



Photo by Shawn Davis

U.S. Army Corps of Engineers senior leaders, California state agency partners and contractors meet Feb. 24 to observe the New River inflow heading toward the Salton Sea Species Conservation Habitat. The inflow waters are aerated to encourage nutrient breakdown and mitigate harmful algal blooms before it flows into the wetlands.

Salton Sea feasibility study progress takes center stage during ‘Tier 1’ meeting, tour

BY STEPHEN BAACK
LOS ANGELES DISTRICT PUBLIC AFFAIRS

IMPERIAL COUNTY, Calif. — Senior leaders and project delivery team members with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers joined key partners for a meeting and site tour of the Salton Sea Feb. 22-23 in Imperial County.

The interagency teams met to discuss updates on the Imperial Streams and Salton Sea Aquatic Ecosystem Restoration Feasibility Study and provide leaders with a deeper familiarity of the issues surrounding the Salton Sea.

USACE Los Angeles District and its partners — the California Department of Water

Resources and Salton Sea Authority — signed a cost-share agreement in December 2022 for the feasibility study, aimed at identifying potential ecosystem, flood-risk management or other land- and water-resource projects and actions for the long-term restoration of the sea.

The purpose of the study is to evaluate solutions to address the degradation of the sea and its tributaries, as well as ecological and public health concerns.

“This Tier 1 meeting brings together our most senior leaders on the oversight committee,” said Lindsay Floyd, water resources planner with USACE’s Sacramento District. “It gives us a

chance to talk about study progress, challenges, issues and ways to resolve problems in a timely manner. It’s also a good opportunity to communicate study successes with senior leaders.”

Joining the study team for the meeting and tour were Tambour Eller, programs director, and Josephine Axt, chief of planning, both with USACE’s South Pacific Division, along with Col. Andrew Baker, LA District commander, and Andrew Goodall, LA District acting deputy district engineer.

The USACE group was joined by representa-

[‘SALTON SEA’ continued on Page 4](#)

Celebrating Engineers Week

ENGINEERS WEEK



“Working for the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers provides a unique opportunity to collaborate with and learn from some of the most experienced professionals in the industry. It is a privilege to contribute my own experience to our vital public service missions and help mentor the next generation of engineers. I am honored to be part of a world-class organization dedicated to solving the nation's toughest engineering challenges.”

JEFFREY GERACI

Engineering Geologist
Los Angeles District



The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Los Angeles District celebrated National Engineers Week, Feb. 22-28, by highlighting some of our LA District engineers, who are committed to strengthening our communities and inspiring our future generations. See more engineer profiles on [Page 23](#).

'Recognize, Retreat, Report'



Photo by Harry Hendler

Members of the San Diego Development Services Department pause for a group photo during a briefing on the Formerly Used Defense Sites, or FUDS, program. Harry Hendler, chief of the Los Angeles District's Environmental Section, briefed city employees on the overall program and how to work with developers and landowners who may build on FUDS properties.

Official publication of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Los Angeles District

Spring 2026
Volume 49, Issue 1

District Commander:
Col. Andrew Baker

Public Affairs Chief:
Dena M. O'Dell

Editor: Stephen Baack

Contributing Editors:
Robert DeDeaux, Dan Collins,
Richard Rivera, Shawn Davis

Tel: 213-509-4193

The NewsCastle is published quarterly under the provisions of AR 360-1 for the employees and extended engineer family of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Los Angeles District.

Views and opinions expressed herein are not necessarily those of the district or of the Department of War.

Address mail to the Los Angeles District Public Affairs Office
ATTN: NewsCastle Editor
Room 1105, 915 Wilshire Blvd.
Los Angeles, CA 90017-2325

Email the Public Affairs Office at:
publicaffairs.SPL@usace.army.mil



SAAPM: A call to action for every member of our team

Teammates,

This April, we observe Sexual Assault Awareness and Prevention Month, or SAAPM. The Army's 2026 theme, "Step Forward. Prevent. Report. Advocate," is not just a slogan; it is a direct call to action for every one of us. It is a reminder



BRIG. GEN. JOHN LLOYD
SPD COMMANDER

that our strength is built on a foundation of trust, dignity and respect. There is no place for sexual assault or harassment in our ranks.

As members of the South Pacific Division, our mission readiness is directly tied to the well-being of our people. A culture of prevention is not a passive state; it is an active, daily commitment. It requires each of us to have the courage to intervene, the compassion to support survivors and the integrity to hold ourselves and others accountable. My commitment is to foster a command climate where every Soldier, Department of the Army civilian and family member feels safe, valued and empowered to reach their full potential.

I personally ask each of you to engage in this year's SAAPM events. These are not simply calendar events; they are opportunities to reinforce our values, stand in solidarity with survivors and strengthen our collective resolve to eliminate these corrosive behaviors from our workforce.

Below are the key opportunities for you to participate across the region:

From April 1-4, participating districts will host official kickoff events to mark the start of the SAAPM, with a proclamation.

Teal Tuesdays are every Tuesday in April. All districts will participate. Wear teal to show your support for survivors of sexual assault. Share individual or group photos for publication on our division intranet.

Denim Day is scheduled for April 29 for SPD, but your district may differ. Wear jeans to stand against victim-blaming and in solidarity with survivors of sexual violence. Send photos to the SARC at denise.d.guidry@usace.army.mil and share why you are participating.

Your engagement matters. Thank you for all you do to make the South Pacific Division a safe and respectful place to work. Your dedication is what makes us strong.

Sincerely,

Brig. Gen. John Lloyd
Commanding General, South Pacific Division

5 Things to Know About the SHARP Program

The Sexual Harassment/Assault Response and Prevention program published the first stand-alone Army SHARP regulation, AR 600-52, in 2025. The regulation professionalizes the SHARP workforce with implementation of full-time, installation-based program staff, expert support for Commanders, enhanced victim support, expanded reporting options for Army Civilians and enhanced primary prevention information. Additionally, the new centralized SHARP program management office ensures better oversight of SHARP professionals, strengthening victim advocacy. These changes are key for reducing barriers for support and improving the Army's culture of respect.

- 1 An installation-based SHARP program.**
SHARP program personnel are aligned to local installation-level SHARP program offices for supervision instead of under a unit's chain of command. This creates an independent, dedicated and consistent structure for oversight and policy application, while strengthening accountability. Sexual Assault Response Coordinators and Victim Advocates remain embedded with brigades to maintain on-the-ground support.
- 2 The role of Commanders.**
Commanders maintain a critical role in executing the SHARP program and preventing sexual assault and sexual harassment in their units. Commanders are responsible for creating healthy unit climates with engaged leaders who encourage prevention, bystander interventions and victim support. The Commander's role is strengthened with the assistance of a full-time, professional primary prevention workforce at their installation.
- 3 Expanded full-time staff.**
The Army has transitioned to a fully dedicated SHARP workforce by eliminating most collateral-duty SARC and VA positions. With limited exceptions for remote and deployed locations lacking established sexual assault resources, full-time SHARP professionals are now assigned across installations to ensure consistent, specialized and continuous support for victims.
- 4 "No Wrong Door" approach.**
Everyone seeking help will be met with understanding and with immediate assistance that best fits their needs. Regardless of which office they go to, they will be provided a warm handoff to the appropriate agency. This approach creates a supportive environment where victims are never told "You are at the wrong office" or are left to navigate the system alone.
- 5 Expanded reporting options and advocacy services.**
Army Civilians have expanded options to report assault to their local SARC or VA using the Restricted Reporting option. This allows them to obtain victim support and advocacy services from the military without notification to law enforcement or their immediate chain of command.



The theme "Step Forward. Prevent. Report. Advocate," calls on every member of the Army — Soldiers, leaders, Army civilians and family members — to take deliberate action to prevent and respond to sexual violence. We all play a role in reinforcing a culture of respect that promotes healthy relationships, prioritizes consent and honors personal boundaries. We must intervene safely and effectively when we observe harmful behaviors and ensure survivors receive compassionate, informed support.

[‘SALTON SEA’ continued from Page 1](#)

tives from both the Salton Sea Authority and the California Natural Resources Agency, which also includes the Department of Water Resources and the California Department of Fish and Wildlife.

THE CHALLENGE

“I think this might be the only study like this in the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers’ portfolio,” Floyd said. “It’s a really interesting landscape, and it’s just so different than what the Corps is used to working on.”

