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U.S. DOE/NNSA - Nevada Site Office



July/August 2008 - Issue 132

A publication for all members of the NNSA/NSO family

## NNSA Leadership Tours NTS

National Nuclear Security Administration Chief Tom D'Agostino and Department of Energy acting Deputy Secretary Jeff Kupfer recently toured the Nevada Test Site. Among the facilities they visited on their one-day visit were the Device Assembly Facility (DAF) and the Joint Actinide Shock Physics Experimental Research (JASPER) Facility. NNSA Nevada Site Office acting manager Steve Mellington and various other staff members from NNSA, National Security Technologies (NSTec) and the National Laboratories also participated in the informal visit and discussions.



Left, Dennis Kelly, NSTec, briefs Kupfer on the features of the DAF "Gravel Gertie" round rooms. Pictured from left to right are Pete Hanlon executive officer to NNSA Administrator Tom D'Agostino, D'Agostino, acting Deputy Secretary Kupfer, and Dr. Bruce Goodwin, Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory.



D'Agostino looks at a holder for a JASPER target. Immediately behind is one of two glove boxes inside the DAF where targets will eventually be assembled.

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**Environmental Management**

U.S. DOE/NNSA - Nevada Site Office

## Livermore Takes Earth Day Initiative Seriously Year-round

While organizations around the world made Earth Day a day to recognize the need for earth-friendly initiatives, National Security Technologies (NSTec) Livermore Operations has taken steps to initiate earth-friendly changes that will have a significant impact on the company's "bottom line" all year long.

NSTec Livermore Operations' recent efforts started in July 2007 with small, easily implemented changes that make a significant contribution to their energy-saving goals. The first set of changes started with precise heating, ventilation and air-conditioning (HVAC) daily management and retrofitting units with high-efficiency fan motors. The benefit realized from this first set of changes was a reduction of 240-kilowatt hours (KWH) per day of electrical consumption and a reduction in system maintenance frequency.

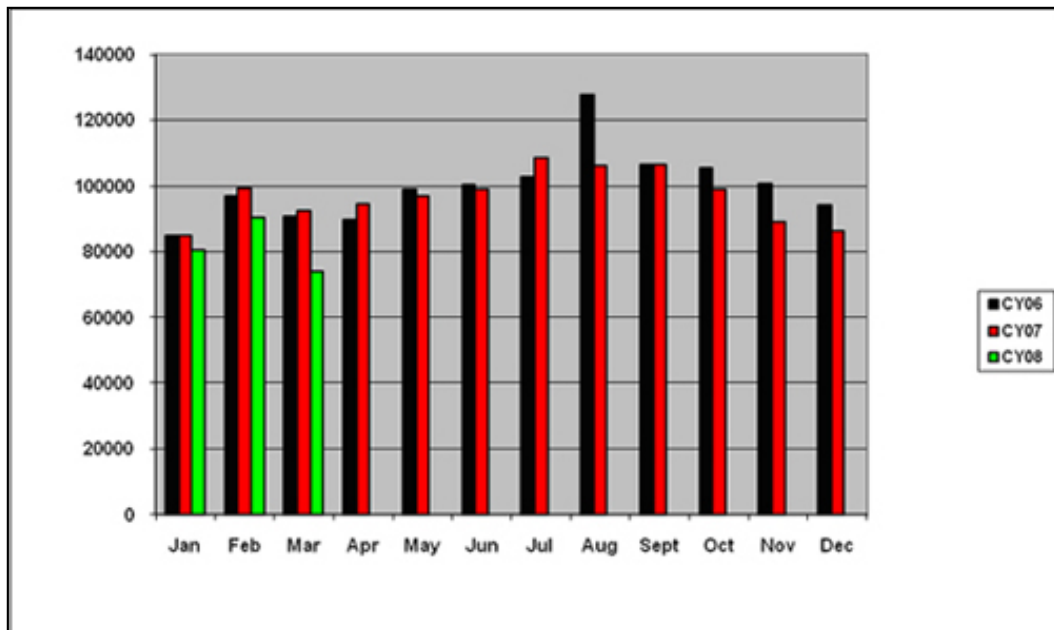
The second part of the changes involved converting 420 lighting fixtures to light-emitting diode (LED) technology. This improved visibility and contrast. It also reduced electrical consumption by 350 KWH per day.

