



U.S. ARMY ENGINEERING AND SUPPORT CENTER, HUNTSVILLE



The Bulletin

May 2023



Center supervisors visit RG 300 construction site

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The U.S. Army Engineering and Support Center, Huntsville, engineers adaptive, specialized solutions across a broad spectrum of global enterprise covering five main lines of effort: Energy, Operational Technology, Environmental, Medical, and Base Operations and Facilities



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Commander's Thoughts

“ You have my eternal gratitude and my utmost respect for being the absolute best. ”



Col. Sebastien Joly

Team,
May 29 is Memorial Day, a day of national recognition to honor the military men and women who gave their lives in defense of our nation and its values.

First observed after the Civil War, Memorial Day was initially called “Decoration Day” because families gathered to remember their loved ones by decorating grave sites with flowers or flags. It is a tradition that continues across America today.

This Memorial Day, I hope that we can remember the common bond we have with the Servicemembers who have gone before us, who selflessly served our country and paid the ultimate price. We honor them by participating in the National Moment of Remembrance, a call to pause at 3 p.m. on Memorial Day, to reflect on and remember those Americans who died in service to our nation.

June is National Safety Month and the arrival of summer brings an increase in outdoor activities such as swimming, parades, fireworks and barbecues. From Memorial Day through Labor Day, the

Army’s 101 Critical Days of Summer safety campaign reminds us to focus on safety when participating in all types of summer activities – in and outside the home.

Summer is the Army’s deadliest time of year for mishaps, so playing it safe is critical to having a good time.

Each May, the Army joins the nation in observing and reflecting on the tremendous contributions of Asian American and Pacific Islanders to our country and our history.

“Advancing Leaders Through Opportunity” is the theme for the 2023 Asian American and Pacific Islander Heritage Month.

This year’s theme provides an opportunity to reflect on the contributions of Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders to the history of the nation, to recognize and honor their service, and to foster inclusive environments where people of all backgrounds can reach their full potential and be all they can be.

Congratulations are due for April and May’s Employees of the Month.

Deja Acevedo, a project

management specialist supporting the Plans and Programs Branch, was selected as May’s employee of the month.

Stephanie Ancira, workforce training specialist was recognized as April’s employee of the month.

Both Deja and Stephanie are very deserving of the recognition.

Additionally, congratulations to Jesus Ramirez, Fuels program manager, and Tracy Helmick, Fuels deputy program manager, for their earning the Program Manager of the Year Award during the National Petroleum Management Association’s annual conference in March.

The strength of the Center lies in each of you – the expertise you bring to the job, the passion and dedication you demonstrate in delivering superior results, and the teamwork you exercise across the entire organization to ensure everyone’s success.

You have my eternal gratitude and my utmost respect for being the absolute best. I’m so proud to be part of the Huntsville Center team!



Photo by William S. Farrow

Directorate and division chiefs as well as office supervisors visited the Center's future home at the Redstone Gateway, Redstone Arsenal's Enhanced Use Lease area March 21. The new three story, 205,000 square foot, purpose built facility allows the Center to consolidate the Center's workforce and provide a more secure environment for the Center's staff.

Supervisors tour RG 300 construction site

By William S. Farrow
Huntsville Center Public Affairs

More than 30 Huntsville Center directorate and division chiefs as well as office supervisors visited the Center's future home at the Redstone Gateway, Redstone Arsenal's Enhanced Use Lease area March 21 to get a first-hand look at proposed interior layout and to see how the project there is coming along.

Nathan Durham, Huntsville Center Command Program Manager and organizer for the tour, said over the past decade, Center personnel worked many courses of actions from a real-estate perspective in hopes of consolidating the Center's workforce and multiple off-post leases into a secure facility on Redstone Arsenal.

"Over the last two years, there has been a lot of anticipation as to whether or not it was actually going to happen," Durham said.

"This tour was a great opportunity for our supervisors and senior leaders to see the progress that has been made on construction as well as give them some assurance that this move is in fact going to happen in 2024 for our organization."

Wade Doss, Director of Engineering, said he appreciated seeing the Huntsville Center's future space.

"I think it's important to let the leadership see the progress made to date, and how the facility has been designed to meet our unique organizational needs," Doss said.

"Our workforce deserves the very best facility, and I think based on what I saw on the tour it will be a facility worthy of a world class engineering and construction organization like Huntsville Center."

From its original location in leased offices at Huntsville's expansive Cummings Research Park, the then—named Huntsville Division began

its operations in 1967 with less than 100 employees supporting the Army Ballistic Missile Defense program. Over the years, Huntsville Division's mission grew to provide specialized support to the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers by executing projects and programs requiring unique technical expertise.

Under U.S. Army Corps of Engineers reorganization, Huntsville Division became Huntsville Center in 1994 and within a year relocated to a facility at University Place in Huntsville, Alabama—a facility built to accommodate about 600 employees.

Since then, the Center has grown to employ more than 1,000 people with more than 90 percent of those employees located in Huntsville. As the Center surpassed 1,000 employees, it relocated most of its workforce in 2018 to its current location at 475 Quality Circle, situated at the city's Thornton Research Park while awaiting construction of the new facility.



State of Huntsville Center laid out for employees

By William Farrow
Huntsville Center Public Affairs

More than 500 U.S. Army Engineering and Support Center employees virtually attended a State of Huntsville Center address May 4.

