

Principal Media Contact: Caroline Reppert  
Savannah River Nuclear Solutions, LLC  
803-952-8367  
[caroline.reppert@srs.gov](mailto:caroline.reppert@srs.gov)

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## SRNS Employees “LEAP” into Professional Development

*Leaders share their best career advice with early-career professionals at the Savannah River Site*

AIKEN, S.C. (Nov. 28, 2016) – Answering the question “where do you want to be in five years” is no small task. At the 2016 LEAP (Leaders Emerging Among Professionals) Conference, guest speakers tackled how to approach this question and shared leadership advice with early-career professionals at the Department of Energy’s (DOE) Savannah River Site (SRS).

More than 180 Savannah River Nuclear Solutions (SRNS) employees gathered for the conference, themed “Emerging Leaders: Your Future Begins Today,” in Aiken, S.C. The event kicked off with an introduction by Stuart MacVean, SRNS President and CEO and LEAP Executive Sponsor, who reflected on the organization’s accomplishments.

“The LEAP organization is a valuable asset to the Savannah River Site and our region,” said MacVean. “Not only does it provide opportunities for our future leaders to expand their network, but it also impacts retention and affects who stays in the CSRA. I commend LEAP members for actively participating in professional development events to learn more about our site’s important missions, as well as taking opportunities to be engaged in outreach activities in the community.”

After the introduction, Jennifer Large, Vice President of Fluor Talent Development, and Stephen Muller, Director of Fluor Talent Development, from Irving, Tex., gave a keynote address. Large and Muller shared strategies for creating a professional “brand” and planning for the future.

“Sometimes we spend more time planning vacations than planning



SRNS President and CEO Stuart MacVean addresses members of Savannah River Nuclear Solutions LEAP (Leaders Emerging Among Professionals) at a recent early-career professionals event in Aiken, S.C.

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our careers,” Large said. “No matter where you are in your career—whether fresh out of college or nearing retirement—it’s vital to have a game plan. We often have more control of our situations than we give ourselves credit for. It’s your game, and it always has been. The question shouldn’t be ‘where do you see yourself in five years;’ however, you should be asking ‘what contribution do you want to be known for in five years’.”

Large and Muller emphasized that just like companies, people have a brand. “Your brand is the perception that others have of you,” added Muller. “Every day we have thousands of ‘touchpoints,’ such as meetings, emails, phone calls and hallway conversations. That’s how people experience your brand. The deliberate choices you make every day affect how people view your ability to communicate, deliver results, make decisions and take reasonable risks.”

Following the keynote address was a panel discussion with managers from different areas at SRNS. The six panelists included Kliss McNeel, Senior Vice President of Environmental Stewardship, Safety and Health; Krissy Zeigler, Director for Materials Science and Technology in the Science and Technology Directorate, Savannah River National Laboratory; Todd Woodsmall, Reservoir Systems Manager, Tritium Engineering; Bill Tadlock, Director of Site Maintenance and Facility Support; Cheryl Hartfield, Small Business Program Manager; and Sterling Robertson, Chief Engineer for Nuclear Materials Disposition.

“The panel discussion had a great variety of participants, and their answers were well thought out,” said Sam Cassady, LEAP member and associate quality assurance engineer in K Area. “The common theme was that you don’t have to be a manager in title to be a leader. Even if you’ve just entered the workforce, you can be a leader today by taking on a big project at work or volunteering in the community.”

LEAP members had the option to invite their manager or lead to the conference. “Overall, the conference provided a great opportunity for meeting LEAP members and managers outside of my organization,” said Mark Barnes, Director of the Analytical Development Directorate, Savannah River National Laboratory. “The keynote speakers were excellent. I enjoyed their presentation as well as the ice-breaker activity that sparked discussions at my table that continued throughout the morning.”

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, professional development and community outreach events, as well as increased visibility with management. The organization is peer-led by a steering committee of 13 members who coordinate monthly events for its 450 members.

*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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