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For Immediate Release

SRNS Sets the Standard for Apprenticeship Pipeline

Sharing Best Practices with WIPP to Build the Future Workforce

AIKEN, S.C. – (June 6, 2025) – The Savannah River Site (SRS) recently hosted representatives from the Waste Isolation Pilot Plant (WIPP) to showcase its acclaimed [SRS Apprenticeship School](#). Since its inception, the program has gained national recognition for its success in workforce development.

Launched in 2020 by Savannah River Nuclear Solutions (SRNS), the Registered Apprenticeship Program was designed to address attrition and establish a robust pipeline for a skilled workforce. Since expanding site-wide, the SRS Apprenticeship School has graduated over 800 apprentices to date, with 90% accepting full-time positions at the Site.



The Savannah River Site (SRS) hosted representatives from the Waste Isolation Pilot Plant to showcase the SRS Apprenticeship School. **Front row, from left:** Wendy Lark, Savannah River Nuclear Solutions (SRNS) Site Training Deputy Director; Angela Carrejo, Waste Isolation Pilot Plant (WIPP) Human Resource (HR) Generalist; Ronald Payne, Salado Isolation Mining Contractors Surface Maintenance Manager. **Back row, from left:** Richard Stringfield, SRNS Site Maintenance Training Manager; Amy Pesek, WIPP HR Director; Jose Bautista, Southeast New Mexico College Workforce Development, Denis Asay, WIPP Deputy Vice President, Performance Improvement; Brand Gracey, WIPP Training and Procedures Manager; BooBoo Roberts, SRNS Program Manager, Apprenticeship School and Workforce Pipeline Training Programs; and Dorian Newton, SRNS Site Training Director.

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“To meet the growing workforce demands to support our Site missions, SRNS plans to hire 2,000 additional employees over the next five years,” said Booboo Roberts, SRNS Program Manager, Apprenticeship School and Pipeline Programs. “The SRS Apprenticeship Program offers three pathways— Youth, Key Skilled Technician, and Professional/Degree-Based— to create a pipeline of skilled employees supporting critical missions for the Department of Energy [DOE] and the National Nuclear Security Administration.”

Inspired by a presentation at the Waste Management Symposium in March 2025, WIPP sought to benchmark SRS’s model to create a similar program for electricians and nuclear operators in southeastern New Mexico.

“We struggle to fill critical job needs due to our remote location and competition with oil and gas companies,” said Denis Asay, Deputy Vice President of Performance Improvement, Salado Isolation Mining Contractors. “We aim to launch our apprenticeship program within a year, using the SRS Apprenticeship School as a guide. The collaboration and example set by this team demonstrates what the entire DOE complex should strive for. Such partnerships can only make us stronger.”



Carrejo and Asay inspect radiological containment areas during a tour of the 766-H Training Facility. SRS apprentices who work in containment areas are required to complete a course on this subject.



Roberts shares the “Radiological Worker 2” course requirement for nuclear operators. Apprentices learn how to properly dress out to safely perform work in radiological areas. Also pictured, from left: Payne, Asay, Gracey and Bautista.

The two-day visit began with a Site tour that included a briefing on the 766-H training facility, as well as remarks from Kevin Whitt, SRNS Director of Operational Excellence and Quality Assurance and Dorian Newton, SRNS Director of Site Training.

“The tour offered a firsthand look at the training and infrastructure that supports our apprentices,” said Whitt. “By integrating hands-on training and classroom education, both here and at our partner colleges, we provide our apprentices the tools they need to thrive in their new roles. We are proud to share our lessons learned to benefit others across the complex.”

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The second day emphasized the importance of community partnerships which provide apprentices with paid, on-the-job training and networking opportunities to help them succeed in highly technical fields. SRS partners with Denmark Technical College ([DTC](#)), Aiken Technical College ([ATC](#)), Augusta Technical College, and economic development agencies like the Lower Savannah Council of Governments, [Apprenticeship Carolina](#) and the SRS Community Reuse Organization ([SRSCRO](#)).

“Our collaboration with economic development organizations ensures the financial stability for our apprenticeship initiatives, benefiting the local community, area technical colleges, and SRS contractors,” continued Roberts.

The group toured DTC and ATC to witness the classroom environment and interact with current apprentices, discussing the program’s tangible impact. The visit concluded at SRSCRO, where the team explained how they secure grants and funding to support apprenticeships at SRS.



WIPP also met with the SRS Community Reuse Organization who oversees the Workforce Opportunities in Regional Careers grant. This grant is leveraged to support apprentices with pre-employment workshops, instructors, student scholarships and supplies.

“One major takeaway is the critical importance of clear communication between SRNS and educational partners to ensure curriculum and training align with industry needs, particularly in nuclear deterrence and nonproliferation,” said Newton. “Our guests were impressed by the scale and intricacy of our program and the strength of the collaborative relationships built by our team.”

Gaining national and regional attention, the SRS Apprenticeship School has been recognized for its innovation and effectiveness, winning the 2023 A. Wade Martin [Innovation Team of the Year](#) Award from the South Carolina Technical College System Foundation and being featured on the [National Public Radio's](#) “Marketplace Morning Report”. The school recently celebrated the graduation of its [first cohort](#) of Savannah River Plutonium Processing Facility Nuclear Operator apprentices in May 2025.

“The Savannah River team was incredibly gracious, and their hospitality made the visit worthwhile. This top-notch program has us excited to adopt and implement some of these strategies at WIPP over the next year,” concluded Asay.

[Click here](#) to watch a video on the SRS Apprenticeship Program.

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.

SRNS-2025-1634