During the address, Albert “Chip” Marin III, Huntsville Center Programs and Business Director, and other senior staff laid out the status of the organization Marin called a “world class organization.”

“No organization has the quality of employees that HNC (Huntsville Center) has,” Marin said.

“Most organizations are not as blessed as this agency is with the caliber of professionalism and the capability and the willingness to just roll up your sleeves and get work done as we have here inside of the Engineering and Support Center in Huntsville.”

As an example, during Marin’s address, he made it clear that issues associated with the 2022 Federal Employee Viewpoint Survey are being addressed to keep the organization the best of the best.

Marin said there will be a greater focus on implementing mentoring programs to help employees feel more confident in their roles and give them a stronger sense of purpose within the Center.

Marin also said that more emphasis will be placed on providing training and mentorship to supervisors.

“Right after the 2022 FEVS results came in we began focusing more training for our supervisors. We’ve always had supervisor professional development classes, but what we haven’t had is what are the nuts and bolts of what you need to be a good supervisor,” Marin said.

Marin said supervisor training will help improve people’s understanding of focusing the right amount of time for routine supervisor duties, such as employee evaluations and counseling, rewarding an employee who’s performing in an outstanding manner or disciplining somebody who is not performing to standards.

He said supervisor training will encompass a 360-degree supervisor evaluation, especially employees who are new to supervision.

“All new supervisors should be able to get a 360-degree evaluation to know what your peers think of you and know what your subordinates think of you,” Marin said.

He said the 360-evaluation will also include a tool to help supervisors recognize personality types so that supervisor’s may tailor their supervision according to their personality types. Interaction based on personality type, Marin said, will hopefully allow supervisors to manage and



Albert “Chip” Marin III

communicate better.

“We take supervisor development very seriously, and I’m hoping that in the 2023 FEVS we’ll see some improvement in our supervisors’ abilities to coach, teach, mentor, manage and lead.”

Marin said the onboarding process at the Center has also been assessed and there will be a new process for bringing employees into the Center.

He said there will be two onboarding sessions instead of one single session.

He said the initial session will provide the employee with everything they need to begin working at the Center, such as information required setting up payroll and IT accounts.

The second part of the onboarding program will focus more on explaining how the Center’s programs, directorates, special staff, and project delivery teams work within the Center.

“The intent of breaking onboarding into two portions is to ensure that all new employees don’t get overwhelmed when they come in on day one and get one big inbriefing. Secondly, to ensure that we teach new employees a little bit more about the Center holistically.”

Marin went on to provide information regarding the Center’s Installation Support and Programs Management Directorate reorganization and the move from the Center’s current facility to its new home at the new facility under construction at Redstone Arsenal.

Marin said the ISPM reorganization was a result of senior staff collaboration to make the directorate more effective. He said to be more effective, standing up project controls and project support branches is vital to help program and project managers plan, acquire, execute, and close out projects.

“Project controls is the use of data tools and software in program and project management help shape ISPM projects from inception,” Marin said.

“Project support is all the systems and tools that Project Controls needs to do its job.”

Marin said Project Support Branch isn’t just for ISPM

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Photo by Kristen Bergeson

Col. Sebastien Joly, Huntsville Center commander, is surrounded by staff during the Continuity of Operations Plan exercise April 12. The COOP exercise tested the Center's ability to stay functional during a natural disaster or other catastrophic

Exercise tests Continuity of Operations Plan

**By Kristen Bergeson
Huntsville Center Public Affairs**

Huntsville Center held a Continuity of Operations Plan (COOP) exercise April 12 to ensure readiness if, or when, disaster strikes.

The COOP exercise tested the Center's ability to stay functional "when something has gone catastrophically wrong – a natural disaster, terrorist attack or something else that has impacted employees to the extent that they cannot come into the workplace," said Col. Sebastien Joly, Huntsville Center commander.

During the exercise, most employees worked from home, while members of the Emergency Relocation Group met

at an undisclosed alternate site.

The COOP covers tasks like traveling to the alternate site and ensuring communications systems and other resources are available.

The exercise also demonstrates that the Center can continue to meet mission-essential functions from a remote location.

As the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) support agency for unique, complex and high-risk missions, resiliency is important for Huntsville Center to continue serving the warfighters and Department of Defense partners in times of crisis, said Joly.

"If something disastrous happens, we can't just throw up our hands and say 'we're out,'" he said. "We have to be

able to deliver the mission, especially when it comes to those nationally critical functions."

Aligned with the established national essential functions, Huntsville Center's critical functions include providing engineering services to Army, Air Force and other assigned government agencies and providing timely engineering support for national response and disasters.

The Center's workforce proved its ability to successfully achieve that mission during the COVID-19 pandemic, when employees' regular working situation was disrupted but the need for the kinds of support they

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Courtesy photo

Valued instruction

Carlos Reis, Huntsville Center Value Engineering officer, teaches a value engineering class at the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Learning Center in Huntsville on April 17. The course, previously taught by Headquarters USACE instructors only, prepares students for the Value Management Associate exam, a requirement for the initial VE certification.

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provide was increased. The Center was instrumental in the establishment of alternate care sites and community vaccination centers.

