MARCH 2025

SAVANNAH RIVER NUCLEAR SOLUTIONS

# SRNS Today

## Changing landscape

SRPPF site preparation activities ramp up

**SCAN ME**
to connect with
our social media

## This month

Wireless capabilities • Aiken County officials tour • Empowering heroes • Science Bowl

**Dennis Carr**
SRNS President and CEO

# Welcome

to the March 2025 edition of

# SRNS Today

March marks another month of significant accomplishments at SRNS, as employees continue to put forth their best efforts in both large and small projects dedicated to our missions. At SRNS, we take pride not only in our work but also in the positive impact we make within our communities.

**On the cover**

Early site preparation and earthwork activities are ramping up at the Savannah River Plutonium Processing Facility at the Savannah River Site.

One of the largest construction projects in the country continues to make significant progress, as site preparation field work ramps up at SRPPF. Since January, construction entrances have been installed, and the domestic water line and underground irrigation demolition has begun. SRPPF is another example of how SRS leverages repurposed nuclear facilities to achieve nuclear deterrence objectives.

SRNS also hosted representatives from across the Nuclear Security Enterprise (NSE) to discuss the present and future of wireless capabilities. This NSE Wireless Collaboration visit brought together personnel from NNSA and DOE sites for two days to share perspectives on technological capabilities and encouraged productive conversations on information sharing opportunities and cost reduction measures.

Additionally, SRNS is committed to enhancing employee engagement and building a workforce for the future through direct dialogue, exemplified by the “Stay Interview” initiative launched in FY25. With almost 700 interviews held, this effort seeks to understand what drives employee commitment and satisfaction. Centered around the key question “Why do you want to stay at SRNS?,” the initiative provides valuable insights into positive employee experience, strengthens morale and improves retention by ensuring employees feel valued.

I hope you all enjoy this month’s edition of SRNS Today.

Dennis Carr

Savannah River
NUCLEAR SOLUTIONS℠

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. The SRNS corporate and community offices are located in the renovated 1912 “Old Post Office” building in Aiken. The primary initiatives of SRNS are national security, clean energy and environmental stewardship. SRNS Today is published monthly by SRNS Corporate Communications to inform our employees and other stakeholders of the company’s operational- and community-related activities. If you have questions or comments, please contact us at 803.952.6131 or visit our website.

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COMMON ACRONYMS
Savannah River Nuclear Solutions (SRNS) • Savannah River Site (SRS) • Department of Energy (DOE)
National Nuclear Security Administration (NNSA) • Savannah River Plutonium Processing Facility (SRPPF)
Central Savannah River Area (CSRA) • science, technology, engineering and math (STEM)

# NSE visit enhances collaboration


James Barber, SRNS Group Manager Emerging Technology, welcomes personnel from sites across the Nuclear Security Enterprise.

Representatives from sites across the Nuclear Security Enterprise (NSE) recently gathered at SRS to discuss the current and future state of wireless capabilities. SRNS hosted an NSE Wireless Collaboration visit, allowing participants to share progress, wireless capability use cases, future plans on expanding those use cases, challenges and accomplishments.

According to James Barber, SRNS Group Manager Emerging Technology, the visit was designed to bring together personnel from various NNSA and DOE sites for a cross-site collaboration with the NNSA Office of Information Management. “Many of the sites are limited in funding, but we all have lofty goals that we hope to achieve in support of NNSA missions,” Barber said. “We felt that having the ability to talk, share and leverage our collective expertise would create more efficiency, allowing us to be good stewards of taxpayer dollars.”

Attendees included NNSA Savannah River Field Office, Savannah River Mission Completion and representatives from Y-12 National Security Complex, Pantex Plant, Pacific Northwest National Laboratory, Sandia National Laboratories and Kansas City National Security Campus. Visitors toured the Site, including the Machining Training Center, and discussed wireless utilization, Digital Transformation and future plans across the NSE. The visit concluded with an Augmented Reality tour of the High-Fidelity Training and Operations Center.

“The willingness to share perspectives and challenges was enlightening, further advancing the NNSA goal of collaboration among the sites,” said Barber. “Much of what was shared through the various speakers and presentations demonstrated that SRS collectively has a wealth of current and future use cases that are aligned with NNSA/DOE Modern Manufacturing initiatives. I truly walked away proud of SRS and all our achievements, the commitment to success and the willingness to share.”


Attendees of the NSE Wireless Collaboration visit

During the two-day event, site representatives discussed technologies and capabilities and shared ideas for cost-reduction measures to avoid replicating tests or procuring hardware. The sessions also provided a forum for discussions with NNSA resources to enhance collaboration and information sharing opportunities.

“It was encouraging to hear the productive discussions and progress made during the NSE Wireless Collaboration visit at SRS,” said Bruce Page, SRNS Senior Vice President and Chief Information Officer. “The exchange of ideas and best practices among various sites underscores our commitment to enhancing wireless capabilities and achieving greater efficiency within the NNSA and DOE. This collaborative approach is essential for meeting our technical goals and optimizing resource utilization across the Nuclear Security Enterprise.”

# Strategic benchmarking visit

## SRNS Strategic Planning and Integration team hosts Y-12 National Security Complex

The SRNS Strategic Planning and Integration (SP&I) team recently hosted representatives from the Y-12 National Security Complex for a benchmarking visit. The two-day visit focused on sharing best practices and lessons learned as SRS embarks on a transformation to meet the evolving needs of the NNSA.

The SP&I team discussed the development of a comprehensive "Master Campus Plan" for SRS, encompassing over 310 square miles. This master plan aims to establish a vision and roadmap for SRS to effectively support and execute NNSA missions over the next several decades. Key components of the plan include constructing new facilities and enhancing existing capabilities necessary for SRS to fulfill its role in the NNSA's Enterprise Blueprint. The Enterprise Blueprint is a 25-year strategy designed to ensure the provision of specialized infrastructure needed to meet the demands of the Nuclear Security Enterprise.

