

# NSSCommunicator

**nscc**

NASA Shared Services Center

**Fifth Anniversary**

**Vision:**  
Unparalleled Service

**Mission:**  
To provide timely, accurate,  
high-quality, cost-effective,  
and customer-focused  
support for selected NASA  
business and  
technical services.





# *Best Laid Plans*



“In early July 2005, I accepted Rick Arbutnot’s offer to serve on a detail assignment at the NASA Shared Services Center in Washington, DC, as the Deputy Director of the Business and Administration Office...

As I expected, this was a very challenging and exciting time—being in on the ground floor of establishing a new NASA Center. The work that needed to be done and the obstacles that had to be overcome didn’t dim my enthusiasm for being on the start-up team for the NSSC. I embraced commuting back and forth from my home in Miss. to Washington, DC, and I dove into the work needed to start up a new organization.

My organization (which consisted of about four employees) worked tirelessly to set up the NSSC in the Working Capital Fund, develop Center processes and procedures, and develop the NSSC chargeback model and funding profile. I also had to hire the staff needed to perform the functions, and ensure that a facility was available to house the NSSC staff after its move to the Stennis Space Center—planned for August 2005.” (Becky Dubuisson)

“Our official report date at Stennis was August 22, 2005—one week before Katrina. I actually flew back to DC on Friday, August 26 to prepare to come back for a house hunting trip with my wife the following week.” (Ken Newton)





# Calm Before the Storm...



“By Friday, August 26, 2005, we were staring a potential hurricane in the face—but we really didn’t understand the severity of it. We advised our employees of the basic hurricane safety instructions and told them we would see them the following week. By Saturday, we realized that the hurricane had a potential to be much stronger than we initially believed. My staff and I were on the phone contacting new NSSC employees advising them to seek shelter away from the Mississippi/Louisiana coastal areas. By Monday, we were hunkered down, witnessing the systematic and catastrophic destruction of the Mississippi Gulf Coast and surrounding areas.” (Becky Dubuisson)

“We had every intention of moving to Mississippi in September of 2005. Nikki was ready to join the NSSC. The night Katrina hit the coast, we could not sleep. We spent the night watching the Weather Channel and wondering what would become of the future plans we had carved out.” (Mike Tubbs)

“Although everyone seemed to be watching the reports on Katrina, we were preoccupied with our search for a home and made an offer on a house that week...unfortunately, we didn’t get the house. By Friday morning, the reports on the storm were getting serious. However, I was determined to find a home to settle into and figured we could weather it out for another day or two. By Friday night, panic started to set in. New Orleans Mayor Nagin was concerned about not having enough body bags to cover all the casualties they were expecting from the storm. Although I kept trying to make a case to stay, my wife (Mae Mangieri of NSSC’s Customer Satisfaction and Communication) insisted we get out as soon as we could, and convinced my parents to start packing and make their way back to Houston immediately. I called the airlines and got us booked on a flight back to Florida for Saturday morning. I believe it was the last flight out of Gulfport before all the airports shut down.” (Dan Mangieri)

“That weekend watching the events unfold, from the size that Katrina grew to in the gulf and then the devastation on land in the Florida panhandle, Mobile, the Mississippi Gulf Coast, and New Orleans—Wow! Where do we go from here?” (Ken Newton)



# Katrina's Destruction

"My children and I rode the hurricane out in our home; we camped out in the hallway. We lost the roof of the house and the back side of the house to the strong winds and trees. I lost my home and my job. I was suddenly faced with getting a roof over our heads and securing some financial support. I pitched a tent in the backyard, and we lived in it for months. I made a daily water and rations trek to the local check points."

(Sonny Provost)

"Some things I'll never forget: cleaning out two refrigerators that had been without power for more than two weeks, Meals Ready to Eat (MRE's), having a "blue" (tarpaulin) roof for five months, raking and bagging debris that filled more than one hundred 60-gallon drum liners, streets lined with fallen trees (stacked so high it felt like driving through a tunnel), how hot and rainless it was in September, power surges and outages."

(Janet Kovac)

"It was unbelievable, words cannot express ones feelings. Terry Jackson and I were the only NSSC employees that were able to work after the hurricane. We shared an office space the size not much bigger than a closet. Rick and others would have telecons with us on a regular basis from DC. We had several employees that lost their condos in Slidell. I recall Terry and I had to get the proper clothing, gloves, and a truck to go to the condos and retrieve our employees' belongings."

