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For Immediate Release

SRNS Surpasses Fiscal Year Cleanup Milestone

U.S. Department of Energy and Savannah River Nuclear Solutions convert excess uranium into nuclear fuel, turning warheads into watts

AIKEN, S.C., (Nov. 16, 2010) – Savannah River Nuclear Solutions, LLC (SRNS), the Department of Energy's cleanup contractor at the Savannah River Site (SRS), surpassed an important milestone for the 2010 fiscal year by shipping twenty-four shipments of low-enriched uranium (LEU) to the Tennessee Valley Authority (TVA), exceeding their goal by four shipments. This process both safely eliminates excess highly enriched uranium (HEU), which can be used to create nuclear weapons, and provides LEU to create fuel rods for commercial power reactors.

Since 2003, the site has "down blended" or diluted the quality of the uranium to the point where it is useless for weapons of mass destruction, more than 20 metric tons of HEU from the nuclear weapons production stockpile.

The advantage for the TVA is free LEU used to create fuel rods for three of their commercial power reactors. By formal agreement, the resulting cost savings from using this material are split between TVA rate payers and the U.S. Treasury.

According to SRNS HEU Program Manager Gigi Magoulas, to date, enough commercial reactor fuel has been created from SRS LEU to power every home in South Carolina for about nine years and, in the process, eliminated about 500 equivalent warheads.

"Of course, we're always interested in exploring new ways to safely process and ship contaminated material offsite and out of the state," said Garry Flowers, SRNS President & Chief Executive Officer. "When we can find a beneficial use for legacy nuclear materials that are no longer needed for national defense at a lower cost to the taxpayers, we're going to pursue that option. It benefits our customer, the U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) and the citizens of our state and nation."

Originally, the highly enriched uranium used to create LEU at SRS came from a variety of on-site sources and locations, including legacy fuel that was created for, but never used in SRS production reactors. Today, SRS no longer has any operational reactors. In fact, SRNS has now processed all 20 metric tons of HEU out of the 20 metric tons of HEU previously identified by DOE for processing and shipment to the TVA.

As part of a new phase, SRNS employees are now down blending highly enriched uranium received from several laboratories and facilities throughout the DOE complex, including sites in Tennessee, New Mexico, and California.

“The Savannah River Site’s H Canyon is the only facility in the U.S. that can recycle contaminated HEU,” said Flowers. “I’m proud of all of the SRNS employees associated with this highly successful and greatly beneficial program.”

Originally funded by the National Nuclear Security Administration, another DOE organization, as a nuclear nonproliferation program, DOE’s Office of Environmental Management took over funding of the HEU blending down to LEU program at SRS in 2008.

TVA provides electricity for utility and business customers in most of Tennessee and parts of Alabama, Mississippi, Kentucky, Georgia, North Carolina and Virginia – an area of 80,000 square miles with a population of nine million. The price of electricity within TVA’s service territory is below the national average.

Savannah River Nuclear Solutions, LLC, is a Fluor-Daniel Partnership comprised of Fluor, Northrop Grumman 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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