

# SRSRA NEWSLETTER

For SRS Retiree Association MembersFrank Campbell, EditorVolume 22, No. 3, July 2019Like us on Facebook to keep up with news and information! Search for SRSRA from your Facebook page.

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## SRSRA Contact Information:

Web page – SRSretirees.org Facebook – SRS Retirees SRSRA Resource Center – phone (803) 508-7065 or toll free at (866) 845-1550 or email <u>srsra@lscog.org</u>

### About this newsletter

The SRSRA Newsletter is published four times a year – January, April, July, and October. The Newsletter is sent to all dues paying SRSRA members. If we have your email address on file, you receive it first since the email version is much quicker to send than the printed version. If you are getting the printed version and would like to get the email version instead, please send us a note through the <u>www.srsretirees.org</u> web page with your current email address and we will update our records. Also, receiving it by email reduces our costs of printing and distributing this newsletter. If you are receiving the printed version, please consider contacting us and switching to an email subscription.

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# Letter from Dave Fauth, SRSRA Chair

Fellow retirees, I was pleased to see so many of my DuPont/Westinghouse/SRNS/SRR friends and their spouses at the SRSRA Annual Meeting on April 16. Sorry, if I didn't personally greet you. I hope that you were able to take advantage of the benefit providers who were present before the meeting and that you gained a more complete understanding of the initiatives that your board is working on. I would like to thank Thomas Johnson, DOE-SR SRS Deputy Manager, Stuart MacVean, SRNS President and CEO, and Tom Foster, SRR President and CEO for their presentations at the meeting. This newsletter contains the minutes and Q&A from the meeting for those not able to attend. I would like to thank Richard Frushour and his team for staging a very successful event. Your board spends considerable time planning the meeting and we hope that it meets your expectations. We have begun plans for a similar meeting in Georgia for those that have difficulty getting to USC-Aiken. Look for more information on this "greet and meet" event.

We continue to work with our congressional representatives headed by Joe Wilson regarding pension improvement. At press time, the SRNS Savings and Pension Administrative Committee is reviewing our proposal. If approved it would then need to be submitted to DOE for review and approval. Needless to say, this is a slow but necessary process.

Part of the SRSRA mission is to support current and future site missions. The pit production program planned for the site needs our assistance. We know that this program can be performed effectively and safely at the Savannah River Site. I encourage you to take a role by submitting formal comments regarding the planned environmental impact statement before July 25, 2019 at the following link, <a href="https://www.federalregister.gov/documents/2019/06/10/2019-12003/notice-of-intent-to-prepare-an-environ">https://www.federalregister.gov/documents/2019/06/10/2019-12003/notice-of-intent-to-prepare-an-environ</a>

mental-impact-statement-for-plutonium-pit-production-at-the

Your SRSRA Resource Center is completing its fifth year of operation under the guidance of Manager Laureen Feinman and Resource Center Chairman Phil Croll. The center assists our retirees who have insurance, stipend reimbursement and numerous issues that confront us in our aging years. The RC staff have begun plans to help retirees/spouses with their 2020 prescription drug plan reviews. Our clients have saved over a million dollars by changing plans over the last 3 years. We need more volunteers so we can help more of you. Please consider becoming a volunteer. If you have any questions, contact the center at (803)508-7065. I would also like to encourage volunteers for our committees. The time commitment can be minor but the positive impact can be substantial for your fellow retirees. These committees include Benefits Protection, Communications (newsletter and social media), United Way and Community Outreach, CNTA/CAB, and Membership."

Dave Fauth SRSRA Chair

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### Minutes of the SRS Retiree Association (SRSRA) Annual Meeting April 16, 2019 USCA Etherredge Center; Aiken, SC

#### Call to Order and Opening Remarks – Dave Fauth, Chair, SRSRA

The meeting was called to order at 1:30 pm. The delegation staffers were thanked for attending. These staffers included Jennifer Hayes (for Sen. Perdue), Martha Ruthven (for Rep. Wilson), Jessica Hayes (for Rep. Hice), and Brinsley Thigpin (for Rep. Allen).

