

Recommendation 347  
Curation Facility

**Background:**

Signed by President Lyndon B. Johnson in 1966, the National Historic Preservation Act asks federal agencies to survey and identify districts, sites, buildings, structures and objects that are significant in American history and science, and use this information to implement programs and projects to preserve historic places.

Housed on the Savannah River Site, the former 27,000 square foot 315-M warehouse opened its doors in 2012 as a curation facility, and works to preserve and protect historic artifacts related to the decades of history and science surrounding the Savannah River Site.

Items housed at the site range from 1950 to 1989 and are catalogued in diverse themes: 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). The collection includes posters, signs and buttons, all the way to control panels used to test reactors. The vast collection also includes emergency wash basins, tools and an array of gages used by tritium area employees to perform quality assurance checks on tritium reservoirs. Along with artifacts, the curation facility stores over 580,000 photographic negatives. As work began on the site in the mid 20<sup>th</sup> century, photos were taken of the pre-site town of Ellenton, and the documentation is housed at the curation center. Along with photos of the land prior to the site, the collection includes photos and films related to employee culture, construction and equipment.

The Savannah River Site has had a profound effect on the Savannah River valley area. The Savannah River Site is owned by the U.S. Department of Energy, and is managed and operated by Savannah River Nuclear Solutions (SRNS). Currently the curation center works with SRNS to share historic photos through a social media program. Additionally, small exhibits have been displayed during leadership events, and a traveling exhibit was installed at several local libraries. In addition, the curation center hosts tours for visitors on the site and organized Heritage Tourism meetings in the community.

**Recommendations:**

Given the historic value housed in the collection of the curation facility, the Savannah River Site Citizens Advisory Board recommends that the Department of Energy:

1. Continue to expand tours of the curation center to interested members of the public.

2. Work with the SRS Heritage Foundation to provide materials for exhibits at their museum.
3. Work with SRNS and the curation subcontractor to develop a plan to allow for greater public participation. At this time, the facility is housed within the site boundaries and tours of the facility require a lengthy vetting process.
4. Work with the local school districts to establish a traveling curriculum and display that can be incorporated by local schools.
5. Continue to work with local community partners who have a vested interest in site history to develop a strategic plan for community displays and participation.