

News from the Savannah River Site

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

New Class of Nuclear Workers Hired by SRNS

Augusta and Aiken Technical Colleges provide many of the skilled operators for SRS nuclear production facilities

AIKEN, S.C. (January 28, 2014) – Department of Energy primary contractor Savannah River Nuclear Solutions (SRNS) has hired and is now in the process of training its first class of nuclear production operators for Environmental Management operations in more than 15 years to support existing and new missions at the Savannah River Site (SRS).

Seventeen of the 40 trainees are graduates of two local college programs created to support the growing need for expertise in nuclear production throughout the region.

“I believe the skills and knowledge obtained through the Radiation Protection Technology Program at Aiken Tech helped me get this job,” said SRNS Operator trainee and Aiken, S.C., resident Andrew Brown.

“Savannah River Nuclear Solutions is putting a lot into this operator training program at SRS, and their approach to safety and conduct of operations is outstanding. I’m married with a four-month-old daughter, so I’m very happy to be employed here.”

“We are pleased that nearly all of these new employees are local,” said Mark Kokovich,



SRNS instructor Skip Johnson explains how a portable air monitoring unit functions to SRNS Operator trainees Natalie Lee and Andrew Brown, Aiken Technical College graduate, while their fellow students prepare training materials for the next class.

SRNS Training Manager. “Most have family and roots here in the area. Our company is making a training investment in people who will stay and grow with us as SRNS continues to receive new missions and as we progressively lose employees through retirement.”

Kokovich explained that nine trainees are graduates of the Nuclear Engineering Program recently established at Augusta Technical College, and eight are graduates of the Radiation Protection Program offered at Aiken Technical College. Both programs were specifically created to provide qualified job candidates for openings at SRS and commercial power reactors such as Plant Vogtle in Georgia and those operating in South Carolina. “The graduates of these programs have gained knowledge and basic fundamentals that will be very helpful toward the successful transition from college to full-time operator,” added Kokovich.

“SRNS and Aiken Technical College have worked together over the years with the mutual goal of providing an education for area residents which equips and enables them to take advantage of the many skilled employment opportunities right here in the community,” said Dave Deal, Aiken Technical College Department Chair for Nuclear and Skilled Trades Programs. “When so many of our graduates are able to achieve that goal by becoming employees at SRNS, we see our mission being fulfilled. It is a win-win situation for everyone.”

Once fully trained, the new class of nuclear production operators will be filling roles in operating facilities across the site and Savannah River National Laboratory.

Kokovich also noted that SRNS has plans to hire a class of new operators each year for several years to support growing SRNS programs and to fill a large void expected to be created in the near future as numerous SRS employees become eligible for retirement. “We want to create opportunities for years to come so our highly experienced employees can pass on process knowledge to the new operators, preserving operations-related information that otherwise would be lost.”

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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