

NEWS RELEASE



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UNITED SPACE ALLIANCE PRESENTS SUPERIOR ACHIEVEMENT AWARDS TO FLORIDA EMPLOYEES

KENNEDY SPACE CENTER, Fla. (February 2006) -- United Space Alliance recently presented its highest employee recognition to several outstanding employees and honored Charles Romeo of Port St. John as "Employee of the Year" at its annual Quest for Excellence Awards ceremony.

A Thermal Protection System Engineer, Romeo also received a Superior Achievement Recognition Award (SARA) for Safety. The honors were bestowed for his efforts in reviewing processing documents, called "job cards." Romeo discovered that fasteners designed to hold a tile carrier panel on the Orbiter Atlantis were shorter than he expected. After researching the issue, he learned that while the fasteners were the correct ones for Atlantis, they were too short for the other Orbiters. Romeo's efforts led to the "job card" instructions being changed, ensuring the use of the correct parts.

USA presents Quest for Excellence awards each month in the categories of outstanding Safety, Quality, Leadership, Administrative Excellence, Technical Achievement, Community Service and Teamwork. Each year, the best candidates in each category are selected for the SARA Award.

The SARA for Quality was a tie with the award presented to Senior Technician Richard Justin of Deltona and Crane Operations Engineer Wally Majid of Titusville.

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Justin's attention to detail possibly averted a flight hardware failure. He discovered that in the special kit designed for installation of the body flap on the Orbiter Atlantis, incorrect actuator nuts were included. Justin researched the engineering drawings and determined what the correct part was. His find also led to a re-inspection of Discovery. Incorrect nuts had been installed on that Orbiter and were subsequently changed.

In the six weeks leading up to Discovery's STS-114 mission, Majid displayed outstanding dedication to mission success by providing safe and reliable services from the Heavy Equipment Shop. With other engineers in his department on special assignments, Majid supported activities such as removal of a main engine from the Orbiter Discovery, designed a special scaffolding to enable inspection of Solid Rocket Boosters and developed innovative uses of available equipment to support numerous crane operations when his department's resources were spread thin in support of Return to Flight.

The SARA for Leadership honor was given to Merritt Island resident Eric Henry, who serves as Manager of Orbiter Handling and Mechanisms Engineering. He met many challenges involving the Orbiter Boom Sensor System and the replacement of the Shuttle's Rudder Speed Brake on all three Orbiters. In the past, such mechanisms could not be checked until the vehicle was powered up. Henry was instrumental in developing and implementing a new process for testing without vehicle power. Due to this innovative approach, flow processing has been streamlined considerably and is more efficient.

The SARA for Administrative Excellence went to Senior Contracts Administrator Paula Klick of Merritt Island. She supported USA's SRB Element and NASA at the Marshall Space Flight Center in working critical Columbia Accident Investigation Board and Return to Flight changes to the Space Flight Operations Contract. She negotiated and processed contract changes that included the addition of the SRB Mounted Observation Cameras, External Tank Bolt Catcher Redesign, Booster Segment Motor Igniter and SRB Retrieval Vessel Radar.

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The Technical Achievement Award was a tie between Electrical Engineer Michael Fuscaldo of Cocoa and Systems Engineer Donald Swem of Cape Canaveral.

As the Lead Integrated Network and Control System Engineer at Launch Pad B, Fuscaldo contributed his expertise to several Shuttle program-mandated improvements. In addition to supporting the Pad B Electrical group's readiness for the STS-114 pad flow, he insured the successful development, fabrication, and installation of three critical and complex modifications to the Bipod Heater, the ET Camera and ET Liquid Oxygen Feed Line Bellows. All three modifications performed flawlessly during final system testing, helping clear the way for the STS-114 mission.

Swem was responsible for bringing the Mate/De-Mate Device back on-line for the Shuttle's Return to Flight. While supporting numerous other systems, Swem spent nearly a year leading the effort to re-prove and re-commission the critical systems at the MDD. With the systems dormant for over two years, the biggest problem was the Orbiter Side Access Platform's support arms. Their tube-like interiors were inaccessible for lubrication. Swem designed, built and implemented an innovative tool that lubricated the length of the tube, helping make the MDD ready for safe operation.

The SARA for Community Service was a tie with the award presented to Donna Buck and Martha Pessaro, both of Merritt Island.

Buck, who works in USA's Payroll Department, has been an energetic and enthusiastic leader and contributor to various community projects for the past ten years. She has made major contributions through her ongoing participation and fund raising for the March of Dimes, the American Cancer Society's Relay for Life and the Leukemia and Lymphoma Society's Light the Night, and fundraisers for the fight against Multiple Sclerosis. Buck is also heavily involved in her church's Youth Group Mentoring Program. In addition to all these activities, she still finds time to deliver meals to the sick and elderly.

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Pessaro of SRB Program Management is a dedicated to improving the quality of life in her community. She averages over 100 hours per month volunteering for several organizations. Her major contributions are to the programs conducted by the Friends of the Enchanted Forest in partnership with Brevard County's Environmentally Endangered Lands Program. Over the past ten years, Pessaro has served in many leadership roles including the organization's president. As Program Director for the building of Serenity Pond, a focal point for teaching aquatic ecology, Pessaro managed to bring the project through all phases on schedule.

The SARA for Teamwork was presented to the 16-member SRB Marine Operations Team. In December 2004 the SRB retrieval ship Liberty Star and her crew departed Port Canaveral with the External Tank barge "Pegasus" in tow, bound for the NASA's Michoud Facility. Shortly after leaving port, Liberty Star developed a problem with her tow winch. A return to port was not possible, and it was late afternoon on a Friday just before the Christmas break. Additional team members were called in to begin removing the drive motor from sister ship Freedom Star's tow winch. Simultaneously, a team on Liberty Star removed the failed drive motor and a small, two-person boat returned it to port. The motors were swapped and the crew of the small boat returned to meet their ship ten miles offshore. The replacement motor was installed allowing Liberty Star and "Pegasus" to safely arrive in Louisiana on schedule due to the extraordinary efforts of the SRB Marine Operations Team.

The team members are: John Bensen of Cape Canaveral, Carroll Clement of Cocoa Beach, Charles Conjour and James Harrington of Cocoa, Corey Davis and Patrick Downey of Edgewater, Daniel Dugan, Timothy Freeley, Darin Schuster and William Wade of Merritt Island, Allan Gravina, David Harris and Phillip Meyer of Titusville, James Harris of Mims, George Kirk Jr. of Orlando and Clinton Small of New Smyrna Beach.

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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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