

# SRSRA NEWSLETTER

For SRS Retiree Association Members

Bob & Pat Stokes, Editors

May, 2002

## **DID YOU FORGET TO RENEW YOUR SRSRA MEMBERSHIP FOR 2002?**

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

*(See form and details later in this newsletter)*

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### **Chairman's Letter**

Our Annual Meeting on March 12th was a huge success. Our keynote speakers Congressman Lindsey Graham and Bob Pedde, President of WSRC, provided excellent updates to our favorite agenda item, the pension adjustment for our retirees. We had good interaction from the floor and candid responses from Congressman Graham and Mr. Pedde. Bob Stokes, SRSRA Vice Chairman, provided an informative summary of your Pension Adjustment Committee's four years of dedicated effort to make our pension adjustment happen. (Tom Greene, Bill Quinn, Bob Stokes, and Fred Cavanaugh make up the pension adjustment committee with help from others as needed.) Read the committee's report below. These folks will not give up! Those of you at the meeting heard Congressmen Graham report about Tom Greene and his committee's persistence. The committee received well-justified applause for their efforts at the meeting. I am confident that your Pension Adjustment Committee's diligence will accomplish their goal this year.

Your Board of Directors made every effort to keep the discussion at a professional level and end the meeting at 3 PM. Unfortunately, we attempted to cover too much on our agenda in view of the interest in the pension adjustment. The seminar on retirement financial planning was too much to undertake and we had to force-fit it into the program. We ended the discussion at about 3:15 PM with several financial questions fielded from the floor and hopefully sufficient information for the interested folks to take to their respective financial planners. It is safe for you to expect seminars to be conducted apart from future annual meetings.

At the April BOD meeting, Tom Cuny presented information on safety eyeglasses and the new policy regarding site access for retirees to obtain eyeglasses. (See the enclosed article from Tom Cuny concerning this policy.)

Your Board of Directors is concerned about Governor Hodges' approach to dealing with DOE regarding plutonium shipments from Rocky Flats to SRS and its effect on the projects and employment at SRS as well as the resulting potential effects on retiree programs and benefits. We are preparing a letter to the Governor to express our concerns and offer him local technical support in lieu of outside support. That outside support seems to be providing the Governor typical antinuclear group strategies to block DOE activities. Our objectives are to reestablish a constructive negotiation approach between Governor Hodges, DOE and our Congressional leaders that seemed to be working before the Governor shifted to the courts. The court action supports other antinuclear group strategies such as demanding an environmental impact statement for the shipments. The SRSRA BOD will keep you informed with press releases and future newsletters.

Sincerely,

Dave Cowfer, Chairman  
Savannah River Site Retirees Association

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### **2002 Annual Meeting Highlights**

Over 200 SRSRA members attended the Fifth Annual Meeting at the Aiken Municipal Conference Center.

Keynote Speakers where U.S. Rep. Lindsey Graham, R-S.C., and Bob Pedde, President, Westinghouse Savannah River Co. The speakers where introduced by SRSRA member Fred Cavanaugh.

Pension adjustment comments from the speakers:

"You deserve it," U.S. Rep. Lindsey Graham, R-S.C., told more than 200 people gathered in Aiken for the annual meeting of the SRS Retirees Association. "You won the Cold War. The least we can do is keep your pensions viable."

"Westinghouse Savannah River Co. has dropped its opposition to a pension adjustment increase", said its president, Bob Pedde.

Dave Cowfer, Chairperson SRSRA, presented the "State of the Association" message for the past year. The SRSRA annual financial report was given by Treasurer, Harry Ledbetter. Bob Stokes reported to the group on the SRSRA's Pension Committee's activities for a retiree pension adjustment.

Election of SRS Retiree Board Members for 2-year terms was conducted. Newly elected, or re-elected, members were: 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, and Bob Stokes.

A seminar on Financial/Estate Planning/Law Changes followed the business portion of the meeting.

Table displays and refreshments where also available for attendees.

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## **Board of Directors Election, Officers, Committees and Meetings**

The SRSRA Board of Directors consists of 30 members with 15 members elected each year to serve for a 2-year period. The slate of nominees for this year's Board of Directors election was the result of an organization-wide solicitation through our newsletter and also through e-mail. All those that positively responded were given the opportunity to serve. The remainder of the slate was developed by the BOD.

*The individuals noted above in the Annual Meeting highlights were elected to the board at the March meeting and will join these additional BOD members to constitute the SRSRA BOD for fiscal year 2002:*

Joe Bickley, Art Blanchard, Fred Cavanaugh, Gerry Croom, George Duke, Frank Givens, Diane Grant, Tom Greene, Don Grogan, Paul Katonak, Nick Kuehn, Ray Perks, Bill Quinn, Ray Sabol, and Chuck Seitter.

