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**Augusta Technical College celebrates inaugural class of Production Operator Apprentice Graduates at joint ceremony with SRS**

**AIKEN, S.C.** (September 5, 2024) - Augusta Technical College (Augusta Tech) and members of the Savannah River Site (SRS) Apprenticeship school recently held a joint graduation ceremony for 20 new graduates of their inaugural class of Production Operator Apprentices, who will now enter the workforce as nuclear operators at SRS.

“We are excited to see this next class of nuclear operators enter the SRS workforce,” said Edwin Deshong, SRS Deputy Manager for the U.S. Department of Energy. “With increasing and enduring missions at the Site, it is imperative to create a pipeline of trained workers ready to go to work. This program is a benefit not only to the Site, but to the students who choose to take part.”

According to Augusta Tech President Dr. Jermaine Whirl, the inaugural production operator apprentice cohort from Augusta Tech was a huge success.

“Augusta Tech is thrilled to have joined this program and to be celebrating these graduates on this historic occasion,” he said. “Thank you to the SRS Apprenticeship School for working closely with these graduates to ensure their success but thank you most of all to the friends and families who supported them through the program. They and future graduates will help make a positive impact to our region.”

Augusta Tech graduates will either go to work for Savannah River Nuclear Solutions (SRNS) Environmental Operations at SRS or for the Savannah River National Laboratory.

The Production Operator Apprentice program started as a partnership between SRNS, Aiken Technical College, Apprenticeship Carolina™, and the Lower Savannah Council of Governments. The eight-month program simultaneously allows for students to complete their classroom work and on-the-job training by allowing them to alternate between taking classes at the technical college and training on Site, while earning a competitive scalable wage. At the end of the program, participants will have earned a certificate in nuclear fundamentals and will have a portable credential from the Department of Labor.

“Since its inception, the Production Operator Apprentice program has seen over 420 graduates,” said Deshong. “We have vital national security and environmental cleanup missions to complete and congratulate our new operators in their roles that will help make the world safer.”

For more information on the SRS Apprenticeship school, visit

[https://www.srs.gov/general/outreach/apprenticeship/apprenticeship\\_school.htm](https://www.srs.gov/general/outreach/apprenticeship/apprenticeship_school.htm)



*Production Operator Apprentice graduates from Augusta Technical College include (front row from left) Lauren Ham, Morgan Fulcher, Jennifer Clark, Lauren Holley, Patrick Sparbel, Jaxsen Briatico (middle row from left) Brandon Jordan, Karter Wheat, Terry Leverett, Joshua Patterson, Ryan Carter (back row from left) Drew Platts, Chris Yancey, Anthony Wiles, Jacob Murphy, Jonathan Short, Stephen Young, Jr., Trevor Taylor, Bradford Charlton.*

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