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**Ceremony marks completion of Savannah River Site plant**

Augusta Chronicle

June 22, 2016

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The plant that will be a key component in processing radioactive liquid waste at Savannah River Site was officially deemed completed Tuesday.

Dr. Monica Regalbuto, Assistant Secretary, DOE Office of Environmental Management; Jacks Craig, DOE-SR Manager Chuck Swain, Parsons, Director of Construction SWPF; and Dr. Tom Burns, Parsons, Vice President - SWPF Deputy Project Manager/Director of Engineering tour the salt waste processing facility.

Dr. Monica Regalbuto, Assistant Secretary, DOE Office of Environmental Management; Jacks Craig, DOE-SR Manager Chuck Swain, Parsons, Director of Construction SWPF; and Dr. Tom Burns, Parsons, Vice

**Energy Summit  
Idaho Falls, ID**  
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September 2016

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**Save the Date:  
House Nuclear  
Cleanup Caucus  
Capitol Hill**

November 2016

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**INVITATION ONLY  
Save the Date: 2016  
Intergovernmental  
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New Orleans, LA**

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President - SWPF Deputy Project Manager/Director of Engineering tour the salt waste processing facility. The Department of Energy held a ribbon cutting at the Salt Waste Processing Facility to mark completion of construction.

The facility, which had been under construction since 2012, will handle liquid waste rather than enriched plutonium.

It will process 90 percent of the site's 36 million gallons of high-level waste left over from the manufacturing of nuclear weapons that ended more than three decades ago.

The contractor started in 2012 and wrapped up its work in April, but the Energy Department spent the next 30 days checking it. That finish was eight months and \$60 million better than original projections.

Monica C. Regalbuto, the assistant secretary of the Energy Department's Office of Environmental Management, said at Tuesday's ceremony that the benefits of the new plant extend beyond SRS' liquid waste mission.

"We are taking a collaborative approach to leverage what we have accomplished with (the Salt Waste Processing Facility) to ensure successful start-up of other key facilities like the Integrated Waste Treatment Unit in Idaho and the Waste Treatment Plant in Washington State," she said.

Jack Craig, the manager of the DOE's Savannah River Operations Office, said that, "Once operational, the Salt Waste Processing Facility will be a cornerstone facility for tank closures at SRS and to Environmental Management's overarching mission of risk reduction."

Executive Vice President of Construction Services for Parsons  
Government Services Anthony Leketa and Parsons Senior Vice President

and SWPF Project Manager Frank Sheppard praised workers for the successful completion of the project.

“This is a key milestone for the project and for our workforce, who has performed so well by safely and efficiently completing construction activities on this facility,” Sheppard said. “But more importantly, we are one step closer to our ultimate goal of beginning operations and accelerating the cleanup missions of the Savannah River Site.”

The project will now transition to the testing and commissioning phase. The facility is currently scheduled to begin radioactive operations in December 2018.

### **Federal safety agency to evaluate Hanford chemical vapor issue**

Tri-City Herald

June 22, 2016

[LINK](#)

The National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health has offered to conduct a short-term evaluation related to Hanford worker exposure to chemical vapors.

NIOSH is part of the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention focusing on worker health and safety and is independent of the Department of Energy. This will be NIOSH’s second evaluation of tank vapor issues, with the first conducted in 2004.

The new evaluation, which is still in the planning stages, is expected to focus on four areas: medical, exposure assessment, safety and health program management, and exposure control.

“Bringing in an independent team of experts to make sure workers are being protected is a strong step in the right direction,” said Sen. Patty Murray, D-Wash., in a statement. “I will be closely following this process

to ensure this evaluation provides the guidance necessary to keep workers safe.”

Murray is the ranking member of the Senate Health, Education, Labor and Pensions Committee. Sens. Maria Cantwell, D-Wash., and Ron Wyden, D-Ore., also called the independent evaluation an important step toward protecting workers.

For more than 20 years, Hanford workers have raised issues of chemical vapors associated with waste held in underground tanks from the past production of plutonium for the nation’s nuclear weapons program.

In recent months, about 53 workers have received medical evaluations for possible exposure to chemical vapors. Workers are concerned that chemical exposure could cause serious health problems.

