

JUNE 2020

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TAMING TUMBLEWEEDS

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The MSA family is strong and resilient in support of the One Hanford mission.



MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT



We are halfway through 2020 and I'm sure we can all agree that not much is going quite as planned. While this has likely caused some frustration and anxiety for many, it has also shown what we are capable of. The MSA family is strong and resilient. We've taken a very difficult and sensitive situation and demonstrated our ability to be flexible and continue to work hard in support of the One Hanford mission. What's more – our team continues to adapt to ever-changing and challenging circumstances.

Our janitorial staff continue to act quickly, and to ensure our health and safety through enhanced cleaning and disinfecting protocols. Our Emergency Services teams continue to respond to COVID-19-related issues, while also battling a strong start to wildland fire season. Information Management continues to support more than 4,000 teleworkers and constantly find ways to improve teleworking capabilities. Ethics and Compliance and Human Resources are working to help employees combat unemployment insurance fraud, while Safeguards and Security are helping protect our valuable resources. Our Public Works employees continue to make sure

the Hanford Site has reliable water, sewer and electric capabilities. Roads and grounds crews are working hard to make necessary repairs. Biological Controls continue to clean up tumbleweeds and overgrown grasses.

The list goes on and on – MSA continues to step up to the plate in many ways. On behalf of your senior leadership team, I want to give our heartfelt thanks and appreciation. We will need to continue to adapt and pivot, but there is no doubt our team is well equipped and ready to do that. Thank you MSA!

Bob Wilkinson
President



FOCUS ON SAFETY AND SECURITY



Wearing proper personal protective equipment (PPE), like the gloves and face protection used during this water line repair, is one hazard control that helps MSA recognize its safety goals.

Reaching Millions of Safe Work Hours

Contributor: Melissa Ver Steeg

The MSA workforce continues to achieve great things in the name of safety. As a company, MSA recorded 1.3 million safe work hours without a lost workday injury at the end of May. In addition to the company milestone, two of our Voluntary Protection Program (VPP) STAR sites continue to add to their millions of safe work hours: Safeguards and Security reached over 1.8 million and HAMMER surpassed 2.1 million safe work hours!

These achievements are a direct result of our safety practices and questioning attitudes. "Safety is personal. Our employees have taken safety into their heads and hearts. Good safety marks are the by-product of caring employees who are courageous enough to speak up with safety issues," shared Rocky Simmons, MSA safety representative.

The Department of Energy's VPP recognizes excellence in implementation of programs and processes to protect the health and safety of workers.



Completing mandatory training, such as this HAZWOPER training at HAMMER, is one step in achieving significant safety milestones.

MSA's achievement of the highest level of recognition, STAR, is through the collective efforts of leadership and workers to provide a safe work environment.

Visit the Environmental, Safety, Health & Quality website at: <http://msc.ms.rl.gov/eshq/>, to access the many safety resources available to employees. Keep the conversation going and ask yourself, "Am I keeping safety first?"



RECOGNITION



Matthias Rice currently serves as a co-op intern at MSA while he pursues his Bachelor's Degree in Mechanical Engineering. He recently received an award from WSU Tri-Cities.

Co-Op Intern Receives Prestigious Award

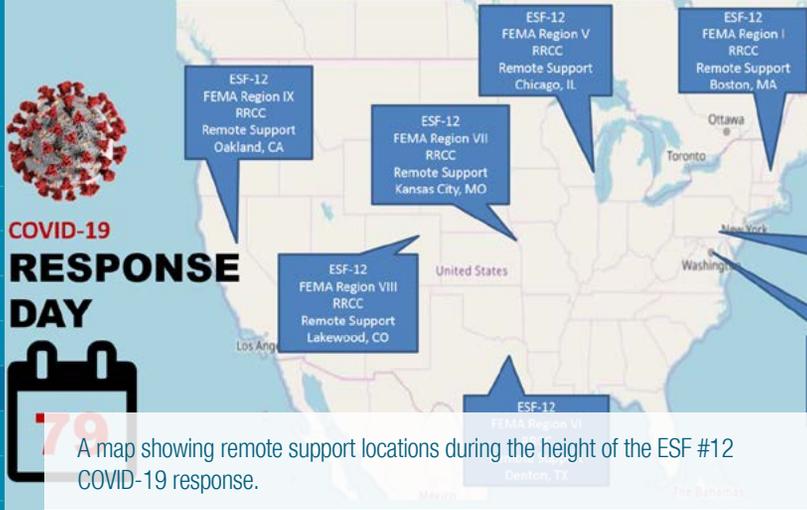
Contributors: Renée Brooks, Matthias Rice

