

# SRSRA NEWSLETTER

For SRS Retiree Association Members

Bob & Pat Stokes, Editors

Volume 23 November 2004

## MEMBERSHIP DRIVE 2005 STARTS NOW!!!!

**(We're at 647 and climbing!)**

**Current Members Can Help Recruit SRS Retirees for SRSRA**

*(At the end of this Newsletter, see a list of recent retirees who are not yet SRS members)*

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### CHAIRMAN'S LETTER

The missions of the SRS Retiree Association (SRSRA) are:

- 1) to maintain benefits achieved at the time of retirement, and
- 2) to support the missions of the Savannah River Site.

To these ends we maintain an ongoing dialog with the Savannah River Site DOE, WSRC Management, and South Carolina State and Federal Congressional Delegations. We routinely participate in public hearings regarding Site missions and respond to inquiries from SRSRA members, other CSRA organizations and the media. We are the largest registered retiree organization in South Carolina with approximately 650 members. Membership growth is limited by our inability to contact retirees, but you can help by sending retiree acquaintances our way.

The SRSRA Board of Directors (BOD) communicates with the membership through quarterly newsletters, telephone inquiries, and e-mail. Check out our website at [www.srsretirees.org](http://www.srsretirees.org) for additional information and links to your BOD and others.

The Board of Directors conducts an annual meeting for the membership. In 2005 it will be held on Tuesday, March 29. Arrangements are being made for one-on-one sessions with Blue Cross and Blue Shield

representatives at the meeting. Internet linkage will allow real time resolution of benefit issues. In addition, to help resolve your Medicare questions and problems, we are contacting Medicare and hope to have their representatives present for similar one-on-one meetings.

In addition to the annual meeting, the BOD meets monthly on the first Tuesday. These monthly meetings are open to the membership. Contact any member of the BOD for the exact time and location of a particular month's meeting.

The agenda for these monthly sessions includes the Treasurers report and standing Committee reports on the Annual Meeting, Membership, Newsletter, ORA Activities, Public Affairs/SRS DOE, Site Activities, and Pension and Health Benefits. Current key agenda items include:

- 1) documentation and resolution of ongoing medical benefit issues by contacts with members, the Site, Blue Cross/Blue Shield, and Medicare;
- 2) development of criteria to initiate dialog for a pension adjustment; and
- 3) action to incorporate wording so that current health and retirement benefits will be maintained in the pending SRS DOE 2006 bid package (similar to wording introduced by Senator Strom Thurmond for the current contract).

We are planning a trip to Washington DC to meet with our Congressional Delegation next February. **Remember, we have strength in numbers. Please support our membership drive to exceed 1,000 members. You can help by maintaining your membership current and sending retiree acquaintances our way.**

Dave Cowfer, Chairman  
Savannah River Site Retiree Association

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## **SRSRA 2005 ANNUAL MEETING**

**PLAN AHEAD:** Mark your 2005 Calendar--the SRS Retiree Association Annual Meeting will be held at 1:00 P.M. on Tuesday, March 29, at the Playhouse on Newberry Street in Aiken. We will be discussing a number of issues that should be of interest to you. It is important that a large number of members attend because our influence with the congressional delegations is based, in part, on the size and level of support by our members. Again this year we plan to have a representative from Blue Cross Blue Shield of South Carolina at the meeting to answer questions from individual members. We expect to have an internet connection set up at the meeting site to allow the Blue Cross Blue Shield representative to access your information and, hopefully, resolve your questions on the spot. See you in March!

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## **BENEFITS TRIP PLANNED**

The pending trip to Washington by a committee of BOD members has been discussed with Senator Graham's staff over the past several months. Senator Graham's staff will help coordinate the committee's visit to discuss the SRSRA's concerns and the needs of the organization's members. The SRSRA's views will be shared with regard to the soon-to-be-released request for proposal (RFP) for management of the Savannah River Site. The committee intends to brief the South Carolina/Georgia congressional delegates and senior DOE management about the SRSRA organization and our objectives with regard to the site operations and members' benefits. The trip will occur in early February after the new Senate/House members have taken office. The committee will discuss these same items with local WSRC and DOE management to give them an insight to our planned trip.

