

News from the Savannah River Site

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

SRS Tour Continues to Surprise and Impress Area Educators

Middle School and High School Science and Math Teachers experience SRS

AIKEN, S.C. (Nov. 12, 2015) – As a part of Nuclear Science Week, 35 local educators recently participated in an intensive tour of the Savannah River Site (SRS) to learn firsthand of the programs and missions performed daily at the 310 square mile complex owned by the Department of Energy (DOE).

“Time and again, we see teachers leave SRS amazed at the sheer size of the site and diversity of work performed here,” said Kim Mitchell, Education Outreach, Savannah River Nuclear Solutions (SRNS).

According to Mitchell, the primary goal of this annual tour is to demonstrate how lessons in the classroom today will later apply to jobs at SRS, Plant Vogtle and other nuclear-based corporations found in the greater Aiken-Augusta area.



Above-left: SRNS engineer Monica Phillips demonstrates a camera system for remote deployment in underground facilities providing local educators who recently toured SRS a design process used in real world applications to develop solutions to complex problems. Teachers observing are (from left) Travis Phillips, Aiken High School; Leigh Ann Osborne, Bamberg-Ehrhardt High School; Angela Virella, Jackson Middle School; and Lisa Durden, Midland Valley High School.



Above-right: Teacher Megan Cooper from Paul Knox Middle School is disassembling a robotic arm in virtual reality by following instructions provided by Savannah River National Laboratory Principle Engineer John Bobbitt during a recent, day-long tour at SRS for area educators.

“This tour helps our teachers develop the training and education programs that are needed right here in the community. These same teachers are not only developing future scientists and nuclear engineers, but also welders, mechanics, production operators, radiation control personnel and several other occupations as well,” said Mitchell. “We want to help teachers throughout the Central Savannah River Area enhance interest in and prepare students for jobs related to the nuclear industry.”

Most of this year’s tour was dedicated to informing the educators about the Defense Waste Processing Facility, Mixed Waste Oxide Facility (MOX) and the Savannah River National Laboratory.

“The Defense Waste Processing Facility is an impressive structure, and the only facility of its kind in the United States,” said Stuart MacVean, SRR President and Project Manager. “It is a showcase for educators and other visitors to see how science and technology are helping to reduce the greatest environmental risk in South Carolina.”

This is the third year that many of the doors to facilities at SRS have been opened to local middle school and high school science and math teachers, each enthusiastically gathering information to transfer to their students.

[Aiken version] “I think it’s beneficial for teachers to see the professional opportunities that are available at SRS and share that information with their students,” said Micki Dove, Science Curriculum Specialist. “I was impressed with the importance placed on safety here and the fact that each organization appears to be constantly testing and trying to find better ways to perform their work. I think the more we can get teachers to see what’s happening the more opportunities we’ll have to share them with our children.”

[Augusta version] “The tour has been great, particularly because the kids always ask, ‘When am I really going to use this?’” said Judy Ward, Secondary Science Professional Learning Facilitator, Richmond County Schools, Ga. “We’ve found that not everyone at SRS has an advanced degree from college; many people working here are straight out of high school or a technical college and are using basic chemistry and physics as a part of their day-to-day job responsibilities.”

[Barnwell version] “We saw some pretty impressive technology today,” said Glen Davis, Career Counselor, Barnwell County Career Center. “STEM, classes involving science, technology, engineering and math are critical for a lot of our programs at the Center. I feel like our students can be made aware of the job opportunities that are going to make themselves present for many at SRNS, SRR or MOX.”

Nuclear Science Week, Oct. 19-23, is celebrated annually across the United States. It is a weeklong educational opportunity to focus local, regional and national attention on all aspects of nuclear science.

DOE provides a variety of science and literacy outreach programs at the Savannah River Site. The primary goals of these outreach programs are to enhance interest in science, mathematics, engineering and technology and to support improvements in education in the Central Savannah River Area by using the unique resources available at SRS.

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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