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DOE-Richland contractors, programs earn safety honors

RICHLAND, Wash. – All three major contractors of the Department of Energy’s Richland Operations Office (DOE-RL) and one individual employee were recently recognized with DOE and national safety awards by the Voluntary Protection Program Participants Association (VPPPA).

Contractor Mission Support Alliance (MSA) received VPP Star of Excellence awards for both the HAMMER federal training center and MSA’s safeguards and security group. VPP Star of Excellence awards were also given to contractors Washington Closure Hanford (WCH) and CH2M HILL Plateau Remediation Company (CH2M), which also garnered a national Safety & Health Outreach Award for its After School Matters program.

“Our workers on the site are performing some of the most complex and hazardous work in the department,” said Stacy Charboneau, DOE-RL Manager. “I commend them for these awards and thank them for the safe work that led to this recognition.”

In addition, MSA’s Kevin Schoonover was awarded the national VPPPA Safety & Health Achievement Program Award, presented to non-managerial employees who have taken the initiative to learn and apply safety and health best practices.

"I would like to congratulate Kevin for winning this award," says Mike Wilson, MSA vice president of environmental, safety, health & training. "Through his dedication to safety, Kevin helps ensure that a safe work environment remains a top priority for not only his work group, but across Hanford."

The VPP Star of Excellence, awarded to each of the three DOE-RL contractors, is awarded to sites that go beyond the Star criteria and demonstrate excellence in outreach and mentoring efforts, along with exemplary employee involvement and management leadership related to VPP.

"Our employees' dedication to working safely and looking out for each other made this achievement possible," said Bill Kirby, CH2M's chief operations officer. "Worker involvement is key to our safety success and project performance."

WCH has worked more than six million safe hours straight without a lost-time work injury, which has contributed to their VPPPA Legacy of Stars award, given for achieving four consecutive Star of Excellence awards.

"I am very proud of our Washington Closure team for the recognition they are receiving for working safely while making fantastic cleanup progress," said Scott Sax, president and project manager, Washington Closure Hanford. "Our workers have embraced safety and as a result, have made tremendous progress by working efficiently on cleanup along the Columbia River."

The awards were announced at the VPPPA national conference in August.

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The Department of Energy's Richland Operations Office (DOE-RL) manages the Hanford Site near Richland, Washington. Along with the DOE Office of River Protection (ORP), DOE-RL is responsible for the federal government's cleanup of the legacy of more than 40 years of plutonium production at Hanford for the nation's defense. Except for the tank waste mission managed by ORP, DOE-RL is responsible for cleanup of all remaining Hanford waste streams and is currently focused on cleaning out and demolishing the high-hazard Plutonium Finishing Plant, excavating and disposing of contaminated soil and solid waste, treating contaminated groundwater, moving radioactive sludge out of the K West Basin and away from the Columbia River, and configuring Hanford Site infrastructure for the future. DOE-RL is also responsible for working with the National Park Service to implement and manage Hanford's portion of the new Manhattan Project National Historical Park, authorized by Congress in 2014. The office oversees Hanford Site work that is conducted by a federal and contractor workforce of approximately 4,200 personnel. Visit www.hanford.gov.