AUGUST 2020

SAVANNAH RIVER NUCLEAR SOLUTIONS

SRNS SALUTES THE SAVANNAH RIVER SITE ON 70 YEARS OF SERVICE

SRNS Today

Plutonium downblend resumes

Improvements enable expedited removal of plutonium from South Carolina

This month

Knowledge transfer • 235-F update • Continuous improvement • Interns 2020

Stuart MacVean
SRNS President and CEO

On the cover

Andrew Kline (foreground), K Area Program & Mission Support, and Charlie Stokes, K Area Operations, conduct training in a mock-up glovebox before resuming plutonium downblend activities

Welcome

to the August 2020 edition of

SRNS Today

Sometimes, it's easy for us to get hyper-focused on our day-to-day activities and forget how much our work extends to helping our nation.

But our reach is long and broad—from helping local students affected by the COVID-19 pandemic, to assisting NASA, to aiding the U.S. Treasury by offering proceeds from reclaimed precious metals while also protecting the environment, SRNS offers one-of-a-kind, invaluable support to entities across the U.S.

Important operational milestones were recently met, including the resumption of plutonium downblending in K Area after an outage to implement major process improvements to the K Area Interim Surveillance Glovebox. This work helps expedite the removal of plutonium from South Carolina. SRNL and Los Alamos National Laboratory began a Knowledge Transfer Program in preparation for the proposed plutonium pit production mission. And SRNS completed risk reduction and cleanup activities in the 235-F Building, allowing transition to deactivation activities, an important milestone in the footprint reduction of SRS.

SRNS also welcomed summer interns again this year and was honored with notable safety awards from the South Carolina Department of Labor, Licensing and Regulation.

SRNS makes the world safer, which starts here in the U.S. We remain committed to our nation and to delivering on the confidence placed in us across our missions.

I hope you enjoy this month's edition of SRNS Today and, as always, thank you for your interest in Savannah River Nuclear Solutions.

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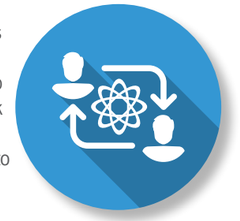
SRNL, Los Alamos collaborate to prepare for pit mission

A Knowledge Transfer Program kicked off in August to help ensure that both SRS and Los Alamos National Laboratory (LANL) are prepared to carry out their parts of the proposed mission – supplying the required number of plutonium "pits" to support the nation's nuclear deterrent. Under this joint program, scientists and engineers from SRS will be temporarily assigned to LANL for two years, where they will work side-by-side with their counterparts and colleagues, learning everything there is to know about plutonium pit production.



"Like much of the pit mission, this initiative involves collaboration between SRS and LANL in a way that fully utilizes the knowledge at each location," said Lisa E. Gordon-Hagerty, Administrator of the National Nuclear Security Administration (NNSA) and U.S. Under Secretary of Energy for Nuclear Security. "It starts with the skills and expertise the people at each site already possess, then provides the opportunity to further develop that expertise to the benefit of the nation."

"SRS has a long history of production, providing materials used in meeting our nation's strategic deterrence objectives," said Nicole Nelson-Jean, Manager of the NNSA Savannah River Field Office. "This program will allow personnel to gain knowledge specific to plutonium pit production from their counterparts at LANL, the acknowledged Plutonium Center of Excellence, and put that knowledge to use at SRS."

The knowledge transfer program is executed by Savannah River National Laboratory (SRNL), and their employees will participate. SRNL is a central partner in the proposed Savannah River Plutonium Processing Facility (SRPPF) mission, along with SRNS' NNSA Capital Projects, the SRNS department responsible for planning and carrying out the proposed mission at SRS.

"Success at carrying out this important mission relies on hiring a capable workforce, then enabling them to further develop their knowledge," said Dr. Vahid Majidi, SRNS Executive Vice President and Director of SRNL. "The Knowledge Transfer Program is a key part of that development. Not only will the SRNL participants gain extensive knowledge that they can apply in support of the mission, but they will also return ready to train other SRS personnel in what they have learned."

