

Savannah River Site

Citizens Advisory Board

Board Beat

Welcome

Welcome to the first issue of "Board Beat," the newsletter of the Savannah River Site Citizens Advisory Board. We have launched this publication as part of our continuing efforts to inform the public about the work of the Board and the important issues facing the Site and the nearby communities.

We hope you will find "Board Beat" interesting and informative. Please let us know what we can do to achieve this goal. A phone call, fax, or e-mail to Dawn Haygood will help get the "Beat" going in the right direction.

phone (803) 952-6971 or 1-800-249-8155
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We'll adjust our format and schedule in response to your suggestions. Again, welcome and we hope you enjoy "Board Beat".

Ann Loadholt, Chairperson
SRS Citizens Advisory Board

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Making Headway:

An SRS Citizens Advisory Board Progress Report

The Savannah River Site Citizens Advisory Board (SRS CAB) continues to provide advice to the Department of Energy and its regulators on activities to hasten cleanup and more effectively prioritize and manage a huge inventory of radioactive waste at SRS. With an emphasis on cost effectiveness and just plain common sense, the SRS CAB tackles about a dozen projects each year and has witnessed firsthand what a difference the public can make! Ann Loadholt, SRS Citizens Advisory Board Chair says, "Our role is to provide the government with a sense of community priorities and community values. How would the average citizen prioritize cleanup risks at SRS? How does the region feel about the SRS role in carrying out current and future public policy? Where can citizen input, or plain common sense, help make an improvement? These are CAB questions."

Notable progress has been made by the Department of Energy, the Environmental Protection Agency, the South Carolina Department of Health and Environmental Control, and their contractors in the past few years. Here are a few highlights:

- over 150 of the 470 waste units identified at SRS, have been remediated or determined to require no further action
- The Defense Waste Processing Facility met its annual goal of filling 150 canisters
- the Consolidated Incineration Facility began operations in April and to date has burned over 57,000 pounds of solid waste and 15,000 gallons of liquid wastes

- 6,500 of 28,000 drums of transuranic waste have been retrieved and processed for storage
- 822 foreign research reactor spent fuel assemblies have been received • from nine countries

Through open discussions and a decision-making process that encompasses a spectrum of individuals from non-technical members of the general public to experts in the field, the laudable contributions of the SRS CAB continue to assist with this progress.

For example, SRS workers recently closed the first million-gallon waste tank, the first decommissioning of its kind in the United States. See

"High Level Waste Tank Closure is First in Nation" on page 4. Three adjoining tanks in the underground cluster are expected to be closed in the next 2-4 years. The SRS CAB recommended DOE establish criteria for closure of the 51 high-level waste tanks in January 1996. In less than two years, and at a cost of about \$5 million, Tank 20 was officially closed in July 1997. Work is underway at Tank 17 and a more recent Board recommendation requested that the closure of the remaining tanks in the first cluster be accelerated and include the closure of an evaporator as well.

The SRS CAB has been involved in the budget process since 1995 and every year studies how activities are prioritized at SRS. As always, the health and safety of the public, workers and the environment rank as a top priority for the Board and the general public. Unlike previous recommendations, however, this year the Board recommended that regulatory compliance should not be listed as a separate criteria within the prioritization model since it is inherent within the health and safety criteria. DOE agreed with this idea, revised the "consequence value matrix"

within the budget model and developed new weighting factors based on the new rankings, thereby making the process more sensitive to stakeholder concerns. The Board also urged DOE to re-evaluate resources being allocated to low risk items in the FY99 budget and re-allocate these dollars to higher risk items and encouraged SRS to ensure that new missions are financed by mission sponsors. One result of these recommendations that significantly impact SRS operations, is that beginning in FY1999, nuclear materials stabilization will be given a higher priority than the receipt and storage of spent nuclear fuel rods, an activity which may not receive funding. It also reinforces that DOE meet its legal obligations within the tri-party *Federal Facility Agreement* and that these obligations should not be renegotiated just because of budget shortfalls.



Tank 20 closure with grout at 75% capacity

Commenting on the Notice of Intent to Prepare an Environmental Impact Statement on aluminum-clad spent nuclear fuel at SRS, the Board continues to vigorously recommend that DOE fully evaluate chemical processing as a viable alternative for managing spent fuel. The Board contends that this is the one course of action that is most likely to lead to the removal of wastes from South Carolina. Until other technologies are proven effective for managing spent fuel, the Board does not want to see the shutdown of capable facilities, such as the SRS canyons.