The Salton Sea is California’s largest lake by area, but it is shallow and receding due to evaporation and recent water transfers. Its main source of inflow is agricultural runoff, which is not enough to sustain its footprint. The lake is classified as an endorheic, or terminal, lake, meaning it has no outlet. As the water recedes, the lake’s salinity only increases while the exposed playa emits dust that contains potentially hazardous pollutants.

“We’re looking to improve the quality, quantity and complexity of the aquatic habitat at the Salton Sea and its tributaries, and we’re looking for opportunities to improve human health and reduce the amount of emissive seabed that is becoming exposed as the Salton Sea recedes,” Floyd said.

A key part of the study is addressing the declining aquatic habitat, including an estimated 400 species of birds that rely on the lake. In the last 30 years alone, the lake has shrunk by more than 60 square miles.

“It’s no longer habitable for most fish species, and it’s an important stopover for birds along the Pacific flyway,” Floyd said. “Migrating birds use this as an important stopover for resting, feeding and nesting. And, it’s an important regional resource because we’ve developed a lot of area that used to be historic wetlands.”

Taking action on the Salton Sea goes beyond ecological and public health concerns, Eller said, also indicating that national security and economic factors are intertwined.

“The Salton Sea has significant national importance,” she said. “From a national security perspective, the lithium resources here are among the most significant known domestic opportunities in the country. When developed responsibly, it could help support America’s energy and manufacturing future.”

The effort also goes beyond the environment to focus on people and the communities around the sea, Eller added, which can “strengthen the regional economy — from agriculture to small businesses — and create opportunities tied to potential affordable housing, workforce development and long-term growth across California.”

USACE is addressing all of this without los-

ing sight of disaster-risk mitigation, she said, adding that “preparing the area to withstand extreme weather events is essential to protecting lives, infrastructure and the investments being made in this region.”

EVALUATING SOLUTIONS

Numerous proposals have been on the table for years as part of restoration efforts. They include individual and combinations of proposals for water pumping, an updated lake perimeter, a divided sea concept, water recycling, dust suppression, water optimization and others.

Floyd said nearly all the proposals, or alternatives, are drawn from the Salton Sea Management Program’s long-range planning effort. The project delivery team members, federal sponsors, participating agencies and senior leaders are evaluating 12 alternatives from the long-range plan, along with another USACE-developed proposal and a “no action” alternative.

“Various agencies at the federal level, state level and universities have been studying the Salton Sea for decades, and there have been lots of proposals to restore it,” Floyd said. “But the Army Corps is unique in that we have this mechanism to recommend projects for construction: the feasibility study process, which ultimately ends in a recommendation for construction. We are looking at everything that’s been done over the past few decades and determining if any of those restoration proposals are feasible, cost effective and are in the federal interest.”

Floyd said the decision-making process is methodical and requires careful consideration of a range of criteria, including four that are mandatory for evaluation and screening: effectiveness, completeness, efficiency and acceptability

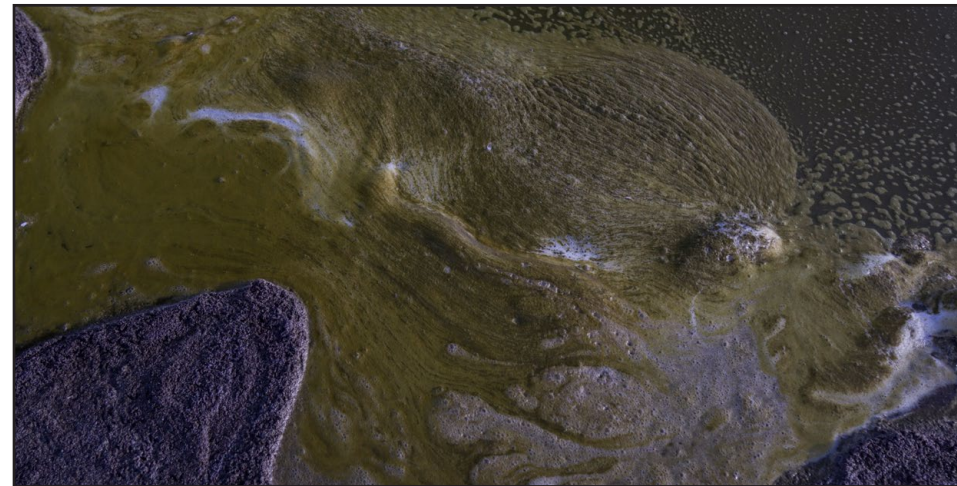


Photo by Shawn Davis

Polluted saline water washes along the shore of Bombay Beach Feb. 23 in the Salton Sea. The hypersaline waters of the lake are receding, exposing contaminated playa, which contributes to harmful dust storms and furthers the salinity of the body of water currently undergoing a mega study in collaboration with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and California state partner agencies to determine the best strategy to restore the water in the interests of the local community.

from technical, financial and legal standpoints.

“In addition to those four mandatory criteria, we also looked at the time to realize ecological benefits,” Floyd said. “We looked at mitigation requirements, and we’re looking at operation and maintenance requirements.”

From among these alternatives, study participants will soon determine a recommended plan that is supported by USACE leadership, nonfederal sponsors and the community.

Corrie Stetzel, plan formulation regional technical specialist with USACE’s Sacramento District, said she is happy to see the high level of engagement from community members and groups.

“They’ve organized very well, and there are lots of nonprofit organizations dedicated to restoring and understanding the sea,” she said. “They’re collecting scientific data, like citizen scientists. I think it’s awesome they have a voice in this and are directly saying what they want to see happen.”

The study team is working with subject-matter experts in the fields of hydrology, biology, agriculture and water and land use policy to develop a hydrologic and hydraulic model of the Salton Sea to help them make a risk-informed decision in selecting the recommended plan.

Eller said it was important for her and fellow senior leaders to be on the ground together to see the study area in person, especially during such a dynamic time in the study process.

“When you see it firsthand, it changes the conversation,” Eller said. “It helps us bring together the strengths of partners like the California Department of Water Resources, the Salton Sea Authority and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and strengthen how we move these efforts forward together.”



Photo by Robert DeDeaux

Kinya “Roger” Minami, a procurement analyst with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Los Angeles District, poses for a photo following his opening address at the Business Opportunities Open House March 18 at the Midtown Hilton Garden Inn in Phoenix. Small businesses represented more than 90 percent of the participants.

District hosts Business Opportunities Open House

BY ROBERT DEDEAUX
LOS ANGELES DISTRICT PUBLIC AFFAIRS

PHOENIX – The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Los Angeles District hosted the spring Business Opportunities Open House March 18 at the Midtown Hilton Garden Inn in Phoenix.

The annual Business Opportunities Open House, or BOOH, focuses on facilitating partnerships with businesses and highlighting contract opportunities.

“Today’s event is going great,” said Venessa Gleich, the American Indian Chamber Education Fund APEX Accelerator program manager. “We have a lot of participation from businesses looking for and connecting with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and learning about the projects they have upcoming. There is a lot of networking between business-to-business and business-to-government.”

During the event, more than 350 business owners met with LA District division chiefs, and

program and project managers.

“It was a great opportunity to reconnect with many of our longstanding USACE partners but also a time to meet with new contractors building future partnerships,” said Justin Gay, chief of the LA District’s Construction Management Branch, following the event. “I think attendees took away an appreciation of the magnitude of the USACE mission and desire to partner with industry to deliver on our commitments.”

The BOOH had three distinct goals – to create competitive bids on upcoming projects, support small businesses in the area and build partnerships through open lines of communication with stakeholders.

“This is an opportunity for vendors to meet us and show us their capabilities,” said Kinya “Roger” Minami, a procurement analyst with the LA District. “We are hoping to meet some new companies that bring new capabilities to match with USACE customers.”

Small businesses represented more than 90 percent of the participants. Businesses located as far as Florida and Illinois attended the event.

“I think today’s event was stellar,” said Victoria Mechtly, vice president at GFT Inc., a privately held architecture, engineering and construction firm. “It was a great opportunity for small businesses and large businesses to meet with one another, as well as with the Army Corps of Engineers and gain insight on future opportunities to work with the government.”

The event also was supported by the Arizona Procurement Technical Assistance Center, Society of American Military Engineers and the USACE South Pacific Division.

“This event benefits my company and all of our employees because it gives us a chance to really give back to the military mission,” Mechtly said.

To learn more about the next BOOH, visit www.spl.usace.army.mil/Business-With-Us/Small-Business-Program.