The first few participants are expected to arrive at LANL in August and September, with others beginning their rotation over a period of time, for a total of approximately 20 participants.

Once these personnel complete their rotations at LANL, they will return to SRS and continue their work in the proposed SRPPF Training and Operations Center. They will serve a two-fold mission, directly training personnel that will work in SRPPF as well as training other trainers. Also, when new production requirements emerge, they will be the recognized subject matter experts that will develop the process and production standards for new material.

SRS participants in the program will typically be personnel who have several years of experience under their belt and want to pursue future growth in the fields that support pit production. At the same time, they could be anticipated to have some years before retirement, during which they would be available to offer advice, mentorship and subject matter expertise when they return to SRS.

To meet national security requirements, NNSA is pursuing a two-pronged approach to the production of plutonium pits—requiring a capability of 50 pits per year at SRS near Aiken, S.C., and a capability of 30 pits per year at LANL in New Mexico. This approach would provide an effective, responsive and resilient nuclear weapons infrastructure with the flexibility to adapt to shifting requirements.

SRNS donates emergency support funds for OCtech students

SRNS has donated $5,000 to create a special emergency support fund for students attending Orangeburg-Calhoun Technical College (OCtech) who may be struggling financially during the COVID-19 pandemic.

"There have been a number of monetary issues affecting OCtech students due to the impact of the coronavirus," said Sean Alford, SRNS Chief Administrative Officer. "Many have taken on unexpected medical debt or lost part-time jobs and can no longer cover a wide range of expenses such as money for gas, books, academic fees, childcare and for some, daily meals. It's a serious hardship for these students, and we're here to help."

As a part of their Memorandum of Understanding, SRNS and OCtech officials work closely to determine which certificate and degree programs to modify or create that will best fulfill the growing need for qualified job applicants in many SRS careers.

"Providing relevant training and education in a flexible environment that prepares our students for successful careers at SRS and other companies throughout the region is the core of our mission," said Dr. Walt Tobin, OCtech President. "We look forward to our continued partnership with SRNS and greatly appreciate their desire to serve our students with their monetary assistance during the pandemic crisis."

During the past five school years, SRNS has donated nearly $2 million to support local education initiatives through a wide range of programs for students, from kindergarten to college.

"SRNS greatly values the life-changing opportunities a good education can provide and desires to help ensure the potential of each student is met, and we hope, exceeded," added Alford.

MARS 2020

SRS-based Radiological Assistance Program supports Perseverance Rover launch

Illustration of Perseverance Rover (courtesy of NASA)

Members of the SRS-based Region 3 Radiological Assistance Program (RAP 3) traveled to Kennedy Space Center to attend NASA's Mars 2020 launch, ready to work. Their job was to observe and be prepared to respond in the unlikely event they were needed. When the launch proceeded without incident, they were well-placed to enjoy the spectacular view.

"I had been fortunate enough to see two SpaceX launches during our first two trips to the Kennedy Space Center, but from farther away," said Trent Edwards of SRNS and the RAP 3 Regional Operations Manager. "For this launch—because of the equipment that my team had—NASA's monitoring plan stationed us close to the launch pad, so the view was fantastic. I was proud to be a very small part of what should be a big step forward for science."

The RAP, which is part of the NNSA Nuclear Emergency Support Team, serves as the nation's premier first-response resource in the event of a radiological or nuclear incident. The RAP 3 team is responsible for the region that includes Florida, South Carolina and three neighboring states. In addition to Edwards, the team is made up of DOE/NNSA federal personnel and Radiological Protection and Health Physics Services personnel from SRNS and SRR, under the direction of NNSA Regional Program Manager Christina Edwards.

RAP 3 has been participating in NASA launches for decades, including all five of NASA's rover missions to Mars.

They supported NASA's July 30 launch because the Perseverance Rover, which the mission is carrying to the surface of Mars, is powered by a Multi-Mission Radioisotope Thermoelectric Generator (MMRTG). The MMRTG, developed by DOE in support of NASA, is a space nuclear power system that converts heat from the natural radioactive decay of plutonium-238 into electricity. Although there are multiple layers of safety built into the MMRTG to help minimize the chance of a release, RAP team members were on hand to help NASA by leading radiological monitoring teams in the unlikely event of a launch anomaly.