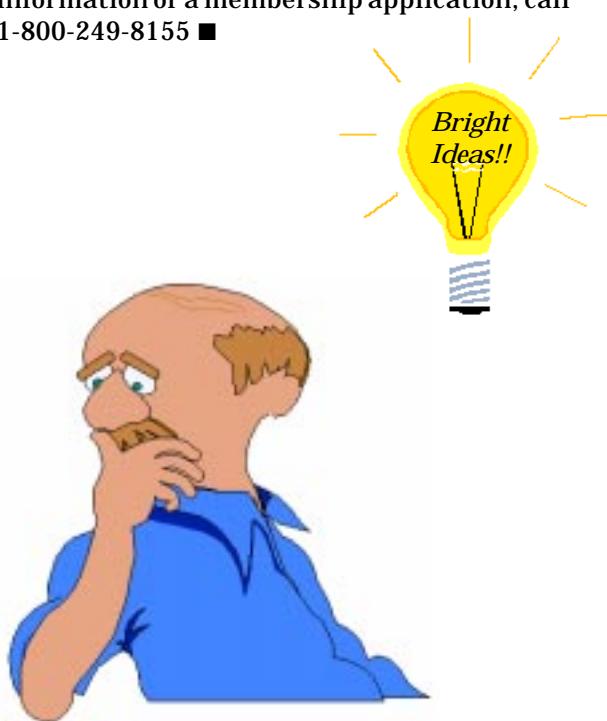
In 1996, the Board showed its support for a plutonium storage and disposition program at SRS as long as safety, security and cost effectiveness are emphasized. "We have to tell people why the plutonium mission is a good one, said DOE-SR Manager, Dr. Mario Fiori. " I would like to consider Savannah River as the plutonium center of excellence for DOE." To ensure that the public was informed, the Board hosted an educational forum along with several other local organizations. This forum served to increase public awareness of the plutonium disposition issues

continued on page 3...

facing the nation and provided expert insights—in an objective format—on the various disposition options being considered. A year later, DOE announced a combined approach to plutonium disposition—immobilization and a mixed oxide option—with SRS receiving the Rocky Flats portions of the surplus plutonium. A similar educational forum was again hosted by the Board in 1997 regarding the temporary storage, treatment and disposition of DOE owned aluminum-clad spent nuclear fuel from domestic and foreign research reactors. See the Forum article on page 7.

Recently, the SRS CAB has focused efforts on DOE planning documents such as the “Accelerating Cleanup: Focus on 2006” National and SRS plans. Other topics of focus include early actions at SRS waste units, decommissioning activities, environmental management integration and a draft study on the nonproliferation implications of spent fuel management alternatives.

The SRS CAB was formed in 1994 to provide advice to DOE and its regulators. All walks of life are represented, from the public-at-large to environmental activists, workers, college professors and small business owners. The Board meets six times a year and standing committees meet monthly. Currently accepting applications for membership, the Board invites your questions, thoughts and ideas. For more information or a membership application, call 1-800-249-8155 ■



Board Beat

Defense Waste Processing Facility



Canisters filled
as of 10/1/97

228

Self-Evaluation Identifies Achievements & Opportunities

Board members responding to the 1997 self-evaluation identified the Spent Nuclear Fuel Forum as the major accomplishment of the year. This was consistent with findings of the 1996 evaluation which ranked the Plutonium Forum as the major achievement last year. Other leading accomplishments were the prioritization of the FY 1999 budget with emphasis on nuclear materials stabilization rather than spent fuel processing and waste tank closure.

Public outreach continues to be important to the Board and expanded outreach was a major objective identified for next year. Focus on 2006 plans; becoming more involved in providing input to DOE national agenda setting, priorities and resource allocation; and better understanding of prioritization issues also received high priorities.

Upgrading the process for selecting Board members was the major improvement suggested by the consensus of the Board members responding to the evaluation. ■

(This self-evaluation was based on a questionnaire submitted to Board members.) ■

High Level Waste Tank Closure is First in Nation

The Savannah River Site cleanup program achieved a major milestone when high level waste Tank 20 was closed in July. Tank 20 was the first waste tank closed at SRS and the first in the nation.

The closure was hailed by Secretary of Energy Federico Peña who said: "Aggressive cleanup of the Cold War's legacy and finding lasting solutions for disposal of nuclear waste are among my priorities as Secretary of Energy. The closure of Tank 20 is a positive and tangible milestone toward eventual removal of these waste forms. I congratulate the SRS team and look forward to the day when the 51st tank is closed."

Tank 20 is one of the 51 high level waste tanks at SRS. The 1.3 million gallon tank was built in 1958 and first received highly radioactive liquid waste in 1960.