Photo by Shawn Davis

U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Senior Executive Service and South Pacific Division leaders pose with USACE Los Angeles District employees Jan. 27 on Prado Dam in Corona, California.

LA District hosts HQ senior leaders for governance meeting, planning

BY SHAWN DAVIS
LA DISTRICT PUBLIC AFFAIRS

SOUTH EL MONTE, Calif. — Senior leaders with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers gathered in the Los Angeles area the week of Jan. 26 to strategize on the future of USACE.

The week included governance meetings at the Los Angeles District Baseyard in South El Monte and tours of LA District project sites.

In tandem meetings, Senior Executive Staff and leaders met at the Baseyard, while others toured ongoing Los Angeles District projects to get a firsthand look at the work being accomplished at the Whittier Narrows, Sepulveda and Prado dams, as well as the Port of Long Beach and the Santa Ana River Salt Marsh in Newport Beach. The Whittier Narrows and Sepulveda dams are considered unique in USACE's dam portfolio because of their proximity to dense, urban land and that also contain properties that will be used for the 2028 Los

Angeles Summer Olympic Games. Overall, the projects play a crucial role in flood-risk mitigation and water conservation within the Los Angeles County Drainage Area.

"There's more visibility on our high priority projects and, with that, hopefully more support," said Lt. Col. Tim Wu, South Pacific Division deputy commander.

One of the challenges USACE faces this year is managing a leaner workforce dedicated toward its global portfolio of infrastructure projects. For the Los Angeles District, dam modification projects, such as the Whittier Narrows Dam Safety project, are slated to begin construction this year. The project will bolster the dam's structure and prepare it for rare, severe storms. The governance meeting and site tours carried the motif of improving efficiency and expedience on deliverables to build and maintain the infrastructure that keeps communities safe.

"At this level, this is what you do," said Brig. Gen. John P. Lloyd, USACE South Pacific Division commander and division engineer. "You take on tough things, solve problems, provide solutions to the team that is out there on the ground every day trying to deliver a very large program for this division."

Other accomplishments USACE officials hope to maintain are the homeless encampment debris removal missions that took place in the Sepulveda and Whittier Narrows recreational areas. From the Whittier Narrows basin alone, more than 22,000 cubic yards of debris were cleared in collaboration with Los Angeles County. Debris included hazardous materials and other items that created unsafe working conditions for contractors operating on USACE-managed lands. The cleanup began in October 2025 as a result of expedited con-

['GOVERNANCE' continued on Page 7](#)



Photos by Shawn Davis

Col. Andrew Baker, commander of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Los Angeles District, standing, speaks to USACE Senior Executive Service and other USACE leaders Jan. 27 at the the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers' Baseyard in South El Monte, California.

['GOVERNANCE' continued from Page 6](#)

tracting.

Outside of Los Angeles, the LA District is involved in dredging projects across the Southern Californian coastline. The most recent dredging work performed by the district has been in the Channel Islands Harbor in collaboration with municipal partners in Ventura County, restoring more than 1.4 million cubic yards of shoreline around Hueneme Beach for fortification against coastal storms and maintaining safe vessel passage in the area.

The district's next dredging project is anticipated to begin in March at Oceanside Harbor, which will include removing about 400,000 cubic yards of sediment.

To learn more about projects the Los Angeles District is working on, visit www.spl.usace.army.mil.



U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Senior Executive Service and South Pacific Division personnel visit Los Angeles District projects Jan. 27 at the Santa Ana River Salt Marsh in Newport Beach, California.

Fort Irwin: Building readiness

Division commander tours key LA District projects to support warfighters

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Los Angeles District hosted Brig. Gen. John Lloyd, USACE South Pacific Division commander and division engineer, by providing a tour of district projects March 4 at Fort Irwin, California.

Projects included the soon-to-be-completed Simulations Center — a 68,000-square-foot facility devoted toward enhancing operations and training experiences for the warfighter, which broke ground in March 2023.

The Los Angeles District oversees a wide portfolio of military construction projects across Army, Air Force and Navy installations in the Southwest and is proud of our military partnerships in support of expanding warfighter readiness.



Photos by Shawn Davis

Brig. Gen. John Lloyd, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers South Pacific Division commander and division engineer, second from right, visits a barracks project the LA District is working on March 4 at Fort Irwin, California.



LEFT: Brig. Gen. John Lloyd, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers South Pacific Division commander and division engineer, center, tours the soon-to-be-completed Simulations Center with Col. Andrew Baker, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Los Angeles District commander, left, March 4 at Fort Irwin, California.



RIGHT: Brig. Gen. John Lloyd, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers South Pacific Division commander and division engineer, tours the soon-to-be-completed Simulations Center with Los Angeles District employees March 4 at Fort Irwin, California.

Secretary of Army for Civil Works tours Whittier Narrows basin cleanup areas, future LA 2028 Olympics site



Photos by Shawn Davis

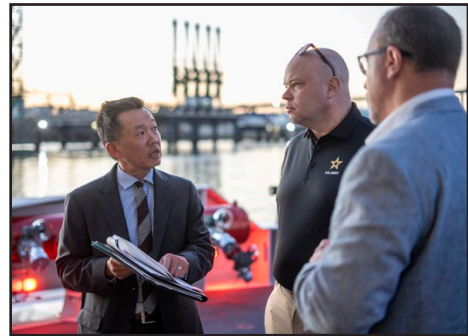
ABOVE: Assistant Secretary of the Army (Civil Works) Adam Telle, left, talks to a reporter about the need for continued partnership and collaboration to keep Whittier Narrows basin cleared of debris and homeless encampments during a visit to the site Jan. 14 in South El Monte, California.



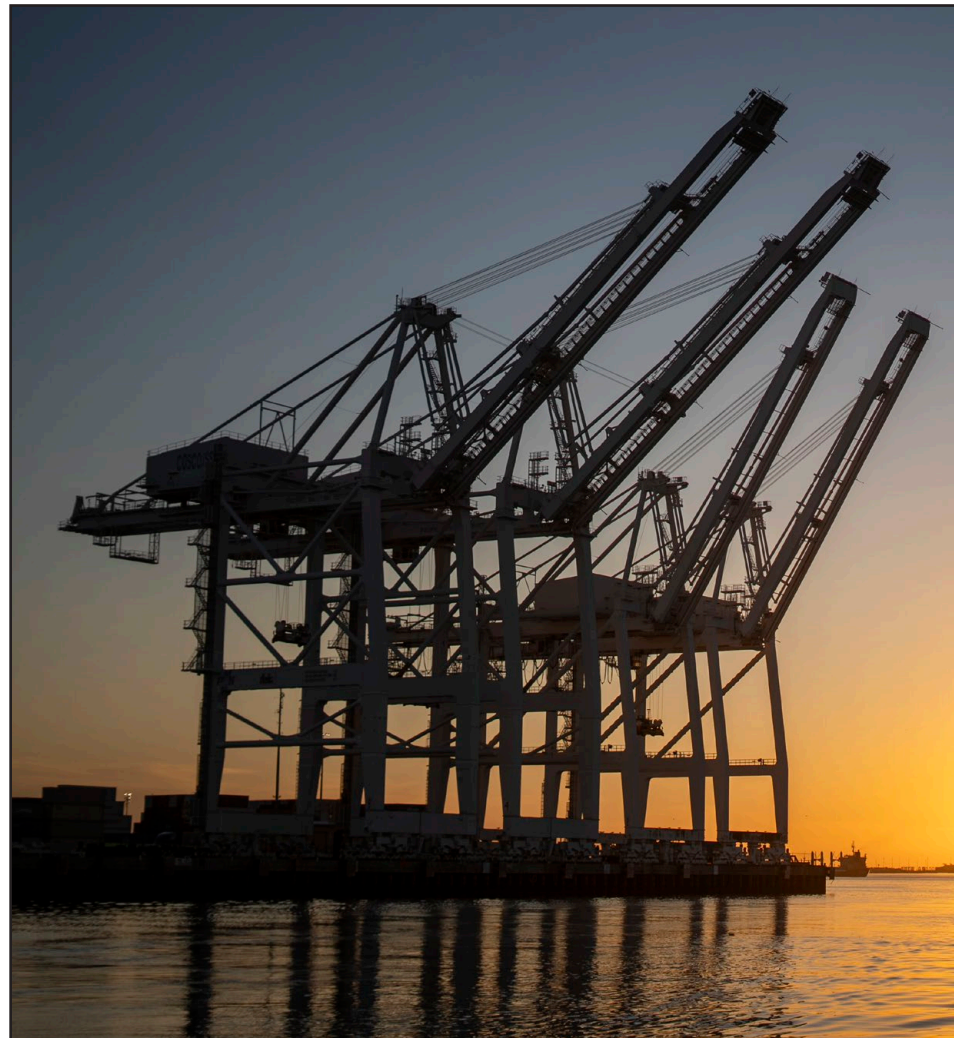
LEFT: Assistant Secretary of the Army (Civil Works) Adam Telle, background right, talks to Jim Mitchell, chairman emeritus of the USA Shooting Board of Directors, left, during a visit for the future site of the LA 2028 Olympics. Also pictured is Col. Andrew Baker, LA District commander, foreground left, and Maj. Gen. Jason Kelly, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers deputy commanding general for Civil and Emergency Operations, right.

