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The Central Warehouse team gathered, Thursday, to celebrate their safety accomplishment – two years without a lost-time injury.



PHOTOS: BILL HEARD

Central Warehouse Employees Mark 2 Injury-Free Years

(June 3, 2005) The last time any employee in the Central Warehouse and Distribution Facility was hurt seriously enough to be off work was May 23, 2003.

For a group that works two shifts a day moving materials with heavy machinery, that's a real accomplishment, says Dieter Hemsing, director of Inventory Management at the Regional Rebuild Center.

So, on Thursday, the 47 members of the Central Warehouse – joined by facilities maintenance technicians, systems analysts and other support staff – held a barbecue to celebrate their two years without a lost-time injury.

Previously, the Central Warehouse group had the worst safety record in Material Management, according to Hemsing, with up to 11 lost-time injuries a year. The job involves receiving, moving, storing and delivering an unending flow of supplies and parts ranging from boxes of nuts and bolts to pallets of heavy equipment.

"The exposure to injury here is generally higher than elsewhere," says Hemsing, noting that the group's total time on the job over the two-year period amounted to 164,500 hours. "That makes their accomplishment even more impressive."



Safety was the "icing on the cake" for the Central Warehouse group.

Helping each other stay safe

He also credits Central Warehouse Manager Jim Montoya and his crew's safety ideas and commitment to helping each other stay safe, as well as the daily stretching exercises that prepare them for the hard work ahead.

Prior to each shift, the materials supervisors – Lorraine Melendez for first shift and Dino Gutierrez for second shift – lead their teams in a three-minute routine aimed at limbering up legs and backs and loosening up arms.

"Dieter and his managers – Jim Montoya, Bill Kovach and Margaret James – have taken safety by the horns and made it a personal objective," says Ted Montoya, deputy executive officer, Procurement. "They should be commended for moving safety from an idea to actual results."

Looking ahead to another year he hopes also will be accident-free, Hemsing says, "Safety is a total team effort. Management can't do it on their own; employees have to buy into it."

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