

## Idea reemphasizes secure launch facilities

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5/25/2011 - **MINOT AIR FORCE BASE, N.D.** -- An Air Force Global Strike Command Airman received the maximum payout of \$10,000 for his submission to the Innovative Development through Employee Awareness, otherwise known as IDEA, program.

Mark H. Kauer, 5th Force Support Squadron manpower management analyst, said the IDEA program is an incentive based program which promotes process improvement and resource savings.

"It encourages Airmen and Air Force employees to look for ways of doing the Air Force business faster, better and cheaper, through program awareness," he added.

It was through this program that Master Sgt. Joseph Saldan, 91st Missile Maintenance Squadron NCO in charge of the Electro-Mechanical Team section, submitted a change to repair procedures - a change that saved the Air Force thousands of dollars and hundreds of manpower hours.

"The final monetary savings is \$296,878.41 annually," he said. "The hours saved was calculated at 648 annually."

Sergeant Saldan directs maintenance of electronic and security systems at 150 launch facilities. He said these systems are an important part of ensuring the security of each launch facility.

"The system is part of the Intercontinental Ballistic Missile Security Modification Program, which was put together partially in response to the event of 9/11," said Sergeant Saldan. "The system is a way of enhancing launch facility security; it secures the launch facility in less than 30 seconds."

"The energy storage system stores created energy used to raise or lower the seven-ton secondary door, which ultimately prevents unauthorized individuals from entering the launch facility," said the sergeant.

Sergeant Saldan said the energy storage system contains a flywheel power system, which provides more than 600 volts DC to the Electro-Mechanical Actuator. The EMA is what raises and locks the secondary door in less than 30 seconds.

"The flywheel, which is responsible for powering the EMA, is magnetically suspended inside of a vacuum chamber," he continued. "If this vacuum fails, the ESS shuts down."

Sergeant Saldan said that if the ESS vacuum pressure falls to the extent that the ESS shuts down, then the technician is unable to perform the ESS pump-down procedures to try and fix the malfunction. If this happens, repair procedures direct that the entire system be replaced.

Sergeant Saldan's idea sought to improve the way in which these complex security systems are maintained in the event of a system failure.



MINOT AIR FORCE BASE, N.D. -- Innovative Development through Employee Awareness award winner, Master Sgt. Joseph Saldan, 91st Missile Maintenance Squadron NCO in charge of the Electro-Mechanical Team section, receives a check for 10,000 dollars from Lt. Col. Joel Hanson, 91 Maintenance Group Commander here May 18. Air Force Global Strike Command awarded a maximum payout of \$10,000 for his submission to the IDEA program. The program encourages Airmen and Air Force employees to look for ways of doing the Air Force business, faster, better and cheaper. (U.S. Air Force Photo/Senior Airman Jesse Lopez)

"During the course of the new system being installed in the field, we ran across a situation where the ESS vacuum would fail," he said. "We tried to repair the ESS when it had a vacuum fault by pumping it down, but if the vacuum failed to the extent of the system needing to be shutdown, we were prohibited to pump it down. We then had to perform a shutdown."

Sergeant Saldan said he saw no reason to not try and pump the vacuum down and verify the readings at the end to ensure it worked. He said he submitted a waiver to Quality Assurance and submitted a change.

"The change incorporated reading our indications after the pump-down was accomplished and verifying the final drag reading was within tolerance, rather than replacing the entire system," he said.

This is the first time the sergeant has submitted an improvement to the IDEA program. He said it took about two months to work out the format and get additional information, but he pursued the improvement as he thought it would be worth the maximum payout of \$10,000.

If interested in submitting an idea, the Minot Air Force Base Manpower Office is giving away an Amazon Kindle to one person who submits an idea between April 15 to July 15. Each idea submitted during this time period is worth one entry into the drawing. The winner will be announced July 16.

For more information on how to submit an idea to this program, visit the IDEA website <https://ipds.randolph.af.mil>.