Honoring Safety

Employees’ safe work earns SRNS another VPP STAR, SCMA award

This month

Deputy Secretary visit • Lab consolidation • Technology awards • STEM solutions • Earth Day
Welcome to the April 2018 edition of SRNS Today

We talk about safety a lot at Savannah River Nuclear Solutions. Every meeting begins with a safety moment; our employees are encouraged to do Behavior Based Safety observations and join our Local Safety Improvement Teams; and every pre-job meeting involves hazard analysis and safety topics. Safety is the cornerstone for everything we do at SRNS, and it shows in our great safety record and the recognition we receive from outside sources as being the best in the industry.

SRNS has once again been recognized as a Department of Energy (DOE) Voluntary Protection Program (VPP) STAR participant for continued excellence in safety programs. The re-certification process for DOE’s highest safety honor takes place every three years and analyzes DOE contractor safety performance, work activities, employee engagement and overall safety culture. This year’s award marks the third consecutive VPP Star status SRNS has achieved since becoming the SRS management and operations contractor.

The SRNS Operations and Construction divisions were also recently recognized by the South Carolina Manufacturer’s Alliance for continued safety excellence. SRNS completed 2017 with its best annual safety record since assuming the management and operations contract at SRS in 2008, finishing out the year with more than 10 million safe hours accumulated with the lowest injury rate in its history.

SRNS is constantly growing and changing for the better, as is the consolidation of the F/H Analytical laboratory and through its continued partnerships with local colleges and tech schools. Through all of these changes and growth, we continue to be committed to safety.

SRNS was recognized on April 12 as a DOE Voluntary Protection Program (VPP) STAR participant for continued excellence in safety programs.

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“SRNS employees recognize the importance of a strong safety culture. It is also important to them that our company remains an industry leader in nuclear and workplace safety. Achieving VPP STAR Participant status is a meaningful validation from the Department of Energy that SRNS’ safety systems are robust and most importantly, that our workforce embodies a solid commitment and belief in the importance of safety both on and off the job,” said Stuart MacVean, SRNS President and CEO.

Michael Budney, DOE Manager, Savannah River Operations Office, presented MacVean with a VPP STAR certificate and flag at a company meeting where he commended SRNS for their continued commitment to on-and-off the job safety.

“The fact that SRNS is receiving its third consecutive VPP STAR recognition shows how your commitment to safety excellence remains the foundation of our success,” Budney said. “You—the SRNS workforce—are a key contributor to the Site’s proud safety legacy.”

In 2017, SRNS also received its 17th consecutive DOE/VPP Star of Excellence Award.

S.C. Manufacturers Alliance honors SRNS Operations, Construction

SRNS was recently recognized by the South Carolina Manufacturers Alliance for continued excellence in safety performance in 2017 at an annual ceremony in Spartanburg.

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“The employee-led safety culture at SRNS is an inspiring characteristic within our company,” said Stuart MacVean, SRNS President and CEO.

In 2017, the SRNS workforce worked in collaboration with the SRNS Environmental Stewardship, Safety and Health Division, to implement numerous grass-roots initiatives designed to sustain company safety performance, training new employees to understand the importance of the SRNS safety culture, and reinvigorating the long-term commitment to safety among more seasoned employees.

SRNS has earned 115 safety-related awards and commendations since becoming the SRS management and operations contractor.

SRNS safety program continues to earn STAR status

SRNS employees often perform intricate work that supports the SRS mission and have achieved more than 10 million safe-work hours. Pictured is Chester Evolve at work in the SRNS Relief Valve Center.

SRNS employees were recently recognized by the South Carolina Manufacturers Alliance for continued excellence in safety performance through an annual Star Award program. Star of Excellence Awards are given to DOE contractors whose safety performance is 75 percent better than the average of businesses in the same industry.

Contractors who earn three consecutive Star of Excellence Awards qualify for a VPP Legacy of Stars Award in their fourth year.

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National Nuclear Security Administration to join SRNL in recognizing recipients of patents, copyrights, commercial licenses, Cooperative Research and Development Agreements (CRADAs), Laboratory Directives (LDRD) Most Valuable Project, and Laboratory Director Awards for Early Career Exceptional Achievement.

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On April 26, Savannah River National Laboratory (SRNL) honored more than 40 of its top researchers and innovators at its Research and Technology Recognition Reception. The event is an opportunity for SRNS, DOE and the National Nuclear Security Administration to honor recipients of patents, copyrights, commercial licenses, Cooperative Research and Development Agreements (CRADAs), Laboratory Directives (LDRD) Most Valuable Project, and Laboratory Director Awards for Early Career Exceptional Achievement.

"The ability of Savannah River National Laboratory to deliver on its important national missions relies on the intellectual curiosity and the drive for innovation of its staff," said Dr. Vahid Majidi, director of SRNL. "This is our opportunity to recognize the contributions these individuals make to the nation.

