

News from the Savannah River Site

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Principal Media Contact: DT Townsend
Savannah River Nuclear Solutions, LLC
803.952.7566
dt-lawrence.townsend@srs.gov

DOE Media Contact: Monte Volk
803.952.6283
monte.volk@srs.gov

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

SRS Engineers Share Knowledge and Experience during CSRA Teach-Ins in support of National Engineers Week

AIKEN, S.C. (March 2, 2017) – Savannah River Site (SRS) employees observed National Engineers Week 2017 by conducting science and engineering demonstrations for more than 3,000 students throughout the greater Aiken-Augusta area.

More than 60 SRS engineers, scientists and technicians conducted over 150 “Teach-In” demonstrations during a two-week period at 29 middle schools, with a focus on seventh-grade students.

Teach-Ins promote the importance of math, science and technology literacy. SRS volunteers provide interactive demonstrations and informative discussions to give students a broader understanding, predominantly in the field of engineering.

“The partnership between Savannah River Nuclear Solutions (SRNS) and area schools provides a highly beneficial opportunity for SRS scientists and engineers to work directly with students in their classrooms,” said Stuart MacVean, SRNS President and CEO. “This is one of many ways we are reaching into local school systems and area colleges to develop an interest in a potential career with SRNS, part of an extensive effort to create a pipeline for future workers.”

Middle schools in the South Carolina counties of Aiken, Allendale, Bamberg, Barnwell and Edgefield, plus the Georgia counties of Columbia and



North Augusta Middle School students Katiebeth Cannon (left) and Sidney Stephens enjoy learning about the highly unusual properties of Oobleck during one of this year's 150 SRS Teach-In demonstrations as SRNS engineers Ian Conant (left) and Ethan Simmons look on.

Richmond, have participated in this outreach program managed and sponsored by SRNS since 2008. During this time period, over 18,000 students from this region have benefited from the creative work and hours of effort provided by hundreds of enthusiastic Teach-In volunteers.

“We’re grateful for our partnership with SRNS and their efforts to foster student interest in STEM fields,” said Aiken County Public Schools Superintendent Dr. Sean Alford. “Teach-Ins pair our classroom instructors with real-world scientists and engineers. This much-anticipated annual event in our middle schools provides a real-world experience for students and makes their classroom curriculum relative to the workforce.”

North Augusta Middle School seventh grader Sidney Stephens noted that a hands-on demonstration using Oobleck was an interesting way for her class to experience that work at a job, especially engineering, can be fun.

Made from cornstarch and water, Oobleck has the properties of a liquid when poured; however, it quickly becomes a solid when force is applied. A layer of Oobleck on the floor can be walked on without sinking through to the flooring beneath.

Classmate Katiebeth Cannon believes she’ll find many connections between what she has learned during the Teach-In experiments and her various math and science classes. “It’s nice that these people from SRNS actually care about what I want to do when I get older,” said Cannon.

“As engineers, we wanted the students to come away from this demonstration thinking if we can understand some of these physical phenomenon better, we can develop something similar later and be the next generation of innovators,” said Ethan Simmons, an SRNS Engineer. “Getting involved in Teach-Ins is a great way to give back and hopefully inspire them as well.”

According to fellow SRNS Engineer Ian Conant, “We were able to engage the kids with an experiment that has a real-world application and help them to retain it. We explained that some of today’s experimental motorcycle apparel uses the same physics principles as Oobleck. The clothing remains pliable until it is struck, and then it instantly hardens to help protect the rider.”

A project of DiscoverE, National Engineers Week celebrates the positive contributions engineers make to society and is a catalyst for outreach across the country to kids and adults alike.

The SRS Teach-In Program is managed by SRNS Education Outreach personnel for the DOE Savannah River Operations Office. DOE and SRNS provide a variety of science, engineering and literacy outreach programs to reach tens of thousands of students each year in the Central Savannah River Area through the unique resources available at SRS.

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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