"The core of our Master Campus Plan is to provide a strategic blueprint for site-wide infrastructure revitalization and modernization, critical for NNSA's enduring mission success," said Freddie Grimm, SP&I Senior Vice President. "This approach aligns strategic goals with site development, ensuring efficient resource allocation and mission support."

Establishing a forward-looking perspective, Chris Hanner, SRNS Strategic Planning Director, emphasized, "We are laying down guiding principles to support mission deliverables over the next 75 years. In addition to enhanced mission delivery and revitalizing infrastructure, we aim to foster a culture that attracts and retains top talent by providing state-of-the-art working environments."

Jane Nations, Y-12 Master Site Planner, underscored the value of face-to-face interactions for effective benchmarking. "Gaining insights from our counterparts who perform similar work is invaluable," she noted. "Benchmarking across the complex allows us to collectively navigate challenges and identify solutions. By collaborating, we aim to influence NNSA headquarters and better manage funding challenges faced by Y-12 and SRS."

A Y-12 complex-inspired Fire Station design is being proposed at SRS to improve response times and function as the new SRS Fire Department Headquarters building.

The benchmarking visit also included a Site tour, providing Y-12 representatives with a firsthand look at SRS infrastructure and ongoing projects.

Hanner summarized the team's strategic direction, emphasizing the shift in mindset from the Site's landlord transition from EM to NNSA. "We are now planning seven or more years ahead, ensuring our production facilities receive the support they need. We will continue to find opportunities for collaboration across the complex to support the nation's nuclear security goals."

The draft Master Campus Plan is expected to be completed by fiscal year-end 2025 and finalized by fiscal year-end 2026.

# Aiken County government officials tour


Accompanied by SRNS and NNSA officials, Aiken County government officials visited SRS for a tour March 5.

On March 5, Aiken County government officials visited SRS for a tour to learn about the Site's growing NNSA missions and impacts on the region.

The Site welcomed Gary Bunker, Aiken County Council Chairman; Britton Williams, Mayor of North Augusta; Teddy Milner, Mayor of Aiken; and Stuart Bedenbaugh, City Manager of Aiken.

The government officials met with SRNS and NNSA officials to learn about the growing enduring missions happening at SRS to ensure the United States maintains a safe, secure and reliable nuclear stockpile in support of the nation's national security.

Their visit included a general Site driving tour, along with overview presentations and facility tours of the Savannah River Tritium Enterprise and the SRPPF.

"We always appreciate the opportunity to welcome our elected officials to the Site and give them the opportunity to see the important work happening here at SRS," said Dennis Carr. "We understand the importance of partnering with our local communities, especially as NNSA activities and investments at SRS continue to grow and have a direct impact on the local communities surrounding the Site."

With the expansion of NNSA mission work, the DOE transitioned landlord responsibilities at SRS to NNSA in October 2024. This has prompted a renewed focus on improvements to Site infrastructure and workforce pipeline planning in partnership with local and regional equities.

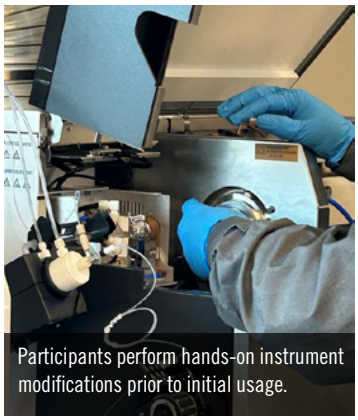
# Partnership with SCSU drives mission

SRNS Pit Production Laboratory staff continue to strengthen collaborative ties crucial for future success of the SRPPF and pit production mission. Analytical Chemist Cassidy Crandell and Receipt Inspection Laboratory Plasma Chemist Lead Kandice Miles-Scott recently visited South Carolina State University (SCSU) for a three-day exchange with faculty, students and instrument applications specialists.

Crandell and Miles-Scott provided subject matter expertise to assist in standing up a new triple quad inductively coupled plasma-mass spectrometer (ICP-MS) purchased using Pit Production Operations and Programs (PPOP) funds intended to build pipelines and collaborative research opportunities within local universities.

"The ability to partner with local institutions and work side by side with the students and faculty on instrument methods and techniques helps us understand the training needs for future staff, allows more learning opportunities for the Analytical Chemistry Group, and also creates meaningful relationships with students—all of which support SRPPF mission success and future workforce development initiatives," said Crandell.

The ICP-MS is a high-performance instrument used for the determination of elemental constituents spanning a wide swath of the periodic table. It is highly useful in efforts ranging from impurities measurements and elemental migrations to column performance determinations when performing complex separations. At SRS, the instrument will assist with optimizing methods and techniques that will reflect future operations in the High-Fidelity Training and Operations Center using a comparable surrogate material.



Participants perform hands-on instrument modifications prior to initial usage.

"Having high-performance analytical equipment in our backyard that overlaps with future mission chemistry efforts—along with strong research ties to employing institutions and regular mentoring interactions with their students—cannot be overvalued," said Floyd Stanley, PPOP Analytical Chemistry Manager. "Dollar for dollar, this is an amazingly efficient way to expand our future staffing pipeline, conduct short-term research projects addressing our needs and their skill sets, and keep our subject matter experts sharp and engaged in the community."

Through their funded efforts with PPOP's Mission Development Program, SCSU is tasked with driving internal growth as part of a larger strategy to facilitate local workforce development through education and research activities tailored to SRPPF's long-term mission. Located in Orangeburg, South Carolina, the school is the only university in South Carolina to offer a bachelor's degree in nuclear engineering.

