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Mission Support Alliance: HAMMER Training & Education Center

(NOTE: MSA manages HAMMER for the Department of Energy)

In 2011, the Volpentest HAMMER Training Center stepped up and supported record-breaking Hanford training numbers with a subsequent rapid ramp down, launched 12 Hanford Site-wide Standardized Training Programs and completed two major construction projects on the campus.

This past year has been marked by change and hard work. Ensuring a culture of safe and secure conduct of operations continue to be our focus at HAMMER. We do this by keeping the Hanford workers safe utilizing our rigorous hands-on training programs and through safe operations.

DOE recertified HAMMER's DOE Voluntary Protection Program (VPP) as a VPP Star Site, with the review team noting that HAMMER is "the premier professional training site within the DOE Complex." A key team finding was the effectiveness of HAMMER's "Workers Training Workers" approach for teaching important Hanford safety courses.

Managed by Mission Support Alliance (MSA), HAMMER operated at record pace through April supporting Recovery Act projects at Hanford. Training was more than 150 percent above pre-ARRA levels, and HAMMER ended the fiscal year with just under 60,000 student training days.

MSA identified 14 standards for providing site-wide safety processes common to all Hanford Contractors, with 12 standards requiring significant instructional design and curriculum development efforts by HAMMER prior to delivery. All of these courses have been updated implementing the standardized training programs. We had mixed reviews this year with the challenging federal budget process regarding our efforts for promoting HAMMER as a national asset to other federal agencies. However, the future looks promising for this coming year.

HAMMER hosted a major training event for the U.S. Army's 2nd Battalion, 48th Chemical Brigade from Fort Hood, Texas, in May. And in September, we hosted training for the Washington National Guard, 10th Civil Support Team (CST). However, since lack of funding caused cancellations for about half of the scheduled trainings, the training for CSTs has been sporadic. Thanks to U.S. Senator Patty Murray, Congressmen Norm Dicks and Doc Hastings, HAMMER is now in the running for designation as a Regional Training Center for the National Guard Bureau.

During Hurricane Irene, HAMMER supported DOE's Office of Electricity Delivery and Energy Reliability, and coordinated the deployment of DOE responders to several FEMA Regions providing staff for DOE's Energy

Response Center in Washington, D.C. This successful response was due in large part to HAMMER's national training and exercise programs that prepare energy responders.

HAMMER continues working with the Pacific Northwest National Laboratory (PNNL) on domestic and international border security training programs. Although federal budget concerns affected these programs, PNNL and HAMMER responded by aggressively pursuing new programs with federal and international agencies. In March, MSA, HAMMER and DOE dedicated the Health and Safety Building in recognition of former DOE Assistant Secretary Inès Triay. The building added critically needed training campus space. In June, HAMMER opened the Operations Building that provides new office and shop space. The additional space has allowed HAMMER to consolidate all training and staff at HAMMER, resulting in improved classroom scheduling, staff efficiency, and reductions in conflict for students when a classroom change occurs from a satellite location to the main campus.

HAMMER has Field Exercise building in the works, funded by the Department of State, which will provide large training and exercise areas to support PNNL programs for the Department of State and Homeland Security.

The one word that describes the new fiscal year is adjustment. This means operating efficiently at reduced levels of class sessions and student numbers. This reduced pace is an opportunity to place greater attention on updating course materials to reflect the best adult learning techniques.

The new fiscal year also means learning how to deliver meaningful training with a reduced HAMMER budget. However, we will continue ensuring that Hanford is nationally recognized for its culture of safe and secure conduct of operations and continue to shine as the 'crown jewel' of the DOE Complex.

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