

The Bulletin

Cybersecurity program providing vital services for National Guard, Defense Logistics Agency

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Commander's Thoughts

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Col. Sebastien Joly

Cybersecurity program provides vital inventory service

By William Farrow
Huntsville Center Public Affairs

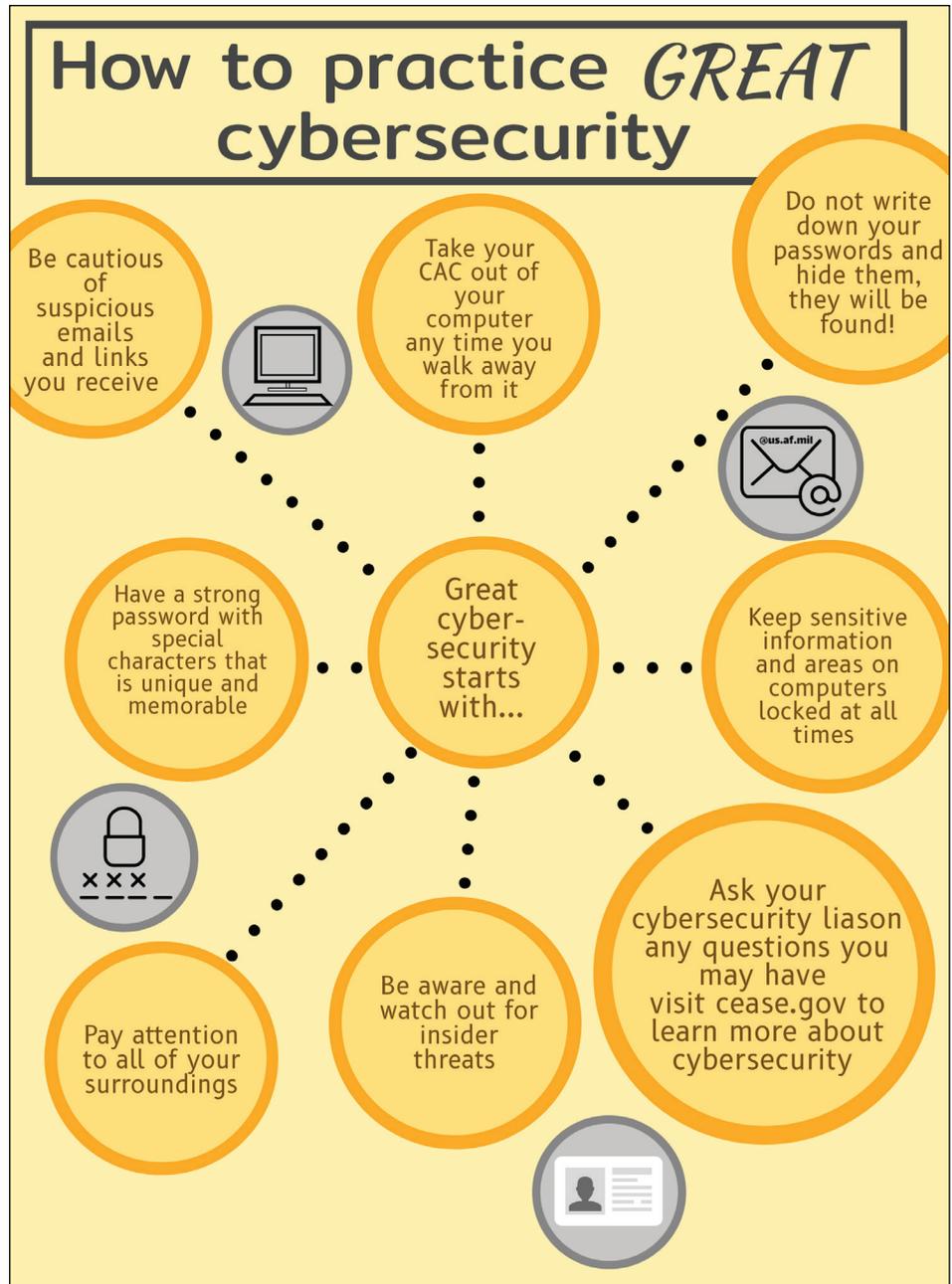
The U.S. government and military sectors report more than 1600 cyberattacks per week. These stunning numbers underscore the critical need for robust cybersecurity measures across all sectors. Huntsville Center's Cybersecurity Systems Program plays an integral part in security against cyberattacks by providing oversight and management of cybersecurity inventories of Facility Related Control Systems (FRCS) including medical equipment and systems, by assisting multiple Department of Defense (DOD) customers in achieving accreditation under the Risk Management Framework (RMF) requirements in support of the customer obtaining an Authority to Operate (ATO).

