

The Leader

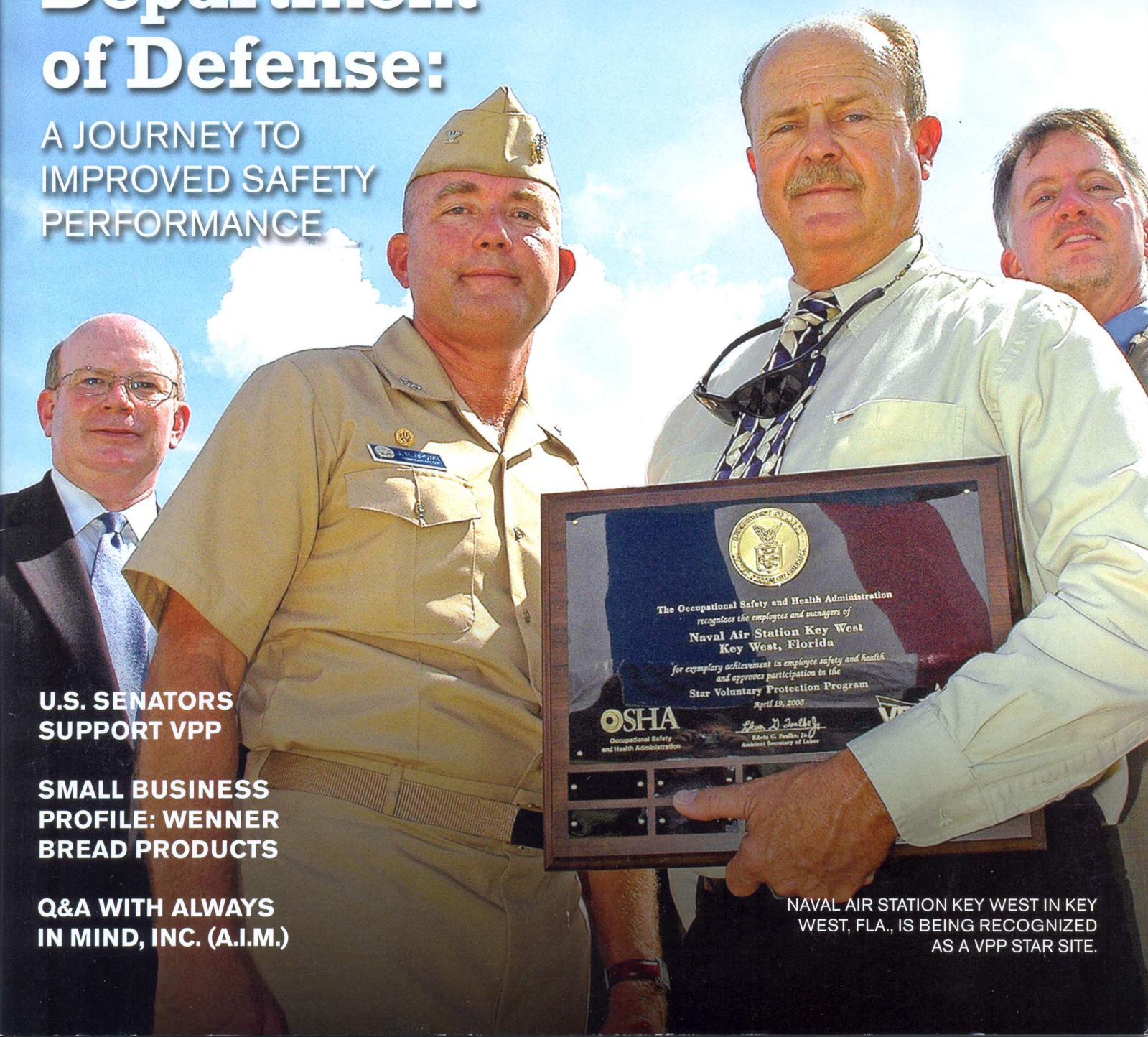
VOLUNTARY PROTECTION PROGRAMS PARTICIPANTS' ASSOCIATION

Volunteers for Total Quality Protection

SUMMER 2010 >> VOLUME 19 ISSUE 3

Department of Defense:

A JOURNEY TO IMPROVED SAFETY PERFORMANCE



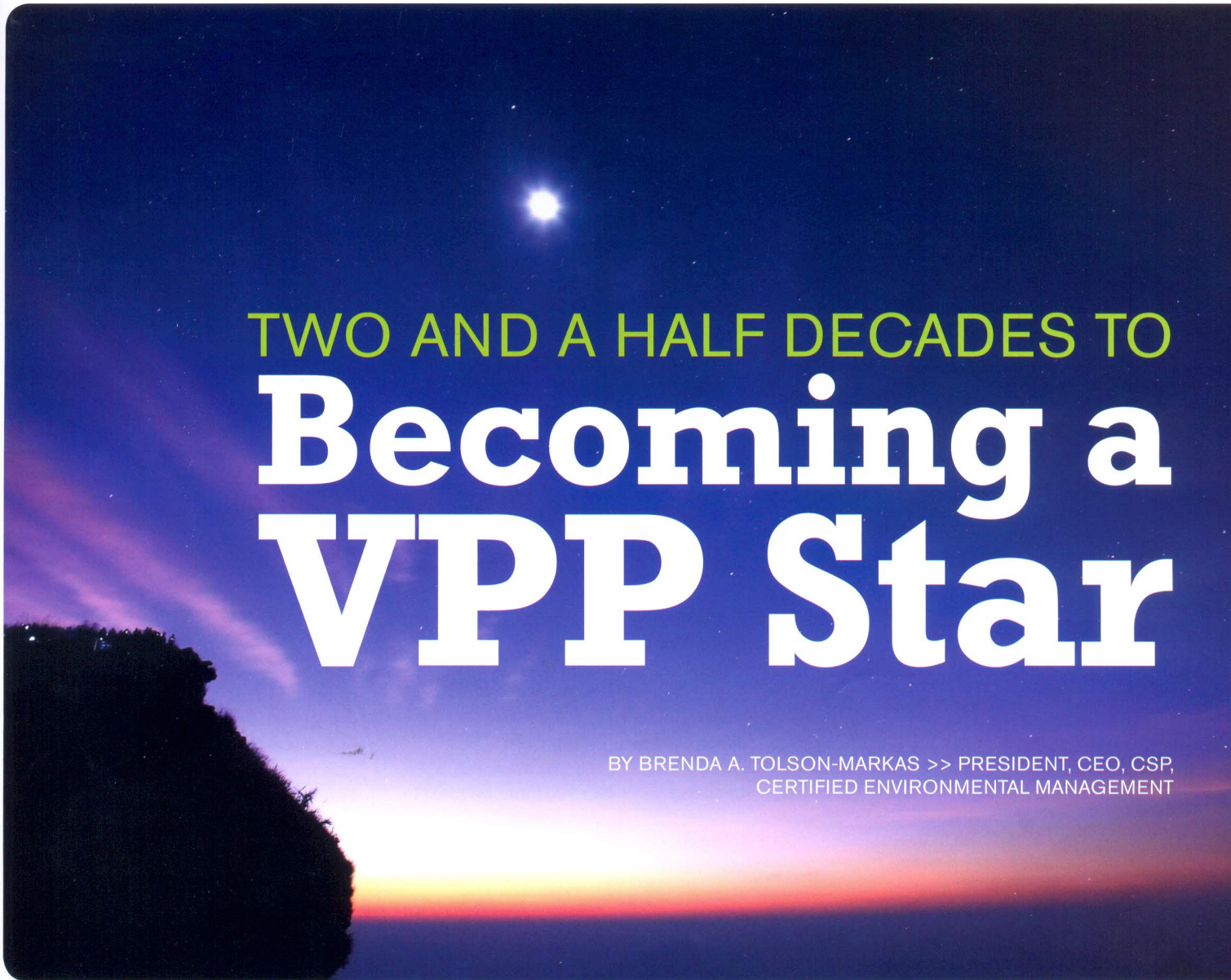
U.S. SENATORS SUPPORT VPP

SMALL BUSINESS PROFILE: WENNER BREAD PRODUCTS

Q&A WITH ALWAYS IN MIND, INC. (A.I.M.)



NAVAL AIR STATION KEY WEST IN KEY WEST, FLA., IS BEING RECOGNIZED AS A VPP STAR SITE.



TWO AND A HALF DECADES TO Becoming a VPP Star

BY BRENDA A. TOLSON-MARKAS >> PRESIDENT, CEO, CSP,
CERTIFIED ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT

What is the importance of zero? That was the question that the Certified Environmental Management, Ltd., (CEM) President asked one of their clients in the mid-1980s. The explanation was simple; any reported injury or illness performance above zero means that someone who works for our company is experiencing a health or safety event that could permanently change their lives or the lives of their families. The CEM executive began to understand the meaning of this zero criterion. So how does our team at CEM see the importance of zero? Essentially, that was our first step to becoming an Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) Voluntary Protection Programs (VPP) Star site and understanding the totality of an OSHA recordable.

In the workplace, risk equals cost – that's the bottom line. With corporations of all sizes facing shrinking budgets, increased stakeholder scrutiny and intense competition for market share and quality employees, controlling costs by effectively managing workplace environmental, health and safety (EHS) programs is crucial for sustaining growth and profitability. Workplace EHS programs reduce costs and risks by maintaining a safer, healthier and more productive workforce, adding significant value to the bottom line. Integrating EHS systems with strategic business planning delivers far-reaching financial, economic, competitive and operational benefits.

CEM partners with clients to understand their specific business and EHS processes,

objectives and strategies. From individual programs to comprehensive systems, we help companies address both immediate and long-term EHS issues, delivering point solutions that add value today and sustainable management strategies that enable our clients to track EHS value and drive improved EHS performance well into the future. We have the experience to understand the business value of EHS and the expertise to provide comprehensive solutions that effectively deliver that value.