Congratulations to one of our dedicated co-op interns, Matthias Rice, named the Outstanding Senior in Mechanical Engineering from Washington State University Tri-Cities' School of Engineering and Applied Sciences! Matthias has interned with MSA since January 2019 and works with the Design Engineering and Project Support group. He continues to enjoy his time as part of the MSA family, sharing, "My managers and coworkers alike are open to questions, and understand the need to emphasize education in the midst of working. Seeing what some may consider failures as opportunities for improvement and learning, has made this internship both beneficial and encouraging."

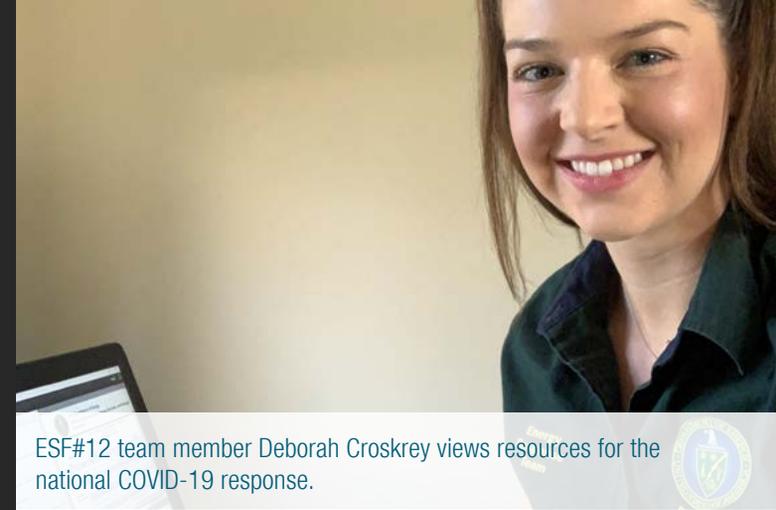
Matthias is set to graduate in August and is eventually considering a graduate degree in nuclear engineering. Grant Ryan, MSA chief engineer, is especially proud of Matthias' award and his work here at MSA, "Congratulations to Matthias for this significant academic achievement. Matthias is a great example of how our co-op internship programs serve both MSA and the student, providing valuable experiences for both."

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A map showing remote support locations during the height of the ESF #12 COVID-19 response.



ESF#12 team member Deborah Croskrey views resources for the national COVID-19 response.

NATIONAL RESPONSE

HAMMER Supports National COVID-19 Response and Hurricane Preparedness

Contributor: Hayley Jay

HAMMER is assisting national response to the COVID-19 threat and emergency preparedness for the current hurricane season. HAMMER supports DOE's Office of Cybersecurity, Energy Security, and Emergency Response (CESER) by providing training, deployment and response mission support to the team of energy experts known as the Emergency Support Function #12 (ESF #12).

Since January, HAMMER has provided essential staff with personal protective equipment (PPE) and testing for the CESER COVID-19 response and the Energy Sector Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)/Testing Task Force. At the height of the current pandemic, every state had declared a state of emergency and every Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) region had activated ESF #12 responders. ESF #12 and HAMMER provided

remote assistance to FEMA, industry and state partners, including ongoing contact with electricity and oil/natural gas sub-sectors as they also worked to refine operations under COVID-19 pandemic restrictions.

While balancing the COVID-19 response, HAMMER completed the annual ESF #12 refresher training for 150 responders across the country. The massive effort was completed utilizing virtual platforms and interactive exercises, just in time for three named storms to form in the Atlantic.

The HAMMER team, emergency response organization and ESF #12 responders were activated for tropical storm Cristobal on June 4. The ESF #12 team demonstrated their response, situational awareness reporting, damage assessment and assisted in restoring power to over 30,000 customers in need. The successes experienced during the past months have generated new practices and protocols, should another disaster occur during this ongoing COVID-19 pandemic.

