

Between 1950 and 1960, the Savannah River communities grew substantially as they absorbed the incoming work force. Augusta grew by 25 percent, North Augusta tripled its population, while Aiken, Williston, and Barnwell doubled in size. Jackson, a rim community, achieved town status, as did New Ellenton located to the north of the plant.

The trailer cities that had housed the construction workers and their families were archaeological sites by 1960. More lasting were an estimated 5,465 homes built to accommodate operating staff and their families in the surrounding counties. The Housing and Home Finance Administration provided grants after AEC review to offset the expansion of basic community services. The affected communities experienced growing pains in all directions, as schools, roads, water and sewage systems, parks, and basic community needs were all impacted.

Inside the plant fence, the Community Chest Program was chosen by the plant management as a way for workers to show their community support. Each year money was energetically collected in support of this program, and contributors would indicate which community should receive their donation. In 1952, \$50,908 were contributed; a year later contributions soared to \$74,015. The new atomic community already had neighborhood pride.

In education, the AEC made great strides in the fields of science and technology. Under an agreement with the Southern Regional Education Board in 1956, a cooperative program began in which college students could attend classes and work at the plant alternating terms. Georgia Institute of Technology and University of Florida students were the first to sign up. Grants were also made to regional universities to fund the development of programs in atomic energy and related fields. At the high school level, science students were invited on Thomas Alva Edison's birthday to come to the plant and tour facilities to learn about the peaceful applications of atomic energy. Civic talks were given and science fairs held. Finally, membership in professional organizations abounded and local chapters of heretofore national organizations were established in the Central Savannah River Area.

Massive amounts of concrete, steel, rebar, lumber, and macadam were used to create the Savannah River Plant. Construction statistics are staggering, attesting to the epic nature of the undertaking. However, the construction activity was confined to an industrial core area, leaving a large buffer zone of land untouched by industrial construction. In this zone, an equally epic undertaking mostly orchestrated by nature occurred. A "garden" grew up around the machine.

The U.S. Forest Service, under contract with the AEC, set out about 10,000,000 pine seedlings along the plant perimeter for screening and erosion control in 1952-53, and then launched a forest management program for an additional 60,000 acres. Their efforts, combined with the retirement of thousands of acres of farmland from cultivation, the impact of intensive grading from construction, and human neglect factored into the making of a new landscape. A green space with an incredible diversity of plant and animal life grew up in its stead.

Scientific knowledge concerning the environmental impact of industry, atomic or otherwise, was limited in 1950. Ecology was a developing field. The AEC, with a strong sense of stewardship, invited scientists from the Universities of Georgia and South Carolina to collect baseline data on plant and animal communities that would provide a "before" picture with which to measure the impact of the Plant's processes on the envi-

ronment. Du Pont, already a leader in the field of industrial ecology, was responsible for bringing a team from the Academy of Natural Sciences in Philadelphia under the leadership of Dr. Ruth Patrick to the plant to perform a biological study of the Savannah River. The University of Georgia developed a program that went beyond inventory, that became the Savannah River Ecology Laboratory. Under the direction of Dr. Eugene Odum, a large-scale study of ecological succession began. Ecologists studied the dynamics of change within the environment as the impress of centuries of agriculture disappeared and natural succession occurred. Radiation ecology studies were also an early research focus. While the Cold War mission was the prime mover in the shaping of the Savannah River Plant, the stewardship of the land acquired for that purpose was also part of the compact made with the American people.

Since those earliest days, the employees of the Savannah River Site have had sustained success in meeting their commitments to the nation. They have safely fulfilled their primary mission of producing plutonium and tritium for the national defense—to this day the Site has maintained a 100 percent on-time record of production and delivery of tritium to the Department of Defense. In the realm of basic science, they advanced the knowledge of particle physics with the proof of the existence of the neutrino in 1956. Their advances in nuclear materials production led to additional missions of creating radioactive isotopes for medical diagnosis and treatment; industrial and research programs; and NASA space missions, from Voyager to Cassini, now on its way to Saturn. They designed and built the largest radioactive waste vitrification facility in the world, the Defense Waste Processing Facility, where highly radioactive liquid waste is transformed into a solid glass form for safe storage and ultimate disposition. Their early concern for the environment and study of the ecological consequences of their operations led to the designation of SRS as the first National Environmental Research Park in 1972. They discovered the natural habitat of the bacterium that causes Legionnaires' Disease.

The end of the Cold War brought significant change to the Savannah River Site. The national defense mission continued with the recycling and replenishment of tritium from dismantled nuclear weapons, but increased attention was brought to bear on waste management and environmental restoration activities. This new focus included adapting defense-specific technologies to peacetime applications, which benefitted greatly from the Site infrastructure and the historical expertise of the Site workforce. For example, Site expertise in handling tritium (a form of hydrogen) has yielded hydride technologies that have applications in the transportation and energy industries. Advances in robotics and environmental monitoring and cleanup technologies, such as proving the existence of deep subsurface microbes and employing them for in-situ remediation of wastes, have led to applications not just at SRS, but across the country and around the world. The Savannah River Ecology Laboratory, widely recognized as the birthplace of the modern science of ecology, has a laboratory at Chernobyl, Ukraine, where scientists share their expertise in helping the Ukrainians recover from that disaster.