# HB Line completes key de-inventory milestone

In an effort to fully de-inventory the HB Line facility at SRS, workers recently removed a group of legacy uranium materials originally produced by the Y-12 National Security Complex.

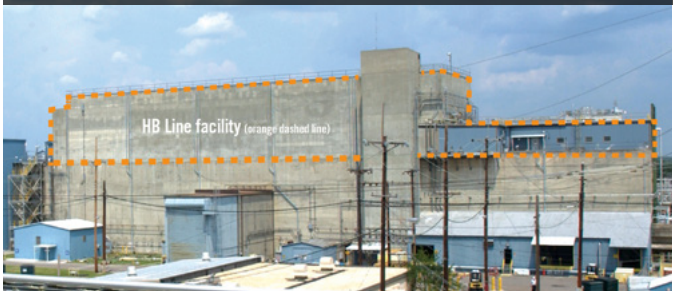
"While most of the material has been de-inventoried from the HB Line facility, a small number of unique and hard-to-disposition items remain," said SRNS HB Line Operations Manager Marty Ogden. "One group of these items was legacy uranium from the Y-12 uranium facility sent to SRS around 2008. Due to the unique material makeup of this group of items and competing missions in HB Line, this material has been in safe storage in the facility since its arrival."

"Removal of the samples of the Y-12 legacy material completes one of the more challenging efforts associated with removal of the remaining items out of the facility," continued Ogden. "Now that this material is gone, we are much closer to a fully de-inventoried state. The team performed flawlessly to make the transfers safely, and I want to thank them for their dedication, perseverance and hard work."

The materials were transferred to the Savannah River National Laboratory (SRNL) at SRS for their use in furthering development of plans to disposition other similar items at the Site. The transfer was a complex process that involved creating new training, and close coordination was needed between SRNS and SRNL to ensure the safety of the workers and the environment.

The HB Line facility is located on top of the H Canyon chemical separations facility at SRS. The facility has been in a soft layup state since 2020. HB Line was formerly used to process plutonium and uranium materials for various historical missions, including material used in the manufacture of power sources used for deep space probes, such as those used in the Cassini space research mission by NASA.

The HB Line facility at SRS is located on top of the H Canyon chemical separations facility.



# Empowering heroes

## SRNS unveils effort to improve disabled veteran hiring

SRNS recently introduced the Disabled Veteran Enhancement Opportunities program, aimed at improving employment opportunities for disabled veterans at SRS. Since October 2024, this strategy ensures that veterans who meet basic job qualifications receive priority consideration for interviews, increasing their chances of securing positions at SRS.

"Nearly 170 disabled veteran applicants have been reviewed under the new selection process," said J. Malik Lightbourne, SRNS Manager, Equal Employment Opportunity. "While this program does not guarantee a job offer, it ensures that resumes from disabled veterans will be prioritized and reviewed by hiring managers for further consideration."

Ron Stover and Alex Brennan, both self-identified disabled veterans, are recent hires making significant contributions to SRNS' critical missions at the Site.

Stover, a Marine Corps veteran with five years of service as military police, started his civilian career as a federal police officer and later transitioned into defense contract quality assurance.

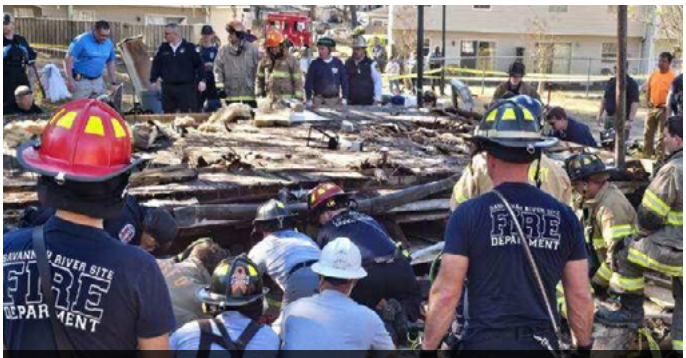
"Anything you can do to support folks who served this country and got hurt doing it is a good effort," said Stover. "We appreciate any sort of extra consideration. For many veterans in transition, they may not have that direct one-to-one correlation for a job, so it is so important to secure that face-to-face interview so they can speak to their experience and dedication."

Brennan, who served 10 years in the Marine Corps as a linguist, now oversees subcontractors at SRS. "Seeing people here for 25-30 years shows longevity," said Brennan. "This program offers a leg up for disabled veterans in the transition process. Finding a suitable career can take time, and programs like this are tremendously beneficial."

With a workforce comprising 9.6% of individuals identifying as having disabilities and 11.7% as veterans, SRNS continues to demonstrate support for those who have served the nation.

"By creating intentional pathways for veterans transitioning out of service, we are strengthening our workforce and supporting national defense missions across the DOE complex," said Bryan Ortner, SRNS Acting Senior Vice President of Workforce Services and Talent Management.

Marine Corps veterans Ron Stover and Alex Brennan were recently hired to support critical missions at the Site.


SRSFD dispatched a specialized response team to assist rescue operations following a building collapse in North Augusta, South Carolina.

# SRSFD supports successful rescue

The Savannah River Site Fire Department (SRSFD) assisted in a rescue operation following a building collapse in North Augusta, South Carolina, on Feb. 26. At 1:49 p.m., an old pool house slated for demolition unexpectedly collapsed, trapping a 24-year-old worker underneath an estimated 7,000 pounds of debris.

Upon receiving the emergency call, SRSFD quickly dispatched a nine-person response team equipped with specialized rescue tools to the scene.

"This is just one of the many examples of how SRS supports the community when needed," said Rick Sprague, Senior Vice President, Environment, Safety, Health and Quality. "Our involvement in such operations reflects a dedication to public service and readiness to extend help beyond our immediate responsibilities."