#### State of the SRSRA – Dave Fauth, Chair, SRSRA

Our thanks go to all those who have contributed to the success of the SRSRA and our Resource Center (RC) and to our major financial supporters, including the SRS Employee Association (SRSEA), the Lower Savannah Council of Governments (LSCOG), SRNS, SRR, SRP Federal Credit Union, and individual donations. Thanks also go to the Cumberland Village management and staff for their continuing support.

The SRSRA Board of Directors (BOD) has worked with DOE-SR, SRNS, SRR, and our delegation to achieve and support improvements in retiree benefits and services. Activities in 2018 included 1) considerable time spent on interactions with DOE, SRNS, SRR, and our Congressional representatives on our pension adjustment proposal; 2) planning for "Meet and Greet" meetings with retirees, with meetings planned in Georgia, Barnwell/Allendale, and north of Aiken County; 3) Resource Center (RC) operations and services; 4) our successful United Way campaign which raised \$24,929; 5) increasing communications to and from retirees through an updated SRSRA website (www.srsretirees.org); and 6) expanding our new Facebook site.

The new SRSRA website is operational and has been updated. A password is not needed to access the site. Use the "Join/Renew" and "Contact Us" buttons for direct interaction with the RC and the BOD. Appointments at the RC may be made online. The phone number for the RC is (803) 508-7065. Please leave your name, phone number, and e-mail address and an RC member will return your call.

Two pension adjustment proposals were evaluated by the pension plan actuary and one was then formally submitted to SRNS (Fund Manager). The proposed adjustment would apply to all those who retired prior to 1/1/2015, which is 70% of all pension plan participants. The proposal is based on a flat dollar concept with the largest percentage of the increase going to the oldest retirees and those with the smallest pensions.

The stipend (Health Savings Account) was increased in January 2017 and was prorated by age. Those 65-69 years of age receive \$2308/person; 70-74, \$2604/person; and 80+, \$3000/person. The RC can help you get started with registration with Right Opt and with claims from WageWorks.

The catastrophic drug coverage program provides help for Medicare eligible retirees and spouses with high cost prescription (Rx) drug expenses. The Rx Plan Year-End Explanation of Benefits (EOB) statement indicates if **SRSRA Newsletter July 2019** Page 3

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an individual has entered catastrophic drug coverage (usually Stage 4). Remember that non-formulary drugs are not included in your Rx expenses. Individuals must file before March annually and reimbursements are added to one's WageWorks account in mid-April. Take part in the Open Enrollment program and get the plan with the most drug coverage for you.

The RC has served over 2450 clients and processed over \$2.23M in claims. Fifty-one (51) Aging Into Medicare sessions have been conducted with 950 clients attending. Thanks to our volunteers for providing this highly valued support.

The SRSRA 2019 financial summary was presented as follows:

Income	\$93,000
Expenses	\$91,350

Funding sources included \$30,000 from membership dues and \$63,000 from grants from the SC Health Insurance Program, SRNS, SRR, SRSEA, SRP Federal Credit Union, and individual donations. Expenses included the RC (~\$74,000), member communications, the Member Annual Meeting, and gas cards.

We need you to participate in the SRSRA, reach out to fellow retirees, volunteer at the RC, and pay membership dues to support the RC. You don't need to work with clients to volunteer at the RC; we also need administrative support, especially during the Open Enrollment period. Thank you for your support!

#### DOE-SR Update – Thomas Johnson, SRS Deputy Manager, DOE-SR

Mr. Johnson provided an update on the SRS budget, current mission priorities, and retiree support. The Administration's FY2020 budget request includes \$1.642 for SRS/EM, an increase of \$91M above the FY2019 enacted level, primarily for construction of the Advanced Manufacturing Collaboration Facility and Saltstone Disposal Units.

