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Huntsville Center
Bulletin

Center rebounds after storms

By Debra Valine
Public Affairs Office

The U.S. Army Engineering and Support Center, Huntsville reopened Monday after severe weather ravaged the region April 27.

"Our thoughts and prayers go out to all those who were impacted by the disaster. It's been a hard few days for all of us," said Col. Nello Tortora, Huntsville Center commander.

"First and foremost, take care of your families. That is what is most important. It will take some time before things get back to normal for a lot of folks."

Messages about the Center's closure were sent out by e-mail, social media, on the Huntsville Center web page when it became available, and relayed to local news media. Employees may not have received the messages because they did not have power to access the Internet or telephone.

"We apologize for the intermittent communication," said Lt. Col. David Bailey, Center deputy commander. "We know many of you lost power and could not access telephone or Internet services. However, when something like this happens, it is important that you let your supervisors know your status. It is critical that we account for all our employees."

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers - Information Technology, Logistics and Contracting teams had leased a generator that provided power to the Center's servers enabling Blackberry and remote access to government computers by Friday. A second much larger generator was installed Sunday that allowed staff to return Monday.

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Photo by Debra Valine

Workers complete installation of generator wiring to power Huntsville Center May 1.

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8 ***Center's deployed settled into Qalaa House***

10 ***New Corps websites coming***

Fifteen QMS auditors trained

By William S. Farrow
Public Affairs Office

Fifteen Huntsville Center employees now have the skills and knowledge required to comb through the processes and documentation performed within Huntsville Center.

Gary Dissette, Huntsville Center quality systems manager, conducted the three-day course focusing on the audit process required to maintain ISO 9001 certification.

Dissette said the audit process is the road map to identify the processes that can provide the biggest bang for the buck and the 15 people who completed the course will help Huntsville Center strengthen the controls in the quality management system and establish continuous process improvement.

"They have been through the training, they are now auditors. They really showed a depth of understanding of being able to comfortably interview managers at all levels and present the results of their audit and lead the teams they were assigned," Dissette said.

During the 20-hour course, Dissette

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Commander's thoughts

Col. Nello L. Tortora

Team, following the devastation caused by the tornadoes April 27, the Huntsville Center was closed for two days. Through a herculean effort by Peter Cole and his ACE-IT team, Mark Marean and his team in Logistics, and John Mayes, Sharon Butler and Cassandra Mora of Contracting, generators were located and installed so that the Center could open May 2.

Our Huntsville Center family experienced one loss. Terri Downs of the Medical Division lost her daughter, Danielle Downs, in the tornado that hit Tuscaloosa. My thoughts are with her and her family in this difficult time. Some employees lost their homes and belongings and many more sustained damage to their homes. We will all work together to bring things back to normal.

It looks like we'll be in business for the rest of the year with the FY11 budget being signed. I want to thank everyone for their patience and support as we planned for the possible funding gap. We were ready, but thankfully we didn't have to implement our plan.

In April, I attended the annual engineer conference, ENFORCE, at Fort Leonard Wood, Mo. This annual conference provides a forum for focused collaboration, information exchange and the regiment's campaign plan, priorities, professional development and institutional updates. It's also a great time to reconnect with other Army engineers.

I also went to San Antonio with a group of our folks: Stan Lee, Tammie Learned, Michael Norton and Dennis Lacy. We showcased the great work done by the Huntsville Center at the Installations Symposium and participated in discussions about achieving energy, water and waste goals on Army installations.

The first day of the conference, the Army announced the locations identified to be pilot net zero installations. As part of the Army's overall effort to conserve precious resources, net zero installations will consume only as much energy or water as they produce and eliminate solid waste to landfills.

The announcement initiates the programmatic environmental analysis and planning process for the Army's Net Zero Installation Strategy. Specifics for projects and initiatives will be determined through a programmatic environmental analysis that will include public engagement and stakeholder outreach.

We are engaging with those net zero organizations to provide them the tools they need to achieve their goals. These will be exciting times for our Energy Division and our other teams that contribute to sustainability on installations.

