

● OCTOBER 2024

SAVANNAH RIVER NUCLEAR SOLUTIONS



SRNS Today



Hurricane Helene

Site staff work on storm preparation, relief and cleanup



SCAN ME
to connect with
our social media

This month

Fast Critical Assembly fuel disposition • Red Cross Heroes • Aiken's Choice: Best Place to Work



Dennis Carr
SRNS President and CEO

On the cover

SRNS Site Services personnel filled over 2,500 sandbags in preparation for Hurricane Helene.

Welcome

to the October 2024 edition of

SRNS Today

As we take a moment to reflect on this past month, I am truly inspired by the remarkable achievements we have accomplished together. Despite the challenges posed by Hurricane Helene, our resilience and commitment have been nothing short of extraordinary. Each of you has played a vital role in ensuring our operations continued to run smoothly while supporting one another, exemplifying SRNS' core values.

This month, we proudly launched an artificial intelligence pilot program designed to create efficiencies across various departments. Early indicators show promise in streamlining our processes and enhancing overall productivity. Additionally, I am pleased to announce that the Savannah River Site Fire Department has enhanced its safety capabilities with a new and improved hazmat vehicle, reinforcing our commitment to preparedness and safety in all situations.

Furthermore, Site Services has successfully developed a sustainable solar pump solution to manage water infiltration in underground valves, reflecting our dedication to innovative and environmentally responsible practices.

I am also thrilled to share that we have reached a significant milestone in our student loan reduction program, successfully enrolling 857 participants in FY 24. Nearly 20 employees have had their student loan debt eliminated. This program helps employees with much-needed financial relief and supports their personal and professional growth.

As we look ahead and transition to NNSA as the SRS landlord, I am excited about the promising developments on the horizon and confident that, together, we will continue to achieve great things and make the world safer!

I hope you enjoy our October edition of SRNS Today.



Savannah River Nuclear Solutions, a Fluor and HII partnership company, is responsible for the management and operations of the Department of Energy's Savannah River Site, located near Aiken, South Carolina. The SRNS corporate and community offices are located in the renovated 1912 "Old Post Office" building in Aiken. The primary initiatives of SRNS are national security, clean energy and environmental stewardship. SRNS Today is published monthly by SRNS Corporate Communications to inform our employees and other stakeholders of the company's operational- and community-related activities. If you have questions or comments, please contact us at 803.952.6131 or visit our website.

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COMMON ACRONYMS

Savannah River Nuclear Solutions (SRNS) • Savannah River Site (SRS) • Department of Energy (DOE)
National Nuclear Security Administration (NNSA) • Savannah River Plutonium Processing Facility (SRPPF)
Central Savannah River Area (CSRA) • science, technology, engineering and math (STEM)

SRS starts up Japanese fuel disposition mission



Crews installed an electrolytic dissolver in the H Canyon Chemical Separations Facility at SRS to dissolve nuclear material and support DOE's nonproliferation mission. Before installing the dissolver there, employees conducted test runs in a mock-up facility.

Achieving another major milestone, employees of the H Canyon Chemical Separations Facility at SRS recently began the dissolution of nuclear material from a Japanese research reactor, leading to its safe disposal.

The achievement follows years of preparation by multiple site contractors and involved replacement of an electrolytic dissolver to process Japan's Fast Critical Assembly (FCA) fuel. The electrolytic dissolver system was designed and custom built by SRS in the 1960s, and the replacement required extensive work to revitalize this one-of-a-kind capability.

"The FCA fuel is different than the other material we have recently been dissolving in H Canyon because it is coated in stainless steel cladding, rather than aluminum," said Janice Lawson, SRNS Senior Vice President of Environmental Management Operations. "The other dissolvers in the canyon are chemical dissolvers that use nitric acid to process the fuel; however, nitric acid alone doesn't work on stainless steel."

This is not the first time H Canyon has performed electrolytic dissolution. From 1969 to 1980, the facility used this method for fuel clad in stainless steel and zirconium. The fuel is lowered into a nitric acid solution, and electricity is used to dissolve the stainless-steel cladding and fuel. This produces a liquid that is sent through the Site's liquid waste facilities, where it is made into glass through a process called vitrification. It is then safely stored on-site until a federal repository is identified.

"I've had the privilege of seeing this material arrive in 2016, as well as the opportunity to oversee the progress and hard work it took to get to dissolution," Lawson said. "The team has faced many hurdles but have used ingenuity, capacity for teamwork and vast knowledge to make this happen. This is a big day for the entire nation."

The Japan Atomic Energy Agency sent the FCA plutonium fuel along with funding for the disposition to SRS, fulfilling a pledge by Japan and the United States to remove all separated plutonium and highly enriched uranium from the FCA reactor in Japan. The fuel is currently stored on-site and is being transferred to the canyon for dissolution on a prescribed schedule. The entire campaign is expected to take 18-24 months to complete.

"We appreciate the partnership and commitment to this non-proliferation mission from all involved," said Virginia Kay, NNSA Director of Office of Plutonium Disposition. "The startup of FCA is a testament to the ability of SRS to handle the nation's critical nuclear materials challenges."

PPOP team submits Key Outcome deliverable ahead of schedule



Joe Kling, Rick Connolly, Erika Baeza-Wisdom, and Michael Gilles of Pit Production Operations and Programs prepare to transmit the Key Outcome 1.1 deliverable package to NNSA.

Pit Production Operations and Programs (PPOP) continues to make progress in the advancement of SRS defense programs missions. A major FY24 PPOP activity was developing an “executable comprehensive plan” to minimize the time required for achieving First Production Unit and ultimately reach rate production in SRPPF. This activity was designated as a Key Outcome in the NNSA FY24 Performance Evaluation and Measurement Plan, underscoring the importance of the effort.