Today, the future of the Savannah River Site looks as bright as it did 50 years ago. In the area of stockpile stewardship, it will continue its key national defense mission as the nation's sole source for tritium using a new Tritium Extraction Facility now under construction. It will also provide a backup

source for plutonium weapon components, called pits, should the nation require that increased capacity. In the area of nuclear materials stewardship, it will contribute to our nation's nonproliferation efforts to reduce the global nuclear danger. It will receive surplus weapons plutonium from other DOE sites for safe, secure storage pending disposition; some of the plutonium will be stored in one of the old reactors which previously created the plutonium. It will prepare that surplus plutonium for final disposition. One new facility will immobilize the plutonium in ceramic disks that will be encased in canisters of protective radioactive glass at the Defense Waste Processing Facility. Other new facilities, the Pit Disassembly and Conversion Facility and the Mixed-Oxide Fuel Fabrication Facility, will convert the plutonium from dismantled weapons into commercial reactor fuel which will provide electrical power while it is slowly converted into non-weapons-usable spent fuel. It will also down-blend weapons-usable highly enriched uranium into a low-enrichment form usable as fuel in commercial power reactors. In the area of environmental stewardship, it will develop technologies and practices to manage wastes and clean up the environment more efficiently and cost effectively. Its longstanding support for, and from, its neighbors in the Central Savannah River Area will reinforce its commitment to success in all these endeavors.

FAREWELL TO TOM MCILWAIN

Mr. LOTT. Mr. President, before this session of the 106th Congress comes to an end, I'd like to take the time to say farewell to Tom McIlwain, who served on my staff this year as a fellow from the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS). Prior to coming to my staff in March, he served as Fishery Administrator for the NMFS Southeast Fishery Center. Tom is a native of my hometown, Pascagoula, Mississippi. He understands the importance of oceans and fisheries issues to the Gulf Coast, and the Mississippi coast in particular.

This is Tom's second stint as a fellow on my staff. Back when I was a member of the other chamber, and Tom worked for the State of Mississippi, he spent a year as a fellow on my staff advising me on oceans and fisheries matters. Tom is a longtime expert in this area. His advice and counsel was just as vital to me this year as it was back then.

As a member of the Senate Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation, I have participated in development and passage of a number of oceans and fisheries authorization bills during this session, and Tom has advised me on every one of them. This year alone, he assisted in the enactment into public law of the National Marine Sanctuaries Amendments Act of 2000, Fishermen's Protective Act Amendments of 1999, Yukon River Salmon Act of 1999, and the Fisheries Survey Vessel Authorization Act of 1999, and the Senate passage of the Pribilof Islands Transition Act, the Coastal Zone Management Act of 2000, Atlantic Coastal Fisheries Act of 2000, Shark Finning Prohibition Act, Coral Reef Conservation Act of 2000, and Marine Mammal Rescue Assistance Act of

1999. I expect several of the latter bills to be enacted this year.

Tom also identified key funding shortfalls in NMFS and State of Mississippi programs for the Gulf of Mexico. His concern that Gulf of Mexico needs were being overlooked as NMFS funding was increased to address high-profile issues in other regions of the country led me to fight for additional funding for our region. The NMFS appropriation for Fiscal year 2001 includes an additional \$8.25 million for red snapper research and \$1 million to expand the NMFS Mississippi Laboratory at Pascagoula. I know he is pleased with that the State of Mississippi will receive much needed additional funding for coastal impact assistance, almost \$28 million in Fiscal Year 2001. This vital piece of the Conservation and Reinvestment Act was authorized and funded this year.

I wish Tom and his wife Janet all the best as they prepare for his next assignment within NMFS. I know that whatever he does, he will bring to it the same keen insight, practical solutions, and good humor that has served him so well in the past.

A MEMORIAL TO ELIZABETH KNIGHT BUNCH

Mr. LOTT. Mr. President, we were all saddened to learn of the death of a long-time Senate employee and good friend, Ms. Betty Bunch. Betty died last week after a long struggle with a pulmonary infection.

Betty started working for the Senate on January 3, 1977, when she moved to Washington, DC, to be the office manager for Senator Malcolm Wallop, the Republican Senator from Wyoming. As a graduate of the University of Wyoming, Ms. Bunch worked for some years at the University before deciding to move East with the Senator.

