



News from the Savannah River National Laboratory

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Radiation Chemistry Expert Receives SRS Orth Award

AIKEN, S.C. – One of the nation's leading experts in radiation chemistry and the chemistry of nuclear waste has been named recipient of the Savannah River Site's 2002 Donald A. Orth Award of Merit.

Dr. Ned Bibler, of the Savannah River Technology Center's Waste Treatment Technology Department, received the award for his over 40 years of significant contributions to SRS' nuclear waste treatment programs, as well as contributions extending well beyond the site. In presenting the award, SRTC Deputy Director Paul Deason pointed out that Dr. Bibler's advice on the chemistry of nuclear waste and on hydrogen generation in radiological systems is sought across the DOE complex and as far away as France and Russia.

The Don Orth Award is SRS' highest honor recognizing technical excellence and professional leadership. It was established in 1992 to honor its namesake as he retired following a long and distinguished career as a nuclear chemist at the site.

Dr. Bibler's work has provided a firm technological framework for the waste vitrification process, and ultimately led to the success of the site's Defense Waste Processing Facility. He led the team that demonstrated the complete DWPF process with actual radioactive waste, and he developed methods for predicting the behavior of fission products throughout the process. The radioactive glass durability test he developed and perfected for the DWPF glass is now a national standard.

He was chosen to participate in the first vitrification technology exchange between the United States and Russia in 1991, visiting one of Russia's former "secret cities." He also served the DOE by his contributions, beginning in the late 1980s, to the Tank Waste Science Panel, which studied the chemistry behind the generation of flammable gases in Hanford's waste tanks. His publications are among the most frequently cited by others working in the field of radiation chemistry.

Deason also noted the respect that Dr. Bibler receives, both from his colleagues within SRTC and those across the country with whom he has collaborated, "for his breadth of knowledge; his level, objective assessment of scientific facts; and his ability to excel in what had otherwise been considered uncharted waters. Beyond his technical excellence, he is admired for personal characteristics such as diligence, a refusal to be deterred by hurdles, and a willingness to pull his share of the load." Letters in support of his nomination came from as far away as the Radiation Laboratory at the University of Notre Dame.

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One of the criteria for receiving the Orth Award is serving as a mentor to younger professionals beyond the normal expectations. One of Dr. Bibler's protegees, now a manager at SRS, called him "the best mentor I have ever encountered" for his contagious love of science, and his approach to guiding the young professionals under his influence. His mentoring has helped to shape the career of numerous researchers, helping them to make significant contributions early in their careers.

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