

News from the Savannah River Site

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Aiken County Public Schools Career Counseling Professionals Discover How Area Students Qualify for Hundreds of Jobs at SRS

AIKEN, S.C., (December 20, 2017) – Nearly 30 career counselors and career specialists from Aiken County Public Schools recently attended a tour of the Savannah River Site (SRS). The special tour was developed to help them answer student questions about careers at the large industrial complex of nuclear and non-nuclear facilities owned by the Department of Energy.

The career counselors visited the site training facility and the Salt Waste Processing Facility, as well as participating in an extensive driving tour featuring the Savannah River National Laboratory, Savannah River Ecology Laboratory, F Canyon and the Defense Waste Processing Facility.

“You really have to tour the site and get involved in presentations, employment statistics and discussions to begin to grasp just how great the potential is for a career at SRS,” said Kimberly Mitchell, Savannah River Nuclear Solutions (SRNS) Education Outreach.

Mitchell explained that the first step is to raise local educators’ level of knowledge about SRS who then act as conduits to reach area students. “It’s not just the careers within nuclear operations, jobs that typically first come to mind,” said Mitchell. “We want them to know we have research scientists, mechanics, accountants, electricians, admin professionals, crane operators, lab techs, engineers, HR and computer science professionals. The list of hourly and professional positions is extensive.”

Last year alone, more than 500 new employees were hired by the largest company at SRS, Savannah River Nuclear Solutions. Hiring at a higher than normal level is expected to continue for many years as a large percentage of SRS employees become eligible to retire.



Cristie Shuford, SRNS Radiation Protection Training Manager, discusses the training qualifications needed for those applying for jobs at SRS related to radiation protection to a large group of career counseling professionals from Aiken County Public Schools.

Valuable data provided to touring counselors and specialists included SRNS employees hired last year by career field. “Projecting the hiring of a similar number of employees next year in each type of occupation is realistic,” stated Mitchell. “This is practical information students can use to make an informed decision regarding the expected job market.”

During the tour, SRS officials also provided information to ensure the counselors and specialists understood the partnership between SRS companies and local universities and colleges, primarily Aiken Technical College, Augusta Technical College and the University of South Carolina Aiken.

“We have a real need here for graduates of 1- to 2-year degree programs, which includes operators, radiation control specialists, welders, mechanics and other personnel,” said Mitchell. “I’m trying to find ways to reach students early in their academic life, kindergarten through twelfth grade, to encourage them to consider this type of career path.”

According to Aiken Technical College student Christopher Bruce, Aiken Tech has a great 2-year degree within their Radiation Protection and Control Program. “I heard about it when I was deciding what to do with the rest of my life. There’s a lot of opportunity for this type of job,” he said.

Career specialists are employed at Aiken County’s middle schools, while career counselors are found within Aiken County’s high schools. Helping the career specialists and counselors assist the students is where the “rubber meets the road,” where the most impact can be obtained for the benefit of the students as well as local industry.

“By working closely with these career guidance professionals, I think we grow our local citizens for jobs, especially at SRS, where we are making the nation a safer place. That’s why I think this tour is so important,” said Mitchell.

“What I think we all heard today, any of our students have the potential to come out here and have a wonderful career for their families,” said Gina Bassford, Coordinator for Counseling and Career Services, Aiken County Public Schools. “It’s such an incredible opportunity to have locally. And, for nearby colleges to be in lock-step with SRS, so students can get everything they need locally, is such a special opportunity.”

“Our students need to explore and not pigeon-hole themselves into the traditional careers. There are a vast number of opportunities that are readily available for our students at SRS,” she said.

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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