BRINGING IN AN INDEPENDENT TEAM OF EXPERTS TO MAKE SURE WORKERS ARE BEING PROTECTED IS A STRONG STEP IN THE RIGHT DIRECTION.

Sen. Patty Murray, D-Wash

NIOSH plans to review policies and operational procedures for evaluating worker health concerns for all employees associated with Hanford tank farms. The medical review will look at monitoring of employee health, the clinical evaluations done when workers may have been exposed and how medical data is evaluated.

It will consider how worker exposures are assessed by reviewing sampling of possible vapors, response to concerns regarding possible exposure and how data is analyzed to identify trends.

NIOSH will review policies regarding communication with workers, including communication of risk related to chemical vapors.

It also will look at what controls are being used to protect workers from chemical vapors.

No schedule has been set for the review, although DOE has sent NIOSH a list of activities from now through October that it might want to observe.

Hanford's top DOE managers, Stacy Charboneau and Kevin Smith, responded to NIOSH's offer, saying it was very much appreciated. DOE will ensure it has full access to information and workers to interview, they said in a letter.

Hanford officials already talk regularly with NIOSH officials on health and safety issues. For instance, in March, DOE asked NIOSH for its professional assessment of the potential development of a study of symptoms reported by tank farm workers. NIOSH responded then with a recommendation for a focused clinical review of workers who had symptoms and their medical records. Hanford officials are pursuing the recommendation.

Wyden said in a statement that his meeting last month in the Tri-Cities with some tank farm workers made it clear that the new NIOSH independent review is needed "to get to the bottom of this decades-long health threat."

"Worker safety is our number one priority, and this decision will both increase transparency and identify means to improve the department's health and safety procedures," Cantwell said, in a statement. She is the ranking member of the Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee.

### **Local Legislator Tackles National Nuclear Issues**

LA Daily Post

June 23, 2016

[LINK](#)

Legislative leaders from the Department of Energy site states gathered last week at Idaho National Laboratory to meet with DOE officials, researchers and industry experts for a briefing on nuclear-related topics crucial to the national laboratories.

New Mexico State Rep. Stephanie Garcia Richard joined fellow members of the bipartisan National Nuclear Legislative Working Group (NLWG) for site tours and discussion on topics relevant to New Mexico's portions of the DOE complex. Issues such as waste disposal and transportation, as well as impacts of the impending closure of several nuclear power plants were discussed.

Legislators were briefed on the upcoming reopening of the WIPP site, work on the DOE's consent-based siting process for a national waste depository and other items.

Garcia Richard spoke with INL Director Mark Peters about the various issues facing the DOE sites and the role of the national labs moving forward.

"We really got an up close and personal look at how the DOE sites throughout the complex really work on national security together," she said. "While LANL provides a large portion of the national nuclear work, INL supports the complex with research on fuels and tests at their Advanced Test Reactor. It was a great opportunity to see these facilities and discuss shared concerns with legislators from DOE sites across the country. As we face these looming issues like waste disposal, it is critical that we coordinate with other sites around the country on solutions that will work for all of us."

Over the past four years, Garcia Richard also has traveled and met with colleagues in Portsmouth, Ohio, Washington, D.C., and Louisiana in her role on the NLWG, representing the interests and concerns of the Los Alamos community.

## **Editorial: Salt Waste Processing Facility fills an important void at SRS**

Aiken Standard

June 23, 2016

[LINK](#)

The opening of the Salt Waste Processing Facility, or SWPF, at Savannah River Site, or SRS, might sound to many like another dog and pony show to divert the public's attention from the severity of threats in the nation's nuclear caretaking missions.

Neither this facility nor its technological prowess are red herrings, though. In a world of federal oversight, failed endeavors from choked funding and undulated mentalities from governmental transitions, this project is a diamond in the rough. After all, it's not often that a major federal project is finished ahead of schedule. It seems even more rare that it came in \$60 million under budget, standing in stark contrast to the MOX project.

But there is no controversy, lawsuit or unrest surrounding the SWPF project, largely because of its common-sense appeal as a solution to a major problem. Salt waste makes up approximately 90 percent of the site's 36 million gallons of liquid waste. That means more than 32 million gallons of salt waste are held in the SRS tank farms.

