

Summer interns

Students gain job experience at Virginia Uranium

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Seven young people gained valuable job experience this summer as interns at Virginia Uranium Inc.'s main office in Chatham. The company employed seven: Walter Anderson, Erica Galvan, Jonathan Wright, Mary Dare Thornton, Josh Shields, Lena Cole, and Sam Cole. The interns, all students, analyzed and recorded data, did statistical and

administrative work, conducted economic research, and even constructed a three-dimensional model of the Coles Hill uranium deposit. Located six miles northeast of Chatham near the Sheva community, the deposit was discovered in the early 1980s by Marline Uranium Corp. Last year, Walter Coles, who owns the land and a majority of the ore, formed Virginia Uranium to explore the possibility of eventually mining the deposit, which is now worth an estimated \$10 billion. Although Virginia has had a moratorium on uranium mining since 1982, Virginia Uranium received a state permit last year to conduct exploratory drilling to verify the deposit. The



company began test drilling in December. Virginia Tech professors and students have also begun an extensive here-year research project at Coles Hill that is expected to shed new light on the uranium deposit. Although there is no uranium mining, Virginia Uranium's office in Chatham is a beehive of activity. The company employs about 20 people. Almost all are local, including the interns. "When we got started, we always said we were going to use local folks, and we're trying to do what we said we'd do," said Coles. "I think it's exciting these bright young kids have a place where they can work and learn and grow." Anderson, 17, a 2008 graduate of Chatham High School, plans to study chemistry at Hampden- Sydney College this fall. The youngest of the interns, he spent the summer digitizing huge

amounts of historical technical data from Marline. Anderson thinks the United States should develop more nuclear energy. "I think it's safe because regulations on the nuclear industry are very stringent," he said. Anderson also thinks Virginia Uranium, which has promised jobs and an economic boost, may be a good place to work after college. "This is definitely a job prospect in the future," he said. Galvan, 19, of Sheva is a student at Johnson Bible College in Tennessee. A sophomore, she is studying to become a social worker, but may change her major after spending the summer at Virginia Uranium. "Actually, since being

here, I'm on the fence," she said. "I'm thinking about looking at engineering." Like Anderson, Galvan played a key role in digitizing technical data from Marline's extensive research almost 30 years ago. She also put her creativity and innovation to use developing papers and brochures on complicated subjects like radiation and air quality. In addition, Galvan helped create a kids' educational section on Virginia Uranium's website. "I'm just really glad to have the opportunity to work here," she said. "Being here has really opened my eyes." Wright agreed. "It's been pretty interesting," he said. "I didn't know much about uranium mining, but I'm more for it now because I understand it better. It's safer than a lot of people think."

Wright, 21, of Chatham is a senior accounting major at Lynchburg College. He used his expertise with numbers to help prepare complex technical data this summer. Thornton, 19, of Chatham is a rising sophomore at Roanoke College, where she is majoring in global business with a minor in French. Thornton, whose mother, Nina, works for Virginia Uranium, did a little bit of everything this summer, including research, sitting in on meetings, and working on a newsletter for the uranium company.



From the left, the interns are Josh Shields, Erica Galvan, Jonathan Wright, Walter Anderson, and Mary Dare Thornton

