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**For Immediate Release**

## **South Carolina Middle School Students Vie for National Recognition in Annual Future City Competition Regional Finals**

*This year's theme is "Water" – Students are asked to design systems to conserve and reuse our most precious resource*

Aiken, S.C. (January 15, 2009) – Water is our most vital resource, whether for drinking or as a resource for sanitation, irrigation, or fire protection. But as our cities grow and expand, what can be done to keep the water flowing? Thousands of middle school students from across the country, including students from South Carolina and Georgia, recently tackled that specific question in preparation to compete in the 2009 National Engineers Week Future City™ Competition.

Sponsored at the national level by our country's professional engineering community, Future City aims to stir interest in science, technology, engineering, and math among young people. Students work in teams under the guidance of a teacher and a volunteer engineer mentor to design and build a city of tomorrow. They must also conduct research for an essay on a pressing social need. This year, the essay centers on ways to improve water use by creating a home system that minimizes the use of municipal or externally supplied water for its daily requirements.

Future City Competitions will be held in January 2009 in 40 regions across the country. **In South Carolina the competition takes place on January 24, 2009 at the University of South Carolina Aiken.** Savannah River Nuclear Solutions, LLC (SRNS) and the Ruth Patrick Science and Education Center at the University of South Carolina Aiken are co-sponsoring the South Carolina regional competition.

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## P.2, Future City Competition

First-place winners from each qualifying regional competition receive an expense-paid trip to the 17th annual Future City National Finals in Washington, D.C., February 16-18, 2009 during National Engineers Week. The national grand prize is a trip to U.S. Space Camp in Huntsville, Alabama. More than 30,000 students from 1,100 middle schools are expected to participate nationwide.

In Future City, the nation's largest engineering education program and among the most popular, students create cities on computers using the *SimCity 4 Deluxe* software and then build three-dimensional, tabletop models to scale. To ensure a level playing field, models must use recycled materials and can cost no more than \$100 to build. Students also write brief abstracts describing their city and must present and defend their designs at the competition before a panel of engineer judges who test the depth of the teams' knowledge.

Solving a problem with such global implications as water conservation is certainly no easy task, as many of the engineers and scientists currently working on such issues can confirm. So why place that task into the hands of middle schoolers?

"Our students are highly motivated, super smart and undaunted by tough challenges," says regional coordinator Bonnie Maxwell. "There is a can-do spirit among these kids that is inspiring and fun to be a part of. I hope everyone in South Carolina will get behind their school's contestants and cheer them on to the finals."

For more information on judging or mentoring in the Future City Competition, visit [www.futurecity.org](http://www.futurecity.org) or call the contacts listed above.

The Savannah River Site is owned by the U.S. Department of Energy. The management and operating contractor is Savannah River Nuclear Solutions, LLC.

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## About Engineers Week

The National Engineers Week Foundation, a formal coalition of more than 100 professional societies, major corporations and government agencies, is dedicated to ensuring a diverse and well-educated future engineering workforce by increasing understanding of and interest in engineering and technology careers among young students and by promoting pre-college literacy in math and science. Engineers Week also raises public understanding and appreciation of engineers' contributions to society. Founded in 1951, it is among the oldest of America's professional outreach efforts. For more information, visit [www.eweek.org](http://www.eweek.org).

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**\* Note to editors: Photographs of the event are available upon request by contacting the media representative listed above.**

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