That waste was generated from the creation of materials for use in nuclear weaponry, a cornerstone of America's ultimate emergence from the Cold War. The efforts of the scientists and operators at the site were fundamental in creating the international strength and nuclear influence we have around the globe today. But you can't exactly turn on a hot tap and pour it down the sink or you'll end up with a completely different form of "hot water." Obviously, something must be done.

Need is the mother of invention, and SWPF is the result. The building hosts 4-foot-thick concrete walls that conceal labyrinths, complete with shielded doors to keep workers safe. The facility even contains controls to operate at adjusted temperature and pressure levels to adapt to constantly changing environmental conditions. Parsons, the site's builder and current operations manager, built 27 miles of piping into the processing facility, which could stretch from downtown Aiken to Fort Gordon's main gate if laid in a straight line. Sections of that piping were engineered at a slight angle so liquid coming into a room or section could be more easily flushed out with gravity's natural assistance, should the need arise.

The processes will render the salt waste much less radioactive and more easily disposed and isolated from environmental contamination. Sure, the facility adds jobs and solidifies the vitality and long-term survivability of SRS. But the long term protection of Aiken, Barnwell and Allendale county residents and the environment in which we raise our families, especially in the wake of personal sacrifices and health risks during the Cold War, is what truly makes the SWPF a vital cog in the ongoing missions of the Savannah River Site.

### **Environment Dept., LANL settle on cleanup plan**

Santa Fe New Mexican

June 25, 2016

[LINK](#)

The New Mexico Environment Department on Friday released its final agreement with the U.S. Department of Energy and Los Alamos National Laboratory on how cleanup at the lab will be managed over the coming decades, saying the new deal will accelerate the pace of getting rid of pollutants and removing barrels of hazardous waste.

But critics said the settlement fails to take into account key concerns raised during a public comment period, including enforcement loopholes and stifled opportunities for public input.

The document leaves little room for debate: It says the public cannot comment, appeal or hold judicial hearings to modify the deal.

The 2016 consent order, first released in late March ahead of a 45-day public comment period, replaces a 2005 order to clean up contamination and waste left after Cold War-era nuclear weapons research and development at the lab. Cleanup deadlines under the previous agreement passed without much of the work being completed.

Ryan Flynn, Cabinet secretary of the state Environment Department, said in a statement Friday that the revised consent order will prioritize and expedite cleanup, and that it will “serve as a stronger tool for substantiating federal budget requests for increased cleanup funds.”

Officials have said the previous order, which expired in December 2015, was hampered by limited federal cleanup funding and the shutdown of the Waste Isolation Pilot Plant in Carlsbad in 2014 after a radiation leak.

Flynn has said repeatedly that cleanup funding proposed for fiscal year 2017 is at least \$66 million short of what is needed. Recent federal estimates have placed the total cleanup cost at \$3.8 billion over the next 19 years.

Under the new consent order, the state and the Energy Department will agree on 10 to 20 cleanup milestones each year, but it also says the goals can be altered if they are “technically unfeasible,” too costly, hazardous to workers or “any other basis that may support a finding of impracticability.” And it says the targeted deadlines are not enforceable.

At least one comment submitted in May asked the department to remove some of this language and to set specific deadlines, including a final date when all waste would be removed from lab property.

“[The] proposed 2016 Consent Order allows the federal government to leave Northern New Mexico contaminated forever if DOE and its management contractor, in this case, LANS, believes that cleanup is too difficult or costly,” wrote Joni Arends of Concerned Citizens for Nuclear Safety and geologist Robert H. Gilkeson.

The state and federal agencies “have taken away genuine long-range enforceability,” said Jay Coghlan, director of the nonprofit Nuclear Watch New Mexico, which filed a lawsuit over deadlines that went unmet under the prior order.

“How can there ever be genuine cleanup without long-range enforcement?” he asked.

Coghlan said the document will allow the Energy Department to skirt cleanup by simply citing insufficient funding. The state’s agreement with the department is “coddling the nuclear weapons industry in New Mexico,” he said.

He’s also concerned about the lack of opportunity to appeal the agreement.

“We believe the Environment Department is now violating its own public participation requirements,” he said.

