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Facilities Reduction Program demolishes buildings ahead of schedule

By Jo Anita Miley
Public Affairs Office

While it's not unusual for the U.S. Army Engineering and Support Center's Installation Support and Programs Management Directorate's Facilities Reduction Program to demolish buildings, this is the first time the team has taken on a large scale demolition project to remove two buildings in less than 60 days.

The Facilities Reduction Program eliminates excess facilities and structures to reduce fixed installation costs and achieve energy savings.

The team is tearing down a 4,830-square-foot World War II wooden building and a 31-year-old 70,832-square-foot facility formerly used as a thrift shop and an exchange at Fort Polk, La., respectively.

According to Janie Thompson, American Institute of Architects, a general engineer with the Army's Installation Management Command Southeast Region, Army installations submit their projects to her office according to their priorities. The U.S. Army Engineering and Support Center, Huntsville centrally manages programs on behalf of IMCOM. Since 2004, the program has grown to include the NASA, the Defense Logistics Agency, the U.S. Army Reserve and the U.S. Air Force.

Fort Polk needed the buildings removed in order to begin new construction. The demolition of the buildings was given a high priority and had to be completed in a short time frame due to the requirements of the other organizations involved.

"The timeline for this project didn't allow any leeway, and had to be completed on schedule," Thompson said. "We had to accept the Army and Air Force Exchange's need for the buildings to be removed at an accelerated rate, in a small amount of time. Their organization had to make sure that the work was done during a time that posed the least problems for them, to include minimizing adverse effect on their forecasting and planning future construction. Huntsville Center found a contractor that was very capable of doing the job and could turn it around in the customer's timeline. I am pleased that the contractor did an excellent job."

Mindy Shelton, FRP project manager, at Huntsville Center, said the project is an extremely successful project, and highly visible.

"Not only did they finish it on time, due to the condensed schedule, AAFES only had minimal time to transfer inventory from the exchange and food court to a storage area while coordinating demolition of the old exchange in order to create the parking lot for the new site," Shelton said.

Construction and demolition teams worked long hours to get the job done, remaining well ahead of schedule throughout the entire process. All-Phase of Delray Beach, Fla., was the contractor selected to complete the work. Demolition began June 14, and workers are now recycling concrete blocks, brick, steel framing, aluminum, copper, tin, asphalt, stone, steel, grass and soil from the surrounding area.

Approximately 75 percent of the materials were recycled. To date, they have compiled more than six different piles of uncontaminated material that will be recycled. Robert Hughes, engineering technician, Fort Polk Department of Public Works, Real Property Branch, said the recycling effort for the site was very well organized.

“Hazardous materials such as asbestos was abated immediately, and sent to a separate facility,” Hughes said. “We made sure the site was safe, and All-phase employees followed necessary hazardous material handling procedures. I can’t stress enough how important safety is, especially when a project has to be turned around in a short time frame.”

David Jackson, realty specialist, Fort Polk DPW, Real Property Branch, said his office made sure the job was completed properly, in spite of the accelerated timeline. Jackson has been working closely with All-Phase, Huntsville Center project managers and IMCOM officials since early June to make sure the project runs smoothly.

Jackson said complete restoration of the land on the site will be finished by Aug. 13, and the construction of a new parking lot will begin late this summer, followed by an exchange and Chili’s restaurant.

Jackson and Hughes agree that getting the job done so expeditiously will have a positive impact on the Soldiers and their Families who are connected to the installation.

“Having a new exchange and Chili’s restaurant will be a plus for our Soldiers and their families, improving their quality of life. This is what is important,” Jackson said.

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