

For Immediate Release

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Construction of New-Style Disposal Unit Complete

AIKEN, S.C. (July 13, 2011) – The construction of a new-style disposal unit for low-activity salt waste materials at the Savannah River Site (SRS) is complete and, following the completion of electrical and mechanical activities including grout lines construction and tie-ins, is on schedule to support initial acceptance of waste in November 2012.

The new disposal units called Saltstone Disposal Units (SDUs) are being constructed to provide additional disposal capacity to disposition the Site's low-activity radioactive salt waste. A total of 38 million gallons of liquid waste are currently stored in 49 underground waste tanks.

This new design has been used in industrial applications for over 20 years. However, the new SDU disposal design has many enhanced features that will improve Saltstone Disposal Facility's ability to safely and permanently dispose of the waste in its final saltstone waste form in accordance with a South Carolina Department of Health and Environmental Control permit.

The new disposal unit, called SDU 2, includes two separate disposal cells. The new disposal unit cells have a watertight design and a cylindrical shape, unlike the Site's current disposal unit, which has a rectangular shape. The cylindrical design eliminates wall stresses found in the rectangular units. It also includes an engineered concrete and steel shell, a wall-to-floor joint design, and high-density polyethylene and geosynthetic-clay barriers below the unit.

Each of the two disposal cells in SDU 2 is 150 feet in diameter and 22 feet high. SDU 2 has a total storage capacity of approximately five million gallons.

Dave Olson, SRR President and Project Manager, said the improved design incorporates lessons learned from the existing disposal units, and meets or exceeds regulatory requirements.

(More)

(add one – Saltstone disposal units)

“Since 1990 when the Saltstone Disposal Facility became operational, we have learned a great deal about safe waste disposal,” Olson said. “While the current disposal unit has done a good job of allowing us to safely disposition this waste, the new facility takes additional steps to further enhance the safety of the environment, workers and the public.”

Currently, approximately 40 SDUs are targeted for construction at SRS. Site preparation is complete for the next set of SDUs and construction is currently under way.

SRS is owned by the U.S. Department of Energy. The SRS Liquid Waste contract is managed by SRR, a team of companies led by URS Corp. with partners Bechtel National, CH2M Hill and Babcock & Wilcox. Critical subcontractors for the contract are AREVA, Energy Solutions and URS Safety Management Solutions.

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