Assistant secretary of Army for Civil Works tours Port of Long Beach

Assistant Secretary of the Army (Civil Works) Adam Telle and Maj. Gen. Jason Kelly, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers deputy commanding general for Civil and Emergency Operations, joined teammates with the Los Angeles District to meet with partners at the Port of Long Beach to discuss ongoing work, recent developments and future collaboration at the port, including the Long Beach Deep-Draft Navigation Feasibility Study. The meeting included a boat tour of the port to give leaders a real-time, shared understanding of the topics and projects.



Photos by Stephen Baack



CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT:

Doland Cheung, project manager with the Los Angeles District Programs and Project Management Division, left, discusses the LA District's Long Beach Deep Draft Navigation Study with Adam Telle, assistant secretary of the Army (Civil Works), second from right. Andrew Goodall, acting deputy district engineer for the LA District's Programs and Project Management Division, stands at right.

Adam Telle, assistant secretary of the Army (Civil Works), second from left, joins Maj. Gen. Jason Kelly, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers deputy commanding general for Civil and Emergency Operations, left, to meet Feb. 4 with Port of Long Beach partners to discuss ongoing federal navigation efforts, including the Long Beach Deep Draft Navigation Study and its authorization pathway, at one of the nation's most significant maritime gateways in the U.S.

A picture of the Port of Long Beach can be seen at sunset in this Feb. 4 photo. Assistant Secretary of the Army (Civil Works) Adam Telle visited the port Feb. 4 to meet with representatives about the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Los Angeles District's Long Beach Deep Draft Navigation Study.

Modernizing care for veterans

Top VA official visits San Diego, Long Beach facilities to see how LA District is constructing modern facilities for veteran care



Photos by Stephen Baack

ABOVE: Dr. Zebulon Fox, associate executive director of the Department of Veterans Affairs Office of Facilities Acquisition, meets with LA District leaders and project team members inside the new and now-open Mental Health Outpatient Clinic at the Tibor Rubin VA Medical Center in Long Beach, California, to review progress on this and adjacent medical facility construction projects supporting veteran care. Fox was joined by VA leadership and facilities staff during his visits.

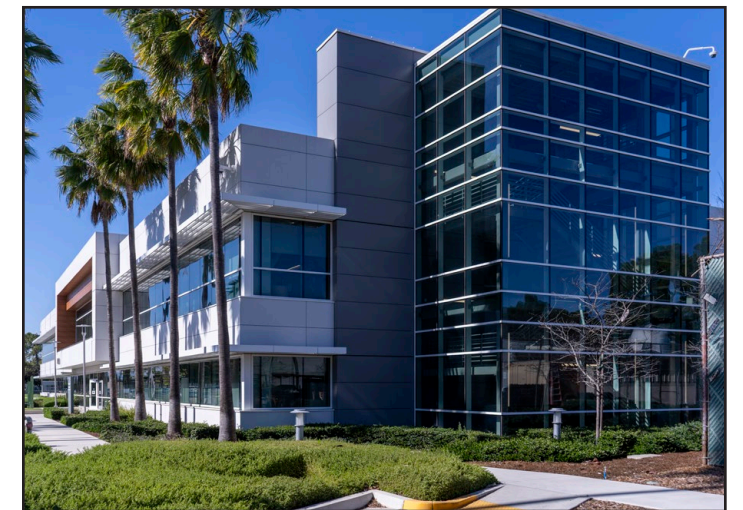
Dr. Zebulon Fox, a key executive from the Department of Veterans Affairs' Office of Facilities Acquisition, visited two major Southern California medical centers Feb. 3-4 to review construction progress with Los Angeles District project teams.

In San Diego, Fox toured the nearly complete Spinal Cord Injury/Community Living Center at the Jennifer Moreno VA Medical Center alongside Col. Andrew Baker, LA District commander, and other project leaders. The new 197,000-square-foot facility is poised to become one of the most advanced spinal cord injury centers in the nationwide VA system.

At the Tibor Rubin VA Medical Center in Long Beach, the focus was on current progress and upcoming milestones for ongoing projects, including a new Community Living Center and parking structure. The visit helps ensure all teams remain aligned on the ultimate goal: delivering safe, modern facilities that support veterans and their families.



LEFT: Dr. Zebulon Fox, associate executive director of the Department of Veterans Affairs Office of Facilities Acquisition, meets with LA District leaders and project team members inside the new and now-open Mental Health Outpatient Clinic at the Tibor Rubin VA Medical Center in Long Beach, California, to review progress on this and adjacent medical facility construction projects supporting veteran care. Fox was joined by VA leadership and facilities staff during his visits. RIGHT: The exterior of the Mental Health Outpatient Clinic is pictured Feb. 4 in Long Beach, California.





Photos by Shawn Davis

Aaron Smith, senior dam safety adviser for the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, speaks with Pico Rivera residents March 24 about community outreach opportunities as part of the Whittier Narrows Dam Safety project at the Pico Rivera Senior Center in Pico Rivera, California.

USACE details dam safety project timeline at Pico Rivera meeting

U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Los Angeles District representatives attended the March 24 Pico Rivera City Council meeting to detail what the community can expect once major construction begins for the Whittier Narrows Dam Safety project until the anticipated completion in 2033.

Whittier Narrows Dam is undergoing a modification to improve its resilience and structural integrity in the event of a severe, unprecedented storm as it continues to perform its function of slowing the fast-flowing San Gabriel and Rio Hondo rivers to mitigate flood risk in downstream Los Angeles Basin communities. To learn more, visit <https://windsafety-project.sec.usace.army.mil>.



ABOVE: Aaron Smith, senior dam safety adviser for the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, second from right, speaks with Pico Rivera mayor pro tem Monica Sanchez and residents March 24 about community outreach opportunities as part of the Whittier Narrows Dam Safety project at the Pico Rivera Senior Center in Pico Rivera, California.



LEFT: Aaron Smith, senior dam safety adviser for the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, standing left, speaks with Pico Rivera residents March 24 about community outreach opportunities as part of the Whittier Narrows Dam Safety project at the Pico Rivera Senior Center in Pico Rivera, California.

LA District park rangers connect with community at Downey 5K

DOWNEY, Calif. — Three Los Angeles District park rangers spent their morning connecting with community members Feb. 28 at the 14th annual Downey 5K at Apollo Park.

The run/walk, which supports the Downey Unified School District's Family Resource Center, provided a fitting opportunity for the team to engage with local residents. While staffing an outreach booth, the rangers spoke with nearly 600 attendees about the importance of the Whittier Narrows Dam Safety project. They emphasized the project's long-term benefits for flood-risk management, and they shared information about how it will protect downstream communities.

This outreach is part of an ongoing effort to keep the public informed. In early March, the project team met with officials from Los Angeles County and the City of Pico Rivera to coordinate public notifications regarding upcoming trail closures and road work associated with the project's construction.



Courtesy photos

Los Angeles District park rangers discuss the Whittier Narrows Dam Safety project with participants during the Feb. 28 Downey 5K community event.



Los Angeles District Park Ranger Emily Hibbard, left, shares information about the Whittier Narrows Dam Safety project with Downey 5K attendees.



LOWER LEFT: Los Angeles District Park Ranger Nick Figueroa, right, explains the long-term benefits of the Whittier Narrows Dam Safety project to a community member at the Downey 5K. LOWER RIGHT: Park Ranger Marlene Schmitt makes a new friend, while representing the LA District at the Downey 5K community event.





