For 20 years, high-level waste at the Savannah River Site (SRS) has been stabilized in glass and sealed in stainless steel canisters for long-term disposition through vitrification.

The nation’s only glassification facility, the Defense Waste Processing Facility (DWPF), has been the steady and reliable workhorse of liquid waste operations at SRS.

Vitrification is the process of using extremely high temperatures to turn the sludge waste into a glass form. A 65-ton melter is used to glassify the waste into borosilicate glass, which immobilizes it, and makes it suitable for safe, long-term storage in stainless steel canisters. Currently, these canisters are safely stored in an on-site facility until a federal repository is identified.

DWPF has been safely treating the high-level liquid waste at the Department of Energy (DOE) facility since radioactive operations began on March 12, 1996, with the transfer of sludge waste feed to DWPF. A little over a month later, on April 29, the first radioactive canister was poured. DWPF poured its 4,000th canister of classified waste December 31, 2015.

SRR operates DWPF, as well as other liquid waste facilities at SRS, as part of its contract with DOE. Operations are expected to continue at DWPF for approximately 20 more years and about 4,000 more canisters are scheduled to be produced.

Jack Craig, DOE-SR Manager, said that DWPF’s success is not just impressive, but necessary. “DWPF is important to the Department of Energy; it’s important to the surrounding communities; and it’s important to the state of South Carolina,” Craig said. “Stabilizing the waste by making it into glass means the risk is significantly reduced for the people, the community, and the environment.”

Mark Schmitz, Acting SRR President and Project Manager, said this facility has been a proven process for dispositioning the high-level liquid waste at SRS.

“The longevity and success of DWPF are attributes of the safe operations performed by our workers over the last two decades,” Schmitz said. “DWPF is a robust, safe, efficient, and reliable facility. We’re looking forward to seeing continued success over the next 20 years.”
SRR Hires New Class of Mechanics

A newly hired class of mechanics began working for Savannah River Remediation with an eye to obtaining knowledge transferred from generations of workers with significant expertise at the Savannah River Site.

SRR hired a class of approximately 20 mechanics that began in April 2016. The new mechanics were assigned to H Tank Farm and the Defense Waste Processing Facility (DWPF).

SRR recognizes the need for providing for continued, reliable operations by ensuring the experienced generation of workers can share their expertise with those coming up, said Mark Schmitz, Acting SRR President and Project Manager.

“New employees are necessary to continue the liquid waste mission,” Schmitz said. “Toward that end, it is important that knowledge be passed on from a generation of experts in the field to on-boarding employees.”

Half of the onboarding maintenance and electrical & instrumentation (E&I) mechanics will work in H Tank Farm, which is one of two “tank farms” at SRS. These two areas contain a total of 43 million gallons of high-level radioactive waste. The other half will work in DWPF where the high-level waste from the tank farms is converted into a solid glass form suitable for long-term disposal. Additional hiring is forecasted in the upcoming months. Visit SRR’s homepage http://www.srremediation.com, click the icon left of “SRR is Hiring,” and select the AECOM link at the bottom of the page to search for career opportunities with SRR.

“New employees are necessary to continue the liquid waste mission...” —Schmitz

Employees Exceed Heart Walk Goal

SRR employees raised more than $31,000 for the 2016 CSRA Heart Walk in support of the American Heart Association. The company-wide goal was $18,000. SRR, an official sponsor of the event, had 17 teams participate in the Heart Walk, and 13 of those teams ranked in the overall top 50 for the amount of donations.

Mark Schmitz, Acting SRR President and Project Manager, said that he is proud of the employees for out-doing themselves in this year’s campaign.

“Everyone may have a different motivation for why they walk, but it’s encouraging to see everyone come together to support a great cause,” he said.

When Vision Becomes Reality

Five teams of SRR employees dispersed across Aiken County in March to support the 2016 Project VISION Day of Caring, sponsored by the United Way of Aiken County.

Aiken agencies Children’s Place and Cumbee Center received much-needed repairs, construction, landscaping and cleaning.

This was SRR employee Shirley Radabaugh’s first time participating in Project VISION.

“I started at SRR shortly after last year’s Project VISION day and heard great things about it. I knew I wanted to participate. It was terrific to see the changes we were able to make at Children’s Place!”

Savannah River Remediation (SRR) LLC is the Savannah River Site’s (SRS) Liquid Waste contractor. SRS is owned by DOE. SRR is composed of personnel from a team of companies led by AECOM with partners Bechtel National, CH2M and BWX Technologies. For more information, contact the SRR Public Affairs Department: Amy Joslin at 803.208.1956.