At the April BOD meeting, the following elections of executive officers and appointment of committees was accomplished:

### **OFFICERS**

Chairman	Dave Cowfer
1 <sup>st</sup> Vice Chairman	Mike French
2 <sup>nd</sup> Vice Chairman	Bob Stokes
Secretary/Co-Secretary	Art Blanchard / Chuck Seitter
Treasurer	Stan Smith

### **COMMITTEES**

Membership	Ray Perks
Data Base Maintenance	Jim Gibbons
Annual Meeting/Nominations	Nick Kuehn / Diane Grant
Newsletter	Bob Stokes
ORA Representative	Paul Katonak
Pension Adjustment	Tom Greene, Bill Quinn, Fred Cavanaugh, Bob Stokes
Benefits	Dave Cowfer
Public Affairs / SRS Relations	Fred Cavanaugh
Site Activities	Mike French
Web Site Design & Maintenance	Sid Curry
Coordination with Other DOE Retiree Organizations	Bill Quinn

**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 board vacancies. If you are a BOD member and would like to serve on the benefits committee, please contact Dave Cowfer.**

**The Board of Directors meets the first Tuesday of each month at the Knights of Columbus Hall on Spaulding Road (off Daugherty Road between Silver Bluff Road and Whiskey Road in Aiken). The meeting date is occasionally changed to avoid conflicts with holidays. That holiday situation will occur twice this summer in July and September. Therefore the schedule for the upcoming BOD meetings this**

summer will be June 4, July 9, August 6 and September 10. The Executive Board of SRSRA encourages all board members to attend these important meetings to help conduct the business of the association.

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### Pension Adjustment Update

The Pension Adjustment Committee has had very little that it can consider positive news concerning a pension adjustment for SRS Retirees since the Annual Meeting in March. Any action on the adjustment by WSRC and DOE, though, is stalled because of the current disagreement between Governor Hodges of South Carolina and the Department of Energy Secretary Spencer Abraham concerning the shipment of plutonium to the Savannah River Site. This is a disappointing development since Bob Pedde, WSRC President, and Congressman Lindsey Graham both indicated their support for the pension increase during the Annual Meeting. The tenor of their messages suggested something positive was in process concerning the adjustment. This apparent lack of any real progress is especially disheartening to the committee in light of the recent pension adjustments granted to the retirees of both Oak Ridge and Sandia sites. The committee is trying to set up meetings with both parties (Graham and Pedde) to continue to present our case for this much needed adjustment.

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### Safety Eyeglass Services to Savannah River Site Retirees

The following was provided by **Tom Cuny of the SRS Safety Eyeglass Office** as a follow up to a presentation he made at a recent SRSRA Board of Directors meeting:

The tragic events of 9/11 caused Savannah River Site to re-evaluate their security culture. For a short time the site was unable to allow anyone without a badge to enter the Site. However, **due to a request from the SRSRA** and through the efforts of Mr. Pedde and the HR director, the site is finally able to allow retirees back on site.

The procedure for entry is a bit different. **Each retiree must call Tom Cuny's office (803-725-3379) for an appointment. When the appointment is made Tom Cuny will handle the necessary paperwork for the retiree to acquire a VISITORS BADGE. The retiree will, at the time of the appointment, stop at 703-A at the badge office to pick up a VISITOR'S BADGE and proceed to 719-A (medical) room 120 for the appointment. You must bring two types of ID. It is relatively simple procedure with only one extra stop along the way.** Tom is looking forward to being able to once again see familiar faces and old friends.

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### ORA News

Included with this newsletter you will find a separate sheet that provides some general information on the Operations Recreation Association (ORA) including funding, contacts, membership and upcoming events or ORA coordinated opportunities.

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## 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

### ◇ Safety Eyeglass Office

Tom Cuny (803) 725-3379

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## Newsletter Mailing

With this newsletter, we are continuing with hard copy mail to transmit the newsletter to all members. The benefits of using the email system to alleviate 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](mailto: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](mailto:rastokes@prodigy.net). You can also send a message to the [srsretirees@lycos.com](mailto:srsretirees@lycos.com) email address to further ensure your information gets to the SRSRA organization.

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## SRS Activities

### **F AREA FACILITIES COMPLETE PROCESSING OF LEGACY MATERIALS**

After 50 years of service to the Nation, on March 27 the F Canyon & FB line facilities completed their last planned production run to process legacy SRS materials. For nearly half a century F Canyon & FB Line have processed most of the plutonium that makes up the U.S. nuclear arsenal. At this time, there are no current plans to process additional materials in F Canyon, although that capability remains available. The F Area facilities historically recovered plutonium by a chemical process from material that had been irradiated in SRS reactors. The material from the reactors is dissolved in the canyon facilities, and the resultant solution is then purified and concentrated. In FB Line the solution is converted into plutonium metal buttons about the size and shape of a hockey puck.