The SRS-based team's work in support of Mars 2020 began with planning meetings that started more than two years ago, a DOE/NNSA-led exercise in 2019, and a week of training that concluded with a full rehearsal of the launch deployment. The week before the launch, the team was on hand to support NASA as the equipment containing the MMRTG and the Pu-238 heat source was lifted up and bolted into place on the rover as part of the rocket's payload.

SRNS RAP 3 Team Members

Wendy Furtick
Kelly Crandall
Trenton Edwards
Johnny Lott
Bobby Smith
Ron Smith
Gerald Walsh

K Area Operator Charlie Stokes handles a simulated plutonium downblending container in the K Area Glovebox training mockup.

SRNS resumes plutonium downblend activities following improvements and efficiencies outage

SRNS employees in K Area recently resumed plutonium downblend after an outage for extensive upgrades that, combined with other ongoing initiatives, will lead to the expedited removal of plutonium from South Carolina.

"Despite facing challenges resulting from COVID-19, our team was able to meet the commitment date to restart plutonium downblend in the KIS glovebox," said Stuart MacVean. "They accomplished an extensive amount of work in a short amount of time to ensure we could expedite DOE's missions and remove plutonium from the state. All of this work has been and will continue to be performed safely, by employees with the know-how and dedication to make it happen."

SRNS employees began downblending plutonium in K Area in 2017. Downblend operations were paused in 2019 to complete an extensive outage to make improvements to processing capabilities and infrastructure. These improvements will allow K Area to expedite downblending and better meet the mission's needs.

"The efficiencies introduced through the K Area outage will aid in the Department's mission to expedite plutonium downblend and removal from South Carolina," said DOE-Environmental Management (EM) Nuclear Materials Senior Technical Adviser Maxcine Maxted.

> *"This is yet another example of NNSA missions being completed in DOE-EM facilities and the partnership that is needed to execute this critical mission."* **Virginia Kay**

Along with the restart of downblend operations, SRNS is also working to increase staffing from two- to four-shift operations, which also requires expanded training and resources.

"Combining current and future planned missions at SRS will result in the need for more efficient plutonium processing," said Virginia Kay, Director, NNSA Office of Material Disposition. "NNSA thanks the SRNS project team and the facility support personnel for their hard work and dedication in helping us achieve this important nonproliferation mission. This is yet another example of NNSA missions being completed in DOE-EM facilities and the partnership that is needed to execute this critical mission."

Plutonium downblending is the process of mixing plutonium oxide with a multicomponent adulterant. After downblending, the plutonium will be shipped to the Waste Isolation Pilot Plant in New Mexico for disposal.

The Shift Operating Base inside the PuFF Facility was a clean area that allowed operators to use manipulators to work with material inside the cells.

235-F Update

Risk reduction activities completed in building used to produce fuel for space program

SRNS employees have completed risk reduction and cleanup activities in a building containing residual hold-up of plutonium (Pu)-238 oxide, once used to power deep space missions.

The two-story, blast-resistant, windowless, reinforced concrete building, known as Building 235-F, has been inactive for more than 25 years. One section, known as the Plutonium Fuel Form (PuFF) Facility, was used to make fuel spheres and pellets out of Pu-238 to provide heat to electrically power long-term, deep-space missions, such as Galileo, Ulysses and Cassini.

"Since late 2012, SRNS has been executing DOE's Implementation Plan for Defense Nuclear Facilities Safety Board Recommendation 2012-1 to reduce the hazards associated with the material at risk that remains as residual contamination in the Building 235-F facility," said Project Manager Jeff Hasty. "Most of the residual contamination in the facility is within the 'hot cells' where processing of plutonium was performed."

In 2019, following several years of prep work, SRNS conducted risk reduction activies that included the removal of a portion of residual plutonium contamination. Measurements conducted during the removal activities indicated that the plutonium oxide was far less easily spread (and less of an immediate hazard to collocated workers) than previously believed. This also meant that further plutonium removal activities were not practical.

