

NEWSLETTER

For SRS Retiree Association Members

Bob Stokes, Editor

February 2002

ANNUAL MEETING MARCH 12, 2002
PLEASE NOTE THE NEW START TIME: 12:30 P.M.
AIKEN MUNICIPAL CENTER (entrance from the ALLEY)
PLEASE ARRIVE EARLY TO ALLOW TIME TO REGISTER AT THE DOOR

IT IS TIME TO RENEW YOUR MEMBERSHIP FOR 2002!

DUES: \$15:00/YR. FOR RETIREE \$5.00/YR. FOR SURVIVING SPOUSE

(See form and details later in this newsletter)

INSIDE INSIGHT

Chairman's Letter	1	Benefits Contacts	4
Fifth Annual Membership Meeting	2	Newsletter Mailing	5
Board of Directors Election	2	SRS Activities	5
Agenda for Annual meeting	3	Limited Service Employee Opportunities	7
Pension Adjustment Update	3	Membership Dues Form	8
ORA News	4		

Chairman's Letter

Come to the SRS Retiree Association annual meeting on March 12, 2002! In closing out my year as chairman, I consider communicating with the membership as the most important role of your Board of Directors. The annual meeting provides you first hand information from our Congressional Representative in Washington, top management from the Savannah River Site, and the state of your SRS Retiree Association. Westinghouse Savannah River Company President Mr. Bob Pedde has accepted the invitation to be our keynote speaker. We also have invited Congressman Lindsey Graham to be with us. We have adjusted our starting time to accommodate Congressman Graham's travel schedule.

Your attendance at the annual meeting is very important! A tentative agenda is included below. The doors will open at 11:30 AM, with the meeting beginning at 12:30 PM, and is scheduled to conclude by 3 PM. Come early to register and renew your membership. You will be provided with a ballot for election of the 2002 Board of Directors as proposed by the nominating committee. Nominations may still be made from the floor during the meeting for members in attendance if they agree to serve. By using this process, we hope to provide the membership with a complete list of candidates so that the list may be voted on by a show of hands. This will be time-effective and hopefully elect those members who will serve the membership faithfully. We need your cooperation and support on this item.

After we conduct the “business” of the meeting, we will have a short seminar by SRP Credit Union staff on financial/estate planning/law changes. We have arranged to have the following table displays: ORA, Medicare, Energy Employees Compensation Resource Center, Blue Cross/Blue Shield, SRP Credit Union, Edward Jones, and Merrill Lynch. These folks will be there before and after the meeting to answer your questions and provide information. Complimentary light refreshments will be provided during the meeting by the Knights of Columbus Ladies Auxiliary. Tables will be set up prior to the meeting for convenient 2002 membership enrollment and to provide you with a new 2002 membership card. Please bring your membership renewal dues with you and the completed membership form included in this newsletter. Your continued support for the organization is needed to assure that the SRSRA remains a strong and effective representative for retirees and their family members.

Please make every effort to attend the SRSRA annual meeting.

Sincerely,

Dave Cowfer, Chairman
Savannah River Site Retirees Association

Fifth Annual Membership Meeting

We have plans for an interesting and informative meeting. Both Lindsey Graham and Bob Pedde have agreed to speak at our annual meeting. To accommodate Congressman Graham’s travel schedule, doors will open at 11:30 P.M. and the meeting will start at 12:30 P.M. sharp with Congressman Graham and Mr. Pedde as the first two speakers. Do not be late for this important date! Please allow adequate time to get checked in with our membership committee to get your name tag and to pay your 2002 dues if you have not already done so. We expect a large turnout so plan on arriving early!

Board of Directors Election

The SRSRA board of directors consists of 30 members with 15 members elected each year to serve for a 2-year period. Listed below is the slate that will be presented for election in the March meeting. This slate is the result of an organization wide solicitation through our newsletter and through e-mail for those of you who have email addresses on file. All those that positively responded were given the opportunity to serve. The remainder of the slate was developed by the BOD.

This year’s nominees are:

Dick Barclay; Dave Cowfer; John Church; Sid Curry; Mike French; Jim Gibbons; Sam Goforth; Tom Hendrix; Al Hunter; John Jones; Frank Langford; Harry Ledbetter; Dave Muhlbaier; Stan Smith; Bob Stokes.

If you would like to volunteer to serve on the Board of Directors please give your name to any board member and you will be given full consideration for future slates.

Agenda for the SRSRA Annual Meeting

SRSRA Annual Meeting
12:30 P.M. March 12, 2002

Call to Order/Welcome Dave Cowfer
Introduction of Speakers Fred Cavanaugh, Jr.