“The COVID-19 pandemic made us figure this out much better and showed that we can continue to perform operations at a high level in a virtual environment,” Joly said.

“This exercise is really just fine-tuning things to accommodate a sudden disaster as opposed to a long-term pandemic.”

The COOP exercise was led by Charles Carson, Huntsville Center’s emergency manager who has over 14 years of experience in USACE emergency management. Before joining the Center in November, he worked with the USACE Mississippi Valley Division, where he implemented the division’s COOP following actual emergencies four times in the last five years alone.

He said Huntsville Center’s lack of

geographic boundaries and ongoing reliance on electronic communication has left the workforce better prepared for emergency situations.

“We are different from most other USACE organizations because we literally have projects all over the world,” he said. “We are used to working with people who aren’t in our building, so this isn’t a huge departure from our standard way of doing business. Of course, there’s always room for improvement.”

A primary element of the COOP exercise was testing of the Alert! Mass Warning Notification System, which sends employees emergency warnings and other critical information and collects responses regarding their safety and work status.

For the system to work effectively, employees must be registered and keep their personal contact information updated.

Initial reports showed 86% of the workforce had responded via the Alert! system within 12 hours of notification.

Carson said he and other Center

officials were combing through the data to remove users who are no longer employed at the Center and identify employees who are not registered or need to update their information.

“Accountability is one of the key things we are working on with these exercises,” Carson said.

“Being able to track folks and ensure that they are cared for, safe and available to work is one of our primary responsibilities.”

Carson said he and Huntsville Center leadership are currently modifying the COOP based on findings from the exercise and will release a revised plan by June 9. The updated COOP will be available to employees on SharePoint.

“My assessment is that the exercise went very well overall. We were able to meet the objectives, which were to educate leadership about the COOP, test the system and find out where our shortcomings are,” he said.

“Achieving the mission is and will continue to be our primary focus.”



Photo by Kristen Bergeson

Jason Kirkpatrick, USACE Aviation Integration program manager, right, presents the USACE Castle Award in Aviation to Ryan Strange, a research physical scientist for the USACE Unmanned Aircraft Systems program, May 1.

Aviation “rock star” honored by his peers

**By Kristen Bergeson
Huntsville Center Public Affairs**

A research physical scientist who helped to develop the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) Unmanned Aircraft Systems (UAS) program in 2017 was recognized for his work with the USACE Castle Award in Aviation during the annual Geospatial Community of Practice meeting in April. Ryan Strange accepted the honor during an informal presentation

May 1 at the U.S. Army Engineering and Support Center, Huntsville.

Award recipients are selected by their peers in the geospatial field in recognition of their significant contributions for advancing the use of UAS in the USACE enterprise.

Jason Kirkpatrick, USACE Aviation Integration program manager, said Strange’s passion for both aviation and the team is key to the program’s success.

“Ryan is a prolific team builder who

understands something about aviation that a lot of people don’t: the crew concept,” said Kirkpatrick. “Even if you’re the lead pilot, it’s always about the team.”

Strange, “a rock star in USACE Aviation,” according to Victor Wilhelm Jr., Marine section chief for the USACE Japan Engineer District, is the first recipient of the Castle Award since 2019 when it was awarded to Matt Milliorn, Fort Worth District.

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Directorate but is available for use throughout the Huntsville Center enterprise.

“Anybody can use the project controls. It’s going sit over in ISPM, but it is an enterprise organization.”

Marin also provided timelines for the physical move of operations to the Center’s new 205,000 square-foot facility on Redstone Arsenal, the Environmental and Munitions Center of Expertise Directorate’s move to the second floor of the Federal Building in Omaha, Nebraska, and the possibility of relocation of the Center’s medical support offices in

Alexandria, Virginia.

Before focusing on questions from the Center workforce, Marin spoke about the importance of the Huntsville Center mission.

“The goods and services that we render every day are critically important to our customers...the Soldiers, Sailors, Airmen, Marines, family members, civilian employees, and contractors on Department of Defense installations around the world. You provide the goods, the services, the facilities, utilities that allow those young men and women to go forth and accomplish the nation’s missions,” Marin said.



Photo by Kristen Bergeson

Carolyn Goodman, Pacific Northwest National Laboratory, provides training to more than 80 resource efficiency managers attending Huntsville Center's REM workshop April 20 at the U.S. Army Engineering and Support Center, Huntsville. The Center manages the REM program and the annual workshop enhances REM's expertise supporting energy efficiency program at U.S. military installations and federal facilities around the world.

Workshop tackles recent energy policy updates, changes

**By William Farrow
Huntsville Center Public Affairs**

Attendees at the 2023 Huntsville Center Resource Efficiency Managers workshop received their marching orders to meet Department of Defense policy changes leveraging resources to mitigate carbon emissions and contribute towards net-zero goals.

More than 80 energy experts attended Huntsville Center's REM workshop April 17-20 to ensure continuous professional development and focused training on state-of-the-art energy programs and initiatives while leveraging Huntsville Center reach-back capabilities through Huntsville Center energy experts.

The REMs are experts in finding ways to save energy and resources at the installations through utility billing audits, gathering energy rebates, conducting energy awareness programs, assisting with microgrid design, and

developing resilient renewable energy projects. Each REM is contracted to military installations to support energy efficiency programs. REMs are also required to maintain a high level of energy related education and must be a certified energy manager.