The program also provides Continuous Monitoring Support (CMS), Professional Technical Services, maintenance support services once the ATO is achieved.

Currently, the Center's Cybersecurity program awarded contracts for logical and physical cybersecurity inventories for the Army National Guard Bureau (ARNG) for 414 sites in five states and for the Defense Logistics Agency (DLA) at six locations located in four States.

Ron Brook, Huntsville Center Operational Technology Branch chief, said the physical cyber inventories are important as organizations may not be aware of all their information technology (IT) or operational technology (OT) assets. Brook said this introduces potential cyber vulnerabilities – and thereby potential cyber risks – to the organization, and by extension, the nation's cyber posture.

"There is a cliché in the field of cybersecurity: 'We don't know what we don't know...until we scan it,' Brook said.



As an example, Brook said if an organization is not aware that it operates a certain OT component, it has no insight into how that component might be exploited by threat actors. He said to securely operate, monitor, patch, and dispose of organizational assets, they must be known and inventoried.

"To protect it, you need to know you have it."

Earl Freeman, Facility Technology Integration Division (FTI-Medical & Cybersecurity) Senior Project Manager,

said the cybersecurity program team is busy providing a full range of cybersecurity technical expertise and programmatic services for its customers in accordance with the Risk Management Framework (RMF) requirements and inventories for Operational Technology (OT) Systems.

He said the program maintains state-of-the-art cybersecurity technical expertise and provides expert-level

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Huntsville Center partners with Auburn University graduate program

By Lillian Putnam

Huntsville Center Public Affairs

Huntsville Center has joined forces with Auburn University to offer a specialized graduate certificate program in construction management, equipping personnel with the skills and expertise to excel in the construction field.

The Auburn graduate program in construction management provides the opportunity for U.S. Army Corps of Engineers personnel to enhance their expertise, improve their knowledge on construction practices and contribute to the Army's infrastructure and readiness.

"The purpose of the certificate is to provide instruction on comprehensive construction management topics as well as an understanding of the contractual and legal aspects that drive the decision-making process in the construction industry," said program graduate Mackenzie Searle, Omaha District Contract Administration Branch chief.

By combining academic rigor with practical applications, the program ensures that graduates are equipped to lead the way in construction management, benefiting not only USACE organizations, but also the warfighters supported with every project.

"It is a very rigorous program and was designed to take USACE engineers outside their comfort zone to critically think about all aspects of construction projects," Searle said.

"We were able to immediately apply what we were learning to our day-to-day work."

The program offers graduate-level training courses in the curriculum to include Construction Cost Estimating, Construction Management and Scheduling, Construction Law and Risk Management as well as specialized topics such as Heavy Civil Construction or Construction Contracting Business.

The program supports professional development by offering courses that meet continuing education requirements for engineers, architects and project managers.

Several classes qualify for Project Management Professional certifications, making this program beneficial for those seeking professional credentials.

"Several classes also qualify for my PMP continuing education requirements," said Darren Mulford, Huntsville Center's Installation Support and Programs Management Facilities Branch chief, and current participant in the program.

"The training is also greatly beneficial to anyone that is



involved in the design, construction, project management or award or administration of any building construction projects."

Students gain deeper understanding and insight into site work, structural systems, building skin types in addition to mechanical, electrical and plumbing components.

This training will help give the participants the tools they need to analyze large, complex changes when they occur.

Mulford elaborated on the advantages of the courses, "It gives us the tools to properly plan, assess risks, administer contracts and analyze construction changes and claims."

Originally conceived in January 2009, the program was created to provide alignment and a baseline common understanding of the components of construction, as many engineering programs around the country do not include that in their curriculum.