SRSFD worked seamlessly alongside North Augusta Public Safety, Augusta Fire, Edgefield County first responders, and other assisting agencies to ensure a coordinated and efficient rescue operation. Within 25 minutes of SRSFD's arrival, the victim was extricated and safely transported by helicopter to Wellstar MCG Health Medical Center in Augusta, Georgia, with non-life-threatening injuries.

"While command of this incident remained with North Augusta Public Safety, SRSFD was instrumental in coordinating the various departments on-scene," said Travis Scott, SRSFD Fire Chief. "Upon arrival, our response teams led all operational aspects of the rescue, including developing the plan and extricating the trapped individual."

Neal Gilmore, SRNS Director, Safeguards, Security and Emergency Services, said, "This incident highlights the importance of teamwork and the vital role that each responder plays in emergency situations. Our trained professionals were able to adapt quickly to the challenging circumstances and execute a well-coordinated rescue operation."

Since 1989, SRS has maintained mutual aid agreements with neighboring fire departments. Currently, SRSFD has seven such agreements with surrounding counties. In fiscal year 2024, SRS responded to 33 mutual aid calls.

# Team develops machine coding for MTC

In the world of Computer Numerical Control (CNC) machining, precision is everything. To fulfill critical SRS national security missions, the newly constructed Machining Training Center (MTC) on-site is integral for developing operator machining skills needed for the SRPPF mission. In the MTC, operators begin to hone skillsets necessary for proficient machining and welding operations in an unclassified, non-nuclear setting.

In addition to having a skilled and knowledgeable workforce, ensuring that equipment and programs operate normally is crucial. A single equipment or programming error can lead to scrapped material, damaged tooling, machine crashes or lost time. One of the most overlooked yet critical aspects of CNC programming is the post-processor—the bridge between Computer-Aided Manufacturing (CAM) software and the CNC machine. The post-processor is used to generate Numerical Code and format "G-Code," which instructs machines to create objects.

SRNS Pit Production Operations and Programs (PPOP) Product Engineering is working to develop Computer-Aided Design (CAD) training objects used by MTC operators. These CAD files are then translated to a CAM file and "post-processed" into new specialized coding used by the lathes and mills in the MTC. This process ensures the coding instructions are formatted correctly so that the machines run smoothly and efficiently.

PPOP Product Engineers monitor and diagnose unexpected occurrences such as invalid tool motions, collisions, unusual cut depths, or rapid traverse errors, which may result from issues with the post-processing coding output used by the machines. When these errors occur, the specially developed code can be used for correcting errors and may be subsequently revalidated at the CNC machine, resulting in improved equipment efficiency and fewer errors.

"Product Engineering is standing up a new capability for the SRPPF mission by transforming training object product definition into machining code for the MTC equipment," said Chris McLaughlin, Senior Manager Product Engineering. "This transformational capability will be required when we receive product definition from our design agency partners. Establishing this capability now in the MTC is one of many levers we need to pull to accelerate the completion of the first pit production unit."

SRPPF will support the U.S. nuclear stockpile by producing plutonium pits—components in a nuclear weapon—at the quantities needed to support military requirements using a two-site strategy with Los Alamos National Laboratory in New Mexico.

Because the CAM and post-processing software required in the MTC is not widely used within the Nuclear Security Enterprise, resources, such as pre-stocked tool libraries and parameter files for tooling, are limited. These constraints have led the Product Engineering group to create their own libraries in collaboration with SRPPF Training. This approach will expedite the process for future programmers and will be integral as PPOP moves toward more advanced training evolutions.

"The success of this project has been largely driven by cross-team collaboration between SRPPF Training, PPOP Product Engineering and Operations," said PPOP Product Engineer Anna Beason. "By leveraging diverse expertise, open communication and shared commitment to the project's goals, we have been able to overcome challenges and deliver usable machine code in the MTC."


MTC Machine Operator Jacob Bryant, PPOP Product Engineer Anna Beason, and Senior Training Specialist Patrick Chavis prepare to validate coding on CNC machines, ensuring their safe and effective operation in the Machining Training Center.


Excavators and other heavy equipment are visible out in the field as site preparation activities ramp up at SRPPF.


# SRPPF site prep ramping up

**SITE PREPARATION FOR THE SRPPF AT SRS** is ramping up with significant progress happening in the field at one of the largest construction projects in the country.

"The landscape around SRPPF is changing, and this flurry of activity is evident to the progress SRS is making on its commitment to establish pit production here for the NNSA," said Jim Dawkins, Executive Vice President and NNSA Chief Operations Officer for SRNS.

The enduring pit production mission at SRS involves completing construction of SRPPF in order to produce the bulk of the nation's plutonium pits, which are critical components of nuclear weapons, in support of nuclear deterrence.

SRPPF is being constructed through repurposing an unfinished facility at SRS with more than 400,000 square feet of available Hazard Category-2 space. This allows the NNSA to make use of an existing, seismically-qualified structure that meets pit production requirements.

The early site preparation work requires complex planning around the construction site for activities such as excavation work, underground electrical, and water and sewer infrastructure.

Since site preparation and earthwork started ramping up in January, construction entrances have been installed to multiple construction work areas. Also, demolition began of the domestic water line and underground irrigation tank. Work also progressed as light poles, wheel stops, asphalt and sidewalks were demolished and removed from a parking lot adjacent to SRPPF in preparation for excavation activities.

Designed to operate for a minimum of 50 years once facility operations are authorized, constructing SRPPF will require modifications and installation of manufacturing and support equipment directly associated with the pit production mission.