Allison Scott Majure, a spokeswoman for the Environment Department, said one of the “enhancements” in the final consent order is “opportunity for public comment by adjacent stakeholders ... should the agreement be modified in the future.”

However, the language of the document limits input only to new cleanup projects proposed by the agencies, and not to the consent order itself.

**Savannah River Site board seeking new members**

Augusta Chronicle

June 28, 2016

[LINK](#)

The Savannah River Site Citizens Advisory Board is accepting applications for new members.

The SRS board is one of eight Environmental Management Site-Specific Advisory Boards funded by the Department of Energy. The group meets to discuss Environmental Management issues involving SRS and submit recommendations to DOE from a community viewpoint. It also informs the public of key issues and upcoming decisions related to SRS.

According to a CAB news release, there will soon be six openings on the board.

The deadline for applications is Sept. 1.

To apply, complete the application on the CAB's website: [cab.srs.gov](http://cab.srs.gov).

Applicants can also email, fax, or mail completed applications to [srsCitizensadvisoryboard@srs.gov](mailto:srsCitizensadvisoryboard@srs.gov); (803) 952-9228 (fax); or SRS Citizens Advisory Board, P.O. Box A Building 730-B, Room 1178 Aiken, SC 29802.

To contact the CAB Support Team, call (803) 952-7884 .

### **DOE Honors LANL's Small Business Program**

LA Daily Post

June 28, 2016

[LINK](#)

### **Successful mentoring partnership recognized.**

Los Alamos National Laboratory and RG Construction Services LLC in Rio Rancho received the fiscal year 2015 Mentor of the Year and Protégé of the Year awards, respectively, from the Department of Energy.

The awards were announced recently at DOE's Small Business Forum and Expo in Atlanta. The awards recognize the Lab and Los Alamos National Security, LLC's contributions toward DOE's mission and small business goals.

Additionally, Jim Carrigan of the Small Business Program Office received a Distinguished Performance Award for formalizing the Los Alamos Mentor-Protégé Program in 2013.

"The LANL Small Business Program will continue to seek opportunities to mentor other viable suppliers and work to create the next success story," says LANL Small Business Program Manager Chris Fresquez.

RG Construction Services provides subcontract construction services for the Laboratory. U.S. Army veteran John McKinstry started the company in 2004; the company was accepted into the Mentor-Protégé Program in 2014. McKinstry said he recommends the program to other small businesses. "The Laboratory is willing to answer our questions. You just have to be willing to ask," he said. "I want to ensure our company has the skills and knowledge to do the work well."

### **About the Mentor-Protégé Program**

The Laboratory's Mentor-Protégé Program is a DOE initiative designed to encourage and assist small and disadvantaged businesses; the mentor typically works with one business at a time for two years. Businesses are selected as protégés through a competitive application process. The mentor signs an agreement with the protégé, committing to enhance the company's capabilities and ability to compete in any market.

Protégés learn how to perform contracts and subcontracts for federal projects, giving them visibility within the DOE complex. In turn, Los Alamos gains more procurement options as it strives to meet its small business goals, set each year with DOE's National Nuclear Security

Administration. The Mentor-Protégé Program also contributes toward DOE's mission and small business goals, and it helps local businesses grow and expand, contributing to regional economic development.

Learn more about [LANL's Small Business Program](#).

### **Amodei expects new push for Yucca**

Nevada Appeal

June 30, 2016

[LINK](#)

With the retirement of Sen. Harry Reid, Rep. Mark Amodei says he sees another push to open Yucca Mountain on the horizon.

In an interview during last week's congressional recess, he said Illinois Republican John Shimkus is "getting ready to have a hearing on Yucca Mountain."

Amodei said he has been told by colleagues in leadership in discussions with the Senate leadership, "there have been indications that some things will change in the Senate with respect to Yucca Mountain."

"It's all in the context of Harry retiring," he said.

Amodei said if the bill just pushes forward on Yucca Mountain, he's a "No" vote.

But, he said if that bill includes such things as land transfers and other economic development issues and other benefits to Nevada, "I'm going to have that discussion."

"I don't think Nevada should sit there like Clint Eastwood at the convention talking to an empty chair," he said. "What can we do that's meaningful for Nevada."