Chief of Engineers Lt. Gen. Robert L. Van Antwerp retired May 3 after 39 years of service. He's been the chief and commander of the Corps of Engineers since May 2007. I know I speak for the entire Center when I say Lt. Gen. Van has been an awesome chief of engineers. He has been a champion for all of us and the great work we do and has put us on a journey from Good to Great. Lt. Gen. Thomas P. Bostick, the Deputy Chief of Staff for Personnel, has been nominated by President Barack Obama to be the next chief. If

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Hails and farewells

Welcome: Don Monk, Dennis Bacon, Steve Goolsby, Deborah Neel, Debra Mayes, Trace Taylor, Unhui Nguyen, John Trudell, Patricia Mooneyham, Leslie Yarbrough, Installation Support and Programs Management Directorate; **Nanette Hill, Curtis Wilson, Hiram Banuchi, Curtis Wilson, Benjamin Davis, Felix Marrero, Joseph Osborne,** Center Contracting Directorate; **Teresa Peterson-Evans, Rhonda Brown, Bill Mason,** Resource Management; **Alicia Wilson,** Business Management Office; **Bobby Pace, Rhonda Pittman,** Engineering Directorate; **Brook Conway, Mike Pate,** Ordnance and Explosives Directorate; **David Hawkins,** Chemical Demilitarization Directorate (Bluegrass); **Herbert Broussard,** Security Office.

Farewell: Lisa Nall, Freddie Shepherd, ISPM; **John Gilchrist,** Internal Review; **Scott Leach, Charnis Boards-Bailey,** CT; **Doug Dukes,** Civilian Personnel Advisory Center.

US Army Corps of Engineers®

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BULLETIN

Commander ..... *Col. Nello Tortora*
Chief, Public Affairs ..... *Debra Valine*
Editor ..... *William S. Farrow*

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Recent *Bulletin* survey results show readers content, room for improvements

By William S. Farrow
Public Affairs Office

As many of you know, we recently conducted a readership survey to gauge the ongoing value of Huntsville Center Bulletin newsletter.

First, I would like to thank the readers who responded to the survey. It took some time and effort to do so, and we sincerely appreciate it.

We sent 377 random Huntsville Center employees survey invitations via the Web-based "Survey Monkey" site, which collects and tallies results.

Care was taken to ensure addresses also included government employees and contractors and the offices in Colorado, Kentucky, Nebraska and Virginia.

The initial survey was sent March 22, and immediately 43 people took the survey. A follow-up reminder was sent April 11. Another 51 people took the time to take the survey bringing the total of survey takers to 94, which is more than one quarter of those people solicited to take the survey.

Of the 94 respondents 94 percent rated the overall quality of the publication between good and excellent.

While proud of that response, we did not overlook the fact that another 4 percent rated the content as merely fair. Regarding the newsletter's readability, (story is accurate/ interesting, story is comprehensible) 41 percent of respondents rated an "excellent," while 53 percent rated a "good" and 5 percent rated a "fair."

This indicates that there is still room for improvement. We are committed to satisfying as many readers as possible while keeping the Bulletin informative, relevant and compelling.

Given the scope of the publication's mandate, the direction we receive from our command and the wide variety of professionals who read the Bulletin, we realize that we will never meet all requirements in a single issue.

However, we will continue to set out to cover major topics of interest to our readers and include Corps-wide news and policy information, Huntsville Center's programs and projects and our happenings and events.

We will also continue spotlighting Huntsville Center employees and the valuable work they do.

To all of our readers, we're moving forward, and with a heartfelt "thank you" to those who participated in this survey, we pledge to continue our efforts to remain your principal connection to all things Huntsville Center.

The Bulletin asks:
"How would you improve the Bulletin?"

"Since I think of Huntsville Center as a family, I'd use the Bulletin as a tool to learn more about our Huntsville Center family. I'd put personal items about employees and their families, and include information about births, deaths, promotions, weddings, etc. I'd also give the front page more of a magazine look, one photo instead of several photos and articles. Next, I'd put photos of new employees, not just their names. Finally, I'd change the name to a more modern one – something that is mission related.

Lequita Byrd-Craig
Center Contracting Directorate

"One of the most important objectives of the Bulletin is to educate others on the different programs we have here in Huntsville. I'd like to recommend we take this one-step further by publishing a picture of the employees of that particular group with names and titles. It would be helpful to know who to contact with questions about a program, as personnel changes occur."