The PPOP team transmitted the FY24 Key Outcome 1.1 deliverable package to NNSA on September 12, more than one week ahead of the prescribed due date. The deliverable was comprised of multiple

components, including Competency Plans, a new Work Breakdown Structure and scope-based Integrated Master Schedule, and a detailed framework assembled in the Program Mission Execution Strategy. The development effort consumed thousands of hours, involved all facets of the organization and required intense collaboration with stakeholders and peer groups across the Nuclear Security Enterprise.

“I am extremely proud of the entire organization and how everyone rallied to support this effort as our highest priority through effective teamwork,” said Rick Connolly, Director — Mission Delivery. “The plan we delivered represents the foundation which we will build upon to achieve mission success in the coming years.”

Meet Jim Dawkins: ‘Every day matters’



For Jim Dawkins, assuming the role of SRNS Executive Vice President and NNSA Chief Operations Officer has been a full circle moment. Born in Atlanta, Georgia, Dawkins spent his formative years between Atlanta, Greenville, South Carolina, and Evans, Georgia, practically in the back yard of SRS. “Back then, I was told the Site was a nuclear power plant,” he joked.

Dawkins’ military origins, including 34 years of service in the United States Air Force, starting as a pilot and eventually retiring as a Lieutenant General, began at the small Thomson, Georgia, airport. He even completed his first solo flight out of the Augusta Daniel Field Airport.

After retirement, Dawkins said he jumped at the chance for a “second act in life” when the position at SRS became available. No stranger to defense program missions, having served as Air Force Deputy Chief of Staff for Strategic Deterrence and Nuclear Integration, as well as NNSA Principal Assistant Deputy Administrator for Military Application, Dawkins was excited for the opportunity to oversee

operations at SRS and contribute to national security again.

“The opportunity to join the SRS team during this critical time that the nation is revitalizing the nuclear weapons enterprise is a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity for me,” he said. “Folks here have chosen to work at a national security site and serve their country. And that is something that doesn’t get acknowledged enough.”

In the coming months, Dawkins said he aims to learn as much about the Site as possible and get to know the workforce and their challenges.

“My goals are to connect people and clear roadblocks, advocate for resources, determine needs and help solve problems,” he said. “Transitioning to an NNSA site can be a big culture change. Having worked closely with NNSA for the past 10 years, I hope to help the Site with that change.”

Dawkins also wants to reinforce the message that “every day matters.”

“When you come to work at SRS, you have to give it your all. No matter what an employee’s job is, they are contributing to our national defense,” he said. “Everything we do, every hour we spend at this Site must be as productive as possible, underpinned by safety and security. What we’re doing every day matters, in order to meet our commitments to our nation. I couldn’t be prouder to be part of this team, and I look forward to meeting everyone.”

AI pilot programs streamline SRS processes



Katie Lunger, SRNS IT Senior Systems Engineer, and Brad Wilson, SRNS IT Associate System Engineer, discuss the new artificial intelligence pilot programs that enhance efficiency and streamline internal processes at the Site.

SRNS Information Technology (IT) department is conducting new artificial intelligence (AI) proof of concept (POC) solutions at SRS. Based on the Microsoft Azure AI Services platform, these solutions will enhance efficiency, streamline internal processes and explore the use of relevant emerging technologies.

The new AI-powered platform will operate exclusively within the Site's secure internal network — providing a controlled yet interactive environment for employees. The first solution, ChatSRS, is based on the OpenAI ChatGPT large language model and is licensed by Microsoft. It can provide users with information across a broad spectrum, assist with academic inquiries and explain complex ideas.

According to SRNS Chief Information Officer Bruce Page, ChatSRS is similar to search engines Google and Wikipedia, but it differs in that it creates a human-like conversation with the user — aiding in writing, editing and offering basic technical support.

"Instead of combing through websites to find your answer, this tool provides contextual feedback and supports a conversational experience associated with a given topic," said Page. "Our goal is to leverage relevant emerging technology with the potential of enhanced productivity, within a technically controlled environment."

The Microsoft Azure AI Services platform solutions will be rolled out in phases, with an initial focus on select human resources (HR) functions, followed by broader integration across the Site. Feedback associated with the POCs are closely monitored to refine and enhance the solutions before site-wide distribution.

"The Azure Platform Engineering team at SRS diligently collaborates with Microsoft experts to adhere to industry best practices, leveraging the mature Microsoft Azure platform," said Debra Beard, SRNS Azure Platform Engineering Lead. "By working closely with Microsoft, the team ensures that the provided Azure AI Services align with the principles of responsible AI, reflecting a commitment to accountability, reliability and trustworthiness in technology."

SRNS IT is also launching AskHR, a second AI solution, designed to streamline HR functions. From answering employee queries to providing personalized support, the platform utilizes advanced natural language processing capabilities to significantly reduce the time spent on routine conversations with employees.

"AskHR provides responses that are easy to understand with citations and support documents highlighting the applicable procedure or policy," said Francine Burroughs, SRNS Senior Vice President, Workforce Services and Talent Management. "The platform utilizes chat experiences similar to ChatSRS, to provide employees with feedback instantly from pre-loaded and trusted internal data sources."

SRNS Executive Vice President and Chief of Administration Sean Alford is confident that the platform will set a standard in HR management and reinforce the Site's position as an industry leader in adopting new technology and innovative solutions.

"Our goal with the new AskHR platform is to enhance the efficiency of our HR operations and provide a more responsive and engaging experience for employees," said Alford. "By adopting this advanced technology, we are optimizing our internal processes and demonstrating our commitment to innovation and employee satisfaction at SRS."

Len Bowers, SRNS Associate Chief Information Officer, Governance and IT Strategic Management, said, "Leveraging our robust service-oriented architecture and comprehensive software development ecosystem, we seamlessly integrated the newly available Azure AI Services to enhance our service offerings, delivering cutting-edge AI applications with unprecedented speed. This swift deployment underscores our commitment to innovation and our ability to rapidly adapt to emerging technologies to meet the evolving needs of our customers."

