

News from the Savannah River Site

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Principal Media Contact: DT Townsend
Savannah River Nuclear Solutions, LLC
803.952.7566
dt-lawrence.townsend@srs.gov

DOE Media Contact: Monte Volk
803.952.6283
monte.volk@srs.gov

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

SRS Public Tours: Decades of Inspiring History, Cold War Defense, Nuclear Operations and Miles of Pristine Wilderness

AIKEN, S.C. (July 20, 2017) – Registration continues for the Savannah River Site’s (SRS) 2017 Public Tour Program. Seats are available for the sitewide tours held twice each month through December at the Department of Energy (DOE) complex near Aiken, S.C.

The driving tours provide a view of the historical and operational facilities at SRS where plutonium and tritium were produced during the Cold War. Tour participants also learn about the site’s current activities and future missions.

The SRS tour program is managed by Savannah River Nuclear Solutions (SRNS) as the site’s management and operating contractor.

“The positive results received through our visitor surveys are highly appreciated,” said Elizabeth Harm, SRNS Tour Program Coordinator. “We welcome the opportunity for visitors to see how safely and securely SRNS manages and operates this important part of our national nuclear defense system. We want to continue to offer this unique experience to all who may be interested in this diverse and amazing place to visit.”

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Forest Service-Savannah River manages endangered species such as bald eagles and red-cockaded woodpeckers. SRS is also home to turkeys, alligators, white-tailed deer, armadillos, otters, coyotes and many other animal species.

The tour concludes with a stop at the Savannah River Ecology Laboratory (SREL), a research unit of the University of Georgia and part of SRS since the site was constructed. Tour participants are treated to a presentation on SREL's mission and a visit with some of the animals that call SRS home.

Today, SRS is a key DOE industrial complex responsible for environmental stewardship, while managing nuclear materials in support of our nation's national defense and U.S. nuclear non-proliferation efforts. The site also develops and deploys environmental cleanup technologies, responsible for treating nuclear and hazardous wastes left from the Cold War.

Past tour participant Chuck Yahres, Beaufort, S.C., knew very little about SRS prior to his visit, though his mother's small hometown of Dunbarton was closed to help create the 300 square mile federal nuclear reservation in the early 1950s.

"While grasping the entire operation of SRS can be challenging, especially to visitors unfamiliar with the SRS mission and history, the tour guides clear explanation of each area in relation to the overall mission enhanced my understanding and appreciation of the site and the work accomplished there," said Yahres.

"The attention to safety was most impressive and visible throughout the entire tour. I was encouraged not only by the excellent security, but SRS' research efforts to improve waste disposal and removal while protecting our environment," added Yahres. "A wonderful tour that I would highly recommend to anyone especially interested in knowing more about the development, processing, storage and monitoring of nuclear materials in support of our national defense."

The tours are free of charge and begin at the Aiken County Applied Research Center, an extension of the SRNL, located off Highway 278, near New Ellenton.

Each tour begins at 12:30 p.m. and typically ends at 4:30 p.m. Seats are filled on a first come, first served basis, up to 50 people per tour. Large groups can be accommodated by calling (803) 952-8994. Participants must be 18 years of age or older and U.S. citizens.

To register for a tour, visit www.srs.gov/general/tour/public.htm or call (803) 952-9472. More information can be obtained about SRS and the tour program at www.srs.gov.

Savannah River Nuclear Solutions is a Fluor-led company whose members are Fluor Federal Services, Newport News Nuclear and Honeywell, responsible for the management and operations of the Department of Energy's Savannah River Site, including the Savannah River National Laboratory, located near Aiken, South Carolina.

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