

# CNTA brings teachers to the center of the atom

Since 2009, Citizens for Nuclear Technology Awareness (CNTA) has sponsored workshops for teachers from the local region who are interested in learning more about nuclear energy and technology. Through 2016, more than 350 K12 teachers have participated and come away with a greater appreciation for energy diversity and workforce needs in the nuclear industry. Generally, one-day workshops are offered two to three times a year and registration is on first-come, first-served basis.

In 2015, the Southeastern Summer Nuclear Institute (SSNI) was established as a three-day education program for teachers from across the two states of Georgia and South Carolina. SSNI 2015 was an excellent success with 21 teachers touring nuclear facilities and learning about Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) careers. Based on the initial success and lessons learned from the review of SSNI-2015, planning for SSNI 2016 began.

Twenty-nine teachers and guidance counselors saw nuclear technology in action during SSNI 2016, June 15 to 17. They came from as far away as Acworth, GA, and Greenville, SC, to spend three days of their summer vacation to learn more about nuclear energy and technology. And SSNI was just the ticket.

The Institute included a tour of the Vogtle nuclear energy facility in Burke County, GA including control room visits, simulator exercises, meetings with nuclear power reactor personnel, etc. The participants were most impressed with the modernized control room that will be used to operate the two new reactors that are currently under construction and the enhanced safety features that are included in the reactor design.

The Institute also included a tour of the Savannah River Site (SRS) near Aiken, SC, including radioactive waste management facilities and the broad range of research and development activities conducted by the Savannah River National Laboratory. The teachers were impressed with the complex facilities and equipment used to prepare the high level radioactive waste currently stored in large underground waste tanks for safe disposal on the SRS and ultimately in a federal repository. In addition, SSNI included a visit to Augusta University for an overview of nuclear medicine facilities and procedures.



In each case, career opportunities were discussed and the need for a strong background in STEM was emphasized. Evening sections were also presented to allow the teachers to share their experiences in motivating students to higher levels of achievement. In addition, the evening programs included a panel discussion of local educational opportunities led by Mindy Mets, the Nuclear Workforce Initiative Program Manager for the Savannah River Site Community Reuse Organization (SRSCRO), and a challenging presentation by Captain Kevin Byrne, Commanding Officer, Naval Nuclear Power Training Command, on the Navy Nuclear Power School.

The Institute included a series of workshop sessions over the three days to emphasize atomic and nuclear fundamentals, power generation fundamentals, nuclear technology applications, risk (real vs. perceived), and nuclear workforce opportunities with hands-on activities to illustrate important technical concepts and scientific principles. Lodging (if needed) and meals were provided at USCA along with free educational resources and teacher guides for



classroom presentations. In addition, each participant received two \$25 gift cards to help cover travel expenses.

SSNI is led by CNTA, a local non-profit organization whose mission is to provide education and information on nuclear sub-

jects for the public. Other sponsors include the American Nuclear Society – Savannah River and Columbia, AREVA, Atkins, Georgia Power Co. /Plant Vogtle, SCE&G, SRSCRO, SUNRISE Universities, USC Aiken, and the Aiken Rotary Club.