Although planned operations associated with the Purex process are completed, FB Line has at least three full years of full operations remaining. Unless additional feed materials are identified, F canyon will now enter a suspension phase where the facility will be cleaned up and all hazards removed or stabilized. Once complete, associated personnel will be transferred to other facilities, such as H Canyon and HB Line. The ultimate goal is to finish the work in the F Area facilities as quickly as possible and use the money saved to further accelerate the Site's Environmental missions. Ideally, F Area operations will gradually conclude on about the same timetable as new missions begin to staff up. A good example of this is that some F Canyon personnel will transfer to H Canyon in May. A new mission is ramping up there to blend down highly enriched uranium, formally used in SRS reactors, into low-enriched uranium which will eventually be used as fuel in Tennessee Valley Authority power reactors.

## **SRS ENVIRONMENTAL RESTORATION ANNUAL REPORT.**

Continuing its effort to accelerate risk reduction while driving down costs, WSRC's Environmental Restoration program placed 14 new technologies in the field in 2001, according to its annual performance report. In fiscal year 2001, which ended last September 30, the program saved \$13 million while meeting all regulatory milestones, in part from using these technologies. The new methods include "Dynamic Underground Stripping", which is a type of steam-cleaning to remove solvents from the subsurface, and phytoremediation" which as currently applied at SRS uses trees to clean solvents from groundwater and tritium from surface water.

Other notable cleanup achievements in this period included remediation at four SRTC Seepage Basins, completion of soil stabilization at the F Area Retention Basin, and completion of remediation at the K-Reactor Seepage Basin. These radioactive basins, like other wastewater disposal basins on site, have not been used for many years. In all, 293 of 515 waste sites were completed or were in remediation at the end of the fiscal year.

## **WSRC TEAM EMPLOYEES REACH 10 MILLION SAFE HOURS,**

On March 20th, WSRC added to its long record of safety accomplishments. That day marked 10 million manhours worked by WSRC operations employees without injury resulting in a lost workday. This is the second time in 2 years that WSRC employees have surpassed that milestone. As you will remember, a lost workday case is defined as any work-related injury or illness which results in days away from work. WSRC President Bob Pedde indicated that most companies would be excited to pass 1 million hours of injury free work, so 10 million hours is phenomenal, particularly in the kind of complex industrial environment we have at SRS. Unfortunately, shortly after this record was achieved, a construction worker was involved in an accident resulting in some lost workdays.

## **SRS EMERGENCY OPERATIONS TEST DRILL.**

Several hundred SRS employees participated in a 3 day emergency operations test drill during the week of April 22nd. The drill, which involved not only site but also federal and state employees, started when an imaginary earthquake registering 6.9 on the Richter scale occurred 1 mile west of the site's F Area Three Runs Creek. As a result of the quake, a plume of contamination was released and federal authorities were called in to aid in the evaluation of the situation. Liquid contamination from the imaginary release was contained inside the F evaporator building from which the release came. Inside the Operations Center site, state, and area officials coordinated efforts to respond to the drill scenario, and computer models of the release were generated. Several simulated "injuries and exposures" occurred and individuals were either treated on site or at a local hospital.

During the exercise, which was considered bad enough to require federal assistance, the Federal Radiological Monitoring and Assistance Center (FRMAC) sent a team of approximately 50 people from their headquarters in Nevada together with some 30,000 pounds of equipment. The FRMAC team established an emergency operations center at the National Guard Armory in Granitville. This was the first time that FRMAC was called in to participate in the site's annual emergency drill, which was done on a much larger scale this year.

## **EMERGENCY COMMUNICATIONS**

In a cooperative effort between the Department of Energy, Westinghouse Savannah River Company and local amateur radio operators, an amateur radio repeater was placed in operation at the Savannah River Site on March 25, 2002.

With an idea to enhance the coverage of area emergency communications, a group of site employees proposed using excess radio equipment to assist community amateur radio operators. These SRS employees double as amateur radio operators (HAMS) away from work, and knew there was inadequate radio coverage between counties surrounding the Savannah River Site. The group obtained licensing for the repeater, modified the equipment to operate on the new frequencies, and currently provides operational control and maintenance of the system. The result is maintained communications between portable and mobile radio operators within a 30 to 40 mile radius of the SRS. Amateur radio operators can find the repeater on 145.45 MHz with an access tone of 123 Hz.

Federally licensed amateur radio operators provide uncompensated man-hours of communications support to local, state, and federal agencies and other response organizations during emergencies. Providing emergency communications is one of the primary reasons that the Federal Communications Commission validates amateur radio. Due to communication barriers after the events of September 11, HAMS went on the air within minutes and were vital to relief efforts conducted in the first few weeks. The new repeater at SRS will enhance the ability of local amateur radio operators to assist in severe storm spotting, hurricane relief coordination and emergency incident monitoring.

CSRA emergency management organizations maintain working partnerships with local amateur radio operators that have the ability to immediately establish local and long distance communications systems. According to Bob Steadman, Senior Emergency Preparedness Specialist for WSRC, "HAM operators are an important resource to the emergency management community. The addition of this repeater at SRS provides a 'shot in the arm' to our volunteers who give so selflessly of their time and provides a critical element of the emergency service infrastructure."

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## **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.