More than 4,000 craft and staff employees are expected to support construction during the life of the project. To support workforce needs, SRNS signed a Project Labor Agreement with the Augusta Building and Construction Trades Council.

"NNSA has prioritized re-establishing the nation's pit production capability, and seeing such visible progress in the field at SRS shows our nation is successfully working to revitalize the unique infrastructure vital to the Nuclear Security Enterprise," said Mike Basham, SRNS Senior Vice President and SRPPF Project Director. "This site prep work being executed now, while SRPPF design is being matured, will help accelerate the project once final design is complete and full construction activities can commence."

The plutonium pit production mission is an essential part of the NNSA's long-term strategy for nuclear stockpile sustainment. Under federal law and to meet national security requirements, NNSA must be able to produce no fewer than 80 pits per year to maintain and replenish the nuclear stockpile. Responsibilities for manufacturing pits will be shared between SRS and the Los Alamos National Laboratory in New Mexico. Once constructed and operational, SRPPF is expected to require approximately 2,100 employees.

# Nuclear Weapons course selections

Machining Training Center/Weapons Support Building Operations Manager Andrew Walczak

Pit Production Operations and Programs Analytical Chemistry Manager Floyd Stanley

SRPPF Formal Design Review Services Manager Jason Varble

A trio of SRNS employees has been selected to participate in the prestigious Sandia National Laboratories (SNL) Nuclear Weapons Management Orientation Course (NWMOC).

NWMOC is a well-known program in the Nuclear Security Enterprise (NSE). Entrance into the program is highly competitive with only 24 participants accepted each year. Half those spots are designated for SNL employees, while the remaining half are for other DOE and Department of Defense sites with a max of two participants per site.

Andrew Walczak, Machining Training Center/Weapons Support Building Operations Manager, is completing the program at the end of March, as part of the Class of 2025. "One of the largest takeaways from the course was a deeper understanding and pride for the SRS mission," he said. "Successful modernization of warheads and our entire deterrence program relies on the entirety of the Site's NNSA mission success. The NWMOC has supplied me with contacts and the knowledge of each DOE NNSA site's capabilities to progress our mission through collaboration."

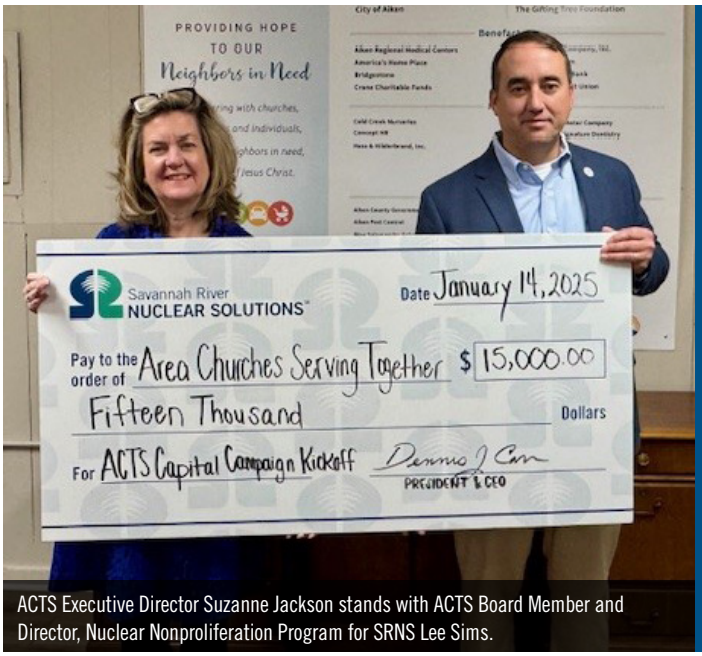
NWMOC provides accelerated nuclear weapon-related education and training to management, while offering professional networking opportunities with other participants from across the NSE. The course covers a variety of topics, from the history of nuclear weapons to nuclear deterrence systems. Participants attend courses via secure virtual teleconference.

Pit Production Operations and Programs Analytical Chemistry Manager Floyd Stanley and SRPPF Formal Design Review Services Manager Jason Varble have been selected for the NWMOC class of 2026, which begins in April and concludes in March 2026.

"Applying for NWMOC was an absolute no brainer," said Stanley. "The opportunity to further my technical knowledge in this field with instructor-led deep dives, while making valuable connections with others pursuing the same goal, is exciting and just too good to pass up."

Varble agreed, saying, "The NWMOC is an opportunity to continue growing my knowledge of the NSE and share that knowledge with the SRPPF workforce to support and advance the SRS pit production mission."

Leveraging connections formed at other Labs, Plants and Sites through programs like the NWMOC helps to enhance SRS defense program missions, according to Darlene Murdoch, SRNS Senior Vice President, NNSA Pit Production Operations and Programs. "We are proud of these employees for being accepted into the program, for furthering their knowledge of nuclear deterrence and for their service to the nation."




ACTS Executive Director Suzanne Jackson stands with ACTS Board Member and Director, Nuclear Nonproliferation Program for SRNS Lee Sims.

## SRNS partners with ACTS for Capital Campaign Fund

SRNS has partnered with Area Churches Together Serving (ACTS) for another year, supporting the organization's Capital Campaign fund with a $15,000 donation presented at the ACTS Downtown Aiken office.

The funds will be utilized to secure a new facility for ACTS operations as retrofitting has not been able to keep up with demands.

"At this stage, the facility is bursting at the seams," said Lee Sims, ACTS Board Member and Director, Nuclear Nonproliferation Program for SRNS. "To overcome this, ACTS has evaluated options to address relocation through the years to grow and build its operations."

"SRNS has been one of our most generous partners through the years, and I've been grateful for that," said ACTS Executive Director Suzanne Jackson.

SRNS has donated over $35,000 to ACTS throughout 2024 to assist its missions.