Upon the partial removal of the residual plutonium contamination, a revised "risk reduction" strategy was developed to ensure the facility is safe until it can be decommissioned.

- SRNL completed characterization by performing an analysis to determine the amount of residual plutonium that remained in the facility.
- Following characterization, SRNS hired an independent contractor to evaluate the fire scenarios specifically looking at whether a fire could occur and, if so, whether it could impact the plutonium.
- Based on the reports, the project team removed or replaced ceiling tiles in rooms containing plutonium and removed combustibles identified above the ceiling tiles.
- The PuFF cells were sealed.
- Waste generated during plutonium removal was characterized and prepared for shipment to the SRS Solid Waste Management Facility.
- The technical documents describing the minimum acceptable safety limits were revised and approved by DOE. This proved that the theoretical radiation dose to a worker near the building in the case of a major accident, such as fire or earthquake, would be within DOE guidelines.
- Based on the new characterization data, SRNL completed the environmental modeling, which demonstrates the long term effects the remaining material will have on the environment.

With the Risk Reduction project completed, the project team transitioned in May 2020 to deactivating the facility. Deactivation will place the facility in a stable configuration for long-term safe storage until the eventual decommissioning. The final deactivation plan is scheduled to be issued in September 2020.

SRNS divisions honored with South Carolina safety awards

Two SRNS divisions—Operations and Construction—were recently honored with safety awards from the S.C. Department of Labor, Licensing and Regulation. The awards reflect safety achievements from the 2019 calendar year and highlight successful safety programs in South Carolina. This is the fifth consecutive year SRNS has received these awards.

SRNS Operations was awarded the Palmetto Shining Star Award for their commendable safety performance in 2019. To receive this award, a company must meet at least one of several important criteria, such as achieving a safety case rate that is 75 percent or below the 2018 South Carolina average rate for the industry. SRNS Construction received the Rising Star Award for their 2019 safety performance. Winners of this award must demonstrate a 2019 incidence rate at least 75 percent lower than the 2018 national average incidence rate for the respective industry.

SRNS Executive Vice President and COO Dennis Carr recognized employees' initiative in providing a safe work environment. "In 2019, SRNS underwent extensive work to continue modernizing aging infrastructure while propelling our important environmental, research and nuclear management missions forward," said Carr. "SRNS employees complete these diverse missions with safety at the heart of all work performed and year-after-year their commitment proves successful."

Photo: SRNS Site Services recently upgraded the SRS A Area Fire Water System, modernizing the Site's fire detection and suppression equipment to state-of-the-art standards.

DOE honors Johnson with third Small Business Award

SRNS has a strong focus on small business development and has proven to be a leader within the DOE Complex. Jay Johnson, who was appointed the SRNS Senior Director of Contracts in December, recently received his third consecutive Procurement Director of the Year award through the DOE Annual Small Business Awards Program.

Jay Johnson

"This prestigious award does not recognize the accomplishments of one person. It's a tribute to the buying professionals and technical leads who decide to partner with small businesses to deliver innovative solutions to our complex missions," said Johnson. "When we win, we win as a team. I'm honored, but everyone on our team is deserving of this award."

According to Johnson, Stuart MacVean's personal engagement has proven important in tying small businesses to strategic execution. "We have key members of the executive team who have played a vital role in mentoring through the SRNS Mentor-Protégé Center of Excellence Program providing their perspective to as few as six small businesses at a time on how to maximize their capabilities and impact at SRS. This unique experience has increased the value they add to DOE missions," he added.

Norm Powell, Senior Vice President of Business Services, served as an early champion of the Center of Excellence. "When we launched this initiative, my focus was on cultivating the talent the Site needed to ensure success, not just for today, but for future missions as well. I'd say we are well on our way to achieving that goal."

SRNS Small Business Liaison Officer Alex Agyemang noted that, to the best of his knowledge, being honored with three consecutive Procurement Director of the Year awards through the DOE Annual Small Business Awards Program is unprecedented. This achievement combined with the fact that over the last three years SRNS has committed $730 million to small businesses validates the strength of SRNS procurement policies related to supporting and growing small businesses.