Mindy Shelton
Installation Support and Programs Management Directorate

Employee Spotlight: Jeffrey Davis

By Jo Anita Miley
Public Affairs Office

Where do you work? I work in the Executive Office.

How long have you worked for the Corps? I have worked for the Corps and Huntsville Center for more than five years.

What is your job title? My job title is Deployment, Housing Planning and Response Team and Family Readiness Network coordinator."

In your own words, what is your job? What do you do? My job is three-fold, and most of what I do can be placed into deployment, housing planning and response or family readiness efforts.

As the deployment coordinator for the Center, I am responsible for supporting the Overseas Contingency Operations with at least 1.25 percent of the Huntsville Center on-board strength deployed at any given time.

This equates to having 10-12 employees deployed at the same time for contingency efforts. This averages out to 2.5 percent, or 20-25 employees deployed to Afghanistan and Iraq each month. I assist employees in all five phases of deployment: pre-deployment, deployment, sustainment, re-deployment and post-deployment. Most of my time is spent trying to match a volunteer's skill set with a current vacancy.

As the Temporary Housing Planning and Response Team coordinator, I am responsible for staffing, training and equipping two 19-member primary and secondary Temporary Housing Planning Response teams. I monitor the training status of team members ensuring requirements are met and training is up to date.

As the Family Readiness Network coordinator, I'm the single point of contact for families of deployed employees. I'm responsible for keeping families abreast and have access to resources and support.

Which Campaign Plan goals and objectives apply to you? Goal 1, objectives 1a and 1c. A large part of my job is to make sure Huntsville Center is ready, responsive and reliable in delivering high performance, all-hazard, contingency mission execution in a worldwide theater of operation and to help establish human resources and family support programs that promote readiness and quality of life.

How do you see your job making a difference and contributing to the Corps' success? I see my job as making a significant difference in several ways. In my capacity as deployment coordinator, we have streamlined the deployment process by providing timely and accurate information and support to our employees. This eases the stress associated with deployment.

The FRN is another advantage for employees at the Center. We've established a sponsorship program and assigned a sponsor to every employee prior to deployment. Sponsors provide direct support to the employee and family members during deployments and extended travel situations. This network is a great family resource.

Having our HPRT team is also very significant for Huntsville Center and Headquarters, USACE. Having a team that is well trained and equipped to be ready, responsive and reliable during emergencies or natural disasters is a great asset to the Corps.

Teams are prepared to deploy within six hours of notification. Supporting

Jeffrey Davis

and strengthening the preparedness of employees and their families is very important to our organization.

What do you love about your job? Traveling and meeting Corps employees around the globe. I've been to some great places like Washington D.C., New York, Hawaii, Florida, Kansas, Texas and Virginia, to name a few. It's great to see firsthand how other Corps entities get the job done.

Supporting and strengthening the preparedness of employees and their families is the hallmark of what our organization is all about, and my job is an integral part of this effort.

I love that my job provides the unique opportunity to meet with and talk to many employees and their families.

In my opinion, there is no greater satisfaction than being able to help others. I love taking care of employees and their families. This is what I do best. I've spent more than 24 years in the U.S. Army doing this.

It's great that I can continue on the same career path as an Army civilian.

The ***Employee Spotlight*** is intended to let our Center employees shine for positively impacting our organization through mission achievements. Employees are nominated on a monthly basis, and are also featured on the Huntsville Center web site monthly, and the Headquarters, Corps of Engineers web site on a rotating basis. If you'd like to nominate someone within your office for this recognition, please contact Jo Anita Miley, Public Affairs Office, at 256-895-1585, or e-mail **JoAnita.Miley@usace.army.mil.**

STORMS

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Center leadership is identifying mission essential personnel who may be temporarily relocated to other nearby Corps of Engineers district offices or be allowed to telework from home.

Because the Huntsville Center's missions are global, it is critical that projects continue to be managed to meet deadlines for projects such as barracks and administrative furniture for buildings built in support of Base Realignment and Closure.

"We're doing everything we can to get the Center back up and operational," Bailey said.

"Right now, we just ask for everyone's patience."

AUDITORS

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said they audited 20 procedures demonstrating a working knowledge of auditing processes using the ISO 9001 standard.

After providing basic principles of the QMS and auditing, Dissette split the class into five teams of three and assigned specific procedures to each team to evaluate.