During a briefing from Albert "Chip" Marin III, Huntsville Center's Programs and Business Director, REMs were made aware of the changing energy landscape.

Marin spotlighted the Climate Smart Buildings Initiative which is expected to increase investments from performance contracts from a low of \$251 million in 2021 to a sustained \$1.2 billion per year by 2030. Marin said the Department of Defense and the Army will carry a heavy load on the initiative.

Marin also pointed out policy directing 100 percent carbon pollution-free electricity on a net annual basis by 2030, 100 percent zero-emission vehicle acquisitions by 2035, a net-zero emissions building portfolio by

2045, including a 50 percent emissions reduction by 2032.

Marin told attendees that as technology is rapidly changing, REMs are expected to have a good handle on the technology to meet the increased number of energy regulations, policies, guidance and directives.

Solutions implemented must meet current and future needs and creative solutions will achieve the end state, Marin said.

Marin went on to explain to the workshop attendees how DOD policy on Electrification of Standard Building Operations, implemented March 2023, will impact their missions.

The policy calls for new military construction and major renovations not yet reaching design phase to include building design using all electric technology for system components. For existing buildings, implementation of

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Courtesy photo

Schoolhouse site visit

At a site visit to the Army War College, Carlisle Barracks, Pennsylvania, Col. Sebastien Joly, left, spent time with Col. Bob Halvorson, Army War College chief of strategy and project management, regarding status and coordination of future deliveries of furniture and fixtures to the AWC's new general instructional building. Joly accompanied Huntsville Center Furnishings Program project managers to the site for quality assurance assessment of the more than \$5 million project providing AWC with furniture for the new \$98 million 201,600 square foot building. The primary academic facility will provide modern educational and support spaces for the AWC. The project is a collaboration between Carlisle Barracks, Baltimore District and Huntsville Center with Baltimore District providing facility construction over site and Huntsville Center providing furnishings.

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all-electric technologies where market-ready technologies exist is mandatory.

"It's a steep hill to climb and the objectives seem to get higher every day," Marin said.

Marin then provided solutions for the REMS to succeed in meeting the new policy directives.

"You're not an island...use the entire Army and DoD energy expert pool," he said.

"Know your business and the policies around it and know your supporting USACE (U.S. Army Corps of Engineers) District (and other) energy experts."

To expand on new policies and how different agencies are implementing policy, John Trudell, Huntsville Center REM program manager and workshop organizer, invited several subject matter experts to provide attendees with information specific to their organizations.

Speakers included Christine Ploschke, Acting Deputy Assistant Secretary of the Army for Energy and Sustainability, Matthew Haupt, Naval Facility Headquarters Energy Director, and Mary Sotos, Department of Energy

Federal Energy Management Program Director.

Overviews of the Services' programs helped attendees understand how the Services operate and the laws are translated into regulations, policies, and directives," Trudell said.

"Understanding of the higher energy program helps the REMs understand their role in assisting the government meet the requirements."

Trudell said DOE FEMP training that included case examples of "retuning" government buildings was extremely important to the attendees.

Re-tuning is a systematic process aimed at minimizing building energy consumption by identifying and correcting operational problems that plague buildings at no-cost or low-cost, said Kendall Kam, a DOE FEMP program manager.

"Re-tuning relies on building automation system data to identify and implement control improvements at no cost other than the time to program the changes" Kam said.

"These low-cost or no-cost operational improvements ultimately improve the buildings' energy efficiency, reduce operating costs, and improve occupant comfort."

Kam also provided attendees with a

presentation regarding 50001 Ready, the DOE program assisting agencies establish a formalized energy management program using a systems approach to managing energy and water while self-attesting to the implementation of an ISO 50001-based energy management system as encouraged in the Energy Act 2020.

Kam said because the USACE REM program has shown success from the REM work to assist government agencies meet the energy mandates and the savings generated from execution of REM-identified projects and energy conservation measures, many federal agencies contract with USACE to obtain REM services.

"The Federal Energy Management Program works with its stakeholders to enable federal agencies to meet energy-related goals, and to identify affordable solutions, facilitate public-private partnerships, and provide energy leadership to the country by identifying and leveraging government best practices," Kam said.

"There is a synergy between FEMP's mission and USACE's REM program, and by providing training to USACE's REMs, FEMP can reach out to many federal agencies through the REMs."



Courtesy photo

Alan Reynolds (left), National Petroleum Management Association Vice President of Operations, and Ron Crowl (right), NPMA Senior Vice President, present the Program Manager of the Year award to Jesus Ramirez, Huntsville Center Fuels program manager, and Tracy Helmick, Fuels deputy program manager, during the National Petroleum Management Association's annual conference March 27-30.

Fuels program managers earn national recognition

By Kristen Bergeson
Huntsville Center Public Affairs

Two program managers with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers' Engineering and Support Center, Huntsville earned top honors at the National Petroleum Management Association's annual conference March 27 - 30.

Jesus Ramirez and Tracy Helmick, program managers for the Center's Fuels Recurring Maintenance and Minor Repair Program, both received the NPMA Program/Project Manager of the Year Award at the 2023 PETRO Expo Fuel Handling Summit. The association typically presents this award to a single recipient.