Alan Bugg, former USACE Area Engineer at Fort Moore, Georgia and current Associate Professor and Service Learning Chair at Auburn University said, "Our young

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This black and white image from the Library of Congress National Photo Company Collection taken in 1914 by an unknown photographer shows a group of Soldiers marching down a dirt road, now the paved Sheridan Avenue, alongside the U.S. Army barracks Bldg. 250. Huntsville Center's Facility Renewal and Repair program recently refurbished the structure.

Facility Division program renovates, upgrades historic *Old Guard* barracks

By William Farrow
Huntsville Center Public Affairs

As new military construction projects are building spaces for the military of tomorrow, some projects are renovating historic Army structures to continue providing facilities for Soldiers serving today.

An example is a U.S. Army Engineering and Support Center, Huntsville Facility Repair and Renewal project that renovated a barracks at Joint Base Myer-Henderson Hall (JBMHH), located adjacent to Arlington National Cemetery, Virginia.

The project refurbished an outdated, historic barracks (Building 250) providing members of the 3rd U.S. Infantry Regiment, traditionally known as "The Old Guard" access to a facility providing 13,000 square feet of living quarters to Soldiers and a 6,700 square feet of basement area repurposed for administrative and mission support functions.

The Old Guard is the Army's official

ceremonial unit and escort to the President, and provides security for Washington, D.C., in time of national emergency or civil disturbance.

One of the oldest Army installations, the mission of Joint Base Myer-Henderson Hall also known as America's Post, formerly known as Fort Myer, is to support the U.S. Army Military District of Washington (MDW) and the Joint Task Force-National Capital Region.

Constructed in 1908, Building 250 is one of the oldest structures still standing on the installation. Razing the building wasn't an option as the barracks was listed on a National Historic Landmark in 1972 and is a building contributing to the Fort Myer Historic District.

However, JBMHH Directorate of Public Works noted the building was in very poor condition and continuing to deteriorate and the decision was made to turn to Huntsville Center's FRR program as it offers fast-track, efficient

methods for design and execution of all types of facility repairs, renovations and minor construction through its Multiple Award Task Order Contract (MATOC).

The MATOC provides a Design-Build vehicle for quick response to facility repair, renovation, conversion, alteration, additions, minor MILCON construction, facility subsystem equipment procurement/ installation and facility commissioning, re-commissioning at Government sites worldwide.

When renovating a federal building listed on the National Historic Register, significant modifications must be made with careful consideration to preserve the building's historic character, often requiring consultation with the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) and adhering to the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties, which prioritize

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Missile Defense Mandatory Center of Expertise (MCX) announces upcoming contract, sets synopsis conference

News Release

Huntsville Center Public Affairs

Huntsville Center's Missile Defense Mandatory Center of Expertise (MCX) announces an Industry Day/Synopsis Review conference for the upcoming solicitation of its \$400 million Architect and Engineer (AE) Indefinite Delivery Contract (IDC).

The new AE IDC is designed to promote industry competition to deliver cutting edge solutions to critical national defense programs by eliminating Cost Plus Fixed Fee (CPFF) as a task order type which removes the requirement for the offeror to provide a Cost Accounting Standards Disclosure Statement at the time of proposal.

The addition of a yearly on-ramp opportunity allows initially unsuccessful offerors the ability to learn from their de-briefs and resubmit their proposal on a yearly basis to reduce risk to the offeror.

Missile Defense specific experience is not required if offeror's demonstrated experience meets each of the required competencies for Mission Critical and Essential Weapon System facilities and infrastructure. The conference is set for 1 – 3 p.m., Feb. 19 at Huntsville Center.

Huntsville Center's Missile Defense MCX provides worldwide technical expertise to deliver the highest quality Mission Critical and Mission Essential Weapon System facilities and infrastructure for the Department of Defense and other federal agencies and foreign governments, in



Courtesy photo

Missile Defense Agency's Flight Test Ground-Based Interceptor 15 mission at Kwajalein Atoll. Huntsville Center's Missile Defense Mandatory Center of Expertise (MCX) has set Feb19 for a conference for a synopsis review for solicitation for a \$400 million contract.

partnership with other U.S. Army Corps of Engineers commands.

