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For Immediate Release

Hurricane Irma Yields Impressive Response at SRS

AIKEN, S.C. September 13, 2017 – The U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) and the Savannah River Site (SRS) weathered Hurricane Irma last week with a combination of meticulous preparation and a well-choreographed response from a team of SRS and contractor employees.

SRS has many important national missions, several one-of-a-kind nuclear facilities, more than 300-square-miles of forests and waterways and a web of two-and-four lane roads spanning Aiken and Barnwell Counties.

“Our community may not realize the extent of SRS’ unique capabilities, especially when severe weather, or any other natural disaster, impacts our area,” said Jack Craig, Manager, DOE Savannah River Operations Office. “We employ our own meteorologists, infrastructure organizations, fire fighters, paramedics, and an expansive emergency response team that can activate and respond to Site needs in less than one-hour. When hazardous conditions affect SRS, we have the knowledge and capabilities to sustain the Site from forecast to cleanup.”

Once Irma’s path narrowed in on the east coast, onsite actions were taken to stage critical materials like diesel fuel and heavy equipment. Inside SRS buildings, safety measures were taken to help minimize impacts from high winds. Water levels in SRS ponds and lakes were also monitored to ensure Irma’s impending rainfall could be accommodated without risk of flooding.

“Hurricane Irma made her presence known at the Site, with wind gusts as high as 76 mph and sustained winds over 35 mph for a period of eight hours,” said Craig.

The Site’s ability to rely almost entirely on its safety, security, environmental and infrastructure teams allows state and local responders to focus on community needs.

SRS supported the South Carolina Department of Transportation (SCDOT) with the removal of trees on Hwy 125 and Hwy 278 by the Site’s management and operations contractor, Savannah River Nuclear Solutions (SRNS). This support allowed SCDOT to focus their critical assets to support efforts to other parts of the state. In addition, Centerra, the Site’s protective force, provided patrol assistance to South Carolina Highway Patrol, ensuring Hwy 278 was monitored for roadway blockages and citizens in need.

On Site, SRNS’ site services division cleared 24 downed trees from major SRS roads, approximately 16 trees from secondary roads and the infrastructure team staffed during the hurricane remained on Site around the clock, ready to respond to any other needs that arose.

“The coordinated effort between DOE and all Site contractors when emergencies arise is both extraordinary and reassuring to our local communities and stakeholders,” said Stuart MacVean, SRNS President and CEO. “From forecasting, to safety preparations and ultimately, clean-up, SRS is well postured to respond quickly and effectively to significant events that may come our way.”

News from the Savannah River Site

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[PHOTOS]

Cutline: Savannah River Nuclear Solutions' Site Services Division worked around the clock to clear SRS roadways after Hurricane Irma.