Dissette said some of the procedures audited were complex and some were simple. However, all processes audited for the course were representative of processes from across the entire Center.

"Some auditors were familiar with the processes they evaluated, but most audited operations they had little or no experience with. You want to have independence in the audit and cross-functional teams to provide a broader perspective in the evaluation of the processes," he said.

Dissette has five more training sessions planned for the year with one in Omaha and one in Virginia.

He said there are more than 30 people identified for the upcoming training, but that number is expected to increase due to the effectiveness of the April session.

Dissette said it takes a well trained work force to maintain a strong QMS and to establish continuous process improvement at the process level and that's the key to dramatic improvements to the way the Center conducts business.

"Once they complete the course, the benefit is understanding the principles of QMS and how to apply it to the processes they do every day," Dissette said.

Q: What is ISO 9001?

A: ISO 9001 refers to the specific standard that applies to engineering services.

The Engineering ISO 9001 specifies requirements for a quality management system that can be used for internal application by organizations, or for certification, or for contractual purposes. It focuses on the effectiveness of the quality management system in meeting customer requirements.

Student Nancy Book said she found the training informative and beneficial to the Center. She said the course exposed her to the value of identifying areas of risks and to provide a basis for continuous improvement.

"We should always look for ways to improve and identify potential non-conformances to take care of them before they become an issue," Book said.

Dissette said Huntsville Center management's support of this training demonstrates their support of QMS to set the stage for the Center to become a more efficient organization.

COMMANDER

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confirmed, he will become the USACE commander and 53rd Chief of Engineers. Maj. Gen. Merdith "Bo" Temple will be acting chief until the new chief is named.

While we're on the subject of changes in leadership, the U.S. Army welcomed a new chief of staff in April when Gen. Martin E. Dempsey took over from Gen. George W. Casey Jr.

Closer to home, we will have Lt. Col. David Bailey's retirement ceremony June 2. Dan Heinzelman will be acting deputy commander until new deputy commander arrives in mid-July. More information will come out about that as the event is planned.

Scott Farrow, the Huntsville Center Bulletin editor, recently conducted a survey to ask readers what they think of the Bulletin. Nearly 25 percent of the folks randomly polled responded, and the answers to the survey questions showed they are pleased with the Bulletin, think it is a quality product and feel it is a helpful tool for keeping employees informed about the Center and issues important to them.

If you did not receive a survey but have a suggestion as to how to make the Bulletin better, just let Scott know.

The Activities Association is hard at work planning the Engineer Day picnic for June 3.

We'll once again go to Monte Sano State Park where we will have a picnic lunch, activities and the annual awards ceremony.

I hope you took the time to nominate some of our outstanding employees with the awards. The deadline for nominations is May 6.

As we head into the summer weather, please keep safety in mind.

As always, thank you for what you do to keep Huntsville Center and the Corps of Engineers great.

Center celebrate's Earth Day with local students

By Jo Anita Miley
Public Affairs Office

The U.S. Army Engineering and Support Center, Huntsville celebrated the 41st annual Earth Day April 20 and April 22 with events at University Place Elementary School and First Missionary Baptist Child Development Center and Academy in Huntsville, Ala.

Both events were designed to teach the children about the Corps' environmental program through mock environmental field investigation exercises.

The University Place Elementary School students celebrated Earth Day April 20 by watching a team of students walk through the process of site soil sampling to a wash-down to decontaminate personnel.

"Each student played a role. Some students sampled the soil, some participated in the decontamination process and others in the audience acted as the Green Team and assisted with finding earth-friendly solutions for helping clean up the environment after a hazardous material spill incident," said Will Eggleston, safety engineer for the Center's Safety Office.

Eggleston, who attended University Place Elementary School as a child, said he had fond memories of his time there.

"It was great to be back at my elementary school and participate in such a fun exercise," he said. "I think children learn more from an interactive activity."

Steve Willoughby, chief of the Center's Electronic Security Branch, and Scott Bradley, an environmental engineer with the Center's Engineering Directorate, explained to the students how Corps employees work hard to find earth-friendly solutions and then provided students with environmentally friendly ideas for everyday use.

Willoughby and Bradley also attended University Place Elementary School. Before the children began the hands-on portion of the exercise, Lt. Col. David Bailey, Huntsville Center deputy commander, described to the children the Corps' role in environmental investigations and the environmental program.

