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National Nuclear Security Administration Program Helps Position SRS Tritium Facilities for the Future

(AIKEN, S.C. – Feb. 21, 2013) – With an eye toward the future, the National Nuclear Security Administration (NNSA) has completed an 11-year program aimed at maintaining the critical infrastructure at NNSA's nuclear security enterprise facilities across the country. Locally, NNSA-Savannah River Site Office (SRSO) and the Savannah River Site (SRS) management and operating contractor Savannah River Nuclear Solutions (SRNS) have used the funding from this program to complete infrastructure projects that help ensure that the SRS Tritium Facilities are able to continue fulfilling their national security mission into the future.

The NNSA Facilities and Infrastructure Recapitalization Program (FIRP), which concluded at the end of Fiscal Year 2012, provided \$42 million for 58 projects at the SRS Tritium Facilities. Approximately one-fourth of the work was carried out by small businesses under the direction of NNSA-SRSO. These NNSA-SRSO-directed projects included overhauling a compressed air system, replacing air conditioning units, and renovating personnel space.

"FIRP funding was utilized effectively to reduce deferred maintenance in the SRS Tritium Facilities and to establish small business development in communities near SRS," said Roxanne Jump, FIRP Project Manager for NNSA-SRSO.

FIRP was a proactive program that helped stabilize infrastructure costs and prevent serious maintenance issues. Legacy deferred maintenance, i.e., backlog maintenance work, was reduced by 20%. Projects completed at the SRS Tritium Facilities included the removal of excess outdoor equipment, renovation of process building ventilation systems, and replacement of important power distribution systems.

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The FIRP projects included disposition of unused facilities and infrastructure. These projects have literally changed the landscape of the site, and earned recognition for the site as well. One such project was the decommissioning of an old, no-longer-needed process effluent capture system. The innovative cutting techniques used in this demolition reduced by more than 1,500 cubic feet the amount of radioactive waste generated, avoiding more than \$600K in waste disposal costs. As a result, the project earned a U.S. Department of Energy National Pollution Prevention Award.

Recent FIRP accomplishments include projects in the H Area New Manufacturing (HANM) Facility (an important piece of the streamlined SRS Tritium Facilities of the future), providing additional cooling for the HANM control room and replacing Uninterruptible Power Supply units.

“The program has had a significant positive impact here,” said Dennis Donati, SRNS Senior Vice President of NNSA Operations & Programs. “It’s one of the reasons we are able to continue meeting our mission.”

SRNS manages the Savannah River Tritium Enterprise for NNSA, supplying and processing tritium, an isotope of hydrogen gas that is vital to the nation’s nuclear defense. Tritium decays radioactively at the rate of 5.5 percent each year and must be replenished periodically. This is accomplished by recycling tritium from existing warheads and by extracting tritium from target rods irradiated in nuclear reactors that are operated by the Tennessee Valley Authority. Recycled and extracted gases are purified to produce tritium that is suitable for use. The SRS Tritium Facilities occupy approximately 29 acres in the northwest portion of the Savannah River Site’s H Area. Operations began in 1955.

SRNS is a Fluor-led company whose members are Fluor Federal Services, Newport News Nuclear and Honeywell, and is responsible for the management and operations of the Department of Energy’s Savannah River Site, including the Savannah River National Laboratory, located near Aiken, South Carolina.

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