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OSHA AWARDS UNITED SPACE ALLIANCE A “STAR” FOR SAFETY

KENNEDY SPACE CENTER, Florida (April 26, 2004) – United Space Alliance at Kennedy Space Center has been awarded full “Star” status under the U.S. Department of Labor’s Occupational Safety & Health Administrations’ Voluntary Protection Program (VPP). The recognition follows a 3-year pilot program, called “Demonstration Star,” that tested the idea of a contractor on federal property being admitted to the program separately from the site host.

USA’s KSC site joined the company’s eight other locations in Florida, Texas and Alabama in achieving this status, making USA an “all-star” company. NASA also received Star status, and joined USA and SGS today in receiving a VPP Star Worksite flag.

The VPP is a joint program between OSHA and general industry. Companies are voluntarily evaluated against stringent health and safety criteria and are admitted into the program based on their level of achievement. Only the most exemplary safety programs are allowed into the VPP.

“I commend everyone at USA, Kennedy Space Center, for all of their diligence and hard work in successfully achieving a world class occupational safety and health management system,” OSHA Regional Administrator Cindy Coe Laseter stated in the letter informing USA of its VPP Star status.

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“Credit for this outstanding recognition goes to all our USA employees and those of our subcontractor partners here in Florida who worked together with OSHA to make sure USA provides the safest, healthiest work environment possible,” said Richard Beagley, USA Vice President of Safety and Mission Assurance.

The VPP Star designation means that USA has voluntarily met a series of 32 stringent criteria that exceed OSHA’s minimum safety requirements. USA-KSC met the requirements for VPP Star status in 2002. Under OSHA’s rules governing the program at that time, the host – in this case NASA – is considered to be responsible for the safety of all at the worksite. However, because of its unique role as the prime contractor for Shuttle operations, USA has ultimate responsibility for the safety of its employees and did not fit the usual “tenant” role described in OSHA regulations.

USA, working jointly with Space Gateway Support, another KSC contractor, convinced OSHA to develop a pilot program, called VPP Star Demonstration. The goal was to prove to OSHA that USA has complete responsibility and accountability regarding the safety and health of its employees, and therefore should be permitted to hold VPP Star status.

“During the Star Demonstration period, USA had to meet requirements that were even more rigid than VPP Star, such as the more frequent inspection schedule of every 12 to 18 months as opposed to the 36 to 42-month inspection cycle,” said Art Edwards, USA’s VPP project manager at KSC.

The original demonstration plan called for a 5-year pilot. However, because of the success of efforts

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by USA and SGS, the pilot was cut short and both are receiving Star status two years ahead of schedule.

“The combined efforts of the managers and employees of United Space Alliance, NASA, Space Gateway Support and OSHA will result in a permanent change in OSHA’s VPP requirements,” Laseter said, adding, “In essence, this change will open the door for previously ineligible employer to pursue VPP participation.”

“I am proud of what USA has achieved in creating a safe workplace, but this is a journey that is not over,” Edwards said. “Now the task before us is to maintain our status as a Star site, and we are all committed to making that happen.”

United Space Alliance, established in 1995, is a space operations business offering products and services in space flight training, space hardware processing, launch and return operations and on-orbit operations. A limited liability company owned equally by Boeing and Lockheed Martin, USA serves as NASA's prime contractor for the Space Shuttle and provides operations services for the International Space Station. USA employs more than 10,000 people in Texas, Florida, Alabama, Washington, D.C., and Russia.

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