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For Immediate Release

From Science Bowl to STEM Careers: How SRNS' Education Outreach Programs are Shaping the Future Workforce

AIKEN, S.C. – (May 7, 2025) – Every year, Savannah River Nuclear Solutions' (SRNS) Education Outreach Programs ([EOP](#)) host the Department of Energy (DOE) [Savannah River Regional Science Bowl Competition](#), bringing together brilliant young minds for a fast-paced challenge. What began as a student competition has evolved into a significant talent pipeline, shaping the next generation of scientists and engineers. Some of today's newest hires at the Savannah River Site (SRS) once competed in these very events and are now giving back as volunteers.



Savannah River Nuclear Solutions Fire Protection Engineer Parth Patel, second from right, volunteers as timekeeper during the 2025 Department of Energy Savannah River Regional Science Bowl Competition. Also pictured, from left: Volunteers Caroline Robins, Maria Kriz, Betsy Booth and Stephanie Craig.

“The journey from student participant to professional mentor exemplifies the profound impact of our education outreach initiatives,” said Cindy Hewitt, SRNS Education Outreach Specialist. “We’ve found that several of our newest hires can trace their career paths back to this very event they now help

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facilitate. We don't just want to hire the best engineers and STEM [science, technology, engineering and math] leaders— we want to help create them by planting those seeds early.”

Each team, comprised of five students and one coach, compete in a fast-paced question-and-answer format similar to the television show “Jeopardy!” The questions span across various academic disciplines including biology, chemistry, Earth science, space science, physics, energy and math.



Patel competed in the Science Bowl as a high school junior at Westside High School in Augusta, Georgia.

Recently hired SRNS Engineers Parth Patel, Sarah Bass and Braden Lewis embody this full-circle narrative through their involvement in Science Bowl.

“It was a defining moment for me,” said Patel, a Fire Protection Design Authority Engineer at SRS who competed in the Science Bowl as a high school junior at Westside High in Augusta, Georgia. “The energy of the competition and the celebration of STEM made me realize I wanted a career with that same excitement. My teacher, Ms. Potter, introduced me to the competition and fostered my passion. I will always remember the clickers and how my heart raced with every question.”

SRS is one of only three DOE sites to participate annually at the regional level since DOE created the National Science Bowl in 1991. Each year, volunteers from multiple site contractors, including judges, scorekeepers, moderators, and timekeepers, make the regional tournament possible. The winning team earns a spot in the U.S. Department of Energy's [National Science Bowl](#), one of the nation's most prestigious competitions.

"Volunteering is a wonderful way to step out of your daily routine and connect with students on a different level," continued Patel. "I hope students recognize the impact STEM can have on their careers, from solving complex problems to real-world applications. This knowledge is a valuable asset."

For many student competitors, the event offers a first glimpse into real-world STEM careers and provides an initial connection with the SRS professionals who support them.

Bass, who joined the Site in 2024, recognized the value of competitive academic programs and initiated the Science Bowl at Greenbrier High School during her junior year.

"I loved volunteering for this competition and watching each team gain confidence as the event progressed. It was rewarding to witness the small victories when a team buzzed in first or correctly answered a toss-up question. Seeing their coaches silently celebrating behind them was heartwarming," said Bass. "These competitive events provide opportunities for students to connect with like-minded peers from different schools while engaging in subjects they enjoy."

Beyond the excitement of the competition, Science Bowl supports SRNS' long-term workforce development strategy. With the recent transition of Site management from [Environmental Management](#)

