

Facts enterprise·srs

● SRS Curation Facility Cold War Historic Preservation Program

Savannah River Nuclear Solutions, LLC, working with the Department of Energy, is fulfilling a commitment to preserve decades of culture, accomplishments and history associated with life at the Savannah River Plant, now known as the Savannah River Site (SRS).

This former warehouse preserves and protects historic artifacts. Though not a museum, the curation facility is home for artifacts from both the Cold War and various archaeology sites at SRS.



SRS Curation Facility opened in 2012.

Background

The goal of the SRS Cold War Historic Preservation Program is to preserve and collect the historic fabric and the history of the Savannah River Site.

Tasked by the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 to care for resources 50 years of age and older, SRS relies on the Historic Preservation Program (HPP) to help repair and renovate buildings in a way that is sensitive to historic integrity. The HPP also collects artifacts from those buildings that must be torn down and, at times, from functioning buildings on site.

Items collected range from approximately 1950 to 1989, the “era of significance,” and they relate to the key themes of the collection: historical figures, historic events, the history of technology on and off site, and the social history of the men and women who worked at the Savannah River Plant (SRP).

Because the themes are broad, the artifacts themselves are also diverse. They range from small campaign buttons worn by engineers from the Manhattan Project who transferred to SRP to control panels used to operate a test reactor. The collection also includes a large number of mockup reactor elements used for training and a collection of gages used by tritium area employees to perform quality assurance checks on tritium reservoirs

Facts

- Until FY2012, the artifact collection was housed in temporary storage, inside a former reactor facility, 105-C, and an unoccupied office building, 742-A.
- The new curation facility, 315-M, is a sheet metal building with 27,000 square-feet of space. The building was initially constructed in 1982 as a warehouse.
- The northern portion is partitioned off for storage of the Cold War artifact collection. The 12,200 square-foot room features laydown areas for very large artifacts; pallet racks for heavy, but smaller artifacts, and open, metal shelving for the bulk of the collection.
- The southeastern block is composed of personnel space and open-walled storage rooms. The southwestern portion of the building has been divided into two new rooms.
 - The northern of these is the Curation Room, an archival document library. This 3,450 square-foot room promotes ideal climate control due to the lack of windows, doors, or skylights which were present in the original building.
 - The southern room is occupied by the Savannah River Archaeological Department, which is keyed and managed separately.
- The HVAC and dehumidification system is designed to provide a climate that is in keeping with the US Secretary of the Interiors standards for artifact storage. A cool, dry, dark environment is ideal for preventing damage to historical artifacts caused by heat, humidity, and light. The system also provides a slight positive air pressure to cut down on particulate infiltration into the clean system.

Savannah River Archaeological Research Program

- Archaeological Storage Room utilizes 3,600 square feet of space.
- Will house over 1.5 million SRS archaeological artifacts.
- Meets DOE curation commitments to the South Carolina State Historic Preservation Office and Advisory Council on Historic Preservation as described in the 1990 programmatic memorandum of agreement.
- Is sized to accommodate existing and future SRS operations for the next decade or more.
- The Savannah River Archaeological Research Program has worked with DOE at SRS since 1978.
- SRARP staff is now transferring SRS archaeological artifacts from their existing on-site curation facility (Building 760-11G) and other interim storage areas into the new curation facility.
- Artifacts housed here date from the end of the Ice Age (12,000 years ago) through the creation of the Savannah River Plant in 1950.
- DOE will continue to make these archaeological artifacts available for scientific research and public outreach purposes.

