



Nevada Site Office News

Nevada Site Office General Counsel Receives First Annual Legal Excellence Award

Sharon A. Hejazi has received the First Annual National Nuclear Security Administration (NNSA) Legal Excellence Award for 2009. As the Site Counsel for the Nevada Site Office (NSO), Ms. Hejazi demonstrates the highest standards of legal skill, integrity, ethics, and achievement that support the accomplishment of the NNSA mission.

Ms. Hejazi represents the NNSA General Counsel as the legal advisor to the manager and staff of the NSO. She is responsible for the full spectrum of assigned legal functions related to programs and projects conducted at the Nevada Test Site (NTS).

For 20 years, Ms. Hejazi has provided legal services at the NSO, serving as Assistant Chief Counsel prior to her current assignment. She has played a pivotal role in facilitating a cooperative working relationship with regulators at the NTS. During an era of transition for the NSO, she has provided effective legal advice in the areas of Federal litigation, Price Anderson compliance, stockpile stewardship, worker safety and health, ethics, Privacy Act, Freedom of Information Act, etc., and represented the agency in numerous hearings before various administrative and regulatory tribunals.

Ms. Hejazi provided legal representation for NNSA in the first case brought by an NNSA contractor before the Civilian Board of Contract Appeals, involving multiple claims implicating divergent legal issues. In addition to her intensive efforts providing litigation services to the site office, her exceptional efforts as an in-house mediator were essential in mitigating an otherwise adversarial atmosphere, providing clarity of understanding to the negotiations, and ensuring the development of an effective settlement agreement. This beneficial resolution provided cost savings to the NNSA,

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enhanced the working relationship of the parties, and provided a foundational commitment to pursue internal agency mediation for potential disagreements in the future.

Ms. Hejazi's exceptional efforts were also pivotal in obtaining a Secretarial Exemption from Executive Order 13202, allowing the timely award of two essential construction projects of longstanding need to proceed and ensuring the ongoing stability of Nevada Site-wide labor relations essential to the mission of the agency. She also played a significant role in collaborating and coordinating with the NNSA Acting Deputy General Counsel, DOE Assistant General Counsel for Environment, and the DOE Environmental Management Program in a concerted team effort to effectively resolve a land withdrawal issue at the site. This resolution will ensure the continued availability of a radioactive waste disposal facility for the agency.



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