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SRNS LEAP Celebrates Its Fourth Year

Early-Career Professional Group Helps SRNS New Hires Navigate Their Career

AIKEN, S.C. (October 30, 2014) – Leaders Emerging Among Professionals (LEAP) recently celebrated four years as the early-career professional group at Savannah River Nuclear Solutions (SRNS). To mark the occasion, LEAP members and SRNS executives and management gathered for a social event at Rose Hill Estate in Aiken, S.C.

LEAP is a developmental program for professionals in the early stages of their careers. With a focus of business awareness specific to SRNS, LEAP provides early-career professionals with networking events, professional development, community involvement and increased visibility with management. The organization is peer-led by a steering committee of 12 members who coordinate monthly events for its 200 members.

Since its founding in October 2010, LEAP has hosted more than 100 networking, professional development and community outreach events for its members. Full-service employees who graduated in 2007 or later and have, at a minimum, an associate's degree automatically become eligible for LEAP when hired at SRNS.

“Whenever you’re new to an organization, it can be challenging to meet new people and learn about the company, especially at the Savannah River



LEAP members Michael Cordaro (left), Caroline Reppert, Lena Gentile, Katie Davis, Anne Kelly and Blake Leaphart celebrate LEAP's fourth anniversary at Rose Hill Estate in Aiken, S.C.

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Site because it's so vast. So far, LEAP has allowed me to become more involved at work," said Matthew Brantley, HB Line Systems Engineer. "This organization is something I can share in common with other young people on site, even though we may work in different fields. We may not work for the same people or work in the same area, but I can find a common thread with others through LEAP."

SRNS employee Connie Yung, an inaugural LEAP member, also became involved with the organization to network with people who shared similar interests. Her early involvement with the organization's community outreach activities, such as volunteering at Golden Harvest and participating in the Ronald McDonald House Plane Pull, landed her a position on the steering committee as outreach chair for two years, and she served as vice president until June 2014.

"I've met a lot of people through LEAP – not only peers and new friends, but also management that I probably would not have otherwise interacted with. I would say these interactions have definitely impacted my career path also, as my current position is a big shift from the technical role I held before. I have had some great opportunities as a result of connections formed through LEAP," said Yung.

Candice Dermody, Manager, SRNS Talent Management and Education Outreach, is a management sponsor and has seen the organization grow since it was established.

"LEAP provides an avenue for early-career employees to gain leadership experience and to learn about the company's culture. This heightened awareness of opportunities within the company will help increase their desire to remain with the company and develop them into the future leaders of SRNS, which impacts retention and affects who stays in the area," said Dermody.

In addition to LEAP, SRNS has a similar organization called Aspiring Mid-Career Professionals (AMP) that caters to the needs of mid-career professionals. AMP serves employees who have between seven and 20 years of work experience.

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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