

SRS Retiree Association (SRSRA) Annual Meeting
April 29, 2025
USCA Etherredge Center; Aiken, SC

Call to Order and Opening Remarks – Gene Dixon, SRSRA

The meeting was called to order at 1:00 pm. The following contributors and supporters were recognized: SRSRA members, SRS Employee Association, Savannah River Nuclear Solutions, Savannah River Mission Competition, Battelle Savannah River Alliance LLC, SRP Federal Credit Union, and Lessie Senior & Youth Center. Also recognized for their efforts are veterans, our Board of Directors, Dave Fauth, Rhonda Whitley, and Deb Shedrow.

The SRSRA mission is to advocate for retiree pension and medical benefits, provide support of SRS retirees, ensure retiree needs are visible, and support SRS missions. Our focus continues to be retiree pensions and benefits. Our 2024 membership total was 1,999; we are likely adding at least \$140M-\$300M into our local economies. We have members in 28 states, 91% from South Carolina or Georgia, 54.7% from Aiken County.

We are living in a time of change and transition. Along with the changes at the Federal level, there has also been a landlord change at the SRS. Changes also continue with how retiree benefits are administered across the primary contractors. Although not always considered, we, the SRS retirees, are a part of the SRS community. Changes that have an impact on the SRS also impact us, the retirees. To maintain and/or improve our retiree benefits, we must have a strong, collective, unified voice and visibility with both SRS leadership and Congressional representatives. The SRSRA has achieved one pension and two stipend adjustments and influenced DOE-HQ to discontinue their “Minimum Required by Law” policy for pension plan funding, resulting in higher plan contributions and a fully funded plan.

We have, however, lost over 70% of the value of our pensions since our last and only pension adjustment. During the same time, health insurance costs have increased ~78%. We continue our efforts for a pension adjustment. We need you to contact your Congressional Representatives and request they do the right thing for civilian veterans of the Cold War by supporting a pension increase. We also must have a growing membership and a continual supply of willing volunteers. The BOD asks each member to volunteer and have an impact on our work.

SRSRA Resource Center (RC) Update – Don Stevenson, SRSRA

The SRSRA RC provides free employee benefit assistance to SRS retirees by working with retirees and their families, SRS prime and benefits contractors, and Medicare providers. Services include assistance in choosing and enrolling in Medicare insurance plans and in filing reimbursement claims. The RC also offers monthly Aging Into Medicare training sessions for upcoming retirees and in-person appointments with our certified Medicare counselors. The RC offices are located at 210 Newberry Street NW, Aiken, SC. The telephone message line is 803-226-0070 or contact us through our website www.srsretirees.org or srsra@srsretirees.org.

From 4/1/2024 to 04/01/2025, the SRSRA RC responded to 1082 client requests, provided Aging Into Medicare training for 221 attendees, processed over \$523,000 in Health Retirement Account claims, and conducted 316 prescription drug plan reviews resulting in over \$276,000 in savings for retirees. The current SRS retiree annual stipend allocation amounts are available on our website. Be sure to review drug plans annually.

Funding is required to maintain operations of the SRSRA RC, including Aging Into Medicare training. The Lower Savannah River Council of Governments ceased providing any financial support and offices for the RC. Due to this reduction in support, the SRSRA RC does not have sufficient funds to pay for our rental offices and the current level of client services. Changes may be necessary in the next fiscal year and beyond and are being evaluated.

SRS Update – Edwin Deshong, Deputy Manager, DOE-SROO

Mr. Deshong provided an update on the SRS key priorities, missions and progress, landlord transition, and retiree support. Key SRS CY25 priorities include 1) achieving significant construction milestones to enable cleanup and economic development including completion of the Advanced Manufacturing Collaborative Facility on USCA; 2) executing key cleanup projects to address safety risk, including installation of extended cross flow filters in the Salt Waste Processing Facility; and 3) reducing the EM footprint and facilitating future prosperity including completing the demolition of two ancillary facilities for 235-F.

The overall SRS funding profile is 47% EM (management/stabilization/disposition of nuclear materials, management/disposition of solid, liquid and transuranic wastes, spent fuel management, environmental remediation/cleanup); 51% NNSA (tritium operations/extraction, nonproliferation support, foreign fuel receipts, pit production mission, surplus Plutonium disposition); and 2% Work for Others. The major organizations onsite are SRNS, BSRA, SRMC, Centerra, UGA and the USFS-SR.

As EM completes its SRS cleanup work towards a defined end-state (~FY2037), NNSA's nuclear security mission continues to increase onsite. EM transferred landlord responsibilities to NNSA at the start of FY2025 (10/1/2024). The four major areas transferred were the SRNS Management and Operating contract, the Security/Centerra contract, the K-Area Complex, and over 500 environmental permits/agreements.

