

News from the Savannah River Site

U S DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY • AIKEN • SC 29808

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For Immediate Release

SRS Public Tours: Decades of Inspiring History, Cold War Defense, Nuclear Operations and Miles of Pristine Wilderness

AIKEN, S.C. (June 13, 2016) – Registration continues for the Savannah River Site's (SRS) 2016 Public Tour Program. Seats are available for the sitewide tours held twice each month through December at the Department of Energy (DOE) complex near Aiken, S.C.

The driving tours provide a windshield tour of the historical and operational facilities at SRS where plutonium and tritium were produced during the Cold War. Tour participants also learn about the site's current activities and future missions.

"This was a perfect trip for our travel group," said Keith Richardson, Lead Pastor, Barnwell First Baptist Church. "Many of us hear about SRS, but it is something of a mystery. Our tour helped me understand better the diverse operations of the plant and how that has developed after the Cold War. I was especially interested to learn of the Ecology Laboratory and the extensive involvement of the U.S. Forest Service."

In 1972, SRS was designated as the first National Environmental Research Park. Encompassing 300 square miles, the U.S. Forest Service-Savannah River manages endangered species such as bald eagles and red-cockaded woodpeckers. SRS is also home to turkeys, alligators, white-tailed deer, armadillos, otters, coyotes and many other animal species. The tour concludes with a stop at the Savannah River Ecology Laboratory, a research unit of the University of Georgia and part of SRS since the site was constructed. Tour participants are treated to a presentation on SREL's mission and a visit with some of the animals that call SRS home.

Today, SRS is a key DOE industrial complex responsible for environmental stewardship, while managing nuclear materials in support of our nation's national defense and U.S. nuclear non-proliferation efforts. The site also develops and deploys environmental cleanup technologies, responsible for treating nuclear and hazardous wastes left from the Cold War.

The tours are free of charge and begin at the Aiken County Applied Research Center (ARC), an extension of the SRNL, located off Highway 278, near New Ellenton.

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Each tour begins at 12:30 p.m. and typically ends at 4:30 p.m. Seats are filled on a first come, first served basis, up to 50 people per tour. Large groups can be accommodated by calling (803) 952-8994. Participants must be 18 years of age or older and U.S. citizens.

The SRS tour program is managed by Savannah River Nuclear Solutions as the site's management and operating contractor.

"We have been extremely pleased with the positive results of our public tour program over the years," said Elizabeth Harm, SRNS Tour Program Coordinator. "We want to continue to offer this unique experience to all who may be interested in this diverse and amazing place to visit."

To register for a tour, visit www.srs.gov/general/tour/public.htm or call (803) 952-9472. More information can be obtained about SRS and the tour program at www.srs.gov.

Caption: Savannah River Ecology Laboratory employee Judy Greene-Mcleod provides a presentation on the animals found at SRS with a public tour group.

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