BARRACKS

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preserving original materials and features while allowing for necessary functional updates.

Joseph Abrego, FRR project manager, said the building's historical significance added an additional layer to the design review.

"The proposed design required approval from the State Historic Preservation Office to ensure the architectural elements maintained the original aesthetic, which included repair and replacement of windows and the prominent white columns on the front façade," Abrego said.

"It (coordination) can be a headache, but we were fortunate it went smoothly

and rather quickly."

The \$7.6 million contract covered the refinishing of interior and exterior architectural features and building systems for sustainability. Abrego said several building systems were inoperable and roof leaks existed which were degrading the structure.

Abrego said the renovation included mold remediation, roof repairs, HVAC repair, and general repair of architectural elements and incidental items as required.

"The project objective was the sustainment of the facility, bringing it up to a standard where habitation was possible for Soldiers assigned to the Old Guard," Abrego said.

"Our goal was to restore functionality and safety to the historic building, while improving the aesthetic for the Soldiers who called B250 home."

Richard LaFreniere, JBMHH Directorate of Public Works, said the work done to upgrade and preserve the building helps maintain a unique sense of place within the JBMHH community.

"Huntsville Center successfully completed the renovation of this historic facility in accordance with historic preservation requirements," LaFreniere said.



Photos by William Farrow

Wes Johnson, Huntsville Center Medical Division chief, addresses attendees at the Defense Health Agency Summit at the Center Dec. 13. Supporting DHA facilities falls on the shoulders of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and the summit allows attendees to listen and learn from each other to ensure military hospitals and clinics worldwide provide the support required to care for the joint force.

Summits support Defense Health Agency, ensure military medical readiness

By William Farrow
Huntsville Center Public Affairs

There are more than 45 military hospitals and inpatient facilities, 572 military ambulatory care and occupational health facilities and 115 dental clinics in the U.S. and around the world providing healthcare to millions of Soldiers, Sailors, Airmen and Marines, Guardians, retirees and dependents. These medical facilities are the core of the Military Health System (MHS).

The responsibility of managing those military hospitals and clinics worldwide falls to the Defense Health Agency (DHA). Supporting DHA facilities falls on the shoulders of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE).

During a bi-annual DHA Summit Dec. 10-13 at the Huntsville Center, more than 100 representatives from DHA, and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers gathered to listen and learn from each other to ensure military

hospitals and clinics worldwide provide the support required to care for the joint force.

The U.S. Army Engineering and Support Center, Huntsville (Huntsville Center), Little Rock District, and Mobile District make up the Medical Support Teams (MST) executing work on behalf of USACE in support of the DHA and their requirements for Repair/Renewal Renovation support, Operations and Maintenance Support, Initial Outfitting & Transition Support, Furniture/Artwork Support, and Contractor Manpower Support.

Wes Johnson, Medical Division chief, said it is always amazing what can be resolved within a three day time period when all stakeholders are sitting around the table in person and can discuss any issues or concerns affecting the overall mission. “The MST/DHA summits are there for leadership from the MSTs, USACE, and DHA Facilities Engineering to get together twice a year to plan for that fiscal year’s execution requirements and discuss current

execution needs and lessons learned,” Johnson said.

“We go over new systems being developed to support those execution requirements as well as work on standardizing the level of support USACE provides to DHA.”

Roy Hirschak, DHA Facilities Operations Branch chief, said from his perspective benefits of the summits allow collaboration between the MSTs and DHA Facilities Enterprise staff to find solutions for maintenance, operations, construction, surveys, assessment, design, initial outfitting, and other specialized healthcare and medical research support.

“By partnering with our MSTs and discussing DHA challenges collectively, we develop more collaborative, and better solutions. The open dialogue creates better outcomes enabling DHA to meet healthcare requirements worldwide,” Hirschak said.

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Center hosts first M2S2 conference in more than a decade

By Lillian Putnam

Huntsville Center Public Affairs

For the first time in 13 years, Huntsville Center's Environmental and Munitions Mandatory Center of Expertise, EM CX, organized and hosted the Military Munitions Support Services conference, Dec. 10-12 in the Bob Jones Auditorium, Redstone Arsenal.