"I first arrived here shortly after Katrina. I served in Vietnam and the devastation was worse than anything I ever saw in Vietnam."

(Dave White)



"When I first arrived on the Gulf Coast, I was surprised to see such devastation. Houses and businesses flattened to the ground. Debris was everywhere! I now had concerns about finding a home for me and my children. My family and friends were advising me to cancel my resignation and remain in Huntsville, Ala."

(Kathy Linn)

"I arrived in November 2005 from the Cincinnati area and couldn't believe the devastation. I was in a hotel in downtown New Orleans for the first two months. The commute was horrible; the twin spans were down to one lane in each direction, and there were no street signs or street lights. Usually the road was a different obstacle course every morning and evening. You never knew what objects you'd be dodging: ladders, paint buckets, cinder blocks, etc. Trying to find a place to eat or wash clothes was another challenge."

(Cassandra Clark)

# Katrina's Destruction





# We Are Staying!

“The senior staff quickly came together to develop the NSSC “Way Forward” and met with the NASA Administrator. The Agency decided, based on the NSSC senior leadership’s recommendation after a thorough assessment and consideration of several options, the NSSC would return to Stennis Space Center in January 2006. According to the new schedule, the NSSC would open its doors on March 1, 2006, (only five months later than originally planned). This decision honored NASA’s commitment to the States of Mississippi and Louisiana. While not easy, it was the right thing to do. When the NSSC conducted a job fair at the Stennis Space Center in October 2005, 1,097 candidates attended—many experienced and high-quality—who were intent on supporting the NSSC in successfully implementing the new NASA Center.

Most of the NSSC’s employees were severely impacted by this hurricane. While I clearly remember the destruction, the lack of infrastructure, etc., what I remember most is all of us pulling together to move ahead with the task of forming the new NSSC—in the face of personal devastation. I remember the commitment of the employees, some living in tents, almost all in temporary housing of some type, making the daily commitment to get the NSSC up and running.” (Becky Dubuisson)

“I thought about moving to Huntsville. It is a beautiful area and had employment opportunities. I attended two job fairs. In the end I decided to return home, if only to repair or rebuild, and to try to find work that wouldn’t require moving. My husband had passed away in June 2005, and I hoped to find a job that would let my daughter finish high school with her classmates and friends.” (Janet Kovac)

“I have always been amazed by the tenacity of the NSSC workforce in those early days. In spite of so many personal tragedies, displaced family members, lost homes and possessions, here they were—often working long hours to get the NSSC up and running.” (Cassandra Clark)

“I started work at the NSSC, like so many others, while we were living in a FEMA trailer and building a home. My husband and I call Katrina our “Do Over” in life. After the storm, we found a strength and resilience we didn’t realize we possessed. Starting work at the NSSC was my return to normalcy, and I was ready.” (Judy Trowbridge)

“I was already committed and had no reservations about keeping my plans. I thought maybe I could help with the recovery. We found a home in Diamondhead, and moved into our new home on January 6, 2006. I was able to see the local communities come back to life. Residents and people from all over the country took rapid action to begin rebuilding their lives and their communities. When we were interviewing for the NSSC positions, it was heartbreaking to hear the Katrina stories, and many of the people were living in FEMA trailers. This is an era I will never forget, and I am happy to say I made the right decision by moving to this area and working at the NSSC.” (Kathy Linn)

“We visited in October. The damage we saw changed us forever—but the attitude, resiliency, and character of the people we met convinced us that a move was still the right choice.” (Mike and Nikki Tubbs)



# We Are Staying!



## NSSC Job Fair Entrance



# The Good Ol' Days



"When I started working for Rick in 2005, I could walk down one small hallway and see every employee that was on the payroll. We were located in Washington, DC, apart from NASA Headquarters. I had three days of training prior to officially becoming Rick's assistant. I was scared to death! After asking for several electronic forms and applications, I was told it was all done by hard copy. I thought, "What have I gotten myself into?" (Kathy Slade)

"Due to the inability to find available housing, we did the initial planning for the NSSC from Washington, DC. On February 6, 2006, when I actually reported for duty at Stennis, I was still unable to find adequate housing. I stayed in a trailer for four months while my family remained in DC. It was difficult being separated from my wife and three boys for that long. But, it actually made it easier to focus on the monumental task of meeting all of the challenges of a March 1, 2006, "Go Live" date." (Ken Newton)

