

Key Objective: "We Must Secure Our Future By Meeting Schedule And Budget Expectations."

CVN 21 Program Cuts First Piece Of Steel

A small group of Newport News employees gathered in the Steel Fabrication Shop on April 15 for the first cut of steel for CVN 21. A formal ceremony is planned this summer, during the grand opening of the 276 Building Extension Heavy Plate Bay, but the cut signifies the official start of construction for the next generation aircraft carrier.

"The message here is that we're honoring our commitment to the customer," **Sammy Vreeland**, CVN 21 Propulsion Plant construction manager, said before **Redell Dildy** (X15) started cutting steel for Unit 512 on the burning machine. "This was a promise we made four years ago."



David Eberwine, director of of Structural Fabrication and Assembly, chats with **Sammy Vreeland**, CVN 21 Propulsion Plant construction manager, during the "first cut."

Vreeland said the program is committed to completing the design and drawings to support several more units scheduled to start cutting later this year. He also said the program, along with Steel Fab and Component Fabrication and Assembly, is working on a plan for building units and pipe assembly for 2006 and 2007 to support the program schedule and work force.

Jim Cash, Steel Fab process owner, was on-hand for the first cut and anxious to show the new building extension to those who were in attendance. When finished, the extension will feature a new burning machine -- "the most state of the art out there," Vreeland said -- a conveyor system, a flipping station and a 5,000-ton press.

Dildy, who has worked in Fabrication for two years, wasn't used to the attention. "I'm not a real public person," he said. "I just like to do my job."



A burning machine in Newport News' Steel Fabrication Shop cuts the first piece of steel for CVN 21 on April 15. A formal ceremony is planned this summer, but the cut signifies the official start of construction for the next generation aircraft carrier. *Photos by John Whalen*

Newport News To Be Featured In Two Discovery Channel Shows On April 24

Newport News will be featured in two shows on the Discovery Channel on Sunday, April 24: "Submarine: Hidden Hunter: will air at 8 and 11 p.m., and "Carrier: Arsenal of the Sea" will air at 10 p.m.

"Submarine" gives the ultimate view of the *Virginia*-class submarine program and its role in leading the U.S. Navy into a bold new phase of undersea warfare. Footage for the

program was filmed at Newport News last summer and includes work underway in the Module Outfitting Facility and onboard *Texas* (SSN 775).

"Carrier," a rebroadcast of the documentary that aired earlier this year, tracks the eight-week voyage of the aircraft carrier *USS Ronald Reagan* (CVN 76) as it sails from Newport News to its home port of San Diego.

Datebook

- ✓ **April 20:** The Nautilus Society will hold its spring business meeting at 4:30 p.m. in Bldg. 520-6. **Rolf Bartschi**, vice president and chief nuclear engineer, will be the guest speaker.
- ✓ **April 22:** The Apprentice School baseball team will play at Columbia Union College at noon.
- ✓ **April 25:** The Apprentice School baseball team will host Randolph-Macon College at 3 p.m.
- ✓ **April 26:** Newport News will host an American Red Cross Bloodmobile from 8 to 11:30 a.m. outside Bldg. 802 (The NetCenter). To schedule an appointment, call 8-0308. For more information, call 0-3011.
- ✓ **April 27:** Newport News' Tuition Reimbursement Office (O35) will host "College Day" from 2 to 5:30 p.m. on the sixth floor of Bldg. 520. For more information, contact **Linda B. Graves** (O35) at 8-8236.
- ✓ **April 27:** **Mike Petters**, president of Newport News, will speak at The Propeller Club's Maritime Banquet at 6 p.m. For tickets or more information, contact Deidre Braga at 558-0551 or dbraga@buildermarine.us.

NORTHROP GRUMMAN

Currents is published weekly for employees of Northrop Grumman's Newport News sector. The deadline for submission is noon Friday for publication the following week. Submissions and comments should be sent to: jim.roberts@ngc.com.

⚓ Petters Named Honorary Alumnus At Annual Apprentice Banquet

The Apprentice Alumni Association (AAA) presented Newport News President **Mike Petters** with an honorary membership at its annual banquet on April 15.

Danny Hunley, vice president, Trades, Education and Training, served as emcee at the banquet and said only seven other people had received the rare honor.

"I am deeply honored, very humbled and very, very grateful," Petters said after Hunley and AAA President **Sammy Vreeland** presented him with a plaque. "Thank you very much."

Petters was the featured speaker at the banquet, which drew more than 200 members of the AAA and former shipyard presidents **Bud Ackerman** and **Pat Phillips**. Petters gave an overview of the shipyard's programs and talked about some of the challenges the shipyard faces, namely replacing experienced employees.

Petters said 448 employees will become Master Shipbuilders this year; they represent more than 18,000 years of experience. "The only way I know how to



Newport News President **Mike Petters** (left) accepts a plaque commemorating his honorary membership in the Apprentice Alumni Association from **Sammy Vreeland** (center) and **Danny Hunley**. Photo by *Chris Oxley*

replace that is through the Apprentice School," he said.

"I am very proud to be associated with the Apprentice School," Petters said. "I hope we can carry the Apprentice School to even better and greater heights."

The AAA also honored the Class of 1955 at this year's banquet.

