



# U.S. DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY

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## SRS Seals Access to P and R Reactors, Marking End to Nearly 60-Years of History

### *American Recovery and Reinvestment Act Project Progress*

AIKEN, S.C. — With investments from the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act, the U.S. Department of Energy and Savannah River Nuclear Solutions, LLC, (SRNS) today sealed the access to the historic P and R Reactors as part of footprint reduction and legacy cleanup at the Savannah River Site.

At P Reactor today, Dr. David Moody, DOE's Savannah River Operations Office Manager and Marc Sharpe, a reactor operator at P Reactor in the 1980s, were the last people to exit the P Reactor before its final opening was welded shut.

"The Recovery Act enabled us to accomplish a remarkable feat," Dr. Moody said. "In just two years we successfully and safely delivered a fitting end to these relics that led our nation to a Cold War victory. For that we are proud."

"P and R Reactors have been instrumental to SRS's history for nearly 60 years. The Recovery Act provided the means to showcase proven and emerging technologies and to use the talents of our dedicated workforce," said Garry Flowers, Savannah River Nuclear Solutions president and chief executive officer. "Sealing access to P and R Reactors is perhaps the most visible milestone reached as work continues to complete closure of the P and R Area Operable Units, rendering the availability of both areas for future new missions."

Inside the P Reactor's opening, Dr. Moody and Mr. Sharpe placed a time capsule, about the size of a 5-gallon paint bucket, containing items that depict

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both the history of SRS, as well as items that show current events in the region and the nation.

In addition to the Record of Decision (ROD) issued by DOE, the Environmental Protection Agency (Region IV), and the South Carolina Department of Health and Environmental Control which initiated the reactor decommissioning project, other materials included a copy of People Magazine on the Royal Wedding and other news items.

During his 30-year career at SRS, Marc Sharpe, was a reactor operator at P Reactor. He sat in the "pot," a term reactor operators used to describe the control room. In the late 80s, Mr. Sharpe helped with its shut down. And this morning, he walked away from the reactor he helped deactivate and decommission.

Recovery Act funds were used to deactivate and perform *in situ*, or in place, decommissioning of these two reactors. The underground areas and vessels of both reactors were grouted in place to 0-foot elevation with an estimated 260,000 cubic yards of concrete grout. The two structures are expected to stay in their present state for 1,400 years.

Notable projects that contributed to the closure of the P & R areas include: deactivation and decommissioning (D&D) of P and R Reactors; soil and groundwater remediation, building and operation of the Batch Plant Facility to produce the special concrete used in reactor grouting; and the remediation of P and R Area Ash basins, which received coal-fired power plant ash and waste during the operation of the reactors.

P Reactor boasted a record of never having a lost-time injury from the time it reached criticality in 1954 until it was shut down in 1988. R Reactor was the first fully functioning reactor at the Site. It became operational in 1953 and was shut down in 1964 when it was no longer needed for the nation's defense.

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, visit [www.srs.gov/recovery](http://www.srs.gov/recovery).

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Marc Sharpe, who was a senior reactor operator at P Reactor in the mid-1980s, carries a time capsule containing items that reveal Site and national current events into P Reactor. Dr. David Moody, U.S. Department of Energy-Savannah River Operation Office Manager, is walking behind him.



Marc Sharpe, who was a senior reactor operator at P Reactor in the mid-1980s, (left) and Dr. David Moody, U.S. Department of Energy-Savannah River Operation Office Manager, shake hands in front of the wall the Recovery Act project team signed. Sharp and Dr. Moody were the last people to be in the 60-year-old reactor building.



Marc Sharpe, who was a senior reactor operator at P Reactor in the mid-1980s, (left) and Dr. David Moody, U.S. Department of Energy-Savannah River Operation Office Manager, were the last people to leave P Reactor, just before the opening is welded shut.



Marc Sharpe, who was a senior reactor operator at P Reactor in the mid-1980s, (left) and Dr. David Moody, U.S. Department of Energy-Savannah River Operation Office Manager, shake hands after being the last people to be in the nearly 60-year-old reactor building.



Marc Sharpe, a 30-year SRS veteran, signs the wall inside P Reactor, documenting his roles as a senior reactor operator and a D&D operator.



From left, Baker Concrete's Charles Powell, Archie Jarrell, and Michael Carter weld shut the last opening to the P Reactor 105-P building. Baker performed the in situ grouting of the below-grade areas.



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**Note to New Director:**

Please contact Paivi Nettamo, SRNS Public Affairs, for video footage of the event.