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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Girls Get “SET” for Adventure Mini-Camp, Discovering Careers in Science, Engineering and Technology

AIKEN, S.C. – April 15, 2016 – Savannah River Nuclear Solutions (SRNS) and one of its parent companies, Honeywell, are sponsoring an adventurous summer camp on the University of South Carolina Aiken (USCA) campus to help high school girls understand the value of a STEM-based education (science, technology, engineering and math).

“The mini-camp is called Girls Get SET, where SET stands for science, engineering and technology,” said Patti Bennett, Program Coordinator for the Aiken Girl Scout Service Unit. “We also want to help them ‘get set’ for college, careers and life.”

The participants, high school girls from Aiken, Allendale, Barnwell and Edgefield counties, will engage in hands-on activities related to STEM topics. Registration is open to girls entering grades 9-12 who live in Aiken, Edgefield, Allendale or Barnwell County. Girl Scout membership is not required.

One activity will feature an engineering program that uses a pre-packaged “adventure in a box” called Engineers to the Rescue. During this experience, campers will apply engineering know-how, problem-solving skills and design savvy to navigate their way out of a camping trip gone wrong after an earthquake. Projects include rebuilding their shelter on shaky soil, filtering drinking water and sending a message for help, while harnessing wind energy to obtain their next meal.



Susie Ferrara, SRNS Community Outreach, and Wallis Spangler, SRNS Senior Vice President, NNSA Operations and Programs, present a \$7,500 donation to Patti Bennett, Program Coordinator for the Aiken Girl Scouts Service Unit (center, left) and Lindsey Sease, Girl Scouts of South Carolina - Mountains to Midlands Vice President, Mission Delivery, Columbia Region (far right), as Candice Dermody, SRNS Director, Education Outreach assists. SRNS is sponsoring a summer camp for high school girls from a four-county region near SRS to enhance the participants' understanding of careers related to science, engineering and technology.

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Another activity is a Nuclear Science patch program called Girl Scouts Get to Know Nuclear that was developed by the American Nuclear Society. Campers will learn about radioactivity, half-life, and fission through a series of interactive games and hands-on activities, including detecting radioactive materials with Geiger counters. “We’re excited to have the SRS Women in Nuclear organization on board with us for presenting that program,” said Bennett.

“In addition, we’re looking to provide an introduction to computer programming,” said Bennett. “We believe it is important for them to have some basic knowledge related to information technology. In today’s world, almost any career will involve the use of technology in some form. Even if they’re not going to become computer programmers, being able to understand and communicate in the IT area is a valuable skill.”

The three-day, two-night event also features a dinner forum with scientists and engineers from the Savannah River Site (SRS) and nearby companies to provide career exploration opportunities.

“When I was in school, our counselors emphasized teaching, nursing and other careers typically associated with females,” said Bennett. “The primary goal of this camp is to inspire girls to consider careers in nontraditional fields and to give them a basic introduction to a few of those career options.”

A \$7,500 donation from Savannah River Nuclear Solutions covers the costs of housing, meals, supplies and a stipend for camp counselors.

Bennett expressed her gratitude to SRNS and Honeywell for sponsoring the event. “They strongly supported the concept from the beginning. In fact, the volunteer support from SRS employees has also been outstanding.”

For most of the girls, this will be their first opportunity to sleep in a dormitory and experience other aspects of campus life at a college or university. According to Bennett, counselors will integrate discussions on the opportunities and responsibilities of college life throughout the camp. “A lot of high school students are nervous about leaving home to live on a college campus. This camp will hopefully help to alleviate some of that anxiety.”

Bennett added that one of the nice aspects of this camp is that it creates a “win-win-win” situation for all involved. “The girls have an awesome experience, SRNS influences potential candidates for future STEM-related jobs and USCA will have the opportunity to showcase their campus to prospective candidates,” said Bennett.

Registration for the June 9-11 camp is open. For more information or to register, visit www.gssc-mm.org or contact Patti Bennett at pattiben@bellsouth.net.

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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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