The SRS CAB recommended in January 1996 that criteria for tank farm closure be established and a closure plan be drafted. The plans establish a precedent for waste tank closure as agreed to by the Site and the SCDHEC. Field work to prepare Tank 20 for closure began in October 1996. The tank was emptied and washed down. A small "heel" of residual waste was mixed with a cement-like substance called "grout" which filled the tank. The grout hardens to contain any residual activity in the tank.

Tank closure efforts have moved to Tank 17 and the CAB recently recommended that closure of Tank 17 and 2 other tanks in the same cluster be accelerated and that a nearby evaporator be closed at the same time.

Waste tank closure will reduce costs for tank farm monitoring and minimize the potential for environmental impacts. ■

 **Membership Application**

If you would like to be considered for the SRS Citizens Advisory Board, please read the enclosed Bylaws and then complete the steps below. If you have any questions, please call Dawn Haygood at (803) 725-9688 or 1-800-249-8155.

- 1) Submit two letters of recommendation from associates or co-workers which attest to your qualifications for Board membership. Ask them to evaluate your potential contribution to the Board.
- 2) Fill in the information requested by this form. (Don't forget to fill in the backs of the pages, too.)
- 3) Carefully read the Conflict of Interest information on Page 4. If you have any question about your eligibility, state your concern.
- 4) Return form and letters to: Dawn Haygood, Westinghouse Savannah River Company Building 742A, Room 190, Aiken, SC 29808

First Name _____ Last Name _____
Name _____
Address _____
Street Address _____
City _____ State _____ Zip Code _____ County _____
City _____ State _____ Zip _____ County _____
Phone _____ Home Phone _____
Area Code/Work Phone _____ Area Code/Home Phone _____

Demographic Information
Completion of this section is optional. However, it will help the Administrative Subcommittee ensure that the Board is truly representative of the population. To meet the cultural and geographic membership criteria contained in the Bylaws, the Subcommittee needs certain demographic information about applicants. The information in this section will be used for that purpose only.

Sex: Male Female
Race: White African American Other Demographic Other _____
(please specify)
Age: _____
County: _____ State: _____

How did you hear about the Citizens Advisory Board?
 Newspaper advertisement Newspaper _____
 Radio advertisement Radio _____
 Friend or relative Other _____

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Membership Campaign in Progress

The annual campaign to recruit new potential members for the CAB is in progress. The campaign will run from September 22 through November 21.

We are interested in recruiting candidates who are willing to devote their time and energy to the work of the Board while, at the same time, meeting the rigorous requirements for diversity established by our Bylaws.

Finding good people is essential if we are to have a pool of qualified replacements for members who rotate off the Board or leave for other reasons.

If you are a potential candidate or know a potential candidate, please call Dawn Haygood at 1-800-249-8155 for a membership application. Or, you may get an application from our Web site at www.srs.gov/general/people/srs-cab. ■

The SRS Citizen Advisory Board is accepting applications through November 21 for the 1998 elections!

Focus on DOE Waste Management

This Issue: Transuranic Waste

Transuranic (TRU) wastes are wastes that contain alpha-emitting isotopes with atomic numbers higher than uranium (92) and half lives greater than 20 years. Alpha radiation is readily shielded but the biological effects on tissue are most damaging. Thus, the most serious risk associated with TRU wastes would be swallowing or inhaling small particles. TRU wastes were generated at many sites in the DOE weapons complex, including Savannah River. Additional volumes of TRU wastes are being created as by-products of current environmental remediation, decontamination, and decommissioning activities at many of these sites. Approximately 105,430 cubic meters (3,726,950 cubic feet) of legacy TRU waste remain and another 27,078 cubic meters (957,207 cubic feet) will be generated in the next decade.



TRU waste being assayed in preparation for shipment to WIPP

The Department of Energy is pursuing several strategies to reduce costs of disposing of the large volume of TRU wastes:

- Consolidate TRU waste storage from sites with small inventories to sites with large inventories (including Savannah River)
- Improve transportation systems to overcome current size, weight, and other restrictions
- Pursue waste acceptance changes to allow disposition of all TRU waste
- Use mobile systems to prepare, package, treat, and load waste to avoid building redundant plants at several sites
- Accelerate TRU waste shipments to permit early closure of the Waste Isolation Pilot Plant (WIPP)

Implementation of these strategies is estimated to save \$2.5 billion from current baseline strategies.