Next in their earth-friendly changes was the installation two high-efficiency systems, one for chilled water, and one for a screw-type air compressor. Overall, this improved control of process improvements, decreased the frequency of system maintenance on both systems, and shrank electrical consumption by 98 KWH per day and 70 KWH per day, respectively.

Along with their strong commitment to energy savings, NSTec Livermore Operations kept the momentum going by replacing one of their gasoline-powered General Services Administration vehicles with a Flex-Fuel model. Numerous studies have shown that this type of eco-friendly vehicle reduces operating costs and an organization's carbon footprint, and takes them one step closer towards reducing fossil-fuel dependency.

Rich Klitzing, NSTec Livermore Operations Site and Administration Manager, has worked closely with Senior Manager Ken Cooke to develop goals that not only improve Livermore Operation's bottom line, but also strengthen their reputation as true advocates of energy-saving, environmentally-friendly initiatives. "We have lowered our energy consumption by 8.3 percent compared to fiscal year 2007," says Klitzing. "In actual cost avoidance figures, from October CY07 thru March CY08, our cumulative average savings will soon surpass \$2,000 per month. For March, CY08 alone we saved over \$4,300," he added.

Existing appliances (monitors, scanners, refrigerators, etc.) also are being replaced with Energy Star-rated equipment.



Comparison of Kilowatt Hours Used per Month for CY '06, '07 and '08

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U.S. DOE/NNSA - Nevada Site Office

## Milestones

### Milestones

#### National Security Technologies

##### **50 years**

William Quam

##### **35 years**

Joseph Calovini

##### **30 years**

Frances Tackett, Robert Peppard, Margaret Townsend, Theresa Jones

##### **25 years**

David McDonald, Jeanette Matthews, Shari Morrison, Walter Wolak, Jerry Stackhouse

##### **20 years**

Wendy Rajm, Claire Yared, Clarence Woo, Derrel Carter, Elsia Gorden-Millender, Gilbert Chavez, Gilbert Medina, Glen Anthony, Kelly Meurrens, W. Sutherland, William Ostler

##### **15 years**

Virginia Bautista

##### **10 years**

Bonnie Foster, Craig Kemnitz, E O'Donoghue, John Pelles, Judith Doron, Kamechia Coltrain, Lorraine Mosca, Michael Bridenburg, Patrick Whitely, Roger Henry, Russell Knight, Stephen Patton, Troy James, Wayne Lenhard, Boyd Anderson, Coates Cobb-Adams, Kevin Campbell, Sylvia Salazar

##### **5 years**

Andrea Hall, Annette Swindell, Carol Neal, Craig Johnson, Douglas Opolka, Franklin Garcia, Jeffrey Smith, Jerry Freter, John Berge, Linda Dorsey. Mark Andresen, Michael McRory, Michael Murphy, Patricia Martinez, Randolph Rollins, Rita Starnes, Steven Riley, Taren Bowen, Wallace Womble, Bradford Janota, Daniel Jensen, Elipio Garcia, Glenda Tepatti, Gregory Strawn, Heather Hernandez, James Carillo, James Daniels, James Kennedy, James Stedeford, Jeffery Cowell, John Spahn, John Vaughn, Joseph Depa, Kenneth Jensen, Michael Smith, Randy Melgaard, Sean Doyle

