

**NOMINATION FOR THE
2016 USGS GROUP SAFETY AND OCCUPATIONAL
HEALTHAWARD OF EXCELLENCE**

BEAU GRIFFIN and MILTON SUNVISON

The Texas Water Science Center (TWSC) has an outstanding safety program. They have combined the duties of Milton Sunvison, the Collateral Duty Safety Officer, with Beau Griffin, a Project Management Specialist, to offer a service that covers the whole scope of safety responsibilities at the TWSC.

As Collateral Duty Safety Program Coordinator, Mr. Sunvison is responsible for the TWSC Safety Program. He works closely with the Center Management Team (CMT) and six field office collateral duty safety officers. He plays a critical role in tracking, understanding, and prioritizing risks faced by field employees from eight science centers and in communicating those risks and their resolution to the CMT. The Center Director and the CMT rely on him to inspect field gages, create, and manage a Hazard Elimination Log, and to provide explanations and recommendations that result in important safety and financial decisions.

In addition, Mr. Sunvison worked with both administrative staff and management to alleviate legacy, non-compliant Office of Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) construction standards and their inherent safety hazards, typically cableways and stilling wells. He established a team of highly qualified and experienced technicians for new gage construction and utilized local experienced staff for repair and maintenance projects. This approach has worked well and has resulted in approximately 100 sites being either removed or brought up to OSHA standards. All new gages are being built to OSHA standards with pre-purchased materials designed to be more reliable with lower maintenance costs.

Using his experience in all aspects of field safety, Mr. Sunvison spent the past 5 years working with the CMT and experienced field staff to create a "Texas Water Science Construction Standards." Some of the major field safety problems in the past have been a lack of understanding of OSHA requirements, poor construction design, inconsistency in construction, time and money wasted obtaining local construction materials, and lack of persons experienced in gage construction, design, and build out. The Construction Standards document addresses all these issues, focuses on teamwork, and provides a document for other science centers to emulate. Once the revised version of the Construction Standards are published, the goal is to make the document available to all science centers as a blueprint for eradicating a long history of poor gage construction. This document and recognition of its benefits in time savings, maintenance cost, and improved equipment reliability provides a guideline for achieving bureauwide compliance with OSHA construction standards.

Mr. Sunvison is assisted by Mr. Griffin, who serves as the focal point for all TWSC non-technical safety matters, including the occupational safety and health program, traffic/driving safety, fire protection and prevention, heat stress control, and operational risk management. He assists Mr. Sunvison in conducting all TWSC accident investigations and establishes, coordinates, updates, directs, and evaluates the effectiveness of existing safety policies, plans, programs, and procedures. He also assists field safety staff and supervisors in periodic facility

safety evaluations and surveys to support safety programs and procedures. As a part-time safety specialist Mr. Griffin takes an active role in facility safety, determining the level of compliance with safety regulations, directives, and instruction, and evaluating the effectiveness of safety programs and procedures.

He shares responsibility with Mr. Sunvison for interpreting safety regulations and standards, and participates in the development of new or revised safety standards. Working primarily in a facility environment, Mr. Griffin maintains and analyzes injury/illness report data in the Department of the Interior Safety Management Information System, reviews Inspection and Abatement System findings, and initiates action to improve the safety program. Working with the Center administrative officer, Mr. Griffin develops schedules, participates in training, and evaluates employee safety training in coordination with regional and Bureau requirements.

Mr. Griffin's and Mr. Sunvison have helped the TWSC achieve an outstanding level of gage safety and OSHA compliance, in addition to exceeding all expectations in developing a systems approach to achieve this goal. Recently, Mr. Sunvison presented their efforts at the USGS Southeast Regional Water Data Conference in Jacksonville, Florida, in September 2015, which was very well received.

Both Beau Griffin and Milton Sunvison are deserving of this award nomination for their vision, teamwork, and work ethic in maintaining a safe and healthy facility work environment for the TWSC, as well as for their combined effort to alleviate legacy, non-compliant OSHA construction standards and the inherent safety hazards. Their enthusiasm, knowledge, skills, and forward thinking is deserving of the USGS Safety Award and possibly a Department Safety Award based on the potential effect of removing known hazards to other Federal employees, reducing our liability to the public, and preventing inadvertent injuries.

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