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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

SRNS Intern Honored as “Future Leader” by the American Welding Society

AIKEN, S.C. (March 25, 2019) – The American Welding Society (AWS) named Savannah River Nuclear Solutions (SRNS) intern Tori Shekastehband a “Future Leader.”

AWS, which serves over 70,000 members worldwide, appoints only two early-career members per year for their Future Leaders Program, which strives to develop the next generation of leaders within their welding professionals society.

Shekastehband first got involved with welding in high school when her mother Le Anne Barkley, who works in SRNS Records Management supporting Area Completion Projects, encouraged her to pick welding as an elective. Before long, it became Shekastehband’s favorite class.

“When I was in high school, a speaker from Savannah River Nuclear Solutions visited my welding class and talked about the high demand for qualified welders at the Savannah River Site,” Shekastehband recalled. “Hearing about the important role welders play led me to consider taking welding beyond high school. I knew there could be the opportunity to pursue a lucrative career, and I could stay local.”

Shekastehband, a sophomore business major at the University of South Carolina Aiken (USCA), earned her associate degree in welding from Aiken Technical College (ATC) in August 2018. She has interned in supply chain management at SRNS since October 2018.

After joining AWS five years ago, Shekastehband started a chapter for the organization at South Aiken High School in 2015. She is currently the president of the AWS chapter



Savannah River Nuclear Solutions (SRNS) intern (shown above) was selected by the American Welding Society (AWS) as one of two “Future Leaders” in North America. AWS is a global professional society for advancing the science, technology and application of welding and allied joining and cutting processes, including brazing, soldering and thermal spraying.

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at ATC for the third consecutive year, and last summer, she was one of five early-career professionals to be selected to attend the leadership symposium for AWS in Miami, Fla.

“AWS has provided me with so many opportunities to meet other welders. Through the organization, I’ve connected with other students and professionals who share similar interests through the AWS online discussion boards, and most recently I’ve been assigned a mentor through their mentoring program,” Shekastehband said.

This is the first year for AWS’ Future Leaders Program, which offers opportunities for early-career professionals from the welding community to interact with industry leaders, gain leadership skills and participate in discussions to set policies within AWS.

“Through my experiences with AWS, I’ve learned how to communicate with different age groups, which is an important quality to have in a multi-generational workforce,” added Shekastehband. “Within our AWS chapter at Aiken Tech, I interact frequently with recent high school graduates and non-traditional students, such as veterans preparing to enter the workforce.”

During her year of service, Shekastehband will attend two AWS board of directors meetings as well as FABTECH, North America’s largest expo for metal forming, fabricating, welding and finishing.

The American Welding Society (AWS) was founded in 1919, as a nonprofit organization with a global mission to advance the science, technology and application of welding and allied joining and cutting processes, including brazing, soldering and thermal spraying. AWS strives to move the industry forward in both thought and action, as well as inspire new generations to see the exciting career opportunities available in the welding profession.

According to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS), approximately 97 percent of welders are male, and three percent are female. The BLS estimates the job growth rate for welders will be about six percent through 2026, which is a rate as fast as average when compared to other occupations. The AWS predicts that 400,000 welders will be needed in the next few years.

“My welding instructors and fellow AWS members have not only taught me a craft, but they have instilled highly valuable leadership skills that I can carry with me while I’m pursuing my degree at USC Aiken and in my future career,” Shekastehband added.

Savannah River Nuclear Solutions, a Fluor-led company with Newport News Nuclear and Honeywell, is 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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