⚓ Topp Receives Systems Engineering Professional Accreditation

Newport News employee **Kevin Topp** was one of four Northrop Grumman employees to receive Certified Systems Engineering Professional (CSEP) certification from the International Council on Systems Engineering.

To receive CSEP accreditation, a candidate: must have a bachelor's degree or equivalent in a technical field from an accredited institution; must have five years experience in a systems engineering profession; must pass an exam to fulfill the knowledge requirement; and must provide three letters of reference confirming his or her technical expertise and experience.

Topp, a CVN 21 lead systems engineer in



Topp

the Systems Engineering Dept. (E47), served as a U.S. Army engineer officer for 22 years before joining Northrop Grumman in 2000.

Topp earned a bachelor's degree in civil engineering from Virginia Tech, a master's degree in environmental engineering from the University of Florida, and a master's degree in national security and strategic studies from the Naval War College in Newport, R.I.

Other employees receiving CSEP accreditation were: David Newbern and Robert Tufts of the Information Technology sector, and Jose Saavedra of the Integrated Systems sector.

⚓ MOE Nominations Due May 6

Nominations for the President's Model of Excellence (MOE) award program, which recognizes Newport News individuals and teams for exemplifying company values and exceeding expectations for outstanding performance, are due by May 6.

For more information, visit Yardnet and click on the MOE icon.



Key Objective: "We Must Secure Our Future By Improving And Standardizing Our Processes."

Seventy Employees Receive Level III Awards At OFI's First Quarter Recognition Luncheon

Newport News' Opportunity For Improvement (OFI) Program hosted its First Quarter Recognition Luncheon on April 14.

Seventy employees received Level III Awards, which are reserved for employees' whose OFI suggestions have been approved and implemented and realized savings of at least \$100,000 within a 12-month period. The Level III awards went to: two employees in Human Resources and Administration, two employees in Technology Development and Fleet Support, seven employees in CVN 21, eight employees in Waterfront Nuclear Engineering and Test, nine employees in the Submarine Program, 11 employees in Trades, Education and Training, 14 employees in Operations, and 17 employees in the Carrier Program.



Timberlake



Chambers

"Crystal Awards" went to Operations for Top Verified Savings (\$2 million) and to Waterfront Nuclear Engineering and Test for Top Per Capita Participation (35.1 percent) and Top Participation (636 OFIs submitted).

The OFI Program also awarded six "Rising Star Awards" to departments with the highest per capita participation. Awards went to: Nuclear Services (E80), 54.5 percent; Welding Engineering (O37), 56.2 percent; Laboratory Services (O31), 41.1 percent; Non-Destructive Test (O38), 43.3 percent; South Side Shops Planning (M30), 48.4 percent; and Nuclear Engineering Radiological Control (E85), 59.2 percent.

The winners of the drawings for the Level II Award and the OFI "Gas & Go" promotion were **Thomas Timberlake** (O31) and **Shane Chambers** (E31). Timberlake received a \$500 gas card, and Chambers received a \$1,000 gas card.

Jennifer Boykin, vice president, Process Excellence, was



Yasmine Robinson (left) presents two Crystal Awards to **Dave Long** at the First Quarter OFI Appreciation Luncheon. Long accepted the awards on behalf of Waterfront Nuclear Engineering and Test, which won for Top Per Capita Participation (35.1 percent) and Top Participation (636 OFIs submitted). *Photos by Chris Oxley*



the guest speaker at the luncheon. "This is really an excellent program," she said. "It's about people coming up with great ideas and leadership taking them to fruition."

Boykin said the OFI Program is an example of continuous improvement in action. "We all need to realize improvement is continuous," she said. "There is always a way to do it better. OFIs are a way to do that."

Through March 31, more than 1,700 employees had submitted more than 1,600 suggestions. OFI's goal for 2005 is to increase per capita participation by 25 percent.

Key Objective: "We Must Secure Our Future By Focusing On Leadership And Employee Training For Peak Performance."

O26 Hosts Appreciation Luncheon For Participants In The Structured On-The-Job Training Program

Newport News' Production And Maintenance Skills Training Dept. (O26) hosted an appreciation luncheon on April 7 for general foremen, supervisors and process leaders currently participating in the Structured On-The-Job Training (SOJT) program.

SOJT falls under the sector's Training Modernization Program and is an effort to reduce the time it takes for workers to reach proficiency within their specific trades. O26 links classroom training to a structured production hands-on experience in which employees apply learned skills that are evaluated and documented for proven proficiency.

Eddie Morris, manager of O26, and

Leonard Harper, trades manager for the CVN 77 Program, provided opening comments at the luncheon. They expressed their thanks to the SOJT participants and said the program will expand to all areas of the yard.

Key sponsors in attendance included:

Jennifer Boykin, vice president, Process Excellence; **Danny Hunley**, vice president, Trades, Education and Training; **Scott Stabler**, vice president, CVN 77; **Mike Butler**, director of Aircraft Carrier Construction; **Dick Boutwell**, manager of Training Services; and several CVN 77 managers and trade managers who report to Hunley.



Eddie Morris (standing, left), and **Leonard Harper** (standing, right) provide opening comments at Structured On-The-Job Training (SOJT) luncheon on April 7.