#### Wackenhut Services, Inc.

##### **30 years**

William Lucero

##### **10 years**

George Lozoya, Kathleen Nangle, Craig Nangle, Rus Redding

**5 years**

Yolanda "June" Neisler

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**Partners in Education**

U.S. DOE/NNSA - Nevada Site Office

## Las Vegas School Has Best Finish at National Science Bowl

Washington, D.C.—The Meadows School from Las Vegas had its best finish ever during the U.S. Department of Energy’s 18th Annual National Science Bowl, held in Washington D.C. The five-student team of Tyler Fitzgerald, Vishnu Halhore, Kevin Kowalski, Matthew Shackley and Jiemin “Jimmy” Zhou was victorious over schools from Hawaii, New York, Missouri, Florida and the Virgin Islands, winning six out of their eight matches in the first round robin. They placed third in their division. With only the first two teams in each division competing in the final round, Santa Monica High School placed first out of 67 teams from across the country, including the Virgin Islands and Puerto Rico.

“We were here two years ago with largely the same team and we were not terribly successful,” says Meadows’ math teacher and coach Jeff Clouse. “This year we came back and we’re very proud of our performance.”

In February, the Meadows School prevailed over 31 other teams from Arizona, California, Nevada and Utah to win the Regional Science Bowl competition and advance to the national event. In that competition, sponsored by the National Nuclear Security Administration Nevada Site Office, teams were quizzed on a wide range of math and science questions. Winners advanced through several rounds to a final match.

While at the National Science Bowl, teams participated in a round-robin, double-elimination *Jeopardy-style* format. The Meadows lost only to Thomas Jefferson High School for Science and Technology from Alexandria, Va. and Fairview High School from Boulder, Colo. Those schools went on to finish third and fourth, respectively, in the overall competition.

The National Science Bowl winners received a trip to the International Youth Science Forum in London, in addition to \$1,000 for their school’s science department. Santa Monica clinched the title by answering a mathematics question.

More than 300 high school students competed in the national event. A total of 12,000-plus students from across the country participated in their respective regional Science Bowls.

The U.S. Department of Energy created the National Science Bowl in 1991 to encourage high school students to excel in mathematics and science and to pursue careers in these fields. The DOE supports mathematics and science education to help provide a technically trained and diverse workforce for the nation. More than 130,000 students have participated in the National Science Bowl throughout its 18-year history.

“I congratulate all of the students who competed in this year’s U.S. Department of Energy National Science Bowl,” said event speaker U.S. Secretary of Energy Samuel W. Bodman. “As proud as I am to celebrate the



impressive accomplishments of these students—and they truly are impressive—the truth is that the National Science Bowl is more than just an academic contest. It’s an important part of the effort to reinvigorate science in America, and it is my hope that these young competitors will help raise awareness of the great need to support scientific education and inspire students across the nation to pursue this discipline.”

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## Acronyms

### Acronyms

The following acronyms appear frequently in *SiteLines*:

<b>BEEF</b>	Big Explosives Experimental Facility
<b>CTOS</b>	Counter Terrorism Operations Support
<b>DAF</b>	Device Assembly Facility
<b>DOE</b>	Department of Energy
<b>EM</b>	Emergency Management
<b>EM</b>	Environmental Management
<b>ES&amp;H</b>	Environment, Safety, and Health
<b>FRMAC</b>	Federal Radiological Monitoring and Assessment Center
<b>JASPER</b>	Joint Actinide Shock Physics Experimental Research (gas gun)
<b>LANL</b>	Los Alamos National Laboratory
<b>LLNL</b>	Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory
<b>NNSA</b>	National Nuclear Security Administration
<b>NSO</b>	Nevada Site Office
<b>NSTec</b>	National Security Technologies, LLC
<b>NTS</b>	Nevada Test Site
<b>PIP</b>	Process Improvement Project
<b>R-MAD</b>	Reactor Maintenance, Assembly, and Disassembly Facility
<b>RSL-A</b>	Remote Sensing Laboratory - Andrews
<b>RSL-N</b>	Remote Sensing Laboratory - Nellis
<b>SC</b>	NNSA Service Center
<b>SCE</b>	Subcritical Experiment
<b>SNJV</b>	Stoller-Navarro Joint Venture
<b>SNL</b>	Sandia National Laboratories
<b>STL</b>	Special Technologies Laboratory
<b>WSI-NV</b>	Wackenhut Services Inc. - Nevada

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## Masthead

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U.S. DOE/NNSA - Nevada Site Office

## DAF, NTS Facilities Continue Operations Transition

The Device Assembly Facility (DAF) and General Facilities are the latest Nevada Test Site (NTS) facilities to transfer management and operational responsibilities to National Security Technologies (NSTec).

