

# Spotlight shines on Hanford Site worker safety

Deborah Dunn, FH

A safety-conscious Hanford millwright and an Idaho Department of Energy program were among the nation's top 12 safety excellence award winners for the Occupational Safety and Health Administration Voluntary Protection Program that affects more than 750,000 American workers. Four percent, about 30,000 of those workers, participate through the specialized DOE Voluntary Protection Program. Within the DOE-VPP, Hanford won several 2001 DOE-complex-wide awards.

Labor Secretary Elaine Chao opened "Jazz Up Safety," the recent 17th annual conference of the Voluntary Protection Programs Participants' Association in New Orleans. In her address before a record-breaking crowd exceeding 2,300, Chao advocated legislation to codify VPP under the 1970 Occupational Safety and Health Act.

Fluor Hanford millwright Jack Griffith was one of four hourly workers presented 2001 Safety and Health Achievement Awards for safety and health knowledge and activities by workers who are not safety or health professionals ("VPPPA recognizes Hanford employee," *Hanford Reach*, Sept 10). He is believed to be the first DOE site employee to receive one of the VPPPA individual achievement awards.

After returning home, Griffith said, "I owe a lot of thanks to my immediate co-workers because they are the folks that continue to forge forward to do the work when I'm gone. That includes my management, Rich Howard and Marty Martin, and the millwrights that cover for me — Ken Cabbage, Mark Verwest, Steven DeMeyer, Dean Wilcox and Wayne Clary. These folks get a special thanks, along with my HAMTC safety representative Mike Stoner."

In other top-level awards, the first DOE site to receive a Site Safety and Health Outreach Award was Bechtel BWXT Idaho at the DOE Idaho National Engineering and Environmental Laboratory in Idaho Falls.

In separate ceremonies, awards were made to participants in the DOE-Voluntary Protection Program administered by the DOE Headquarters Office of Regulatory Liaison. Hanford winners were:

- DOE Star of Excellence: Fluor Federal Services, Inc.
- DOE Star of Excellence: the Fast Flux Test Facility
- DOE Superior Star: DynCorp Tri-Cities Services, Inc.
- DOE Superior Star: Day & Zimmerman Protection Technology Hanford
- DOE Superior Star: Pacific Northwest National Laboratory
- DOE-VPP Innovation Award: Pat Wright, PNNL, for the electronic VPP application
- DOE-VPP Federal Champions Award: Noble Atkins, DOE Richland Operations Office, for assisting five DOE-RL VPP programs achieve the DOE-VPP Gold Star and promoting star status efforts by other contractors and projects at Hanford.

Currently, within the entire DOE complex, 18 contractors or projects have earned the DOE-VPP Gold Star. Five are from Hanford, accounting for 28 percent of the DOE-VPP Gold Stars. Hanford's five DOE-VPP Gold

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Star winners are, in order of achievement: Day & Zimmerman Protection Technology Hanford, DynCorp Tri-Cities Services, Fluor Federal Services, Pacific Northwest National Laboratory and the Fast Flux Test Facility.

The conference featured more than 90 workshops including three from Hanford: "Deep Sixing Annual VPP Assessments," presented by Bob Evans, Jill Molnaa, Jack Griffith and Rich Kobelski; "Safety Representatives Program at a DOE Site" with Dave Jackson, John Jeskey and Bob Evans; and "Filing an Electronic Application for DOE-VPP," by Todd Hart, Pat Wright and Vern Madison.

In a special meeting, the possibility of holding the 2003 Occupational Safety and Health Administration Region 10 conference in the Tri-Cities was discussed.

The Voluntary Protection Program expands traditional safety and health programs by encouraging employee involvement and a partnership with labor to reduce injuries and obtain superior safety performance. On average, VPP workplaces have overall lost workday rates 50 percent below the industry average. Companies that commit to achieving VPP star status must work hand-in-hand with their employees and labor representatives to ensure that employees own the safety and health program, are involved in hazard prevention and recognition, and assist in the continuous improvement process. Once the partnership is achieved and the safety systems are successfully reducing injuries, the company is ready to make star status application to OSHA or DOE. ♦