

Katie Gantt

Savannah River Nuclear Solutions
(839) 465-0492, katie.gantt@srs.gov

For Immediate Release

SRS welcomes new class of nuclear operators from Augusta Tech

AIKEN, S.C. – (August 28, 2025) – The Savannah River Site (SRS) is strengthening its workforce with a new cohort of skilled nuclear operators, thanks to recent graduates from Augusta Technical College's (ATC) Nuclear Operator Apprenticeship Program. This program is a robust partnership with the SRS Apprenticeship School, aimed at creating workforce pipelines in various disciplines at SRS through collaboration with local technical colleges.

The graduation ceremony marked the third cohort from ATC, celebrating 18 new graduates: Justin Attwood, Nicholas Billings, Kenneth Bowman, Horace Brunson, Christopher Coleman, Chase Crapse, Beaumont Davenport, James Gillespie, Joshua Gordon, Sydnee Hammonds, Kristian Kennedy, Stephen Kennedy, Gunnary Kern, Chad Priester, Dalton Sawyer, George Trull, Johnny Wooden, and Andrew Zercher. These graduates are now transitioning to their next phase of training at their respective facilities with Savannah River Nuclear Solutions (SRNS), the managing and operating contractor at SRS.



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The eight-month program involved intensive classroom instruction at ATC paired with practical on-site training at SRS. After completing the program, 13 graduates will join the K Area Complex (KAC) team, contributing to downblending missions for Plutonium Disposition Operations and Programs (PDOP). Four graduates will be part of the Environmental Management team, and one will work at the Savannah River Pit Production Facility. This cohort represents the largest group of graduates for KAC to date.

Lee Sims, Acting Senior Vice President, PDOP, attended the graduation to support KAC graduates. "It is an honor to welcome this talented group of individuals into our operations," he said. "Their dedication to our mission and their unwavering commitment to safety will help drive our success for years to come. We look forward to watching their careers grow as they contribute to the critical missions performed at SRNS."



Interim President of ATC, Dr. Melissa Frank Alston, delivered the welcome remarks. Featured speakers included SRNS' Senior Vice President, Environmental Safety, Health, and Quality, Duane McLane, and Senior Vice President, Environmental Management Operations, Janice Lawson.

Lawson delivered the keynote address, inspiring graduates with her words: "Continue to learn. Learn the systems of your facility, learn the safety basis of your facility and go after your qualifications! I too went through a

training program many years ago and that was the start of where I am today. Be the best operator that you can be, and I promise you that good opportunities will come to you."

Christopher Coleman, a graduate who will be joining PDOP as a full-time employee, presented a student reflection emphasizing the importance of integrity. "I strive to be the best I possibly can be in everything I put my hands to. That principle has led me to success in this program and will be my guiding light for the rest of my career at SRS," Coleman remarked. "It's a challenge to pursue excellence, but we can, and we must remain vigilant and dedicated to the honesty, integrity, and excellence that defines us as people and as nuclear operators at the Site."

David Jackson, the graduating cohorts program lead at SRNS said, "This cohort of operator apprentices bonded as family. Throughout the process they showed dedication, teamwork, and skill. This cohort has proven that going through the Apprenticeship Program isn't just achieved—it's earned."

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In addition to ATC, the SRS Apprenticeship School's community partners now include Aiken Technical College, Denmark Technical College, and economic development agencies such as the Lower Savannah Council of Governments and the Savannah River Site Community Reuse Organization.

To learn more about opportunities available at the SRS Apprenticeship School, visit srs.gov/general/outreach/apprenticeship/apprenticeship_school.htm.

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.

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