



Many Voices Working for the Community

Oak Ridge Site Specific Advisory Board

NEWS RELEASE

For Immediate Release

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March 6, 2012

Citizen Participation on Advisory Board's Committees Encouraged By David Martin, member, Oak Ridge Site Specific Advisory Board

Many local residents are aware of the Oak Ridge Reservation's accomplished and well-documented history. From the beginning as a manufacturing center for fissionable material, Oak Ridge is now a major center for energy, research, and national security. To achieve these missions the Department of Energy (DOE) must remove the byproducts and facilities left from the site's early operations.

This cleanup is difficult and expensive, and unfortunately, there is not enough money to address all of the Oak Ridge Reservation's environmental concerns simultaneously. A great deal of thought goes into determining where and when money can be best spent. Planning for environmental cleanup involves effective prioritization and oversight to complete as many projects as possible. To help with the process, the DOE actively seeks input from the community.

The Oak Ridge Site Specific Advisory Board (ORSSAB) is one of the most important avenues DOE uses to engage the public. The board, composed of 22 area residents, is a volunteer organization that advises DOE on environmental restoration and serves as an outreach vehicle to the community. Members are appointed by the federal government and may serve up to six years. The DOE supplies information to the group through monthly presentations, information bulletins, and special called meetings. The meetings are open to the public and include time for public comment. As part of the board's mission, members present formal recommendations to the DOE regarding environmental restoration.

Appointment to the ORSSAB is a difficult process with a lengthy waiting list, and membership requires a considerable investment of time and effort. However, there is an easy and effective way to become more involved and provide input - through the board's five committees. Three committees, Environmental Management, Stewardship, and Public Outreach, directly support the board's mission. In addition to ORSSAB members, local citizens can also serve and attend committee meetings. No applications are necessary, and membership is automatic. Participants can vote on all issues before the committee, and any member can make formal presentations and recommendations to the DOE during committee or board meetings. Committees are an excellent avenue for people who want to immediately enter dialogue about environmental remediation on the Oak Ridge Reservation. Committee membership also provides a preview to people who may be interested in full board membership.

During the next 20 years, much work needs to be done to close out the Manhattan Project facilities and make sure waste stored here does not pollute. We, the citizens of East Tennessee, have an opportunity to help complete the job that was started in the darkest moments of World War II. We owe this to the men and women of the Manhattan Project and to future generations. Please inquire about committee membership and lend your voice and ideas to the process.

For more information, please visit the ORSSAB web site at www.oakridge.doe.gov/em/ssab or call 865-241-4583 or 241-4584

David Martin resides in Roane County. He is a rancher and has served on the ORSSAB for four years.

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