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SRNS Finds Success in Streamlining Hiring as Part of Broad Human Capital Gains

Aiken, S.C. (Jan. 12, 2018) – With nearly 550 new hires in 2017 and an average age of employee that has dropped by six years to 48, the multi-year effort by Savannah River Nuclear Solutions (SRNS) to address anticipated retirements has begun to bear fruit.

“We have put a strong emphasis on making sure that we inform, inspire and reward our workforce as we build for the future,” SRNS President Stuart MacVean said. “We are focused not only on new hires, but also retention of our employees and supporting them as they grow.”

Over the last four years, more than 1,900 new workers have been hired, with 83 percent coming from the local area near Aiken, S.C., and SRNS predicts the need to hire 2,000 employees within the next five years in the mission areas that it manages alone to address predicted attrition.

Many key improvements, including a more efficient security clearance process and market equity adjustments for engineers and scientists, have helped attract some of the best and brightest from the region to SRS, earning SRNS recognition as the “Workforce Innovator of the Year” by the South Carolina Chamber of Commerce.

“We also want to make sure we continue to benefit from the accumulated experience and understanding of the SRS personnel as our workforce evolves, so we’ve also expanded our mentoring and knowledge transfer initiatives,” said Carol Barry, SRNS Senior Vice President, Workforce Services and Talent Management.

Among the key initiatives that SRNS has implemented to improve its hiring and workforce retention are:

- A new web-based module that streamlines the onboarding of new hires by using an automated process to handle completion of all new hire and benefits forms;



SRNS President and CEO Stuart MacVean (right) chats with interns Benjamin Langdale (left), Logan Stringfield, Serenity Edwards and Jacqueline Phillips during the end-of-summer intern reception in July 2017. This year, SRNS welcomed 147 summer interns and hired 69 interns for full-time employment.

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- An expanded internship program that resulted in SRNS welcoming 147 summer interns in 2017 and hiring 69 interns for full-time employment;
- Implemented salary equity increases for engineering/scientist managers and industrial hygiene and health protection professionals and expanded variable pay efforts to include programs for attracting and securing new hires (sign-on awards) and retaining critical skills like Fire Protection Engineers;
- SRNS has two programs devoted to supporting individual development and professional training for employees. LEAP (Leaders Emerging Among Professionals) and AMP (Aspiring Mid-Career Professionals) continued providing an avenue to increase employee engagement for early and mid-career employees. Both organizations promote business awareness specific to SRNS and increased visibility through monthly professional development, networking and outreach events.

SRNS has also streamlined the hiring process, ultimately reducing “time to hire” by 50 percent. For example, a new process to enroll employees in General Employee Training (GET) using the Site Badging System allows the National Crime Information Center background checks to be completed prior to employees attending the training. Likewise, providing the Personnel Security Questionnaire to be completed prior to coming to work has also streamlined the security clearance process.

In addition to the development of employees, SRNS is focused on the creation of future pipelines through partnerships with local technical colleges and universities.

SRNS invested in the region’s developing workforce by giving \$550,000 for an endowed engineering professorship to the University of South Carolina Aiken. During the development of the Industrial Process Engineering Program four-year degree program, the university and SRNS helped identify current and anticipated workforce requirements and how the program might meet those needs in the region. The program has three dedicated faculty members and an initial class of students who will graduate in May 2018.

In addition, SRNS has worked with Aiken Technical College (ATC) to offer the Radiation Protection Technology Program, a two-year, 70-credit hour program that leads to an associate’s degree in applied science. The program supplements students’ previous education by providing the opportunity to develop the skills necessary to evaluate a work site requiring radiological controls. Students become certified Radiological Control Inspectors after completing 180 application hours through on-site internships at SRS.

ATC also offers the Nuclear Fundamentals certificate program, which was also developed in conjunction with SRNS. The program prepares students for entry-level positions in the nuclear industry. A mix of applied chemistry, physics and engineering classes provides a strong foundation for employment in today’s nuclear facilities. Students who graduate from the program could qualify for a career in nuclear operations at SRS or another major nuclear facility in the region.

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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