

from Savannah River Nuclear Solutions, LLC

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For Immediate Release

SRNS Nomination Results in National Recognition for Local Science Teacher

Participation in SRNS Future City Program and student exposure to innovative teaching, fundamental to earning this award

AIKEN, S.C. – (May 30, 2012) Aiken Middle School teacher Susan McCullough was recently rewarded for her dedication to students and for participating in the area's Regional Future City Competition for 14 years. In a field of over 180 applicants, she was selected as one of eight runners-up for the inaugural DiscoverE Educator National Awards. In recognition of this distinction, she received a \$500 cash award, a digital camera, and gift pack.

The South Carolina (and Augusta, Ga.) Regional Future City Competition, sponsored and managed by Savannah River Nuclear Solutions, LLC (SRNS) in partnership with the Ruth Patrick Science Education Center, creates numerous benefits each year for area middle school students by assisting teachers and volunteer engineers who support each Future City Team.

A middle school science teacher for the last 23 years, McCullough has heard the constant refrain from her incoming students that “engineers are nerds...they are boring...I don’t want to be like that.” Yet within the span of a few months each school year, she is able to change those perspectives. Engaging her students in the Future City program has resulted in several former students who have earned engineering degrees and one who is even a Disney “Imagineer.”



Aiken Middle school teacher Susan McCullough (back left) recently attended a national award ceremony and was recognized for 23 years of work towards innovatively encouraging her students to consider careers in science, technology, engineering and math. She is shown with her 2012 Future City Regional Competition Team consisting of SRNS volunteer engineer Teri Davis and students (from left) Logan Coggin, Toby Fulmer, and Erik Fallon

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According to McCullough, The Future City Competition was actually piloted in Aiken County at Aiken Middle School 15 years ago. “I was approached about its inception, and we have participated in the competition every year, except one,” said McCullough. “I cannot believe the sheer number of former students who remind me how much they enjoyed the work for the competition and how much they gained from it. This competition has such a tremendous impact on anyone who is involved in it.”

DiscoverE Educator Awards recognize STEM (science, technology, engineering and math) educators, the ‘unsung heroes’ behind many exceptional engineers, for their outstanding achievements in helping students discover the world of engineering. Many of these educators dedicate much of their lives to nurturing the nation’s future STEM talent pool – a crucial part of America’s future economic growth.

“I am also excited and proud of Susan’s engineer mentor, Teri Davis,” said SRNS Education Outreach employee and South Carolina Regional Future City Coordinator, Kim Mitchell. “Our site engineers and scientists are an invaluable resource here and frequently support our local school systems by offering their time and expertise in the classroom.”

SRNS engineer Teri Davis has assisted McCullough during the past three years of Future City Competition. “I nominated Susan as a way to say thank you for leading her students to new perspectives on science and engineering,” said Davis. “She makes it exciting, interesting and full of amazing potential for so many of her middle school students. This award validates what a unique and very special teacher she is to her students.”

The Future City Competition is a national, project-based learning experience where students in 6th, 7th, and 8th grade imagine, design, and build cities of the future. Students work as a team with an educator and engineer mentor to plan cities using SimCity™ 4 Deluxe software; research and write solutions to an engineering problem; build tabletop scale models with recycled materials; and present their ideas before judges at Regional Competitions in January. Regional winners from throughout the U.S. represent their region at the National Finals in Washington, D.C. in February.

Savannah River Nuclear Solutions, LLC, is a Fluor Partnership comprised of Fluor, 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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SRNS-12-35

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