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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

## SRS Facility Supports Removal of Plutonium From South Carolina

AIKEN, S.C. (June 23, 2021) — Workers have placed the first drum inside a new facility at the Savannah River Site (SRS) to support the interim storage, characterization, and shipment of plutonium for permanent disposal.

Completion of the National Nuclear Security Administration-funded facility, known as the K Area Characterization and Storage Pad, is an accomplishment that will support the removal of plutonium from South Carolina.

Plutonium is downblended in the Site's K Area Complex glovebox in a process that mixes plutonium oxide with a multicomponent adulterant to enable DOE to meet requirements for shipping plutonium to EM's Waste Isolation Pilot Plant (WIPP) in New Mexico for disposal.

Next, the plutonium is packaged in Criticality Control Overpack (CCO) drums and stored on the pad until it is characterized and ready to be received at WIPP. The pad also contains equipment to load drums into larger shipping containers on a shipping transport vehicle.

"Initially the pad will add the capacity to store over 3,800 CCO drums while awaiting shipment," said Geoff Hendrick, the K Area Storage and Characterization Pad project manager for SRS management and operations contractor Savannah River Nuclear Solutions. "The first shipment is planned for March 2022."

In the past, all waste shipped to WIPP was characterized in the SRS Solid Waste Management Facility (SWMF), located several miles away from K Area. A large piece of characterization equipment was transferred from SWMF to the pad in December 2020 to prepare for the characterization process.

Additional characterization equipment has also been procured and installed on the pad. This equipment will be used by WIPP contractors to verify and validate that



*The completed CCO Characterization and Storage pad has the capacity to hold 3,800 CCO drums while awaiting shipment to WIPP.*

the waste within each container matches documentation provided by SRS and that it does not contain any items prohibited by WIPP before shipment out of South Carolina.

“By being able to store, characterize, and ship the material directly from the pad, we are eliminating the step of sending the material to SWMF to verify the material is safe to ship. With the pad in operation, that same verification can now be done in the area where the material is packaged and stored. This saves time and resources and allows for more efficient mission execution,” Hendrick said.



*Members of the CCO Pad team and their management celebrated the delivery of the first CCO Drum to the pad. (From left) Brian Whitlow, K Area Nuclear Material Control and Accountability Lead; Janice Lawson, SRNS Deputy Vice President of Environmental Management (EM) Operations; Michael Mickolanis, DOE Assistant Manager for Nuclear Material Stabilization; Chris Amos, SRNS Security; Larry Lee, SRNS Security; Geoff Hendrick, CCO Pad Program Manager; Lee Sims, K Area Complex Facility Manager; James Rowell, SRNS Security; Toby Phillips, SRNS Security; Amanda Barnes, K Area Complex Deputy Facility Manager; Jim McKeon, SRNS Security; Virginia Kay, Director, Office of Material Disposition, National Nuclear Security Administration; and Wyatt Clark, SRNS Senior Vice President of EM Operations*

“Despite many unavoidable challenges throughout the project, such as weather delays and a global pandemic, the SRNS project team remained committed to completing the characterization and storage pad construction safely and within cost and schedule constraints. This focus was clearly demonstrated by the project manager. This new storage facility is an important step in progressing the nonproliferation mission of the Department of Energy and the National Nuclear Security Administration (NNSA),” said Bill Wabbersen, with NNSA’s Office of Materials Management & Minimization. “This impressive project is just one of the ways SRS helps make the world safer.”

*Savannah River Nuclear Solutions, a Fluor-led company with Newport News Nuclear and Honeywell, 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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