Contract to date, this innovative program has received 15 awards with 13 of these recognitions coming in the last three years.

Continuous improvement in action


Michael Ratliff examines parts created by Andy Warren using a 3D printer.

3D printing inexpensively adds efficiencies, enhances productivity while improving radiological safety at SRS

3D printers continue to inexpensively create unique objects that improve safety and operations as an SRNS employee recently discovered in his laboratory where air filters are measured for levels of radioactivity and isotope identification.

SRNS analyzes about 80,000 industrial air monitoring filters each year for radiological contamination within SRS nuclear facilities. Senior Health Physicist Michael Ratliff is, in essence, a high tech "radiological investigator," who operates a specially designed laboratory at SRS where these analyses are completed.

Air filter analysis determines the source of radioactive particulates identified during unique work evolutions or to help measure any possible airborne particulates within an operating facility. The process provides valuable data that can be used to monitor the ongoing health and safety of SRS employees working within nuclear facilities.

"When they come to me, the filters are a two-inch diameter circle on a card that is about three-inches wide," said Ratliff.

Ratliff explained that each card is packaged and delivered to the lab for analysis. "We're always looking for ways at SRS to continuously improve the safety, quality and efficiency of our work while reducing operating costs where possible," he said.

Recently Ratliff decided to check with a friend, Andy Warren, who provides technical leadership for a production-scale laboratory within the SRNS Environmental Bioassay organization, to tap his knowledge and experience seeking improvements.

"Andy asked me 'how are the cards normally handled in the automated counters, the high volume equipment that runs through the 80,000 samples a year?'," said Ratliff. "So, I brought him one of the little fixtures used in the automated units. And, to my surprise, the next day he provided a 3D printed part that fit perfectly on my counting instrument and holds the sample card exactly centered in a reproducible geometry.

"That reproducibility further improves our safety, the quality of obtained data and reduces the time allocated for the initial setup. The 3D printed fixture is now being used for multiple purposes within the Health Physics Services laboratories," he said.

The fixture printed for Ratliff's laboratory increases traceability of the detector, traceability of the sources and repeatable geometry. It also would prove effective during any form of audit.

Warren has used the 3D free-form printer to solve unique problems and further enhance the excellent work produced within his organization over the last 12-18 months.

"When Michael contacted me and said, 'I could use your help,' we were already setup to create unique, one-off products using a computer-aided design program. It took about two hours to draft the part and send the design to the printer. The next morning, I came in, took it off the printer and gave to Michael."

What use to take months at a design and fabrication shop, can now be printed overnight in-house.

According to Warren, costs associated with using 3D printing as a resource are low, approximately $7,000 for a printer and $2,000 for computer aided design software. "The only additional cost is the plastic that you feed into it. The fixtures made for Ratliff cost about $5 each."

Former photo film processing wastewater in SRS tank yields precious metal for U.S. Treasury

Silver Lining

Silver-bearing sludge was recently removed by SRNS from an SRS industrial wastewater tank, and will be shipped to the DOE Business Center for Precious Metals Sales and Recovery to be reclaimed, with proceeds going to the U.S. Treasury.

For many years, developing photo film at SRS involved a process that generated industrial wastewater containing silver nitrate. The wastewater initially passed through ion-exchange equipment to remove the silver before being discharged into the tank.

"Some of the precious metal still made it to the tank and over the years has accumulated to a significant amount," said Ted Millings, Subject Matter Expert, SRNS Environmental Compliance. "Fast forward to the age of digital photography. Now this tank, that's permitted through the South Carolina Department of Health and Environmental Control (DHEC), no longer serves a purpose."

Precious metals reclamation is the recycling and recovery of precious metals (e.g., gold, silver, platinum, palladium, iridium and rhodium) from hazardous waste. Because these materials are handled protectively as valuable commodities with significant economic value, generators, transporters and storage of such recyclable materials are subject to reduced regulatory requirements—a "silver-lining" for SRS when disposing these types of materials.