"When I began work at the NSSC, we had not yet occupied Building 5100, the temporary site of the NSSC. We had a difficult time finding office space for our leadership team, but eventually we moved our leadership team into a couple of rooms on Stennis grounds. At that time, we had only hired one employee." (Dave White)

"I started work in Building 5100 in December 2005, one of two Procurement Service Providers reporting to the functional manager. I used a personal e-mail account for work correspondence—nasa.gov accounts weren't assigned for more than a month. I nagged the Business Office almost daily to request e-TES ID's for new hires. There were 33 SP Procurement new hires in January, eight in February, and five in March. E-TES timesheets were paper then." (Janet Kovac)

"I started right after the move to Building 5100. There were less than 50 people working at the NSSC at the time. We were getting computers and phones okay, but supplies (pens, paper, etc.) hadn't arrived yet. A couple of us went to the Dollar Store and bought our own supplies. Once the NSSC started to "mass hire," it got real crowded, but most people took it in stride. They had to erect cubes to accommodate the number

of people coming on board. Some new hires had to work off of tables that were set up in their work areas. In the beginning, I knew everyone, and I knew where they sat, because they had to come and get their login envelope from me." (Carol Billiot)

"When we first started, we were in quads sitting on folding chairs. The paper that we were using for the copy machines and printers was "recycled" paper. Now, when I say "recycled," I mean we were using the back of paper that had already been used. As time went on, and we started to expand (still before "Go Live"), the HR department was moved into two large open rooms, with two people sharing folding tables as their desks. We were using cardboard boxes standing on their sides as filing systems for our binders." (Shelley Lee)

"We (the Customer Contact Center) moved into Building 5100 on January 3, 2006. There was no furniture, only a few folding tables and chairs. We were able to see the Contact Center mature from an empty room to a room furnished and wired for our entire staff." (Kathy Linn)

"The beginning was great here at the NSSC. In January of 2006, we were a small group; it was so easy to get to know each other. Everyone pitched in on the training and learning sessions of the job. No one had to ask; we just all dove into learning what was put before us and improving upon it. There wasn't any distinction between service providers or civil servants. We were just NSSC employees getting the job done, and we did just that." (Sonny Provost)

"In my early days with the NSSC, we were in Building 5100, and I sat in the lobby area next to the elevators. The elevators would malfunction and alarm all day long. Some employees were afraid to get into the elevators, and I would assure them it would be okay. Now that we've moved to our new building, I do not miss hearing the elevator alarms throughout the day. I do miss seeing everyone passing my desk!" (Cindy Mroueh)

"I feel fortunate to have been moved quite a few times while we occupied Building 5100. I met a lot of folks from different functions and positions. I enjoyed learning what we were all about at the NSSC. I've got to say I miss the close proximity we shared back then, but would not trade this new building to go back." (Judy Trowbridge)





## The More Things Change

**H**aving had the great opportunity to be involved from the beginning, it is amazing to see how the investment in planning and time has minimized the surprises and the “if we had it to do all over again” moments. Our greatest successes have been achieved when we approach challenges as a team, taking the time to identify and mitigate risks, and communicating. The processes have evolved, as you would expect, into a maturing and stabilizing organization. Our attention to detail has also added to our success—service recovery plans, quality control plans, responsiveness protocols, and remaining customer focused.

It is great to know that we are not afraid to change for the greater good—for the better of our great NSSC employee team, the better of those paying the bill, and most importantly the better of our customers. It has truly been delightful seeing managers, supervisors, leads, and each of our NSSC team members embrace continuous improvement and the necessity to constantly and consistently improve.” (Ken Newton)

“Initially, the biggest change was the high turnover rate of employees. That was shocking! However, now that we are stabilized, turnover has reduced, and we are maintaining a great solid workforce.” (Suzanne Honeycutt)

“The biggest change is how much we’ve grown in size—especially since we moved into Building 1111. We don’t get to know each other as we used to. I think the quad-cube environment in Building 5100 helped people get acquainted in the beginning, which helped foster working together for an organization just starting up.” (Carol Billiot)

“Everything has grown! As teams have gained the trust of customers, they have assumed more and more responsibility. There is a real Agency-wide “team-effort” that was hard to establish in the first year. Processes are more efficient, and the people involved are more knowledgeable.” (Nikki and Mike Tubbs)

“There are more people here to offer new ways of streamlining each procedure.” (Sonny Provost)

