

For Immediate Release

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## Waste Removal Begins on Highest Volume Sludge Tank at SRS

AIKEN, S.C. (July 3, 2012) – The largest volume of sludge waste in any one tank in the history of the Savannah River Site (SRS) is being removed.

Recently, three submersible mixing pumps were inserted into Tank 13, a 1.03 million-gallon underground waste storage tank that held a record 277,000 gallons of radioactive sludge, which is double the amount of sludge normally stored in a waste tank. Bulk waste removal activities for Tank 13 was up on the tank closure schedule and the work began.

Tank mixing operations were initiated to retrieve of the waste. There is enough sludge waste in this one tank to fill over 1,100 high-level waste canisters, or 14 percent of the total canister projection, from the Defense Waste Processing Facility (DWPF).

Terrel Spears, Assistant Manager for Waste Disposition Project, U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) Savannah River Operations, called tackling the Tank 13 sludge waste a major undertaking.

“When liquid waste cleanup efforts began at SRS, we had 15 old-style tanks with some volume of sludge waste in them; bulk waste removal has been completed on 13 of them,” Spears said. “With Tank 13 sludge removal efforts under way, we have begun a substantial waste dispositioning project that will leave us with just a single old-style tank remaining with sludge waste that will be removed.”

During bulk waste removal, the giant mixing pumps break up the sludge and suspend the waste in liquid until it is removed from the tank and fed to the DWPF where the highly-contaminated waste is mixed with borosilicate glass and poured into 10-foot tall, stainless steel canisters. The canisters are being safely stored at SRS until a federal repository is available.

(more)

(add one – Tank 13)

Dave Olson, Savannah River Remediation (SRR) President and Project Manager, said waste removal efforts were made possible thanks to the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA), which identified Tank 13 upgrades as one of its 41 SRR projects.

“A tremendous amount of Tank 13 work and infrastructure improvements were accelerated thanks to the ARRA project, allowing us to move sludge removal ahead of schedule,” Olson said.

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

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