In a transition plan that is on-track for an August 13 completion, General Facilities, including research sites, warehouses, storage buildings, equipment buildings, and administrative offices were completed on May 9. The DAF transition finished on June 2, according to Patrick Morris, Division Manager, Readiness in Technical Base and Facilities, NSTec.

“We’ve followed the same process with all of the facilities and the transition team has done an outstanding job interfacing with our client and our laboratory partners,” Morris says. “We’ve all come together to make a very effective team.”

Work is currently underway to transition operations at the Joint Actinide Shock Physics Experimental Research (JASPER) Facility and the High Explosive Facilities. The primary focus is on safety and continuity of operations, Morris says.

Federal Project Director Lisa Mueller says she has been impressed that the transition continues on schedule and within projected costs. “I recognize the efforts that the entire team has put forth to accomplish the milestones to date and commend them all,” Mueller says.

Historically, the National Laboratories have managed the major NTS facilities using established home laboratory practices, principles, and health and safety requirements. As such, implementation of health and safety, security, and compliance requirements would vary among the NTS facilities.

Citing a gradual shift to “authorization basis-driven activities” and the need for a consistent application of requirements and potentially more efficient uses of resources, Martin Schoenbauer, Principal Assistant Deputy Administrator for Operations, National Nuclear Security Administration (NNSA), issued a directive that calls for NSTec to assume full responsibility and accountability for managing and operating all facilities on the NTS.

A detailed Project Execution Plan was prepared last year by a team consisting of representatives from the Nevada Site Office (NSO), Joint Nevada Test Site Program Office (JNPO), and NSTec, and approved on January 4, 2008. The National Laboratory presence in Nevada manages JNPO.

The DAF transition involved modification or revision of some 270 management, hazards analysis and regulatory documents. Morris praised the work of DAF Project Manager Terry Ploeger and JNPO Facility Lead Don Felske in bringing the project in on time. A true measure of the success of

the NTS Facilities Transition Project was the DAF support “Hot” operation on June 2 – the first day under NSTec management.

Work in the General Facilities included the modification and development of 270-plus documents. These encompassed emergency response plans, security and operations procedures, and Real Estate/Operating Permits (REOPs). The process was overseen by Fred Williams of NSTec and Don Bourcier of JNPO. Morris says the remarkable effort of Felske and Williams helped to complete the transition three weeks ahead of schedule.

“An important element within the milestone of transferring a particular facility is the employee orientation and preparation for transferring employees from National Weapons Laboratories to NSTec,” Mueller says. “The Human Capital team has provided a well-coordinated and seamless process to accomplish this task.”

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## CTOS Enrollment Numbers on the Rise

The nation continues to improve its ability to respond to complex emergencies thanks to the highly specialized Counter Terrorism Operations Support (CTOS) program sponsored by the Department of Homeland Security's Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA). The program has seen a 48 percent increase in graduates. The distinctive curriculum enables first responders to train with hazardous and radiological materials in a secure, controlled setting.

More than 61,000 state and local emergency response personnel have learned to take immediate, decisive action to prevent or mitigate terrorist use of radiological or nuclear Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMD), such as Improvised Nuclear Devices (INDs) and Radiological Dispersal Device (RDDs or "dirty bombs"). The performance based, hands-on training is carried out in realistic scenarios at the Nevada Test Site, and throughout the United States and its territories via Mobile Training Teams.