Photo by Jo Anita Miley

Will Eggleston, a safety engineer, Center Safety Office, poses a question to a student at First Missionary Baptist Child Development Center and Academy during an Earth Day activity designed to teach children about environmental programs.

During the exercises scenario, Eggleston explained to the students that research led us to believe that the area had been contaminated with a hazardous material.

"We told them that we were sending in teams to take soil samples of this very dangerous contaminant of concern, then I asked them to help me 'clean up' the earth."

The volunteers set up four work zones for the scenario. Students from each grade were divided into six groups.

The rest of the students made up a "Green Team" with an assignment to find earthly-friendly solutions for the questions the Corps' team asked.

"We gave the students spoons to collect the soil. They mixed the soil in the bowls to get a good representative sample," said Kellie Williams, a safety specialist in the Center's Safety Office.

Work zones included the "hot zone" where the contaminated soil was located, the decontamination zone where we removed the student's personal protection clothing to prevent spreading the contaminant, and the support zone where emergency responders and safety specialists tested the air for contamination.

"Our students enjoyed the activity – it was a great hands-on experience for the children to get to role play," said Janice Summerhill, event coordinator and teacher at University Place Elementary School.

"They haven't had the chance to participate in such a fun and educational event for Earth Day in a long time."

More than 450 students took part in

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the Earth Day event at University Place Elementary School.

At the First Missionary Baptist CDCA Earth Day event, more than 173 students were welcomed to the Earth Day celebration by Lt. Col. Michael Carr, Mobilization and Planning Office at the Huntsville Center.

Carr talked to students about environmental fieldwork and explained the importance of taking care of the planet. Students at the school were also treated to an ordnance and explosives artifact display, metal detector demonstration and mock environmental investigation exercise.

Sgt. Woof, the safety mascot for Army Environmental Command, was present at both Earth Day events handing out Earth Day posters, safety guides, coloring books and environmental awareness bookmarks regarding UXO safety.

Dr. Annie Savage, school principal at First Missionary Baptist CDCA, said the teachers and students at the school enjoyed the activities – especially a visit from the safety mascot.

"Using 'Sgt. Woof' as a teaching tool when explaining ordnance safety is a great idea. It's easy for students to remember: Recognize, Retreat and Report when encountering hazardous material or UXO," she said.

"The volunteers gave students important information about how to follow the correct safety measures if they encounter hazardous materials. Our kids enjoyed the activity and the Army Corps of Engineers did such a great job."

Earth Day was first celebrated April 22, 1970. The campaign for Earth Day began as a grassroots effort to teach about environmental stewardship, create an awareness of the environment's fragility and to enlighten the mainstream of American society.

The campaign caught on quickly and evolved into what we now celebrate as Earth Day.

Photo by James Campbell

Lee Shockley, a student trainee with Huntsville Center's Engineering Directorate, donned the Sgt. Woof costume and passed out Earth Day posters, safety guides, coloring books and bookmarks. Sgt. Woof is the safety mascot for Army Environmental Command and was present at both Earth Day events.

Little things make deployment more like home

By Debra Valine
Public Affairs Office

Pictures of loved ones, stuffed animals and personal bedding all help make being deployed in support of overseas contingency operations feel a little like home.

So does being with people you worked with back home.

That's how it is at Qalaa House in Afghanistan. There are 11 Huntsville Center employees on site. They may not have known each other at the Huntsville Center, but while deployed, they quickly become like family.

Huntsville Center averages 20 of its 750 employees – nearly 3 percent – deployed each month, and there are regular vacancies that need to be filled. Since 2003, approximately 485 Huntsville Center employees have deployed overseas.

People volunteer to deploy for a variety of reasons and to perform a variety of jobs. Some like the monetary incentives, others like feeling they are doing important work.

Sherry Masters, who is chief of Internal Review when she is in Huntsville, is on her fourth deployment. She has been to Iraq twice, and this is her second trip to Afghanistan.

"The monetary benefits are great, but that is not the driving factor for why I deploy," said Masters, who will return to Huntsville Center in May. "When you have been working 10-12 hours and you are exhausted, it takes more than the money to keep you motivated.

"People here are proud of the work they are doing," Masters said. "It's not the same thing over and over, day after day. Every day when you go back to your room you have a feeling of work well done.

