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For Immediate Release

SRNS Shares Successful Education Outreach Initiatives

Benchmarking Visit Brings Regional Science Bowl to Carlsbad, New Mexico

AIKEN, S.C. – (January 24, 2024) – A guest from the Waste Isolation Pilot Plant ([WIPP](#)) recently visited the Savannah River Site (SRS) to benchmark the Savannah River Nuclear Solutions ([SRNS](#)) [Education Outreach Program's](#) successful science, technology, engineering and math (STEM) outreach programs, which have been in place with local schools since 2008.



Joy James-Foster, Ph.D., Waste Isolation Pilot Plant Education Outreach Lead, left, visits Kim Mitchell, SRNS Education Outreach Lead, to learn how to establish a Regional Science Bowl in Carlsbad, New Mexico. Her three-day visit to the Savannah River Site included a mock science bowl demonstration with buzzers, scoreboards and timers.

Joy James-Foster, Ph.D., WIPP Education Outreach Lead, has followed SRS Education Outreach online for years, taking note of and learning from various STEM-related programs. After virtually connecting with SRNS Education Outreach Program Lead Kim Mitchell, Foster traveled more than 1,400 miles from Carlsbad, New Mexico to Aiken, South Carolina to learn from SRS.

“The SRS Education Outreach Program caught my eye after WIPP’s new contractor, [Salado Isolation Mining Contractors](#), aimed to host the first Regional Science Bowl in our area as part of our community commitment plan,” said Foster. “After multiple virtual meetings with Kim, I decided to take the chance and travel to South Carolina in hopes that this program would positively impact the underserved and rural populations of Carlsbad.”

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In addition to education outreach in their host communities, SRS and WIPP share respective roles in the national cleanup mission of the Department of Energy (DOE), as defense-related transuranic waste shipments from SRS are shipped to WIPP for safe disposal.

Foster and Mitchell spent three days analyzing mock science bowls, listing the materials and labor needed to launch the initiative, and touring the University of South Carolina Aiken – the facility that has hosted [SRNS Regional Science Bowls](#) for over 15 years.

The event tests high school students' knowledge in all areas of science and offers them a chance to be nationally recognized. SRS is one of only three sites to participate annually at the regional level since the DOE created the [National Science Bowl](#) in 1991.



The 2023 DOE Savannah River Site Regional Science Bowl Competition's winner. Lakeside High School-Team 1, of Evans, Georgia, advanced to the Department of Energy National Science Bowl in Washington, D.C.

"I am determined to connect our organization with the next generation of scientists, engineers and mathematicians," continued Foster. "This benchmarking session helped pave the way for WIPP to establish a strong education outreach program and regional science bowl and that is all thanks to the mentorship I received from Kim."

In addition to the Regional Science Bowl, SRNS Education Outreach programs include [STEM that Travels](#), [CSRA College Night](#), [CSRA Regional Science and Engineering Fair](#), [Innovative Teaching Mini Grants](#), various workshops and Site tours. Mitchell and Foster plan to continue future workforce development and education outreach initiatives at both DOE sites.

"It is the sincerest form of flattery to have someone take note of our accomplishments and aim to mirror our community initiatives in another state," said Mitchell. "Joy is very dedicated to her program and has

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already established her own version of Mini Grants, Engineers Week, and scholarship receptions at WIPP. This was the next step in taking her program to the next level while establishing a strong relationship with SRS.”

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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