“Standing up the Contact Center from scratch with the resources and tools didn’t take long; however, the information gathering of the 55+ services transitioning to the NSSC is an ongoing task. Our knowledge database and the NSSC Customer Service Portal are our life line.” (Kathy Linn)



Description	FY 2006	FY 2010	FY 2011 (First Quarter)	Total since Go Live - March 2006
Employees	279 (Feb 06)	522	525	525
Activities	10	52	52	52
Customer Inquiries	8,851	88,444	21,206	380,583
Grants (Awards & Funding Supplements)	686	5,443	704	16,385
Travel Vouchers	25,420	75,269	16,823	348,617
AP Transactions	0	87,476	20,199	227,789
Initial Calls Resolved	4033 @ 91%	29,078 @ 97%	5,762 @ 93%	153,855 @ 97%
Budget	\$41M	\$58.4M	\$15.5M	
Payroll	\$30M	\$51.2M	\$13.4M	

# Slow and Steady

“The success of the NSSC over the past five years is clearly evidenced by the numerous awards it has received. It is humbling to realize that the NSSC has received a major industry award each year since Go-Live. Without question, this is due to the exceptional employees who make up the NSSC. It has been a genuine pleasure for me to know and to work side-by-side with such dedicated and professional ladies and gentlemen. I would like to wish each of you the very best in the days ahead and to thank you for your outstanding service to NASA. The NSSC is on a path for continued growth and success, and I am confident that its employees are poised to take this organization to even greater heights in the future.” (Rick Arbuthnot)

“Changing NASA culture to accept a Shared Services model has been the biggest challenge. NASA employees take such pride in their work, and are so passionate, that convincing them a major change can be good is difficult (as it should be). It took more than a PowerPoint Presentation to show NASA we were ready. We had to be consistent and perform every day. Winning that trust was the biggest challenge, but also the greatest reward.” (Nikki and Mike Tubbs)

“It seems there is a level of acceptance of the NSSC throughout the Agency that certainly did not exist when NSSC opened. We’re not 100% there yet, but it seems it is getting better. Culture change is always hard.” (Dan Mangieri)

“My favorite NSSC story has to be when the NSSC Procurement team attended the Procurement Conference in Baltimore, Md., in December 2008. Each Center was tasked to present to the audience what we do, what we are about, etc. It was the holiday season, so we briefed in song (to holiday tunes) what the NSSC does, what it offers, and even tried to recruit other



Centers’ employees. Needless to say, we made a big impact and made everyone laugh—they even sang along with us! To top it off, Mr. Bill McNally, Associate Administrator for Agency Procurement, wore his Mardi Gras beads for the remainder of the day.” (Suzanne Honeycutt)

“We have earned a reputation of getting the job done, overcoming operational challenges, and meeting and exceeding customer expectations. As our leader, Mr. Rick Arbuthnot, would say, “providing unparalleled service”...great service at a great price! Rick will truly be missed!” (Ken Newton)

“There has been an attitude change about the NSSC. We have become a recognized and accepted way of doing business for the Agency.” (Cassandra Clark)





## Oh, the Places You'll Go

"I am so proud of the tenacity of the local employees who, though working to recover from total devastation, pulled themselves up by their bootstraps and did whatever was necessary to enable the NSSC to successfully open for business on March 1, 2006. The Executive Director noted that, "NSSC employees demonstrated high flexibility under duress." By the following year of operation, the NSSC received the runner-up award for Best New Captive Shared Services—an amazing feat and a testament to the will and character of the employees and the people of Miss. and La. The success story continues today with the NSSC eventually receiving the Best New Captive Shared Services Organization award in 2009 (truly an Oscar experience), and the Corporate Executive Board's Force of Ideas award—and this is largely due to the work ethic and performance of the entire NSSC team." (Becky Dubuison)



HDI Certified Support Center

*Presented To*

**NSSC Customer Contact Center  
Operated by CSC**

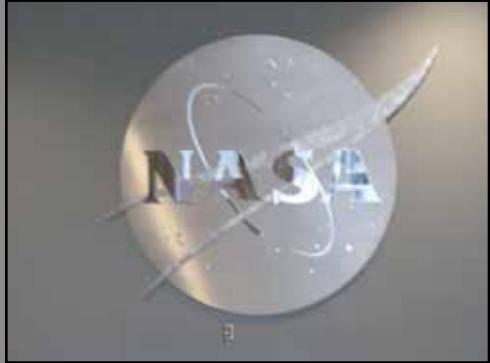
**January 2009 - January 2011**

Demonstration of excellence in eight core areas:  
Leadership, Policy and Strategy, People Management,  
Resources, Process and Procedure,  
People Satisfaction, Customer Satisfaction,  
and Performance Results

