



Sept. 4, 2012

Public Affairs Contact: William S. Farrow  
256-895-1693  
william.farrow@usace.army.mil

## Huntsville Center program manager guides state's 4-H Club shotgun team to national competition

By William S. Farrow  
Huntsville Center Public Affairs Office

**HUNTSVILLE, Ala.** – Huntsville Center's Karen Moore, a program manager with Installation Support and Programs Management Energy Division, is also head coach of the Winston County Four-H Club shotgun team that recently represented Alabama at the National Four-H Club Shooting Sports Invitational in Grand Island, Neb. Moore's grew up around guns and was only natural for her to become a certified shotgun instructor for the 4-H Club program and volunteer her time as the team's coach. Shotgun competition runs deep in Moore's family as her son, Kurtis, is on the team and her brother, Kenny Robinson, was the primary instructor for the Winston County Shooting Sports Team.

"He (Kenny) got my son, Kurtis, interested in the sport and he asked me to become a certified instructor to be able to take care of some of the practices when his job took him out of town," Moore explained.

In the spring, before state competition, Robinson asked Moore if she could take over full-time since his son (Moore's nephew) had decided to focus on his future with the Army National Guard and no longer compete.

Moore accepted the position, but she wasn't quite sure about her coaching capabilities. Any self-doubt was soon eliminated as her team won the Alabama state competition.

"I wasn't expecting our team would take first place but we did well in both skeet and trap," she recalled.

After winning the state championship, the team's next competition would be the national competition in Nebraska.

But there was an obstacle. Because the team wasn't a school-sanctioned program they received little funding. It was estimated that more than \$5,000 would need to be raised to send the team to Nebraska.

Thanks to hard work of the team and Moore's direction, they raised the funds needed to attend the event through fund-raisers and from donations

"Thanks goodness I had skills in marketing and a degree in human resource management to guide the team through the fund-raising process," she said.

Beside raising money to get to Nebraska, Moore recalls the team facing other obstacles on the trip to Nebraska when two team members traveling together had their shotguns stolen.

For competitive shooters, not just any gun would replace the ones they lost—the boys had practiced with those particular guns for the past four years.

She said the team was already nervous about competing in the nationals, but more so when two of their members had to get used to firing a "new" gun. However, when the team reached Nebraska, other 4-H'ers did all they could to help.

"When I checked the team in at nationals, I had to ask about borrowing guns that matched the style guns they use," Moore said.

She said Tom Person, the National Chief Range Officer, not only found guns matching the stolen guns, he also helped the team overcome yet another obstacle—the lack of experience shooting sporting clay.

"Alabama doesn't compete in the Sporting Clays so we had a leading expert and professional shooter, Jim O'Conner, practice with us and give us tips for improvement so we would be competitive with the other teams. We placed in the top 10 for Skeet and Sporting Clays but lost momentum for the trap."

The next obstacle before the team was the Nebraska weather. Moore said on the first day of competition it was 104 degrees with 40 mile-an-hour winds and the second day was around 70 degrees and pouring down rain.

“I’ve never seen clays thrown into heavy wind but then again, we were in Nebraska,” she said.

However, the Alabama team did well enough to earn the respect of the 4-H Club National Staff and competition. The Alabama team’s main category was shooting skeet and one team member had a score of 96 out of 100 and placed 11 in the skeet category. Moore said they were so impressed with the Alabama team’s ability to keep competing that a sign was hung in the auditorium that read “Alabama is what 4-H is all about.”

Alabama 4-H Club rules state that once members compete in a National event, they can no longer compete.

“Our senior team has now completed their mission and placing 13th overall in the Nationals is great for Alabama,” Moore said. For Coach Moore, the future of 4-H Club shotgun competition shines bright and she is looking forward to coaching next season. “We have so many junior kids interested in continuing the sport.”

--30--