

News from the Savannah River Site

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Student-Built Cities of the Future Displayed during Annual Regional Competition Involving South Carolina and Augusta-Area Middle Schools

AIKEN, S.C. (Jan. 26, 2016) – Hundreds of middle school students from across South Carolina and throughout the greater Aiken-Augusta area have been striving to build an award winning, table top model that best represents the most practical and innovative city of the future. Each team had the opportunity to convince a panel of judges that their project merited a first place prize during the recent Regional Future City® Competition.

The student teams, along with an educator and volunteer mentor, research and design a solution to a city-wide challenge that changes each year. This year's challenge was — “Waste Not, Want Not” —that encouraged students to design waste management systems for residential use and small businesses by looking at issues such as collection, separation, processing, recycling, health and safety, energy efficiency, environmental impact and cost.

“Students learn how today's engineers and city planners deal with citywide sustainability issues like solid waste management,”



This year's winning team from Paul Knox Middle School in North Augusta, S.C., (from left) Rebekah Rahman, Matt Bodine, Savannah Padgett, Amanda Burnside and Madden Bell.

said Future City Regional Coordinator and SRNS employee Kim Mitchell. “They research cutting edge technologies and develop an imaginative and plausible solution that can exist for generations.”

Savannah River Nuclear Solution’s (SRNS) Education Outreach personnel have been managing the local Future City Regional competition for 13 years, in partnership with the Ruth Patrick Science Education Center at the University of South Carolina’s Aiken campus. “Our partnership with USCA has been highly productive,” said Mitchell. “We can’t thank them enough for the major contributions they make to this important program year after year.”

Since returning to school earlier this fall, 36 student teams have been hard at work on their Future City projects. They join more than 40,000 middle school students from 1,350 schools in 37 regions around the country, all of whom are engaged in similar regional competitions.

Competing teams are judged by panels of volunteers from the local engineering community on five program deliverables:

- Project Plan: Students complete a project plan to help them plan and organize their project;
- Virtual City Presentation: Teams design a city using SimCity software and present their city’s progress via a slideshow;
- City Description: This 1,500 word essay outlines the team’s solution to this year’s Waste Not, Want Not challenge;
- City Model: With only a \$100 budget, teams built a model of their city to scale with at least one-moving part using mostly recycled materials; and
- Comprehensive City Presentation: Teams had seven minutes to impress the judges by showcasing what they’ve learned and what their city is all about.

This year’s first-place winner from Paul Knox Middle School, North Augusta, S.C., will travel to the Future City National Finals in Washington, D.C., Feb. 12-17. In addition, the top prize is \$7,500 for the school’s science, technology, engineering and math (STEM) program plus a trip to U.S. Space Camp in Huntsville, Alabama.

Hilton Head Christian Academy took second place in the completion, while the team from North Augusta Middle School came in third.

Future City has received national attention and acclaim for encouraging middle schoolers nationwide to develop their interest in a STEM-based education. The annual challenge is one of the nation’s leading engineering education programs and among the most popular.

“This isn’t a weekend project. The learning curve is significant, involving months of planning and hard work,” said Mitchell. “The creativity and ingenuity found within each project is impressive. Each team should be proud of their city.”

For more information on the Future City Competition, visit www.futurecity.org

The U.S. Department of Energy Savannah River Operations Office provides a variety of science and literacy outreach programs at SRS by funding and coordinating the efforts of several organizations. The primary goal of these outreach programs is to enhance interest in science, mathematics, engineering and technology and to support improvements in education in the Central Savannah River Area by using the unique resources available at the site.

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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