

News from the Savannah River Site

National Nuclear Security Administration • Aiken • SC • 29808

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Materials from SRS Help Prepare Future Welders

AIKEN, S.C. (Nov. 25, 2019) – Thousands of pounds of scrap stainless steel donated to area welding education programs will help give local welding students a boost toward well-paying careers. Welding programs at high schools and technical colleges in the region surrounding the Savannah River Site (SRS) each received 2,000 lbs. of stainless steel from the National Nuclear Security Administration (NNSA) at SRS for use in training future welders.

Welding stainless steel is a valuable skill in industry, but the cost of the material means that welding education programs usually are not able to give their students hands-on training with actual stainless. Instead, they train on carbon steel or other materials with properties that can be very different and wait until they are on the job to receive hands-on experience with stainless. “It’s going to give them such a leg up to already have this experience,” said Daniel Ball, welding instructor at the Aiken County Career Center. “Stainless is so different – it kind of has a mind of its own. Using this material, we will basically train them up so they can be placed with employers like SRS or Vogtle. The sky’s the limit.”

The first delivery of the excess stainless steel went to Allendale-Fairfax High School in Allendale, S.C. Welding is one of the more popular fields in the school’s Career and Technical Education (CATE) programs, which serve approximately 200



(top) Virginia Bell, Tina Paschal, Mark Hall, Nicole Henley and Rachel Baxley load stainless steel for delivery to area welding education programs.

(bottom) Chad Green (center), welding teacher at Allendale-Fairfax High School, and Mark Hall of SRNS direct Allendale-Fairfax High School welding students as they unload donated stainless steel from SRS.

students. The welding curriculum provides lots of hands-on experience for its students, but – like most welding education programs – no previous opportunity to work with stainless steel.

“We are so excited about the community reaching out to us to support our scholars in preparing for their future careers,” said Mona Lisa Anderson, director of the Allendale-Fairfax CATE program. “We make good use of everything that comes to our hands.” Chad Green, who teaches welding, is looking forward to students being able to use the material to learn pipe welding and similar skills.

The donations are part of NNSA's strategy for obtaining the greatest benefit from materials no longer needed for the canceled Mixed Oxide Fuel Fabrication (MOX) Facility project. NNSA and Savannah River Nuclear Solutions (SRNS) are working together to apply a rigorous review process to determine potential uses for the excess material and equipment, giving top priority to the agency's projects at SRS and elsewhere.

The stainless steel was determined to be unneeded by NNSA or U.S. Department of Energy programs at SRS or elsewhere, and available to use in a way that benefits the community.

Mark Hall of the SRNS department tasked with dispositioning the material and equipment first saw the potential the excess stainless steel held for welding education programs and, after obtaining agreement from NNSA, coordinated the donation program. “This is scrap material to us,” he said, “but it's something the schools usually can't get and could use to prepare students for really good jobs. Usually, welders don't get to train with stainless until they're already on the job. With access to this material, they can be trained and ready when they arrive.”

Michael Meyer, welding instructor at Evans High School in Georgia, plans to use the stainless steel to allow his students to practice tig welding, and possibly mig welding as well. “This is the same stuff they'll be working on in the field,” he said. “There are a lot of opportunities for kids with these welding skills.” He noted the employment



(top) Daniel Ball (right), welding instructor at the Aiken County Career Center, examines the donated stainless steel with Tina Paschal, Nicole Henley and Rachel Baxley of SRNS.

(bottom) Michael Meyer (left), welding instructor at Evans High School, and welding students examine the donated stainless steel from SRS.

opportunities for skilled welders in the local area, including SRS and Plant Vogtle, but also the chemical plants and other industry in the area, plus the shipping industry just a couple of hours away in Savannah.

Donations were made to:

- Aiken County Career Center
- South Aiken High School
- Wagener-Salley High School
- Abbeville County Career Center
- Allendale Fairfax High School
- Barnwell County Career Center
- Strom Thurmond Career Center (Edgefield County, S.C.)
- Hephzibah High School (Hephzibah, Ga.)
- Josey High School (Augusta, Ga.)
- Evans High School (Evans, Ga.)
- Grovetown High School (Grovetown, Ga.)
- Columbia County (Ga.) Schools
- Cope Area Career Center (Cope, S.C.)
- Aiken Technical College
- Denmark Technical College

Established by Congress in 2000, the National Nuclear Security Administration (NNSA) is a semi-autonomous agency within the U.S. Department of Energy responsible for enhancing national security through the military application of nuclear science.

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 site's missions in support of the NNSA.

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