

America's Best Gets Better

By Ron Dittmore, Space Shuttle Program Manager



Over the past decade, the Space Shuttle Program has achieved remarkable success in adjusting to environmental influences, implementing change to vehicle configuration, organization and contract structures to increase the capability and efficiency of the program. For example:

- Configuration changes have led to an 80-percent decrease in launch risk and nearly a 100-percent increase in cargo capability to low-Earth orbit.
- Increased stabilization of processes and procedures has contributed to a 70-percent decrease of in-flight anomalies.
- Aggressive efforts to control and reduce operational costs has led to an amazing 40-percent decrease in the overall program cost and workforce while, at the same time, achieving a 26-percent reduction in the number of workforce accidents.

America's best has certainly gotten better! But only through the hard work and commitment of the NASA and contractor teams, working together with open and honest communication, have we been able to achieve these remarkable results. With the increasing likelihood that the space shuttle will be the primary human space transportation system through 2020, it is inevitable that the program forecast will continue to include change and challenges to become more efficient.

Efforts to reduce program risk through vehicle upgrades and configuration change will continue. Increased emphasis on maintaining the safety and integrity of the existing system infrastructure (system, facilities, skills, knowledge, process control, etc.) is a key ingredient of our strategy to control risks and maintain a safe and viable system through 2020. Technology advancements, obsolescence and budget constraints are but a few of the challenges that have and will continue to affect the strategic path of the Space Shuttle Program.

As we pursue efforts to develop the near-term and long-term strategies to meet the challenges before us, our commitment to work together to overcome the hurdles of the future must be paramount. The business of space travel is not about the individual. On the contrary, our success has been and continues to be built upon the chemistry and power of the team.

Our constancy amid change must be dependent upon the team approach, where diversity of background and experience produces innovative ideas and revolutionary concepts necessary for us to adapt to the ever-changing environment.

The last 20 years of space shuttle operations have been incredible. The next 20 years will be even more remarkable as we begin to fully utilize an orbiting laboratory and open wide the doors of space travel and discovery. We can make it happen. We will make it happen!

Center Director Message



PAY ATTENTION TO DETAIL!

I usually don't worry much. I try to live as my mother advised me: "If there's something you can do about it, do it and quit worrying; if there's nothing you can do about it, it's silly to worry about something that is out of your hands."

In following this philosophy, I normally don't get too worked up about what may or may not happen in the future and I sleep very soundly at night.

Lately, though, I've had a sense of unease. I haven't been able to put my finger on why, but something seems to be bugging me. I suspect that the main cause of my disquiet centers around the incredible amount of activities that have been filling up all of our schedules and will continue to do so for the next couple of months (launch activities, World Space Congress, off-sites, back to school, etc.) The rash of mishaps that we have experienced over the past several weeks is a signal that we are not coping with our situation very well.

What can we do about it? The answer: WE MUST ALL PAY ATTENTION TO DETAIL! That simple act is what separates professionals from amateurs. That simple act is what makes the difference between doing things correctly versus doing things carelessly. You can't have professional excellence without paying attention to detail.

We are all part of a large, dynamic team that is involved in a high-risk endeavor that cannot succeed unless all of its players do their part. If one of us fails, we all fail. We must each focus on the task at hand and not allow ourselves to be distracted by events occurring around us, or our concerns about future events.

We are all in this together. Let's focus. Let's pay attention to detail.

FROM THE DESK OF LT. GEN. JEFFERSON D. HOWELL, JR.

JSC commended by state committee

By Kendra Ceule

JSC was recently selected as a recipient of the Public Employer Award from the Texas Governor's Committee on People with Disabilities. This award recognizes a government employer for outstanding commitment to hiring, accommodating and advancing employees with disabilities. The committee grants only five employer awards each year.

The Center was nominated for the honor by United Cerebral Palsy (UCP) of Greater Houston, which operates a program called High School/High Tech (HS/HT).

The program encourages students with developmental disabilities to pursue secondary education and high-tech careers, in part by placing them in summer internships with technologically advanced employers. JSC is one of those employers.

"JSC has always been a tremendous supporter of this program," said UCP's Kelly Dietrich, who wrote the Center's nomination. "The people there go above and beyond to get these kids into JSC internships."

One former JSC intern, who was placed here through the High School/High Tech program, wrote about his I/T experience at the Center in his application essay to Baylor University. He is now a student there. Other HS/HT interns have been offered permanent jobs at JSC.

The award will be presented to JSC at a ceremony in Lubbock, Texas, on Oct. 25. Estella Gillette, Director of Equal Opportunity Programs, will accept the award. Gillette said the award belongs to the entire Center because of the teamwork that earned it.

"Without JSC's management support, Human Resources' work and the organizations' support in placing our summer interns from the High School/High Tech program, and without resources to accommodate persons with disabilities when necessary, JSC would not have won this award," she said.

"We should all be proud of the recognition that Governor Rick Perry has bestowed upon us."

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