



News Release

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ECBC's Valdes Receives Presidential Rank Award

Aberdeen Proving Ground, MD — James Valdes, Ph.D., the U.S. Army Edgewood Chemical Biological Center's (ECBC) Scientific Advisor for Biotechnology, was awarded a "Meritorious Senior Professional Rank Award" as part of the 2009 Army Presidential Rank Awards held recently.

Valdes, along with 25 other distinguished career executives and senior professionals, was presented with the most prestigious recognition afforded to Army civilians during a ceremony at the Women in Military Service for America Memorial.

"We are truly, truly fortunate to have such wonderful civilians, such highly accomplished individuals helping to lead the Army during what I know we all understand are very, very challenging times, and times of great change," said Secretary of the Army John McHugh.

Valdes was recognized for his work on the Tactical Garbage to Energy Refinery (TGER), a hybrid waste-to-energy system that combines two complementary technologies — advanced fermentation and thermal decomposition — to convert a broader range of waste products such as plastic, paper, food scraps and styrofoam into synthetic gas or hydrous ethanol. The TGER can consume about a ton of waste per day and was designed to produce electricity for the local power grid or heat for showers while disposing of waste generated by more than 600 people with a 60 kilowatt generator.

"The TGER is best suited for a post-[Hurricane] Katrina, post-combat or expeditionary military operation situation. One where there is a lot of garbage, but no power," Valdes said when asked to describe the benefits of the system.

Valdes was previously recognized with the "Meritorious Senior Professional Rank Award" in 2003 for his conceptual and technical breakthroughs in the field of "biosensors," a discipline which he helped to establish and define a strategic direction for at ECBC and throughout the Joint Services.

McHugh said the Army's success is due "in no small measure" to the civilian awardees -- who work in such fields as contracting, procurement, research, installation management and Iraqi reconstruction and training -- and that their efforts have resulted in a "more efficient and cost-effective" Army.

Awardees, who must be nominated by the secretary of the Army, evaluated by boards of private citizens and approved by the president, received between 20 and 35 percent of their base pay in addition to the framed certificate signed by President Obama.

For more information on ECBC, visit <http://www.ecbc.army.mil/>.

ECBC is the Army's principal research and development center for chemical and biological defense technology, engineering and field operations. ECBC has achieved major technological advances for the warfighter and for our national defense, with a long and distinguished history of providing the Armed Forces with quality systems and outstanding customer service. ECBC is a U.S. Army Research, Development and Engineering Command laboratory located at the Edgewood Area of Aberdeen Proving Ground, Md. For more information about the Edgewood Chemical Biological Center, please visit our Web site at <http://www.ecbc.army.mil/> or call (410) 436-7718.

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