SRTE hosts training for First-Line Managers

Thirty SRNS employees recently completed the Institute of Nuclear Power Operations (INPO) First-Line Leadership Essentials seminar.

Savannah River Tritium Enterprise (SRTE) hosted this in-person event in downtown Aiken, South Carolina. The seminar provided valuable leadership training and development opportunities for first-line supervisors across the Site.

Returning participant and SRTE Operations Project Integration Manager Josh Stringfield said the training is designed to help leaders overcome challenges that they may face in a real-life work setting.

“The sessions were highly interactive, with a significant focus on practicing real-world job scenarios,” said Stringfield. “It provided an opportunity to enhance skills and foster improved leadership capabilities.”

The seminar’s curriculum is designed to help supervisors become better overall tactical leaders by teaching fundamentals in communications, safety culture, coaching, integrity and more. Through a variety of different learning activities, participants are equipped with the appropriate leadership tools and skills needed to bolster their professional development.

Senior Vice President, NNSA Tritium Operations and Programs J.C. Epting added that the training is helping to reinforce the standards of excellence in safety and security across the different SRNS missions.

“The class started out with 30 individuals and ended as one SRNS team with a common mission — to make the world safer,” said Epting.

Established in 1979 after the Three Mile Island accident, INPO is dedicated to promoting excellence in the operation, safety and reliability of commercial nuclear plants.

“Our partnership with INPO emphasizes our unwavering commitment to operational excellence in producing and protecting nuclear materials in support of our nation’s nuclear deterrent,” stated Epting. “We must continue to educate and develop our first-line managers to become outstanding leaders for tactical operations.”



SRNS Site Services Billy Vowell, Water Operator; Rich Brown, Engineer; and Tyler Handberry, Water Operator, inspect the D Area solar-powered pump system that manages water infiltration.

Site Services develops new solar pump solution

SRNS Site Services organization recently introduced an innovative, sustainable solution to SRS by installing a solar-powered pump system to manage water that infiltrates underground valve pits.

This initiative arose from a critical evaluation by SRNS Site Services Operations, which identified the traditional method of removing water from underground valve pits as both inefficient and unsustainable.

The pits, constructed as durable concrete structures, house large valves that regulate nearly 50 miles of river water piping integral to SRS operations. Routine maintenance of these valves is crucial for the seamless functioning of the River Water System; however, the pits are susceptible to water infiltration from rainfall and groundwater, requiring them to be dewatered before maintenance can be performed.

“Historically, we had depended on diesel-driven pumps to remove excess water,” said Grace Lukaczer, SRNS Site Infrastructure Engineer. “While effective, this approach was cumbersome and time-consuming, and it contributed to increased carbon dioxide emissions. To address this, the engineering and operations teams submitted a suggestion to the SRNS IDEAS Program to develop an efficient and environmentally-friendly automated solar pump solution.”

Since its inception in 1952, the SRNS IDEAS™ (Individuals Developing Effective Alternative Solutions™) Program has stimulated employee participation in generating innovative improvement suggestions. In fiscal year 2024, over 200 implemented ideas streamlined operations and yielded savings exceeding \$6.1 million.

At the same time, the SRNS Area Completion Projects (ACP) was finalizing a solar-powered microblower project. They transferred 19 surplus solar panel assemblies to SRNS Site Services for reuse, avoiding the costs associated with their disposal and significantly reducing material procurement expenses.

“This cross-functional collaboration proved highly advantageous for both ACP and Site Services,” said Jeff Hall, SRNS Site Services Utility Commodities Manager. “With the solar panels in hand, Site Infrastructure Engineering and Site Services Operations designed a pumping system — powered by the repurposed solar panels — that activates automatically to remove water from the valve pits.”

The integration of the solar pump solution exemplifies the SRNS commitment to continuous improvement and sustainability. This project not only made effective use of excess materials, but it also reduced labor costs, minimized carbon dioxide emissions and extended the lifespan of the distribution system by mitigating water damage and corrosion.



SRNS NB-390 Certified Inspectors Jacob Jones, Dane Keller and Andrew Matthews complete inspections of the A Area Biomass Boiler.

SRNS achieves NB-390 Certification

SRNS Design Engineering recently obtained the NB-390 Certification from the National Board of Boiler and Pressure Vessel Inspectors leading to cost savings and optimized scheduling for an extensive fleet of pressure vessels.

This National Board Inspection Code (NBIC) certification allows SRNS to act as an authorized inspection agency for the periodic inspection, repair and alteration of pressure vessels and boilers at SRS.

“This certification marks a major milestone for SRNS, reflecting our commitment to enhancing our technical expertise and operational efficiency,” said Thomas George, SRNS Engineering Standards Board Chairman. “By bringing these inspection capabilities in-house, we not only streamline processes but also ensure the highest standards of safety and compliance for our pressure vessels and boilers.”

With more than 1,500 pressure vessels in service, SRNS previously relied on external Authorized Inspectors for critical inspections, repairs and alterations. Today, SRNS joins Oak Ridge National Laboratory and Los Alamos National Laboratory as a NBIC-certified Federal Inspection Agency.

SRNS Design Engineers Andrew Matthews, Jacob Jones and Dane Keller successfully completed all qualifications to become NBIC Certified Inspectors.

“This is a monumental effort from this team,” said Donny Barfield, SRNS Director of Site Services. “They recognized a need to expedite these inspections; and, in the past, we were at the mercy of outside subcontractor schedules. Having the capability to perform these inspections in-house reduces equipment downtime, minimizes impacts to our customers and ensures the same quality of work prior to returning equipment to service.”

According to Rich Zaharek, SRNS Senior Vice President, Chief Engineer and Nuclear Safety Officer, the NBIC certification is a useful asset for the entire Site.

