

SRSRA NEWSLETTER

For SRS Retiree Association Members

Bob & Pat Stokes, Editors

Volume 14

August, 2002

GRAHAM ANNOUNCES PENSION ADJUSTMENT FOR WSRC TEAM RETIREES

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Chairman's Letter

SRSRA pension adjustment is approved effective September 2002 – Please join me in congratulating your Pension Adjustment Committee – Tom Greene, Bill Quinn, Fred Cavanaugh, and Bob Stokes for a job well done. This accomplishment was an intensive 4-year effort. It took considerable support from Third District Rep. Lindsey Graham (R-Seneca) who made the commitment and spearheaded the congressional effort and Mr. Bob Pedde, President of WSRC, and his WSRC team who created the budget line item for DOE approval. In addition, support from DOESR and HQ staffs helped make it all happen. On behalf of the SRSRA Board of Directors I want to thank all those involved. The achievement of this pension increase was a major objective of SRSRA. (See additional details of the pension committee's activities in the next article.)

The pension adjustment is an example of what retirees working together can accomplish. With that in mind, I ask you to please invite any other retirees you may know who are not SRSRA members to join our organization---the greater our numbers, the more our influence.

The Savannah River Site has kicked off its United Way campaign. Look for more details in the mail in the weeks ahead. You can participate in community projects planned for September 20th, 27th and October 4th, by calling Jack Witters (208-6667, or home 827-2932) or Marvin Peak at (208-0793).

Your Board of Directors has been busy this summer. Included in this newsletter, you will find an exchange of letters with Governor Hodges. Let me to take this opportunity to explain why your Board of Directors found it necessary to write to the Governor. During our May meeting, we discussed the news release that Governor

Hodges had initiated a lawsuit against DOE to block plutonium shipments to SRS. Many of the Board members agreed with the need to get a commitment from DOE regarding MOX and the needed SRS processing facilities for plutonium programs. However, we strongly disagreed with court action to accomplish these objectives. Our concerns, described in the May 20, 2002 letter (attached) were based on the following:

With DOE and the WSRC Team in the middle of FY2003 budget negotiations, the timing of this litigation could not have been worse. We had word that DOE would not move on finalizing the FY2003 budget until the court case was resolved. Delays in SRS budget resolution could have resulted in SRS being left out of the \$800 million dollar accelerated cleanup budget. DOE had already started to distribute the funding with a very large portion reportedly going to Hanford. We were told that funding for the SRS Retiree Association pension adjustment depended upon the SRS level of funding.

Use of the Courts is a delaying tactic often used by national antinuclear organizations. We believed that Governor Hodges did not have a chance of winning this case and that he was being misled by the antinuclear faction. (Hodges has already lost in the local Federal court and now in the Appeals Court as well. Next step: Supreme Court ----a continuing waste of SC taxpayer's money!)

We offered to provide technical support to the governor on this issue because news releases were technically incorrect and it was clear that the governor's technical direction and other support was from interests outside of South Carolina. We asked for a meeting with Governor Hodges to air our concerns, tell him who we are and propose how we could provide a non-political, balanced technical basis for continued negotiations with DOE.

Read the letters attached and draw your own conclusions. Fortunately, the Governor's lawsuit did not derail the site's budget or our pension adjustment. We thank the Governor for his timely responses to our concerns. However, we are disappointed that he did not accept our offer to meet with him and provide technical support on the plutonium issue. We decided to discontinue offering our help to the Governor on this subject because he had wasted his negotiating power through his misguided court action.

Sincerely,

Dave Cowfer, Chairman
Savannah River Site Retirees Association

Pension Adjustment Arrives

The Pension Adjustment Committee reports that the very encouraging comments at the annual meeting from both WSRC President Bob Pedde and Congressman Lindsey Graham have resulted in concrete results for this report. The news release from Congressman Graham's office announcing the pension increase is included in this newsletter following this update.

The following update was provided to Tom Greene by Congressman Graham's Chief of Staff on July 2 and dealt with the FY2003 SRS budget issue. Resolution of the SRS budget was key to reaching a satisfactory conclusion in our pursuit of a pension increase for the WSRC employees who have retired since April 1, 1989:

“ As far as an update for the Pension Adjustment, it looks like tomorrow DOE will announce that SRS will receive \$216M in accelerated cleanup funds (The \$216M was confirmed by media reports.) The significance of this is that

SRS will finally have, for the most part, their final number for FY03. At the same time, we have been working with the folks at the Site on a resolution to the Pension Adjustment issue. They have been good to work with and I believe trying very hard to make this happen. I understand that they have responded to Lindsey's (Graham) request by working with DOE to determine the appropriate method to award the Pension Adjustment, in the event we are able to work it out.

