

# NEWS from The Savannah River Site



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For Immediate Release

## GIRLS TO BE INTRODUCED TO ENGINEERING FEBRUARY 23

AIKEN, S.C., (February 20) – On Saturday, February 23, Savannah River Site engineers will continue to take small steps toward easing the approaching shortage of workers skilled in the engineering disciplines at the second annual “Introduce a Girl To Engineering Day.”

During this day-long event, to be held at USC-Aiken’s Ruth Patrick Science Center, approximately 50 girls from 20 middle schools in the CSRA will interact with SRS professionals, who will teach them more about careers in engineering.

“Unless they have a parent who is an engineer, girls this age are not likely to give much thought to ‘engineering’ as a career option,” says Susan Wood, director of the Savannah River Site’s applied research and development laboratory. “We want to give them a reason to add it to the careers they are considering.”

One of the reasons that so few females go into engineering is that they do not receive adequate math and science education in high school. That’s the reason for focusing on middle-school girls, Dr. Wood says. “If we catch their interest now, they will see a reason to sign up for the math and science courses they need in high school,” she says. “The more math and science they take, the broader their options.”

The day will include games to help girls discover where their interests lie, as well as interactive, hands-on activities to show them how their natural problem-solving abilities form the basis for many engineering skills.

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According to Barbara Smoak, Acting Manager of WSRC Education Outreach Programs, the focus on female middle-school students is by design. “Our goal is to provide programs that will generate student interest in careers such as engineering that are critical to the success of SRS and local industries. We have a particular interest in providing this information to female students because traditionally, females are underrepresented in career fields that are science and technology oriented.”

“Introduce a Girl to Engineering Day” is an offshoot of National Engineers Week, which is being celebrated across the country – including SRS – Feb. 17-23. Last year about 40 girls from 17 middle schools participated in the event.

The CSRA Society of Women Engineers is helping to sponsor the local event, with support from Westinghouse Savannah River Company and its partners (Bechtel Savannah River Inc., BNFL Savannah River Corporation and BWXT Savannah River Company); USC Aiken - Ruth Patrick Science Education Center; Westinghouse Safety Management Solutions; American Nuclear Society; and CSRA – American Society for Engineering Management.

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