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For Immediate Release

Over 2,600 students ‘Discover Engineering’ with SRS volunteers

SRS engineers bring hands-on STEM experiences to CSRA middle schools

AIKEN, S.C. (February 26, 2026) – To celebrate National Engineers Week and National Job Shadow Day, engineers from the Savannah River Site (SRS) recently partnered with middle schools across the Central Savannah River Area (CSRA) for hands-on activities during Discover Engineering week, held February 2-6. Fifty engineers engaged over 2,600 students in 128 interactive sessions, demonstrating how engineering shapes everyday life.

Savannah River Nuclear Solutions (SRNS) [Education Outreach Programs \(EOP\)](#) play a vital role in shaping the future nuclear workforce by connecting education, industry and community. Through initiatives that span from pre-K to high school, EOP introduces students to science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM) in ways that are exciting and accessible for all.



Highland Springs Middle School students watch intently as their carefully built structure succumbs to the forces of simulated seismic activity on the shake table.

According to Taylor Rice, SRNS Education Outreach Lead, thousands of volunteer hours have been devoted to providing impactful STEM experiences to over 600,000 students, educators, and community members since 2008.

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“These young minds grow into our next cohort of interns, apprentices, and future mission leaders who will deliver critical missions for the Department of Energy and the National Nuclear Security Administration,” said Rice. “Discover Engineering sparks interest in careers that protect the nation and shape global security one demonstration at a time.”

The program’s success is evident in stories like that of Hunter Harris, now an SRNS Process Control Engineer. Harris volunteered at [Highland Springs Middle School](#), leading a lab on plate tectonics and earthquake-resistant structures. The twist? He was teaching in the classroom of Becky Miller, his former fifth-grade teacher.

“This was a full circle moment for me,” said Harris. “I volunteered to show her students how teamwork drives innovation. In engineering, collaboration is key and when diverse ideas come together, great things can happen. Every student has the potential to contribute to something bigger than themselves, and I hope I sparked that curiosity.”

For Miller, the experience was just as meaningful. “Seeing Hunter’s accomplishments since leaving my classroom is proof of what these kids can achieve,” she said. When students see someone like them succeed, it broadens their horizons and makes STEM careers feel attainable. Investing in local schools strengthens our community and prepares students for the jobs we need to fill locally. It sends a powerful message that their education matters and they are valued as future members of society.”



Taylor Rice, SRNS Education Outreach Programs Lead, collaborates with students as they reinforce their models, ensuring their structures can withstand the simulated earthquakes.



Hunter Harris, SRNS volunteer and engineer, guides a group of Highland Springs students through the design phase, sharing insights on how to create earthquake-resistant structures.

In groups, students learned how engineers design earthquake-resistant structures by building wooden stick models and testing their stability and survivability on a shake table.

“It was both exciting and slightly nerve-wracking to watch it shake, but our structure held up really well,” shared sixth-grader Jaxon Prosser. “My group’s cone-shaped design only lost a couple of pieces, thanks to our choice to add reinforcement pillars. This experience really opened my eyes to how many different types of engineering careers exist. It’s made me even more interested in pursuing construction

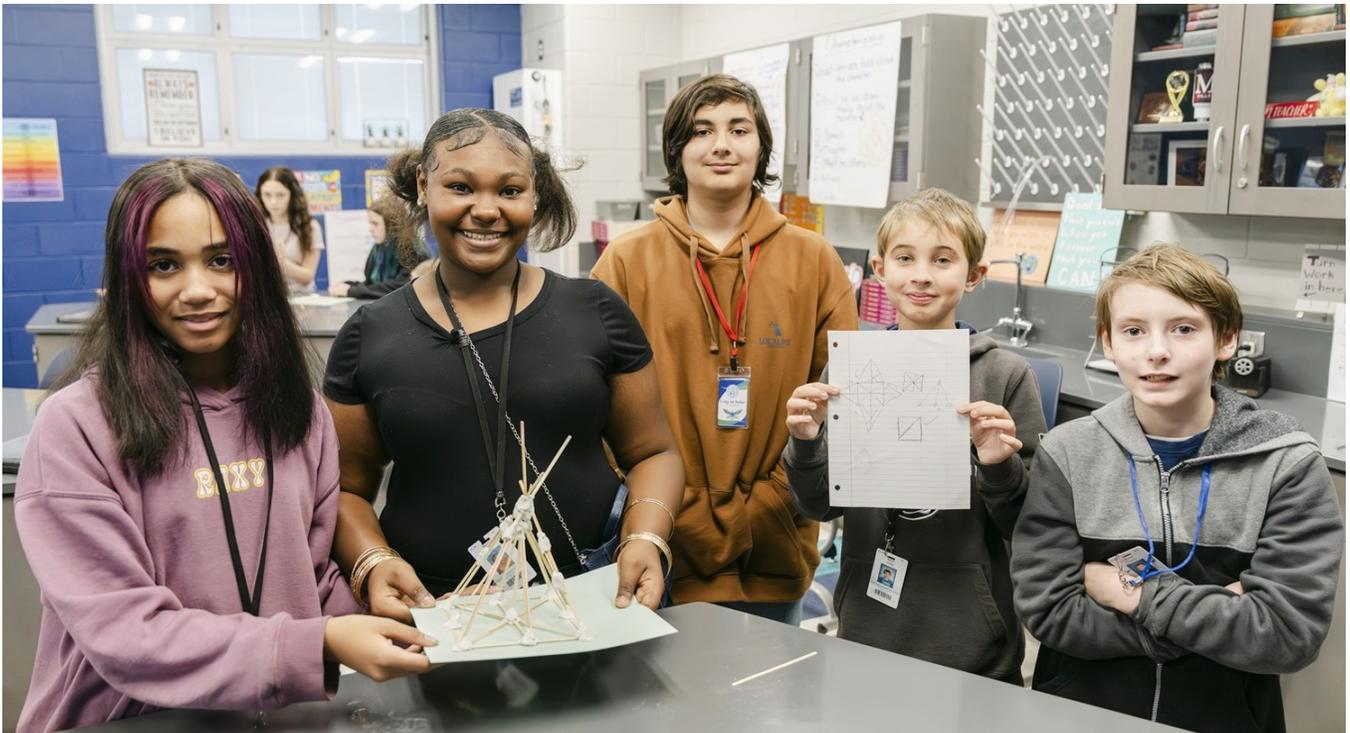
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engineering, following in my dad's footsteps, and learning how organizations like SRS create structures designed to stand the test of time."

Sixth-grader DeVaya Gartrell added, "SRS offers so many exciting career options to explore, you just have to stay focused and work hard to achieve your goals. I think other students would really enjoy the chance to learn directly from an engineer in the field."

In conjunction with National Engineers Week, these demonstrations are part of [DiscoverE](#), a global initiative celebrating engineers' contributions. SRS volunteers also discussed engineering degrees, salaries, recommended courses, and strategies for early success, reinforcing SRNS EOP's commitment to sparking interest in STEM and strengthening education in the CSRA.



A proud team of Highland Springs Middle School students showcase their complete structure alongside a design plan, highlighting their teamwork and engineering creativity.

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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