



(U.S. Navy photo)



by Eley Engstrom

SAN DIEGO – NAVFAC Southwest, NOVA Group Inc, and Underground Construction Co. Inc, celebrated a safety record of 500 incident-free days Feb. 11 at Naval Base Point Loma's P-401 Replace Fuel Facilities project.

The Point Loma Fuel Storage Facility is the fuel hub of the southwestern United States and the eastern Pacific and the current construction presents a project of great complexity and magnitude. The Military Construction project (P-401) was awarded on Sept. 26, 2009 to a joint venture between Nova Group, Inc and Underground Construction Company, Inc. (Nova-Underground). The five-year project is valued at \$175 million and will include the construction of above ground fuel storage tanks, demolition and closing of existing above and below ground storage tanks and extensive remediation of contaminated soil.

In less than 18 months from award, the project boasts the completion of a state-of-the-art Fuel Oil Reclamation (FOR) Facility with three of the eight 125,000 barrel tanks under construction. Further, with safety as the top priority for all stakeholders, the project has reached a significant achievement of 500 safe days worked.

"To have a project of this magnitude, one where we are working on a 40 acre site with an average of 110 workers per day, and go 500 days without a lost time incident, is truly amazing," said LT Michael Guzzi, NAVFAC Southwest Facilities Engineering Acquisition Division (FEAD) Point Loma director. "This equates to 208,606 man-hours! This is an amazing feat for any project, but especially one like P-401. In the past year-and-a-half we have moved 50,000 tons of soil, driven over 2,000 piles in the ground, placed thousands of cubic yards of concrete,

demolished dozens of structures, and raised four massive tanks. Despite the numerous hazards the Nova-Underground team has remained laser focused on safety and reaching this 500 day milestone is a testament to those efforts. However, we are only half way complete so now is no time to rest on our laurels. The team will celebrate today, but tomorrow it's right back to it."

The safety record is a significant accomplishment that highlights the collaborative efforts of the committed and focused Nova-Underground and NAVFAC Southwest FEAD Point Loma team and presents an ongoing safety standard that all stakeholders wish to sustain throughout the project.



(U.S. Navy photo by M.T. Icarl)

LT. Guzzi, NAVFAC Southwest Facilities Engineering Acquisition Division (FEAD) Point Loma director, praised contractors for their safety accomplishment at a luncheon celebrating the safety record.

"This is largely due to an outstanding safety program that has been implemented and administered by three highly qualified safety professionals from Nova-Underground, Ward Bramblett, Art Mendoza, and Geoff McPherson," said Dave Wilkins, NAVFAC Southwest safety officer. "This safety staff, along with myself, FEAD Point Loma's project assigned construction safety officer, and our Environmental Manager Alan Vancil, have worked very closely together developing, reviewing, and implementing a very comprehensive Activity Hazard Analysis (AHA) program and data base which sets the groundwork for a successful safety program, particu-

larly for a contract of this magnitude."

To date, 164 AHA's have been written and accepted and are reflective of the many hazards associated with this large and wide ranging scope of construction. It is also a notable reflection of the commitment from Nova-Underground and NAVFAC Southwest FEAD Point Loma.

"Safety success on a project is a team effort; it cannot be achieved by a single individual," said Robert Hume, NOVA corporate safety director. "It has to be a concerted effort by everyone on the project."

By design, Nova-Underground has created two distinct employee safety incentive programs to help elevate and sustain the commitment to safety. A

"Chips Program" encourages employees to develop and maintain higher levels of safety awareness by rewarding employees with chip ranging in value from \$3 to \$100 for exceptional safety awards which may be redeemed. A second program employs a new "Safety Monitor" each week whose task it is to inspect and identify potential hazards, whereby once a month employees are able to self-elect an "Employee of the Month" to receive a \$150 gift certificate. These innovative programs are a prime reason for the high level of safety success of the P-401 project.

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