That is why in 2008, our CEM team, the International Organization for Standardization (ISO) 17025 and the American Industrial Hygiene Association (AIHA) laboratory and consulting group chose to vigorously pursue becoming a VPP Star worksite.

CEM's Journey as a Small Business to Becoming a Star!

Our industrial hygiene (IH) team since the 1980s has had the privilege of working with the leaders of multiple industries within the United States. But one thing that always stood out when our IH field team would arrive at these sites was how from a behavioral, housekeeping, cultural and quality perspective, they were different. It might be as subtle as the signage that exists in the entry way into the facility or the pride which exists in the landscaping on the exterior of the facility. These sites always would shine in a very specific and unique way, so our team began to ask why the employees at these special sites are so conversant, knowledgeable and proud. Why did these sites appear differently both physically and internally? The answer was simple ... they were VPP Star worksites!

Because of our first-hand experience of witnessing these VPP sites and team members, our company in 1993 attended the national Voluntary Protection Programs Participants' Association (VPPPA) conference in Orlando, Fla., and sponsored kickoff events, like "Seventh Inning Stretch" receptions for all VPPPA team members. At the 1994 conference in San Antonio, Texas, we sponsored "Let's Go Out to the Ballpark" by bringing in legendary baseball players and providing every VPPPA member with an autographed baseball from Baseball Hall of Fame player Harmon Killebrew. We also got the chance to meet him in person and shake his hand. We also gave VPPPA members a personally autographed baseball by every member of the World Series baseball champions, the Minnesota Twins. During the next decade, our CEM team continued our efforts to support Region VII.

From CEM's perspective, every individual that helps their plant become a VPP Star worksite is a hall of famer! Over the years, our team has helped companies track their return on investment toward VPP Star status and has found that historically, clients generate a \$4 to \$11 lifetime return for each dollar invested in VPP.

Jumping Forward to 2008 ... Finally – CEM's Opportunity to Pursue VPP Star Status

In 2008, with so many industrial hygiene laboratories and companies being acquired by foreign investors and companies, our

CEM president believed it was our patriotic responsibility to support the "best" that the United States of America had to offer in the regulatory arena – VPP.

For years, CEM has participated in the following certification and accreditation programs:

- + American Industrial Hygiene Association (AIHA)
 - Certification Number 101294 (Since 1987)
 - ELLAP Certified (Lead in Paint, Lead in Soil, Lead in Air, Lead in Wipes)
 - IHLAP Certified (Organics, Organic Badges, Metals, Asbestos and Silica)
- + National Cooperation for Laboratory Accreditations (NACLA), #101294
- + NACLA Mutual Recognition Arrangement
 - Coordinates Laboratory Accreditation with the United States, Canada and Mexico
- + International Organization for Standardization (ISO) policy ISO/IEC 17025 ISO/IEC 17025 incorporates requirements of ISO 9001 and ISO 9002
- + Proficiency Analytical Testing (PAT) Program for 23 continuous years
 - Operated by the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH) and funded by AIHA
 - All Parameter (Organics, Metals, Silica, Fiber counts)
 - Organic Badges (3M, Trace air, SKC, etc.)
 - Lead (Pb) in Paint, Soil, Bulks
 - Bulk Asbestos Identification
- + Germany's BGIA Program
- + United Kingdom's WASP Program
- + Asia Pacific Laboratory Accreditation Cooperation (APLAC)

Bottom Line

None of these certifications or accreditations has made our employees as proud as being recommended as a VPP Star worksite! After CEM's decades of watching and assisting the "best of the best" worksites in the country become Stars, OSHA Region VII recommended

that CEM be acknowledged in May of 2010 as a VPP Star site!

One major misconception that we had for many years was that VPP was not a small business option. Our employees proved this not to be the case as they saw the VPP Star as a professional step and honor for themselves and the company. Their safety practices were critical in going home each day without any laboratory accidents or incidents. Protecting their health was vital to their daily tasks as well as their ability to conduct accurate analytical chemical analysis. This program also increased the team spirit and close working relations in the laboratory. More time was spent on developing safer laboratory practices, standard operation procedures and methodologies. VPP was almost a professional growth step for all of our laboratory operations and all of our team members. We really discovered that you do not have to be a large organization to become a VPP Star. It is for all companies, large and small.

Our team learned that VPP promotes effective worksite-based safety and health. Following VPP objectives, management, labor and OSHA establish cooperative relationships at workplaces and jointly implemented a comprehensive safety and health management system. The approval of CEM for Star recognition by our OSHA Region VII team was OSHA's official recognition of the outstanding team efforts that our employees achieved and their exemplary occupational safety and health work habits.

We are honored to state that we value the importance of zero and that we are part of this time-honored "fraternity" of being a Star worksite for our employees, their families and for this great nation.

Special recognition and salutes need to be extended to multiple Special Government Employees (SGEs) that suggested our company apply for VPP Star recognition. Their advice and counsel were invaluable in engaging in this process. Two extraordinary SGEs need individual recognition by our team: Jon Baxt of Koch Industries, Inc./Aviation and Dr. Norman Murphy, who is retired from NASA. ★