Photos by Richard Rivera

Col. Andrew Baker, Los Angeles District commander, left, delivers remarks during the End of Fiscal Year 2025 Town Hall and Awards Celebration Oct. 16 in downtown LA. Also pictured is Andrew Goodall, acting LA District deputy engineer, right.

LA District hosts second quarter town hall

BY SHAWN DAVIS
LA DISTRICT PUBLIC AFFAIRS

LOS ANGELES — The LA District celebrated a quarter of achievements and exceptional service by its employees Feb. 5 during a town hall award ceremony at its headquarters in downtown LA.

“I want to first start off by acknowledging that 2025 was a challenging year in terms of our workload,” said Col. Andrew Baker, Los Angeles District commander. “However, in terms of our work placement and delivery — we knocked it out of the park, awarding 811 contracting actions for an incredible \$2.17 billion.”

Highlights for the district’s second quarter included closing out all 34 contracts related to the Los Angeles County Wildfires Debris Removal Mission one year after the tragic Eaton and Palisades wildfires, as well as visits to the district from higher headquarters staff, including Maj. Gen. Jason Kelly, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers civil and emergency operations deputy commanding general; Brig. Gen. John Lloyd, South Pacific Division commander and division engineer; and Adam Telle, Assistant Secretary of the Army (Civil Works).

The distinguished visitors were apprised of the essential civil works projects undertaken by the

Los Angeles District for the region’s benefit.

One of those projects included the Department of Veterans Affairs’ Spinal Cord Injury and Community Living Center in San Diego, which is on track for completion. The center will provide services for veterans with spinal cord injuries and disorders.

Baker also highlighted the ability for the district to fill critical vacancies, including 10 exception to policy approvals and use of the talent marketplace portal to leverage existing USACE employees with temporary promotions, 120-day details and reassignments.

Looking forward to a new, successful quarter, Baker spoke about the district’s ambition to earn the Army Safety Star.

“This evaluation will be an “all-hands” effort. Personnel at every level will be interviewed,” Baker said. “Be prepared to speak about your personal responsibility to safety, your knowledge of our district’s

programs and how our safety culture has directly benefited you and your team.

“Let’s earn that star, let’s do it for each other. We have a righteous mission, and we couldn’t do it without each and every one of you. Thank you.”

The following awards were given to Los Angeles District employees during the town hall award ceremony:

Mary Wrightson received the John D. Oshima Center of Gravity Award.

Michael Turanitz received the Kevin Inada Employee of the Quarter Award.



Fany Anderson
Civilian Service Achievement Medal

Lisa Lugar received the Jennie Ayala “Beyond the Call of Duty” Award.

Orville “Dan” Collins received the Innovator of the Year Award.

Shawn Davis and **Josh Casten** received the Rising Star Award.

Jesse Rice received the Casten Compass award.

Michael Cho and **David Myles** received the H2O Helping Hands for Others award.

Sean Hutchison received the Outstanding PDT Member Award.

Aaron Burke, Joshua Pendergrass, Fany Anderson, December Winters and **Maria Randolph** of the **Safety Team** received Civilian Service Achievement Medals.

Robert DeDeaux of the Los Angeles District received the Office of Public Affairs USACE Clark Taylor Civilian Videographer of the Year Award.

James Elsberry of the Los Angeles District received the Office of Small Business USACE Small Business Champion of the Year Award.

Chadi Wahby of the Los Angeles District received the Office of Small Business USACE Program Manager/Engineering Professional of the Year Award.

Roger Minami of the Los Angeles District received the Office of Small Business Beyond the Call of Duty Award.

The following awards were presented to the district as a whole:

Directorate of Contracting District/Center of the Year.

Directorate of Civil Works Planning Excellence Award-Enterprise.

[More Town Hall Awards Photos](#)
[continued on Page 15](#)

Los Angeles District Quarterly Awards



Lisa Lugar / Jennie Ayala "Beyond the Call of Duty"



Michael Turanitz / Kevin Inada Employee of the Quarter

Photos by Richard Rivera



Shawn Davis / Rising Star



Josh Casten / Rising Star



Michael Cho / H2O Helping Hands for Others



David Myles / H2O Helping Hands for Others



Chadi Wahby / USACE Program Manager/Engineering Professional of the Year



Kinya "Roger" Minami / Beyond the Call of Duty Award

Southern California Wildfires Debris-Removal Mission Awards



Sean Sackett / Meritorious Civilian Service Medal



Brenna Smith / Civilian Service Achievement Medal

Photos by Richard Rivera



Maj. David Paxton / Army Achievement Medal



David Kingston / Civilian Service Commendation Medal



Aaron Cruz / Civilian Service Achievement Medal



Abegail Banaga / Civilian Service Achievement Medal



Raj Cooper / Civilian Service Commendation Medal



Melanie Stalder / Civilian Service Commendation Medal

Photos by Richard Rivera



Margie Tizon / Civilian Service Commendation Medal



Veronica Gonzalez / Civilian Service Commendation Medal



Kinya "Roger" Minami / Civilian Service Commendation Medal



Ryan Rivas / Civilian Service Commendation Medal



Mary Wrightson / Civilian Service Commendation Medal



Southern California Wildfires Debris-Removal Mission Awards



Yat "Dustin" Ku / Certificate of Achievement



Dena O'Dell / Certificate of Achievement

Photos by Richard Rivera



Shawn Davis / Certificate of Achievement



Stephen Baack / Certificate of Achievement



Col. Andrew Baker, center, stands with four commander's coins recipients, recognizing them for excellence during the Southern California Wildfires debris removal mission. The recipients, from left to right are: 1st Lt. Alexander Cummings, Mary Wrightson, Santos Macias and Shaun Frost.

VA San Diego: Facilities near completion



Photos by Jenn Rivo



ALL PHOTOS: Brig. Gen. John Lloyd, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers South Pacific Division commander, and Christy Jones, South Pacific Division regional business director, conduct a tour Jan. 5 of the Spinal Cord Injury/Community Living Center at the Jennifer Moreno Department of Veterans Affairs Medical Center in San Diego. The leaders, along with partners from the Department of Veterans Affairs and contractors, reviewed the facility, which is nearing construction completion. The project will provide state-of-the-art care, including therapy pools and specialized patient rooms, for veterans in the region.

Phoenix Area Office town hall



Photo by Robert DeDeaux

Los Angeles District Commander Col. Andrew Baker, along with Deputy Commander Lt. Col. Stephen Brooks and Area Engineer Richard Fontanilla, conducts the Phoenix Area Office town hall March 18 in Phoenix. During the event, Baker thanked employees for their support. The LA District consists of engineers, scientists, researchers and a multitude of other professionals all working together to safely deliver quality programs and projects on time and within budget.

A roadmap for leadership



Photo by Richard Rivera

Leaders with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Los Angeles District gather for a photo at the LA District Baseyard in South El Monte, California, for their leadership offsite Dec. 10. The event brought together district leaders to identify strategic efforts in processes, partnerships and talent development. Key outputs from the conference included evaluating process efficiencies and developing a roadmap for leadership growth to retain and develop existing talent.

Sharpening safety knowledge for upcoming Army Star Assessment

BY ZENNY DINH
LA DISTRICT ACTING SAFETY CHIEF

As Los Angeles District employees prepare for the upcoming U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Safety and Occupational Health Management System Army Star Assessment during the week of Aug. 10, the Los Angeles District Safety Office will be launching CE-SOHMS “BITE” Thursdays to share key CE-SOHMS facts to help everyone feel confident and ready.

Question: What is one of the primary tools used in the effective risk management process to identify hazards in non routine tasks?

Answer: The Activity Hazard Analysis, also known as the AHA.

Why: According to Engineer Manual 385 1 1, Chapter 1, Section 6, AHAs must be prepared and documented for all field, laboratory, industrial and maintenance activities. Before beginning each work activity, task or definable feature of work, an initial AHA must be completed to ensure minimum safety requirements are identified and addressed.

Key takeaway:

- The AHA is used to:
- Identify hazards associated with a task before work begins;
 - Determine the probability and severity of those hazards;
 - Develop controls to mitigate risks and reduce them to a manageable, acceptable level.

Keep an eye out for CE-SOHMS “BITE” Thursday emails to help you with your CE-SOHMS knowledge!

LA District employees: Learn more about the AHA process by navigating to the [AHA Tab](#) on the SOH SharePoint. Help us build our [AHA Library](#) by submitting your Section’s AHA to DLL-SPL-SO@usace.army.mil.

