

FOR RELEASE:**January 9, 2003****THOR TREATMENT TECHNOLOGIES TO PROVIDE CONCEPTUAL DESIGN TO TREAT RADIOACTIVE TANK WASTE AT THE HANFORD SITE**

Aiken, South Carolina – THOR Treatment Technologies LLC (THOR) announced today that it has been awarded a contract from CH2M HILL Hanford Group, Inc. (CH2M HILL) to provide a conceptual design for a fluid bed steam reforming system capable of immobilizing waste from the Hanford tank farms. Using its patented technology as the foundation, THOR will design a modular and transportable unit tailored to this radioactive waste treatment application.

“Our engineers are already at work applying our commercially proven process to this unique challenge,” said John McKibbin, President of THOR. “I’m confident that the technical merits of THORSM will stand out in the conceptual design review. The THORSM process has the high potential to supplement vitrification technologies for treating tank wastes. Our team stands ready to help accelerate Hanford tank closure, which is one of the most challenging environmental cleanup projects in the DOE complex.”

Current plans call for the Department of Energy to treat and dispose of the 53 million gallons of radioactive tank waste stored at the Hanford Site by 2028. To help meet this milestone, CH2M HILL has been investigating the tailored application of treatment technologies that could be applied to specific waste tanks. This tailored application would supplement the processing capacity of the Hanford vitrification facility, which will convert the waste into stable glass. Steam reforming is one technology selected by CH2M HILL for further evaluation because of its potential to produce a stable product with characteristics equivalent to glass at a much lower cost and in an accelerated timeframe, thereby reducing risk to the environment, the community, and employees.

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“Tapping into the innovative power of the commercial sector to find solutions to the cleanup challenge we face at Hanford will be a key part of our success story,” said Dale Allen, CH2M HILL Hanford Group senior vice president of Strategic Planning and Mission Analysis. “By investigating a technology that is already treating commercial nuclear waste in a full-scale production facility, we can focus on evaluating the application of this technology at Hanford rather than researching and developing a completely new technology. Our task is to determine whether THORSM can cost-effectively enhance the tank closure activities already underway at Hanford.”

The THORSM process will convert tank waste into nepheline, a water insoluble ceramic mineral commonly found in nature. A test of the THORSM process in late 2001 demonstrated the capability of the process to successfully treat non-radioactive, simulated Hanford tank waste. Independent testing of the mineral product was conducted by both Pacific Northwest National Laboratory (PNNL) and the Savannah River Technology Center (SRTC) at the request of the Department of Energy Office of River Protection. The tests showed that the mineral product’s leachability characteristics are comparable to most borosilicate glasses, which are used in vitrification systems.

The THORSM technology is extremely flexible. It can be used to thermally treat a variety of radioactive waste streams—solid, liquid, and gas—to produce a variety of final waste forms, depending on the particular needs of each customer. Without modifying the basic system hardware, various outputs can be achieved by simply changing the type and quantity of proprietary additives utilized in the process. The process is currently utilized at Studsvik’s Erwin, Tennessee, facility to treat radioactive waste for the commercial nuclear industry.

THOR is a joint venture formed in June 2002 between Westinghouse Government Environmental Services Company, which is a subsidiary of Washington Group International, Inc., and Studsvik, Inc. More information about the company is available at www.thortt.com.

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