

Recommendation 367  
Stakeholder Awareness Study

**Background**

Based on news reports and community interactions, it is apparent that many people in the Central Savannah River Area do not have a basic understanding of what the Savannah River Site (SRS) is, what its missions are, and how it is organized. Anecdotal evidence suggests that people in the community understand that SRS has a number of missions and that it is overseen by the Department of Energy (DOE). Otherwise, it is not clear that our community understands for instance, that the primary mission of Environment Management (EM) is cleanup or how successful the site is in its various missions. Communications from DOE about EM efforts often focus on individual contractor accomplishments and not the site. It seems likely that confusion about activities at SRS undermines confidence in DOE-SR's activities and even fuels community fears about what many long-time local residents call "the bomb plant."

The CAB believes that DOE-SR needs to take an active role in combating community misconceptions about SRS through persistent and targeted public outreach. In order to do that, the department must understand the community's level of interest in SRS, its level of concern about SRS, and how community outreach can be improved. The Nevada Site Specific Advisory Board made such an effort in 2018, which resulted in "Final Work Plan #7 Report."<sup>1</sup> The effort resulted in multiple recommendations about ways to improve public outreach. Top recommendations related to outreach to local civic organizations, the use of social and online media, and focusing communications on communities closer to sensitive activities. The results of the Nevada study were made available to the CAB and the general public.

**Recommendation**

The Citizens' Advisory Board (CAB) recommends that DOE-SR fund a scientifically valid and reliable baseline survey of the stakeholder population in order to ascertain its understanding of SRS EM activities, to measure its interest in and concerns about SRS, and to determine efficient and effective channels for SRS EM outreach to stakeholders.

Given the importance of confidence in the findings, i.e., achieving scientific validity and reliability, the survey should be designed (with substantial CAB and DOE-SR input) and fielded by a credible research organization (such as a local university) and employ a sample and sample size that will yield a useful margin of error (e.g., +/- 5 percentage points) and confidence interval.

---

<sup>1</sup> [https://www.nnss.gov/NSSAB/docs/Recommendations/R\\_FY18/Community Analysis Report FINAL 7-18-2018.pdf](https://www.nnss.gov/NSSAB/docs/Recommendations/R_FY18/Community%20Analysis%20Report%20FINAL%207-18-2018.pdf)