"The services ACTS provides to those in need are critical to the community. I am proud to work for a company that supports this organization and helps it deliver these needs," Sims said.

# ‘Buzzing’ in for the win at Science Bowl

Future scientists, engineers and mathematicians recently put their knowledge to the test during the annual DOE Savannah River Regional Science Bowl® Competition at the University of South Carolina Aiken. Coordinated by the SRNS Education Outreach Program, the event attracted 14 teams from South Carolina and the greater Augusta, Georgia, area on Feb. 22.

“Sponsoring STEM events like the Science Bowl is crucial for DOE and SRNS because it brings awareness and exposure to students,” said Cindy Hewitt, SRNS Education Outreach Specialist. “They see how math and science impact the world around them and learn about career opportunities at SRS.”

Lakeside High School Team 1, of Evans, Georgia, emerged victorious, earning an all-expense-paid trip to DOE’s National Science Bowl® competition in Washington, D.C., scheduled for April 24-28. Lakeside High School Team 2 secured second place, while Davidson Fine Arts Magnet School, of Augusta, Georgia, claimed third.

Coach David Arrington, of Lakeside High School, explained that the school holds tryouts and practices year-round in preparation for this event.

“My students have grown tremendously, both independently and as a team. Science Bowl brings a competitive edge to science education, encouraging a deeper love for the subject,” said Arrington. “Coaching builds relationships that extend far beyond the classroom, and we will continue to compete each year.”

“We’ve worked hard for this moment, and it feels fantastic,” said Jerry Fan, a senior on Lakeside High School Team 1. “I started participating in Science Bowl back in seventh grade, and my interest has only grown, particularly in biology and physics. We’re ready to take home the trophy at nationals.”

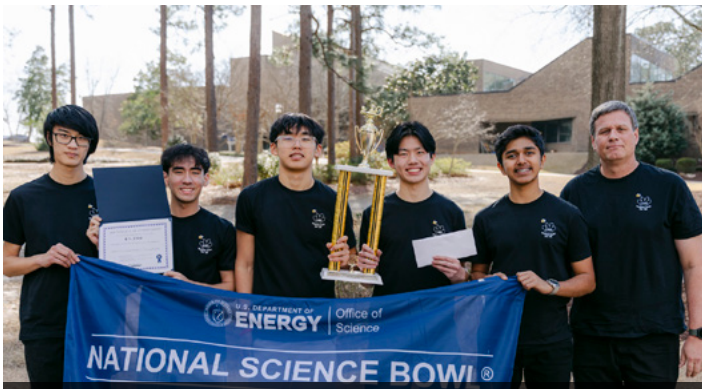
Each team, comprised of five students and one coach, competes in a fast-paced question-and-answer format similar to the television show “Jeopardy!” The questions span across various academic disciplines including biology, chemistry, Earth science, space science, physics, energy and math.

“The intense moments, like answering the final question in the last seconds, are unforgettable,” said Coralyn Cairns, senior captain of Lakeside High School Team 2.

“I’m extremely proud of our team’s dedication and commitment. Despite their busy schedules, they never missed a practice,” said Silver Bluff coach Rachel Harrell. “We’re a small school, but our students’ enthusiasm and teamwork have led us to win a round today.”

SRS is one of only three DOE sites to participate annually at the regional level since DOE created the National Science Bowl in 1991. This year’s regional contest involved 63 students from 10 high schools and is the only academic competition of its kind.

Volunteers from multiple Site contractors, including judges, scorekeepers, moderators and timekeepers, made the regional tournament possible.



This year’s winners are Lakeside High School Team 1: David Wang, Matias Riveros-Amado, Jerry Fan, George Zhou, Arnav Patel and Coach David Arrington.


Davidson Magnet Team 2 and Aiken Scholars Academy prepare for practice rounds.

“I love watching competitors be so enthusiastic about STEM,” said Greyam Hayes, SRNS Design Authority Engineer. “Other Site employees should get involved because now, more than ever, we must advocate for education and proudly share our passion for our careers.”

To reach the DOE National Science Bowl, teams from across the U.S. must win one of 65 regional tournaments. Approximately 344,000 students have faced off in the National Science Bowl finals.

> *“Sponsoring STEM events like the Science Bowl is crucial for DOE and SRNS because it brings awareness and exposure to students.”*
>
> **Cindy Hewitt,**
> **SRNS Education Outreach Specialist**

# Highlighting IT Youth Apprenticeship Program

SRNS recently highlighted its Information Technology (IT) Youth Apprenticeship Program at the "Good Morning North Augusta" event, hosted by the North Augusta Chamber of Commerce. Two IT youth apprentices, Jacob Lott and Alejandro Aguirre-Hernandez, shared their experiences and the benefits of the program with 60 attendees.

"The discussion highlighted the program's effectiveness in building a workforce pipeline—starting in high school and leading to a rewarding career at SRS," said Abigail Bowman, SRNS Apprenticeship Program and Pipeline Development Lead. "Not only are these students gaining hands-on and paid experience, but SRNS is introducing high-potential talent to our safety culture and standards."

During the event, Lott and Aguirre-Hernandez demonstrated how to repair a computer. Other panelists included SRNS Enterprise End User Services Manager Tim Arnold, North Augusta High School teacher Michelle O'Rourke, and SRNS Customer Response Center Manager Jacqueline Starlings.

"I've always had an interest in computers, and when I heard about the apprenticeship at SRS, I was excited about the possibility of working on a variety of new devices," Lott said. "The support from my counselors and the folks at SRS has ensured a balanced schedule, letting me excel academically while gaining valuable on-the-job experience. The connections I'm making and the practical skills I'm acquiring, including potential IT certifications, will open numerous doors for me in the future."