“I am proud of our three new certified inspectors and the Pressure Protection team for their commitment to achieving this major milestone and taking their job duties to the next level,” said Zaharek. “SRNS now has the capability to control our own destiny — no longer having to rely on outside resources to place equipment back into service.”

Team assembles 7,000 plastic suits for SRTE CY25 Outage

Respiratory Equipment Facility team members completed the assembly and inspection of 7,000 plastic suits in support of Savannah River Tritium Enterprise’s (SRTE) Calendar Year 2025 (CY25) Outage.

The suits are essential to the personnel responsible for working the outage, providing them with the necessary protection needed to carry out their tasks safely and effectively. Each suit is assembled and tested for air flow, leaks and other deficiencies that could lead to potential hazardous exposure to the workers.

“SRTE cannot meet their milestones without the proper protection. It’s our job to make sure we are putting out a good product to keep the workers safe,” said Respiratory Equipment Facility and Containment Fabrication Facility Manager Tim Barnes.

During the one-year outage, H Area New Manufacturing facility will undergo a major equipment recapitalization to help ensure Tritium efficiently continues its mission of producing high-quality tritium products. Replacement of several systems will require pausing operations in select areas of the facility. The preparation for this significant event has been ongoing for five years.

“This outage is crucial to the production of SRTE,” said Senior Vice President, National Nuclear Security Administration Tritium Operations and Programs J.C. Epting for SRNS. “These employees have done an amazing job making sure our team receives the proper equipment needed to fulfill this critical need.”

On average, 3,000 suits are assembled each year by the Respiratory Equipment Facility team. By meeting the requirements of this significant project, the team more than doubled their annual volume of production. In addition, they also assembled four ventilation huts and two glovebox bags.



Respiratory Equipment Facility and Containment Fabrication Facility team member Derrick Brown assembles the hood of a plastic suit.

When disaster strikes

Site personnel respond to Hurricane Helene impacts

In the wake of Hurricane Helene's devastating impact in the Southeast, SRS mobilized teams from SRNS Site Services, SRS Emergency Response Organization (ERO), the Savannah River Site Fire Department (SRSFD), Centerra-SRS and the U.S. Department of Agriculture Forest Service–Savannah River to address extensive damage, repairs and recovery efforts across the Site.

"The impacts of Hurricane Helene to the Site and our neighboring communities were unprecedented and remain challenging for many," said Mike Budney, Manager, DOE Savannah River Operations Office. "Team SRS stepped up response efforts immediately to ensure the safety of personnel, the environment and our nuclear facilities. I'm extremely proud of the outstanding work of our emergency preparedness and essential personnel — all of our workforce — in coming together to serve and lend support in this difficult time."

With thousands of trees uprooted and utility lines down, essential employees worked around the clock to restore SRS to normal operations.

"Nearly all major roadways at SRS were impacted by fallen trees or downed power lines. The majority of this was cleared and restored in two days," said Donny Barfield, SRNS Director of Site Services. "We plan for these extreme weather events, so our team was prepared to begin work on recovery efforts immediately."

In preparation for the storm, SRNS Site Services and the Savannah River National Laboratory Atmospheric Technologies Group implemented the Severe Weather Procedure. Activities included staging equipment in three response zones, filling 2,500 sandbags and adjusting shift schedules. The storm made landfall as a Category 4 late in the evening of Sept. 26, bringing wind gusts up to 82 mph.

"Nearly 80 Site Services employees consisting of heavy equipment operators, road crews and six linemen reported to the Site during initial recovery efforts. The team collaborated with the SRSFD and the U.S. Forest Service to clear roadways and rescue several motorists trapped inside their vehicles," continued Barfield.

During recovery efforts, the Site was in an operational emergency status, or a state of heightened alertness and operational flexibility to manage unforeseen challenges.

"In the face of Hurricane Helene, the ERO turned a potential crisis into a showcase of our strength and collaboration," said Neal Gilmore, SRNS Director of Safeguards, Security and Emergency Services. "I witnessed firsthand how our proactive emergency protocols and the swift decision-making of all Site tenants enabled us to manage water intrusion and process interruptions with no significant impact to Site operations."

SRS coordinated with off-site fuel shipments of gasoline, ethanol and diesel fuel to ensure SRS critical loads were supplied. Over 14,000 gallons of gasoline and diesel fuel were provided to essential employees to combat off-site gas shortages. In addition, SRNS subcontractor, Russell's Pizza, provided nearly 7,500 meals to responding employees.

Recovery teams were able to clear thousands of trees and powerlines from SRS roadways, repair approximately three miles of powerline and replace over 30 power poles and 60 crossarms.

"Our employees' commitment to safety and their tireless efforts around the clock have been instrumental in restoring the Site to normal operations," said Dennis Carr. "In the face of adversity, they have not only demonstrated exceptional work ethic but have reaffirmed our dedication to each other and the community. Together, we can rebuild and emerge stronger than ever before."



SRNS Site Services and the SRS Fire Department cleared thousands of downed trees and power lines.



Nearly 7,500 box lunches were provided to on-duty essential personnel by SRNS subcontractor Russell's Pizza.

Contractors support local community relief

IN A COLLABORATIVE EFFORT to support local relief agencies recovering from Hurricane Helene, nearly 40,000 MREs (Meals, Ready-to-Eat) were recently distributed by NNSA, the Department of Energy–Savannah River (DOE-SR) and SRNS. Additionally, SRNS contributed \$50,000 to the American Red Cross chapters serving Central South Carolina and East Central Georgia.

As part of its Continuity of Operations Plan, SRS maintains a stock of MREs to ensure essential operations during emergencies.

