U.S. DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY

SAVANNAH RIVER OPERATIONS OFFICE
AIKEN, SC 29802

NEWS MEDIA CONTACT:
Jim Giusti, DOE, (803) 952-7697
james-r.giusti@srs.gov

Fran Poda, SRNS, (803) 952-8671
fran.poda@srs.gov

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DOE's H-Canyon Finishes Processing Old Reactor Components From Nevada Test Site

AIKEN, S.C., May 27, 2009 – In another example of the Department of Energy's (DOE) Savannah River Site (SRS) facilities working together to stabilize and dispose of surplus nuclear materials from around the DOE Complex, workers at H-Canyon recently successfully completed processing the last highly enriched uranium (HEU) components from a Nevada Test Site (NTS) reactor.

The NTS reactor, called the Super Kukla Prompt Burst Reactor, operated from 1964-1978. It produced an intense pulse of neutron and gamma radiation to measure how well nuclear weapon components and materials withstood bombardment.

When the reactor was disassembled, parts were sent to DOE's Oak Ridge facility for consolidation of surplus nuclear materials. Oak Ridge then sent 324 containers for chemical separation at SRS's H Canyon facility. In April 2009, the last of the Super Kukla material was successfully dissolved and down blended in H Canyon.

"The consolidation, processing and disposition of surplus special nuclear materials is a priority for the Environmental Management Program and the contribution of the workers at the Savannah River Site is greatly appreciated," said Jeff Allison, SRS Manager.

Like other uranium material stabilization and disposition in H Canyon, this low enriched uranium (LEU) will be shipped to the Tennessee Valley Authority (TVA) for conversion to commercial reactor fuel. The material is part of 5.6 metric tons of highly enriched uranium included in a recent Interagency Agreement between DOE and TVA.

MORE

SR-2009-06

Super Kukla 2-2-2-2

The SRS uranium from DOE's uranium blend-down program is being used at the Browns Ferry facility in Alabama, providing power for homes across the Southeast. So far, SRS uranium has produced enough electricity to power every home in South Carolina for 10 years.

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.

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SR-2009-06