

The Pittsburgh Federal Executive Board Honors NETL with Eight Awards

NETL took home one team and seven individual awards at the 31st Annual Pittsburgh Federal Executive Board (FEB) Excellence in Government Awards Program Luncheon at the Westin Convention Center in Pittsburgh.

The Pittsburgh FEB encompasses more than 100 Federal agencies and 20,000 Federal employees in the region. The Excellence in Government Awards Program encourages innovation and excellence in government, reinforces pride in federal service, and helps call public attention to the broad range of services provided by federal employees.

NETL medal winners were:

Gold Medals

Donald Ferguson, Community Service Award: Dr. Ferguson was recognized for his volunteer work developing high-tech tools that assist local and national search and rescue efforts, particularly his Integrated Geospatial Tools for Search and Rescue (IGT4SAR). The mobility model of IGT4SAR considers the influence of slope, land cover, hydrology, and the availability of travel aides to provide a realistic estimate of the distance a missing person may have travelled. IGT4SAR is used by numerous organizations around the world.

Barbara Kutchko, Outstanding Contribution to Science (Non-Medical): An internationally known expert in wellbore cement, Dr. Kutchko serves as the principal investigator for groundbreaking NETL evaluations of foamed cement systems for oil and natural gas wells, primarily to mitigate environmental impacts. Dr. Kutchko also conducted forensic analyses on cement associated with the 2010 Deepwater Horizon oil spill, and her results were highlighted in a technical report seen as the “roadmap for future wellbore cement research.”

Lisa Nichols, Outstanding Administrative Employee: Ms. Nichols led five NETL projects that improved existing office business systems or replaced them with new, innovative systems. Her guidance helped increase the overall effectiveness of the laboratory’s office operations by increasing data accuracy and reliability. The systems she implemented help reduce the time it takes to complete work processes and cut costs by reducing labor requirements.

Jimmy Thornton, Outstanding Supervisor/Manager in a Professional Series: Mr. Thornton improved NETL’s safety training management, leading to improvements in efficiency and effectiveness for its Safety Analysis Review (SARS) team. He also implemented an automated training verification system that combines official training completion records with project-specific training requirements. The system has reduced supervisory time to complete training verification by more than 90 percent.

Silver Medals

Julianne Klara, Outstanding Professional Employee (All Other Fields): Ms. Klara implemented the NETL-Regional University Alliance (NETL-RUA) and coordinated operations between NETL, five regional universities, and an engineering, design, and construction firm. She provided high-level expertise and management advice on optimizing research collaborations and independently developed and implemented a strategic vision and business plan for NETL-RUA that led to the discovery and development of new energy systems.

David Miller, Outstanding Professional Employee (Medical and Scientific Field): Dr. Miller developed and leads NETL's Carbon Capture Storage Initiative (CCSI), which is developing computational tools and models to cut the time and cost of designing highly efficient, environmentally benign energy systems. Dr. Miller led the creation of the first CCSI Toolset: a unique, integrated suite of simulation-based tools that help industry rapidly and cost-effectively screen, develop, scale up, and deploy carbon-capture and related technologies.

Marissa Arnold, Mara Dean, Peter Hensel, and Brett Humble, Outstanding Team Award: NETL's Research & Development (R&D) Safety Analysis and Review (SARS) Team developed and implemented updates to their R&D SARS procedure to increase lab safety and significantly improved the efficiency of the safety analysis process. NETL saw a 45 percent reduction in the amount of time needed to handle a SARS review process after implementation.

Bronze Medal

Bruce Brown, Outstanding Professional Employee (All Other Fields): Mr. Brown manages the Department of Energy's Regional Carbon Sequestration Partnerships: the lead U.S. program investigating methods for successfully storing CO₂ in geologic formations across various regions of the United States and Canada. Mr. Brown also coordinates public meetings in the subject area to facilitate industry and academic networking and information exchange.