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## **SRS RETIREES WEB PAGE IS CHANGING**

The web site for the SRS Retiree Association is in the process of being changed and updated. The most immediate change is a new URL (web address). We can now be reached at:

<http://www.srsretirees.org> or just <http://srsretirees.org>

Some information has been updated (meeting place, some committees, etc.), and other changes are in progress to make the web site more useful to our members. The changes are of two types: simply updating the material on the present pages, and a larger issue of restructuring the web site to make the information more easily accessible.

These changes should be transparent to the users, and no difficulties should be encountered. We will announce and discuss major changes in the web site in future newsletters.

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## **MEMBERSHIP**

The current 2004 membership totals 647. That total continues to grow and represents the largest active membership in the SRSRA's history. The number helps us continue to be the largest registered retiree organization in South Carolina. **Thanks to all the members and remember that the MEMBERSHIP DRIVE FOR 2005 STARTS NOW!** Do your part and ask your SRS retiree friends and neighbors to join the SRSRA. Their membership will amplify our efforts to maintain and preserve our benefits while supporting site programs.

By now, all current and previous members who have not yet renewed membership for 2005 should have received their 2005 Membership Renewal Form. Please review your personal data and sign up for membership next year. You can make life simpler for your Membership Chairman if you elect a two-year membership. So, sign up for 2006 also!

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## **NEWSLETTER MAILING**

We are continuing to use the internet e-mail to reach over half of our members. We added a new option with the May Newsletter. The May and August Newsletters were converted to Adobe pdf format and installed as a link through the SRS Retiree Association web page. That enabled many more internet savvy members to access the Newsletter directly without receiving a lengthy e-mail attachment. This Newsletter is also being handled in that same way since that will make it possible for those members with e-mail addresses that do not allow long attachments to access the Newsletter at their convenience from the link. **If you have an e-mail address and you did not receive this Newsletter or a link to it over the internet, please respond to Bob Stokes at [membership@srsretirees.org](mailto:membership@srsretirees.org) and give us your correct e-mail address for future use. If your e-mail address has changed or does change in the future, be sure to advise us so that we can update our files and keep you abreast of the activities of the SRSRA.**

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## **SOUTH CAROLINA BATTLES THE FLU**

Considering the difficulty in getting flu shots this year, we pass along this bit of news that may (or may not) be of some help to our South Carolina members.

October 1 marked the official beginning of Senior Vaccination Season in South Carolina. People of all ages are susceptible to influenza; in fact, the illness hospitalizes an average of 114,000 people each year, and 36,000 Americans die each year from flu-related complications. However, 90% of the deaths occur in people age 65 and older.

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, "The single best way to prevent the flu is to get vaccinated each fall." The flu shot is safe and effective and can help turn these startling statistics around. Medicare pays for both flu shots and pneumonia shots.

To learn where you can get your yearly flu shot, visit the South Carolina Flu Clinic Finder at [www.mrnc.org](http://www.mrnc.org) or call Carolina Medical Review at [1-800-922-3089](tel:1-800-922-3089).

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## **SRS ACTIVITIES**

### **F Area Marks 50 Years Since Operations Began**

History was made at the Savannah River Site (SRS) 50 years ago on November 5, 1954, when F Canyon became the world's first operational full-scale PUREX separation plant. PUREX, or plutonium and uranium extraction, was the process used to extract plutonium and uranium products from materials irradiated in SRS reactors.

This historical milestone was accomplished quietly behind the secure fences of the Savannah River Plant. Construction started in February 1951, and the first reactor, R Reactor, began operations in December 1953. On the evening of November 4, 1954, F Canyon – a 128,000 square-foot facility used to process plutonium and

other materials for the national defense— received its first material from R Reactor and placed it in its dissolver, which was part of the canyon's chemical separation process that ultimately produced plutonium metal for the nation's defense. SRS's first plutonium product was shipped to Rocky Flats in Colorado on December 28, 1954.

This facility produced one-third of the nation's plutonium over its years of operation. Operations concluded in F Canyon in March 2002. In FB Line, the canyon's sister facility where plutonium finishing operations historically took place, all remaining materials are being stabilized and packaged for long-term storage. This work is expected to be complete, and both facilities ready for final deactivation by March 2005.