To learn more, contact the Safety Team or your local CDSO.

CE-SOHMS “BITE”

Preparing for the CESOHMS Army Star Assessment – Week of August 10

QUESTION: What is one of the primary tools used in the effective risk management process to identify hazards in non-routine tasks?

ANSWER: The Activity Hazard Analysis (AHA)
SEE ATTACHED FORM

WHY?
EM 385-1-1 requires AHAs for all field, lab, industrial, & maintenance activities.
Initial AHAs must be completed before starting any work task.

KEY TAKEAWAY:
The AHA is used to:

- ✓ Identify hazards associated with a task before work begins
- ✓ Determine the probability & severity of those hazards
- ✓ Develop controls to mitigate risks to an acceptable level

U.S. ARMY CORPS OF ENGINEERS

REFER TO: EM 385-1-1, CHAPTER 1, SECTION 6

Phoenix Area Office Engineer Day



ALL PHOTOS: Employees and family members with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Los Angeles District's Phoenix Area Office gathered March 19 to celebrate Engineer Day with fellowship, special recognitions, awards, games and food. See photos from the Length of Service awards on the next page.



Phoenix Area Office Length of Service Awards

Five Years

Ewelina Zielinska-Thomas
Christopher Stanton
Sara Kimsey

10 Years

Robert Hutchinson
Danielle Lenox
Kimberly Kovar
Oscar Siqueiros
Angela-Rene Tugaoen

15 Years

Samuel Law
Paul Bane
Joel Pliskin
Douglas Ritchie
George Sunny
Kevin Grove
Clinton Griffin

20 Years

Jeffrey Owens
Steven Winkleblech
Bradley Carter
Yvonne Hallman

25 Years

Greg Hegge

30 Years

Michael Tuttle

35 Years

Brian Kirchner

45 Years

Robert Crist



Sara Kimsey



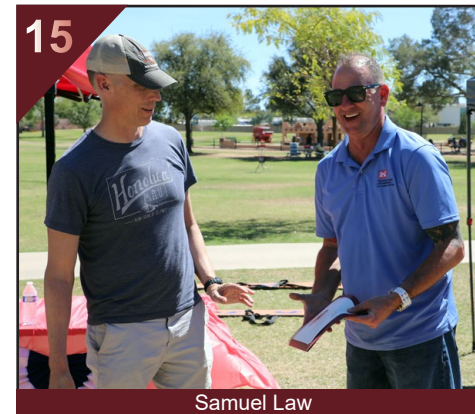
Kevin Grove



Robert Hutchinson



Joel Pliskin



Samuel Law



Bradley Carter



Yvonne Hallman



Jeffrey Owens

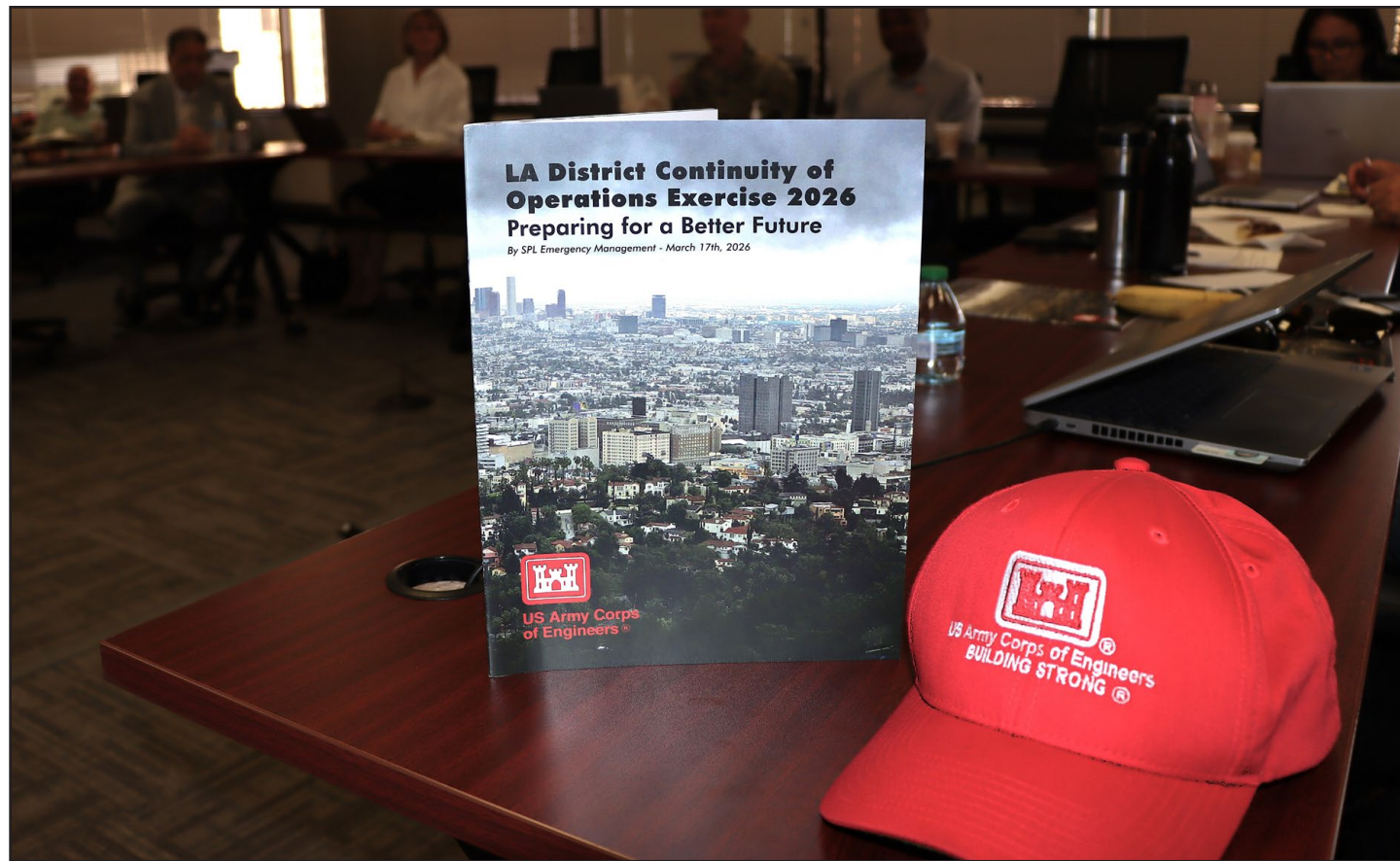


Photo by Robert DeDeaux

The Los Angeles District Emergency Management Branch team hosts a continuity of operations training exercise March 17 at the LA District's area office in Phoenix. The exercise is designed to review, drill and assess the district's response to catastrophic disaster scenarios.

LA District sharpens crisis response skills during continuity exercise

BY ROBERT DEDEAUX
LA DISTRICT PUBLIC AFFAIRS

PHOENIX — The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Los Angeles District tested its emergency readiness March 17 during a continuity of operations exercise, or COOPEX, simulating a command relocation to Phoenix.

Hosted by the LA District's Emergency Management Team, the COOPEX is intensive training designed to review, practice and assess the district's response to a catastrophic event using virtual scenarios.

"Emergencies can be very sudden, and we want to make sure our leaders already know what to do when the time comes to maintain command, control and communication," said LA District Commander Col. Andrew Baker.

Representatives with the LA District's Crisis Management Team, or CMT, joined emergency management teams from the Sacramento and Albuquerque districts participate in the event. The team focused on learning from the Emergency Management Branch's recent re-

sponse to the LA wildfires.

"Performing a COOPEX annually is a requisite part of district emergency preparedness," said Grant Adams, an emergency management planner, who led the training. "However, there is also an opportunity for the district to capitalize on lessons learned from the 2025 LA fires and incorporate those lessons into the COOPEX to better prepare new CMT members."

Army Regulation 500-3 and Presidential Policy Directive 40 require USACE to have a Continuity of Operations Plan, or COOP, to ensure it can respond and perform essential functions in an emergency.

"Beyond the regulatory requirement to conduct continuity of operations exercises, these are critical to us being prepared for real-world continuity of operations events," said David Kingston, LA District Emergency Management Branch chief. "Our district leadership did an outstanding job. There were a lot of changes in the Crisis Management Team membership, but each of them prepared for the COOPEX and

really provided some great insights to how we would respond to the virtual training situations."

