

The Board Beat Magazine

A publication of the Savannah River Site Citizens Advisory Board



Savannah River Site Citizens Advisory Board

Fall 2022

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Savannah River Site Citizens Advisory Board



Bobbie Williams, CAB Administration & Outreach Chair, presents at the Teaching Radiation, Energy, and Technology (TREAT) workshop in Barnwell, SC on October 13, 2022.

Message from the Chair

As we approach the end of the year, all official events of the new CAB – full board meetings, committee meetings, and member orientation – have been in person. And CAB membership has rebounded to nearly full strength, with a current roster of 20 members out of a possible maximum of 25.

There is a lot of work to do. The CAB, in general, is charged with advising DOE-Environmental Management on issues related to cleanup of the environmental legacy of decades of nuclear weapons development and nuclear energy research at the Savannah River Site. The CAB's Annual Workplan, which presents specific topical priorities for the coming year, has been full. The 2022 Workplan included, among many other topics, consideration of the SRS Solid Waste Program via the Nuclear Materials Committee; salt and sludge batch processing via the Waste Management Committee; environmental management systems via the Facilities Disposition and Site Remediation Committee; and member leadership opportunities via the Administrative and Outreach Committee.

And there's more. The CAB has reviewed and considered seemingly good news that DOE is accelerating the removal of 29 tons of spent nuclear fuel from SRS's L-Basin storage area. Reports indicate the process will take 12 to 13 years to complete and save taxpayers \$4 billion. It has also continued its interest in the progress of the Salt Waste Processing Facility, which began full operations in 2021. Operations are off to a solid start, but, unsurprisingly for such a complex operation, there are bugs yet to work out. Among some "low hanging fruit," SRS is positioned to deactivate and decommission (D&D) a number of excess onsite facilities that no longer have a use under DOE's mission if adequate funding is provided. But it is a reasonable question as to whether the CAB should advocate for that funding or funding directed toward projects providing greater but more long-term risk reduction. And, finally, the CAB is taking a look at itself by considering some aspects of how the full board and committees meet and how potential changes might increase efficiency and broader participation by CAB members and our communities.

There's exciting work to do during this exciting time to be involved with the CAB, whether as a member, a DOE'er or contractor, or, importantly, a fellow resident of one of the 17 SRS stakeholder counties. Come one, come all! The SRS CAB is back in business.



NEWS

Original Publication from srs.gov

SRS Completes Deactivation in Building Used to Produce Fuel for Space Program

(Aiken, SC - September 22, 2022) Department of Energy (DOE) Environmental Management (EM) workers at the Savannah River Site have completed deactivation of a former material storage building containing residual hold-up of plutonium (PU)- 238 oxide, once used to power deep space missions.

The two story, blast resistant, windowless, reinforced concrete building, known as Building 235-F, have been inactive for 25 years. One section of Building 235-F, known as the Plutonium Fuel Form (PuFF) Facility was used to make fuel spheres and pellets out of Pu-238 to provide heat to electrically power long-term, deep-space missions, such as Galileo, Ulysses and Cassini.



“Deactivation of 235-F began in 2019,” said Building 235-F Project Manager Jeff Hasty. “Deactivation will prepare the facility for Long Term Safe Storage, which is an end state relatively free of non-radiological hazards, with acceptable radiological risks, and minimal continuing surveillance and maintenance.”

Hasty also explained that the deactivation will also prepare the facility for eventual decommissioning. “The deactivation project included the reconfiguration/shutdown of the ventilation system; isolation of all utilities (water, steam, power, etc.); removing contamination or using a permanent coating, called a fixative, that prevents contamination from spreading outside of the process enclosures and removing non-radiological hazardous material (i.e., lead, oils, process water, etc.) This shutdown/isolation will greatly reduce the cost for surveillance and maintenance (S&M) of Building 235-F during Safe Storage.”

The DOE & SRNS have worked with the South Carolina Department of Environmental Control (SCDHEC) and the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) to finalize plans for the decommissioning of Building 235-F. The end state determination is complete and includes approval from both EPA and SCDHEC. Based on the risk to the workers, protection of human health, environmental impacts, and cost, it was decided that grouting the process areas and emplacement of a durable sloped roof was the recommended disposition path. Decommissioning will be a multi-year project that is planned to commence in fiscal year 2023. The decommissioning of building 235-F will be similar to the decommissioning of the former reactor facilities P & R areas at SRS.

“We are pleased to see another SRS facility hearing decommissioning,” said DOE Nuclear Materials Program Manager Bert Crapse. “This helps further the Department of Energy’s mission of footprint reduction at SRS and reduces to risk to workers, the public and the environment.”

SRS Liquid Waste Team Reduces Risk, Cost With Spare Equipment Rebuilds

Original Publication from [srs.gov](https://www.srs.gov)

Aiken, SC (JULY 28, 2022) The U.S. Department of Energy's Office of Environmental Management (EM) is reducing radiological exposure, reducing cost, and minimizing facility downtime at the Salt Waste Processing Facility (SWPF) at the Savannah River Site (SRS) by using existing facilities to rebuild critical equipment onsite. SWPF is key to processing the majority of tank waste at SRS. Treating 4 million gallons of tank waste at the site is an EM 2022 priority.