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Deputy Energy Secretary Brouillette tours SRNS operations, meets with employees

Deputy Energy Secretary Dan Brouillette toured SRS for the first time in late March, visiting SRS facilities and engaging with the workforce and community leaders.

"It was a great visit at Savannah River Site, where I learned more about your impressive work in stockpile stewardship, environmental cleanup and putting science to work," Brouillette told the workers and community members. "You have a strong legacy of important work to the Department of Energy (DOE) and our nation, and I look forward to working with you to accomplish even more."

Brouillette met with community leaders at an event hosted by the SRS Community Reuse Organization at the SRS Museum in downtown Aiken. He also attended an informal roundtable discussion with federal and contractor employees share their educational background, experience and aspirations as the next-generation federal and contractor employees share their educational background, experience and aspirations as the next-generation.

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Earth Day 2018

SRS employees learn about local and global environmental impact

SRS celebrated Earth Day at an event held on April 19 at the SRS Training Facility where approximately 600 employees from both federal and site contractors attended to learn about a range of environmental topics. “This year’s Earth Day celebration was a successful collaboration between SRS and community organizations. Employees were able to take away information that can be implemented in their daily lives to make a meaningful improvement in their environmental impact,” said Kim Cauthen, SRNS Earth Day coordinator.

The event included 12 different booths on a variety of topics related to environmental conservation. Thanks to the U.S. Forest Service-SC, employees received young pine trees destined for a new place to spread their roots. The forestry booth educated SRS employees about the importance of planting trees to replenish the Earth’s most valuable natural cleaning agents.

Clemson University was also on hand with educational tools for environmentally-friendly gardening, including tips from the university’s Master Gardeners. The Savannah River Ecology Lab and S.C. Department of Health and Environmental Control shared valuable information about pollinators and the value of beekeeping.

Other booths focused on a range of topics from storm water management to resourceful food consumption to reduce household waste.

Earth’s most valuable natural cleaning agents.

STEM Solutions

SRNS, educational institutions work to prepare graduates for careers

Occupations related to science, technology, engineering and math (STEM) are growing in number throughout the local workforce needs,” said Dr. Darren Timmons, USC Aiken Dean of the School of Sciences and Engineering. “Encouraging the next generation to pursue expertise in STEM fields addresses a real need for the Central Savannah River Area.

“Scholarships, like the ones from SRNS, are critical resources for many students pursuing an education that will enable them to contribute in our community.”

Timmons also noted thanks to the generosity of partners like SRNS, 25 percent of the students who start college with USC Aiken and graduate do so with no debt. To date, SRNS has contributed approximately $320,000 in scholarships to USC Aiken.

Similarly, SRNS and ATC have collaborated to create the Nuclear Fundamentals Certificate at ATC. The program prepares students for general production operator positions in the nuclear industry. SRNS donated $10,000 to help offset the cost to those enrolled in this program. The donation, combined with other forms of scholarship funding, reduces the cost of pursuing an education that will enable students for general production operator positions in the nuclear industry.

SRNS has also worked closely with USC Aiken for several years to help develop the university’s Industrial Process Engineering Program and plans for programs in cybersecurity. One of several equal installments of a $550,000 donation from SRNS to help support an endowed professorship for the new engineering degree was recently presented to USC Aiken Chancellor Dr. Sandra Jordan.

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“This tremendous gift helps immensely as we continue to grow the program and recruit the best faculty in this discipline. This gift to USC Aiken is the largest single gift designated for this initiative,” said Jordan.
The tour group listens to George Wingard, Program Coordinator, Savannah River Archeological Research Program (SRARP), as he describes the former town of Dunbarton.

Tour participant Lorene Fisher studies the new Dunbarton informational sign.

The SRS Cold War Preservation Program and the Savannah River Archeological Research Program (SRARP) have partnered to install an educational kiosk in what was formerly Dunbarton, one of the towns displaced by the construction of SRS.

For the first time, a group from the public viewed the new kiosk during an SRS Historic Tour, a part of the SRS public tour program, which is operated by SRNS.

In the tour group was former Dunbarton resident Howard Greene, who had not set foot in the town since he was five years old.

"Over the years, I’ve read books and watched documentaries about the Site, but being physically here has painted the whole picture,” said Greene. "The Dunbarton sign provided a vision of what used to be in the town. I was surprised to see one of the pictures was of my Aunt Elma. I was very close to her, so that was neat to see."

Incorporated in 1910, Dunbarton was a railroad community named after the Dunbar family. The town contained 15 commercial buildings, 35 residences, two cotton gins, a post office, one grammar school, a church, railroad station and saw mill. Although it had electricity, Dunbarton only had two telephones.