Congressman Lindsey Graham, U.S. House of Representatives
Bob Pedde, President, Westinghouse Savannah River Company

Break

Treasurer's Report Harry Ledbetter

State of the Association Dave Cowfer

Election of Board of Directors Dave Cowfer

Seminar
Financial/Estate Planning/Law Changes
Ronnie Hair and Mike Harrington, SRP Credit Union

Adjourn

Pension Adjustment Update

An extensive letter writing campaign was launched by the Savannah River Site Retiree Association in December of last year. The campaign packages were mailed to WSRC Retirees who were associated with the SRSRA. The campaign resulted in letters of support from Congressman Lindsey Graham, Senator Strom Thurmond, Senator Earnest Hollings, Senator Max Cleland, Congressman Charles Norwood and Congressman Joe Wilson.

The Pension Adjustment Committee met with Congressman Graham, on January 17, 2002, on the issue and more recently met with both Congressman Graham and SRS President Bob Pedde on February 12, 2002. The position taken by the SRS President in that meeting was that because of Budget problems with the 2002 Budget there would be no adjustment to pensions. Mr. Pedde noted that DOE's budget proposal for SRS does not have sufficient funding to allow an increase. Your Committee pointed out that it is becoming apparent that SRS Management has not seen a need to adjust retiree pensions since this is the same excuse that we have been given for the past 4 years. We reiterated that retirees are suffering with reductions in purchasing power (up to 25 percent) and loss of 401k values and becoming very discouraged and frustrated. The committee asked the question "Why could Oak Ridge receive a pension adjustment 10 months ago while SRSRA has been seeking an adjustment for four years?". The answer that was given was that it all comes down to money. The response

was followed by a very frank discussion on how to fund a pension adjustment. Congressman Graham reiterated his support for an adjustment, and asked for additional data for the purpose of raising this issue with DOE and within the Congress. As a result of the discussion, the pension adjustment committee is cautiously optimistic about the prospect for this much needed pension adjustment. The committee plans to work closely with Congressman Graham to bring this most important need to a successful closure. We hope we will receive more positive feedback on this critical issue for SRS retirees at the SRSRA Annual Meeting on March 12, 2002.

(ed: Within the past few weeks, Sandia National Laboratories has announced a 15% increase for their retirees' benefits. That news was heralded by the media and Congressional representatives in New Mexico. Also, the Sandia retirees pension calculation currently is [2.0% x Average monthly pay x credited years of service = monthly Sandia pension] SRS retirees pension calculation is [1.2% x average monthly pay x credited years service = monthly SRS pension]. That represents an increase of 66.7% for the Sandia retiree's pension over the SRS retiree's pension.)

ORA News

In a recent newsletter we passed along an offer that was available through SRS ORA auspices for a cellular phone account with Sun Com. The offer was for special rates for SRS employees and retirees. If you took advantage of that offer you should have noted that the agreement you signed contained a clause that allows Sun Com to rollover your account/agreement for an additional year of service on each anniversary of your agreement. Recent local CSRA news articles have highlighted the problems of individuals trying to terminate this type of service. **Please note you must notify Sun Com in the thirty days preceding the anniversary date of your agreement to cancel that agreement and to avoid charges you might incur for the following year's service.** Further information may be obtained by calling Ben Burnau, at the ORA (952-9866).

Benefits Contacts

◇ **Life, Health, Dental**

Kathy Hutto (803) 725-9545
Becky Proveaux (803) 725-0526
Greg Murray (803) 725-0531

◇ **Pension**

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

◇ **Service Center**

(800)-360-2747

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

◇ **Blue Cross/Blue Shield of SC**

1-800-325-6596
Option 1 for Medical
Option 2 for Dental
Option 3 for Pre-Cert/Med Authorization

◇ **Value Options** (mental health & substance abuse assistance) 1-800-333-6557

◇ **BAC (Westinghouse Corporate Pension)**
1-800-581-4222

Newsletter Mailing

With this newsletter, we are returning to hard mail to transmit the newsletter to all members. Sending the newsletter as an email attachment has become a daunting task due to the many changes in email addresses by members. Those changes and new electronic roadblocks encountered by the changes/sales/consolidations of Internet Service Providers (ISP) plus screening techniques that stop the mass distribution if even one ISP has a "too many recipients" filter. We will try in the next few months to correct the problems encountered to facilitate future email transmittals. The benefits of alleviating the time-consuming handling and stuffing of hard copies in envelopes, reducing copying and mailing costs, and speeding the delivery of the newsletter to those active members with email access is still a worthwhile objective to pursue. You can help us achieve this improvement. If you are a new member or you are new to the Internet email system, please provide your email address to rastokes@prodigy.net. If you are a current member and your email address is changing or has changed please send your new address to rastokes@prodigy.net. You can also send a copy to the srsretirees@lycos.com to further ensure your information gets to the organization.