The event brought together professionals from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Department of Defense, federal agencies, state regulators and private contractors to address military munitions response and environmental efforts. The conference began with discussions led by key leaders in the munitions support services field including Brian Jordan, Office of the Assistant Secretary of Defense munitions program manager, Gunarti Coghlan, Headquarters U.S. Army Corps of Engineers DOD Environmental Programs branch chief, Nicole Toth, Headquarters USACE M2S2 action officer and Michelle Lordemann, Huntsville Center EMCX director.

The presentations provided critical updates and outlined initiatives aimed at improving safety, efficiency and collaboration across military munitions response activities.

"Our primary objective under M2S2 is to provide safe, quality and consistent military munitions support," Toth said. "So, regardless of the stakeholder, their geographic location or the scope of the job, we are working hard to drive consistency in the level of support our military munitions design centers provide to address the needs of our customers."

Throughout the three-day conference, attendees explored a wide range of topics and initiatives related to munitions response cleanup. Presenters shared lessons learned, while designating time for questions and answers, creating a collaborative environment for advancing technical expertise.

"This is currently one of the few events that provides an opportunity for collaboration, which is essential for ensuring consistent and efficient execution of our mission," Lordemann said.

"By working with DOD, federal land managers, regulators and contractors, we can better uphold the highest standards of safety and environmental stewardship."

Discussions focused on emerging trends, technological advancements and ways to improve coordination between federal and state regulators, land managers and contractors.

With an array of experts in attendance, the conference underscored the importance of interdisciplinary collaboration



Photo by Lillian Putnam

Michelle Lordemann, Huntsville Center EMCX director, addresses participants of the Military Munitions Support Services conference at Redstone Arsenal in December.

in tackling complex challenges within the field. Conference participant and USACE South Atlantic Division Formerly Used Defense Sites program manager, Andrew Rebman, emphasized the benefit of alignment between policy and practice, stating, "A conference like this helps us gain a better understanding of all the inner-workings throughout the programs, while giving us the opportunity to hear senior leaders' perspectives on policies."

Military Munitions Support Services, M2S2, encompasses the full spectrum of work to address unexploded ordnance, discarded military munitions, munitions constituents and chemical warfare material.

These activities span a variety of initiatives, including the Military Munitions Response Program, MMRP, operational range sustainment and support for construction projects. Safety remains a priority in all M2S2 efforts, which involve addressing military munitions across various programs and project activities.

Through the M2S2 Community of Practice, USACE maintains a highly specialized workforce dedicated to managing and mitigating the unique challenges posed by military munitions in the environment.

Safely fit

Col. Sebastien Joly, Huntsville Center commander, participated in an employee tour of the Center's fitness center Jan. 21. Huntsville Center Safety office sponsored the tour to allow employees an opportunity to familiarize themselves with the fitness equipment and receive encouragement and information on physical workout opportunities in a safe environment.



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He said everyone involved knows and understands the importance of DHA's medical mission worldwide.

"All of us come to work each day to support our military service members, their families, and our beneficiaries," Hirschak said.

"Our mission is a noble one that directly supports our medical providers that provide the best care in the world. Our collective experiences allow us to find the best solution which enhances DoD healthcare operations with minimal impact. If we stop healthcare, our beneficiaries must rely on the private sector system, delayed medical care, and mission readiness is impacted."

There are plenty of challenges in the healthcare sector from rising cost of equipment, pharmaceutical and staffing.

Balancing the clinical cost and lost care due to construction projects is a major concern.

However, Hirschak said one successful solution is the use of "swing space" when an existing medical facility is undergoing renovations.

"Our MSTs have developed clinical modular facilities within the project scope that allow the clinical staff to continue healthcare in the swing space

while the construction team can more efficiently work in an unoccupied space," Hirschak said.

"We use a similar process with our renovations of sterile processing department that cleans and disinfect surgical equipment. In this case, the contracts include rental trailers with sterile equipment allow for sterilization services while the space is under renovation."

Another innovative feature, Hirschak said, is with USACE contracts used for the emergency contingencies clause which allows for rapid modification to support natural disasters.

