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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

## Living on the Moon: Future City Competition Goes Virtual

AIKEN, S.C., February 1, 2021 – Teams of middle school students from across South Carolina recently participated in this year’s virtual Future City Regional Competition, providing a look at how cities might thrive and grow 100 years from now on the moon with the team from Spartanburg, McCracken Middle School, taking first place.

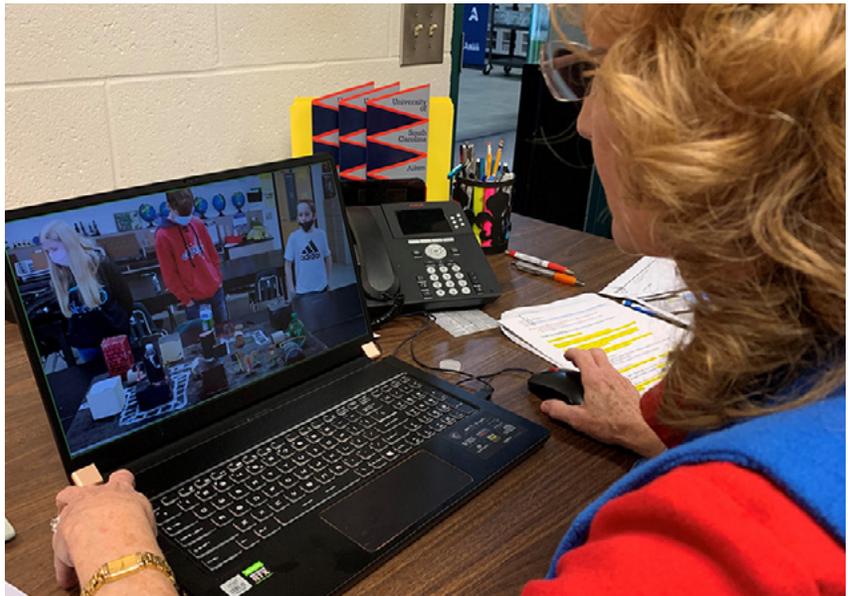
“All of our Savannah River Nuclear Solutions (SRNS) educational outreach programs have been impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic,” said Taylor Rice, SRNS Education Outreach. “We’ve worked with the region’s school systems, our volunteers and IT professionals to discover and implement innovative solutions to this ongoing challenge.”

Rice noted that due to the normal complexity of the Future City competition and the fact it involves various components for judging, technological hurdles during the academic year have been daunting.

The virtual version of the competition proved to be a success with students from Kennedy Middle School winning second place (Team Odyssey Outpost) and third place (Team Celestial Station).

Future City starts with a question, “How can we make the world a better place?” To answer it, students imagine, research, design and build cities of the future that showcase their solutions to a sustainability issue.

This year’s topic, Living on the Moon, challenged students to design a future lunar city and provide examples of how their city uses two Moon resources to keep their citizens safe and healthy.



*Kim Mitchell, Savannah River Nuclear Solutions, Education Outreach, assists teams and a panel of judges throughout this year’s Future City Regional Competition, which was recently conducted virtually at the University of South Carolina Aiken campus due to the COVID-19 pandemic.*

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Participants completed five deliverables: a 1,500-word essay; a scale model built from recycled materials; a project plan; a presentation video; and a virtual, online question and answer session with judges. The first-place team will represent South Carolina at the International Finals.

To be successful, students use a variety of skill sets and interests, like creative problem solving, building scale models, researching, writing and public speaking.

“Future City has become a valuable part of our school,” said Amber Bryan Dobbs, Science Teacher, Merriwether Middle School. “The students who participate not only learn how to work together but they develop a deep sense of understanding of the STEM fields (science, technology, engineering and mathematics). Future City empowers them to push the boundaries of what they think they can do. They suddenly realize that they can speak in front of large groups and create innovative technologies. Future City has helped my students achieve a sense of independence that they have never had before.”

This cross-curricular educational program gives students the opportunity to do things engineers do: identify problems; learn the specs and brainstorm solutions; design solutions; build, test and retest; and share their results. Future City provides an engaging way to build students’ skills, while they apply math and science concepts to real-world problems.

“I cannot imagine being able to complete this project without the support of SRNS. From supplying engineer mentors to funding the registration fees, they have truly given us the chance to participate in this amazing program,” said Dobbs. “Many of my students have now been exposed to careers at SRNS and have serious interest in becoming engineers one day because of this program and all the work that they do.”

*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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SRNS-2020-994