For SRS, these strategies would result in:

- Shipment of 2,943 cubic meters to Idaho for treatment
- Shipment of 372 cubic meters of Pu-239 TRU waste to Hanford for repacking and/or certification for shipment to WIPP
- Receipt of 2.5 cubic meters of Pu-238 TRU waste from Hanford
- Receipt of 291 cubic meters of TRU waste from Mound
- Shipment of 4,598 cubic meters to WIPP

The Board has continued to address TRU waste issues by passing 4 recommendations on these issues since March 1995. This attention will continue as the disposition strategies evolve and are deployed. ■

Transuranic Waste Volumes Cubic Meters

	<u>Inventory</u>	<u>Generation</u>
Hanford	16,261	7,972
Idaho	64,816	0
Los Alamos	8,563	1,266
Oak Ridge	2,205	580
Rocky Flats	1,303	13,525
Savannah River	10,159	3,389
Others	2,117	346
Total	105,430	27,078

Assistant Secretary Al Alm Visits CSRA

Al Alm, Assistant Secretary for the DOE Environmental Management (EM) Program, paid his second visit to the Central Savannah River Area (CSRA) on July 15th. Secretary Alm spoke to a large and very interested audience at the North Augusta Community Center.

John Pescosolido of DOE-SR set the stage for the evening by outlining the national and SRS discussion drafts of Accelerating Cleanup: Focus on 2006.

Dr. Mario Fiori, Manager of the Savannah River Operations Office, welcomed the crowd and committed DOE-SR and its contractors to the 2006 plan. Dr. Fiori intends that SRS will be "the site of choice" for future missions. Four factors contribute to making SRS the site of choice: safety record, cost effectiveness, operating facilities, and community support. He recognized the contributions of time and effort made by the SRS Citizens Advisory Board.

Assistant Secretary Alm explained his vision of cleaning up as many sites as possible within 10 years to reduce fixed costs which currently average \$4 billion per year. The plan is to close most sites by 2006, leaving only Hanford, Idaho, Oak Ridge, and Savannah River with cleanup missions beyond that date.

Comments from the floor expressed concern about the viability of privatization initiatives which figure strongly in the 2006 Plan. Mr. Alm responded that recent problems experienced by Duratek at Savannah River and the Pit 9 Project at Idaho would have been much more costly to the taxpayers if they had not been privatized.

In response to other comments, Mr. Alm repeated the importance of technological innovation and

productivity improvements in achieving stretch goals essential to the 2006 Plan.

The audience was very supportive of Assistant Secretary Alm's vision and appreciative of his willingness to come and answer questions. ■



Al Alm

Member Spotlight



Bill Adams: A retired U.S. Air Force Lieutenant Colonel, Bill has also worked with the Tennessee Game and Fish Commission and served as Vice President of the Agricultural Research and Development Institute in Washington, D.C. He was also program manager of the Science Education Directorate of the National Science Foundation for 15 years. Currently, Bill resides in Hilton Head, S.C. where he spends his time as a real estate broker and developer.



Thomas W. Costikyan: A retired U.S. Navy Special Weapons Command Supervising Officer, Tom has also worked in the petroleum industry, where he held positions with technical and commercial management responsibilities. His home is Dataw Island, S.C., a community downstream from the Site, which draws its water from the Savannah River. Tom is the Nuclear Materials Management Subcommittee Chair.



Mary Elfner: Mary is water conservation planner with the Savannah/Chatam County Metropolitan Planning Commission and is involved in regional water issues. She holds degrees in environmental studies and policy and chemistry. Mary has also held positions as a fish and wildlife biologist and a land condition trend analysis field crew leader. She resides in Savannah, GA.



Brendolyn Jenkins: Brendolyn is the president of the Jenkins Memorial Chapel, Inc. She has studied with the American Death Education Counseling Service, the National Foundation of Funeral Service and the St. Joseph Hospital Hospice to receive certification for grief and bereavement counseling. She also provides parenting classes for parents of high risk students and has helped establish various parenting programs. She is the Vice Chairperson of the SRS CAB. Brendolyn lives in Aiken, S.C.



Thelonious Jones: Thelonious has a degree in criminal justice and a diploma in legal research. He has also worked as a drug counselor and police officer. Mr. Jones serves as the Budget Subcommittee Chair. He resides in Augusta, GA.



Kathryn May: Kathryn is a school teacher who specializes in environmental education. She has also served as an instructor in the Georgia Conservancy's teachers workshops on environmental education. In 1993, she was presented the Georgia Conservation Educator of the Year Award. Ms. May co-chairs the Environmental Remediation & Waste Management Subcommittee.