“The MREs were originally purchased as a contingency to sustain operations during the COVID-19 pandemic; and, if not used, they would have expired in January,” said Michael Mikolanis, Manager, NNSA-Savannah River Field Office. “This was a great win-win to support our local community by providing more than 39,000 meals to agencies and first responders working Hurricane Helene recovery.”

“It is remarkable to see all of us come together to successfully navigate this crisis and execute delivery of the MREs within 24 hours,” said Tammy Rimes, SRNS Senior Director of Supply Chain Operations and Programs. “The process of preparing, loading and transporting the meals to each agency was truly inspiring.”

SRNS Supply Chain Management received support from Site Services Transportation and the SRS Fire Department to expedite the transports to various locations. Recipients of the MREs included the North Augusta Community Center, Aiken Regional Medical Centers, Augusta University, MCG WellStar, Georgia East Central Public Health District, Burke County Emergency Management, South Carolina Fire Academy and Allendale Emergency Management.

“The leadership displayed across NNSA, DOE-SR and SRNS is unmatched and essential to the success of SRS. We recognize that our employees and community are still recovering from the devastating impacts of Helene,” said Mike Budney, Manager, DOE-Savannah River Operations Office. “This is more than just a meal; it reflects our commitment to uplift those affected and further support the brave first responders working tirelessly to help.”

In addition, SRNS contributed \$50,000 to the America Red Cross of Central South Carolina and East Central Georgia for storm recovery relief efforts.

“Our hearts are with those impacted by this storm,” said Carr. “By supporting our local American Red Cross branches, SRNS is helping our neighbors rebuild and recover quickly from this disaster. Together, we can turn this challenge into a renewed strength for our community.”

\$50,000

SRNS contributed to American Red Cross

39,000

Meals for agencies and first responders

MRE recipients

- North Augusta Community Center
- Aiken Regional Medical Centers
- Augusta University
- MCG WellStar
- Georgia East Central Public Health District
- Burke County Emergency Management
- South Carolina Fire Academy
- Allendale Emergency Management



SRS Fire Department’s David Satterwhite and Camden Stanley load meals for delivery to Allendale County Emergency Management.



Site contractors worked together to support local agencies with Hurricane Helene relief efforts.



SRSFD's vehicle fleet was designed and built in Appleton, Wisconsin, by Pierce Manufacturing, the world's largest manufacturer of fire apparatus.

New hazmat vehicle enhances SRSFD safety

The Savannah River Site Fire Department (SRSFD) recently received a new addition to their vehicle fleet, a Pierce Manufacturing Velocity hazmat truck. This truck replaces an existing vehicle from the mid-'90s, offering 21st century technology and improvements to aid in emergency response.

The truck features a dual lens camera with thermal and optical abilities mounted on a 45-foot telescoping mast, advancing situational awareness of incident scenes regardless of weather or time of day. With an industrial compressor, the truck can offload liquids more efficiently by pressurizing the tank they are stored in and creating a controlled flow. This is especially helpful when transferring large volumes to another vehicle or into a water supply for firefighting.

While its purpose is to mitigate hazardous materials, the hazmat truck can also be used as a command cab or rehabilitation space where emergency responders can go to assess vitals, replenish fluids and momentarily rest. The command cab features a backup onboard internet connection which ensures constant communication is maintained, a weather station and multiple display monitors to access images from the telescoping camera, view drone footage, broadcast television and more. The body of the truck also has several fold-down doors that double as seats, giving responders a place to sit while donning their personal protective equipment.

Equipped with a 12-volt generator, the hazmat truck possesses the capability to power all onboard equipment. This allows the engine to be shut down on long incident scenes, reducing the noise on the scene and complications that could result from diesel regeneration systems.

SRSFD Chief Travis Scott stated, "I'm excited about the capabilities and added safety measures this truck brings us. Hazardous material incidents are some of the more high-risk, low-frequency emergencies we are subject to respond to; therefore, having the best equipment and technology available enhances the safety and mitigation efforts of our responders."

This addition will not only increase the safety of SRS employees but also the community, as SRS has seven mutual aid agreements with surrounding counties. This year, the SRSFD has gone above and beyond to support the community, responding to 29 mutual aid calls — nearly double the amount they typically respond to annually.

Cultivating Wellness: SRS health fair offers tools for better living

The DOE recently held an on-site health fair providing SRS employees with access to flu shots, free medical screenings and helpful resources to encourage health and wellness.

Piedmont Healthcare and Aiken Regional Medical Centers provided blood pressure checks, medical labs and carotid artery ultrasounds to help employees identify potential health risks and provide additional insight into healthy lifestyle options. Other services included flu shots offered by Family Pharmacy and hearing examinations offered by Hearing Associates of South Carolina. Informational booths included:

- Spine Doctors of Aiken
- Project Lifting Spirits
- Vein Guys
- DayBreak Adult Care
- Long Term Liaisons
- Advanced Endo/Oral Facial Specialist
- CSRA Regional Commission — Area Agency on Aging
- Medical Associates Plus
- Shepard Community Blood Center
- Professional Case Management
- National Active and Retired Federal Employees Association
- Federal Health Benefits Representatives (BlueCross BlueShield, MailHandlers, MetLife, United Health Care)

"SRS actively seeks to provide the resources necessary to ensure the health and safety of employees," said Rick Sprague, SRNS Senior Vice President, Environmental, Safety, Health and Quality. "Events like this help detect potential health issues early, empower individuals to take control of their well-being and encourage a culture of preventative care in the workplace."

DOE Management Analyst Susan McGahee stated, "We really appreciate all the vendors and employees who participated in this year's Health Fair to make it such a success. Some vendors said that this was the best health fair they have ever attended. Wellness is important for all, and we are honored to be able to offer this annual event."



Various informational booths provided employees with beneficial health and wellness information and resources.

Red Cross Heroes honored at event



Red Cross Heroes, including SRNS employees Bill Hutcheson (third from right) and Jodie Saverance (second from right) gathered for a group photo after the event.