In 2007, a record-breaking 14,335 first responders were taught either directly via CTOS trainers, or indirectly via the web-based curriculum or their own trainers who had attended specialized instructor training courses. These results represent a significant jump in enrollment and signify significant achievements in the nation's preparation level.

The CTOS program is a founding member of the National Domestic Preparedness Consortium (NDPC), which was established by a 1998 Congressional Mandate in response to the Oklahoma City bombing. Congress created the NDPC to address the serious counterterrorism preparedness needs of the nation's emergency responders within the context of radiological and nuclear, chemical, biological, and explosive WMD threats.

CTOS specializes in radiological and nuclear threats and takes advantage of the experience gained during years of nuclear weapons testing and preparations to detect or respond to radiological/nuclear WMDs. The CTOS cadre is particularly adept at converting this highly technical subject matter into courses designed to meet the needs of our nation's police, firefighters and emergency medical personnel.

FEMA coordinates the federal government's role in preparing for, preventing, mitigating the effects of, responding to, and recovering from all domestic disasters, whether natural or man-made, including acts of terror.

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U.S. DOE/NNSA - Nevada Site Office

## JASPER Facility Back in Business

The Joint Actinide Shock Physics Experimental Research (JASPER) Facility at the Nevada Test Site (NTS) recently celebrated a return to normal operations after a one-year period of no critical experiments.

JASPER employees have been working round-the-clock to transform the facility from a Radiological Facility to a Hazard Category 3 Nuclear Facility. The crew celebrated their success with an April 30 Hot Shot Experiment— exactly one year to the day operations were stopped – then gathered May 20 to acknowledge the achievement.

“The JASPER Team worked extremely hard to accomplish the transformation. They didn’t balk at the challenges thrown to them and managed to exceed my expectations in the readiness and return to operations activities,” says Dax Jolly, JASPER Facility Manager, Joint Nevada Test Site Program Office (JNPO), Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory (LLNL).

JASPER plays an integral role in the certification of the nation’s nuclear weapons stockpile by providing a method to generate and measure data pertaining to the properties of materials (radioactive chemical elements) at high shock pressures, temperatures and strain rates. The JASPER crew achieves these goals conducting high-pressure experiments using a two-stage gas gun.

On April 30, 2007 the JASPER Facility received its new classification and all operations with special nuclear material were stopped. Throughout the next year the entire JASPER team worked to develop a temporary Justification for Continued Operations (JCO) and to implement all the new requirements and level of rigor.

As part of the transition, the JASPER Facility underwent three assessments: an Internal Assessment, a Management Self-Assessment and a Readiness Assessment. Each was performed by the National Nuclear Security Administration/Nevada Site Office, with headquarters' participation. Findings had to be addressed before operations could be restarted.



*Jasper employees listen to speakers during a May 20 gathering in Mercury.*

On April 30, 2008, the crew saw their one-year goal of success realized with the resumption of experiments.

Speakers at the May celebration included: Charlotte Carter, NNSA/NSO; Rick Higgs, JNPO Program Leader; Jeff Hockman, LLNL; Jim Holt, Defense Experimentation and Stockpile Stewardship Director, National Security Technologies; Rob Mailhot, JASPER Ramrod, and Jolly.

"All of the crew and staff are a very talented and dedicated group of people and I can't praise them enough," Jolly says. "It is great to again have JASPER producing exceptional plutonium data, and I am excited about the upcoming operations schedule."

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## On the Road to Project Management Excellence

*"Achieving excellence in Project Management is vital to the future of NSTec" ---Steve Younger, NSTec President*

National Security Technologies (NSTec) recently developed a Project Manager Certification Program that is central to achieving excellence. Program components include: project management qualifications, experience, and training. NSTec Project Managers will be certified at one of four levels based on these components.