Current SRS mission priorities include 1) continue safe treatment and disposition of legacy liquid waste; 2) assure ability to maintain unique nuclear materials processing capabilities in need of substantial maintenance and upgrades; 3) address common infrastructure needs; 4) consider options to address pension liability that may impact future work scope (flat funding profile); 5) support DOE's commitment to the State of SC regarding the removal of 1MT of plutonium; 6) continue employing SRNL expertise to support cleanup and enduring security missions; and 7) continue support of STEM initiatives and building the next generation SRS workforce.

Mr. Johnson stated that the DOE recognizes and values the work and contributions of SRS retirees and SRS's strong history of community and Congressional support for its missions and workforce. The DOE is committed to continued engagement and open dialogue with the SRSRA and working together to find solutions to issues

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as evidenced by active participation in the SRSRA Annual Meetings and quarterly meetings with the SRSRA Executive Committee and the SRS Contractors Benefits Team, accessibility to the Benefits Team for information and assistance, continuous improvement on claims filing and reimbursements, evaluation of options to address rising pension liability and the proposed pension increase to meet obligations, and advocating for the SRSRA RC and important services.

#### SRNS Update – Stuart MacVean, President and CEO, SRNS

Mr. MacVean discussed SRNS's four key mission areas as follows: Environmental Stewardship for soil, water, and facilities, supplying tritium for nuclear weapons deterrent, securing nuclear materials, and transforming nuclear materials. SRNL has expanded operations and continues to be a significant contributor to all key missions. There has been a significant change in the customer base with 45% of the FY2019 budget from EM, 50% from NNSA, and 5% from Work For Others.

Spent Fuel receipts increased this year, plutonium down-blend was accelerated, tritium programs experienced significant growth, and the D-Area Ash Basin remediation was completed. Significant infrastructure upgrades are ongoing with \$115M in improvements planned in FY2019.

For FY2014-present, 3037 new full-time employees were hired. Hiring continues with over 300 more employees to be hired this fiscal year and 1000 projected for FY2020.

#### Liquid Waste Overview – Tom Foster, President and Project Manager, SRR

Mr. Foster discussed recent SRR accomplishments. Preparing for the startup of the Salt Waste Processing Facility (SWPF) is the key activity for the next 18 months. Blend and feed tanks are being prepared, saltstone optimization is underway, critical tie-ins are being made, Saltstone Disposal Unit (SDU) 7 project work continues, and SDUs 8 and 9 work will begin.

SRR plans to hire 500 people. Business operation changes will include a new hiring portal, a major training initiative, and cyber upgrades.

#### Questions and Answers – Dave Fauth, Chair, SRSRA

Following the break, submitted questions were answered. A summary of the submitted questions and answers provided follows:

#### Pension Plan

- SRSRA needs to pay more attention to the pension plan. Why has the funding level dropped from 87% at the end of 2015 to less than 68% at the end of 2018?
- How can we get a retiree pension increase when DOE (Government) does not fully fund the pension program? The funding factor of 67% is really 80% if you fudge interest rates. Its voodoo economics.

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• Address numbers on pension funding notices. The numbers look "not good!" and the discussion in the April 1 letter comes across as dire.

<u>Answer</u>: Funding of the Pension Plan has been and continues to be done per DOE guidelines. Although legal, the approach appears to be short-sighted and risky. SRNS has been assigned the responsibility to determine the Site operating budget and pension funding needs. It has been DOE guidance that keeps the plan legal but without any additional buffer. Federal pension regulations (ERISA) will begin forcing DOE to bring the SRS Pension Plan to 100% funded status over the next five years. Since this will require sharp increases in pension plan payments, starting in FY2020 DOE is beginning to institute a higher leveled payment strategy to allow better work scope and personnel planning.

#### Pension Adjustment

- Every year, COLA raise is being looked at but never gets approved. Why is this? Seventeen years without a pension increase is an insult to retired (some Cold War) employees.
- Please continue with and obtain DOE approval for proposed pension increase (~5.3%) to help with cost of living expenses.