Believe me, I am hopeful that we can get this issue resolved soon, Lindsey asks (about) it first thing every week when he returns to Washington. We are convinced of SRSRA arguments for the Pension Adjustment, but we want to make sure it withstands scrutiny."

In discussions with WSRC officials, they indicated that we needed to be patient while they work through budget issues. The above statements were positive; and when the site management and DOE resolved the 2003 budget process, the pension increase became a reality.

The SRSRA had consistently taken a position that a pension adjustment for SRS retirees should be based on fairness and equity issues. SRS retirees are no less worthy than our fellow retirees at Sandia and Oak Ridge. Those other DOE Sites have had similarly tight budgets and have found ways to provide a much-needed pension adjustment. As members may recall, we asked for a pension adjustment identical to the one granted to Oak Ridge retirees on 4/1/01 but updated for SRS to compensate for the passage of time.

At our annual meeting this year, both Congressman Graham and Mr. Pedde indicated their support for a Pension Adjustment. Their actions to help bring this pension increase to you have demonstrated the sincerity of their promises in March 2002. The pension increase for our WSRC retirees satisfies the committee's desire for an increase program similar to the Oak Ridge pension adjustment. Retirees from April 1989 through May 1999 will receive increases. Estimated amounts of your increase can be calculated using the formula shown in the Congressman Graham news release. The increase will be effective September 2002 and will be included in the end of September pension checks. Affected members will receive a letter from site management to describe the increase action more fully. The committee is very pleased that WSRC has agreed to include surviving spouses, who receive a survivor pension, in the pension adjustment. However, we are disappointed that our proposal to include more retirees was not adopted.

The committee wishes to thank Congressman Graham and both his Washington and local staff. We would also like to thank the members of the Georgia and South Carolina delegations who supported our efforts; these include Congressman Norwood, the late Congressman Floyd Spence, and Senators Thurmond, Hollings and Cleland. Thanks also go to Bob Pedde who finally made it happen and to Greg Rudy and Joe Buggy for their encouragement. Finally, we would like to acknowledge the efforts of those SRSRA members who took the time to write letters to their congressional representatives and to Site management in support of a pension adjustment; your efforts were quite helpful. The significance of this accomplishment reinforces the continuing need for a strong SRSRA membership.

You were all supportive and patient with us as we pursued what appeared to be a never-ending process. Your patience, and our persistence, has finally paid off!

Thanks to all,

Tom Greene, Bill Quinn, Fred Cavanaugh, Bob Stokes

GRAHAM ANNOUNCES COLA FOR WSRC RETIREES

AIKEN, SOUTH CAROLINA -- South Carolina Third District Rep. Lindsey Graham (R-Seneca) today announced an Ad hoc Cost of Living Adjustment (COLA) for retirees or their survivors who retired prior to May 1, 1999. The COLA will be effective September 1, 2002.

"I'm very pleased the Site management and DOE have instituted a COLA," said Graham. "It's very much deserved. Keeping faith with those who helped win the Cold War is essential to future recruitment of personnel to secure our national defense needs."

According to Westinghouse and DOE documents, the COLA package included an increase of approximately 50 percent of the increase in the Consumer Price Index since the retirement date of each retiree. The actual increase will be calculated using a formula which increases the retiree's benefit by 3.4 percent plus an additional 0.10 percent for each month of retirement prior to May 1999 plus an additional 0.05 percent for each month of retirement prior to January 1996. The sum of those adjustments would then be recalculated based on any income leveling or survivor option adjustments.

"The SRS Retirees Association deserves much of the credit for their hard work," said Graham. "I'd like to also thank the other members of the South Carolina congressional delegation and Congressman Charlie Norwood of Georgia for his help."

Graham also thanked Secretary of Energy Spence Abraham and Bob Pedde, President of Westinghouse Savannah River Company, for recognizing the important contributions and sacrifices these retirees made to win the Cold War.

"When Secretary of Energy Spence Abraham came before the House Armed Services Committee this spring, I asked him for his support for a COLA adjustment," said Graham. "I'm very appreciative, and I know the retirees are as well that he supported this package."

"Awarding this COLA during tough economic times is recognition of a job well done," said Graham. "SRS retirees helped fight and win the Cold War. They deserve equitable treatment."