After serving Senator Wallop for 10 years, Betty transferred to the Committee on Rules and Administration and worked for ranking member Senator TED STEVENS of Alaska. In July 1991, Betty moved to the Senate Sergeant at Arms office and worked on a number of projects for the Education and Support Services team of the Computer Center.

One of Betty's major projects was to assist with the final construction planning for the Sergeant at Arms' operations move to the Postal Square building. She was very involved in the relocation of the Senate's computer and communications center and staff, as well as the financial and procurement staffs. This was a major initiative, and Betty accomplished it with the utmost professionalism.

Betty continued on a number of special projects for the Sergeant at arms until her retirement in June 1999. In total, Betty served the Senate well for over 22 years.

We will all miss her loyalty, professionalism, integrity, and wonderful sense of humor. Her son Jamie and

daughter-in-law Glennis are in our thoughts and prayers.

VICTIMS OF GUN VIOLENCE

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, it has been more than a year since the Columbine tragedy, but still this Republican Congress refuses to act on sensible gun legislation.

Since Columbine, thousands of Americans have been killed by gunfire. Until we act, Democrats in the Senate will read the names of some of those who have lost their lives to gun violence in the past year, and we will continue to do so every day that the Senate is in session.

In the name of those who died, we will continue this fight. Following are the names of some of the people who were killed by gunfire one year ago today.

November 1, 1999:

Carlester Johnson, 17, Memphis, TN;
Rory Longs, 20, Chicago, IL;
Orlando Rangel, 23, Chicago, IL;
Patrice Thomas, 21, Houston, TX;
Donnell Tucker, Jr., 22, Baltimore, MD;

Adrian Miller, 43, Detroit, MI; and
John Ellis Wright, Jr., Fort Wayne, IN.

We cannot sit back and allow such senseless gun violence to continue. The deaths of these people are a reminder to all of us that we need to enact sensible gun legislation now.

HEALTH CARE FINANCING ADMINISTRATION

PAYMENTS FOR OUTPATIENT SERVICES

Mr. GRAMM. Mr. President, I am very concerned about how the Medicare program has chosen to pay the 10 free-standing cancer hospitals for outpatient services. It appears that the Health Care Financing Administration has ignored the explicit intent of the provisions we enacted last year as part of the Balanced Budget Refinement Act—provisions intended to help these critically important health care institutions.

Mr. ROTH. Senator, I share the Senator's concern. Last year, the Congress was concerned about how cancer hospitals would fare under the new Medicare outpatient prospective payment system. Cancer hospitals face many unique costs and the advent of exciting new treatments caused many to question the wisdom of applying the new outpatient prospective payment system to these facilities. To this end, the Finance Committee proposed and the Congress enacted provisions to protect these important facilities.

In brief, this provision created a permanent "hold harmless" for cancer hospitals. We instructed the Medicare program to pay cancer centers the same proportion of the facility's cost covered in 1996. In addition, we instructed the Secretary of the Department of Health and Human Services to

make interim payments to these facilities consistent with this hold harmless.

Mr. GRAMM. The Secretary has ignored our concerns and intent. The Secretary has allowed the Medicare program to withhold 15 to 20 percent of the interim payments owed to cancer facilities. The Medicare program will not pay cancer hospitals these withheld funds for up to 4 years.

Mr. ROTH. I investigated this issue with the Health Care Financing Administration, HCFA, to ensure that they are not proceeding in a way that disadvantages these facilities and protects access to important cancer services. It is my understanding that the Medicare fiscal intermediaries are keeping the interim payments to these facilities artificially low in order to avoid the risk of overpayments.

While I think it is appropriate to make interim payments to facilities as accurately as possible, paying these facilities as low as 80-85 percent of what HCFA estimates final costs to be seems too low. If in fact these reductions are lower than previous rates of reduction when a system transition has been implemented, then I strongly urge HCFA to immediately review their proposal to make upward adjustments in the payment rates. Also, I urge the Administration to give special attention to the expeditious handling of the initial cost reports from cancer hospitals as they are submitted over the next few months in order to determine what appropriate payment levels need to be.

Mr. GRAMM. I agree with the Senator. I believe that the Secretary's actions are counter productive and I strongly urge including language in the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD that would make our intent clear.

Mr. ROTH. I, too, support restating within the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD our intent with regard to last year's Medicare bill.

LABOR-HHS-EDUCATION FUNDING BILL

Mr. KENNEDY. Mr. President, in every area of public policy, we have to make choices and set priorities.

How much do we spend on defense? And how much do we spend on domestic priorities?

How much do we protect our forests and natural resources? How much do we allocate to health care, education, law enforcement, and other obvious priorities?

How heavy should the tax burden be? How much do we need to do to protect Medicare and Social Security for the future generations?

Often, we have to make difficult choices.

But when it comes to protecting workers from injuries in the modern workplace and increased investments in education, I say there is no choice. It's not one or the other. We must do both.

But I'm convinced that our Republican friends want to do neither.