<u>Answer</u>: Obtaining a pension adjustment/increase is our highest priority activity. While some DOE facilities have COLA increases written into their contracts, SRS does not. For us, funding a pension increase requires an act of Congress. We are in discussions with our legislative representatives and we meet with the DOE and the contractors at least quarterly.

#### **Benefits**

- What happens when a member passes away? What should the spouse do as far as Wage Works? Is there a procedure?
- Explain the policy pertaining to deferred pensions for spouses and what happens to deferred monies when spouse dies before the retiree.

<u>Answer</u>: The procedure is listed in the WageWorks instruction handbook. Contact the SRNS Benefits Center and inform them of the passing of one's spouse. The SRSRA Resource Center can assist with this. The money does not go away. In most cases, the stipends for the retiree and the spouse are combined in a joint account. (See description of Joint Accounts below.) The money may be used by either spouse, even when both spouses are living.

Joint Accounts: For married couples, the retiree and spouse are each entitled to a medical stipend. The stipends are combined in a joint account. The account is in the name of the person who retired first. This allows for greater reimbursements if one spouse incurs much more in medical expenses, and it allows

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access to all existing funds to a surviving spouse. (Exception: Couples who both retired from the Site and who carried individual medical coverage may have individual accounts.)

#### Term Life Insurance

• Need report on amount of term life insurance as your age increases with Prudential.

<u>Answer</u>: We provided general information on term life insurance amounts in our September newsletter. The SRSRA Resource Center can provide more detailed information based on your particular situation. Call the SRSRA Resource Center or the SRNS Benefits Center.

#### <u>MOX</u>

• To convert MOX to Pit Production, how much and how long does it take? MOX was designed for diluting high percentage plutonium, not designed for Pit Production. This conversion seems like to change an Abraham tank to a Ford F150 pick-up truck.

<u>Answer</u>: Currently the proposed Savannah River Pit Production Facility would produce 50 pits/yr. stating in 2030. This is an aggressive schedule. Very preliminary cost estimates are above \$5B. The MOX facility is a very large plutonium facility that has more than 3X the space required for the pit production mission. MOX and the proposed SRS pit facility are both plutonium facilities and share many common facility design requirements. Adapting the MOX facility to the SRS pit mission will, however, require overcoming numerous challenges.

#### General Business – Dave Fauth Chair, SRSRA

- The minutes of the 2017 SRSRA Annual Meeting were approved.
- The proposed Board of Directors slate was approved.

#### Door Prize Drawings – Jennifer Garvin, Board Member, SRSRA

The following fifteen names were randomly selected to receive \$100 gas cards: Eddie Randle, Frank Weitz, John Martin, Walter Glover, Sara Green, Donald Coles, Guy Hembree, Jr., Christine Li, Gale Kan, Cyndy Ledbetter, Damon Haley, Jr., Delores Martin, Doretha Floyd, David Potocik, and Barry Myers.

#### Adjournment – Dave Fauth, Chair, SRSRA

The meeting was adjourned at ~3:20 pm.

#### Save the date for the next SRSRA Annual Meeting on April 21, 2020!

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### 2019 SRSRA Board of Directors



The SRSRA Board of Directors gathered for a picture before the Annual Meeting.

First row, from left to right: Pam Amendola, Bernice DeLoach, Jennifer Garvin, Deb Shedrow, Daisy Graham, Rhonda Whitley

Second row, from left to right: Lee Fox, Kathy Grant, Harold Sturm, Bob Hottel, Mike Rucker, Harvey Kinder, Jim Tisarrani

Third row, from left to right: Dave Fauth, Art Osborne, Dick Frushour, Ranny Saylor, Don Stevenson

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## **Benefits Protection Committee**