Spent Nuclear Fuel

Citizens Advisory Board Sponsors Forum

The Savannah River Site Citizens Advisory Board spearheaded a multi-sponsored educational effort for the public in June of this year by hosting an educational forum on the transportation, treatment, storage and final disposition of DOE-owned spent nuclear fuel (SNF).

The "Spent Nuclear Fuel Educational Forum: Managing Highly Radioactive DOE-Owned Spent Nuclear Fuel", was held Thursday, June 12, 10 a.m. to 9 p.m. at the Augusta Technical Institute. The four-month planning effort lead by CAB members Karen Patterson and Tom Costikyan included support from Citizens for Environmental Justice, American Nuclear Society, Physicians for Social Responsibility, League of Women Voters, Citizens for Nuclear Technology Awareness, Sierra Club, Health Physics Society, Georgia/South Carolina Technical College Consortium, Paine College, Augusta State University, Education, Research and Development Association of Georgia (ERDA) and South Carolina Universities Research and Educational Foundation (SCUREF).

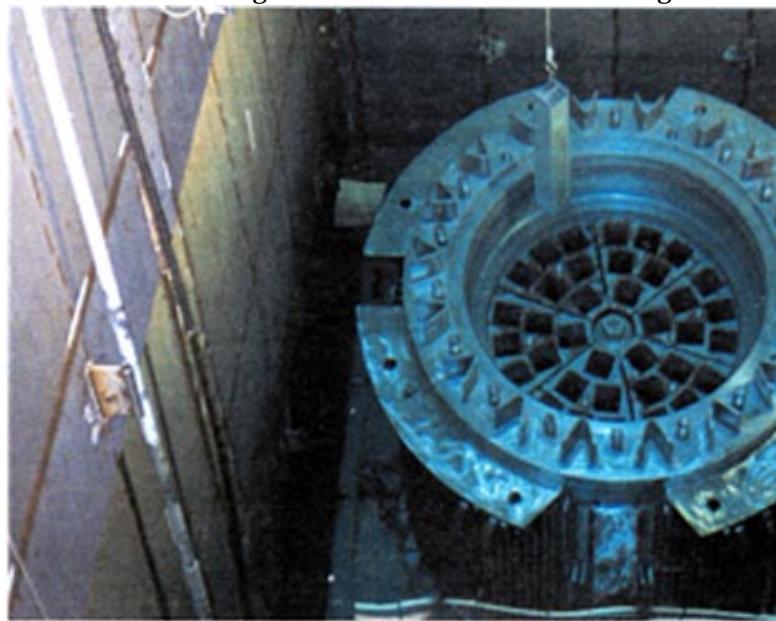
The agenda highlighted prominent speakers from all over the country who are experts in the management of spent nuclear fuel. Sponsors felt it important to give citizens in the 200-mile radius of

SRS a chance to hear all sides of the issue. In addition to segments on transportation, treatment, and final disposition of SNF, the day also included a morning and evening "Introduction to Spent Nuclear Fuel" session, an evening panelist discussion, a day-long exhibit program, and a reception. The meeting goal was to provide balanced information to the public in advance of the Savannah River Site Spent Nuclear Fuel draft environmental impact statement to aid in informed participation.

Additional efforts by the forum co-sponsors to extend educational efforts in the two-state area and beyond included satellite telecast of the forum to locations in Atlanta and Savannah, Georgia and Columbia and Charleston, South Carolina, development of a video of the meeting for public distribution and creation of a SNF-specific Internet homepage.

If you would like a videotape of the entire meeting, please contact Donna Martin, Savannah River Site Public Involvement, 1-800-249-8155. To stay abreast of SRS-related SNF Activities, and to see specific information on the forum's goal, agenda and presentations, visit the CAB web site at www.srs.gov under "People, Partners & Programs" and look for the SNF Forum home page. ■

Foreign research reactor element being removed from the shipping cask



Upcoming Board Meetings

1997

November	17	Barnwell, S.C., First Baptist Church
	18	Barnwell County State Park, Blackville, SC

1998

January	26-27	Holiday Inn Ocean Front	Hilton Head, SC
March	23-24	Holiday Inn - Folly Island	Charleston, SC
May	18-19	DeSoto Hilton	Savannah, GA
July	27-28	USC-Aiken	Aiken, SC
September	28-29	TBD	Augusta, GA
November	16-17	TBD	Columbia, SC

Generally, meetings are held on Monday from 6-9 p.m. and Tuesday from 8:30 a.m.-4 p.m.

"Board Beat" is published semi-annually by the Savannah River Site Citizens Advisory Board. Content is provided by Board members and support staff. Please send your comments and suggestions to:

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