



SOUTH AFRICAN NUCLEAR ENERGY CORPORATION (Necsa)

MEDIA RELEASE: NATIONAL SCIENCE WEEK 12-19 MAY 2007~NUKE IS NEAT!

Date: 18 May 2007

National Science Week is an initiative of the Department of Science and Technology (DST) with the South African Agency for Science and Technology advancement (SAASTA) as the implementing agent. It was officially launched on Monday 07 May 2007 by the Minister of Science and Technology, Mosibudi Mangena at the Tshiya Resource Centre in the Free State.

The theme for this year's National Science Week is "Tomorrow's Science & Technology are in our Youth's Hands". The South African Nuclear Energy Corporation (Necsa) in conjunction with DST and SAASTA, have partnered their aims and objectives in inculcating youths towards Science and Technology.

The aim of the week at Necsa is to excite youth towards science at an early age, to encourage them to develop an interest in studying Mathematics and Science subjects and most of all, to create an awareness among those sectors of society bearing an influence on the subject and career choices of learners.

The programme at Necsa started with an Open Day on Saturday, 12 May 2007. The public were invited to come into Necsa, to view the facilities and to ask their pertinent questions. One little boy, Daniel Almeida, a grade 5 student was so overwhelmed by his visit that when asked if he enjoyed the programme, he said, "Yes, this is going to make my science teacher green with envy because I am here." Some parents brought their children because they want them to pursue careers in maths and science. Tanya van Heerden, a tertiary science student says she is hoping to come to Necsa next year to do her practicals and will encourage anyone to understand science and technology through the eyes of curiosity.

The fun did not stop there! This continued on Monday 14 May 2007 to 18 May 2007 with School Careers Days. Necsa staff members ranging from a Scientist, a Financial Advisor, a Lawyer, a Radioanalyst, a Communication Officer, an Administration Officer, a Reactor Operator, an Information Technologist, a Human Resource Officer, a Safety Health and Environment Officer amongst others, spent quality time with various schools explaining their line of work. Almost 500 students visited Necsa over the week and we were thrilled at the amount of interest it generated.

Each student received a t-shirts, water bottles, rulers, math sets, brochures, periodic table of elements and posters. Necsa aims to positively embed and raise the profile of what it is all about and to market its Research and Development capabilities. Government has iterated the need to retain and encourage key skills in the country, especially in science and technology. Necsa has therefore committed itself to target learners, particularly disadvantaged groups and especially female learners, in educating them on a broad array of career options in the nuclear physics and related arena.

The objective in line with Government's strategy, is to create awareness of the important role that science plays in people's daily lives and to encourage our youth to consider studying and improving their performance in mathematics and science.

This week is also primarily to motivate and attract more of our youth into Science, Engineering and Technology (SET) careers and to promote the greater awareness and appreciation of the contribution that Science and Technology makes to the nation. Given the recent Nuclear renaissance, this will ultimately boost the skills shortage desperately required in the years to come.

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