He said his idea would include making the Desert Research Institute the watchdog over management of the site and making UNLV into the “world wide leader in reprocessing the fuel so it becomes a commodity instead of trash.”

He said one of his ideas is the federal government, “convey to the state the right of way for I-11.”

“Those discussions haven’t been had but I’m willing to have them as part of moving something,” the Carson City native said.

Interstate 11 is a proposed freeway that would connect Arizona all the way north to the Canadian border, running through Nevada. But officials concede it would probably take decades to plan, win environmental approvals and build.

“If you already own the right of way, that’s a big step,” Amodei said.

The state has successfully prevented the waste dump 75 miles north of Las Vegas from opening for more than 30 years through an endless succession of legal battles and the efforts of the state’s congressional delegation. But it was Reid who convinced President Obama to defund the project in his energy Department budget, effectively killing it, and Reid as majority then minority leader has continued to frustrate efforts by backers of the so-called repository.

### **Townsite Cleanup Continues In Los Alamos Canyon**

LA Daily Post

June 30, 2016

[LINK](#)

The Department of Energy’s (DOE) Environmental Management Los Alamos Field Office (EM-LA) and Los Alamos National Security, LLC

(LANS) is moving forward with the removal of contaminated soil along the south-facing slopes of Los Alamos Canyon adjacent to the Los Alamos Townsite.

The contaminated soil is primarily associated with legacy outfalls from the Manhattan Project and early Cold War research activities from 1943–1965.

“Cleaning up historical properties from areas within and around the Los Alamos Townsite is among our top priorities. We are committed to performing this work safely and efficiently,” EM-LA Manager Doug Hintze said.

The contaminated sites are within, or directly adjacent to, DOE property and will be accessed through private property along the north rim of the canyon in the area of the former Los Alamos Inn. The total combined area to be cleaned up is less than one acre. The location and topography requires temporary site infrastructure for equipment and materials staging to ensure safe and effective site access, soil cleanup, site restoration, and waste management operations.

The project is part of the Historical Properties Completion Campaign, one of the campaigns included within the recently finalized 2016 Compliance Order on Consent (Consent Order). Work is scheduled to begin in the first week of July and is expected to be completed by the end of September. Cleanup work will be performed in collaboration with TerranearPMC, a subcontractor to LANS that completed the highly successful cleanup on DOE property near Smith’s Marketplace in the summer of 2015.

The work will include all necessary and appropriate safety, security, and environmental protection measures. The excavated soil will be temporarily staged on DOE property pending final characterization results and will then be shipped off site to a licensed facility for final disposition.

## House Panel to Hold Hearing on Yucca Mountain

[Asha Glover](#)

[June 30, 2016](#)

The House Energy and Commerce Committee Subcommittee on Environment and the Economy is scheduled to hold a hearing on Yucca Mountain and spent nuclear fuel disposal on July 7.

When Congress amended the Nuclear Waste Policy Act in 1987, Yucca Mountain in Nevada was designated as the sole site for a deep repository for high-level radioactive waste and spent nuclear fuel.

“The federal government must fulfill its legal obligations and resume work on the Yucca Mountain License Application as soon as possible,” Environment and the Economy Subcommittee Chairman John Shimkus (R-Ill.) said in a [statement](#) on Thursday. “Next week’s hearing will provide us an opportunity to hear from Nevada stakeholders and explore the federal, state, and local perspectives and economic benefits of moving forward with the Yucca Mountain project. I’m looking forward to hearing the various perspectives and examining the issues at hand in more detail. Yucca Mountain plays a critical role in our nuclear future.”

Witnesses have not yet been announced.

In February, Shimkus and Energy and Commerce Committee Chairman Fred Upton (R-Mich.) [requested information](#) about whether the Energy Department can complete the Yucca Mountain license application and still comply with the Nuclear Waste Policy Act, especially as some nuclear reactors will enter the decommissioning process before their operating licenses expire.

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A May [report](#) by the Nuclear Regulatory Commission found that the potential environmental impacts associated with the discharge of any contaminated groundwater from using Yucca Mountain as a repository for nuclear fuel and radioactive waste would be “small”.

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