

Primary Media Contact:

Gabrielle Bates
Savannah River Nuclear Solutions
(803) 208-8996
gabrielle.bates@srs.gov

NNSA Media Contact:

Bryan Cox
NNSA – Savannah River Field Office
(803) 989-9050
bryan.cox@nnsa.srs.gov

For Immediate Release

SRNS welcomes fifteen Nuclear Operators



Front row: Garrett Wright; Paxton Wall; Gage Jones; Cameron Coughenour; Operations Training Lead David Jackson; (second row): Department of Energy-Savannah River Deputy Manager Edwin DeShong; Site Training Deputy Director National Nuclear Security Administration an Environmental Management Wendy Lark; Vice President of Economic Development, Augusta Technical College Julie Langham; Mario O’Neal; Gregory Davis; Kelly Coons; William Prather; Zedric Swedenburg; SRNS Senior Vice President NNSA Tritium Operations and Programs J.C. Epting; Program Manager and Manager of Youth Apprenticeships BooBoo Roberts; College Partnership and Pipeline Development Lead Abigail Bowman; (third row): Jacob Bridgmon; Cameron Leach; Anthony Harley; Malik Jones; Chad Gilchrist Jr.; Benjamin Parsons, Patrick Ott.

AIKEN, S.C., – (May 27, 2025) – Fifteen apprentices recently earned their Nuclear Fundamental Technology certificates from [Augusta Technical College](http://www.atc.edu) (ATC) in Augusta, Georgia, following

their graduation from the Savannah River Nuclear Solutions (SRNS) [Nuclear Operator Program](#). Upon fulfilling all employment requirements, these graduates will become fully-qualified operators in the SRNS [Savannah River Tritium Enterprise](#) (SRTE).

“We are excited to have this wonderful group of graduates join us in Tritium,” said SRNS Senior Vice President NNSA Tritium Operations and Programs JC Epting. “SRTE is the only facility in the nation capable of preparing tritium for the nuclear weapons stockpile and these young men and women will play a vital role in making sure we meet our national security commitments.”



During the graduation ceremony, SRNS Senior Vice President NNSA Tritium Operations and Programs JC Epting offered words of wisdom and encouragement and welcomed the new operators to SRTE.

A ceremony honored the 15 graduates of the program. Vice President of Economic Development, ATC Julie Langham and Epting made opening remarks at the event. Special guest speakers included Department of Energy-Savannah River Deputy Manager Edwin DeShong, Site Training Deputy Director National Nuclear Security Administration an Environmental Management Wendy Lark, and three participants from the graduating class.

William Prather, a graduate of the apprenticeship program, is transitioning into the SRTE's Tritium Extraction Facility. Prather expressed his gratitude for the program, noting that it equipped him with the essential skills and knowledge required for a successful career as a nuclear operator.

“This apprenticeship program was more than training. It was an opportunity to gain important knowledge while building hands-on experience,” said Prather. “It also gave us the ability to build meaningful relationships with the people we will be working with.”

The eight-month Nuclear Operator Program offers students a distinctive learning experience by combining classroom instruction at a partnering technical college with paid on-the-job training alongside experienced senior operators. In addition, students gain a thorough understanding of the safety protocols and work culture at the Savannah River Site, ensuring a smooth transition into their full-time positions.

"The apprenticeship program at SRS ensures apprentices' success by offering a competitive wage and fundamental knowledge in their discipline through our partnering technical colleges. This program provides hands-on experience alongside seasoned professionals and on-the-job training, helping to build confidence in their professional abilities," said SRS Apprenticeship and Pipeline Training Program Manager BooBoo Roberts. "Through structured mentoring and training, apprentices gain a strong foundation that prepares them to thrive in their facilities. This helps the company meet their deliverables."

Roberts also added that the apprenticeship program provides the participant with the opportunity to earn a Technical College Certificate and a U.S. Dept of Labor Certificate. These two nationally recognized and portable credentials enhance their professional qualifications and career mobility.

In partnership with [Apprenticeship Carolina](#) and the Lower Savannah Council of Governments, the SRS Apprenticeship Program was created to address attrition levels and establish a pipeline to support mission-critical positions at the Site. The program collaborates with [Aiken Technical College](#), Augusta Technical College and [Denmark Technical College](#) to provide the comprehensive educational training.

Established by Congress in 2000, NNSA is a semi-autonomous agency within the U.S. Department of Energy responsible for enhancing national security through the military application of nuclear science. NNSA maintains and enhances the safety, security, and effectiveness of the U.S. nuclear weapons stockpile; works to reduce the global danger from weapons of mass destruction; provides the U.S. Navy with safe and militarily effective nuclear propulsion; and responds to nuclear and radiological emergencies in the U.S. and abroad.

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.

SRNS-2025-1629