You feel like your work is appreciated, and you are not being taken for granted. People are here because they want to be here. The benefits are good, but it's not enough. You have to have something on the inside making you want to do it."

Carla McNeal, a relative newcomer to Huntsville Center who works in Resource Management, is on her second deployment. The first time was with Army Materiel Command.

"This being my second tour in Afghanistan again makes me appreciate the comforts of the United States," McNeal said.

"Things we take for granted, like electricity, food, warm clothes in the winter and having the freedom to go to work every day and not have our families threatened. USACE along with other agencies are making these things possible for the Afghan people. We are contributing to something bigger than ourselves and it is a wonderful feeling to be a part of history."

Courtesy photo

Huntsville Center's Omar Ching, Jennifer Haapoja and Pam Draper are deployed to Afghanistan.

Pam Draper, one of the most recent Huntsville Center employees to arrive on site, said hearing a dog bark and a familiar siren makes her feel like she's home.

"It's different here; I feel like I'm on a six-month camping trip," said Draper, a project management specialist. "You have a roommate, and you have to go across the compound to go to the bathroom.

"It feels like home to me when I hear the dog barking in the British compound behind us," Draper said.

"The sirens on ambulances here also remind me of home because they sound just like our ambulances."

Jennifer Haapoja, a human resources specialist with Huntsville's Civilian Personnel Advisory Center, said she deployed to learn firsthand how what she does at home impacts those deployed.

"If you are shy or have an issue with personal space, coming here is probably not for you," said Haapoja, who arrived the same day as Draper.

"But you get used to it; it's amazing how quickly you adapt. People become your lifelong friends because of the shared experiences and living conditions. You have to look out for each other and be aware of your environment, but I feel safe here. I have never felt like I was in harm's way.

"In my job in the CPAC at Huntsville Center, I'm responsible for all of the deployment related issues for Center employees, mainly the International Operations folks," Haapoja said.

"I wanted to come over so I could learn how to better help our deployed folks. It's important that our employees receive the human resources support they need while they are here. It is an eye opener for me, and I think I will learn how to better do my stateside job while I'm here."

All agreed that being able to call

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back to Huntsville Center when they need help is a big plus.

"Everybody has been very helpful and responsive when I have needed support," Masters said.

"I get an answer back almost immediately. That is so important to us here. Sometimes being deployed tends to make you feel like you don't fit any where, but when you reach back to Huntsville and people respond , it confirms the ties we have to our base office and the importance of the work we are doing here in Afghanistan."

Being in Afghanistan also affords the opportunity to get to know the Afghan people.

Masters has interfaced with a group within the Corps' Afghan Engineer District – North that is mentoring Afghan women who are engineers and businesswomen.

"AED-N is committed to building capacity within the country," Masters said.

"American women here on the compound are assisting Afghan women develop their businesses so they can become more competitive for contracts," Masters said.

"I have been afforded many opportunities to clearly see the cultural differences between American women and Afghan women. The best word I know to describe my feelings toward those differences is gratitude for my way of life. It will take generations before the culture here is more accepting of women in business and in prominent positions within their society."

While performing important work and making new friends is important, the women said they do miss the comforts of home: family, Wal-Mart, TJ Maxx. Being able to call home when they want to helps them cope.

"We are encouraged to stay in touch with our families," Masters said.

"Most of the days are good, but when you have the occasional tough day, the voice of a family member on the other end of the phone helps bring balance back into your day."

They all agreed gift cards from TJ Maxx would help a lot.

Deployed to Afghanistan from Huntsville Center, Arkie Fanning, Jim Nichols, Terry Burton, Carla McNeal, Laura Fursdon, Shah Alam, Sherry Masters and Tracy Shaw, are providing support for U.S. Army Corps of Engineers efforts in that country.

Courtesy photo

Center employees helping Corps meet overseas demands

The Corps of Engineers is playing a huge role in rebuilding Iraq's and Afghanistan's infrastructures, and Huntsville Center regularly receives announcements for vacancies.

Since 2003, more than 9,000 Corps civilian employees have deployed. Huntsville has deployed nearly 500 of that number.

Of the 20 deployed employees Huntsville averages each month, 11 of them are with the Afghan Engineer District – North.