## **First SRS Area Nears Final Closure**

The Savannah River Site's (SRS) first operational area is also the first to be completely demolished – and will soon be the first to achieve final closure.

All 28 buildings in T Area – also known as TNX – have been demolished, and the area has been turned over for final cleanup. Work is expected to be complete, and the area completely closed by the end of September 2006. What was once an operational area will be covered by soil and a geosynthetic cap, then grassed over.

T Area once served as the gateway to SRS. Equipment arrived at its river dock from all over the world to be used in SRS's production process. T Area also served as testing facilities for this equipment before it was put into service in SRS operations.

T Area is the first area to be addressed under the Area Closure concept, which was developed with the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and the South Carolina Department of Health and Environmental Control (SCDHEC), and which will be the method used as closure work continues at SRS. Entire geographic areas are cleaned up and closed, one at a time, starting at the periphery of SRS and moving inward. T Area, which is on the Savannah River, was addressed first because of its proximity to the river and because its mission is complete.

Work is also ongoing in other SRS areas to reach closure. Coming next are M Area, R Area, and P Area. In M Area, materials were produced for use in SRS reactors. R and P areas are reactor areas where all facilities have been shut down for some time.

## **MCG and SRNL Collaborative Agreement**

The Medical College of Georgia and the Savannah River National Laboratory signed a collaborative agreement that is intended to stimulate collaboration among the researchers at both institutions on tasks that can assist MCG and the Department of Energy in carrying out their missions. Recent technical exchanges among the researchers have shown that MCG and SRNL have common needs and interests in technologies that entail both life sciences and engineering aspects. This agreement provides the framework for pursuing those interests.

They have already defined a list of potential joint collaborations that might be pursued. Of high interest are dual-use technologies, which are technologies developed for one purpose, then adapted for another. Some of the projects they envision are:

- Collaborations in dental materials science
- Biotechnology research in areas from biodefense to biological waste treatment and bioremediation

- Integrative research concerning environmental contaminants
- Technologies developed for homeland defense applications
- New materials developed for waste management are being evaluated for therapeutic uses in the body
- Electrochemical studies in waste management are being studied for applicability to heart stent materials
- 3-D imaging and rapid fabrication technologies are being examined for construction of materials for implants or for treatment of injuries
- Environmental monitoring / cleanup sensors may be used for special periodontal probes

## **Nuclear Production of Hydrogen**

Using hydrogen produced in a nuclear plant to fuel our cars would be a viable part of an overall future energy strategy for the nation according to a study just published by the Savannah River National Laboratory. The study found that nuclear production of hydrogen holds considerable promise, both from a technological and an economic viewpoint, although its authors stress that considerable research and development is still needed to make hydrogen practical for wide-spread use to power homes, cars, and industry.

Nuclear production of hydrogen would take advantage of the heat produced by nuclear reactors to ‘crack’ water, breaking it into hydrogen and oxygen. The hydrogen could then be used as a clean, environmentally friendly transportation fuel to replace imported petroleum. This method has the potential to efficiently produce large quantities of hydrogen using domestic resources and without producing greenhouse gases and, hence, play a significant role in meeting the goals of the President’s Hydrogen Fuel Initiative.

The report can be viewed on the NERI website at [neri.ne.doe.gov/](http://neri.ne.doe.gov/)

## **Researchers Study How The Earth Heals Itself**

Nature has many ways of cleansing itself of the contamination that resulted from human activity. Sometimes the best method of environmental cleanup is just to let nature do its work, or to provide a little “boost” for the earth’s own tools.

The Savannah River National Laboratory is coordinating a project for the U.S. Department of Energy that looks at nature’s own ability to clean chlorinated solvents from the groundwater and how to apply the new science to help understand that process. Results of this three-year project are expected to accelerate cleanup by a minimum of 10 years for DOE sites that have groundwater plumes contaminated with chlorinated solvents. At SRS, the project is expected to make it possible to accelerate chlorinated solvent cleanup by at least 20 years.

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## **NOTICE OF BOARD MEETING DATES AND LOCATION CHANGE**

The SRSRA Board of Directors is now meeting in the Conference Room of the Hampton Inn on Whiskey Road/Route 19 South, near the Aiken Mall. Meeting dates for the coming months are: December 7, 2004; January 4, 2005; and February 1, 2005. **The location of meetings after February 2005 may have to change at the request of the Hampton Inn, which has been providing the meeting room free of charge.** Association members may attend and participate. Be sure to contact a BOD member to confirm the date if you plan to attend.