The exercise had three main objectives: testing protocols in a realistic scenario, reviewing inter-district roles and validating comprehensive continuity plans from emergency response to recovery.

"We did accomplish our objectives," Kingston said. "Most critical was the bringing together of the CMT to really work through scenarios that stretched their critical thinking, and the identification of action items to make us even better in responding."

The LA District Emergency Management Branch provides engineering services to respond to national and natural disasters to minimize damage and help in recovery efforts.

"As the result of the COOPEX, I really do think we are ready to respond to another real-world disaster," Kingston said. "Our response to the SoCal wildfires in January 2025 was incredible because of our training during previous COOPEXs."

National Engineer Week

 <p>ZENNY DINH Acting Chief of Safety Los Angeles District</p> <p>“Engineering Week celebrates the teamwork behind our mission. Serving the public begins with protecting people, and that starts with the partnership between safety professionals and project teams working together to deliver every project safely and responsibly.”</p> 	 <p>JASON PADILLA Mechanical Engineer Los Angeles District</p> <p>“I get to work with different people from different disciplines. We get to collaborate and put our ideas together to ensure we have quality projects. I love the way we interact with each other as a team. I've been in Operations Division, and now I'm in construction. The team is seamless – everyone has the same goals.”</p> 
 <p>RICHARD ALVAREZ Resident Management System administrator Los Angeles District</p> <p>“I like working for the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers because of the people I work with – my coworkers.”</p> 	 <p>TOM WEBER Area Engineer – Southland Area Office Los Angeles District</p> <p>“I get to work with intelligent people and create projects that leave a legacy for the American people.”</p> 
 <p>KEVIN KENWORTHY Electrical Engineer Los Angeles District</p> <p>“I love solving technical problems for the benefit of the nation and local communities.”</p> 	 <p>ROBERT NGO Structural Engineer Los Angeles District</p> <p>“Engineering has always been a true passion of mine. Working for the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers allows me to transform that passion into meaningful contributions that serve the American people, strengthen communities and support our nation.”</p> 



Photo by Shawn Davis

Col. Andrew Baker, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Los Angeles District commander, left, signs the updated memorandum of understanding with California Polytechnic State University Pomona President Iris Levine March 24 on the campus at the university's campus in Pomona, California.

LA District reaffirms partnership with Cal Poly Pomona with signing event

BY SHAWN DAVIS
LOS ANGELES DISTRICT PUBLIC AFFAIRS

POMONA, Calif. — Leaders with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Los Angeles District and California State Polytechnic University, Pomona renewed their longstanding partnership with an updated memorandum of understanding signed March 24 at the university.

“We are proud to stand alongside the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers in this shared commitment to education, innovation and service,” said Andrew Ketsdever, dean of the college of engineering at Cal Poly Pomona.

To celebrate, leaders from both organizations met at the university’s student-run Restaurant at Kellogg Ranch. The updated agreement makes the partnership, first signed in 2016, permanent by removing its expiration date.

The memorandum of understanding outlines a partnership that enables participation

by USACE engineers in student mentoring sessions and applied research opportunities. Events like site visits to USACE-managed projects, guest lectures by USACE personnel and mentorship programs are a result of the shared partnership between the university and the Los Angeles District.

“It expands opportunities for students, and it deepens our connections to the communities that we serve,” Ketsdever said. “But perhaps more importantly, it reminds us that education and service are equally connected.”

“When we prepare students to be excellent engineers, we are also preparing them to be stewards,” Ketsdever continued. “Stewards of our infrastructure, stewards of our environment, stewards of our future.”

“The LA district has hired 33 Cal Poly students since 2009,” said Col. Andrew Baker, USACE Los Angeles District commander.

“The work we do at the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers — delivering vital engineering solutions to secure our nation, energize our economy and reduce disaster risks — has never been more critical.”

Baker pointed to a major local project as a prime example of USACE’s impact. Just recently, the Los Angeles District awarded a more than \$735-million construction contract to Barnard Construction Inc. to begin major construction work for the Whittier Narrows Dam Safety project, which is anticipated to be completed in 2033.

Whittier Narrows Dam mitigates flood risk to more than 1 million people downstream of it. While the broader agency manages more than 700 dams nationwide, the Los Angeles District manages 16 dams and one debris basin across

[‘CAL POLY’ continued on Page 25](#)

[‘CAL POLY’ continued from Page 24](#)

Arizona, Nevada and the Southern California region. Many of those dams, such as Sepulveda, Prado and Whittier Narrows, carry significant importance due to their proximities to dense, urban communities.

“(This memorandum) is a key exercise of Cal Poly’s philosophy: ‘learning by doing,’” Baker said. “Today, students are motivated by

meaningful work, a supportive culture and the opportunity to make real-world impacts. That is exactly what a career in the Los Angeles District promises.”

Cal Poly Pomona President Iris Levine said the university community also benefits from the collaboration.

“We see new avenues for applied research,” Levine said. “Faculty and students can col-

laborate with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers on challenges that require innovation and technical expertise. ... We see a stronger, more connected pipeline that prepares graduates to step directly into goals where they can make an immediate difference.”

To learn more about career opportunities at the Los Angeles District, visit www.spl.usace.army.mil/Careers.



Photo by Shawn Davis

U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Los Angeles District personnel and California State Polytechnic University faculty, staff and students pose for a group photo March 24 at the university's campus in Pomona, California.

Leadership Development Program graduation



Photo by Richard Rivera

Graduates of the fiscal year 2025 U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Los Angeles District Leadership Development Program (tiers 1 and 2) gather for a photo with their facilitators and Lt. Col. Stephen Brooks, LA District deputy commander, after their group project presentations and graduation ceremony Feb. 26 in the district headquarters building in downtown LA. Congratulations, LDP graduates!



Photo by Stephen Baack

Sean Sackett, chief of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Los Angeles District Contracting Division, left, addresses attendees March 5 during an Industry Day in Las Vegas focused on contracting opportunities for upcoming projects at Nellis Air Force Base, Nevada.

Nellis Industry Day gives LA District chance to showcase innovative contracting process

BY STEPHEN BAACK
LA DISTRICT PUBLIC AFFAIRS

LAS VEGAS — The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Los Angeles District showcased an innovative contracting method during an Industry Day event March 5, aimed at attracting contractors for a series of strategically important projects at Nellis Air Force Base.

The work at Nellis centers on an upcoming “aircraft beddown” program. An aircraft beddown is the process of stationing and integrating new or relocated aircraft, which involves extensive infrastructure development — such as building or modifying hangars, fueling systems and maintenance facilities — to accommodate the fleet.

To manage this work, the district is launching a new Advanced Pre-Qualification Sources List framework, building on the stan-

dard Pre-Qualification Sources List, or PQSL, which is a list of contractors who have been pre-screened and approved by a government agency as technically qualified for specific projects.

The purpose of the PQSL is to streamline the bidding process, but the Advanced PQSL takes the concept a step further, said Sean Sackett, chief of the LA District’s Contracting Division.

“We’re going to be doing something that’s very innovative and different that, to our knowledge, no one in the enterprise is executing,” Sackett said. “We’re taking that concept and putting some innovation in it to engage industry early on in the design process before it actually goes to the construction solicitation and award.”

One of the main goals of the event, he said, was to gather direct

feedback from industry leaders.

“It’s something we’ve heard from industry that they like that concept and they want to continue to participate,” Sackett added. “So, we’re trying to listen to industry and show it to them for the first time to see what they think.”

Engaging industry leaders during the design phase is intended to encourage early business teaming, which can help local small businesses partner with larger firms and provide a boost to the regional economy, Sackett said.

The forum provided an avenue for these types of potential partnerships to form.

Grace Harris, president of Jeremy Harris Construction Inc., attended the event with that goal in mind.

“We are an 8(a) company in Riverside, California, and have been working with the LA District,” Harris said. “We’re interested in creat-

ing new partnerships within the industry to better support USACE.”

That sentiment was shared by Bobby Ameen, president and CEO of 24HRC, who said his goal is to help restore the nation’s vital infrastructure.

“Ultimately, my company was founded for the purpose of being in service,” said Ameen, whose company also holds an 8(a) designation.

He praised the direct access to USACE leaders at the event.

“Today was a blessing,” he said. “They had a lot of chiefs here. I said, ‘All right. This is awesome.’”

Sackett confirmed the district is seeking firms for the new process over the next three to six months and expressed confidence in the turnout.

“We’ve got a lot of large general contracting firms that are very interested in the program, so that’s always a good sign,” he said.