The remaining Huntsville Center employees are located throughout Afghanistan and Iraq.

Huntsville's 11 employees at Qalaa House in Afghanistan are:

- Sherry Masters, who conducts internal review evaluations.
- Arkie Fanning is chief of the Quality Assurance Branch.
- Shah Alam is a program manager.
- James Nichols is the chief of the Contract Administration Branch.
- Tracey Shaw is a contract specialist.
- Laura Fursdon is a program analyst.
- Carla McNeal is a financial management specialist.
- Terry Burton is the chief of the Infrastructure and Planning Branch.
- Jennifer Haapoja is a human resource specialist.
- Pam Draper is a project management specialist.
- Omar Ching is a civil engineer.

For more information about deployment opportunities, contact Jeffrey Davis, Huntsville Center's deployment coordinator.

He can be reached at 256-895-1329 or by e-mail at jeffrey.a.davis@usace.army.mil.

Corps' Web presence shifting platforms

By William S. Farrow
Public Affairs Office

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers will soon be undergoing a major overhaul in how it posts information to the Internet.

The goal is that all USACE websites will look and navigate the same, making it easier to find information when moving from one USACE site to another.

To do this, USACE will use the Armed Forces Public Information Management Service as the platform.

AFPIMS is a customized content management system that standardizes efforts by allowing personnel to submit news stories, images, video, audio and other text from around the world.

The Department of Defense, Air Force, Navy and Marine Corps already uses AFPIMS to manage information on websites.

The headquarters website will be the first to move to AFPIMS. Corps Divisions, Districts and Centers are scheduled to follow. All sites are scheduled to be moved to AFPIMS within 12-18 months.

According to Tesia Williams, USACE Public Affairs Office, the biggest challenge of the migration is meeting the timeline set due to the thousands upon thousands of Web pages across USACE.

"No one seems to know the actual total number of public web pages in USACE but an A-76 study five years ago accounted for more than 500,000 pages of content. Converting to AFPIMS is a way for the Corps to get a handle on the vast amount of information published publicly on the Web," she said.

According to Williams, the responsibility for transferring information to AFPIMS falls on the shoulders of content providers who will work with public affairs personnel to ensure their information migrates to AFPIMS. Prior to the migration, content providers will receive online AFPIMS training.

"The process of posting and approving information to the Web will be seamless," Williams said. "Offices that have a public Web presence will assign content providers to post content to AFPIMS as needed. That content will then be approved and published to the Web by public affairs officials who will act as content publishers and site managers," she said.

Williams said sorting through the vast amount of information USACE has placed on its Web pages over the years may seem overwhelming and it's crucial Corps employees begin reviewing their Web content prior to the migration process.

"I would also recommend they remain in close contact with their public affairs office to ensure they receive the latest updates, status, milestones, etc., regarding the migration," she said.

Williams said the manual process (cut and paste) of migrating the sites will help with eliminating duplicated and inaccurate content since content providers will only want to manually migrate information that is up-to-date and necessary to communicate the missions and functions of the organization.

She said moving USACE's Web publishing capability to AFPIMS will not only clean up the Corps' Internet presence, but also establish a standard for Web content management and ensure uniformity among all its public sites and pages.

"We'll have a standard global navigation and templates that will take the guess work out of finding information. Regardless of what public Corps website a user visits, the information will be displayed the same way and be featured in the same area of the website," Williams said.

"Ultimately, this system will assist USACE in satisfying stakeholders' demands for instantaneous, consistent information and reduce redundancy and will ensure users are able to quickly find what they need when they need it."

The movement to reshape the Corps' Web presence came in the spring of 2008 when Chief of Engineers Lt. Gen. Robert Van Antwerp asked headquarters U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Public Affairs to work with headquarters USACE Corporate Information Directorate to develop an enterprise solution for the public website presence.

Van Antwerp had long been aware USACE public websites were in need of an overhaul after noticing that some USACE sites displayed accurate content on clean templates while other websites displayed information that has not been updates since the late 1990s.

Initially, USACE Corporate Information in concert with ACE-IT identified Microsoft's Share Point as the solution.

However, after migrating USACE headquarters and New York District (the pilot site), it was clear Share Point didn't meet the overall objectives of consistent branding for all public facing web pages, an automated content approval process and cross communication between defense agencies.

