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SRNS Analytical Labs Maintains Operations while Safely Completing Coil Replacement

AIKEN, S.C. November 4, 2014 – Savannah River Nuclear Solutions (SRNS), the Department of Energy's Primary Contractor at the Savannah River Site (SRS), has safely completed installation of 68 heating and cooling coils that were damaged in the January 2014 sub-freezing temperatures in order to maintain critical operations in the Site's primary production support laboratory in F Area.

SRS experienced a steam outage that lasted for several days, resulting in the failure of 68 cooling water and steam system coils, as well as domestic water, fire water and steam piping in the two analytical buildings located in F Area. Numerous analyses are performed in these labs on waste and process control samples to ensure processing standards are being maintained.

"Much of the work that is performed in the lab is sensitive to indoor environmental conditions," said Robert Becton, SRNS Project Lead. "If inside temperature or humidity levels in the lab module were to get too high or too low, the analytical instruments could potentially be affected. So, we were challenged to get the cooling coils replaced before the heat of the spring and summer."

Several different departments, including Operations, Engineering, and Procurement, worked alongside Construction to ensure success. Three separate crews worked simultaneously in buildings 772-F and 772-1F to replace the 68 failed coils and repair the other systems.



A crane performs a critical lift to replace a heavy heating and cooling coil that was damaged in the January 2014 sub-freezing temperatures.

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Becton said, “We could not have completed the task without the cooperation of all the different departments. Analytical specialist employees monitored indoor temperatures, prioritized labs modules and relocated lab equipment to allow completion of coil replacement. There were numerous scaffolding locations requiring overhead work for the coil replacement. Sample analysis and construction activities required extensive planning so that the two could be completed simultaneously.”

Initial planning efforts required determining which lab modules were a priority, and what sections of 772-F and 772-1F needed to be repaired first to support sample analysis activities. Every effort was made to restore temperature control capabilities to those sections as soon as possible.

“Because the large scope of work, the replacement of cooling and steam coils took five months to complete. There were times when the outside temperature presented challenges for us, so changes were implemented to perform sample analysis on the night shift while temperatures were cooler. Analytical specialist employees relocated items in the labs that produced heat. There was a tremendous effort put forth by the team to ensure we minimized impacts to our customers,” Becton said.

Becton added that replacing the coils was no easy task. Out of the 68 coils that needed replacing, six were located in the 772-1F second level mezzanine and weighed over 1,200 pounds each. Thirteen coils were over 900 pounds each and inside units located on the roof of 772-F.

“We had to remove access doors and use a crane to perform critical lifts to replace those coils,” he said. “We completed the work on time, with minimal delay and with zero injuries.”

The Savannah River National Laboratory’s Analytical Laboratories have supported SRS operations for more than 55 years, providing high quality analytical, radiometric and environmental monitoring data. Since the mid-1950s, the labs have provided a diverse array of scientific and technical services in support of Site missions.

The labs maintain certifications and qualifications through a variety of governing bodies, which allow multiple applications of laboratories services. Over 100,000 samples are processed yearly, producing 300,000 determinations with an error-free rate averaging 99.99 percent.

Savannah River Nuclear Solutions is a Fluor-led company whose members are Fluor Federal Services, Newport News Nuclear and Honeywell, responsible for the management and operations of the Department of Energy’s Savannah River Site, including the Savannah River National Laboratory, located near Aiken, South Carolina.

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