#### John Veldman

SRS Retirees Association continues to advocate for a modest pension adjustment in 2020. On March 18, SRSRA sent Mr. Stuart MacVean, President and CEO of SRNS, a formal request for a pension plan amendment based on the pension adjustment formula that we have been advocating. On May 6, Mr. MacVean responded with a letter outlining the next steps that would be required before a potential submittal to DOE. These steps include an actuarial analysis of the proposal and the impact it would have on future funding projections and work scope, and the review and approval of the SRS Savings and Pension Administrative Committee. SRNS has completed this work and forwarded our pension adjustment request to DOE on June 20, 2019. Now, DOE will analyze and evaluate our request, and make a decision on granting the pension adjustment. Although DOE has not granted an ad hoc pension adjustment anywhere in the nation since 2002, we are now further in the formal process than in recent past attempts. SRSRA's goal is to have the pension adjustment request and the Congressional Appropriation for the pension funding increase that DOE needs to move forward in tandem.

SRSRA has also been working with our elected representatives to seek their support for our pension adjustment proposal and the large increases in ERISA required pension funding payments to move our pension plan toward 100% funded status over the next several years. On May 3, Mr. MacVean received a letter of bipartisan support from our delegation for both the pension adjustment and the increased pension funding payments. Rep. Wilson, Rep. Clyburn, Rep. Allen, and Rep. Hice signed this letter.

# Giving Back to the Community

#### Pamela Amendola

Savannah River Site employees have a long history of community giving. Employees have been participating in the United Way Campaign since it first opened in Aiken County as "The Community Chest" in 1952! "United Way of Aiken County would not be here without Savannah River Site employees," says Sharon Rodgers, president of the United Way of Aiken County.

SRSRA members proudly carry on that tradition throughout their retirement years. Our members keep the partnership alive today by helping the local United Way achieve its goal. This year marks our organization's 20<sup>th</sup> year of support. Member pledges, over \$200,000 to date, help support critical needs programs provided by United Way health and human service partner agencies.

The SRSRA United Way campaign kicks off August 31st. Last year, we raised nearly \$25,000 to support local United Way agencies. We again offer the opportunity to contribute directly to the United Way through the Association. If you live in South Carolina or Georgia, watch for pledge forms arriving in your mail soon!

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### **Retiree Resource Center Report**

Laureen Riley Feinman, Manager

### WageWorks Claims Problems -- Never Give Up!

WageWorks has acknowledged that they are continuing to have significant claim processing problems where claims are denied which actually have proper documentation. Do not be discouraged and give up. Either resubmit your claim yourself or bring it to us and we will see that it is paid or help you if there is a documentation issue. We have contacts with WageWorks and we consistently reconcile these type of issues. They have assured us they are working on process improvements, but in the meantime, we can help you get claims through. Let us help you. Don't ignore your reimbursement potentials.

### Do Not Stop Your Payments to Cancel Your Medicare Plans!

We all have valid increasing premium concerns. The best course of action is to come see us or contact RightOpt to discuss your alternatives. If you just let your coverage lapse and you are cancelled for non-payment, you will most certainly see even higher plan premiums since your guaranteed issue period has expired. We have seen situations where the premiums are over \$100 a month more expensive than they were before cancellation when the retiree tries to get back their coverage. In addition to premium increases, there can be lifelong penalties for breaks in coverage for certain Medicare plans. Not a lot of pleasant surprises happen when you ignore Medicare requirements from what I've seen.

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## Annual Volunteer Luncheon

The Lower Savannah Council of Governments partners with us and offers office facilities and Medicare technical support. Each year, they celebrate the volunteer contributions made by third party non-profit groups they support with a lovely Volunteer Luncheon. We always have the most volunteers. Our group in May included: Bob Croley, Larry Hall, Don Stevenson, David Zigelman, Annie Fields, Laureen Feinman, Ranny Saylor, Dave Fauth, Jack Roberts, Kathy Grant, Beverley Zigelman, Jeanne Szymanski, and John Veldman. Absent but still appreciated: Allen Blancett, Sandy Carroll, Phil Croll, Dick Frushour, Rick Geddes, Nick Kuehn, Bob Hottel, Bob and Maria Malstrom, John Plodinec, Tom Varallo, and Marilyn Winn.