After careful consideration and work with DHEC officials, SRNS decided to permanently close the tank.

"Despite the fact that silver is a precious metal it is also considered toxic for both humans and the environment," said Millings. "Therefore, appropriate safety measures were put into place and carefully followed during removal of the sludge."

Following the pumping and cleaning phase, a camera was lowered into the tank to verify that essentially no sludge remained and to confirm the structural integrity of the floor and walls of the tank, according to Millings.

> *"Helping to ensure the proceeds from the reclaimed precious metal goes to the U.S. Treasury is important; however, protecting our environment from this waste is invaluable."*
>
> **Andrew MacMillan**

"It was at this point, we filled the tank with grout, which has properties similar to concrete," said Andrew MacMillan, Project Lead, SRNS Area Completion Projects. "The same grout was used in the permanent closure of two nuclear reactor facilities at SRS.

"The value of this project for SRS involves the costs avoided by not having to manage or dispose of the sludge as hazardous waste. Helping to ensure the proceeds from the reclaimed precious metal goes to the U.S. Treasury is important; however, protecting our environment from this waste is invaluable," he added.

SRNS worked closely with DHEC officials through each phase of the project to ensure all South Carolina environmental regulations were followed.

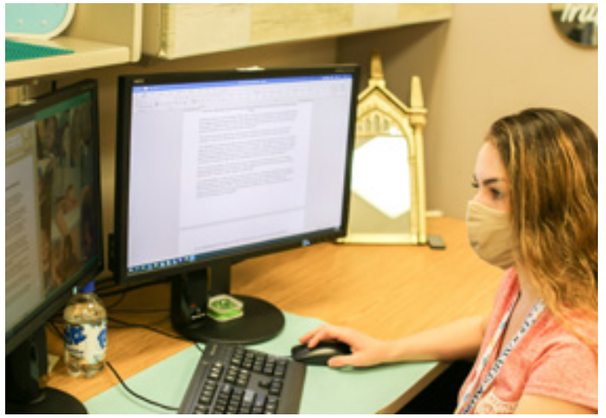
"This has been a highly unusual project involving a diverse group of individuals representing several SRNS organizations," said Travis Shaw, SRNS Environmental Compliance Authority for Asset Management and Distribution Operations. "And though it's the end of an era at SRS for developing photographic film, the successful completion of this project validates the continued value of teamwork and shared resources for a common cause."

Each summer, the SRNS internship program provides students and recent graduates opportunities to apply their studies within a professional organization, providing them with meaningful work to benefit their future careers. Students represent a wide diversity of disciplines, including engineering, science, computer science, business and communications.

interns 2020

Brandon Rogers explains a model created for a project he completed during his internship.

SRNS Spent Fuel Project intern Anna Hawcroft performs a walkdown on the C Reactor roof.



SRNS Site Training and Technology intern Fallan Flatow updates online training resources.

Brandon Rogers gains SRTE experience despite pandemic

When Brandon Rogers applied for the SRNS internship program, he expected a summer internship that would provide real-world experience. He did not expect a real-world crisis—the COVID-19 pandemic.

Rogers is an Industrial Engineering major at Clemson University, and while in the SRNS internship program, he worked with the Savannah River Tritium Enterprise's (SRTE) Continuous Improvement (CI) organization.

The CI organization works with groups throughout SRTE and NNSA to improve processes and reduce mission risk. Rogers worked on the Tritium Argus Project, designing an efficient system for materials management to be used by project managers. He helped design a communications platform change to assist the project team in discovering issues early and expediting resolution, and he contributed to the initial data analysis for the SRTE maintenance reliability program, which aims to reduce equipment failures and maintenance costs.

When the pandemic worsened, Rogers expected the internship to be canceled like so many other regional events and programs. "Internships and jobs many of my peers had were pushed back or eliminated, so I was surprised and grateful to hear about my start date," he said.

Rogers added, "Working here has shown me firsthand what it is like to work with professionals on large projects. I can look at real accomplishments my name is on, be proud and say 'I did that.'"

