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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

## Regional Apprenticeship Programs Rapidly Grow, Creating New Job Opportunities

SRNS Registered Apprenticeship Program sparks the development of a new version of a traditional concept at multiple commercial, educational and governmental organizations throughout South Carolina

**AIKEN**, S.C., January 26, 2022 – High school and college students, the unemployed and underemployed are taking charge of their future careers through Registered Apprenticeship Programs now available throughout the region as well as at the Savannah River Site (SRS), in Aiken, South Carolina.

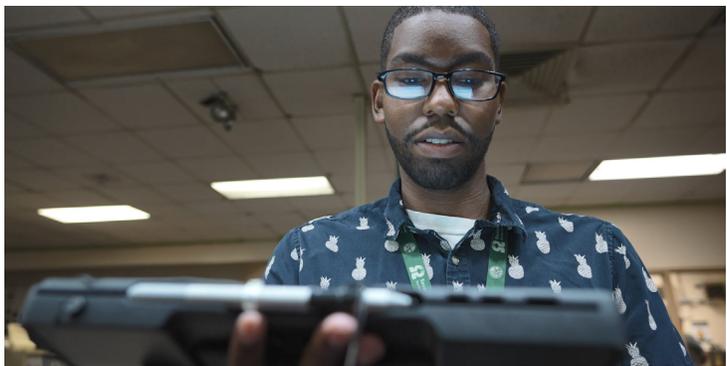
“To ensure the development of a viable workforce within the South Carolina counties of Aiken, Allendale, Bamberg, Barnwell, Edgefield and Orangeburg, several companies and organizations are working together to establish 300 Registered Apprenticeships,” said Sean Alford, Savannah River Nuclear Solutions (SRNS) Executive Vice President and Chief Administrative Officer.

SRNS is striving to ensure approximately one third of these apprenticeships will be at SRS.

Apprenticeships allow companies to establish a learning path for participants while the students pursue a technical education and obtain paid on-the-job experience. Unlike most internships, apprenticeships promote and document knowledge transfer and provide the participants with proof of skill mastery as a portable Department of Labor (DOL) credential. Most importantly, apprenticeships allow organizations the opportunity to build and fashion the workforce they desire for decades to come.

“Apprenticeship Carolina and the Lower Savannah Council of Governments have played an important part toward making this goal a reality, and our progress to date has been extremely encouraging. I believe our collective efforts have resulted in a magnificent job of designing and converting job functions into DOL approved apprenticeships that will benefit all involved,” added Alford.

Since establishing the Production Operator apprenticeship job profile at SRNS in 2020, 13 additional profiles have been approved: Software Engineer, Records Management Clerk, Process Software Engineer, Systems Engineer, Computer Systems Support, Maintenance Mechanic,



*Caption: Savannah River Nuclear Solutions Nuclear Production Operator Apprentice Program graduate Kevin Thomas uses training equipment to simulate work practices performed by full-service employees at the Savannah River Site.*

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Fire Protection Engineer, E&I Technician, Process Control Technologist, Radiological Protection Inspector, Network Operations Engineer, Cybersecurity Engineer, and Supply Chain Management Resource. And the list steadily continues to grow.

“We have several important missions to fulfill as the management and operations contractor at SRS involving the protection of our nation and the cleanup of Cold War-era waste sites,” said Alford. “And, we have a need to fill a wide range of job pipelines with enthusiastic candidates, to safely and securely accomplish all of this for the Department of Energy.”

Alford noted that other companies at SRS, such as the Battelle Savannah River Alliance and Savannah River Mission Completion are establishing apprenticeship programs as well.

“Without a doubt, the credentials you earn as a registered apprentice are invaluable,” said Janéssa Smith, SRNS HR Operations. “In fact, depending on the job profile you pursue, you can be accepted into our program with zero experience. We will provide all the training you need. At which point, you now own a portable credential proving you can do the work for any company needing that skillset.”

Erik Christensen, President and CEO of Swiss Krono, in Barnwell, South Carolina explained that his company has a long tradition of employing apprentices from local high schools.

“This year we invested more heavily in the program having just hired 12 high school youth apprentices. The program is really well received. It benefits the students, the high schools and guidance counselors, and certainly us, here at Swiss Krono,” said Christensen. “The students get a chance to learn about the different career opportunities while on the job, and we get the chance to get to know them with the intent of hiring them after their high school graduation. The long-term value of this employment concept is clear to us.”

An apprentice enjoys several other advantages as well. In addition to being paid, apprentices gain job experience, network to obtain references and have an opportunity to test drive an occupation.

“We are pleased to partner with SRNS, Apprenticeship Carolina and officials within the South Carolina Technical College system to help champion an employment solution with local, regional and state-wide impact through this important cause,” said Andre Anderson, Lower Savannah Council of Governments.

Since July 2019, the number of companies within Aiken, Allendale, Bamberg and Barnwell counties alone have tripled and a ten-fold increase in DOL occupation profiles have been created. “Even with the trials brought about due to the COVID-19 pandemic, on-the-job training, worked concurrent with obtaining a technical certificate or degree, has proven to be a highly successful alternative to a traditional four-year degree. Apprenticeship programs have innovatively created a career path leading to well-paying jobs and a highly trained, reliable workforce for the future,” said Alford.

To learn more about career enhancing opportunities as an SRS apprentice, click on the following link to view a one-minute video: <https://vimeo.com/662039274/e6b1a5ed12>

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

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responsible for the management and operations of the Department of Energy's Savannah River Site located near Aiken, South Carolina.

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