Then in the fall of 2009, Norfolk District brought the AFPIMS platform to the attention of headquarters public affairs' personnel.

The USACE PA office researched the product and met with the Defense Management Agency Web program officials and decided that AFPIMS was the direction in which USACE needed to go.

After a year of building a case study and seeking funding, AFPIMS was selected as the public Web enterprise solution for USACE.

Courtesy photo

"The bird" swoops a few feet off the ground on Martha's Vineyard, Mass., during a search for unexploded ordnance. The modified Bell 206 helicopter equipped with magnetometers earned the nickname because of its flight patterns that are slow, low and erratic to the casual observer.

Cleanup continues at Martha's Vineyard

By James Campbell
Public Affairs Office

With average winter temperatures hovering in the 20s, you wouldn't expect anyone to be on the beaches of Martha's Vineyard, Mass., but the team tasked with searching for training munitions and other hazards from military activity there more than 60 years ago was hard at work conducting surveys.

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, New England District, with the U. S. Army Engineering and Support Center, Huntsville and contractor UXB International, Inc., continues to work on a Remedial Investigation/Feasibility Study at South Beach, Cape Poge and Tisbury Great Pond, in an area known as a summer getaway for many in the region.

With both a large area to cover and a timeline set to complete the surveys before area beach traffic picks up in June, aerial magnetic surveys were used in late winter to gather information and prepare for more detailed surveys with hand-held equipment this Spring, said Carol Charette, New England District project manager. The late winter helicopter work also avoided disturbing birds that are now nesting in the area.

The Time-Critical Removal Action completed last year reduces the immediate risk, said Ralph Campbell, Huntsville Center project manager for the site from the Ordnance and Explosives Directorate. The Remedial Investigation/Feasibility Study is a process conducted to gather information to support the selection of a site remedy that will reduce or eliminate associated risks.

The TCRA resulted in the discovery and disposal of MK-23 and MK-5 practice bombs from Little Neck and aerial rocket motors, practice bombs and practice warheads from Norton Point and South Beach.

The Cape Poge Little Neck bomb target site, the former moving target machine gun range and bomb target site at South Beach, and the former Tisbury Great Pond bomb site were used to train U.S. Navy aviators during and immediately following World War II.

Land-based data collection is complete and the work has moved to inland waterways and ocean transects, said Bob Selfridge, chief geophysicist, Civil Structures Branch, Center Engineering Directorate. The RIFS will include marine geophysical surveys using towed underwater electro-magnetic survey systems, based on research of historic documents describing the former ranges.

Ethics Corner

When a gift is not a gift

By Chris Paden
Office of Counsel

A question came into me recently asking if a Corps of Engineer employee, while on official travel, can accept a voucher from a hotel that was given to him because the employee complained about the accommodations.

The certificate was for a $100 discount on a two-day stay at one of the hotel's other locations. It was a gift given to the employee as a way for the hotel to say "I'm sorry." This hotel provides this certificate to anyone who complains about their accommodations.

There is a presumption that a discount is a gift when dealing with a prohibited source; however the ethics rules make clear that a discount is not necessarily a gift.

In this connection, certain exclusions from the definition of "gift" are addressed including exclusion for discounts available to the public or to all government employees (section 2635.203(b)(4)). The gift rules do not prohibit an employee acceptance of a discount if one of the gift exceptions applies. Any of the exceptions—the $20 rule or the rule governing gifts based on a personal relationship, for example—may apply to discounts questions. However, in this case the discount was obtained not because of his government's position; but rather, he obtained it because he complained. The reception of the discount given to him was "unrelated to government employment."

The ethics rules prescribe a three-part test that interprets the phrase "unrelated to government employment" to mean: (1) it is not necessary to be a federal employee to be included in the group or class to which the discount is offered; (2) it does not appear that federal employees are being targeted; and (3) the employee seeking to accept the discount is not in the group or class to which the discount or benefit is offered because of some actual or perceived power, influence or status associated with his job or position within the government.

In this case the employee is free to accept the certificate. He obtained it because he complained, not because he is a government employee; the discount is offered to anyone who complains, not just federal employees; and it was not offered because of some actual or perceived power, influence, or status associated with his job or position within the government.

If you have any questions regarding this or would like to discuss, just come by and see me or give me a call at 256-895-1103.

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