Anna Hawcroft puts classroom knowledge into Spent Fuel practice

SRNS Spent Fuel Project (SFP) intern Anna Hawcroft has been putting her classroom instruction to practice this summer in L Area.

Originally from Nashville, Tenn., Hawcroft has lived in Aiken, S.C., for several years. She is currently a sophomore at the University of South Carolina Aiken, where she studies mechanical engineering.

As an SFP intern, Hawcroft has been working on a number of projects this summer. "This internship is a great combination of office and field work. Part of the work that I've been assisting with includes maintaining inactive facilities by conducting walk downs to identify facility needs," said Hawcroft. "I have also been assisting in reducing our file storage by transitioning a significant portion of our files from paper to electronic. I have participated in the revision of the Receiving Basin for Offsite Fuel (RBOF) and 105-C Surveillance and Maintenance plans to meet current site requirements, while also working on ownership documents for the future RBOF transfer."

SRNS hosts many events throughout the year to market various opportunities for students to get involved with SRS. That's how Hawcroft heard about the open internship. While on campus, Hawcroft attended job fairs and information sessions where she learned about various internship opportunities and how to apply.

SRNS also values the important experiences that internships give to students for their professional and personal growth. "My experience this summer has allowed me to learn a lot about future career paths. It has been interesting to meet engineers who are already employed in a field that I would like to work in after I graduate," said Hawcroft.

SRNS Training interns bring fresh perspectives to innovate instruction

Interns provide organizations with fresh perspectives needed for problem solving, while assisting with meaningful work to benefit them in their future careers. Site Training and Technology Intern Fallan Flatow, a recent Business Administration graduate from Augusta University, has had unique experiences throughout her time on site, which began in May of 2017 with SRNS Procurement, followed by SRNS Corporate Communications.

Pierce Smith develops virtual reality training content

"Working in three SRNS departments has enabled me to better understand how SRS operates," said Flatow. "Each group provided a glimpse into the work that makes the world safer. I'm so grateful for the connections and experiences I've gained."

This summer, several SRNS Site Training interns were tasked with developing online training content for departments around the site, using Microsoft Teams software and designing virtual reality simulations for training.

With the COVID-19 pandemic, web-based training needs have significantly increased, due to the number of SRS workers teleworking.

"Interns are valuable team members. We are always looking for fresh ideas to enhance the site's training experience" said Site Training Manager Kevin Whitt. "Gaining new perspectives on integrating technology into our training program is extremely beneficial, especially now as the Site adjusts to the new normal."

SRNS employees receive Department of Defense Patriot Awards

Ebony Patterson-Harvey, SRNS Program Manager for Continuous Improvement, wanted to join the U.S. military when she was in high school, but life circumstances always seemed to stand in the way until one fateful day.

P.K. Hightower (left) and Terri Williams

"On a dare about three years ago, I took my oldest son and nephew to the U.S. Armed Forces recruitment office, in Augusta, Ga., believing this would be a good career move for both of them," said Patterson-Harvey. "I told them, 'Let's all go sign up together.' However, the result of my efforts—then and later— didn't work. As it turned out, I was the only one to enlist about a year ago."

Patterson-Harvey explained that while the Army offered the most appealing incentives, her heart belonged to the Air Force Reserve. After nearly six months of training and technical school, she was ready to serve her country.