Benefits Contacts

In a recent letter from John Greenquist to all retirees and retiree survivors, a **People Support Service Center** was highlighted as a **one-stop service for most HR and payroll activities and questions**. The numbers for that service are:

People Support Service Center

- ◆ **803-725-7772 (local are SC and GA)**
- ◆ **800-368-7333 (long distance)**
- ◆ service-center@srs.gov (for email contact with this new service)

Please use the information above for future contacts with WSRC concerning your Human Resources or payroll issues or questions. The numbers we have previously provided as benefits contacts are still included below for your information until the new service has been tested. Please give us your feedback on this new service as you have occasion to use it. Send your comments to rastokes@prodigy.net.

◇ **Life, Health, Dental**

Kathy Hutto (803) 725-9545
Becky Proveaux (803) 725-0526
Greg Murray (803) 725-0531

◇ **Pension**

John Felkel (803) 725-7722
Viola Best (803) 725-1900

◇ **Service Center**

(800) 360-2747

◇ **Internal Medicine Partners** (706) 792-5075 (Physical Examinations)

◇ **Blue Cross/Blue Shield of SC**

1-800-325-6596
Option 1 for Medical
Option 2 for Dental
Option 3 for Pre-Cert/Med Authorization

◇ **Value Options** (mental health & substance abuse assistance) 1-800-333-6557

◇ **BAC (Westinghouse Corporate Pension)**

1-800-581-4222

◇ **Safety Eyeglass Office**

Tom Cuny (803) 725-3379

Newsletter Mailing

If you plan on relocating, remember to keep us posted on your whereabouts so that we can continue to update you on the SRS Retiree Association's activities. Send us your new home address.

If you are a new member, or you are new to the Internet email system, please provide your email address to rastokes@prodigy.net. If you are a current member and your email address is changing or has changed recently, please send your new address to rastokes@prodigy.net. You can also send a message to the srsretirees@lycos.com email address to further ensure your information gets to the SRSRA organization.

MEMBERSHIP:

SRSRA was founded in 1998 and is the largest retirement organization formally registered in the state of South Carolina. SRSRA representatives hold frequent meetings with senior DOE and WSRC Team staff at SRS, as well as members of the South Carolina and Georgia congressional delegations. The keynote speakers at our recent Annual Meeting were Congressman Lindsey Graham and WSRC President Bob Pedde.

The SRSRA can be your voice with the site and with the local congressional representatives. SRSRA keeps abreast of activities and issues concerning retirees. TODAY WOULD BE A GOOD TIME TO JOIN THE SRSRA!

YOUR REMINDER: IT IS TIME TO RENEW YOUR MEMBERSHIP FOR 2002! PLEASE COMPLETE THE MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL FORM BELOW AND RETURN WITH YOUR CHECK FOR YOUR 2002 MEMBERSHIP DUES. PLEASE REMIND OTHER RETIREES, WHO MAY NOT BE AWARE OF THE SRSRA ORGANIZATION AND ITS OBJECTIVES, TO CONTACT RAY PERKS (TEL. 803-642-8654) TO GET ON THE MEMBERSHIP LIST. CALL Ray Perks 803 642 8654

Return to: **SRS Retiree Association
P. O. Box 5686
Aiken, S.C. 29804**

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- _____ Please send me more information on the SRSRA.
- _____ Yes, I want to join as a member in SRSRA. I would serve on the SRSRA BOD. _____ Yes _____ No
- _____ Yes, my SRS retired spouse wants to join as a member in SRSRA and would serve on the SRSRA BOD. _____ Yes _____ No

Annual Dues: Year 2002

Year 2003

- | | |
|---|---|
| _____ \$15 for Retiree | _____ \$15 for Retiree |
| _____ \$5 for Retiree's Spouse (if also retired from SRS) | _____ \$0 for Retiree's Spouse (if also retired from SRS) |
| _____ \$5 for Retiree's Survivor Spouse | _____ \$5 for Retiree's Survivor Spouse |

RETIREE NAME _____ SPOUSE NAME _____

ADDRESS _____

CITY _____ STATE _____ ZIP _____ TELEPHONE _____

RETIREE RETIRED FROM: WSRC _____ BSRI _____ BWXT-SRC _____ BNFL-SRC _____ OTHER _____

RETIREE'S SPOUSE RETIRED FROM: WSRC _____ BSRI _____ BWXT-SRC _____ BNFL-SRC _____ OTHER _____

RETIREE DATE OF RETIREMENT _____ E-MAIL ADDRESS _____

RETIREE'S SPOUSE DATE OF RETIREMENT _____ E-MAIL ADDRESS _____

Return to: **SRS Retiree Association P. O. Box 5686 Aiken, S.C. 29804**