Savannah River Remediation (SRR), the liquid waste contractor at the U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) Savannah River Site (SRS), has removed two more Cold War era liquid radioactive waste tanks from service, the third and fourth tanks operationally closed by SRR in the last 14 months.

The latest tanks operationally closed were Tanks 5 and 6. Grouting and closure activities, which began on these tanks in August, were completed on December 18, 2013, approximately two years ahead of schedule.

Tanks 5 and 6 join Tanks 18 and 19, which were operationally closed in October 2012. SRR has closed four tanks since the first two radioactive waste tanks in the nation were closed at SRR in 1997.
Grouting of Tanks 5 and 6 began August 16, 2013. Over 1.8 million gallons of specially formulated grout were delivered by 1,150 cement trucks and poured into the tanks. Grouting the tanks was another effort that further eliminated the risk associated with the Site’s legacy nuclear waste, according to Dr. David Moody, DOE Savannah River Manager.

Dr. Moody said, “This is a testament to the DOE, SRR, South Carolina Department of Health and Environmental Control and the Environmental Protection Agency. Without this partnership, we would not be here today. What we are celebrating is a testimony to the fact that we deliver.”

Speaking to the SRR tank farm team, Dr. Moody said, “This is your day. Thank you for this great Christmas present.”

Ken Rueter, SRR President and Project Manager, said SRS liquid waste employees are recognized as the leaders in legacy nuclear waste risk reduction.

“Historically, SRS liquid waste employees were the first in the country to operationally close waste tanks and now they have closed another four,” Rueter said. “No other project in the nation is reducing the risk associated with this legacy waste like SRR employees at SRS.”

An agreement between DOE, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and South Carolina Department of Health and Environmental Control required the operational closure of Tanks 5 and 6 by December 2015.

Tanks 5 and 6 were constructed in the early 1950s and placed into service in 1959 and 1964, respectively. Both were used as receipt tanks for waste from the F Canyon separations operations, each holding approximately 730,000 gallons of hazardous waste.

“The resiliency and diligence demonstrated by SRR employees has resulted in Tanks 5 and 6 being removed from service approximately two years ahead of schedule,” said Ken Rueter.