"This year we have a first-ever for this award due to the unique circumstances associated with the position," said Ron Crowl, NPMA senior vice president. "Even though it is one duty title, due to the sheer size of responsibilities associated with the position, it requires two managers to appropriately manage it."

The Fuels Program provides vital maintenance and repair services to the Department of Defense and other government agencies to sustain a worldwide robust fueling capability in support of the Army, Navy and Air Force.

As Fuels program managers, Ramirez and Helmick are

responsible for the acquisition strategies, execution and post-award contract management of 25 task orders providing preventive and corrective maintenance at 433 Defense Logistics Agency fuels sites in nine countries.

"The USACE Huntsville Fuels Program is critical to all the services to ensure that clean, dry fuel is able to be issued and received at installations worldwide," said Crowl.

"USACE Huntsville is the only organization executing this level of maintenance and repair on DOD fuel systems, and Mr. Ramirez and Ms. Helmick are at the tip of the spear."

Dennis Bacon, chief of the Fuels Branch at Huntsville Center, credits Ramirez and Helmick with the program's more than 900 percent growth over the last decade.

"Our people are the primary factor in our program's success," he said. "We have the right people making the right decisions for the right reasons every day."

Ramirez and Helmick spoke to attendees about the Fuels Program's services and capabilities during two breakout sessions on days two and three of the conference. Both sessions were filled to capacity with about 200 attendees each.

Bacon provided the keynote address, where he spoke about the theme of the 2023 conference, "Connecting and Caring for Our Greatest Asset: People."



Photo courtesy Rock Island Arsenal

Foundry workers with Rock Island Arsenal – Joint Manufacturing and Technology Center conduct a foundry pour into sand molds April 16 at Rock Island Arsenal, Ill. Huntsville Center signed off on a \$67 million Energy Resilience & Conservation Investment Program contract to provide Rock Island Arsenal with secure, self-sufficient energy.

Energy program leads path for \$67 million Rock Island Arsenal project

By William S. Farrow
Huntsville Center Public Affairs

Huntsville Center signed off on a \$67 million Energy Resilience & Conservation Investment Program (ERCIP) contract to provide Rock Island Arsenal (RIA) with secure, self-sufficient energy.

A subsection of the Defense-Wide Military Construction (MILCON) program, ERCIP specifically funds projects that save energy and water, reduce Department of Defense energy costs, improve energy resilience and security, and contribute to mission assurance. Huntsville Center Energy Division's ERCIP is the Army's requirement development experts

providing planning and technical support to the Army by validating all ERCIP projects before they are submitted to the Department of Defense to compete for funding.

"To fulfill the Army's energy resilience requirements, Rock Island Arsenal must submit a project proposal to the Office of the Secretary of Defense to compete for funding," said Richard Moore, ERCIP project manager.

"It's the job of Huntsville Center's ERCIP validation team to lend technical support and planning guidance by validating the project."

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Photo by Dave Becker

Environmental experts with the Environmental and Munitions Center of Expertise (EMCX) and other U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) entities conduct a site visit at Bradford Island, Oregon, on July 26. USACE has been working with the Oregon Department of Environmental Quality, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and Washington Department of Ecology to evaluate and oversee cleanup of various contamination sources on the island and the adjoining Columbia River, which lies within the Bonneville Dam complex, since 1997.

EMCX celebrates 30-plus years of environmental expertise

**By Kristen Bergeson
Huntsville Center Public Affairs**

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Environmental and Munitions Center of Expertise (EMCX) has undergone multiple name changes and restructurings over the last three decades, but its mission to provide environmental remediation expertise for military installations worldwide has remained the same.

The EMCX, part of Huntsville Center, recently completed a rigorous recertification process, earning the USACE “expert” designation for another five years.

A Mandatory Center of Expertise (MCX) is a USACE organization that has demonstrated a unique and exceptional technical capability in a highly specialized area that is critical to other USACE commands. To maintain MCX designation, organizations must recertify every five years by proving their skill and cost-effectiveness.

The Corps of Engineers first

established the CX in 1991 to provide centralized technical quality assurance in support of the Department of Defense’s Defense Environmental Restoration Program (DERP) for active installations and the Formerly Used Defense Sites (FUDS) Program. These programs are responsible for protecting human health and the environment by investigating and, if needed, cleaning up potential contamination or munitions left behind following military testing or training exercises.

At that time, the CX was named the Radioactive and Mixed Waste Center of Expertise, but it was renamed the Hazardous, Toxic, and Radioactive Waste Center of Expertise just a year later.

During these early years, the CX recruited dozens of highly qualified experts, many of whom continue to grace the hallways and offices of the CX’s main office in Omaha, Nebraska. As the sole providers of technical quality assurance on challenging, often tedious projects that span decades, the

expertise and experience of long-time employees is an invaluable asset.

One of these is Dave Becker, geologist, who already had eight years of experience in environmental clean-up with the Corps of Engineers when he joined the CX in 1991. He continues to provide quality assurance support for one of the first projects he was assigned as a summer intern.

“In 1985, I was assigned a project in Phoenix, a Formerly Used Defense Site, and I’m still working on that project almost 40 years later with the anticipation that it will be several more decades until this is cleaned up,” Becker said. “The groundwater contamination goes for miles and involves tremendous volumes of water.”

