



## U.S. DEPARTMENT OF **ENERGY**

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### **TRU Waste Remediation Technician Finds Stability in Recovery Act Job**

*Stabile job provides time to fulfill educational goal*

Aiken, S.C. – If there were a prize at the Department of Energy’s Savannah River Site (SRS) for a Recovery Act worker coming from farthest away, Dean Morris would most likely win.

Morris, a waste remediation technician, moved south in June all the way from Wasilla, Alaska, to join SRS’s highly specialized Solid Waste Management team. Funded by the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act, the team is remediating 55-gallon drums containing transuranic (TRU) waste in F Canyon.

Morris decided to pursue work in the lower 48 states after hearing that SRS would be receiving \$1.6 billion in Recovery Act funds. “I knew there was going to be a lot of growth and a lot of work at Savannah River. I planned for this project for six months,” Morris said.

Like many in his profession, Morris has led somewhat of a nomadic lifestyle, moving 16 times in five years. Much of his work had been in refueling commercial nuclear power plants during scheduled power outages, a job that requires short work periods with a heavy concentration of hours.

Constant traveling from one work site to another was holding Morris back from his goal of obtaining a college degree – but not anymore.

“I’ve been pursuing a degree for 16 years,” he said. “But now there’s a good chance I’ll have my master’s degree when I finish here. This job is the best thing that has happened to me in a long time.”

Because of the Recovery Act, Morris will be settled at Savannah River for the next two years, and working a more traditional work week. He plans to earn his bachelor's degree in health care administration in March from Regis University in Denver, Colorado, through a distance-learning program, and then start on his master's degree from the University of Oregon through another online program.

In the deactivated F-Canyon, the TRU waste drum remediation is taking place after the initial phase of the project was completed in October 2008. The project was restarted with Recovery Act funding in April 2009. After hiring and training new personnel, as well as upgrading the remediation facilities, active drum remediation restarted in early November last year. The team has been making safe, steady progress in the last three months.

The TRU waste will be shipped to the Waste Isolation Processing Plant (WIPP), a geologic repository near Carlsbad, N.M., for long-term storage.

Additional information on the Department of Energy's Office of Environmental Management and the Savannah River Site, can be found at <http://www.em.doe.gov> or <http://www.srs.gov>. For more information about the SRS Recovery Act Project, please visit [www.srs.gov/recovery](http://www.srs.gov/recovery).

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Dean Morris of Wasilla, Alaska, is enjoying the F-Canyon drum remediation project as a Recovery Act employee.