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## **U.S. Army at the Rocky Mountain Arsenal Receives OSHA's Highest Workplace Safety Award**

### ***Site Named One of the Nation's Safest Workplaces***

The U.S. Army at the Rocky Mountain Arsenal strengthened its record as a national leader in workplace safety in early March by earning the Voluntary Protection Program (VPP) Star Award from the U.S. Occupational Safety and Health Administration.

The installation now becomes the first Army site in the region to receive the award.

“We are proud to be recognized by OSHA as one of the safest worksites in the country and to have instilled a culture of safety among all the organizations working on this program,” said U.S. Army Program Manager Charlie Scharmann. “The health and safety of our workers and the surrounding community has always been the cornerstone of the Arsenal’s environmental cleanup. I want to congratulate all Army employees, contractors and partners for their unwavering commitment to workplace safety.”

The Arsenal’s cleanup program is led by the Army and Shell Oil Co. Like many construction programs across the country, the Arsenal’s cleanup involves multiple organizations. With the Army’s Star Status achievement, the Arsenal currently has three VPP Star organizations working at the site.

OSHA recognized the Arsenal as an exemplary site and noted the Army’s health and safety practices are among the best in the nation, comparable to many Fortune 500 companies. OSHA also recognized three Army health and safety programs as best industry practices.

OSHA’s Voluntary Protection Program honors outstanding efforts of employers and employees who have demonstrated exemplary occupational health and safety performance. Each applicant selected for participation in the program undergoes a rigorous on-site evaluation by OSHA, which culminates in a report recommending Star Status only for those companies with excellent health and safety programs.

## **About the Rocky Mountain Arsenal**

The Rocky Mountain Arsenal, located in Commerce City, Colorado, approximately 10 miles northeast of downtown Denver, is one of the largest Superfund cleanup sites in the country. In 1942, RMA was built to manufacture chemical weapons to be used in World War II as a war deterrent. In 1946, some of the facilities were leased to private industry including Shell Chemical Co. for the production of industrial and agricultural chemicals. The Arsenal later performed chemical agent demilitarization programs. Since 1985, the sole mission of the Arsenal has been environmental remediation and restoration.

The Arsenal's extensive and safe environmental cleanup of the site's soil, structures and groundwater is nearing completion in 2010. Cleanup plans were developed and approved by the Army, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, the State of Colorado, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and Shell Oil Company.

Currently, 80 percent of Arsenal land has been removed from the Environmental Protection Agency's Superfund List, and all major contaminated soil cleanup projects are complete. Most of the remaining cleanup work involves clean construction, which means moving clean soils and materials to build covers over the landfills and consolidation areas.

### **Refuge Transition**

By fall 2006, more than 12,000 acres of Arsenal land were transferred from the U.S. Army to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service once cleanup actions were complete, officially establishing and later expanding the Rocky Mountain Arsenal National Wildlife Refuge. Once the remaining Arsenal projects are finished, a final land transfer of 2,500 acres will complete the Refuge, making it one of the largest urban refuges in the country. The Army will retain approximately 1,100 acres to maintain its landfills and groundwater treatment plants.

The Refuge now provides environmental education and interpretive programs, catch-and-release recreational fishing, eight miles of trails, wildlife viewing opportunities and site tours for the public, and is a sanctuary for more than 330 species of animals, including bison, bald eagles, deer, coyotes and burrowing owls.

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