Becker, who is also a part-time professor at The University of Nebraska in Omaha, said he compares the process to “cleaning latex paint out of a paintbrush” when explaining it to

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Energy savings contract program enhancing Army policy

By William S. Farrow
Huntsville Center Public Affairs

Two important Army installations are using a tool provided by the Huntsville Center to support the Army's Installation Energy and Water Resilience Policy. The tool is the Energy Savings and Performance Contracts (ESPC) program administered by Huntsville Center.

An ESPC utilizes private capital to make infrastructure improvements and new efficiencies without tapping into the capital budget to support and enable the warfighter and meet energy and environmental mandates. Considered the Army's expert in ESPCs, Huntsville Center implemented the contracts to assist the installations in supporting the Army Climate Strategy by providing energy resilience and energy cybersecurity and reducing energy and water use (as well as carbon and greenhouse gas emissions) to improve readiness and save taxpayers money.

At Army Garrison Carlisle Barracks, Pennsylvania, the ESPC project there is in its fifth year of the performance period and has exceeded the guaranteed savings by \$62,973. The home to the U.S. Army War College, Carlisle Barracks is the nation's second-oldest active military base.

The project at Fort McCoy, Wisconsin, is in year six of the performance period and has exceeded the guaranteed savings amount by \$325,100. Fort McCoy is a 60,000-acre Army Reserve installation and home to the 88th Regional Support Command, a Total Force training center responsible for enhancing readiness for more than 100,000 military personnel annually.

Hannah Niedergeses, Energy Division Project Manager, said energy conservation measures for these projects include lighting upgrades, energy monitoring and control system upgrades, which will optimize the



Photo courtesy Fort McCoy

Engineers with 601st Engineer Detachment, pour concrete into the base of what will be one of 28 light poles at the Central Receiving Shipping Point at Fort McCoy, Wisconsin in 2022. Huntsville Center's Energy Savings Performance Contracts program utilized by Fort McCoy includes lighting upgrades and improvements throughout the expansive installation.

operation of HVAC systems throughout the buildings.

"There are other organizations that award ESPCs, but the thing that makes Huntsville Center stand out from the others is that we have a centralized project management 'one-stop-shop,'" Niedergeses said.

"The long-term partnership between the Huntsville Center's Energy Division, the garrisons, energy savings contractors and other Army stakeholders requires a high degree of commitment and work in good faith to enable successful outcomes."

Niedergeses said the advantages of implementing ESPC projects through Huntsville Center include the program's experience with ESPC project execution. She said the programs centralized project management enables a standardized and streamlined process by a dedicated and experienced project

development team.

"We provide comprehensive program support including engineering technical expertise, project management expertise, cost analysis, legal review, and measurement and verification services through a third-party," Niedergeses said.

"We also ensure compliance with all Department of Defense policies and regulations of third-party financing."

Huntsville Center's ESPC program support provides a tremendous value, said Richard McCoy, Carlisle Barracks energy manager.

"Since the inception of our (ESPC) contract six years ago, the contractor has been monitoring our energy usage and HVAC operations in five buildings. This has resulted in reduced energy costs each year and assists the garrison in keeping our HVAC equipment running efficiently."



EMCX

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his students.

“Just like the paint sticks to the bristles in the brush, the contaminants stick to the rocks and other things in the ground,” he said. “You have to use a lot of water to flush it out, and it’s a very long process.”

Kate Peterson, chief of the Environmental Management and Cost Division, joined the CX in 1994. She and her team support USACE districts by helping them create their programming and budgeting estimates for clean-up projects at FUDS sites, a process that’s improved tremendously as they’ve gained experience over the years, she said.

“When we first started, environmental work was all new, so how do you estimate it?” Peterson said. “But now, we have historical data from the last three decades to help us establish better estimates, which leads to better planning and, ultimately, better performance.”

In 2007, the Hazardous, Toxic and

Radioactive Waste CX merged with the Military Munitions Center of Expertise (MM CX) in Huntsville, Alabama, and expanded its environmental clean-up mission to include the safe removal of unexploded munitions (UXO) from former defense sites. This realignment resulted in the CX’s current name, the Environmental and Munitions Center of Expertise.

John Sikes, chief of the Military Munitions Division of the CX, has been with USACE for 28 years beginning with the MM CX in 1994. He said he’s seen tremendous improvement in technology and processes since that time.

“We’ve come a long way from old analog-type geophysics instruments, basically standard metal detectors that would let us know that something might be there, so we’d have to dig up every single anomaly,” Sikes said.

“Now, we use digital geophysics devices where we can get a better picture of what’s underground, compare it to a database of munitions images, and confirm that it’s unexploded ordnance before wasting

time and resources to dig it up.”

The remediation process for UXO has also evolved, improving the way we approach investigations of sites, he said.

“These investigations allow us to make better decisions -- technically, scientifically and legally,” Sikes said. “We’re now working better with environmental regulators and communicating with various groups all focused on the same end goal of making the public safe from UXO.”

The EM CX is currently led by John Nebelsick, who has over 30 years of experience working with military munitions and hazardous, toxic and radioactive waste projects. He credited his team of experts with the success of the EM CX over the years.

“Our team is very well educated -- many of the staff have advanced degrees or certifications -- and focused on the mission and finding solutions,” Nebelsick said.

