

4 February 2016

SRS jobs are enduring, important

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Letter to the Editor of *The Aiken Standard*

Aiken SC

An Aiken Standard editorial last week seemed to dismiss the value of new SRS job opportunities. This view is surprising, disappointing, misleading and wrong. Furthermore, to the extent that it may have cautioned against nuclear sector jobs, it did a disservice to our students, our region and our state.

The paper should have known, or by asking a few questions should have learned:

- Nuclear jobs are good jobs; SRS jobs are good jobs. The average existing salary at SRS is nearly 150 percent of the region's average. New salaries will be greater than \$40,000 and with good benefits.
- These jobs are opening now, and will be available into the next decade. More than half of the current workforce is retirement eligible. Site contractors track this closely. The work at the Site will continue for many decades.
- It is important work with both regional and national significance. Workers at SRS literally make the world a safer place. They provide us national security, energy security and a cleaner environment.
- Facts support these claims. Our community conducted a nuclear workforce study seven years ago, the Economic Impact Study of 2010 and the Regional Workforce Study last year. They suggest 10,000 technical and scientific jobs in the next 10 years; 30,000 nuclear, manufacturing and health care job openings in the next five years. One easy place to find this information is the SRSCRO website.
- Citizens interested in these jobs need time to prepare. Nuclear industry jobs require strong skills that are obtainable through local college and university programs. This information is also available at the SRSCRO website.
- SRS jobs are enduring.

I was a CEO at SRS for the last contract transition. Of the nearly 10,000 employees, 99 percent were asked to stay on and join the new companies. This will continue to be true in the next contract transition.

While it's true that SRS employment is dependent on congressional appropriations, everything says that funding will continue. Budget debates, while important, have been about no more than a few percent of the total, and that revenue is more stable than typical corporations or private companies.

I would say to anyone in our community seeking a good enduring job; "polish up your STEM credentials and run toward the SRS employment offices." You will be well paid and contribute to making the world a safer place.

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