SRNS has been a long-time supporter of the American Red Cross, serving as the presenting sponsor for their annual Heroes Breakfast held in Augusta, Georgia. This event honors community heroes who strive to embody the Red Cross mission in their everyday lives.

This year, two SRNS employees from L Area were recognized with Good Samaritan awards: Senior Operations Support Specialist Jodie Saverance and Operations Support Specialist Bill Hutcheson. While talking with a co-worker one day, Saverance noticed something wasn't quite right and that her co-worker had become incoherent. She, along with fellow co-worker Hutcheson, immediately took action to obtain first aid attention. Hutcheson reached out to the appropriate contacts to get an EMT to their location, while Saverance stayed with their co-worker in distress, continuing to converse with them and determine the extent of any issues. They provided EMTs with as much detail as possible once they arrived to ensure their co-worker received the necessary help.

"It is important to know your co-workers and to check on each other daily," said Saverance. "I feel like people work better together when they know each other, and our team tries to make a point of doing this. We are trained in first aid and CPR as well as hold Area drills to prepare for emergency situations. These precautions are vital and help people to recognize the signs when something is not quite right and what they can do to help. Once you participate in enough drills, it becomes second nature to step in and know how to respond."

Other honorees from the local community include:

- Military Hero — Stephen Thompson; Sponsored by WJBF and Beasley Media Group
- Nurse Hero — Tina Watts; Sponsored by Hardwood Floors and More and Clearwater Paper
- Spirit of the Red Cross — Mad Hatter Farm; Sponsored by Aurubis Richmond

- Animal Hero — Deputy Chad Cheek; Sponsored by SME CPAs and M3 Agency
- Water Rescue Hero — Dr. Vasu Lakkimsetti; Sponsored by Queensborough Bank and Trust and ADP
- Good Samaritan Youth Hero — Caitlyn Burner; Sponsored by SRP Federal Credit Union
- EMT/Firefighter Hero — Lt. James Thomas; Sponsored by Wynn Capital and Publix Charities
- Medical Hero — Jane Echols, RN, BSN; Sponsored by Doctors Hospital and the TR and N Reddy Foundation

Executive Director for the American Red Cross of East Central Georgia, Susan Everitt, stated, "The annual Red Cross Heroes Breakfast is one of the most inspiring events of the year — where we take the time honor people and organizations doing extraordinary things. They symbolize the best of the human spirit and reflect the Red Cross ideal of helping others."

"This year's hero honorees were chosen from a competitive field. We saw some truly impressive nominations, but these 2024 honorees rose to the forefront for making a difference — in some cases, a lifesaving difference — in their communities and are true heroes," Everitt continued. "Jodie and Bill were the perfect choice for the Good Samaritan Hero award. Their care for their coworker is inspirational, and an example of a true Good Samaritan."



WATCH THE VIDEO:

<https://vimeo.com/995085276/b4ee3375da?share=copy>

'2024 Buyer of the Year' for small business

SRNS Small Business Program was recently named "2024 Buyer of the Year" of goods and services from Minority Business Enterprises (MBEs) during Carolina-Virginia Minority Supplier Diversity Council's (CVMSDC) annual Business Opportunity Conference in Virginia Beach, Virginia.

As one of 23 regional affiliate councils of the National Minority Supplier Development Council (NMSDC), CVMSDC aims to expand business opportunities for minority businesses by creating mutually beneficial relationships with corporate members. The top buyer award recognizes significant contributions to supplier development and regional small and minority business initiatives.

During the ceremony, special recognition was given to SRNS Buyer Jana Chavous, who received accolades for the award category, and SRNS Rachel Boyd, who serves as liaison to the CVMSDC council.

"We continue to partner with CVMSDC to elevate minority business participation levels and foster economic development," said Jay Johnson, SRNS Deputy Vice President and CVMSDC Board Member. "We execute a 'small business first' approach for our procurements — with some buyers awarding over 93% of work, in any given month, to small businesses."

At the heart of CVMSDC's initiative is the MBE Leaders Program (MLP), symbolized by the MLP Ring — encompassing Midlands, Low Country, Pee Dee and surrounding areas. SRNS leadership is instrumental in empowering MBEs, enhancing their capabilities and fostering sustainable growth.

"SRNS was selected from a competitive pool of nominees from the MLP Ring, including: BMW, Bank of America, Ferguson, Truist, Duke Energy, Fluor and Hill," continued Johnson.



On behalf of SRNS, Buyer Jana Chavous was named the "2024 Buyer of the Year" by the Carolinas-Virginia Minority Supplier Development Council.

Council President and Chief Executive Officer Dominique Milton said, "This is a well-deserved recognition for our partner SRNS and their impact in the region. They remain intentional about supplier diversity and inclusion; and [they] continue to share opportunities with minority businesses in Virginia and the Carolinas."

SRNS has contracts with more than 80 minority businesses, which comprises 18% of the company's overall supplier spend. Since 2012, SRNS has committed over \$456 million to minority businesses in South Carolina, North Carolina and Virginia and \$1 billion nationally. SRNS has led best practice supplier development initiatives with many of these small businesses.

"SRNS Buyers continue to actively support small businesses through the Mentor-Protégé Program, partnership opportunities and local economic development projects," said Lisa Tanner, SRNS Small Business Liaison Officer. "By championing small business interests, SRNS creates a more dynamic and resilient business ecosystem, contributing to the broader economic prosperity."



Aiken's Choice SRS recognized as 'Best Place to Work'

SRS was recently recognized as the Best Place to Work in Aiken, South Carolina by the Aiken Standard's annual Aiken's Choice Awards.

