

## **Bright Ideas Save Millions**

### *10 Years of Employee-Generated Cost Savings, Safety, and Quality Improvements at RMA*

Ten years of innovative thinking by Rocky Mountain Arsenal employees have resulted in more than \$67 million in savings. Through the Arsenal's Cost/Productivity Improvement Program (C/PIP), good ideas submitted by nearly 1,000 participants, have led to improvements in the overall productivity, safety and quality of the cleanup at the Arsenal.

One of the largest environmental cleanup sites in the nation, the Rocky Mountain Arsenal is a former chemical manufacturing site being transformed into an urban national wildlife refuge. The \$2.4 billion cleanup is scheduled for completion in 2010. Most of the site's remaining cleanup work involves placing clean soils and materials over the landfills and consolidation areas and restoring the site with natural vegetation.

The Cost/Productivity Improvement Program has assisted with keeping the cleanup under budget and one year ahead of schedule. The program was originally implemented as a way to solicit employee suggestions and recognize them for their good ideas as well as helping to ensure taxpayer monies were used as efficiently as possible. The program also encourages ideas about enhancing the integrity of the environmental cleanup and improving the safety and quality of work at the site.

"The great ideas and commitment to this program by employees is a great example of the Arsenal's stewardship of public funds," explained U.S. Army Project Manager Charlie Scharmann.

The largest savings came from a group of employees who proposed a safer, more cost-effective way to contain waste from one of the 31 cleanup projects at the site. Following review by federal, state and local regulatory agencies, the idea was adopted, resulting in an overall savings of \$22 million.

While cost savings are a large part of the program, just as important are ideas focused on improving the overall safety of the cleanup program. For example, one project team developed a specialized tool that allowed employees to complete their task without entering confined working spaces. In an effort to reduce the high volume of truck traffic for two cleanup projects in close proximity, employees proposed adding a night shift so that one team could work during the day while the other worked at night.

Other ideas are designed to aid in the ongoing transformation of the site into an urban national wildlife refuge. The final phase of many of the cleanup projects includes reseeded to restore the land to a natural short-grass prairie habitat. Employees developed a technique to collect seeds from existing plants and use them to reseed other portions of the site. In just one year, this reseeded effort saved more than \$17,000.

Over the past decade, the C/PIP program has demonstrated the power of drawing on employee ideas at the Rocky Mountain Arsenal. It has attracted interest from other organizations and

businesses as a potential model for saving money, and improving the safety, quality and efficiencies of this work. The program was recently recognized by U.S. Rep. Perlmutter who read a letter of commendation into the [Congressional Record](#).

For more information about the Rocky Mountain Arsenal, call 303-289-0136 or visit [www.rma.army.mil](http://www.rma.army.mil).