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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

## New Historic Sign Preserves the Past of Displaced Savannah River Site Town

AIKEN, S.C. (April 30, 2018) – The Savannah River Site (SRS) Cold War Preservation Program and the Savannah River Archeological Research Program (SRARP) partnered to install an educational kiosk in what was formerly downtown Dunbarton, one of the displaced towns that existed before the construction of the Savannah River Site in Aiken, S.C.

For the first time, a group from the public visited the new sign during an SRS Historic Tour, a part of the SRS public tour program, which is operated by Savannah River Nuclear Solutions (SRNS). Among the members of the tour group was former Dunbarton resident Howard Greene, who had not set foot in the town since he was five years old.

“Over the years, I’ve read books and watched documentaries about the Site, but being physically here has painted the whole picture,” said Greene. “The Dunbarton sign provided a vision of what used to be in the town. I was surprised to see one of the pictures on it was of my Aunt Elma. I was very close to her, so that was neat to see.”

Incorporated in 1910, Dunbarton was a railroad community named after the Dunbar family. The town contained 15 commercial buildings, 35 residences, two cotton gins, a post office, one grammar school, a church, railroad station and saw mill. Although it had electricity, Dunbarton only had two telephones.

On Nov. 28, 1950, the Atomic Energy Commission (AEC) announced that areas in Barnwell and Aiken Counties would be acquired for new production plants to be designed, built and operated by the E.I. du Pont de Nemours and Company. The AEC noted that approximately 1,500 families would need to relocate. At this time, Dunbarton had a population of approximately 300 people.



*Savannah River Site (SRS) historic tour participant Lorene Fisher views an educational sign in Barnwell County, S.C., that was designed and installed by the SRS Cold War Preservation Program and the Savannah River Archeological Research Program in Dunbarton, a town that was displaced to make way for the construction of SRS.*

# News from Savannah River Nuclear Solutions

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“I remember it being hard for my family because we were dealing with the unknown. We had less than a year to get our affairs in order,” said Greene.

The sign has a map of Dunbarton as recalled in 1981 by Margaret Anderson and Zelda King O'Bannon, former residents of Dunbarton. It also contains photographs of buildings, as well as a 1951 aerial of Dunbarton.

“It’s a good visual to introduce the story of Dunbarton to first-time visitors, validating what the residents of Dunbarton went through years ago. They were patriots who had to give up their homes, businesses, schools, friendships and family ties,” said George Wingard, Program Coordinator, Savannah River Archeological Research Program.

SRNS engineer Ed Petty, who has worked at SRS for nearly 40 years, had relatives who were displaced from Dunbarton. At the time of the AEC announcement about the future Savannah River Site, his Aunt Maggie and Uncle B.F. Anderson owned a house and store, and the new sign displays where those structures would have been.

“By no choice of their own, they made the sacrifice to leave their home, business and way of life,” said Petty, Manager, K Area Process Engineering. “It’s important that the site’s Cold War Preservation and archeological programs have gone to the trouble to map out who lived where, recognizing who these residents were so we don’t lose that history. The sign is a useful tool that can help educate the public and site employees about what happened during that turbulent time, so these people aren’t forgotten.”

The Cold War Preservation Program and SRARP have also partnered with the SRS public tour program to offer four historic tours in 2018: “From Farms to Fission.” In addition to a stop at Dunbarton, the tour features C Reactor and the site’s curation facility.

“The tour showed how Americans have made an impact to their country. I’m in awe of the technical and safety accomplishments and all that the Savannah River Site has done for the state and our nation,” added Greene.

On May 5, the SRARP will bring a large group of former Dunbarton residents to see the newly installed sign during the 65th Annual Dunbarton Reunion. This is the first time since 2001 that the group has been able to visit the location of their old town.

The SRS Cold War Preservation Program helps ensure that DOE complies with the National Historic Preservation Act through the collection and curation of artifacts and archives at SRS. The program has conducted significant research resulting in the documentation of many different areas of the site’s operations. To date, the program has completed eight thematic studies, which are illustrated narrative documents based on oral histories and other research. The studies are available at the South Carolina Department of Archives and History website: <http://shpo.sc.gov/research/Pages/conreps.aspx>.

The Savannah River Archeological Program is a division of the South Carolina Institute of Archeology and Anthropology, a unit within the College of Arts and Sciences at the University of South Carolina. The SRARP manages all archaeological and historic resources for the U.S. Department of Energy at the Savannah River Site.

*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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