



*Many Voices Working for the Community*

## **Oak Ridge Site Specific Advisory Board**

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### **NEWS RELEASE**

**For Immediate Release**

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### **Time Well Spent – Advisory Board Members Receive as Much as They Give in Service**

Board meetings, committee meetings, participation at conferences, reading, writing, thinking, discussing.

It takes a lot of time and effort to be an active member of an advisory board. Being a member of an organization like the Oak Ridge Site Specific Advisory Board (ORSSAB) takes a special kind of dedication. “Like anything else, you get out of it what you put into it. If you want to study and learn about the issues and participate it’s a lot, but not overwhelming. The biggest challenge is learning all the technical stuff, the jargon, the acronyms, who reports to whom, and so on. But it’s fun to learn and be exposed to things a lot of people may not know about,” says Ron Murphree, one of the more active members of the board.

ORSSAB is a federally-chartered citizens’ advisory board to the U.S. Department of Energy’s (DOE) Oak Ridge Environmental Management program, which is responsible for cleaning up the Oak Ridge Reservation’s outdated facilities, residual contamination, and hazardous waste.



Ron Murphree and Betty Jones staff the Oak Ridge Site Specific Advisory Board exhibit at the Oak Ridge Secret City Festival.

Murphree has been a member of the board since 2006 and during that time he has been chair of the board, chair of the Executive Committee, chair of the Environmental Management Committee, and vice-chair of the Stewardship Committee. He has attended a number of conferences and other meetings related to environmental management. All of that time adds up and he and the other members of the board serve without compensation. The board provides independent advice and recommendations to DOE on those cleanup activities.

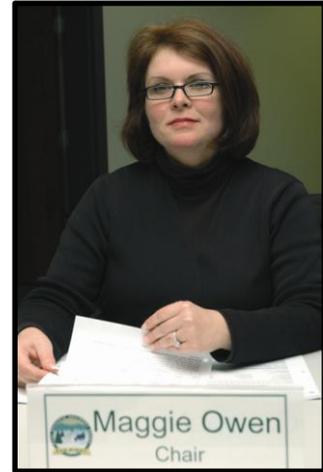
In fact, for fiscal year October 2010 to September 2011, members of the ORSSAB spent more than 1,300 hours of their time participating in meetings and representing the board at public functions and conferences. That does not count time away studying informational materials and preparing for meetings.

ORSSAB’s annual report noted that board members spent 518 member hours in board meetings, 312 member hours in committee meetings, and almost 430 member hours attending meetings and conferences related to environmental management issues.

Members also spent 72 hours participating in special events like staffing ORSSAB booths and exhibits at the Oak Ridge Secret City Festival and similar events, and making presentations to civic groups about ORSSAB activities.

“Although I have served on several committees, I have particularly enjoyed the time I have spent on the Public Outreach Committee,” says current board chair Maggie Owen. “The hours dedicated to raising awareness of ORSSAB through participation in the Secret City Festival, Earth Day, and the Health Physics Society meeting were well spent and gave me the chance to meet many of my East Tennessee neighbors.”

Making the public aware of ORSSAB and what it does is just one function of the board. ORSSAB members spend a lot of time listening to presentations at board and committee meetings regarding what DOE is doing to rid the reservation of radioactive and hazardous wastes. “Citizen participation is essential to the success of our cleanup operations,” said Owen. “I believe strongly in community involvement. Being a member of ORSSAB has given me the opportunity to further my understanding of the environmental management concerns of the Oak Ridge Reservation and my community.”



Maggie Owen chairs the Oak Ridge Site Specific Advisory Board.

“It’s a significant commitment that we ask of people,” says Melyssa Noe, ORSSAB’s Federal Coordinator. “As a group they spend two to three hours a month at board meetings hearing presentations on work DOE is doing on the reservation. They also spend time discussing recommendations that the board sends to DOE. Beyond that we ask each member to serve on at least one committee so, that’s another evening of the month they spend in meetings. Plus our more active members participate in meetings and conferences, and other activities.

“We appreciate what they do more than we can express. We know it’s a sacrifice, but they know that the work they do is important to DOE and to the community,” said Noe.

And as Murphree said, it can be just as rewarding to those who actively participate like he and Owen. “I have broadened my understanding of the environmental management concerns of other DOE sites by attending several of the Intergovernmental Conferences,” she said. “The Long-term Surveillance and Maintenance Conference that Ron and I, and several other members, attended in Colorado increased my knowledge of the challenges that await our community long after the cleanup process is finished. I hope I can incorporate the knowledge I gained from participating in the conferences to better serve my community.”

“The Intergovernmental meetings that Maggie and I have attended (one in Utah and one in New Orleans) were really good and the Weapons Complex Monitor Decision Makers Conference was pretty informative too,” said Murphree. “I would never have had the opportunity to attend those without belonging to ORSSAB.”

While board membership fluctuates some throughout the year, the average number of board members for FY 2011 was 20 including two student representatives from local high schools. The board can have as many as 22 members.

“I wanted to be on the board because I thought it would be a great experience,” says student representative Kasey McMaster from Oak Ridge High School. “I have learned a lot about what is currently going on at the reservation - information that most people that live here probably don’t know about. I’ve learned a lot of new terms and procedures that I had no idea existed before my membership, and my knowledge about environmental science in general has greatly expanded.”

The board is currently accepting applications to fill current and anticipated vacancies. Anyone interested may access an application on the board’s website at <http://www.oakridge.doe.gov/em/ssab/> or by calling 865-241-4583 or 241-4584.

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