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## Resource analyst program pays off for Army

By Scott Farrow  
Public Affairs Office

**HUNTSVILLE, Ala.** – It's not often that a utility company comes knocking with a rebate check, but that's just what happened April 13 when representatives from a local utility provider hand delivered a check for over-payment of electric bills at Fort Sam Houston, Texas.

The \$2,656,650.08 check was due to the efforts of Fort Sam Houston's energy manager, John Gonzales, and especially the investigative work of resource efficiency manager (REM) Charlie Neuman, Sain Engineering Associates, Inc., who made the overpayment known to the CPS Energy representatives.

According to Neuman, he and Gonzales initially met with a CPS Energy representative May 5 to explain that CPS had incorrectly billed power usage at Camp Bullis Military Training Reservation for nearly five years.

"After several meetings, phone calls and e-mails, they came up with a check," Neuman said.

Although the U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) Federal Energy Management Program (FEMP) sponsors the REM program nationally, Installation Management Command owns the Army program and U.S. Army Engineering and Support Center-Huntsville manages it for the Army. According to Energy Program/Project Manager Will Irby, Installation Support and Program Management Directorate, catches like this prove the value of the REM program.

"This was a human error problem and an REM caught the error, made it known, and the Army got its money back," Irby said. "This is a perfect example of why this program was implemented."

Irby explained that the REM is a contracted staff member hired by an installation to support its energy and resource efficiency program. He said the REM's primary focus is to bring about reductions in the cost of energy, water, natural gas, fuel oil, refuse disposal, other utilities, and energy-and water-related operations.

He said since installation energy managers are looking at the big picture for energy consumption, REMs are the members of the public works team who are often pouring over the fine print of installation records and bills, analyzing statistics and spreadsheets and coming up with efficient utility use alternatives, which is occasionally as simple as catching accounting errors.

"Historically, the cost savings to an installation identified by an REM have substantially more than offset the cost of contracting for an REM," Irby explained. "A designated, salary-guaranteed manager is key to the success of the program."

Though the programs are designed to be self-funding, Irby said there are initial start-up funds needed to support the manager until the utility savings realized from program efforts can be returned to pay for the program. For the Army REM program, these funds are picked up the first year by IMCOM and go toward the REM's salary, training, equipment and software, travel and administrative support. However, after that first year, the installation then picks up the bill. However, after that first year, the installation then picks up the bill. But there's a catch; the installation will only continue to pay the REM bill if the REM can show savings equal to or greater than the REM's costs.

Over the last year, Irby said the Army's total investment was more than \$2 million and REMs have proposed energy savings in excess of \$10 million.

Irby said Fort Sam Houston is unique because of the amount of money that was returned, but also many other REMs are finding billing and utility anomalies where the government has either been overpaying utility companies or underbilling tenants.

"This coupled with energy savings project development makes REMs an important resource for the Army, and champions an agency's commitment to energy and environmental goals. As a result, organizations reduce environmental impacts, save energy, improve energy security and save money," he said.

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