

# News from the Savannah River Site

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

## SRNS Hires First Intern through Veterans to Careers Program

*Recent Aiken Technical College graduate gains hands-on learning experiences at the Savannah River Site through a unique internship*

AIKEN, S.C. (June 19, 2014) – The U.S. Department of Energy's (DOE) primary contractor at the Savannah River Site (SRS) Savannah River Nuclear Solutions (SRNS) recently hired the first intern through the Veterans to Careers Program (VCP), an initiative that began in 2013 as a collaboration with Aiken Technical College (ATC), the University of South Carolina Aiken (USCA) and the Aiken-Augusta Warrior Project (AWP) to connect student veterans with part-time jobs in their field.

On March 20, 2014, SRNS signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with ATC, USCA and AWP to offer student veterans valuable opportunities to apply their education in a practical setting.

The MOU addresses how to bridge the gap between academia and the workplace by connecting veterans with hands-on experience in science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM), and business management.

John Strom, the first VCP intern, served as a medic in the Air Force for four years and was hired into the SRNS Tritium organization during his last semester at ATC. Strom graduated with an engineering graphics degree in May 2014, completing the program in just two years.



SRNS Configuration Management Lead Leah Stanley (left) goes over revisions to a CAD drawing that was edited by SRNS intern John Strom, a recent Aiken Technical College graduate.

During his internship, Strom has edited computer-aided design (CAD) drawings and specifications; he is pursuing a career in plant design systems.

“I want to learn as much as I can, contribute to my group and grow as a professional,” said Strom. “My internship has already given me the opportunity to build on the design process that I learned at Aiken Tech, and this experience has given me confidence in my field.”

SRNS provides information to USCA and ATC about STEM and business management internships, and the colleges match veterans who are full-time students with a GPA of 2.5 or higher with the internships at SRNS. AWP assists veteran students with the internship application process and promotes awareness of the VCP to the community.

“The goal of the program, from our perspective, is to help our students acclimate to the civilian workforce,” said Gemma Frock, Vice President of Education and Training at ATC. “It’s a win-win for the academic community and the employers, especially when employers such as SRNS understand the structure that our veteran students and graduates are used to.”

Strom has already gained skills that will enable him to check CAD drawings and blueprints against the corresponding machinery and structures in the field and will have opportunities to help cross-train fellow employees, according to his manager Leah Stanley.

“The VCP allows veterans like John, who was still in school, to gain experience in the workplace. He was able to earn his degree while contributing to our group here at Tritium,” said Stanley, Configuration Management Lead for Tritium. “So far we have been pleased with what John has been able to accomplish in such a short period of time.”

SRNS has provided support in the past that focused on the needs of veterans. In 2011, SRNS and SRNL worked with the CSRA Wounded Warrior project under the Wounded Warrior Support initiative, which offered three- to four-month internships for local Wounded Warriors to help veterans refine their skills and prepare to return to the workforce.

*Savannah River Nuclear Solutions is a Fluor-led company whose members are Fluor Federal Services, Newport News Nuclear and Honeywell, 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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