When Typhoon Mawar hit Guam in 2023, DHA utilized Andersen Air Force Base's clinic contract for repairs and returned to healthcare services in less than a week after the storm hit.

"DHA cannot provide care without quality, safe, and purpose-built healthcare space to provide it in," Hirschak said.

"Our medical facilities are critical to allow the medical mission to occur. By ensuring our facilities are safe, reliable, and comply with Joint Commission, we ensure we are providing the best physical environment to provide healthcare. The building must have

the correct temperature, air flows, pressurizations, and other services to allow our providers to take care of our patients.

Hirschak said the support USACE provides to DHA improves the quality of life not only of service members and their families, but also healthcare providers working in the facilities.

"There are studies that correlated the patient experience with the quality of care they receive and the building is critical component in the provision of healthcare," he said.

"The building in healthcare is the 'weapons systems' for a healthcare provider. We want to provide them with the best facilities to take care of the world's most deserving patients.

Hirschak said the challenge DHA has is its aging infrastructure, and DHA must be ready to respond to assist military treatment facilities and medical leadership.

"Every day is a new challenge managing over 84 million square feet of building across the globe," Hirschak said.

"The entire team, which includes USACE, and MST teams have a challenging and critically important set of responsibilities."



CYBERSECURITY

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support to the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers' Military Programs Enterprise on a cost-reimbursable basis.

"We are working closely with the Center's Cybersecurity Center of Expertise to provide cradle to grave management of cybersecurity requirements using USACE Industrial Control Systems (ICS) inventory methodology to conduct physical and logical inventories of OT equipment and systems," Freeman said.

"The cybersecurity inventory data is used by our customers to maintain physical security and continuous monitoring of equipment on the network for cybersecurity and Information Assurance (IA) compliance."

In addition, Freeman said the cybersecurity inventory data is ultimately used for the future attainment of an Authority to Operate (ATO), for new or existing control systems.

In the past, cybersecurity automation

and industrial control systems (ICS) – like HVAC, utility monitoring, fire, and natural gas control systems – have been physically isolated systems that only communicated locally, such as within a building.

Currently, those systems are more frequently being integrated into installation networks so data can be remotely monitored, aggregated, and analyzed at higher levels.

This increases the vulnerability and cyber security risks of not only the individual systems, but also the entire network.

"These Cyber Inventory Projects are the first step in a phased approach to help these States and sites achieve cybersecurity compliance in accordance with current DoD Cybersecurity requirements," Freeman said.

Additionally, Freeman said the cybersecurity program manages and implements Facility Related Control Systems (FRCS) inventories for facilities

worldwide to assist customers in identifying and managing their current control systems and use the data in the RMF process and establish accreditation boundaries.

"Our project delivery team (PDT) manages all aspects of FRCS logical and physical cybersecurity inventories to include program and project management, contracting, legal, engineering, submittal reviews, technical evaluations, assessments, and safety compliance services support," Freeman said.

He said reach-back support from Huntsville Center's Cybersecurity, Electronic Security System (ESS), and the Utility Monitoring and Control System (UMCS) MCXs ensure cybersecurity changes won't negatively affect the operability of existing or planned OT systems.

AUBURN

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USACE engineers had to learn construction management skills on the job. So, this program was designed to fill the gap by providing participants with practical construction management skills that are applicable to their everyday duties."

The program's impact extends beyond professional development. Graduates leave with a better understanding of the labor, materials, equipment and processes used by contractors, enabling them to improve the design and administration of construction contracts.

This expertise translates into better buildings, military bases and support facilities—directly benefiting soldiers and the broader mission of USACE.

"This work helps soldiers by ensuring they have the places, tools and support they need to do their jobs safely and well. Graduates play a vital role in building stronger communities and ensuring the warfighter is better prepared for the future," Mulford explained.

Beyond individual growth, the program aligns with USACE's strategic goals of enhancing mission-related competencies and fostering innovation in construction technology.

This approach fosters better communication and collaboration with contractors, ultimately leading to more successful project outcomes.

"Because the program is open to contracting officers, project managers, engineers and construction professionals, there is a unique opportunity to have crucial conversations and collaborate outside of the normal workplace," Searle said.