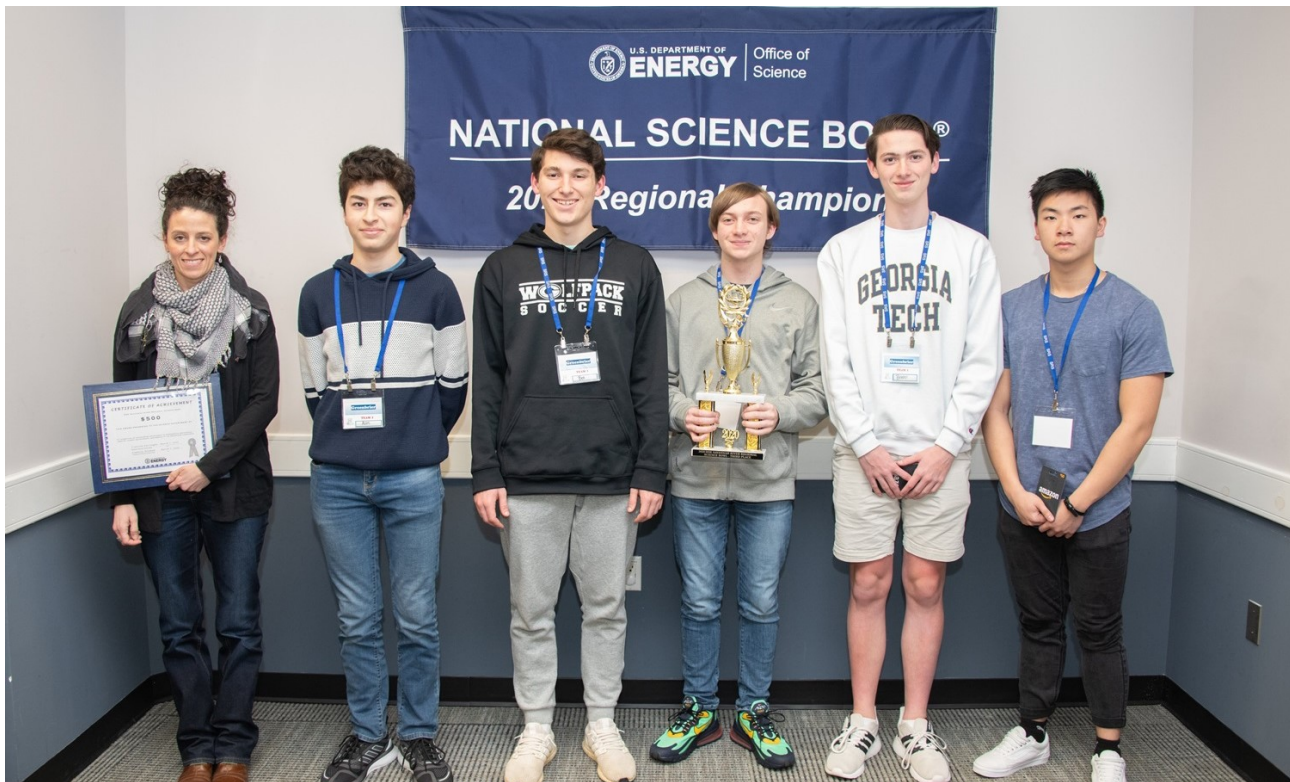
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to the [National Nuclear Security Administration](#), SRS aims to hire 9,000 additional recruits over the next five years. By introducing students to STEM pathways early, SRNS strengthens its recruitment pipeline and fosters future talent organically.

Lewis, an associate engineer hired in March 2025, built his Science Bowl team at Greenbrier from the ground up, progressing from B to A team and mentoring new members.

“My experience culminated in a third-place finish in my junior year,” said Lewis. “Science Bowl provided an outlet for my passion for STEM and helped me realize my strengths in math and physics, ultimately leading to a career in mechanical engineering. As an SRNS employee, I’m excited to volunteer next year and inspire future scientists and engineers. These programs had a significant impact on me, and I want to pass those experiences on to the next generation.”



SRNS Associate Engineer Braden Lewis, second from right, competed in the 2020 DOE Savannah River Regional Science Bowl Competition for Greenbrier High School, where his team placed third.

“The intense competition required me to think quickly and respond confidently,” continued Lewis. “It wasn’t always easy with dozens of people watching, but it was the highlight of my high school experience. The best advice I can give students is to find what you’re passionate about and pursue it. Never stop asking questions and keep learning.”

SRNS intends to further expand its student outreach efforts through additional EOP initiatives and partnerships with local schools in the Central Savannah River Area.

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“Programs like Science Bowl are not just good community service— they’re good business,” said Kim Mitchell, SRNS Education Outreach Lead. “We are building relationships that begin in elementary school and continue into fulfilling careers at SRS. This strategy is incredibly powerful for retention, culture and innovation. By investing in these programs, we are not only securing the future of our company but also contributing to the advancement of STEM education as a whole.”

Savannah River Nuclear Solutions, a Fluor and HII partnership company, is responsible for the management and operations of the Department of Energy’s Savannah River Site, located near Aiken, South Carolina.

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