Thank you to our very generous volunteers – our Retiree Resource Center could not be here without them.

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Retiree Resource Center Metrics			
Services Since Inception			
	September 2014 to May 2019		
3,870	Office Visits at Retiree Center		
2,508	Clients Served		
68	Home Visits		
6,430	Phone Contacts		
471	Email Contacts		
52	Number of Monthly Aging In to Medicare Meetings		
966	Number of Clients who've attended Aging in Meetings		
\$2,328,990	WageWorks Claims Reimbursement transmitted from RRC		
Prescription Drug and Medicare Advantage Plan Reviews 2015 - 2018			
1,453	Number of Plan Reviews conducted at RRC		
\$1,363,739	Projected Savings from Reviews and Plan Changes using the Medicare.gov model with Client Specific Meds, Pharmacies, and Plans		

### Gas Card Winners

The gas card winners for this issue are Shumei C. Lee, Lonnie E. Wilson, and Edward L. Larrabee. These lucky SRSRA members have each won a \$50 gas card courtesy of the SRSEA and SRSRA. Call Bob Hottel at 803-648-7721 within 30 days to claim your gas card! Please verify your home address when you contact Bob.

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### **Benefits Contacts**

- SRS Benefits Service Center at the site(service for most HR and payroll questions):
  - 803-725-7772 (local area SC and GA)
  - 800-368-7333 (toll free)
  - <u>service-center@srs.gov</u>
- SRSRA Retiree Resource Center:
  - o **(803) 508-7065**
  - o (866) 845-1550 (toll free)
  - o <u>srsra@lscog.org</u>
- Westinghouse Corp. Pension 800-581-4222
- RightOpt/My Medicare Advocate 877-591-8904; <u>www.rightoptretiree.com/srs</u>
- WageWorks 877-924-3967; <u>www.wageworks.com</u>
- Medicare Helpline 800-633-4227; <u>www.medicare.gov</u>
- Prudential Life Insurance 844-494-4778 (Contributory and non-contributory life insurance)
- Blue Cross/Blue Shield of SC 800-325-6596;
  - <u>http://www.southcarolinablues.com</u>
    - Option 1 for Medical
    - Option 2 for Dental
    - Option 3 for Pre-Cert/Med Authorization
- DuPont Retirees life insurance: 800.775.5955
- DuPont Retiree Medical with Via: <u>https://my.viabenefits.com/</u> 855-535-7140
- DuPont Retirees Contact Information for other benefits: <u>http://www.retiree.dupont.com/our-company/retirees/contact-us.html</u>

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# In Memorium

Donald Appel, North Augusta	Polly P Hill, North Augusta
Billy Armstrong, Augusta	Shirley N Johnson Jr, New Ellenton
Charles (Chuck) M Ashley Jr, Lady's Island/N Augusta	Walter (Pee) Johnson, Augusta
Harry Albert Baird III, Graniteville	John Taylor Longshore, Aiken
Gary Blessing, Aiken	William Olliff, Aiken
Will Ernest Brady, Augusta	Gloria Gay Gibson Peace, Aiken/Boca Raton
Michael Cain, Aiken	Marion Frank Percival, Jackson
Wilmer Ray Corman Jr., Augusta	Ruthie Priester, Aiken
John C (JC) Davis Sr, Beech Island	Rudell Robinson Smith, Augusta
Paul Dickson Jr, Aiken	Joyce Culbertson Sprouse. New Ellenton
Marvin Flanders, Augusta	Warren W Stewart Sr., Augusta
Jeffrey (Jeff) D Frommer, Aiken	James Andrew (Andy) Titcher, North Augusta
Howard "Fuzzy" Gore Sr., Aiken	Bobby Lee Vest, Martinez
Faber J Hance, North Augusta	James (Jim) W. Welch, Aiken