Certificates have been awarded to:

Janet Cowley - Operations & Infrastructure Directorate

Diana Higgs - Homeland Security & Defense Applications Directorate

Douglas Miller - Environmental Management Directorate

Michelle Miller - Homeland Security & Defense Applications Directorate (not pictured)

Jeffrey Morrison - Operations & Infrastructure Directorate

Robert Platoni - Operations & Infrastructure Directorate

Donald Ray - Project Management Directorate.



*Photographed from left to right are: Jeffrey Morrison, Janet Cowley, Robert Platoni, Donald Ray, Diana Higgs, and Douglas Miller. These individuals were the first to earn certificates in the new Project Management Program.*

This credential indicates a level of professional competency in project management. The NSTec Project Manager Certification Program is consistent with private sector and government project management certification programs, such as the Project Management Institute's Project Management Professional certification and the Department of Energy's Federal Project Director Program.

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## NTS Fire/Emergency Crews Recognize Services Week

“Your Life is our Mission” was the theme for the recent National Emergency Medical Services (EMS) Week. EMS Week is sponsored each year by the American College of Emergency Physicians to increase public awareness of local emergency medical services, and to recognize emergency responders.

Much is written of the “Golden Hour” – that first 60 minutes following an accident wherein if medical treatment is received, the patient’s chance for survival increases dramatically. An article printed in the *Journal of Trauma* states that, “For those victims in rural areas, death risks were seven times higher if the EMS response time was longer than 30 minutes.”

Nothing gets more rural than the Nevada Test Site. All NTS Fire and Rescue (F&R) EMS responders are paramedics and all firefighters are trained to the Emergency Medical Technician (EMT) level. There are three teams of two paramedics on duty as a minimum at all times – two located at the Mercury Fire Station and one at the Area 6 Fire Station – with capabilities and equipment for Advance Life Support. Calls for emergency medical assistance are received through the 911 system or through “Mayday” alerts on the radio by the dispatcher located in the Operations Coordination Center in Mercury.

With the nearest hospital 50 miles away, quick response by the NTS paramedics is essential for site worker survivability. “Not only is much of the work performed here hazardous, we also deal with the realities of an aging work force,” says NTS F&R Chief Chuck Fauerbach. “Even with helicopter transport by Mercy Air, we are racing against the clock for many of our patients.” In 2007, NTS paramedic onsite responses included 106 “treat and transport” medical calls for patients whose medical conditions warranted care at an in-town hospital.

Additionally, per the mutual aid agreement with Nye County, NTS F&R are the prime responders to the stretch of U.S. Route 95 that runs parallel to the NTS boundary. Without NTS F&R, accident victims would have to wait for EMS crews from Pahrump Valley to arrive from 40 miles away. And when the highway narrows from a divided four-lane down to just a two-lane, north of the Mercury turnoff, it becomes especially deadly. In 2007, the NTS paramedics treated, stabilized and transported victims from 12 traffic accidents on Route 95. Two of these accidents included fatalities; seven of these accidents included victims that required *Flight for Life* helicopter response to survive.

“Time is of the essence when dealing with traumatic injuries and the chances of survival deteriorate with every minute that passes,” says Fauerbach. “I can cite many instances where, without our response, people would have more than likely died from their injuries while waiting for community responders to reach them.”

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## Elect to Perfect: EMI SIG 2008

The Emergency Management Issues Special Interest Group (EMI SIG) conference was held recently in Reston, Virginia. This year's theme was: Elect to Perfect.

Since its inception, the EMI SIG has conducted annual meetings, developed numerous products, shared lessons learned, and provided a network for emergency management professionals. The EMI SIG was established in 1986 and is sponsored by the Department of Energy (DOE) Office of Emergency Management and Policy (NA-41) and advised by the DOE Office of Transportation (EM-11).

The EMI SIG conference provided a significant opportunity for DOE complex federal and contractor employees to engage in an information exchange. Presentations included information on continuity of operations planning, drills and exercises, training, emergency operation centers, hazard surveys, and technology.

