



U.S. DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY

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Getting the Lead Out of SRS

Latest lead shipment equal to the weight of a space shuttle

Aiken, SC (Nov. 16) -- The Savannah River Site (SRS) is shedding pounds rapidly thanks to the American Reinvestment and Recovery Act.

Recently, Savannah River Nuclear Solutions shipped the equivalent weight of a space shuttle, or 205,000 pounds, of contaminated lead to an off-site processing facility in Oak Ridge, Tenn. for recycling.

Savannah River Nuclear Solutions, the management and operating contractor, and Savannah River Remediation, the liquid waste contractor, joined forces to ensure that this cost effective and environmentally friendly approach to material reuse is a success.

Just as doctors use lead to shield patients from over-exposure to x-rays, SRS utilizes this material to protect workers from radiation exposure. Lead shielding is used across the Site in high radiological areas. The most recent shipment of lead came from activities in SRS' High Level Waste Tank Farm where it was molded around process piping and used to shield other equipment to protect workers from radioactivity.

“The lead we are sending out for processing means more than just waste reduction at SRS; we are sending the material to be reused. We are reducing high disposal fees at waste disposal sites, while ensuring that the most environmentally friendly action is taken,” said John Harley, SRNS Waste Certification Engineer.

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<http://sro.srs.gov/index.html>

These shipments exemplify SRS's commitment to providing environmentally protective waste reduction initiatives. Lead that cannot be sent for commercial recycling is required to be disposed of at a designated off-site waste processing and disposal facility, where it must be treated to reduce environmental hazards and buried, requiring long-term surveillance and monitoring.

“The 18 containers that left the Site in our latest shipment consisted of 51,600 lbs of lead and resulted in cost savings of approximately \$175,000 for this work,” said Reynolds Stewart, SRR Liquid Waste Operations, Waste Program Manager. “This effort was huge not only for the cost savings, but also for the dangers associated with handling and repackaging that were avoided. I appreciate the effort that it took to make this happen and the cooperation from our SRNS counterparts.”

With the help of Recovery Act funding, SRS will be able to accelerate the number of offsite shipments of process wastes while consolidating excess materials currently stored at the Site's periphery. This work will allow for the closure of outlying areas with a goal to achieve over 45 percent reduction of the operational footprint by late 2011.

For 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.

The Savannah River Site is owned by the U.S. Department of Energy. The management and operating contract is held by Savannah River Nuclear Solutions, LLC.

The SRS Liquid Waste contract is managed by SRR, a team of companies lead by URS Corp. with partners Bechtel National, CH2M Hill and Babcock & Wilcox. Critical subcontractors for the contract are AREVA, Energy Solutions and Washington Safety Management Solutions.

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