



U.S. ARMY CHEMICAL  
MATERIALS AGENCY

# NEWS RELEASE

## Umatilla Chemical Depot

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
Feb. 15, 2007 - 1:30 p.m.

For more information contact:  
**Adam Russell, WGI**  
(541) 564-7227 – Cell (541) 571-1779  
**Bruce Henrickson**  
(541) 564-5312 – Cell (541) 379-8810

### **Umatilla Chemical Agent Disposal Facility celebrates top safety and health status**

**UMATILLA CHEMICAL DEPOT, Hermiston, Ore.** – A new flag was raised in a ceremony on Monday, February 12, at the Umatilla Chemical Agent Disposal Facility (UMCDF), signifying federal recognition of the project's excellent safety and health performance.

UMCDF, operated for the Army by Washington Group International (WGI), recently earned Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) Voluntary Protection Program (VPP) "Star" status, the highest safety honor bestowed by the federal government. Dick Terrill, regional OSHA administrator, presented WGI Project General Manager Doug Hamrick with a VPP flag during a Monday celebration at the weapons disposal plant.

Terrill noted that companies nationwide have achieved the designation. But VPP Star status is more than just a title, he added, noting that Star companies suffer less than half the number of injuries of other companies performing similar tasks. Terrill, along with Hamrick and Mark Evans, Washington Group International's (WGI) vice president of Chemical Demilitarization Programs, complimented the UMCDF employees on achieving VPP Star status and challenged them to maintain that highest level of safety awareness and performance throughout the life of the project.

Lt. Col. Donna Rutten, Umatilla Chemical Depot commander, added her thanks for the attention workers give to safety and the example they provide for depot staff and other companies in the region.

The VPP promotes effective worksite-based safety and health. Companies in the program are assigned "Merit" or "Star" status following a comprehensive on-site review by OSHA. Within the VPP program, management, labor, and OSHA establish cooperative relationships at workplaces that have implemented a comprehensive safety and health management system.

UMCDF is only the second chemical weapons demilitarization site in the nation to be awarded VPP Star status. The Army's disposal facility in Anniston, Alabama earned the honor in 2006. Washington Group, through UMCDF, becomes just the 12th company in Oregon to earn VPP Star status. Washington Group International also was inducted into OSHA's VPP Corporate Pilot Program in 2006, the fifth organization to be selected. UMCDF is destroying chemical weapons that have been stored at the depot since 1962.

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