



Past. Present. Future.

October 30, 2009

The U.S. Department of Energy's (DOE) Savannah River Site (SRS) has served as a major cornerstone of America's national defense infrastructure for nearly six decades. The sacrifice and hard work of SRS employees, past and present, have served the needs of our country and built a solid foundation for the Site to meet the challenging missions ahead and forge a bright future for decades to come.

PAST

On November 28, 1950, President Harry S. Truman announced that the Savannah River Plant would be built. The historic announcement followed E.I. du Pont de Nemours' acceptance of President Truman's request to design, construct, and operate a facility to produce nuclear weapons materials for the Nation's defense effort.

January 1951 began one of the largest construction projects in United States history. Communities were moved; the construction workforce topped 38,000 at its peak; and local populations and businesses boomed - forever changing the face of the Central Savannah River Area.

Original construction on the 310-square-mile site consisted of five production reactors, two chemical separations areas, tritium facilities, a heavy water extraction plant, waste management facilities and various administrative and support facilities.

Site workers met every challenge with a stellar safety record and environmental stewardship that was decades ahead of its time. These early employees and those that have followed over the next 60 years have made significant contributions to our Nation's security that helped win the Cold War and establish the United States as a leader in science, technology and engineering.

PRESENT

Dedicated to maintaining the highest safety and security standards, today SRS is a key DOE industrial complex responsible for environmental stewardship, environmental cleanup, waste management, and the disposition of nuclear materials. While SRS still processes and stores nuclear materials in support of national defense and nuclear non-proliferation efforts, the Site also develops and deploys technologies to safely and effectively clean up hazardous wastes resulting from the Cold War.

The Savannah River National Laboratory (SRNL) is putting science to work to create, test and deploy solutions to the technological challenges facing the Site and the Nation in three key areas: national and homeland security, energy security, and environmental management. SRNL researchers have made significant advances in glass technology, hydrogen technology, nonproliferation technology, environmental characterization and cleanup, and radioactive waste treatment, just to name a few.

The Site's national security missions managed by DOE's National Nuclear Security Administration (NNSA) include national defense programs and nuclear non-proliferation efforts. SRS will continue its key national defense mission as the nation's sole source for tritium using the Tritium Extraction Facility. The primary defense missions focus on reclamation of previously used tritium reservoirs; receipt, packaging and shipping of reservoirs; recycling, extraction, and enrichment of tritium gas in support of the maintenance of the nuclear weapons stockpile, including the U.S. stockpile of tritium.

PRESENT Continued

In the area of nuclear materials stewardship, SRS will continue to contribute to our Nation's nonproliferation efforts to reduce the global nuclear danger. The Mixed Oxide (MOX) Fuel Fabrication Facility and the Waste Solidification Building, both currently under construction at SRS, are integral to the goal of implementing the United States' nonproliferation commitment to dispose of surplus weapons-grade plutonium.

SRS will continue the critical work to down-blend weapons-usable highly enriched uranium into a low-enrichment form usable as fuel in commercial power reactors. Additionally, with its unique infrastructure and capabilities, the Site is positioned to receive surplus weapons plutonium from other DOE sites for safe, secure storage pending final disposition.

In the area of environmental stewardship, SRS continues to develop technologies and practices to manage legacy wastes and advance the ongoing environmental cleanup more efficiently and cost effectively. The Defense Waste Processing Facility (DWPF) immobilizes high-activity liquid waste in glass for safe, long-term storage. Since DWPF began operations in March 1996, more than 10 millions pounds of radioactive glass, or about 2800 canisters, has been produced. SRS is the first site in the DOE Complex to disposition salt waste. The Salt Waste Processing Facility under construction is a critical facility for the treatment, decontamination and disposition of the majority of radioactive salt waste in SRS storage tanks. Removing waste from the tanks will result in the permanent closure of the Site's high-level waste tanks, a critical risk reduction priority for DOE.

Today, approximately 11,000 people are employed at SRS, making it one of the largest employers in South Carolina. The current Site workforce is comprised of employees from various federal agencies and contractor organizations, to include: the DOE-Savannah River Operations Office, the Government agency oversight and landlord; NNSA, managing the Site's defense programs operations and nuclear nonproliferation program; Savannah River Nuclear Solutions, management and operating contractor; Savannah River Remediation, liquid waste contractor; Wackenhut Services, Inc., security contractor; Parsons, salt

waste processing contractor; the U.S. Forest Service-Savannah River, providing timber and forestry management.; and the Savannah River Ecology Laboratory, operated by the University of Georgia. Additionally, there are numerous subcontractors also in place, to include just over 1,300 new employees working on accelerated cleanup projects funded under the 2009 American Recovery and Reinvestment Act.

FUTURE

From current missions to expanded energy research and production to increased nuclear materials management and skilled expertise in the global nuclear arena, the future of the Savannah River Site looks as bright as it did nearly 60 years ago.

Current cleanup work – such as material stabilization and disposition, excess facility demolition, and waste site cleanup – will extend to at least 2028. Expanded partnerships with universities and plentiful research opportunities, along with cooperative agreements with commercial partners, expanded missions with other federal programs, and the potential for an "Energy Park" could further define the Site's future.

At the Savannah River Site, we take pride in our role in America's defense. We actively engage in our environmental mission. And we work toward the future by using applied science to meet the Nation's need for homeland security and energy independence.

Like those who came before them, the men and women working in today's Nuclear Security Enterprise are making the country safer through their efforts to maintain a safe, secure and effective nuclear deterrent and through their work reducing proliferation and the threat of global nuclear terrorism.

Protecting workers, the public, the environment, and national security interests is the Site's highest priorities. SRS will continue to maintain needed facilities and infrastructure while training and retaining a skilled and motivated workforce to ensure its technical capability and performance.

Our future is bright because our past record of safely and effectively serving the needs of our country provides the solid foundation for meeting the challenging missions ahead. The efforts and achievements of our predecessors directly contribute to the successes we have enjoyed for decades. In looking back over the last 60 years, there is much to be proud of, and, in looking to the future, SRS is still going strong.

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