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WORKERS PUT FINISHING TOUCHES ON PHASE-1A CLEANUP ACTIVITIES AT THE ST. LOUIS AIRPORT SITE (SLAPS)

St. Louis, Missouri, December 12, 1997 -- The Phase 1A cleanup of residual radioactive contaminated material at the St. Louis Airport Site (SLAPS) is now complete, project officials announced this week.

This cleanup, which began in late September under the direction of the U.S. Department of Energy (DOE), grew out of a series of discussions with area stakeholders on the acceleration of cleanup activities at the St. Louis site. The cleanup involved the removal of residual radioactive contaminated material from the west end of SLAPS, nearest to Coldwater Creek, and shipment of this material to an out-of state disposal facility.

According to project manager Dr. Rob Mullins, the cleanup moved forward with minimal delays during the transfer of the Formerly Utilized Remedial Action Program (FUSRAP) to the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE). The Corps quickly assessed the importance of the project and worked to ensure the project continued on schedule.

The cleanup consisted of the removal of approximately 6000 cubic yards of low-level contaminated material and replacement with clean low permeability clay backfill. A series of engineering controls prevented surface water run-off from entering Coldwater Creek. There was no impact to the gabion wall adjacent to the Creek and no disruption to normal traffic patterns and commercial activities along McDonnell Boulevard.

Radioactive contamination in the St. Louis area is the result of the processing of uranium and other materials associated with the early years of the nation's nuclear weapons program. The site was designated for cleanup in the late 1970s and is administered through the Corps of Engineers, St. Louis District Office.