SRS ACTIVITIES

WORKFORCE RESTRUCTURING PROGRAM ANNOUNCED

The Westinghouse Savannah River Company has received approval from the Department of Energy to proceed with a Workforce Restructuring Program at SRS.

"In the past several years, we've undertaken many cost savings initiatives and staffing strategies that have allowed us to meet our work scope and avoid any involuntary reduction in force. However, we're currently at a point where we must restructure the workforce, while at the same time retain or even increase certain skills we need to meet our current and future missions," said Bob Pedde, WSRC president.

WSRC expects to conduct the Workforce Restructuring in phases, beginning with an Early Retirement Incentive program to be offered in March. Approximately 1380 employees would be eligible to volunteer for the early retirement program.

Once the early retirement program is complete, WSRC plans to offer a Voluntary Separation program, which would offer a severance package to full service employees who agree to leave the company.

After the completion of these two voluntary programs, WSRC will evaluate whether involuntary separations are necessary, and will make a recommendation to the Department of Energy.

MAJOR FUNDING SET ASIDE FOR MOX PROGRAM AT SRS

A huge boost for SRS is on the horizon with a major step forward in the establishment of a Mixed Oxide Fuel Facility (MOX) for the processing of excess weapons grade plutonium. The project was approved by the National Security Council and is said to have full support in the President's budget for the upcoming fiscal year. It would be a \$3.8 billion set aside investment, along with the creation of 500 more jobs at SRS. Rep. Lindsey

Graham indicated that this is good news for world peace and a major step towards economic growth in the CSRA. He further indicated that we have now got a plutonium disposition plan that is a win-win for South Carolina and the nation, and expects that the President's budget will include the necessary funding to construct the MOX facilities, as well as reflecting a firm commitment to a plutonium disposition plan. The immobilization facility will not be constructed at SRS, because we will not receive any plutonium that cannot be converted into commercial grade nuclear fuel through the MOX process.

SRS IN RUNNING FOR NEW NUCLEAR POWER PLANT

The Bush administration proposes to spend \$38 million on a joint government-industry project to study whether a new commercial nuclear power plant can be built on federal land. This could be beneficial for SRS, which is one of 3 sites to be studied by DOE, the other two being the Idaho National Engineering and Environmental Laboratory near Idaho Falls, and the now closed Portsmouth Gaseous Diffusion Plant in Ohio. The Department has a plan envisaging completing a new commercial power reactor by 2010. The plan, if Congress provides the money, would give a major boost to companies that have been showing increased interest in building a new nuclear power plant. In recent years, there has been a "nuclear revival" with several companies indicating to the NRC that they may submit a license for a new reactor in the near future. Industry officials have said that a new plant will have to be built on the site of an existing reactor facility or on federal land to reduce community opposition.

USC, WESTINGHOUSE SAVANNAH RIVER COMPANY SIGN HYDROGEN TECHNOLOGY AGREEMENT

Westinghouse Savannah River Company and the University of South Carolina have signed an agreement to make South Carolina the nation's leader in hydrogen and fuel cell technology.

The agreement calls for collaborative research and development in the area of hydrogen technology, including energy applications and development of hydrogen fuel cell technology for transportation, electric power and portable power applications. Hydrogen is considered one of the fuels of the future because it is inexhaustible, universally available and harmless to the environment. Hydrogen and fuel cells can be used to generate electricity or to power vehicles, eliminating the need for gasoline and reducing the country's dependence on imported oil.

The agreement will benefit industry and business throughout the state and the nation. This collaboration will bring together scientists and engineers to develop solutions that will be economically and environmentally sound. This is another example of how a research university can establish partnerships with industry for the good of South Carolina and the nation. The agreement represents great promise for USC and WSRC. World events have shown how important it is that we pursue hydrogen's energy applications, both because of environmental advantages and for the nation's energy security. This agreement brings together two great resources: the university, with its excellent research capabilities, and the Savannah River Technology Center, with its long experience in putting science to work, especially in the area of hydrogen technologies. Together, we can make great progress.

USC has conducted pioneering research in hydrogen fuel, and plans are under way for the establishment of a fuel cell center in the university's College of Engineering and Information Technology. WSRC has devoted

more than 40 years to hydrogen fuel research for the defense industry, as well as for transportation and other non-defense initiatives. This initiative will help to maintain and enhance SRS's expertise in hydrogen and related technologies while leveraging the nation's long investment in hydrogen technology at SRS. WSRC and USC will bring together their expertise and capabilities to collaborate on research and development. USC and WSRC have worked together closely before on hydrogen storage and fuel cell research. USC and WSRC recently collaborated through Southeastern Technology Center, a local company engaged in technology transfer, with a fuel cell company and other partners. The partners equipped a John Deere vehicle with a fuel cell power system; WSRC designed and built the hydrogen storage units, and USC developed the fuel-cell power system.