Participants also gain access to Auburn University's robust alumni network and professional connections, offering further opportunities to collaborate with organizations outside USACE.

Bugg explained some of the benefits of establishing the program through Auburn.

"Auburn has one of the oldest construction management schools, with an outstanding faculty with decades of industry experience."

"Those leading this program are dedicated to teaching the next generation to ensure there are proficient construction professionals to continue building and supporting our communities," he said.



Mentoring program is easy New Year’s resolution with encouraging results

By William Farrow
Huntsville Center Public Affairs

As many people ring in the new year thinking about how to reset goals and make lifestyle changes, desire tends to be greater than the capacity to accomplish set goals. People often have trouble envisioning realistic goals and often end up abandoning them not long into the new year.

However, there is a talent development program available to Huntsville Center employees focused on improving individual performance and enhancing career progression and the program may be one of the best New Year’s resolutions an employee can make.

Huntsville Center’s Mentoring Program is an informal platform allowing mentors and mentees to partner for as little or as long as agreed upon. The vision for the program is to enrich professional relationships and encourage both personal and professional growth.

Charmika Merriweather, Huntsville Center mentoring program coordinator, said mentoring is an effective strategy significantly contributing to the career development of employees. She said the program offers a way of building skills towards future career goals.

“Mentoring provides the opportunity for knowledge transfer from more experienced employees, helping mentees grow and develop professionally, build confidence, achieve goals, and create lasting relationships,” Merriweather said.

Mentoring, she said, is also an effective method for helping an individual realize their potential within the context of the organization and the program is collaborative relying on both participants sharing responsibility for the success of the relationship.

Mentors and mentees work together for one year, but the length of each partnership can vary according to the needs and interests of the team and can extend beyond the one year

if desired. If the initial pairing is not a good match, either participant can use a “no fault termination clause” at any time, and for any reason. At the beginning of the program, the mentors and mentees will come up with a plan for the year regarding goals and objectives that they want to achieve, Merriweather said.

“Most often, the relationship proves to be an equally rewarding experience for both the mentor and the mentee, offering the mentee personalized guidance and support, while the mentor strengthens their leadership skills and creates a lasting impact within the life of the mentee and the organization,” she said. Ultimately, the program maximizes the human capital resources available to Huntsville Center and contributes to continued mission success by striving to remove barriers to career progression within the organization, Merriweather said.

“Although there is no concrete schedule set for the participants, it is recommended they meet at least once a month and as many times their schedules allow.” Laura Beth Quick, Huntsville Center human capital chief, said she recognizes the value mentoring can have on the Center’s talent development efforts.

Quick oversees the mentoring program and has been a mentor for eight years. “Our program’s goal is to impact every employee, providing mentoring opportunities to the workforce through a collaborative, learning environment,” Quick said.

“Mentoring is a catalyst for talent development and it goes beyond pointing someone in the right direction. It guides an individual’s growth through nurturing and supportive interaction that focus on personal experiences and real-world circumstances.”

Employees wanting to be a part of the Center’s Mentoring Program, or learn more about the program, visit <https://team.usace.army.mil/sites/HNC/PDT/Mentoring/default>.



Recognition Corner: January Employee of the Month



Photo by Steve Lamas

Col. Sebastien Joly, Huntsville Center commander, presents Mark Nugent, Access Control Point project manager, with January’s employee of the month recognition. Nugent led his project development team during installation of active vehicle barriers at Fort Carson, Colorado. Fort Carson Department of Public Works tasked Huntsville Center with a design build construction project to install a new concrete pad on Essayons Road to realign a mission essential tank trail to cross the road inside the protected perimeter created by the new AVB install. Nugent was instrumental in utilizing the PDT to derive an out-of-the-box solution that met security, training and logistics requirements for Fort Carson.



Photo by Lillian Putnam

Resourceful recruiting

Brian Hamilton, left, Huntsville Center Site Development Branch chief, and Michael Duffy, Huntsville Center Supervisory Contract specialist, speak with attendees of the University of Alabama in Huntsville Career Fair, Jan. 29.

Safety Corner:

TORNADO WARNING

A tornado is happening or imminent. Take shelter immediately.

TORNADO WATCH

A tornado is possible.