On Nov. 28, 1950, the Atomic Energy Commission (AEC) announced that areas in Barnwell and Aiken Counties would be acquired for new production plants to be designed, built and operated by E.I. du Pont de Nemours and Company. The AEC noted that approximately 1,500 families would need to relocate. At this time, Dunbarton had a population of approximately 300 people.

The Cold War Preservation Program and SRARP have partnered with the SRS public tour program, to offer four historic tours in 2018. In addition to a stop at Dunbarton, the tour features C Reactor and the site’s Curation Facility.

On May 5, the SRARP will bring a large group of former Dunbarton residents to see the newly installed sign during the 65th Annual Dunbarton Reunion. This is the first time since 2001 that the group has been able to visit the location of their old town.

More than 100 employees from SRNS volunteered to work on Friday, April 27, at United Way agencies in the greater Augusta, Ga., area as part of this year’s Project Serve, and in Barnwell, S.C., for Project Care. Employees committed to work during their day off on projects that will improve the living conditions of disadvantaged children, low-income senior citizens, the disabled, single-parent homeowners or specific United Way partner agencies.

Team projects typically include painting, repairing flooring, putting up drywall, building fences and wheelchair ramps, replacing rotting boards, fixing faulty plumbing and performing yard work.

"The attitudes of those who serve are always grateful. Volunteers show up with smiles on their faces ready to make a difference,” said Kevin Cross, SRNS Project Serve Lead and Manager, Savannah River Tritium Enterprise H Area New Manufacturing Facility.

One of the locations for this year’s Project Serve was the Graniteville, S.C., Farmers Market, where volunteers constructed picnic tables, cleared trails and worked on restoring a 15,000-square-foot barn to be an environmentally-friendly, indoor farmers market. According to Phin Hitchcock, agency director of Fireside Ministries & Industries, Horse Creek Trust bought the Graniteville Farmers Market property with the goal of revitalizing the community.

Project Care was held the same day as Project Serve and provided assistance for Barnwell County. Thirty volunteers from SRNS worked on improving the YMCA facility and building a wheelchair ramp for a local resident. Melanie Lepard, SRNS Manager for Nonnuclear Maintenance in SRNS Site Facility Maintenance Support, volunteers as a board member of Barnwell County United Way and coordinated activities during this year’s Project Care.
Waste Management Symposia participants meet historic SRNL robot

Along with the latest developments in robotic technology, attendees at the 2018 Waste Management Symposia in Phoenix had the opportunity to see SRNL’s historic Robin robot, a “relic” of the 1980s that was one of the most advanced robots of its time.

Arriving at SRS in 1986, Robin was built to work in DOE nuclear facilities. Robin, whose name was derived from its being a “Robotic ROcket,” was capable of lifting up to 1,500 pounds, twice its own weight. It could reconfigure its shape to be tall and slender or short and squat, and was able to walk in either configuration. Its computer was operated remotely and the robot moved under its own power.

Robin featured a camera system, allowing remote users a view of its surroundings. Each of its six legs had its own minicomputer providing a high degree of dexterity and the ability to navigate uneven surfaces and stairs. However, the most significant feature added for the DOE mission was the telescoping jointed arm mounted on a rotating turret enabling the robot to do work. The robot was borrowed by NASA in the early 1990s for evaluation.

Members of the SRNL robotics team—known then as the Savannah River Lab Robotics group—worked with Robin over the years to develop techniques and procedures for use in emergency response and maintenance situations. Robin’s high price tag saved it from use in actual radiation areas and dangerous missions where it could face contamination or damage. Experimentation with Robin provided the basis for many future robotic systems developed by SRNL for use at SRS.

SRNL’s historic Robot Robin on display at Waste Management 2018

Today Robin is a member of the SRS Cold War Historic Preservation collection. Robin was built by Odestics, Inc., with specifications from SRNL. The hexapod was built circa 1983 upon the OdeX 3 research platform, which is presently part of the Smithsonian Institution’s permanent collection.

SRNL has a rich history in advanced robotics for use in environmental management and high-hazard conditions. “Our student team members are more prepared for college and careers than your average student,” said Fogarty. “Some of our alumni are now engineers at SRNL. That’s a testament to the education pipeline passing through this organization.”

“In fact, I was one of those students who didn’t have much I was interested in before joining this robotics team in middle school in 2005,” said Fogarty. “If it wasn’t for being a member of M’Aiken Magic, I would not be an engineer today.”

SRNS-supported M’Aiken Magic Robotics Team competes nationally

Over the years, engineers and robotics experts from SRNS have shared their knowledge with and offered guidance to the M’Aiken Magic Robotics Team consisting of area students. The team has combined this expertise with the students’ ingenuity, hard work and enthusiasm, earning their way to the First (For Inspiration and Recognition of Science and Technology) Robotics Championship in Houston, Texas. The team made it to the division semi-finals before being eliminated.

