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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Savannah River Site Contractor Provides Major Contributions to Regional “STEM Career Connections Day”

AIKEN, S.C. – (Oct. 27, 2015) – Savannah River Nuclear Solutions (SRNS) recently reached out to hundreds of high school students from throughout the Central Savannah River Area during this year’s “STEM (science, technology, engineering and math) Career Connections Day.” The event was held at the Kroc Center in Augusta, Ga.

The primary purpose of this interactive forum is to encourage students to explore career opportunities in STEM-based occupations through interaction with professionals from local high-tech industries, including nuclear technology, information technology and advanced manufacturing.

According to Kim Mitchell, SRNS Education Outreach, the demand for jobs requiring skilled workers in STEM fields is rapidly growing in our community and across the nation. Students often do not choose careers that support industry needs, hence the importance of a STEM Career Day and why SRNS is involved.

“We have multiple programs at SRNS that emphasize the importance of STEM-based curriculum and vocations, such as the Future City Competition, Introduce a Girl to Engineering, Teaching in Excellence Mini-Grant Program, the Science Bowl and also the Traveling Science Demonstration Program where SRNS volunteers provide in-school presentations,” said Mitchell.



Students from the greater Aiken-Augusta area recently participated in an interactive forum for high school students considering a career pathway that involves science, technology, engineering and math skills at the Kroc Center in Augusta, Ga. Savannah River National Laboratory engineer Dr. Aaron Washington (left) discusses several innovative products created by employees at SRNL with local school students.

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Joseph Martin, a high school teacher with the Academy of Richmond County, expressed his appreciation for the value of the individual connection made between the students and the presenters in the field versus the classroom. “The students get to move around and ask questions, receiving a diverse range of information at their own pace,” said Martin. “You try to get these kids to think about the next step, and this is an incredible opportunity for that. I firmly believe it’s about what you expose the students to that can captivate them. Then you can just see them take off.”

For Savannah River National Laboratory (SRNL) Principal Scientist Dr. Aaron L. Washington, II, this day presents an opportunity to impact the next generation of scientists and engineers. “It is an important obligation for us as researchers working for SRNL,” said Washington. “This event is giving us access to students from throughout the CSRA to have a one-on-one conversation to present our ideas, projects and products while giving them opportunities to obtain information. My colleagues Dr. Brenda Garcia-Diaz, Holly Watson and I are delighted to meet these future researchers and engineers.”

At the STEM Career Connections Day event, SRNL presented newly invented radiological containment bags, a hydrogen fuel cell setup, as well as a device to demonstrate how we can harness solar energy through the use of photovoltaics.

SRNS personnel provided several popular information booths and numerous volunteers. In addition, the Department of Energy contractor was also a major sponsor of the annual event.

Mindy Metts, Nuclear Workforce Initiative Program Manager, SRS Community Reuse Organization, noted that across the nation today, there’s a tremendous need for new workers in the fields of science, technology, engineering and math. “The typical job fair in the gym experience is not always fruitful. Whereas STEM Career Connection Day is a way to creatively connect employers in the greater Aiken-Augusta region with students interested in STEM areas of study,” said Metts. “This event can really make that connection in a real life, hands-on experience. Having young nuclear professionals here who the students can relate to carries so much more weight.”

STEM Career Connections Day is a part of Nuclear Science Week, which is a national celebration that focuses on all aspects of nuclear science. Events during this week provide many learning opportunities that can be found by discovering the world of nuclear science.

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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