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## **TREASURER'S REPORT** - Stan Smith, Treasurer

The following summarizes financial activity FY to date:

Opening Balance (7/01/2004)	\$16,612.30
Plus Receipts	<u>1,365.00</u>
Total	\$17,977.30
Minus Expenditures	<u>975.69</u>
Closing Balance (10/31/2004)	\$17,001.61

All income was the result of membership dues payment. The major expense items were rental deposits for the 2005 annual meeting and printing costs associated with our Vol. 22 Newsletter distributed in August 2004.

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## **PROPOSED BYLAWS REVISION**

The SRSRA BOD agreed earlier this year to recognize a membership year that is based on the calendar year.

However, the current Bylaws are unclear relative to a "membership year" in the Association. At the November Board of Directors meeting, it was agreed that at the upcoming 2005 Annual Meeting, we will propose a Bylaws change to formalize exactly what comprises our "membership year" and that the "membership year" will, in fact, be based on the calendar year.

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## **MEDICAL BENEFITS ISSUES**

### **BC/BS Service Concerns**

We have many letters from retirees trying to get proper Blue Cross/Blue Shield reimbursement for their medical bills. Many of the problems occur when the retiree/patient lives out-of-state (i.e., no longer in SC). If you have records of BC/BS service problems to share with SRSRA members, please send a letter outlining your case to:

Send to:  
**John Church, Medical Benefits Committee**  
**SRS Retiree Association**  
**P. O. Box 5686**  
**Aiken, SC 29804**

and to:

**Judy A. Martin, Manager and Service Representative**  
**Major Group Marketing AX-330**  
**BC/BS of South Carolina I-20 at Alpine Road**  
**Columbia, SC 29219**

or e-mail your information at:

**Judy.A.Martin@bcbsc.com**

or fax: 1-803-736-2851.

as a last resort call her at: 1-800-288-2227 x42205

### **OUT-OF-COUNTRY MEDICAL ISSUE REVISITED** - from Mike French

Again, in response to questions from some of our members regarding medical insurance coverage when traveling overseas, we would like to provide the following information. Insurance is provided by the BlueCross BlueShield system through their BlueCard Worldwide access program.

If you have access to a computer, it is relatively easy to follow the program. Follow this sequence:

- Enter [www.bluecard.com](http://www.bluecard.com)
- Select “**Healthcare Anywhere**” (it’s at the left hand side of the page)
- Select healthcare coverage “**traveling outside U.S.**” (toward bottom of page)
- “**Search for Doctors and Hospitals worldwide**” (top of page)
- Click on “**accept terms and conditions**”
- Next page enter your “**I.D. number**” (for us, that’s SRS followed by your Social Security Number)
- Next page asks if you want to be redirected to a non secure connection. Per guidance from SRS HR Department, indicate “**YES**”.
- Next select “**Find a provider**”
- Select the “**country of interest**”
- Select the “**City/Cities of interest**”. This will show you the names and addresses of hospitals and physicians accepting BC/BS coverage.

There is additional information in the web page including general information and a claim form – you might have to pay something when traveling abroad toward drug costs. I strongly urge everyone to read the “fine print” before you leave. If you don’t have access to a computer, or alternatively have questions regarding use of the computer program, please contact either Greg Murray (SRS/HR) or Blue Cross/Blue Shield using their phone numbers listed later in this Newsletter.