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Plastic shields are now in place at the DOE reception desk at 2420 Stevens Drive, providing an added layer of protection between workers and visitors.

ONE HANFORD MISSION

Plexiglas Prevention

Contributor: Robin Wojtanik

As the Hanford Site remobilizes, carpenters from Maintenance Services have installed nearly 50 plastic shields at more than 30 locations across the site, to help prevent the spread of COVID-19. This includes the addition of removable barriers at U.S. Department of Energy offices at 2420, 2430 and 2440 Stevens.

Barriers aren't fabricated in a "cookie cutter" style, but rather customized for each location and work station based on the organization's operational needs, ergonomics and flow of personnel. The potential for public interaction was especially key for the DOE reception areas.

"The ingenuity and talent of our carpenters has really been evident as they've tackled each new challenge, implementing protective barriers for each of our customers' unique needs," said Clint Donley, director of maintenance services.

It's expected more barriers will be installed as the site continues to remobilize.

ONE HANFORD MISSION

New Fiber Connections to Save Significant Dollars

Contributor: Patrick Conrad

A test project will boost fiber connections between Hanford's data centers, following work by the Information Management team. There is an additional network load due to teleworking and an expected ramp up in cleanup work as direct-feed low-activity waste (DFLAW) comes on line, so the ability to improve speed between data centers is important to a successful mission.

The test included use of a Dense Wavelength Division Multiplexing (DWDM) system. This system can significantly boost the amount of data moving through fiber optic strands. Similar to shining a light through a prism, the multiplexer takes a single fiber optic strand, virtually multiplies it, running each circuit on a different light frequency or color. The new circuits are combined into one fiber optic strand and then separated again, using prisms. Hanford now has the capability to convert a single fiber optic strand running at 10-gigabit per second, to support up to eight 10-gigabit per second circuits using that same single fiber optic strand.



MSA's Quinn Bragg tests the connections of the Dense Wavelength Division Multiplexing (DWDM) system at a Hanford data center.

"What really brought this on was the significant increase in the number of employees teleworking," said Jason Lacher, director of Network and Computing Services. "Because there was so much data moving through the system from different means than before, it caused new chokepoints and network slowdowns. The multiplexers will help us minimize those issues."

Besides increased speed, the multiplexers will also lead to significant cost savings. Without the new equipment, IM would have to lease additional fiber optic strands, requiring additional funding, time and engineering. Each leased fiber optic strand costs around \$2,500 monthly. The multiplexers will lead to cost savings of approximately \$90,000 per year, and potentially more, as additional circuits are required in the future. Lacher says they can now expand the number of circuits without having to purchase them.

ONE HANFORD MISSION

Tumbleweed Takeover

Contributors: Robin Wojtanik, Juan Rodriguez

True to form, 2020 has already proven to be unlike any other year, and the spring tumbleweed invasion is no different. Through May, crews burned more than four times as many tumbleweeds than were burned in all of the last fiscal year. The most recent total tops 50,000 cubic yards of tumbleweeds, compared to over 12,000 cubic yards disposed of in 2019. To visualize that amount, picture a football field, including the end zones, covered with tumbleweeds to the height of the goal post cross bars. That's not even half of what's been disposed of this fiscal year.

In a typical year, crews burn about 25,000 cubic yards of tumbleweeds. The 2020 increase is likely due to a few things, said Biological Controls manager Juan Rodriguez. The first was a 2019 Yakima wildfire that spread eastward. "Tumbleweeds take advantage of the new, open ground created by fire, dropping seeds left and right. Ash is a nice fertilizer for them," said Rodriguez. The wind also did its part. The Pendleton office of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration said this spring was slightly windier than average, providing more opportunities for tumbleweeds to stay on the move.

Toss in early 2019's record snow event, which provided moisture for richer growing conditions, plus Washington State's removal

of a barbed wire fence, and there's no barrier to tumbleweeds passing over State Route 240. "Now, tumbleweeds have free access," said Rodriguez. A two-mile long perimeter fence at the 200 West area has been coated with tumbleweeds 30-40 feet deep on both sides of the fence, at a height of six feet.

