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NNSA Employee Receives Service to America Medal

WASHINGTON, D.C. – For the second year in a row, an employee of the National Nuclear Security Administration (NNSA) has earned a prestigious Service to America medal.

Nicole Nelson-Jean, an NNSA employee who directs the Department of Energy’s (DOE) office in Tokyo, received the award last night for her nonproliferation work in Russia, including leading a delegation of U.S. security specialists and engineers to the Arctic Circle to build a multimillion dollar training and service center for Russian nuclear material and weapons security.

NNSA Administrator Brooks was on hand to present Nelson-Jean her medal, praising her work before giving her the award. “The agreement she helped strike has led to the creation of a multimillion dollar facility in Russia, dedicated to ensuring that dangerous nuclear materials never fall into the wrong hands,” he said. “We are proud of her outstanding work. Clearly the best is yet to come from this remarkable young woman.”

One year after joining NNSA, Nelson-Jean facilitated the signing of the bilateral agreement to secure former Soviet nuclear materials and weapons. This agreement had been in negotiations for over a year and was at an impasse until the task was handed to Nelson-Jean. Once the agreement had been signed, she began leading delegations of security specialists and engineers to the Arctic Circle to work with the Russian Navy to spearhead the establishment of the Kola Technical Center, which is the first multimillion-dollar service and training center for securing nuclear material and weapons in Russia. She worked with the Russian Navy and Russian contractors to develop training programs, technical center designs, and construction schedules. In the process, she gained the trust and respect of her Russian counterparts. As a result, this facility will help ensure that weapons-usable material and weapons of mass destruction do not fall into the hands of terrorists.

Last year, NNSA employee Riaz Awan won the award. As director of DOE’s office in Ukraine, he oversaw multimillion-dollar initiatives that significantly improved nuclear safety and enhanced the security of nuclear facilities in Ukraine, including the permanent closure of the Chernobyl Nuclear Power Plant.

The Service to America Medals were created in 2002 by the Partnership for Public Service, a nonpartisan, nonprofit organization committed to revitalizing federal government service, and the Atlantic Media Company (publisher of *Government Executive*, *National Journal* and *The Atlantic Monthly*).

Established in 2000 by Congress, NNSA is a semi-autonomous agency within the U.S. Department of Energy responsible for enhancing national security through the military application of nuclear energy. NNSA maintains and enhances the safety, security, reliability and performance of the U.S. nuclear weapons stockpile without underground nuclear testing; works to reduce global danger from weapons of mass destruction; provides the U.S. Navy with safe and effective nuclear propulsion; and responds to nuclear and radiological emergencies in the U.S. and abroad.

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