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MARSHALL CENTER READY TO MEET INTERNATIONAL QUALITY STANDARDS SAYS ISO 9001 AUDITORS

The Marshall Space Flight Center in Huntsville, Ala., has shown it is “world class” because its people can be counted on to provide customers throughout the world with quality products and services, said the Center’s acting director.

Carolyn Griner, acting Center director, said today Marshall will be recommended for certification in ISO 9001, a set of international standards used to evaluate organizations whose business processes range from design and development, to production and installation.

Auditors certified by the International Organization for Standardization spent three days this week assessing how well Marshall’s Quality Management System measures up to ISO 9001 standards. Auditors found no major non-conformances, only 13 minor non-conformances and seven observations — minor areas for improvement.

Marshall implemented its Quality Management System to meet ISO 9001 standards and guidelines in response to a challenge issued by NASA Administrator Daniel S. Goldin in 1996. The recommendation for certification caps a two-year effort at Marshall.

“We are leaders in the world of space and technology. We must also be leaders in the world of quality,” said Goldin.

“Marshall’s Quality Management System is designed to deliver quality products and services to our customers,” said Griner. “As an organization, we are committed to pursuing excellence, maintaining quality, safety and reliability standards and recognizing the importance of our people.

“This recommendation for registration verifies that our plan measures up to standards established and accepted by the international community,” said Griner. “Moreover, this recommendation confirms what we’ve known for a long time — Marshall Space Flight Center is truly a world-class organization.”

Griner said ISO 9001 certification will help Marshall keep in step with numerous certified companies across the United States.

“This spring, Marshall will be test-firing a propulsion system for Lockheed-Martin, and compliance with ISO standards is a requirement of our contract with them.”

Bob Schwinghamer, Marshall’s associate director, technical, led the Center’s quality certification efforts as the ISO management representative.

“I am truly exhilarated,” said Schwinghamer. “I’ve been at Marshall for more than 40 years. This center-wide effort is totally in character. The Marshall Space Flight Center team always comes through when they have to. And they’ve done it again.”

“The Center did well and everyone at Marshall is to be commended for reaching this milestone accomplishment two months ahead of schedule. The auditors were tough, but fair. And again, Louis Pasteur’s axiom has been validated ‘chance has favored the prepared minds.’”

To ensure that the anticipated registration is ultimately conferred (and then retained), Marshall must continue improving its Quality Management System. Auditors will return to Marshall in May to verify that improvements are made in the minor non-conformances and observations.