Tumbleweeds are rounded up by hand or with large machinery to be surveyed for radioactivity, then burned or compacted. Tumbleweeds that make it into the tank farms are sent to a special compactor at the Environmental Restoration Disposal Facility.

Hanford Fire can only burn tumbleweeds when the air quality rating allows for it, and there is not an increased risk of wildfire danger due to heat or wind. This usually only happens in the spring and fall. Rodriguez said crews have written 259 service requests for tumbleweed control with three months to go in the season, compared to 180 in all of the prior fiscal year.



Hanford Fire crews supervise a prescribed burn of tumbleweeds collected from the Site.

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Hanford Patrolman Pat Krzan poses with the newest member of the Hanford Patrol, and his new partner, Belle.



Topi (back left) recently retired from Hanford Patrol and enjoys a relaxing evening with her replacement, Belle.

ONE HANFORD MISSION

Hanford Patrol Welcomes New K9

Contributors: René Brooks, Robert Marrow

Hanford Patrol welcomed a newly-certified member to the MSA and Hanford families – Belle. The 18-month-old chocolate lab has been paired with Pat Krzan to become the newest Hanford K9 team. Belle is certified in explosive detection, a very important job for the six canines (and their partners) who work to protect Hanford and the community. Robert Marrow has trained canines for Hanford Patrol for 18 years, “Belle may be young, but she is strong and smart, and an excellent addition to the team.”

Hanford Patrol canines are first trained at an Alabama kennel, and when they arrive here, Robert collaborates with the dog’s handler to finish their initial training. Hanford Patrol K9 teams receive ongoing training for as long as they are working.

Belle takes the place of the recently retired canine, Topi, who worked for Hanford Patrol for seven years. Topi plans to enjoy the slower pace of retired life, with lots of naps, treats and belly rubs.

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Vegetation was cleared from 200 East, south of the former helicopter pad, to prepare for potential office space and parking.



ONE HANFORD MISSION

Prepping to Return

Contributor: Robin Wojtanik

The current phased remobilization effort includes clearing land to make way for additional office space and parking lots in parts of 200 East and 200 West. The need for social distancing may require new office trailers to properly space workers, in addition to more parking spaces due to fewer carpools and vanpools.

Crews from Biological Controls cleared brush near the site of a former helicopter pad in 200 East to prepare for potential office space that could be occupied by employees of contractor CH2M Hill Plateau Remediation Company. Two existing parking lots, including one at 4th & Baltimore, and the other at 2101M, may also be reconfigured to allow for additional vehicles.

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Excavation work was completed as part of a sewer line repair that will allow the system to remain operational while closing an aging lift station. *Hard hats were not required during this phase of the repair work.



ONE HANFORD MISSION

Teamwork Results in Fast Finish

Contributor: Robin Wojtanik

New pipes are in place and ready for use by a trailer that supports tank farms workers, setting the stage for the future closure of a lift station. Following a necessary sewer line repair, Maintenance Services worked with Water & Sewer Utilities to excavate the area.

Together, the teams re-routed the pipe to bypass the lift station altogether, allowing gravity to assist with efficient wastewater removal. This change let crews decommission the lift station, avoiding future support costs, with plans to remove the pump entirely. The repair passed inspection, was backfilled and completed successfully within the same day.



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Kenny Ferguson, director of IT Infrastructure Services, inspects potential damage to a radio repeater facility following the Gable Mountain Fire.



The Hanford Fire Department successfully contained a lightning-sparked wildfire at Gable Mountain in early June.

ONE HANFORD MISSION

Hanford Fire Battled Challenging Conditions

Contributor: Melissa Ver Steeg

A lightning-sparked fire caused extensive damage to portions of the Hanford Site while burning for about 24 hours in early June. The Hanford Fire Department requested assistance from nearby cities and counties to help contain the flames that scorched about 5,500 acres around Gable Mountain, near the center of the site.

Lightning strikes during a thunderstorm started a number of smaller brush fires over the same weekend, but the largest was the one centered at Gable Mountain. Strong winds fanned the flames across a rural part of the site. "Firefighting crews were challenged with thick grasses, fire burning in difficult areas to access, and changing weather conditions," said Adam Moldovan, acting fire chief of the Hanford Fire Department.

