



NEWS RELEASE

U.S. ARMY CORPS OF ENGINEERS

BUILDING STRONG®

For Immediate Release:
May 21, 2010

Contact:
Debra Valine, 256-895-1691
Debra.valine@us.army.mil

Team completes largest furniture project to date for Huntsville Center's Furnishings Program

By Debra Valine

When the Human Resources Center of Excellence at Fort Knox, Ky., officially opens for business, the largest furniture procurement project to date for the U.S. Army Engineering and Support Center, Huntsville, will come to a close.

A ribbon-cutting ceremony May 27 will dedicate the complex to Lt. Gen. Timothy J. Maude who died in the Sept. 11, 2001, terrorist attack on the Pentagon. Maude was the Army's deputy chief of staff for personnel at the time of his death.

Two commands will occupy the six buildings that make up the HRCoE at Fort Knox: U.S. Army Accessions Command and the Human Resources Command. Accessions Command will start moving into the new facility June 3 and expects to be finished by June 30. The Human Resources Command will move in between June and the end of September. The commands are relocating from Alexandria, St. Louis, Indianapolis and Fort Monroe, Va.

The Corps' Louisville District was responsible for construction and project management of the facility. Huntsville was responsible for managing the furnishings.

The Huntsville Center is the agency responsible for executing the Army's centrally managed furnishings program for furniture and furnishings for Army installations worldwide, through funding provided by the Installation Management Command.

"We purchased administrative furniture for the entire facility," said Maj. James Hanks, project manager for the Furnishings Program at Huntsville Center. The facility is approximately 880,000 square feet that will accommodate 4,418 Soldiers, civilians and contract employees.

"We took the comprehensive interior design that was created for the facility and used our procurement process to purchase all the admin furniture," Hanks said. The \$14.6 million project awarded 23 contracts to three prime contractors: Knoll Inc., of East Greenville, Pa., Steelcase Inc., of Grand Rapids, Mich., and UNICOR Federal Prison Industries of Atlanta.

"We had a significant savings over the original estimate because of the size of the order," Hanks said. "The original estimate was \$28.8 million; we cut the price by about 50 percent."

Hanks said Huntsville Center received the order for the new furniture in December 2008. The team started working the order in March 2009, awarded contracts in September and October 2009, started installing furniture in February 2010, and was complete by the furniture install completion date of May 21.

"This project took longer because of the size of the project," Hanks said. "The average cycle for procurement of furniture is probably six to seven months from the time we get the order until installation begins."

“We had to figure out some of the stuff along the way,” Hanks said. “It has been a great learning experience and has helped us significantly reduce the time on another big project at Aberdeen Proving Ground, Md. It helped us know what questions to ask to expedite other large projects.”

Hanks said just the logistics of getting the freight through the gates and handling of recyclable materials from the packing material posed challenges. At the beginning of the install periods they received about 30 truckloads of furnishings per week.

“One thing we did differently on this project, which was important to this project, was we had an overall contractor project manager, Knoll,” Hanks said. “They worked with the other contractors to coordinate efforts. That process worked very well. We plan to use it on other projects as well. It takes us out of the day-to-day operations.”

Leah Deljoo, an interior designer in Louisville District’s Engineering Division, performed reviews when furniture design was performed by the design/build contractor, and did the detailed technical coordination and review of Huntsville Center’s procurement scope documents.

“Maj. Hanks has been great to work with,” Deljoo said. “He was very responsive and stayed on top of the project at all times.”

“We worked very closely with Huntsville Center on the furniture procurement and installation for HRCoE and were very pleased with how it worked out,” said Mike Ryan, project manager, Louisville District. “The commitment to success and the flexibility to adjust to rapidly changing requirements from two major users shown by Maj. Hanks and the entire Huntsville Center furniture team were key to the success of this project.”

“This project was extremely fast paced,” said Karen Sweeney, Louisville District’s resident engineer at Fort Knox. “The Huntsville Center team has done a lot of heavy lifting in meeting changing demands. We have all been working hard to get the buildings finished, the furniture in place, the computer hookups, phones, etc., in place by the June 3 deadline.”

Col. Scott B. Cottrell, P.E., the Base Realignment and Closure chief for Accessions Command said he has been at Fort Knox since 2008, and is looking forward to moving into the command’s new headquarters.

“I have been here since 2008,” Cottrell said. “They had already done the groundbreaking, and they were probably at the 40 percent complete level at that time.

“We have been in the new facility. It’s a great facility,” Cottrell said. “We have been looking at the furniture for the modular (cubicles) office space and the hard furniture for the offices. The furniture seems to be good quality and the cubicles have good space. The office furniture has a nice wood finish with a rich feel, especially the executive offices.”

Cottrell said he worked with the Huntsville Center Furnishings team to make final decisions on the furniture purchased.

“We met with Steve Lewis, Alicia Allen and Maj. Hanks during the furniture procurement process,” Cottrell said. “They helped us through the selection process and are still working with us on late changes. Maj. Hanks has been very supportive. We are all anxious to get in the new building. June will be very busy. We are looking forward to it.”