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SRNS Takes on New Environmental Cleanup Challenge: Coal-Fired Ash

AIKEN, S.C. (Sept. 29, 2014) – A mammoth, 1950s-era, coal-fired power plant now sits cold and dark in a largely closed industrial area within the sprawling Savannah River Site. Owned by the U.S. Department of Energy, whose primary contractor is Savannah River Nuclear Solutions (SRNS), the powerhouse may be quiet and still; however, nearby, SRNS employees are rapidly preparing for the cleanup of huge quantities of ash, generated over the decades by the same facility.

“Coal ash represents a potential risk to human health and the environment,” said Chris Bergren, Director, Environmental Compliance and Area Completion Projects. “Cleaning up this particular site is in the best interest of the environment, SRS and the State of South Carolina. This is particularly true given the age of the earthen berms created to make the pond-like basins historically used to store the ash.”

SRNS personnel will use their extensive experience and specialized knowledge involving environmental cleanup to place an ash landfill and much of the three adjacent water and ash-filled basins in a long term, environmentally safe condition. A portion of this 90-acre clean-up site will also be graded and formed into a storm water collection area.



Full restoration of the 90 acres, located within the Savannah River

SRNS employees have begun a five-year project to fully restore 90 acres, located within the Site's D Area, by remediating approximately 1.3 million cubic yards of ash.

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Site's D Area, is expected to take five years. Removing tens of millions of gallons of water contained within the basins is now taking place.

The next phase will involve heavy equipment, used to consolidate approximately 1.3 million cubic yards of ash within two designated locations at the work site.

Clean fill dirt will then be placed in the basins and on the ash landfill.

Once ash consolidation is complete, two layers of clay will form a water impermeable barrier that will be covered by nearly two feet of new soil and planted with grass to finish the remediation process. The project is expected to be completed by June of 2019.

Since becoming the management and operating contractor at SRS in 2008, SRNS has achieved the cleanup of 85 percent of the site's area to industrial standards with approval from local and federal regulatory agencies.

Savannah River Nuclear Solutions is a Fluor-led company whose members are Fluor Federal Services, Newport News Nuclear and Honeywell, 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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SRNS- 2014 – 265