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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

SRNS partners with South Carolina State University to create Fire Protection Engineering Program

AIKEN, S.C. – (March 11, 2021) – Savannah River Nuclear Solutions (SRNS) and South Carolina State University are partnering to create a Fire Protection Engineering degree program, which fulfills a workforce need at the Savannah River Site (SRS) and provides new career opportunities for university students.

Hiring Fire Protection Engineers (FPEs) at SRS is a challenge because no regional schools provide the degree. An FPE analyzes fire hazards; performs building analyses, inspections, fire code and engineering evaluations; and approves new fire protection system installations and design documents for facility construction.

“We’re excited about the discussions taking place with SC State to create an FPE program. Early on, we provided information to the university about the skills students should have upon graduating, and then the university created the curriculum and proposed courses for a degree program,” said Eric Johnson, SRNS Fire Protection Engineer Manager.

To offer this program to their students, SC State must receive approval from the South Carolina Commission on Higher Education and the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools.



In this Feb. 3, 2020 photo, Savannah River Nuclear Solutions President & CEO Stuart MacVean (center) signs a Memorandum of Agreement that provides extensive SRNS resources in support of two historically black South Carolina universities. Marcus Burgess, Associate Vice President of Major and Planned Gifts, Claflin University (left), and Dr. James Clark, President, South Carolina State University, provide their signatures as well.

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“The College of Science, Technology, Engineering, Mathematics, and Transportation is very delighted for the opportunity to partner with Savannah River Nuclear Solutions to find solutions to problems of mutual interest,” said Dr. Stanley Ihekweazu, Department of Civil and Mechanical Engineering Technology and Nuclear Engineering Dean.

Both SRNS and SC State will benefit from the new program. SC State will utilize the program as a recruiting tool, and SRNS will grow its talent pipeline. In February 2020, SRNS and the university signed a memorandum of understanding (MOU), ensuring support for mutually beneficial programs. The creation of this Fire Protection Engineering program is one tangible result of the MOU.

“We are looking forward to this new program at SC State getting underway,” said Rich Zaharek, SRNS Director of Engineering Technical Services. “It is a great example of how our partnership with the university ensures that graduating students who want to work at SRNS have the skills needed to qualify for these specialized positions. The degree program will also benefit companies throughout the state, region and Department of Energy complex as Fire Protection is a critical element for other industries as well.”

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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