Participants from National Security Technologies (NSTec) Emergency Services and Operations Support (ESOS) were able to learn, meet and conduct presentations with other emergency management professionals from around the nation. Information presented at this year's conference was brought back and shared among ESOS employees. The information sharing allowed ESOS to identify key opportunities to enhance the Emergency Planning and Preparedness (EP&P) five-year plan, which defines customers, mission, vision, assets, strengths, goals, objectives and areas for improvement.

David Stuhan, NSTec, presented ESOS validation methods of addressing past exercise issues during formally evaluated exercises. Presentations allow emergency management professionals to incorporate new methods and procedures into their own programs. In addition to his address, Stuhan was selected as the co-chair for the EMI SIG Drills and Exercises Sub-committee for 2009.

During breaks, EMI SIG members were able to participate in a trade show designed to promote information sharing. The Nevada Site Office Roadrunner '08 display, which depicts NTS emergency crews in action during the exercise, won the Best Training Display Award as " the most informative display on emergency management programs or activities at contractor facilities."

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## Remote Sensing Laboratory Aviation Wins Third Consecutive Support Award

For the third straight year, the Remote Sensing Laboratory (RSL) Aviation Program of the National Nuclear Security Administration Nevada Site Office (NNSA/NSO) has been presented with the Department of Energy Aviation Support Professional Award. This time honors go to Joe Keller. "For me, I'm just doing my job. I put a great deal of initiative into what I do on the aircraft quality assurance side of things," says Keller, a quality assurance administrator who has worked at RSL since 1992. He was recognized at DOE's annual Aviation Workshop in Tampa, Fla. in April.

Last year, William Colucci won the same award and Tony Shoemaker earned it in 2006. The Remote Sensing Laboratory also garnered the prestigious Federal Small Aviation Program Award from the General Services Administration (GSA) in 2007. The NNSA is one of just three federal agencies to win that honor multiple times. Previously, the NNSA/NSO was named "Best Program" in the small operation category. Twenty-one federal government agencies were in contention for the award.

The Aviation Program team—comprised of the NNSA and its contractor National Security Technologies (NSTec)—qualified for the GSA award after it swept the competition and won three separate aviation awards from the DOE in early 2007. All of the awards recognize outstanding contributions to the safety, efficiency, and effectiveness of one or more aspects of a federal flight program.

NSTec operates the aviation program at the RSL at Nellis and Andrews Air Force bases. RSL provides a broad range of scientific, technological, and operational disciplines. Its core competencies include emergency response operations and support, remote sensing, and applied science and technologies to support counterterrorism and radiological response.

"The RSL aviation team is truly outstanding," says RSL Director Brent Park. "This team exemplifies a 'can-do' attitude that focuses on safety and national security responsibilities. They have set a higher standard for the aviation industry."

The DOE awards have poured in for RSL since 2006. The honors representing some of the highest that can be bestowed on a program by the DOE Office of Aviation Management.

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## Nevada Test Site Innovates and Evolves with Fast-paced Fiber Optics

Fiber optics is a vital and growing service available at the Nevada Test Site (NTS), and Sandia, Lawrence Livermore and Los Alamos National Laboratories. Since its invention in the early 1970s, the use and demand for fiber optic signals (for voice and data transmission) has grown tremendously in high-tech environments like the NTS.



*Pigtails provide various options with fiber optics and are a significant part of upgrades in North Las Vegas and at NTS.*

Perhaps the biggest current use for fiber optics is computer networks such as the internet, or anywhere information is sent digitally. Fiber optics crews create and maintain the entire NTS fiber optic infrastructure—and that means all NTS fiber communications dealing with data transmissions, interfaces, monitoring for projects and experiments, as well as maintenance, repairs, and upgrades.