M’Aiken Magic Head Coach John Fogarty noted that engineers from SRNS were the original founders of the team. “We could not have survived as an organization without the many years of SRNS help and funding,” added Fogarty.

SRNL Engineer Chris Cable has been a mentor for three years with SRNS Family Scholarships. The recipients—all sons and daughters of SRNS employees—were selected based on their ability, leadership, community service, scholastic assessment and achievement. A scholarship awards ceremony will be held in May to recognize the students and their families. The recipients are:

- Ashton Blush, student at Fox Creek High School, daughter of Patricia Blush of ESS&L Safety and Health
- Katelyn Clark, student at Aiken High School, daughter of Calvin Clapp of NNSA, Tritium Reservoir System Engineering
- Vivian Du, student at Lakeside High School, daughter of Lin Do of Engineering, Process Control and Automation Engineering, and Hung Do of Technical Services, Project Management and Construction Services
- Vinna Elingreen, student at Evans High School, daughter of Roger Elingreen of Technical Services, Operational Excellence
- Rebecca Ferguson, student at Aiken High School, daughter of Robert and Evine Ferguson of Technical Services, Site Services
- Trenton Gambrell, student at North Augusta High School, son of Stewart Gambrell of Technical Services, Site Services
- Taylor Lewis, student at Westside High School, daughter of Brian Lewis of NNSA, Tritium ES&H and Environmental Compliance
- Malika Lightbourne, student at Ridge View High School, daughter of Malik Lightbourne of Business Services, Supply Chain Management
- Brian McKee, student at Aiken High School, son of Charles McKee of SRNL, Science and Technology
- Catherine Orlovski, student at Aiken High School, daughter of Michael Orlovski of Technical Services, Site Services
- Sarah Perdue, student at Greenbrier High School, daughter of Travis Pennebaker of SRNL, Environmental Stewardship
- Steven Poon, student at Silver Bluff High School, son of Anita Poon of SRNL, National Security
- Michael Ray, student at Aiken High School, son of Joel Ray of Engineering, Facilities and Systems Engineering
- Fatima Rizvi, student at Aiken High School, daughter of Mark Barnes of SRNL, Science and Technology
- Brandon Rogers, student at Aiken High School, son of Lana Rogers of NNSA, Tritium Reservoir System Engineering

SRNS Family Scholarship recipients named for 2018

SRNS has announced the recipients of the 2018 SRNS Family Scholarships. The recipients—all sons and daughters of SRNS employees—were selected based on their ability, leadership, community service, scholastic assessment and achievement. A scholarship awards ceremony will be held in May to recognize the students and their families. The recipients are:

F/H Lab consolidation with SRNL to reduce costs, increase efficiency

SRNS and SRNL are realigning current resources for future missions by consolidating the historic F/H Analytical Laboratory into existing SRNL laboratory space, which will reduce costs, increase efficiency and allow F Area to move to a lower cost surveillance and maintenance mode.

The F/H Analytical Laboratory, a section of SRNL, includes two major structures that were built in 1954 and 1987 to support F Canyon, which is no longer in use, and H Canyon chemical separations facilities. Their capabilities eventually extended to other on- and offsite customers. The lab analyzes both radiological and non-radiological liquid and solid samples for process, product, accountability and criticality safety analyses.

“As the Site’s missions have changed, the analytical capabilities needed have also changed,” said SRNL Deputy Director Sharon Marra. “This move will allow SRNL to still fulfill our customers’ needs for analytical capability to help move the lab footprint, modernize our equipment and will result in a lifecycle cost savings. More importantly, it will give all SRNL personnel a chance to grow in their careers and a sense of cohesiveness with their fellow laboratory employees.”

F Canyon chemical separations facility was deactivated in 2005 and placed into a low-cost surveillance and maintenance mode. This allows for a minimal number of employees in the area to perform periodic activities to ensure that the facility is safe and poses no risk to the environment.

“The plan is to eventually move all F Area facilities to a cold, dark and dry state,” said Michael Glys, F Area Closure Program Manager. “This will allow us to lower our environmental footprint, and lower risk and cost by moving F Area employees to other areas on Site where they are needed.”

During the move, SRNL will excess obsolete equipment and replace equipment where needed. They will also review procedures and processes to make the work more efficient. This will save lifecycle costs for SRNL and its customers.

SRNL is working to ensure that employees have an easy transition by holding workshops and walk-downs to help build a cohesive team. Marra added that this change will give lab employees a chance to grow and try new things, while introducing them to new co-workers and new collaborative work activities.
INNOVATION • DEFENSE
NONPROLIFERATION • ENVIRONMENT

SRNS

Savannah River Nuclear Solutions
We make the world safer.