In 2024, SRNS partnered with the Aiken County Public School District to provide high-performing tech students with valuable hands-on experience. Both Lott and Aguirre-Hernandez are part of North Augusta High School's Dell Student TechCrew—performing advanced computer repair and diagnostics. The TechCrew has repaired nearly 2,000 devices for the district.

> *"The connections I'm making and the practical skills I'm acquiring, including potential IT certifications, will open numerous doors for me in the future."*
>
> **Jacob Lott,**
> **IT youth apprentice**

"This is a win-win opportunity that provides value to not only SRS but local schools, students and the broader community," said Sean Alford, SRNS Executive Vice President and Chief Administrative Officer. "More importantly, it demonstrates that businesses can adopt a similar strategy, leveraging apprenticeships to develop their workforce."

SRS anticipates significant growth in its workforce, requiring the addition of 9,000 new hires over the next five years. In fiscal year 2024, SRS welcomed six high school students to participate in a Youth Apprenticeship Program. The 24-month program enables rising juniors or seniors to complete paid on-the-job training, culminating in a certificate from the Department of Labor.

"Any chance we have to connect with students at the high school level benefits our organization and strengthens our workforce," said Arnold.

The discussion highlighted the effectiveness of the IT Youth Apprenticeship Program at SRS in building a workforce pipeline to support the Site's critical missions. Over 60 professionals attended the event.


SRNS IT Youth Apprentices were recently highlighted at a North Augusta Chamber of Commerce event.

LEAP is a unique tool in career development for early career professionals at SRNS, SRMC and BSRA.

# Annual LEAP social unites members with management

The SRS Leaders Emerging Among Professionals (LEAP) organization recently held their annual Management Social at the Aiken Center for the Arts. This signature LEAP event brings young professionals and managers together from across the Site for an evening of networking in a more casual setting.

LEAP is a peer-led organization that serves as the voice for early-career professionals working for SRNS, Savannah River Mission Completion and Battelle Savannah River Alliance with less than eight years of professional and/or SRS experience. Believing that young professionals are the future of the Site, LEAP offers opportunities for personal and professional development to help cultivate their careers.

This year, LEAP strived to increase engagement between social attendees through a bingo card icebreaker, encouraging employees to connect with others by finding individuals who met specific criteria – such as someone who has worked on-site for over 15 years, celebrating the same birth month and more.

"Developing early-career professionals at SRS into the leaders of tomorrow is a cornerstone of LEAP," said Gardner Blackburn, LEAP President and SRMC H-Tank Farm Closure Engineering Design Authority. "The Management Social is the foremost opportunity for our members to interface with executive leadership to establish connections and gain valuable insight into what it means to lead at all levels. As the LEAP Steering Committee, we are fortunate to be in a position to host such events, and we consistently push ourselves to think of new, creative ways to foster growth among our membership."

LEAP Executive Sponsor and SRNS Senior Vice President of Infrastructure Modernization and Sustainment Lee Schifer remarked, "This year's LEAP Management Social was fantastic! The opportunity to meet with the next generation of SRS Leaders and network with individuals from multiple companies was invaluable. I met some truly inspiring individuals who will no doubt be near-term future leaders on-site."

# LSITs influence safety awareness

Influencing safety skills and promoting workplace awareness were the core focuses for safety leaders from Local Safety Improvement Teams (LSIT) across SRS during their annual LSIT Leadership Day. This year, LSITs in attendance included those from SRNS, Savannah River Mission Completion (SRMC), Battelle Savannah River Alliance (BSRA) and Centerra.

Interactive presentations and developmental activities punctuated the all-day event hosted by SRNS. To network, attendees were divided into different groups through a shared favorite candy.

"Sitewide events help us speak together as peers and are a great outlet for people," said Jacob Fansler, with the K Area ATOMS LSIT. "They help build character and people put their best foot forward enthusiastically."

Leading the activities of the day was a presentation on "Influence Without Authority." Here, participants were shown the importance of understanding what they could personally control and its influence on how their colleagues engaged with safety.

"We want people to leave work the way they came or even better," Bomb Squad LSIT Co-Chair Jodi Lynn said. "Having an LSIT helps us ramp up our safety in Tritium."

Another presentation taught leaders that safety culture included keeping an eye out for insider threats.

"At SRS, you have to understand that you cannot have security without safety," shared Janice Shelby-Bentley, Physical Security Lead for General Site, H and L areas. "Security issues can lead to safety concerns if people can't recognize what security issues are."

Many participants expressed that safety was not just protocol but a culture that they want everyone on-site to join.

"One of the important things to me is how team mentality is a huge part of our safety," LSIT Liaison Bradley Clark said. "I love everything about building that foundation of a safety culture."


Attendees gathered at the recent LSIT Leadership Day.


SRNS Talent Manager Matt Wright and Human Resources Specialist Gretchen Barton complete a 'Stay Interview' aimed at improving engagement and retention across the workforce.

# 'Stay Interview' enhances employee engagement

In an effort to retain valued team members, SRNS recently introduced a strategic 'Stay Interview' initiative in fiscal year 2025 to enhance employee engagement through direct dialogue. To date, SRNS has conducted approximately 654 interviews led by 146 managers.

"Attrition can cost a company of SRNS' size upwards of $50 million annually, the majority of which is typically associated with non-retirement attrition," said Jessica Hall, SRNS Workforce Services and Talent Management (WSTM). "The need for an effective retention solution has never been more clear—a solution that brings additional benefits for the Site's infrastructure, research capabilities and employee benefit enhancements."

As SRNS strives to examine the characteristics of a positive employee experience, one question stands at the forefront: "Why do you stay at SRNS?" By directly engaging with staff, this initiative aims to tap into firsthand insights on what keeps employees committed and content in their career.