- Stay tuned to local radio/TV for info.
- Know where you'll shelter if you have to.

PHOTO CREDIT: OAR/ERL/NATIONAL SEVERE STORMS LABORATORY (NSSL)

FEMA | NATIONAL WEATHER SERVICE

Severe weather preparedness includes sales tax holiday

By Alicia Hodge
Huntsville Center Safety Office

Alabama is well-acquainted with severe weather, particularly tornadoes, which can strike at any time of the day, throughout the year.

In 2023 alone, Alabama witnessed 70 tornadoes. Tragically, these severe weather events resulted in the loss of 9 lives and injuries to over 29 individuals. This highlights the devastating impact tornadoes can cause, emphasizing the need for ongoing alertness and readiness.

However, the state experiences two main severe weather periods. The primary season spans from March to May during spring, while the secondary season occurs from early November to mid-December.

The severity of these seasons varies annually, emphasizing

the need for year-round preparedness.

To support preparedness efforts, Alabama will host a Sales Tax Holiday from February 21-23. During this three-day period, shoppers may purchase essential preparedness items free of state sales tax.

Items eligible for the tax holiday to include: batteries (AAA, AA, C, D, 6-volt, 9-volt); portable radios and weather radios; flashlights and lanterns; tarpaulins and plastic sheeting; first aid kits and fire extinguishers and portable generators (up to \$1,000). For a complete list and more information, visit https://www.weather.gov/bmx/outreach_swaw

This tax-free weekend is an excellent opportunity to gather essential supplies and complete your emergency kits.

By taking advantage of this, you and your family will be better equipped to handle severe weather and stay safe during potential disasters.



Ethics Corner:

Guidance on working second job while employed by the federal government

Clay Weisenberger

Huntsville Center Office of Counsel

To offset rising prices, many federal workers look to have second jobs or “side hustles” to fill in the gaps.

This is perfectly acceptable under the right circumstances. Federal employees may have outside part-time employment or business interests, provided that there is no conflict with the employee’s schedule or job duties.

That employment can only occur outside normal duty hours and/or on weekends. There are special considerations that must be evaluated, however, when the outside employer or business interest is a Government contractor.

Here a few guidelines for navigating these waters:

- A federal employee may not represent a contractor on matters involving the Government. The employee may work for a contractor on federal contracts in a non-representational, behind the scenes role, but only if there is no conflict of interest.
- An employee may not participate personally and substantially in any contract or other matter in which the worker’s outside employer has a financial interest. In some

cases, the necessary recusal would impair the employee’s ability to do their job or the agency’s ability to accomplish its mission. In such cases, the agency may prohibit the outside employment. Even if any employee does not have official duties involving a particular agency contractor, there may be some limitations on outside activities.

■ Employees may not engage in outside activities that create the appearance that they are using their public office for private gain.

■ For those who own or manage their own businesses, the FAR prohibits a contracting officer from knowingly awarding a contract to a Government employee or business concern or other organization owned or substantially owned or controlled by one or more Government employees. That means that substantial ownership or control by a federal employee in a company disqualifies that company from receiving a federal contract.

One final thing to know is that Government employees need written approval from their supervisor prior to engaging in outside employment.

This approval is required for any non-Federal employment, business relationship, or activity that involves providing personal services, whether as an employee, consultant, or independent contractor.

If you plan to work for a federal contractor, or if the outside position could create a conflict of interest with your Government duties, you must also request approval from your ethics counselor before engaging in outside employment.

Your ethics counselor will provide a legal memorandum outlining potential conflicts of interest and restrictions related to your interactions with the contractor.

For those of you who are OGE 450 filers, don’t forget to report any outside employment or business arrangements on your financial disclosure statement.

Outside employment can be a great way for federal employees to supplement their income or pursue a passion, but it is essential to understand the rules and regulations to avoid conflicts of interest and ensure compliance with federal laws.

If you have any questions regarding employment outside of the federal government as a government employee, feel free to contact me at 256-895-1140.

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.

FY2024 40+ Programs

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

\$ 2.6B

“HNC Delivers Innovation”

In fiscal 2024, Huntsville Center awarded contract actions totaling more than **\$2.6 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