Simply put, fiber optics is a medium for carrying information from one point to another in the form of light (rather than the older electrical technology carrying information in the form of electrical current). With fiber optics, long, human-hair-sized strands of very pure glass are arranged in bundles called optical cables. These cables can be used to transmit light signals over long distances without needing to be refreshed or strengthened. Unlike copper-based transmissions, common in old telephone lines, fiber optics is not electrical in nature. So an advantage of fiber optics over copper is a greater resistance to electromagnetic noise such as radios, motors, or other nearby cables.

Fiber optic cables offer better performance, more bandwidth and better security than metallic-based communication systems. And fiber does it at a lower cost. The cables are strong, lightweight and can be used outdoors in any type of harsh environment. For these reasons fiber optics systems are ideal for remote data collection Test Site customers.

Hundreds of fiber optic cables measure precision diagnostics for subcritical experiments conducted at the NTS. For example, fiber optics capture physics data with fiber optic pins that may measure shock velocities in plutonium samples, or sound speeds in shocked plutonium. Fiber optics may carry energy release measurements to verify that plutonium was

never in a critical-mass configuration and that no self-sustaining fission reaction occurred. Physics researchers also use fiber optics to measure spall strength, surface velocity, total ejecta mass, and equation-of-state data.

James Gatling, Acting Manager for Defense Experimentation and Stockpile Stewardship Programs and Operations for National Security Technologies (NSTec), says the demand for better bandwidth and resolution is constant. "Today, new discoveries are possible because of the ability to measure signals at increased resolution. For each new experiment, we push our technology to record data that was previously undetectable. Our fiber optics teams are critical components as we are tasked with the development of state-of-the-art diagnostics and recording techniques."

"The most complex precision service we provide is the fabrication of arrays for the National Weapons Laboratories," says Fiber Optics Supervisor Barbara Begley of NSTec. "An array is a specific pattern of fiber arranged in a housing specified to the customer's requirements. These are custom-built, extremely detailed, and can include 1,000-plus fibers in a spacing of 5 microns or less—that is spacing so close you cannot see it with the naked eye."

Begley says other services include various connection methods, or different ways of putting fibers together, such as Epoxy, Hot Melts, and Pigtailed. A Pigtail, Begley explains, is a length of fiber where one end is terminated with a connector and the other end is left "unterminated" to be spliced or welded to another length of fiber. Pigtailed are commonly used at the Big Explosives Experiment Facility, Critical Experiment Facility, and other Test Site facilities. Pigtail methodology dominated the fiber optic communications upgrades and renovation for the North Las Vegas B-3 Facility.

Begley states that NSTec's fiber optics support is extensive and has considerable expertise. "We have the ability to splice or weld single mode fibers as well as multi-mode fibers that range in diameter from 50 microns to 1 millimeter," she says. Additional capabilities include: designing Safety Interlock Systems, performing power measurements, and gas-blocking and high-pressure sealing-fiber assemblies. The fiber optic staff includes a fully trained Laser Safety Officer.

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## NSTec Pilots Step Up During Emergency

Air traffic controllers in Los Angeles and Las Vegas have offered a pat on the back to two National Security Technologies (NSTec) pilots who recently provided tracking aid to an aircraft in distress.

Gary Butler and Don Smith were departing an airport in California in April, heading to Las Vegas, when they heard controllers asking airliners to help locate a Piper Tomahawk that had declared "Mayday" on emergency frequencies and had then disappeared from radar.

Butler and Smith followed last-known coordinates provided by controllers and located the aircraft flying at a low altitude toward the airstrip in Baker, California. Aviation officials called emergency services to that location while Butler and Smith continued to follow the aircraft until it finally landed safely in Baker.

When they arrived at Nellis Air Force Base, Smith said he and Butler were congratulated by controllers who heard the incident on the emergency frequency. They were later notified the airplane apparently had suffered a "fuel-related" issue, and they were again thanked by controllers in Los Angeles for their assistance.

"Gary and Don perform outstanding work every day in support of our federal customers, and the quick-thinking actions of these two men demonstrate NSTec's continued commitment to the community and our nation," says Steve Younger, NSTec President.

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