**Also, please remember that Medicare does NOT provide any medical coverage outside the United States.**

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## **BENEFITS CONTACTS**

**People Support Service Center (a one-stop service for most HR and payroll activities and questions).**

- ◆ **803-725-7772 (local area SC and GA)**
- ◆ **800-368-7333 (long distance)**
- ◆ [service-center@srs.gov](mailto:service-center@srs.gov) (e-mail contact for this new service)

◇ **Life, Health, Dental**

Becky Proveaux PS Svc. Ctr. #  
Rosalee Bennett PS Svc. Ctr. #  
Greg Murray 803-725-0531  
Cindy McClintock 803-725-7004

◇ **Pension**

John Felkel 803-725-7722  
Viola Best 803-725-1900

◇ **Internal Medicine Partners** 706-792-5075  
(Annual Physical Examinations)

◇ **Metropolitan Life** 800-360-2747  
(WSRC/BSRI SIP Funds Program)

◇ **Blue Cross/Blue Shield of SC**

1-800-325-6596  
[www.southcarolinablues.com](http://www.southcarolinablues.com)

Option 1 for Medical

Option 2 for Dental

Option 3 for Pre-Cert/Med Authorization

◇ **Value Options** (mental health & substance abuse assistance) 800-333-6557

◇ **BAC (Westinghouse Corporate Pension)** 800-581-4222

◇ **Safety Eyeglass Office**

Tom Cuny 803-725-337

Carolina Medical Review (CMR) is the Quality Improvement Organization for South Carolina's Medicare program. They have a variety of useful information available either at their web site <http://www.MRNC.org> or by calling the national 24-hour customer service number **1-800-MEDICARE (1-800-633-4227)**. There is a QIO in every state, and that listing is at: <http://www.medqic.org/content/qio/qio.jsp?pageID=4>

Members on the Internet can also visit <http://www.medicare.gov>. If members have a state-specific question, the customer service representative at that number should be able to refer members to the state-specific Medicare number. (**The one for South Carolina is 1-800-583-2236.**) This may be a useful starting contact to resolve Medicare issues if the regular Medicare office of your state is not providing satisfactory service.

For further information, contact:

Andrea Fuller, Outreach Specialist  
Carolina Medical Review  
250 Berryhill Road, Suite 101  
Columbia, SC 29210

Telephone: 800-922-3089 (Toll Free); local 803-731-8225; Fax: 803-731-8687  
e-mail: [afuller@SCQIO.sdps.org](mailto:afuller@SCQIO.sdps.org)

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**RECENT RETIREES TO BE CONTACTED FOR SRSRA MEMBERSHIP**

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Bobby Abbott	Patricia Edey	Bhagwan Joshi	Johnny Reese
Frederick Anderson	William Elliott	Marti Kantelo	Linda Reese
Joyce Attucks	Dick Emerson	Suzanne Kneece	Charles Roach
Gerald Bach	Overn Epps	John Knight	Betty Rouse
Jim Balsler	James Fallaw	Ed Landry	Neta Rutland
Diane Barker	Charles Eugene Feltman	Priscilla Langford	Harrison Sanders
Dorothy Barnes	Lynn Ferguson	Bob Lewis	Pam Sanders
Bobbie Bauserman	Rooney Floyd	Fred Lewis	Charlie Saunders
Brenda Bell	Ezeikel Foreman	Mary Livingston	Robert Scott
James Bennett	Willie Frazier, Jr.	Rose Lockhart	Rick Seiersen
Jose Bernabe, Jr.	Samuel Ford	Jim Manahan	Cheryl Seigler
Cora Berry	James Crosby Fuller	John Maloney	Mike Shaffer
Rebecca Bevins	Beverley Funk	William Mattocks, Jr.	Paul Shearer
Michael Blackwood	Henry Gardner	Wallace McCluggage	Charles Smith
Clifford Boasso	Joye Glaze	Danny McGee	Jim F. Smith
Wesley Bodie	James F. Gleaton	Ervin Medlin	Steven Smith
Ronald Bolin	Michael Glover	Douglas Messerli	Sharel Stallings
Tolly Bolling, Jr.	Audrey Graham	Rosemary Metts	Dena Sturgis
Linda Boone	Delores Green	D.C. Miller	Robert Sugg
Royce Boone Jr.	Rhonda Green	Gary Miller	Donald Swindler
John Bowers	Alan D. Gregory	Samuel Moody	May Thompkins
Eileen Boynton	Lana Griffin	Kathy Moore	William Tucker
Nancy Brit	James W. Guthrie	Charles Morgan	Robert Vance
Fred Bryant	Marcia Hall	William Morgan	Dave Varn
Gisle Bryant	Mary L. Hammonds	Christopher Moseley	Raam Vichare
Lewis Buggs	Gloria Hansen	Mary Moss	Susan Vought
William Burns	Carl Hatfield	Gary Mullis	Steven Walling
Kim Byrne	Steve Hays	Leroy Nimmons	Shirley Washington
Calvin Carr	Monte Hawkins	David Norred	Elisha Watson
Ryson Carter Jr.	Daniel Hayward	Frank O'Brien	Alfred West
Vonda Clerc	Cubby Heath	Daniel O'Connell	Terry Westbrook
K.C. Collins	Bob Henderson	Arthur Odom	J. J. White, Jr.
Roland Collins	Ron Hinds	Rozzie Ott	Jasper White
James Cooper	Rita Hitchler	George Owens	Randy Whitt
Dora Cook	Doris J. Hoffman	Sez Ozden	Danny Williams
Alonzo Corley	Douglas E. Holley	Charles Pair	Irving Williams
Johnny Crim, Sr.	Beatrice J. Holmes	Lynn Peeler	Jimmie Williams, Jr
Thomas Crisman	Deborah Howard	Ronnie Peeler	Johnny Williams
Earl Cushman	Gerald Huff, Sr.	Joe Perrin	Bruce Wilson
Larry Davis	Laura Ivey	Lyman Pitman, Jr.	Oleen Witter
Brent Daugherty	Grover Jarnagin	Evan Pontoo	Gary Young
Duck Drake	Emily Johnson	Carmen Provenzano	
Bobby Dunbar	Rebecca Jolly	Teresa Quarles	

