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For Immediate Release

WORC Grant Recipients Explore Career Opportunities at SRS

AIKEN, S.C. – (January 22, 2026) – Twelve WORC ([Workforce Opportunities in Regional Careers](#)) grant recipients, accompanied by 14 educators and administrators from local partner universities and technical schools, recently toured the Savannah River Site (SRS). The highlight of the visit was the Manufacturing Technology Center, where participants learned about the Savannah River Plutonium Processing Facility and other critical mission areas supporting the National Nuclear Security Administration (NNSA).

The Department of Energy's (DOE) WORC grant funding, administered by the Savannah River Site Community Reuse Organization (SRSCRO), aims to advance nuclear education and training in the region. In 2024 alone, \$2 million in WORC grants were funded to support higher education partners. This funding supports students in apprenticeships and local 2-year and 4-year programs, strengthening the vital workforce pool needed for DOE Environmental Management (EM) and NNSA missions.



Andrew Walczak, MTC Operations Manager, led a tour of the Manufacturing Technology Center (MTC) at the Savannah River Site.

Tracy Beach, University of South Carolina (USC) Salkehatchie STEM Manager, said, "This visit covered a multitude of areas including state-of-the-art technologies, coding, robotics, and industrial process engineering, while also offering insights into apprenticeships, internships and diverse employee

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experiences. The support from DOE, NNSA, SRS, and SRSCRO has created numerous opportunities for community members and students. What resonates most is the Site's commitment to making their workforce happy and productive, with limitless opportunities for career growth."



Ross Montgomery, SRPPF Deputy Facility Manager, shares information about a high-precision lathe in the MTC.



A WORC grant recipient views a high-precision lathe which is responsible for disassembling welding items.

Led by Savannah River Nuclear Solutions' (SRNS) Education Outreach Programs (EOP) and Pit Production Operations and Programs (PPOP) departments, the tour highlighted the Site's expanding missions and workforce opportunities within NNSA. Participants experienced a comprehensive Site driving tour, gained insights into the hiring process, and learned about available internship and apprenticeship programs.

Taylor Rice, SRNS EOP Lead, highlighted the importance of partnerships with local educators, especially as SRS aims to hire thousands over the next five years to support mission-critical projects.

"Providing these opportunities ensures educators and students are aware of our workforce needs, career paths and critical mission scopes while fostering a pipeline of well-trained graduates ready to enter our workforce," explained Rice. "This tour showcased cutting-edge technology and the training provided at the MTC, including walk-throughs of the high bays and various equipment."

The newly constructed MTC addresses a critical training need for SRPPF, which will support the U.S. nuclear stockpile by producing the required number of plutonium pits. MTC operators develop the necessary skills for proficient machining and welding operations in an unclassified, non-nuclear setting, which helps speed up the time required to achieve proficiency. Upon graduating from the MTC, specialists will transition into the High-Fidelity Training and Operations Center (HFTOC), where they will learn to navigate physical restrictions and gain experience with simulated radiological controls and errors. Fully qualified operators will later move to the SRPPF Main Process Building, where they will handle the product in its final form, governed by controls and restrictions.

"An influx of young talent is critical for the long-term success of SRPPF," said Ross Montgomery, SRPPF Deputy Facility Manager. "Our PPOP management team frequently conducts tours of the MTC for local

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students and faculty, aiming to generate excitement and enthusiasm. These tours help entice new hires to join our organization and highlight the array of opportunities at SRNS."

"When I toured SRS, riding the bus around was just the beginning," said Austin Berninger, WORC grant recipient from USC Salkehatchie. "The moment we stepped into the buildings and received a detailed list of job opportunities, it really hit home. Seeing the advanced machining devices up close and learning about the exciting work being done there was eye-opening. It became clear why so many WORC grant recipients are eager to secure a position at 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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