SRS BEGINS NEW ENVIRONMENTAL CLEANUP JOB

SRS recently began another step in the effort to clean up the legacy of the Cold War—the final closure of the Old Solvent Tanks. Located in the Old Radioactive Waste Burial Ground (ORWBG), these 22 underground steel tanks were used to temporarily store degraded liquids from the plutonium-uranium extraction process. They range in size from 6,800 to 27,000 gallons in capacity and were used until the mid-1970s. The ORWBG, which has been inactive for nearly 30 years, was the original burial site for low-level radioactive waste.

The tanks are nearly empty having only small amounts of liquid and sludge that could not be removed. Crews are now completely filling the tanks with grout (concrete-like material) to prevent them from collapsing. Grouting the tanks will also trap and hold the residual materials so that they do not spread to the environment. Remotely operated camera systems allow work crews to inspect the tanks visually and make sure that they are being grouted completely and properly. The tank area will then be covered with a protective cap along with the rest of ORWBG.

The tank remediation project is the latest in a series of milestones that track the history of the Burial Ground Complex, of which the Old Radioactive Waste Burial Ground (ORWBG) is a part. The ORWBG, which occupies 76 acres, received radioactive waste between 1952 and 1974. In 1998, a soil cover at least two feet thick was put over the ORWBG to reduce ground-level radiation levels, to reduce the amount of rainwater flowing through the buried waste, and to reduce the spread of contamination to the ground water.

Final closure is currently being planned under the Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act as agreed in the Savannah River Site Federal Facility Agreement (FFA). The FFA identifies the ORWBG as having the greatest environmental and human health threat among all other waste units. Grouting the tanks marks the last significant step in finally closing the most radioactively contaminated area of the site.

Limited Service Employee Opportunities

A previous mailing to members requested those interested in Limited Service Employee (LSE) opportunities at the Savannah River Site to provide a short one page resume and cover letter (two copies of each) to the SRSRA. That information will be sent to the SRS human resources office. You are still invited to submit that information if you are interested in limited site work to supplement your retirement income and not affect your pension payments. Submit that information to the address at the top of this newsletter to the attention of Ray Perks.

MEMBERSHIP QUESTIONS: CALL Ray Perks [803 642 8654]

All Board members are WSRC/BSRI Retirees and our objective is to support the Retirees interests by maintaining and preserving our current benefits. We need a strong voice to represent the Retirees. The number of members is very important when representatives of the SRSRA meet with SRS and DOE Management, Congressional Delegations and the Media, to discuss and resolve Retiree issues. Please encourage fellow retirees to join the organization. Paid members will receive a membership card and periodic newsletters.

REMINDER: IT IS TIME TO RENEW YOUR MEMBERSHIP FOR 2002! PLEASE COMPLETE THE MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL FORM BELOW AND RETURN WITH YOUR CHECK FOR YOUR 2002 MEMBERSHIP DUES.

Include a legible email address to ensure SRSRA records are correct and we can communicate with you by electronic means. Send email to rastokes@prodigy.net to correct, or add, your email address to our files.

PLEASE REMIND OTHER RETIREES, WHO MAY NOT BE AWARE OF THE SRSRA ORGANIZATION AND ITS OBJECTIVES, TO CONTACT RAY PERKS (TEL. 803-642-8654) TO GET ON THE MEMBERSHIP LIST.

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

WE NEED YOUR SUPPORT

- Yes, I want to renew my membership in SRSRA
- Yes, I want to join as a new member in SRSRA.
- Yes, I want to renew my membership in SRSRA. I am the spouse of deceased Retiree
 [Name of deceased retiree] _____

Are you interested in serving on the SRSRA Board of Directors? Yes No

Annual Dues:

- | <u>Year 2002</u> | <u>Year 2002 and 2003</u> |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> \$15 for Retiree | <input type="checkbox"/> \$30 for Retiree |
| <input type="checkbox"/> \$5 for Surviving Spouse | <input type="checkbox"/> \$10 for Surviving Spouse |

NAME _____

ADDRESS _____

CITY, STATE, ZIP CODE _____

TELEPHONE _____

RETIRED FROM WSRC _____ BSRI _____ DATE OF RETIREMENT _____

E-MAIL ADDRESS [IF AVAILABLE] _____