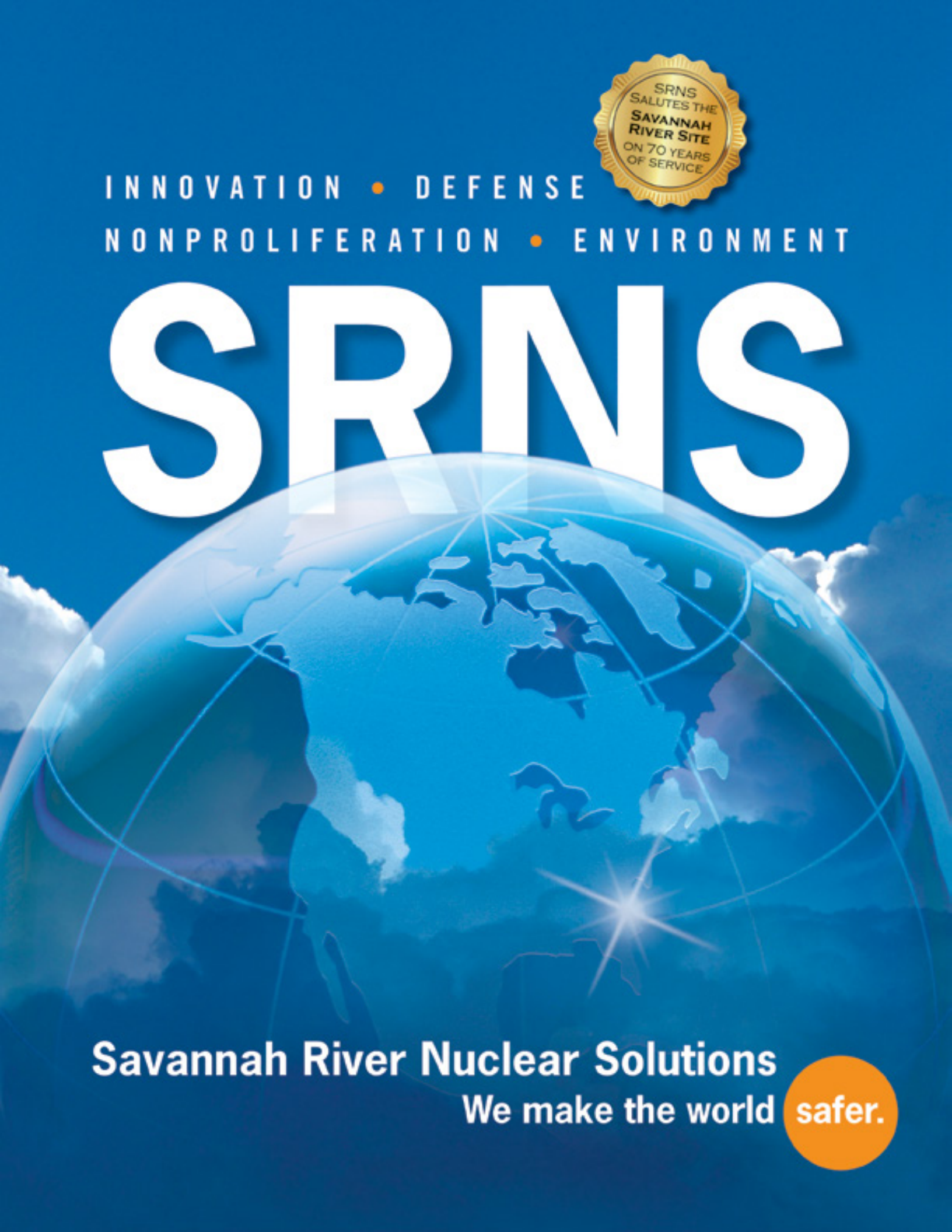
At SRS, hundreds of SRNS employees can relate to the rigors and trials of training to become a military reservist or National Guard member. "Though I was committed to the necessity of leaving my family during weeks of training each year, I was concerned that my management team may feel otherwise," said Patterson-Harvey. "In fact, when I was initially away for six months for training, I couldn't help but worry, 'Would I have a job when I returned?'

"I was so relieved and thankful when both Terri Williams, and later, P.K. Hightower not only agreed to this ongoing commitment but expressed their complete approval. I'm extremely grateful to them and the SRNS leadership team who demonstrated their full support as well," she added.

To show her appreciation, Patterson-Harvey nominated both Hightower and Williams for the U.S. Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve Patriot Award. And both were honored during a special onsite ceremony.

"I am humbled that Ebony took the time to nominate me for the award; however, I do not feel that I should be honored for doing what is right for employees who are serving in the Reserve or active duty military," said Hightower, Interface Management and Continuous Improvement Manager.

Terri Williams, a Project Controls manager with Environmental Management Operations, also expressed her gratitude. "I appreciate the commitment that our troops make when they join the armed services. It was my privilege to help and support any of my people who are involved with the military."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