"What made me most proud was being a part of the NSSC's first successful transition in March 2006, when the NSSC opened for business. A lot of hard work went into preparing for the first "Go Live." It was very gratifying to see the results of our efforts." (Dan Mangieri)

"It was a lot of work standing up the Customer Contact Center from scratch. We spent our days prior to "Go-Live" procuring the right software, equipment, staffing, and developing and writing processes and procedures. All our efforts were recognized in 2009, when the Customer Contact Center was awarded the Help Desk Institute Support Center Certification. This was exciting news for us." (Kathy Linn)

"The greatest proudest moment for me had to be seeing the faces of Rick, Joyce, Becky, Steve, and Ginger when we were announced as the winner of the 2009 Shared Services "Excellence Award" for Best New Captive Services Delivery—beating out an organization such as Walmart Corp., nonetheless! This was the culmination of all the hard work, long hours, and dedication of all involved—including the efforts of our Center partners." (Ken Newton)





# Trivia is Not Trivial

## Top 10 NSSC Trivia

1. In Building 5100 there was an alligator, named Ruffles, who served as the NSSC mascot. Ruffles was often spotted near the parking lot of Building 5100.
2. Employee of the Quarter Ceremonies were once held in the loading dock area. There was no seating available, unless you wanted to sit on the cement floor.
3. There used to be a bulletin board called, "The NSSC Baby Board," where employees could post pictures of all newborns. The first NSSC baby was John, son of Sonny Provost.
4. Right after we moved into Building 1111, Jim Caldwell and Cindy Epperson donned green wigs, hats, and aprons, and pushed a cart with pastries and juice while serving the entire NSSC Finance team. Jim and Cindy do so many things well, and supporting their staff is at the top of the list. (Judy Trowbridge)
5. The Customer Contact Center participates in Customer Service Week events each year. During the week, the NSSC Executive Director and other senior leaders answer customer calls in the Customer Contact Center. It's amazing how good our senior leadership is at answering the phones! (Kathy Linn)
6. Back in the original days, when we were located in Building 5100, we were near the engine test stands. When an engine was being tested, we didn't know if it was thunder, another hurricane, perhaps an earth quake, or what that was shaking the entire building and rattling the glass windows. Still, witnessing the test engines was definitely a spectacular sight to see. (Suzanne Honeycutt)
7. Alternate Workweek Schedules were not an option in 2005. (Janet Kovac)
8. SOLAR was the online learning system, not SATERN. (Janet Kovac)
9. The first ever NSSC Christmas party was held at an Irish Pub in Washington, DC; around 20 people attended. (Nikki Tubbs)
10. The 2006 NSSC Swingers was one of the worst softball teams in SSC history—won three games. Five years later, they have grown into one of the best teams in the league. (Mike Tubbs)





# THE BEST PART - YOU!

"The best part of our NSSC experience has been the relationships we have made over the last five years. In 2006, we were brand new to Mississippi; we knew no one. Our colleagues were so welcoming to us. Many have become our best friends. That's probably the biggest reason the Gulf Coast now feels like home." (Nikki and Mike Tubbs)



"I had so many friends move away from the Gulf Coast after the storm, so the best thing about working here at NSSC was the development of strong bonds and new friendships." (Sonny Provost)



"What a journey this has been! \*Jennings\*Scalles\*Buffalano \*Fails\*Braxton\*Dagleish\*Stromer\*Canon\*Claunch\*Johnson \*Reilly\*Perry\*Abrams\*Harwood\* are all names in the NSSC Hall of Fame that led the charge to lay the ground work for the NASA Shared Services Center, that arguably has become one of the premier customer-focused service delivery models in government. One of NSSC's primary goals was to meet the challenge established in the 2003 Strategic Plan; NASA's first Implementing Strategy was to "Achieve management and institutional excellence comparable to NASA's technical excellence." YOU have made it happen!" (Ken Newton)





**NSSCommunicator Fifth Anniversary Edition**  
NASA Shared Services Center  
Bldg. 1111  
Stennis Space Center, MS 39529  
[www.nssc.nasa.gov](http://www.nssc.nasa.gov)

