

# News from the Savannah River Site

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

## Students Create Cities of the Future during Annual Regional Competition Involving South Carolina and Augusta-Area Middle Schools

*40,000 middle school students from 1,350 schools in 37 regions across the U.S. are competing to win a trip to the national competition in Washington, D.C.*

AIKEN, S.C. (Jan. 23, 2017) – Teams of middle school students from across South Carolina and throughout the greater Augusta area have been striving to build complex and highly creative tabletop models that best represent the most innovative and practical city of the future. Their goal: winning this year's Regional Future City® competition recently held at the University of South Carolina Aiken.

“This is a long term commitment over the course of several months beginning in late August or early September. Each team of students typically works hundreds of hours to participate in this competition, managed by Savannah River Nuclear Solutions (SRNS),” said Kim Mitchell, SRNS Education Outreach. “Again and again, as an end result, we see students become excited about learning in their efforts to solve real world problems. Our hope is that they will be inspired by this rewarding effort to later pursue careers in the fields of science, technology, engineering and math.”

This past weekend a team from Augusta, Ga., St. Mary on the Hill, took first place, while a strong finish by Paul Knox Middle School, North Augusta, S.C., lead to a second place trophy. Westview Middle School from Westview, S.C., came in third.

The first place team will travel to the Future City National Finals in Washington, D.C., Feb. 12-17. In



*Students of St. Mary on the Hill, Team Virdeca, attempt to persuade Future City Competition judges that their city deserves first place during the final round of the daylong event.*

addition, the top prize is \$7,500 for the school's science, technology, engineering and math (STEM) program plus a trip to U.S. Space Camp in Huntsville, Ala.

The student teams, along with an educator and volunteer mentor, research and design a solution to a city-wide challenge that changes each year.

Celebrating its 25th anniversary in 2016-17, this year's Future City Competition asked students to address The Power of Public Space and challenged them to design innovative, multiuse public spaces that serve a city's diverse population.

Public spaces have the capacity to revitalize a city's economy by introducing new businesses and bringing in new visitors. They can also help reduce crime, ease traffic congestion, improve pedestrian safety, promote healthy living, improve the environment and enhance citizen interaction.

Working as a team, students are first challenged to design a virtual city using SimCity™ software. Next, they research today's public spaces and write an essay about their solutions and city design. And finally, students bring their ideas to life by building a tabletop scale model of their city using recycled materials on a budget of \$100 or less and give a brief presentation about their city to a panel of judges.

"I originally wanted to be a librarian," said Savannah Padgett, an 8th grader at Paul Knox Middle School. "The Future City program really inspired me to become an engineer. It put me on a path for success as an engineer because you learn about all of these different processes. And, socially, you make a lot of good friends too."

One of the nation's leading engineering education programs and among the most popular, Future City has consistently received national recognition. In 2016, the Future City Competition was the recipient of the 2016 Henry C. Turner Prize for Innovation in Construction, presented by Turner Construction Company and the National Building Museum.

The U.S. Department of Energy provides a variety of science and literacy outreach programs at the Savannah River Site (SRS) through their primary contractor Savannah River Nuclear Solutions. The goal of these outreach programs is to enhance interest in science, mathematics, engineering and technology and to support improvements in education in the Central Savannah River Area by using the unique resources available at SRS.

*Savannah River Nuclear Solutions is a Fluor-led company whose members are Fluor Federal Services, Newport News Nuclear and Honeywell, responsible for the management and operations of the Department of Energy's Savannah River Site, including the Savannah River National Laboratory, located near Aiken, South Carolina.*

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