“I’m really proud of how diverse of a work group we have and how we’ve been able to solve every problem that’s been thrown our way.”

RIA

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Rock Island Arsenal is a major Army installation employing more than 6,000 military, civilian and contractor personnel and is home to more than 80 tenant organizations providing critical products and services to all of U.S. armed services. This project supports Rock Island’s resilience to the effects of climate change by securing self-sufficient generation using a diverse set of assets including solar, hydro-electric and battery storage, alleviating reliance on its on-site fuel storage or the serving utility during man-made and natural emergencies.

The contract calls for a planned construct of a microgrid powered by approximately 14 MW natural gas (NG) generators, up to 3 MW solar photovoltaic array, and a 400 kW / 1.6 MWh battery energy storage system integrated with the existing 2.8 MW hydro-electric power plant totaling approximately 20 MW.

“The microgrid system will supply sufficient electricity for continued operation of all critical loads across Rock Island Arsenal during a grid outage for weeks and it will double the renewable energy capacity to almost 50% of critical load,” Moore said.

Absent of the microgrid solution, an extended outage at Rock Island Arsenal could disrupting manufacturing processes and operations vital to U.S. military efforts.

“We validated the project definition, technical feasibility, appropriate technology, estimated energy savings, and associated Life Cycle Cost Analysis by calculating the Savings to Investment Ratio (SIR) and payback years through a comprehensive process,” Moore said. Huntsville Center’s Energy Division provides cost savings to customers through an array of services including: critical energy analysis; planning and consultation; project management; acquisition support/tools; alternative financing and other services.

Doug Van Werden, RIA Energy Manager, said the ERCIP project will allow RIA to operate during an electrical outage for as long as needed with no impact to the installation mission.

“Currently the post can only provide about 10-15% of the emergency power required,” he said.

“In the end, this project will allow RIA to continue supporting the war fighter world-wide during power outages while decreasing the post’s daily greenhouse gas production. A win-win for the post the and the U.S. military world-wide.”

BULLETIN FOCUS: Leadership

By Margaret Simmons
Huntsville Center Chief of Counsel

Many of the Army values are embodied in the word “leadership.” At one time there was a campaign to help us remember those Army values: L D R S H I P – Loyalty, Duty, Respect, Selfless Service, Honor, Integrity, and Personal Courage.

I believe all of those values should be visible in true leaders. I hope others see those values when they see me. I am sure I have moments – a day or an hour – when they may be missing, but hopefully not for long!

I started with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers at Nashville District in April 1985 as a GS-11 attorney in real estate. Here I am, 38 years later, still energized by all the work USACE does for our soldiers and our nation.

In 1985 I had the privilege of working on a new nationwide program that was managed by what was then Huntsville Division. It was the Formerly Used Defense Site (FUDS) Program. Congress established this program to address environmental problems that were being discovered on lands formerly used or occupied by Department of Defense (DOD).

Huntsville did not have a real estate office, so I was the real estate resource for the program. I worked with the team reviewing documents to ensure that the lands with the environmental issues had been owned, leased, used or occupied by DOD. Through this program, I had the opportunity to travel across the United States and help train the USACE offices that were involved with this program. I met folks at both the district and division levels, many of whom still work for USACE today.

The environmental attorney at Huntsville went to work for the Space and Missile Defense Command, and I applied for that vacant position. I was



Margaret Simmons

offered the position and moved to Huntsville in August 1991, and it was one of the best decisions I have made.

I came for a GS-12/13 attorney position and was also the labor attorney, FOIA attorney and contract attorney.

In 1995, Huntsville Division became Huntsville Center. I grew up with the Center and all the programs. In June of 2003, I was selected to be the Huntsville Center Counsel – Supervisory Attorney. I was the first permanent female GS-15 at Huntsville Center.

I have learned many lessons over the years about being a leader. Many of those lessons were long before I became the Center Counsel. I look back at some of those lessons and I am embarrassed at times by how I responded in certain situations. On the positive side, I did, however, make sure that I did not repeat the actions that I now think were somewhat unprofessional. I do take responsibility for those moments when I did overreact or let someone push that particular button. Luckily those moments were few and far between.

One of the biggest lessons I have learned is that I have to really listen to people. I have to pay attention to their words and their body language. If possible, it also helps to know if they are going through a personal issue that is having an impact on their life. If

someone is seeking advice, I want to be sure that I understand the situation. The question they ask could have more than one meaning, and I will miss out if I do not try to really listen.

I have participated in numerous leadership assessments over the years.

The most surprising one to me was Flippen. At the time, the feedback I got was that I was too blunt with other leaders, which was at times, hurtful. I have never intended to hurt someone's feelings, but based on that feedback, I have tried to make sure that when I am blunt or specific, I provide the information in a kinder way. This may be with tone of voice but is more likely to be in the approach. I try not to be too direct, and that seems to have worked better over time.

For a leader, I also think that honesty and integrity are two of the most important values. I want people to trust me and I have to earn that trust. In order to earn trust, I have to be honest and people have to know that I mean what I say and that my actions are consistent with my words. If I cannot do something I thought I could do, I immediately let that person know and I let them know why. I try to be available and responsive. I feel so blessed to have been with USACE for 38 years, most of those here at Huntsville Center.

