

News from the Savannah River Site

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For Immediate Release

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Next Set of Saltstone Disposal Units Prepare for Operations

AIKEN, S.C. (August 26, 2013) – The next set of circular disposal units for low-level radioactive, non-hazardous salt waste at the Savannah River Site (SRS) have been constructed and completed an assessment to determine readiness prior to operations.

A readiness assessment was completed for Saltstone Disposal Units (SDU) 3 and 5, which consists of four 2.9 million-gallon circular cells. Readiness assessments are conducted by an independent review team prior to performing major work to ensure all preparations have been made, resources available, people trained and hazards identified and mitigated prior to the start of the activity.

Utilizing SDUs 3 and 5 will follow the successful operation of SDU 2, cells A and B, which are expected to be completely filled this fall.

The SDUs provide safe on-site permanent disposal of low-level radioactive salt waste taken from inside SRS underground waste storage tanks. The SDU design is new for Savannah River Remediation (SRR), SRS's liquid waste contractor, and has proven to be very successful, according to Mark Schmitz, SRR Salt Waste Disposition Project Director.

"The SDU design has been proven in other industrial applications and is proving successful for us," Schmitz said. "We look forward to continuing the disposition of low-level salt waste by utilizing this technology."

SRR has received South Carolina Department of Health and Environmental Control authorization for disposal operations. Grouting operations are targeted to commence for SDUs 3 and 5 this year, following DOE approval to begin operations.

(more)

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SDUs 3 and 5

Terrel Spears, Assistant Manager for Waste Disposition Project, U.S. Department of Energy (DOE)-Savannah River Operations Office, called the implementation of SDUs another step toward safe waste disposal operations at SRS.

“Since 1990 when the Saltstone Disposal Facility became operational, we have learned a great deal about salt waste disposal,” Spears said. “This new storage capacity adds further steps to enhance the safety of the environment, workers and the public.”

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 Professional Solutions.

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