

For Immediate Release

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Senior DOE official sees new bubbler technology as ‘real progress’

Dr. Inez Triay, the Assistant Secretary for Environmental Management at the U.S. Department of Energy (DOE), got a first-hand look at the new bubbler technology recently installed by Savannah River Remediation LLC (SRR) to increase the processing of radioactive liquid waste at the Savannah River Site (SRS) and accelerate waste tank closure.

About \$7 million dollars of American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) funding supported the infrastructure improvement project.

Triay visited the Savannah River Site on October 20 to attend a Site celebration and conduct meetings with stakeholders, including members of the South Carolina and Georgia legislative delegations from the Central Savannah River Area (CSRA).

While at SRS, Triay, along with members of her staff and Site officials, viewed bubblers identical to those recently installed in the Defense Waste Processing Facility (DWPF).

Briefed by ARRA Program Manager Mark Schmitz, Triay praised deployment of the new technology adding, “With Recovery Act funding, we are making real progress by accelerating the closure of SRS waste tanks, enhancing the safety of our workers and the public, and protecting the environment.”

SRR President and Project Manager Jim French told Triay that the use of the bubbler technology was “an excellent example of how Recovery Act funds have helped us accelerate waste processing and maintain our momentum in closing SRS waste tanks.”

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Triay at SRR
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The bubbler technology, developed for use at DWPF by the Vitreous State Laboratory and Energy Solutions, will increase the annual production rate of waste canisters from the current level of 215 canisters a year to 325. When all facility enhancements are complete, the annual canister production rate is projected to reach 400. The canisters will be temporarily stored at SRS awaiting transfer to a national waste storage facility.

The bubblers, installed in the 65-ton DWPF melter, inject argon gas into a molten glass and waste mixture inside the melter and significantly increase the capability of the 15 year-old waste processing facility to process radioactive waste.

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

Photo Caption: DOE Assistant Secretary for Environmental Management, Dr. Inez Triay, accompanied by officials from DOE-Savannah River, is briefed by Savannah River Remediation Program Manager Mark Schmitz on the benefits of the recently-installed bubbler technology at the SRS Defense Waste Processing Facility.

From left: Zack Smith, DOE-SR Director of Recovery Act Programs; Rod Rimando, DOE- SR Deputy Director, Recovery Act Programs; Dr. Triay and SRR Program Manager Mark Schmitz.

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