The work we do is so important to the soldier and to the nation. I value each person here in this organization as we are all needed to be successful. We may not always see the big picture or know exactly how our work contributed to the mission, but rest assured that each person here contributes to mission success. I thank each of you for your support because together we make Huntsville Center the best place to work across USACE.

ESSAYONS!



BULLETIN FOCUS: Ethics

Redefinition of the Foreign Gifts and Decorations Minimal Value

By Melanie Braddock
Huntsville Center Office of
Counsel

Under the Foreign Gifts and Decorations Act (FGDA), the General Services Administration (GSA), in consultation with the U.S. Department of State, must redefine the minimal value of foreign gift items to reflect changes in the Consumer Price Index every three years.

As you may be aware, as a federal government employee, one may not accept gifts from foreign governments or international organizations except as permitted under the Foreign Gifts and Decorations Act (FGDA; 5 U.S.C. 7342). The GSA increased the “minimal value” for purposes of accepting gifts from foreign governments under the FGDA from \$415 to \$480 on March 6. GSA made this change retroactive to January 1.

What you may not be aware of is that the increase in the “minimal value” affects other Ethics rules too.

For example:

- DoD has updated the “reasonable attendance fee” for DoD employees to attend a conference where DoD personnel will be speaking to \$927.
- Additionally, with the recently enacted amendments to the Supplemental Standards of Ethical Conduct for DoD Employees, DoD modified the limit on gifts from subordinates on a “special infrequent occasion.” Specifically, the limit on gifts from subordinates on a “special infrequent occasion” now follows the “minimal value” threshold established in the FGDA so the limit on gifts from subordinates on a “special infrequent occasion” is now \$480.
- Soon the Office of Government Ethics will be revising its financial disclosure regulations to reflect the

increased thresholds for reporting of gifts and travel reimbursements for both the public and confidential financial disclosure systems. Reporting will be modified as shown:

- ▲ Filers will need to report all gifts and travel reimbursements aggregating “more than \$480” from any one source received on or after 1 January 2023.
- ▲ The widely attended gathering gift exception for non-sponsor gifts of free attendance will increase from \$415 to \$480.

One additional change to 5 CFR § 3601.104(a) modifies the current \$300 limit on gifts from a group that includes an employee’s subordinate. The new rule uses the “minimal value” threshold that recently jumped from \$415 to \$480.

If you are affected by any of these changes or have any questions, feel free to reach out to the Office of Counsel.

BULLETIN FOCUS: Safety

Huntsville Center personnel are in the process of moving out of our current facility. An office relocation can give rise to certain safety and health concerns and the Huntsville Center Safety Office wants to ensure those risks are mitigated. Moving doesn’t have to be strenuous on your body if you stay mindful, follow proper lifting techniques, and most importantly, ask for help if you need it. The eight tips below may keep you safe while during our move to RG 300 at Redstone Arsenal.

1. **Plan ahead before lifting.** Ensure you are wearing the appropriate clothes and shoes before you begin carrying boxes and equipment. Well fitted tennis shoes are ideal. Knowing where you’re going and making sure the path is clear will prevent you from making awkward movements while holding something heavy.
2. **Lift close to your body.** You will be a stronger and more stable lifter if the object is held close to your body rather than at the end of your reach. Make sure you have a firm hold on the object you are lifting, and keep it balanced close to your body.

3. **Feet shoulder width apart.** A solid base of support is important while lifting. Holding your feet too close together will be unstable, too far apart will hinder movement. Keep the feet about shoulder width apart and take short steps.
4. **Bend your knees and keep your back straight.** Practice the lifting motion before you lift the object and think about your motion before you lift. Focus on keeping your spine straight--raise and lower to the ground by bending your knees.
5. **Tighten your stomach muscles.** Tightening your abdominal muscles will hold

your back in a good lifting position and will help prevent excessive force on the spine.

6. **Slowly lift with your legs.** Your legs are many times stronger than your back muscles--let your strength work in your favor. Again, lower to the ground by bending your knees, not your back. Keeping your eyes focused upwards helps to keep your back straight.
7. **If you’re straining, get help.** If an object is too heavy, or awkward in shape, make sure you have someone around who can help you lift.
8. **Set down your load carefully, squatting with the knees and hips only.**

About Huntsville Center

HNC

Unique to the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers,

Huntsville Center provides innovative engineering solutions to complex, global missions. Our team of professionals engineer adaptive, specialized solutions across a broad spectrum of global enterprise covering five main lines of effort: Energy, Operational Technology, Environmental, Medical, and Base Operations and Facilities. Our portfolios comprise 43 program areas, as well as nine mandatory and six technical centers of expertise, and 17 centers of standardization. Through partnership with Department of Defense agencies, private industry and global stakeholders, we deliver leading edge engineering solutions in support of national interests around the globe.

FY2022 40+ Programs

8 Mandatory Centers of Expertise,
6 Technical Centers of Expertise
and 17 Centers of Standardization

\$ 2.5B

**“HNC Delivers
Innovation”**

In fiscal 2022, Huntsville Center awarded contract actions totaling more than \$2.5 billion in obligations for its stakeholders.



The U.S. Army Engineering and Support Center, Huntsville, engineers adaptive, specialized solutions across a broad spectrum of global enterprise covering five main lines of effort: Energy, Operational Technology, Environmental, Medical, and Base Operations and Facilities