"Employee morale and retention are closely linked to how valued people feel by their organization," continued Hall. "Stay Interviews empower us to build upon successful practices, address any concerns in real-time, and reinforce trust and loyalty across the board."

Management's acknowledgment of employee perspectives has a critical influence on staff retention. Through informal, one-on-one discussions, managers work to identify initiatives that strengthen employees' ties to SRNS, resulting in customized 'stay plans' to boost loyalty.

Implemented Stay Interviews have led to immediate improvements in SRNS' work environment and engagement strategies, benefiting both the top talent and the entire workforce, while enabling managers to be actively involved in retention strategies. The process helps foster a feedback-valued culture with increased morale and decreased turnover.

"Our workforce is evolving, and we're adapting to meet the needs of our new customer," said Bryan Ortner, SRNS Acting Senior Vice President, Workforce Services and Talent Management. "We're thrilled to invite our managers to embrace this change and work closely with WSTM to foster a productive and engaged workforce."

When conducting Stay Interviews, SRNS managers should adhere to the following best practices:

- Spend 80% of the time actively listening to employee feedback.
- Engage deeply by asking insightful follow-up questions.
- Document the conversation thoroughly.
- Maintain a conversational tone that distinguishes the process from annual performance reviews.

SRNS aims not only to reduce the negative impacts of attrition but to cultivate a more interconnected and motivated workforce, with leaders in sync with their team members' aspirations and needs.

**Travis Scott**

**AT SRNS:** Fire Chief, SRS Fire Department

**IN THE COMMUNITY:** Volunteer at Christian Heritage Church in Graniteville, South Carolina

# THE PEOPLE OF SRNS

Travis Scott has worked on-site for over eight years, currently serving as the Fire Chief of the Savannah River Site Fire Department (SRSFD). Fire Chief is the highest-ranking officer in the fire department, responsible for leading and managing all firefighters and officers within the department and overseeing daily operations.

Scott attended Anderson University in Anderson, South Carolina, where he received his bachelor's degree in Homeland Security and Emergency Services. Prior to working at the Site, he served as a Firefighter and Paramedic in Greenville County, South Carolina.

When asked what he enjoys most about working at SRNS, Scott noted the sense of purpose he feels from his work, as well as the dedicated team with whom he works. "We have a talented and skilled workforce who are specialists within their craft. Not only do we get to protect the lives, property and environment of our stakeholders, but we have the unique privilege of doing so while simultaneously supporting the national security of our country."

Aside from his standard job functions, Scott is the Management Sponsor of the SRSFD Local Safety Improvement Team (LSIT) Five Alarm Safety; he supports safety initiatives and serves as a representative between their LSIT and Fire Department administration. Additionally, he is a member of the Field and First Responders Subcommittee through the Emergency Management Symposium–Special Interest Group, comprised of Fire Chiefs from across the DOE complex.

Originally from Greenville County, Scott and his family currently reside in Graniteville, South Carolina. In his spare time, he enjoys dirt track racing, attending college sports events and spending time with family.

# SRTE 'chips' in to support the AHA Heart Walk

One hundred and twenty Savannah River Tritium Enterprise (SRTE) employees and guests participated in the annual SRTE Golf Tournament held at the Mount Vintage Golf Club in North Augusta, South Carolina. The charitable event raised $15,000 to benefit the American Heart Association (AHA) of the CSRA.

"We are thrilled with the success of this year's golf tournament," said SRTE employee and tournament director Dylan Chavous. "Raising over $15,000 is a testament to the dedication and generosity of our participants and volunteers. This significant contribution will greatly support the AHA's efforts in funding research, education and community programs aimed at combating heart disease and stroke."

The tournament featured 30 four-person teams and followed a "captains' choice" playing format, where teams work together to play a hole by taking turns teeing off and then playing from the best shot. After 18 holes of golf on the par-72 course, teams were awarded for first- and second-lowest round, longest drive, closest to the pin and putting contest.

"I want to extend my heartfelt thanks to everyone who participated in this year's golf tournament," said SRTE Senior Vice President J.C. Epting. "The enthusiasm and generosity of these employees have made this event a tremendous success. I am incredibly proud of SRTE's commitment to supporting the AHA."

Tournament participants practiced during the 2025 SRTE Golf Tournament at the Mount Vintage Golf Club in North Augusta, South Carolina.

Kelsey Cox, Jodi Lynn, Christina Cannella, Mattie Inabinet and Michelle Holman-Abbot

# FEATURE FRIDAY

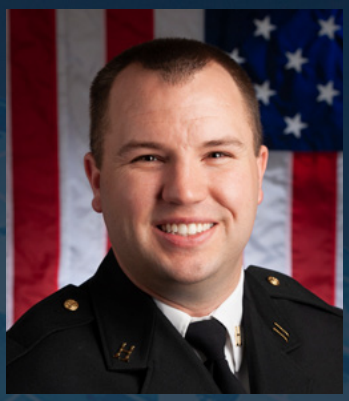
The following employees were highlighted as part of the SRNS Feature Friday series on social media.

**SCAN ME**
to connect with our social media

**Alexis Schuchmann**
Spent Fuel Project Process Engineer

**Rodell Evans Jr.**
Deputy Facility Manager

**Lauren Ingalls**
Spent Fuel Project Process Engineer



**Travis Scott**
Fire Chief, SRS Fire Department

# SRNS

**Developing innovative approaches to deliver on our environmental commitments and nuclear materials challenges**

**Supplying products and services necessary to maintain the nation's nuclear deterrent**

**Securing nuclear materials to prevent unwanted proliferation**

**Transforming nuclear materials into assets and stable wasteforms**

Savannah River
NUCLEAR SOLUTIONS℠