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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

## Area Students to Design Cities of the Future, Protecting Against Natural Disasters During Regional Competition

AIKEN, S.C. (Jan. 29, 2019) – Earthquakes, tornadoes and hurricanes damage public utilities within towns and cities throughout the world each year, severely disrupting every aspect of life. During this year's Future City competition, middle school students from South Carolina and the greater Augusta, Ga. area, responded to this challenge by designing an electrical grid that can withstand and quickly recover from a natural disaster.

“Designing a city of the future is a difficult task for anyone, much less a middle school student,” said Taylor Rice, Savannah River Nuclear Solutions (SRNS) Education Outreach. “Requiring an effective way to protect a city-wide electrical grid would be a significant task for those studying engineering in college. The Future City competitors used creativity, imagination and ingenuity to create resilient cities with connected systems and a robust infrastructure in place to limit damage and help the city quickly recover. Their projects were impressive.”

Each team of three students worked together to create their virtual city using SimCity™ software during the first phase of the competition. This was followed by a 1,500-word essay describing the city in detail, followed by actually building their city to scale using recycled materials in the form of a table top model.

Points were awarded for each phase of the competition leading up to the day of the South Carolina Regional Competition where groups of judges listened to presentations while asking team members challenging questions.

“I learned a lot of life skills this year, like public speaking, how to write



*Students representing Aiken Area Home Educators attempt to persuade Future City competition judges that their model city deserves first place during the daylong event at the University of South Carolina Aiken. This team went on to win the regional competition, earning a trip to the finals in Washington, D.C.*

technical papers, conduct thorough research and develop strong team skills,” said Jenna Potvin, seventh grade, Aiken Area Home Educators. “This will help me in college to pursue a degree in engineering related to project planning.”

After carefully evaluating each city, special awards were presented and the first, second and third place winners announced.

- 1st Place “Urbe Grafito,” Aiken Area Home Educators, Aiken, S.C.
- 2nd Place “Grelean City,” St. Mary on the Hill Middle School, Augusta, Ga.
- 3rd Place “Rubalexia,” Paul Knox Middle School, North Augusta, S.C.

SRNS Education Outreach personnel have managed the South Carolina Future City Regional Competition for 16 years, in partnership with the Ruth Patrick Science Education Center at the University of South Carolina Aiken campus (USCA), the event host site. “Our partnership with USCA has been rewarding for all involved,” said Rice. “Their dedication towards academically growing our young people throughout the region is admirable.”

Since returning to school earlier this fall, 40 student teams from the South Carolina region have been hard at work on their Future City projects. They join more than 40,000 middle school students from 1,350 schools in 40 U.S. regions around the country, all of whom are engaged in similar competitions.

This year’s celebrity judges for the final round of competition included Bruce A. Easterson, SRNS Senior Vice President, Chief Engineer and Nuclear Safety Officer; Dennis Carr, SRNS Executive Vice President and Chief Operating Officer; and Rosalind Blocker, Executive Advisor to the Deputy Laboratory Director for Savannah River National Laboratory.

Regional winners will face off at the finals in Washington, D.C. in February, where they will be joined by international teams, including those from Canada, Egypt and China.

“A resilient city ensures its residents are safe and can meet the challenges of the future,” said Rice. “With the guidance of an educator and STEM mentor, each Future City team during this year’s competition has gained immeasurable experience and knowledge that will prepare them for even greater accomplishments that lie ahead.”

For more information on the Future City Competition, visit [www.futurecity.org](http://www.futurecity.org)

*Savannah River Nuclear Solutions, a Fluor-led company with Newport News Nuclear and Honeywell, is 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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