If you know any of these retirees or any other retirees that are not yet SRSRA members, please ask them to join and support the SRSRA. You can also provide us with their U.S. postal address (an e-mail address is also good) and we will send a membership application to them. Dues are only \$15.00 per year. **For 2005 retirees, we are extending our offer of a free 2005 year of membership. All they need to do is sign-up!** If you need a membership form, call Bob Stokes at 803-649-3362 or e-mail him at [membership@srsretirees.org](mailto:membership@srsretirees.org). An SRSRA membership application is on the last page. You may give it, or a copy of it, to your friend to apply for membership in the retiree organization. We appreciate your efforts to broaden the reach of the SRSRA. Thank you for your help!

## Savannah River Site Retiree Association Membership Application

NAME \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_

CITY \_\_\_\_\_ STATE \_\_\_\_\_

ZIP \_\_\_\_\_ TELEPHONE \_\_\_\_\_

RETIRED FROM: \_\_\_\_\_ (WSRC, BSRI, BWXT-SRC, BNFL-SRC, or OTHER SRS)

RETIREE'S DATE OF RETIREMENT \_\_\_\_\_

E-MAIL ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_

### ANNUAL DUES:

#### Year 2005

\_\_\_\_\_ \$15 for Retiree

\_\_\_\_\_ \$0 for Retiree's Spouse (also retired from SRS)

\_\_\_\_\_ \$5 for Retiree's Surviving Spouse

#### Year 2006

\_\_\_\_\_ \$15 for Retiree

\_\_\_\_\_ \$0 for Retiree's Spouse (also retired from SRS)

\_\_\_\_\_ \$5 for Retiree's Surviving Spouse

### SRS RETIREE OR SURVIVING SPOUSE OF RETIREE

\_\_\_\_\_ I want to **RENEW** my membership in the SRSRA.

(...and I am willing to serve on the Board of Directors. \_\_\_\_\_ Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No) \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ I want to **JOIN** the SRS Retiree Association.

(...and I am willing serve on the Board of Directors. \_\_\_\_\_ Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No) \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ I am the **surviving spouse** of an SRS retiree and wish to join / renew my membership in the SRSRA.

### SRS RETIRED SPOUSE

\_\_\_\_\_ My **SRS retired spouse** wants to **JOIN** the SRSRA.

(...and my retired SRS spouse is willing serve on the SRSRA BOD. \_\_\_\_\_ Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No)

NAME \_\_\_\_\_

RETIRED FROM: \_\_\_\_\_ (WSRC, BSRI, BWXT-SRC, BNFL-SRC, or OTHER SRS)

DATE OF RETIREMENT \_\_\_\_\_

E-MAIL ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_

**Return to: SRS Retiree Association  
P. O. Box 5686  
Aiken, S.C. 29804**

**Attn: Membership Chairman**