

Grant lifts nuclear workforce training

G Educators from five regional universities and technical colleges have established successful programs designed to train a new nuclear workforce.

The training programs were created and implemented over the past three years under a Department of Energy grant titled "Advancing Nuclear Skills Regionally" in response to a study that showed the local demand for nuclear workers could grow to 10,000 over the next decade. The grant, now in its fourth year and totaling \$3.8 million, is administered by the Nuclear Workforce Initiative and overseen by the SRS Community Reuse Organization.

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Mindy Mets, NWI Program Manager

Training programs at each area institution include:

- Aiken Technical College Associate of Applied Science in Nuclear Quality Systems and Nuclear Welding Certificate
- Augusta Technical College Chemical Technology Associate of Applied Science Degree and Nuclear Career Advisement
- Georgia Regents University Nuclear Science Tracks in Chemistry and Physics Degrees
- University of

South Carolina Aiken Environmental Remediation and Restoration Biology Specialized Degree

• University of South Carolina Salkehatchie Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) Programs

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NWI® Program Manager, said. "We estimate that about half of the industry's work force will be eligible to retire during the next 10 years. Training new workers has become an industry priority nationwide."

The NWI® works closely with partners in business, academia, economic development and state and local governments to ensure local citizens have an opportunity to develop the skills needed to fill these future jobs.

Some 300 local students are enrolled in the nuclear curricula developed under the grant and nearly 60 have graduated and are beginning careers in the region.

An additional 1,000 students have received information and training in Science Technology Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) programs designed to strengthen basic knowledge that forms the heart of advanced technology education.

The program is drawing interest locally and from others around the state. Daniel Johnson, 25, from Columbia, South Carolina, recently completed Nuclear Quality Systems training at Aiken Technical College.

The youngest to graduate from the program, Johnson, has been working through an internship at the Savannah River Site.

"This position has given me the opportunity to use my training working directly in the quality field," Daniel said. "People are happy to see a young face here and are helping me as I gain the experience I need."

