

**COMBINED  
CYCLE** Journal

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Participation in the Best Practices Awards program for gas-turbine-based generating facilities, launched three years ago by the COMBINED CYCLE Journal, continues to increase. This is evident from the number of pages it took to profile the 2007 entries in the categories of management, environmental stewardship, safety, and O&M (p 3).

The editors thank all who shared the methods and procedures used at their plants to assure top performance on a predictable and repeatable basis. And thanks, too, to the Leadership Committee of the CTOTF (Combustion Turbine Operations Task Force), which judged the entries.

Management is, perhaps, the most challenging category to judge. Most entries sound like good ideas but it's difficult to evaluate them in terms of real benefit and sustainability. For example, no one would dispute the value of storm-emergency procedures and periodic drills. But how many plants take the time to drill when staff can't remember the last time the roof leaked and what the consequences of inadequate response were? Success is achieved only when such best practices are woven into the fabric of plant behavior and continually reinforced from the top down.

The editors caught up with Plant Manager Robert Mayfield after this year's awards luncheon. The plaques he accepted on behalf of Tenaska Virginia Generating Station attest to the success of that facility's proactive program of continual improvement. For Mayfield, continual improvement is a way of life. He started his navy career at the bottom of the enlisted ranks and retired as a nuclear sub engineer officer; now he's about a year away from completing his doctorate.

We asked Mayfield about the community relations program that Tenaska Virginia received a BEST OF THE BEST award for in 2006. The entry talked about how the program contributed significantly to the *esprit de corps* among plant staff and helped employees feel connected and valued within the area where they live and work.

Great words, but was the plant still doing what it set out to do or had this become one of those "good ideas, but no time, no money" things we've all experienced in the "talk the talk" corporate world? By the time Mayfield finished, there was no doubt that the judges made the right call last year—that the Tenaksa Virginia team not only "walks the walk" it really doesn't know any other way to "behave."

In the three years since COD (commercial operating date), Mayfield says the plant staff has hosted about 2000 visitors. He personally spends an hour or so with each group discussing any concerns guests have about power generation. A couple of weeks ago it was a class of 70 sixth-graders who wanted to know about global warming. A couple of days before coming to Orlando, Mayfield and staff hosted the Central Virginia chapter of retired submariners and their spouses. Upcoming: Theme of the plant's annual 9-11 barbecue (actually Sept 8 this year) is "Honor those that serve." County policemen, firemen, emergency medical personnel, etc—plus the CCJ staff—are invited. Last year more than 150 attended.

In sum, Mayfield believes that Tenaska Virginia's "open plant" policy is very important in a county experiencing double-digit population growth, especially given the many misconceptions that exist today about the energy industry. "Being a good corporate citizen is vital to the success of any business," he says.

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