Each year, the Aiken Standard accepts nominations from their readers to highlight the best that Aiken has to offer in a variety of categories, including arts, music and entertainment; city life; beauty, health and wellness; food and beverage; pet services; recreation; shopping; and services. Once the nomination period is completed, the top five in each category moves up to the voting round where readers can vote one time daily until the contest concludes, and the top three winners are calculated for each category.

The Aiken Standard has hosted the Aiken's Choice Awards for 32 years. According to Aiken Standard Advertising Sales Manager, Diane Daniell, "SRS has been a repeated winner for Best Place to Work over the years. We are delighted to host an annual themed celebration to put a spotlight on the dedication, passion and hard work that each of our winners bring to the community."

To view all winners from this year's 2024 Aiken's Choice awards, visit: <https://aikenstandard.secondstreetapp.com/Aikens-Choice-2024/>

SRS/LANL university collaborations develop next-generation pit technology

SRNS and Los Alamos National Laboratory (LANL) are partnering with multiple universities to develop next generation technology and personnel pipelines in advancement of the NNSA's two-site pit production mission.

Through these university engagement initiatives, personnel from SRNS Pit Production Operations and Programs (PPOP), LANL's Associate Directorate for Weapons Production's Technical Applications Office (ALDWP-TAO), and LANL's partner, TechSource Inc., visited the University of Texas El Paso (UTEP) the week of Sept. 16, during National Hispanic Heritage Month. UTEP, one of the largest and most successful Hispanic-serving institutions in the country, has a renowned Metallurgical and Materials Engineering program focused on materials synthesis, development of high-performance materials and material degradation in extreme environments.

"One of the goals of this collaboration is to develop and test next generation materials, processes and technology for the pit production mission," said Bill Blake, PPOP Technical Applications Team Lead. "We have been very impressed with LANL's engagement with UTEP and other universities and are looking to expand our partnership with them on current and future university collaboration efforts."

The visit provided a comprehensive update of ongoing UTEP initiatives, key capabilities and recent advancements, and included student capstone research project presentations.

SRNS Deputy Vice President for PPOP Erika Baeza-Wisdom offered an overview of SRS and the pit production program mission during a student seminar, while sharing her personal story and tips for professional success.

"Across all industries, there are not many executives who look like me," said Baeza-Wisdom. "Representation matters. It's what makes these students, many of whom are of Hispanic and Latino backgrounds like myself, feel empowered to chase their goals and dreams and to know they are attainable because they are seeing progress being made by others. It shows them that anything is possible."

Baeza-Wisdom, along with LANL's ALDWP-TAO director, Robert "Bob" Putnam, were recently invited to participate in a UTEP



Erika Baeza-Wisdom, SRNS Deputy Vice President NNSA Pit Production Operations and Programs, presents an SRNS pit production overview to students.

Advisory Board, where they will work closely with the Vice President for Research's office and faculty members to provide input on curriculum and student capstone projects.

"The next generation of our workforce must be an adaptive, innovative and diverse team. This is why LANL partnered with TechSource Inc. to develop the weapons production technology and nuclear training program (WP-TNT) to interface with key colleges and universities," said Putnam. "The quality of UTEP graduates, their sense of mission and reverence for mission to the safety and security of the United States is what first attracted us to UTEP. We are thrilled to be sharing WP-TNT with our mission partner at SRNS."

Representatives from PPOP also participated in a joint UTEP career fair with TAO, where they spoke with students about the pit production mission at both sites.

"We received dozens of resumes from students and are looking forward to sharing more about our two sites and how we are working together to keep the world safe through our defense program missions," said Blake.

In addition to these efforts, SRNS has been invited to join LANL in collaborations with Montana State University and Arizona State University on pit production-specific projects.



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Erika Baeza-Wisdom,

SRNS Deputy Vice President for Pit Production Operations and Programs



Site reaches milestone in pit production staffing

The Site recently onboarded five apprentices as part of the inaugural SRPPF class of Production Operator Apprentices. This development marks a significant milestone in staffing SRPPF, which was selected by NNSA to produce the plutonium pits required to strengthen the nation's nuclear stockpile.

According to Patrick Ott, SRNS Apprentice Recruiter/ Apprenticeship Program Lead who oversees the SRPPF Apprenticeship operators through the SRS Apprenticeship School, to be eligible for the program, applicants must have a high school diploma or GED and achieve required scores on the WorkKeys assessment tests.

"Over the years, the Production Operator Apprentice program has been a huge success with nearly 450 graduates," said Ott. "We are especially looking forward to onboarding this new group of SRPPF apprentices as they become part of the SRS mission of helping make the world safer."

Brianna Golphin said she decided to apply for the SRPPF Production Operator position because of the unique opportunity to serve her country. "I am particularly excited about graduating from the program and starting my journey at the SRPPF facility," said Golphin. "Through this program, I hope to gain comprehensive knowledge and training that will enhance my performance skills, enabling me to become the best production operator at SRPPF. My long-term goal is to build a lasting career with SRPPF."

The eight-month program will allow these students to simultaneously complete their classroom work and on-the-job training by alternating between taking classes at Denmark Technical College (DTC)'s satellite



The first class of onboarded SRPPF Production Operator Apprentices

campus, located in the heart of Allendale, South Carolina, and training on-site, while earning a competitive scalable wage. After completing the program at DTC, a Historically Black College and University, participants will have earned a certificate in nuclear fundamentals and will have a portable credential from the Department of Labor. A formal graduation ceremony will be held to commemorate the occasion.

"Onboarding this first class of SRPPF Production Operator Apprentices signifies a major development in our efforts to staff the pit production mission at SRS," said Darlene Murdoch, SRNS Senior Vice President, NNSA Pit Production Operations and Programs. "Having the right team in place is a crucial factor in successfully delivering on our commitments to strengthen nuclear deterrence. We are thrilled that these students have chosen to join our team and look forward to working with them for many years to come."