Firefighters managed to keep buildings and equipment intact while working to contain the Gable Mountain Fire. Environmental, Safety, Health and Quality crews hope to survey any potential ecological or cultural damage. The storm and resulting fire also damaged the lines that power equipment that supports Emergency Services, ESH&Q, as well as the Waste Treatment Plant. Damage is likely to take months to repair.



An instructor addresses students during HAZWOPER training in a HAMMER classroom modified to allow for social distancing.



Instructors assist students in the respiratory refresher course at HAMMER.

ONE HANFORD MISSION

HAMMER Training Center COVID-19 Restart

Contributors: Hayley Jay, Tyler Oates

Training programs restarted successfully at HAMMER after six weeks of COVID-19 hazard analysis and control preparations. Staff and worker trainers collaborated to ensure all aspects of training and facility operations addressed COVID-19 health hazards, while maintaining effectiveness of hands-on training. The team identified controls that allowed critical health and safety training to continue for the Hanford workforce. HAMMER staff and instructors also recognized the importance of setting a positive tone for the rest of the Hanford Site as they returned to work.

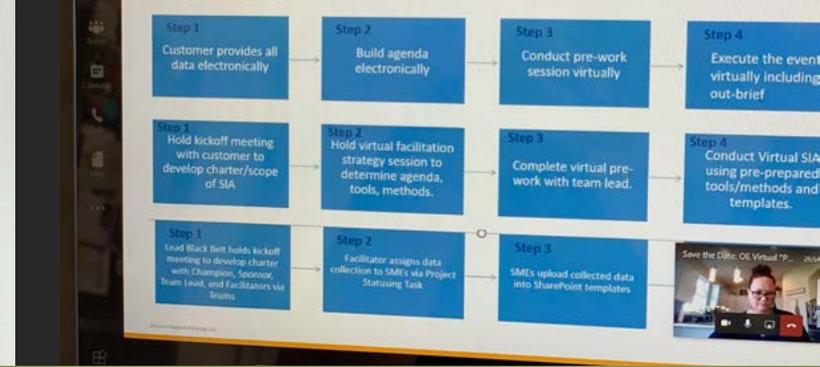
As part of the HAMMER Training Hazard Analysis process, the team implemented COVID-19 exposure control plans for each class. These include disinfection/sanitization protocols, touch point control, and ensure hands-on activities reduce exposure, while allowing students to demonstrate or perform critical tasks.

Other factors thoroughly evaluated include custodial services, social distancing, staggered break times, visitor control, postings, course materials, rosters, face coverings, health checks, and the availability of personal protective equipment and disinfectants.

To ensure staff and trainers understood processes and controls to prevent COVID-19 exposure, multiple meetings, briefings, training dry-runs, and facility walk-downs were conducted beforehand. Training notices alerted students to upcoming class locations, health check stations, and necessary protocol prior to arriving on campus. HAMMER also benefited from strong partnerships with DOE, labor unions, contractor leadership, and the National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences to ensure success.

HAMMER received very positive feedback from students and Hanford Site leadership since returning to operations. The team is effectively supporting the One Hanford mission while providing an overall sense of confidence, continuous improvement, and worker protection during a time of unease.

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ONE HANFORD MISSION

Operating Excellence Adapts to Virtual Environment

Contributor: Operating Excellence team

The Operating Excellence (OE) Program rapidly aligned to the essential mission-critical operations posture, responding with agility and flexibility. With less than a day’s notice, the OE team picked up their laptops and headed home to develop a strategy for continued forward movement of their projects. The team re-invented the program to include new tools, templates and methods to take the Hanford Site to the next level of virtual kaizens. A kaizen is a formal effort to look for process improvements and increased efficiency.

OE recently piloted a virtual kaizen over four half-day sessions. The kaizen goal was to implement improvements to the virtual methodology that would:

- Ensure customers feel comfortable in the technical environment of a virtual workshop.
- Establish a sense of team-building during virtual sessions and without face-to-face contact.
- Prepare black belts and green belts with the tools and confidence to effectively facilitate virtual Structured Improvement Activities (SIAs).

