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Center employee named S.A.M.E. Student Engineer of Year

**By Becky Proaps
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A U.S. Army Engineering and Support Center employee received special recognition Feb. 20 from the Society of American Military Engineers (S.A.M.E.) Huntsville Post.

Bryan Simpkins, a mechanical engineering student at the University of Alabama Huntsville, was named the Huntsville Post's Student Engineer of the Year. Simpkins is also employed full-time in the Engineering Directorate's Cost Branch, Huntsville Center working at least 40 hours a week.

"I am honored to be chosen for this award. There are many other very talented students that work here in the building. To have been picked from that able body is a great achievement for me," Simpkins said.

As an engineering technician for Cost Engineering (Mechanical discipline) Simpkins is an active member of the 3086 program and actively participates with the Facility Repair and Renewal Team and the Medical Repair and Renewal Team.

The nomination was a great surprise to Simpkins but not to his supervisor.

"Simpkins is one of our top performers in the branch," said Arkie Fanning, the Cost Engineering Branch chief. "He is one of the best people we have in the branch at using our cost engineering software and at developing parametric estimates for our 3086 reviews. He has been invaluable on the 3086 program which requires a more generalized cost background and the ability to understand the impacts of several cost items on the overall cost for a project. Mr. Simpkins is also an accomplished estimator for design-bid-build and has developed many mechanical engineering portions of cost estimates and has performed many cost analyses on these same estimates (reconciling the estimate to the bid). Simpkins has attained Facility Engineering II rating which is significant as he is still a student."

Simpkins has excelled in numerous areas of engineering. He was a design member for the American in Orbits project team at UA Huntsville, building a mock third generation Gemini capsule for testing landing gear. This project won best project of the semester at UA Huntsville. Simpkins is a presidential member of the UA Huntsville chapter of Sigma Alpha Pi, a national academic excellence, leadership and success student organization.

Simpkins has been with Huntsville Center for five years and is planning to graduate in spring 2011 from the mechanical engineering program at UA Huntsville.

His advice to other students is simple.

"Work hard at whatever you do," Simpkins said. "Don't be afraid to jump in and try challenging projects. Operate outside your circle, meaning offer help to other programs in your group when you run out of things to do, don't be afraid to ask questions and learn as much as you can through interaction with senior co-workers."

"Simpkins is a much sought after resource in the Cost Engineering Branch and is not only excellent at mechanical engineering but he is developing into an excellent overall cost engineer," Fanning said.