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UNITED SPACE ALLIANCE EMPLOYEES RECEIVE PRESTIGIOUS NASA AWARDS

KENNEDY SPACE CENTER, Fla. (July 16, 2007) -- Two United Space Alliance (USA) managers and three teams who play key roles in support of the Space Shuttle program at the Kennedy Space Center were recently presented prestigious NASA honors in ceremonies at the Kennedy Space Center.

USA's Director of Ground Operations Safety Quality and Mission Assurance (SQ&MA) Kathy Gay and Mark Laposky, Project Manager for Infrastructure Program Management in Ground Operations Engineering, were recipients of the NASA Exceptional Public Service Medal. The space agency presents the Exceptional Public Service medal to individuals whose extraordinary accomplishments contribute substantially to the NASA mission.

Gay was recognized for her leadership and contributions to America's Space Shuttle Program.

Gay joined the space program at KSC in 1987 as a systems engineer. She has advanced with increasing responsibilities through various management positions including Deputy Director of Orbiter Operations, Director of Integrated Data Systems and currently serves as the Director of SQ&MA.

Gay became the Director of Safety Quality and Mission Assurance in 2004. During the time she has served as Director, the organization has been instrumental in studying Shuttle program risks. In addition, several processing improvements have been implemented including the collection and analysis of real-time safety data gathered through the use of PDA's (personal digital assistants) in the processing areas.

Laposky was honored for leading the effort to complete major upgrades to the Crawler Transporters (CTs).

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PRESS INFORMATION

-- 2 --

Since 2001, Laposky has excelled in managing the multi-year, multi-million dollar project established to ensure that the Crawler Transporters are reliable and ready to support the transportation of the Shuttles. His most recent achievements include his successful management of several of the most comprehensive CT modifications in the 40-year history of the transporters, This effort involved the redesign and installation of new engine radiators and exhaust systems, driver's cabs, electrical motor control centers, and ventilation systems.

When structural cracks were discovered in the Crawler Transporter tread belt shoes, Laposky worked in developing design enhancements that led to the manufacture of complete sets of new shoes for both Crawler Transporters.

In addition, the 94-member Crawler Transporter Tread Belt Shoe Replacement Team received the Public Service Group Achievement Award in recognition of their superior team performance in the design and installation of the new tread belt shoes.

Each crawler has eight tread belts, with 57 one-ton shoes on each belt, for a total of 456 shoes per crawler. As additional shoe failures occurred, it became apparent that the supply of serviceable spare shoes would soon be exhausted.

The CT Tread Belt Shoe Replacement Team was formed to develop new design specifications for stronger, longer-lasting shoes, a project that need to be completed in time to support STS-114 processing activities and without impacting the launch schedule.

A Public Service Group Achievement Award also went to the 21-member USA External Tank Engineering and Shop Processing Team for "outstanding support of Return-to-Flight External Tank modifications and processing for STS-121/ET-119 and STS-115/ET-118."

Major return-to-flight changes to the standard External Tank processing required a high volume of non-standard work and the associated documentation to be generated and implemented. The ET Engineering and Shop Processing Team provided nearly seven days a week, 24-hour support to meet the External Tank/Solid

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PRESS INFORMATION

-- 3 --

Rocket Booster mate milestones and program-critical launch attempt windows. The team also supported a contingent from Lockheed Martin Michoud Operations in a wide range of non-standard modifications and liquid hydrogen tank entry and engine cut-off sensor removal and replacement and post entry closeouts.

NASA recognized the Process Improvement Engineering Team with a Public Service Group Achievement Award for sustained initiative in improving quality and accurately implementing corrective actions. The engineers from USA's Process Improvement Engineering are responsible for analysis and oversight of Shuttle Program Corrective Action tasks. The team includes 18 USA members and one person from Science Applications International Corp.

United Space Alliance is a world leader in space operations with extensive experience in all aspects of the field. Headquartered in Houston and employing 10,000 people in Texas, Florida and Alabama, USA is applying its broad range of capabilities to NASA's Space Shuttle, International Space Station and Constellation programs as well as to space operations customers in the commercial and international space industry sectors.

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