Recent key progress highlights include 1) double-stacked over 2400 canisters at Glass Waste Storage Building; 2) record production treatment of ~2.6Mgal of waste at Salt Waste Processing Facility; 3) Saltstone Disposal Unit 9 construction completion; 4) preparations for H-Canyon High Assay Low-Enriched Uranium production; 5) CD-0/1 approval for 235-F demolition; and 6) major progress on the Advanced Manufacturing Collaborative construction and completion.

DOE values the work and contributions of SRS retirees and is committed to continued engagement and open dialogue with the SRSRA and working together to find solutions to

issues through active participation in the SRSRA Annual Meetings and quarterly meetings with the SRSRA Executive Committee, accessibility to the SRNS and SRMC Benefits Teams for information and assistance, continuous improvement on claims filing and reimbursements, ensuring pension obligations are met, and advocating for the SRSRA Resource Center.

Questions and Answers Session - Moderator: Gene Dixon, SRSRA BOD

Panelists: Joe DaVia, DOE-SROO; Cary Holbert, SRNS; Donna Adubato, SRMC;

Kerri Makekau, BSRA-SRNL

Previously submitted questions were answered. A summary of the questions and answers is provided as follows:

Benefits:

- What is the plan and timetable for BSRA/SRNL to take over management of retiree benefits and how do we contact them? They have stated in emails that they are setting up a separate webpage and service center, but no timetable has been provided.

BSRA Response: BSRA/SRNL took over the administration of benefits on 1/1/2025. The HR Solutions Center was also created for active employees and retirees at that time. Their contact information is: 803-725-2772 or HRsolutions@srnl.doe.gov. This contact information will be emailed to BSRA/SRNL retirees so that they have it readily available. The Retiree Resource Center will also have this contact information.

- How do we know when our annual stipend amount has increased. What is the accounting process?

SRMC Response: Since the stipend amounts are based on the age bands, SRMC provides the new tier amount for those aging into a new band to Via Benefits in November for a January 1 effective date.

SRNS Response: SRNS would send an updated Summary Plan Description (SPD) or Summary of Material Modification notice of the change. SRNS has the SPD posted on the SRS retiree page 24/7, https://www.srs.gov/general/jobs/benefits/documents/2025/HR_SPD_2025_Final.pdf LIG Solutions (a Gallagher Company) sends an annual newsletter during Medicare Open Enrollment with the stipend information. You can call LIG at 855-662-0681. The annual stipend amount information (notional funding record) is transmitted from LIG to Health Equity in January of that year. Claims are paid weekly.

- SRMC mandated the change to a single Medicare provider. As a result, there have been significant increases in health insurance costs for that insurance. Is SRMC going to allow a stipend increase to offset the increase in health insurance costs resulting from the SRMC mandated change?

SRMC Response: SRMC does not require enrollment with Humana beyond the first year of entry into the Post-65 Medicare Plan. Only 63 people made changes for 2025. It is advisable to do research on available plans every year during Open Enrollment. The premium increases from 2024 to 2025 were largely based on the new Part D cap of \$2,000 per year.

Pension Plan:

- Did the responsibility/accountability for the Pension Plan transfer to NNSA?

DOE Response: Yes, the oversight of the pension plan transferred from DOE-EM to NNSA. In our discussions, we agreed the federal oversight styles are very similar, so there will not be a big difference to you.

- How many people are in the Pension Plan?

SRNS Response: Total of 15,689; Retirees and Beneficiaries: 12,116; Active employees: 1,489; Terminated vested: 2,084.

- Is it true that DOE is looking into the possibility of lump sum pension buy-outs? If so, please elaborate.

DOE Response: DOE is not looking into the possibility of a lump sum pension buy-out. That answer deserves more clarification: 1) DOE does not initiate changes to the pension plan. The plan sponsors (SRNS, SRMC, and BSRA) would recommend to NNSA and DOE to make lump sum pension buy-outs. 2) Contractors meet periodically with pension consultants regarding ways to improve the plan or reduce costs. Lump sum payments have been proposed a few times (four times in the past 15 years); the contractors have rejected lump sum payments each time.

- Can Bitcoin or Bitcoin ETFs be explored to fund a portion of the Pension Plan?

SRNS Response: The Outsourced Chief Investment Officer (Aon Investments USA, Inc.) does not recommend using any cryptocurrency (inclusive of Bitcoin) for funding nor investment in the Multiple Employer Pension Plan (MEPP), especially since the MEPP is ~100% funded and has significantly de-risked on the glide path over the last few years. The MEPP currently has equity diversifiers such as hedge funds, real estate, and private credit, which we view favorably in this current volatile market environment and are part of our key building blocks for asset allocation strategies.

- Our last Pension Adjustment was in 2002 for those who retired before 5/1999. Therefore, very few, retirees are still alive who have ever received a pension adjustment. Total inflation rate from 2002 to present is 77.37%. (\$1.77 in 2/2025 = \$1 of buying power in 2002). Does DOE have any legacy responsibility for evaluating