Savannah River Mission Completion (SRMC), the SRS liquid waste contractor, optimized how SWPF contactors and manipulators are maintained. SWPF uses centrifugal contactors in the solvent extraction process, and the SWPF laboratory uses manipulators to handle process samples and equipment within its radioactive cell. Both contactors and manipulators require periodic maintenance and rebuilding.



SRMC has improved the repair process by packaging and transporting the used equipment to existing onsite facilities to decontaminate and rebuild them, producing functional spares. The contactors are now being decontaminated and rebuilt in the 299-H facility, which was used historically to decontaminate and rebuild similar contactors from the previous interim salt processing facility. The manipulators are now being rebuilt at the Defense Waste Processing Facility (DWPF) manipulator shop, which is used to decontaminate and rebuild similar manipulators used at DWPF.

SRMC President and Program Manager Dave Olson said rethinking how critical SWPF equipment is maintained is a sign of a continuous improvement mindset.

“It was an easy decision to use existing decontamination facilities instead of creating a duplicate capability inside the Salt Waste Processing Facility,” Olson said. “Not only does it reflect our focus on cost savings, it demonstrates our teamwork since the repairs are done by experienced staff from SWPF and the repair facilities at DWPF and 299-H.”

Using refurbished spare contactors and manipulators instead of buying brand-new is a significant cost savings for EM, according to Jim Folk, DOE-Savannah River Assistant Manager for waste disposition.

“DOE is committed to creating solutions that reduce risk, promote efficiency, and incorporate lessons learned, all while maintaining good stewardship for taxpayers,” Folk said. “Minimizing facility downtime by having available rebuilt spare equipment means we can stay focused on completing the Savannah River liquid waste mission.”

THE SAVANNAH RIVER SITE

SRS is a 310-square-mile site located near Aiken, SC, on the Savannah River, which borders South Carolina and Georgia. SRS covers 198,046 acres, including parts of Aiken, Barnwell and Allendale counties in South Carolina.



September Full Board Meeting Savannah, GA





The SRS
Citizens
Advisory
Board is
always
looking
for new
members!

Do you live in an area affected by cleanup activities at SRS?

Would you be interested in learning about SRS and working as a team to help inform local communities?

If the answer is “yes,” you would be perfect for the SRS Citizens Advisory Board. We are currently recruiting new members to the CAB for the next term.



Please fill out an application at: <http://cab.srs.gov>
You can email us at: srscitizensadvisoryboard@srs.gov

DID YOU SEE IT?

Written by: Charles A. Hilton

We sometimes feel there is a deluge of information coming our way as members of the CAB. From detailed outlines of presentations to the actual presentations themselves, it is easy to miss small exciting tidbits of information. I also miss these tidbits sometimes because other members of our CAB fortunately did not and I find myself frantically going through emails and presentations to come up to speed!



One such tidbit I found was in the Sept. 14, 2022 email of SRS Daily News Clips. In that newsclip was an Aiken Standard article discussing the Voyager I and II space probes that recently marked forty-five years in space. From my understanding there is a lot of junk floating around in outer space that we have put there without any reasonable expectation of cleaning it up when it no longer serves any purpose – dead rockets, boosters, satellites, etc..

What was significant about these probes was they are still operating and communicating. And how is that being accomplished? From Plutonium 238 produced at SRS back in the mid 1970's.

Sometimes many in our community and in reality, in the country, lose sight of what was done at SRS. Yes, we all know it was "The Bomb Plant" (it never produced a bomb – only components) but fail to realize the research and other production processes that occurred here. One of the products was the aforementioned Pu238 as well as products such as medical isotopes.

I am always proud to see articles such as these which extol the tremendous work for good that was done at SRS.

CAB SCHEDULE 2022

FULL BOARD MEETING

November 14-15 Augusta University
Student Activities Center Ballroom
2500 Walton Way
Augusta, GA 30904



COMMITTEE SCHEDULE

October 25th

4:00 - 5:00 PM Facilities Disposition &
Site Remediation

5:15 - 6:15 PM Nuclear Materials

6:30 - 7:30 PM Waste Management

December 13th

4:00 - 5:00 PM Facilities Disposition &
Site Remediation

5:15 - 6:15 PM Nuclear Materials

6:30 - 7:30 PM Waste Management



Savannah River Site Citizens Advisory Board



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Key criteria for Board membership includes a time commitment and the willingness to study the issues and work toward clear, implementable recommendations.

To apply for membership to the Citizens Advisory Board, please call 1-800-249-8155, or visit the CAB website and complete an application at: cab.srs.gov

Please call, mail, fax, or email your comments and suggestions to:

James Tanner

Board Administrator

SRS Citizens Advisory Board

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Building 730-B, Room 1185

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