LA District attends SAME, NAVFAC small business, industry forum



Photos by Shawn Davis

Col. Andrew Baker, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Los Angeles District commander, speaks to audience members attending the 2026 SAME San Diego Post Small Business/NAVFAC Southwest Industry forum Feb. 27 in San Diego.

BY SHAWN DAVIS
LOS ANGELES DISTRICT PUBLIC AFFAIRS

SAN DIEGO — U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Los Angeles District leaders represented their organization at the joint Society of American Military Engineers and Naval Facilities Engineering Systems Command small business and industry forum Feb. 27 in San Diego.

The forum connects private and public experts, business professionals and military personnel in a discussion-panel format coupled with a small business fair that allows attendees

to be apprised of the missions of various government logistics and engineering agencies, as well as the private sector.

“(We are) a big organization with a lot of missions. ... For us, civil works is a big deal,” said Col. Andrew Baker, LA District commander. “We also have military construction — a lot of work.”

Baker detailed the capabilities and responsibilities of his district, as well as the efforts of his staff in supporting it, as he discussed the various projects and studies the district

has been working across California, Nevada, and Arizona.

“We’re keeping our head above water and doing pretty well,” he said. “Even though (other districts like) Sacramento has a larger (USACE) district in terms of workforce, we represent a larger portion of the American public — in fact, larger than any other district in the country.”

Participating agencies at the forum included NAVFAC Southwest, NAVFAC Pacific, Defense Logistics Agency, LA District, NAVFAC Facilities, Engineering and Acquisition Division Teams and NASA.

SAME, the event co-host, consists of uniformed military personnel, retirees, project managers, corporate executives, academic leaders and more with the mission of bridging the gap between public professionals and private sectors.



Lt. Col. Stephen Brooks, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Los Angeles District deputy commander, left, speaks to audience members attending the 2026 SAME San Diego Post Small Business/NAVFAC Southwest Industry forum Feb. 27 in San Diego.



Photos by Shawn Davis

Families who lost loved ones in the deadly Palisades Wildfires gather Jan. 7, while holding tribute placards, flags and flowers, as part of a community-wide remembrance event in front of the American Legion Post 283 in Pacific Palisades, California.

Pacific Palisades community honors, remembers fire victims one year later

BY SHAWN DAVIS
LA DISTRICT PUBLIC AFFAIRS

PACIFIC PALISADES, Calif. — After historic rainfall in Los Angeles, the cloudy skies gave way to a quiet, sunny morning, as the Pacific Palisades community came together Jan. 7 to honor and remember those lost in the Palisades Wildfires.

The ceremony began at American Legion Post 283, one of the few buildings spared by the catastrophic fires that ripped through the community one year earlier.



Tribute placards are presented on easels Jan. 7 as the Palisades community rallies around Village Green after a procession, as a bell tolled 12 times for those lost in the wildfires.

[‘PALISADES’ continued from Page 28](#)

Community leaders, residents, first responders, military members and local, state and federal officials shuffled into the small, quaint building on La Cruz Drive to pay tribute to survivors and their families and to come together for the one-year anniversary of fires that devastated the community.

“When this all was going down, I saw a community coming together ... it was very heart-wrenching and heartwarming at the same time,” said American Legion Post 283 Commander Joe Ramirez during ceremonial remarks.

The ceremony emphasized a somber mood with a private indoor white glove presentation of flags to survivors and invited guests; a retirement of the scarred flag that had flown atop the post’s flagpole outside during the wildfires with the dedication of a new flag; and a procession led by bagpipers to Village Green to honor those who lost their lives in the fires. The American Legion Post 283 was used as a refuge and community hub during the wildfires.

“This is a special place,” said Jim Craig, director and chair of the Palisades Long-Term Recovery Group. “For the last year, this has been a

place, a bedrock for the community, but a home for people to return to before they saw the remnants of their homes. This is a place of hugs. It’s a place of love.”

The procession walked past the skeletons of historic buildings, like the 1924 Business Block building, still carrying burn scars, alongside newer construction in the neighborhood, as the community begins to rebuild. The procession continued toward Village Green, where surviving family members placed placards on easels and laid wreaths for their loved ones amidst the regrown greenery of the small park. All stood silent as a bell tolled 12

times for the number of victims lost in the Palisades Fire.

“This mission was deeply personal for the Los Angeles District,” said Lt. Col. Stephen V. Brooks, deputy commander of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Los Angeles district. “Three of our employees lost their homes, and many more of our employees were displaced.”

We are immensely proud to have made a difference alongside our community and partner agencies in helping the community rebuild,” he continued. “We honor the twelve Palisadians who unfortunately lost their lives, and we will continue supporting local communities.”



Photo by Shawn Davis

Ceremonial bagpipers lead the Palisades community during the Palisades wildfire remembrance procession to Village Green Jan. 7 on La Cruz Drive in Pacific Palisades, California.

USACE teammates get special invitation to Rose Bowl

Members of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and their family members were honored with a special invitation to the 2026 Rose Bowl in Pasadena, California, as a thank-you for their service during the Southern California wildfires of 2025.

While inclement weather prevented the planned flag unfurling, the recognition didn't stop. USACE received a shout-out during the game, and employees and their families enjoyed the experience together from the stands. We're grateful for the support shown to our team and proud of the work they do for Southern California communities.

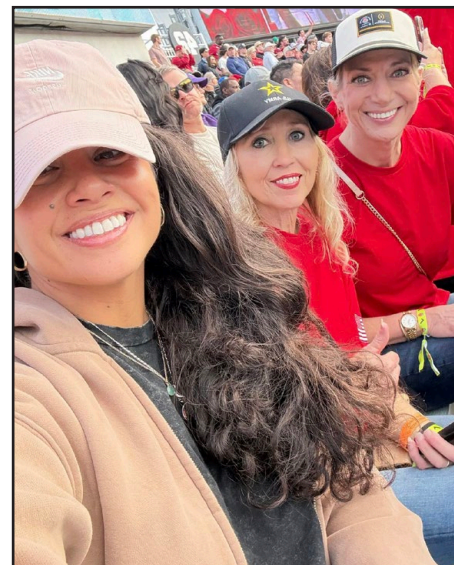
The historic Rose Bowl entrance is pictured Jan. 1 before the 2026 game, during which members of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and their family members were honored with a special invitation to the game in Pasadena, California.



Courtesy photos



Members of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, who worked in support of USACE's 2025 Southern California wildfires debris-removal mission, are gathered for a photo Jan. 1 before the 2026 Rose Bowl game.



Members of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and their families are pictured together Jan. 1 during the 2026 Rose Bowl in Pasadena, California.



Courtesy photos

The Alabama Crimson Tide face off against the Indiana Hoosiers at the 2026 Rose Bowl Jan. 1 in Pasadena, California, during which members of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and their family members were honored with a special invitation to the game.



Members of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers are pictured together Jan. 1 during the 2026 Rose Bowl in Pasadena, California.



April is **Sexual Assault Awareness and Prevention Month**. SAAPM is a time to educate, support and empower each other in the fight against sexual assault.

SHARP is committed to building a safe, respectful and ready force through prevention, advocacy, expanded reporting options and a dedicated workforce.

What Services Does SHARP Provide?

SHARP services are designed to support, protect and empower individuals impacted by sexual harassment or sexual assault. Services include:

- 24/7 confidential support from trained Sexual Assault Response Coordinators and Victim Advocates
- Crisis intervention and safety planning
- Medical, legal and counseling referrals
- Advocacy and support during medical or legal processes
- Prevention education and training

Who Can Use SHARP Services?

- Soldiers (active, National Guard, Reserve)
- Army Civilians
- Adult Family members (18+)
- Survivors regardless of rank, role or location

Support is available on-post, off-post and during deployments.

Reporting Options

The Army offers two reporting options for victims of sexual assault: Restricted and Unrestricted.

- Restricted Report
 - Confidential
 - Allows access to medical care, advocacy and counseling
 - Does not trigger an official investigation
- Unrestricted Report
 - Initiates an official investigation
 - Enables command involvement and legal action
 - Provides full access to support services

How to Get Help

- Contact your local Sexual Assault Response Coordinator or Victim Advocate
- Call the DoD Safe Helpline: 877-995-5247 (24/7)
- Visit: www.safehelpline.org
- For more information, see Army Regulation 600-52



Connect with us @ArmyResilience



#SAAPM2026