

NEWS RELEASE



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UNITED SPACE ALLIANCE PRESENTS QUEST FOR EXCELLENCE AWARDS TO OUTSTANDING EMPLOYEES

KENNEDY SPACE CENTER, Fla. (January 2006) -- United Space Alliance recently presented Quest for Excellence Awards to several exemplary employees who have distinguished themselves by contributing to the achievement of USA's mission and vision, which is to provide safe, high-quality, best-value space operations services.

USA presents Quest for Excellence Awards each month in the categories of outstanding Safety, Leadership, Administrative Excellence, Technical Achievement, Quality, Teamwork and Community Service.

The Quest for Excellence Award for Safety is designed for employees such as Merritt Island, Fla. resident William Stapleton, a senior technician, who was honored in October. During an operation in the Vehicle Assembly Building (VAB), he noticed that hand rails on an access platform were not in the proper configuration. Stapleton's report of the potential hazard resulted in modifications to the handrails alleviating the problem.

Also honored with Safety awards were the Foreign Object Debris Abatement Team and the Recycling Project Team. They were honored for meticulous inspections of Shuttle Launch Pad 39-B to eliminate any loose items and for utilizing plastic media instead of standard grit material in a project to remove corrosion from the VAB doors.

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Katherine Laufenberg of Rockledge received a Monthly Award for Leadership in November for coordinating efforts to replace thermal protection system tiles on the Orbiter Discovery, after they were damaged just hours prior to the first launch attempt for STS-114. After quickly assessing the problem, Laufenberg developed the plan to replace the tiles and solved problems that arose during installation, clearing the way for Discovery's Return to Flight.

Leadership awards were also presented to Phillip Davidson and Dori Swift, both of Cocoa, along with Harvey Mizell of Merritt Island. They led critical efforts in support of systems modifications to Launch Pad 39-B, managing the Complex Control Center in support of Shuttle processing and leading an effort to upgrade ground infrastructure systems.

Travis Williamson of Titusville received the December award for Administrative Excellence given to employees who play a key role in developing or implementing improvements in efficiency and performance. An Avionics Test Engineer, Williamson developed three databases that allow users to easily track each piece of hardware in the Avionics Laboratory. The innovative web-based tool has significantly improved documentation of hardware in the lab.

John Judd and Carolyn Halavin, both of Merritt Island, were also Administrative Excellence Award winners. They were recognized for developing a library of standardized facility drawings and reconciling financial systems.

A Technical Achievement Award was presented to Donald Swem of Cape Canaveral in October. A Systems Engineer, Swem was responsible for bringing the Mate/De-Mate Device back on-line for the Shuttle's Return to Flight. With the systems remaining dormant for over two years, a problem with the Orbiter Side Access Platform's support arms. Their tube-like interiors were inaccessible for lubrication. Swem designed an innovative tool that lubricated the length of the tube, helping make the MDD ready for safe operation.

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Technical Achievement Awards honor those who develop advances in technology that have significant impact on Shuttle program or company goals. Also receiving the award were Paul MacInnis of Titusville, the Integrated Boom Assembly Team and the Thermal Windowpane Fastener Modification Team. These honorees were selected for their efforts in processing, testing and installing the Orbiter Boom Sensor System and implementing a critical modification on the Orbiter's thermal windowpanes.

Crane Operations Engineer Wally Majid of Titusville received a Quality Award in December. He coordinated Heavy Equipment Shop activities such as supporting removal of a main engine from the Orbiter Discovery and designing a special scaffolding to enable inspection of Solid Rocket Boosters. He also developed creative ways to use available equipment to support numerous crane operations at a critical time when his department's resources were spread thin in support of Return to Flight.

Along with Majid, a Quality Award was presented to Timothy Seymour of Geneva, Fla. who contributed to improving the quality of the products and processes in the Thermoform Laboratory, where plastic covers are manufactured to protect critical areas of the Orbiter, External Tank and Solid Rocket Boosters during pre-flight processing.

Honored with a Community Service Award in December, Hypergolic Maintenance Facility Technician Edwin Claunch of Cocoa Beach works as a tutor each week in his daughter's second grade class at Roosevelt Elementary School. He helps students needing one-on-one assistance with skill development in reading, math, writing and computer skills. The students include many children whose parents are stationed at Patrick Air Force Base and are often deployed away from home.

Employees who have volunteered their time and demonstrated an ongoing commitment to improving the quality of life in the local area receive the Community Service Award. Also honored in this category was Donna Buck of Merritt Island, who has been a long-time participant in numerous community fundraising efforts.

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A Teamwork Quest for Excellence Award was presented to the Wire Rope Maintenance Team in November. Two employees developed a more efficient means of cleaning the wire ropes on cranes, doors and platform systems at the Kennedy Space Center. Previously, technicians performed this cumbersome job by hand, requiring many labor hours. The members of the Wire Rope Maintenance Team designed and developed a tool that not only cleans the wire rope more rapidly, but also collects the debris, thus reducing cleanup time.

Teamwork awards are presented to groups who distinguish themselves by contributing to the achievement of USA's mission and to the realization of USA's goals and objectives. Also honored were the Electrical Power and Ground Launch Sequencer Team, the Launch Processing System Team, and the Discovery Wire Repair and Protection Team for tasks such as modifying major computer systems and completing Orbiter wire repairs while minimizing impacts to other operations.

United Space Alliance, established in 1995, is a leader in space operations offering extensive experience in space launch and recovery operations; mission planning and control; flight hardware processing; space flight training; on-orbit assembly; payload deployment and servicing; rendezvous/proximity operations and docking; large-scale integration and sustaining engineering. United Space Alliance serves as NASA's prime contractor for the Space Shuttle and provides operations services for the International Space Station. United Space Alliance employs more than 10,000 people in Texas, Florida, and Alabama.

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