



For Immediate Release

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## Apprenticeship Program Prepares Workers for Job Market

OAK RIDGE, Tenn., March 22, 2018 – As a single Mom, Cheyenna Hawn of Oakdale, Tennessee, knew the hard struggle of trying to balance the demands of home and children with the need to generate income to support her family.

With two school-age daughters, Cheyenna felt the constant pull of her desire to be a good mother while still pursuing career goals that would allow her to advance in the workplace. That's when she discovered a new training program in Oak Ridge, Tennessee, that has put her on track for full-time employment and introduced a new stability and joy in her family life.

Two major regional employers are partnering with the Cooperative Agreement of Labor and Management (CALM) to sponsor a new East Tennessee Apprenticeship Readiness Program that is leading to employment opportunities for Cheyenna and other construction craft on the Department of Energy's (DOE) Oak Ridge Reservation and elsewhere.

The employers are URS|CH2M Oak Ridge LLC (UCOR), lead DOE contractor for cleanup of the East Tennessee Technology Park, former home of the Oak Ridge Gaseous Diffusion Plant, and Consolidated Nuclear Security (CNS), operating contractor for the Y-12 National Security Complex in Oak Ridge.

CALM is an organization comprised of Oak Ridge construction employers, including the Knoxville Building & Construction Trades Council which represents 16 unions. Classes are offered through the National Association of Building Trade Unions (NABTU) which sponsors similar training nationwide.

The inaugural training class – the first of three classes planned this year – consists of 23 students from throughout East Tennessee. A graduation ceremony is scheduled for March 29. After that, Cheyenna and her classmates will have the opportunity to begin immediate employment with UCOR as union laborers in the company's environmental cleanup program for the Department of Energy.

Angela Long of Oak Ridge sees the training program as a way to carry on a family tradition. Both of her parents – and her stepdad – were long-time employees for contractors on the Oak Ridge Reservation. Her father retired from Oak Ridge National Laboratory after a long career as a pipefitter. Her mother worked at the K-25 uranium enrichment plant and at the Y-12 National Security Complex while her stepdad was employed by UCOR in cleanup of the East Tennessee Technology Park.

Angela's goal: "I want to get my foot in the door to have a chance to pursue a career at Oak Ridge like my family did." She says the Apprenticeship Readiness Program is providing that opportunity. "I just wish it had come along sooner," she says.

Then there's Stephen Ball, a Boston-transplant and Army veteran who moved to Knoxville last year to care for family members after 20 years of military service. A former Command Sergeant Major, paratrooper and certified professional chef, Ball says he found the training program to be "eye-opening" and has a greater appreciation for the types of trade crafts that are needed at DOE sites.

He views labor unions as the "backbone" of the workforce and looks forward to using his knowledge, skills and experience in advancing his post-military career.

"The close partnership between Oak Ridge employers and the labor unions creates a favorable environment for those completing the training to transition to the workforce." Ken Rueter, UCOR President and Chief Executive Officer, said. "With many current workers approaching retirement age, the demand for new workers is increasing. It is likely that UCOR will have an immediate need for many in the current apprenticeship class."

"This program provides a gateway for local residents who desire fulfilling and challenging work to gain access to Building Trades registered apprenticeship programs," CNS President and CEO Morgan Smith, said. "In addition to learning about DOE's Oak Ridge complex, participants have a chance to try out union crafts and the construction industry before selecting a specific career trade."

In addition to NABTU's core curriculum, contractor representatives will provide an overview of upcoming labor needs for their respective projects.

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*Pictured: Cheyenna Hawn, Angela Long and Stephen Ball*