

National Nuclear Security Administration/Nevada Field Office
P.O. Box 98518, Las Vegas, NV 89193 • 702-295-3521 • fax: 702-295-0154

News Media Contact:
Tracy Bower (702) 295-0961
Bowertl@nv.doe.gov

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Nevada National Security Site's Aviation Team Receives Four DOE Aviation Awards

Las Vegas, Nevada –The Nevada National Security Site (NNSS) Aviation Program swept four out of four awards in the Department of Energy (DOE)'s Office of Aviation Management annual awards recognition program. The NNSS' Aviation team, which works at the Remote Sensing Laboratory (RSL) offices at Nellis Air Force Base in Las Vegas, and at Joint Base Andrews near Washington, D.C., is responsible for helicopters and fixed-wing aircraft that conduct an array of special missions, ranging from aerial surveillance for radiological threats during major events around the world to aerial monitoring for consequence management to wildland firefighting operations at the NNSS. RSL's aviators also were called on to help in an advisory capacity during the 2011 tsunami and nuclear disaster in Japan.

The Aviation Program won top honors in the following categories:

Small Aviation Program Award Winner – Nevada Field Office/NSTec Aviation

This program was judged to be the most outstanding, efficient, effective and safest in all aspects of their flight program among all DOE Aviation Operations. The management/administration, operations, maintenance, training and safety programs were recognized as being the best in class for the DOE. Members of this team included both federal and contractor representatives.

Federal Aviation Program Manager Winner – Les Winfield

This award is presented to the best Federal Aviation Program Manager whose primary duties involve management of a Federal Aviation Program. Les Winfield has been the Federal Aviation Program manager for the past seven years and has significantly contributed to the success of the Nevada Program by forming a true partnership with his contractor counterparts who make up the one-team, one-mission attitude of aviation professionals who represent this program.

Aviation Safety Professional Winner– Timothy Rourke

This award recognizes the best Aviation Professional in an aviation safety position. Tim Rourke has served as the Aviation Section Safety Officer for the past 10 years. Among Rourke's many contributions to the foundations of aviation safety were his efforts to achieve the Stage III certification for the International Standards for Business Aircraft standards, which are the aviation industry's equivalent of ISO 9001 standards for Aviation Safety Program management.

Aviation Professional/Operational Support Winner – Jessica Thomason

This award is presented to the best Aviation Professional in an operational or support position. Jessica Thomason has served as the Senior Emergency Response and Operations Specialist for the past 12 years and has simply done an outstanding job of administering the operational and reporting requirements for this program that have been consistently recognized as a model for other DOE operations.

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Winners in all categories are automatically submitted for consideration at the annual General Services Administration's Federal-level Aviation Program Awards competition.

For many years, the Aviation Program has been noted as one of the nation's most prestigious programs for excellence and innovation in aviation management and administration, operations, maintenance, training and safety. RSL's aviation program has also been recognized for more than 20 consecutive years of operations without an accident or incident, and numerous team members have been recognized with individual safety achievement awards.

"Such an accomplishment is rare in the aviation industry and is also something that does not come easy. Aviation is an industry that entrusts the lives of people in their work, and this trust demands a level of technical expertise, skills and abilities that must be applied in the most professional manner. We are all exceptionally proud and gratified that the NNSS has this team of dedicated professionals who serve with this level of excellence and provide critical aviation support to our National Security mission in a vigilant and diligent manner," said Steve Lawrence, manager of the NNSA's Nevada Field Office.

"These tremendous accomplishments signify a total-team achievement, which recognizes each aspect of the NNSS' Aviation Program and the professionals who work tirelessly every day. They ensure that the program's stewardship remains in a band of excellence that is among the best of the best," added Jim Holt, NNSS Site Director.

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The NNSS and its related facilities help ensure the security of the United States and its allies by: supporting the stewardship of the nation's nuclear deterrent; providing nuclear and radiological emergency response capabilities and training; contributing to key nonproliferation and arms control initiatives; executing national-level experiments in support of the National Laboratories; working with national security customers and other federal agencies on important national security activities; and providing long-term environmental stewardship of the NNSS's Cold War legacy.

The NNSS falls under the jurisdiction of the National Nuclear Security Administration, a semi-autonomous agency within the U.S. Department of Energy (DOE). The Site's operations are government-controlled and contractor-operated. They are overseen by DOE's Nevada Field Office, headquartered in North Las Vegas.

For more information, visit us at www.nnss.gov.

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