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MATERIALS AGENCY

NEWS RELEASE

Umatilla Chemical Depot

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Depot wins command safety award

Umatilla Chemical Depot, Hermiston, Ore. – Umatilla Chemical Depot, Hermiston, Ore., is the Army Material Command's nominee for the U.S. Army Exceptional Organization Safety Award for 2010.

UMCD won the Army Material Command Exceptional Organization Safety Award. This plaque is awarded each fiscal year to the battalion through division and garrison organization with the most effective overall safety program.

"The team work displayed by the UMCD work force to improve their safety culture should serve as the example for the rest of the Army's material enterprise," said Conrad F. Whyne, director, U.S. Army Chemical Materials Agency. "The Umatilla program not only involves the Depot leadership, but focuses on engaging all employees to help reduce the frequency and severity of accidents and incidents."

The mission of Umatilla Chemical Depot is to provide a safe, secure and environmentally sound domain for the storage and disposal of the chemical weapons stockpile while concurrently providing maximum protection to employees, the public, property and the environment.

"Over the past several years, UMCD has worked hard to improve safety awareness, reduce accidents and prevent injuries," said Lt. Col. Kris Perkins, UMCD commander. "Change doesn't happen overnight and it takes everyone working together to meet safety goals. Most significant are employees taking ownership for safety. They're out there every day, looking out for each other and taking steps to prevent injuries. They understand the importance of going home to family in a healthy state. We understand how valuable they are to us and that's why we place employee safety above all other business."

UMCD employees recognized the need to take control of their own safety and formed a Safety Leadership Program team with the purpose of moving from a reactive to a proactive safety approach. The Safety Office hosts a safety stand-down twice each year to seek out conditions and circumstances with potential to cause injuries. Ergonomic, fire extinguisher, personal protective equipment and active shooter scenario training are completed by all employees.

An aggressive master driving program for all government vehicle drivers and a mandatory motorcycle safety course are required to operate such vehicles on the installation.

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All employees receive winter driving hazard training “An integral part of our safety culture program is the Near Miss Program,” said Patty O’Bleness, Umatilla Chemical Depot safety specialist. “The program attacks underlying factors and root causes that lead to an injured worker. Each near miss is fully investigated by upper management and safety teams with the employee involved to determine cause and to develop solutions and preventive measures. We track each incident for trending, feedback and resolution.”

UMCD now competes against nominees from all Army major commands. The winner of the competition will be announced in the spring of 2011

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