The pilot kaizen consisted of black belt facilitators from several organizations within MSA and WRPS. It resulted in several actions integral to effective implementation of a telework option.

MSA Communications and External Affairs completed a virtual Public Involvement Strategy workshop, facilitated by OE. The workshop was scheduled to take place in a face-to-face setting prior to COVID-19 restrictions. Using new methods, the virtual workshop was considered a success. Chief of staff Debbie Kelley, who championed the workshop, said, “Not only was the meeting well-structured and information easy to reference, all participants were fully engaged. Clearly the OE team will continue to bring value regardless of the format, and ensure the safety of our customers.”

As the program becomes more robust and expands capabilities, OE facilitators and customers will continue to be successful in their structured improvement activities.

“Not only have we not had to cancel any workshops, this is the most activity we have had on our schedule at one time, said Tracy Desmond, OE program manager. “We are ready and prepared to perform and facilitate virtually. I could not be more proud of our OE team. They have created new tools and methods to take our program to the next level.”

ONE HANFORD MISSION

Hungry, Hungry Mice

Contributor: Patrick Conrad

The Hanford Site is home to many types of wildlife, but just one remains a nuisance to our Information Management (IM) team. A mouse snuck its way into an outdoor fiber box in the 200 East Area, and began chewing on a fiber cable connected to the chlorine system. It caused a false chlorine alarm to go off around one a.m. in mid-May.

When IM crews arrived to investigate the alarm malfunction, they quickly discovered the opening in the fiber cabinet and clear signs a mouse had been there a while. The cabinet was left partially open from a project that began prior to the site moving into the essential mission-critical operations posture.

“When a mouse gets into one of these boxes, they run wild and will chew on anything that makes a good nest,” said Kenny Ferguson, IT Infrastructure Services director. “After clearing out the debris, we sealed the hole and installed copper mesh to keep mice from getting back into the box.”

The chlorine alarm has a primary and backup system. Ferguson said the alarm was set to sound if there was only a .05-second delay when switching from the primary to the backup line. He said they increased that to 5 seconds, which should help prevent similar false alarms from going off in the future. As for the mouse that caused the trouble? He’s still on the loose.



This photo shows the fiber cable that was chewed on by a mouse who made a home inside an outdoor fiber box in the 200 East Area.

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COMMUNITY OUTREACH



Virtual Food Drive a Success!

Contributor: Reneé Brooks

Thank you to the many members of the MSA family who participated in the Hanford Feeding Families Fundraiser, benefitting Second Harvest Tri-Cities. Together, Hanford contractor employees and our labor union partners raised more than \$52,000!

These funds will allow Second Harvest to continue to support the unprecedented need for food throughout the Columbia Basin, Yakima Valley and Walla Walla. The spirit and caring nature of our workforce is especially evident for events like this.



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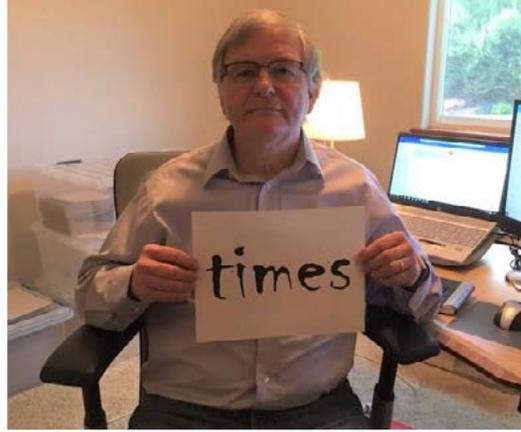
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Readers are invited to share news events, including volunteer activities, individual achievements and program accomplishments.

Have a story idea for Streamline? Send an email to MSAcos@rl.gov or contact [Reneé Brooks](#) with MSA Communications at (509) 373-0857.

STREAMLINE is published by Mission Support Alliance Communications and highlights company business and employee contributions.

Streamline design by Jason Fitzgerald.



Right solution.
Right time.
Right value.

At MSA, we are committed to providing innovative solutions that fit the needs of our customers. We work closely with the DOE and Hanford contractors to determine timing and value, ensuring that Hanford cleanup continues to progress.