Student Loan Debt Reduction program helps 857 participants

SRNS recently met a major milestone in its Student Loan Debt Reduction (SLDR) program; they have successfully enrolled 857 participants and have helped to eliminate the student loan debt of nearly 20 employees.

As part of the CARES (Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security) Act of 2020, the U.S. Congress amended Section 127 of the Internal Revenue Code to permit employers to pay up to \$5,250 per year to employees for student loan repayments as part of an educational assistance program. SRNS launched the SLDR program in January 2024 to encourage employee retention and directly address the financial strain of student loan debt.

During the first cycle, SRNS contributed over \$2.5 million to reduce student loan debt, providing each participant with up to \$350 per month to support loan payback.

"SLDR funds are designed to pair with a participant's monthly student loan payment, bringing down their debt quicker and paid directly to the student loan provider," said Francine Burroughs, SRNS Senior Vice President, Workforce Services and Talent Management. "With only 8% of national employers offering student loan debt reduction programs for their employees, this is a major milestone for SRNS."

Full-service, full-time employees with complete graduate or undergraduate degrees are eligible to apply for reduction of their Qualified Education Loans.

"The program not only alleviates financial stress but demonstrates our ongoing commitment to our employees," continued Burroughs. "Seeing nearly 20 individuals achieve complete debt relief is a testament to the remarkable impact of this program."

To improve retention and manage attrition, the program includes a payback agreement requiring SRNS participants to remain employed for at least one year following the receipt of benefits or repay the amount received.

"This SRNS benefit was perfect for me because it allowed me to finish paying off my student loans at a faster pace," said Philip Woods, SRNS Software Engineer. "I'm thankful for this program and SRNS for bringing this benefit to employees. It is attractive to both new and veteran hires."

"We are committed to supporting team members at various stages of their careers," said Sean Alford, SRNS Executive Vice President and Chief Administrative Officer. "SLDR program participants range from recent college graduates to a 71-year-old veteran of the workforce. We value the contribution of every SRNS employee, and it is an honor to facilitate the retirement of their educational debt."

The second application portal will open Nov. 1 through Dec. 10 for 2025 SLDR benefits.



Seneca Johnson

AT SRNS: Pit Production Program Quality Assurance Manager

IN THE COMMUNITY: Volunteer with United Way, Heart Walk, Toys for Tots and participates in monthly food distributions with local churches

THE PEOPLE OF SRNS

Seneca Johnson currently serves as the Pit Production Quality Assurance Manager at SRNS. Her primary duties include overseeing all aspects of the pit program quality assurance program and conducting performance evaluations; advising management on various requirements, corrective actions and activities affecting Site operations; and directing evaluations to promote continuous improvement in program guidance.

Johnson holds a Bachelor of Science in Chemical Engineering from the University of South Carolina. She has worked at SRS for eight years, previously residing as the Quality Manager for all NNSA Capital Projects.

Aside from her standard job functions, Johnson has volunteered with numerous community service organizations including the United Way, where she served as Chair for Site Services in 2018 to 2019 and continues to help raise funds for the 2024 campaign, and Toys for Tots, whose campaign she co-chaired in 2019 and chaired during the 2020 pandemic. She also has volunteered with Heart Walk, Project Vision and currently actively participates in monthly food distributions to those in need with local churches. Johnson also served on the communications team of the Aspiring Mid-Career Professionals steering committee from 2018 to 2019.

"I'm grateful for the opportunities for professional growth and development the Site has provided me," said Johnson. "The experiences I've gained at SRS have allowed me to continually enhance my skills and knowledge."

A South Carolina resident originally from Sumter, Johnson now resides with family in Graniteville. In her spare time, she enjoys reading and running 5Ks.

SRTE holds annual Housekeeping Day

Savannah River Tritium Enterprise (SRTE) recently conducted their annual Housekeeping Day, dedicated to cleaning facilities around the Tritium campus and celebrating the invaluable contributions of employees in support of the nation's nuclear deterrent.

Employees started with a stretch and flex and then went to designated areas to begin their assigned housekeeping duties.

"Housekeeping day was a tremendous success. Our dedicated employees took the time to clean handrails, mop floors and ensure every corner was spotless. Their hard work has truly made a difference, creating a fresher and more welcoming environment for all," said Deb Solomon, SRTE Environmental Security, Safety and Health Manager.

In addition to cleaning facilities, employees participated in celebratory activities, including a cornhole tournament.

This year, 16 teams donated \$20 each to the United Way campaign as the entry fee to compete in the tournament. The team of Joe Dennis and Zach Cheely, who work in H Area Old Manufacturing, battled it out until the end taking home the title of first place.

Following the tournament, an Employee Appreciation ceremony recognized employees for their hard work and dedication to SRTE's vital mission.



During SRTE's Housekeeping Day, employees worked together to help clean facilities.

Former Executive Vice President and NNSA Chief Operations Officer J.C. Wallace; Manager of the NNSA Savannah River Field Office Michael Mikolanis; and SRNS Senior Vice President — NNSA Operations and Programs J.C. Epting spoke during the ceremony, praising employees for their efforts.

"I want to commend each and every one of you for our fiscal year '24 success," Epting said, during the ceremony.

FEATURE FRIDAY

The following employees were highlighted as part of the SRNS Feature Friday series on social media.



SCAN ME
to connect with
our social media



Donna Bridges
EC&ACP Health and
Safety Manger



Savannah Mcentarffer
SRPPF Training
Manager



Jessica Cartin
SRPPF Operations/Technical
Training Specialist



Kendall Feenstra
Principal Public Relations
& Information Specialist

SRNS

Developing innovative approaches to deliver on our environmental commitments and nuclear materials challenges

Supplying products and services necessary to maintain the nation's nuclear deterrent

Securing nuclear materials to prevent unwanted proliferation

Transforming nuclear materials into assets and stable wasteforms



Savannah River
NUCLEAR SOLUTIONSSM