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Holiday Town Hall

Dec. 13, 10 a.m. at University of Alabama-Huntsville's Chan Auditorium. Transportation provided and buses will load at 9:15 in front of the Center.

Huntsville Center Bulletin

Medical program gets new name, reflects recent mission growth



Photo by Joseph Serena

An administration station at the Primary Care Clinic at General Leonard Wood Army Community Hospital, Ft. Leonard Wood, Mo., procured through Huntsville Center's Integrated Medical Furniture program.

By James Campbell Public Affairs Office

ne of the medical programs at the U.S. Army Engineering and Support Center, Huntsville changed its name in November, and that name change reflects recent mission growth.

The Integrated Modular Medical Support Systems Program, often simply referred to as IMMSS, is now the Integrated Medical Furniture Program. IMF provides all furnishings necessary to create a functional medical space whether it is in a hospital, clinic, office space, or any space that supports the medical mission, for U.S. Army Medical Command medical facilities worldwide, often working closely with the Center's Medical Repair and Renewal Program and Initial Outfitting and Transition Program. The IMF Program also acquires other furniture for Army medical facilities. This can include wood office

Commander's thoughts

eam, I know you've been busy, and I encourage you to enjoy the holidays by taking some time off as you are able. December can be a busy time at home, but you all deserve some rest as we roll in to 2013 with new challenges ahead.

As many of you know, I spent two weeks in November supporting relief efforts in the wake of Hurricane Sandy, a significant storm that caused serious damage to densely populated areas of the Northeast. It is indeed amazing to be a part of a team of local, state and federal responders, working together for the people in the affected areas.

The Corps' priority is supporting power, debris and temporary housing missions. We have also pumped water at 14 critical locations, as determined by local officials. USACE used 162 pumps and removed more than 275 million gallons of water during de-watering operations.

Our water delivery mission is now complete with 512 truckloads delivered to sites in New York, New Jersey, Pennsylvania and West Virginia with each truck carrying 18,000 liters of water. Providing power has included 198 generators in critical locations and 101 generator de-installations as grid power returned.

We can all be proud of USACE serving as the lead agency that responds with public works and engineering support in times of disaster, and we're assured the Corps will be involved with coordinating long-term infrastructure recovery.

Adding to the excitement of the season, we held our annual Small Business Forum, Nov. 16. It was a solid success, with an attendance of more than 260 representatives from the small business community.

Many of you were there, representing your programs well, providing information vital to small businesses that have or hope to earn contracts with the Center. Additionally, we will be represented at the Society of American Military Engineers' Small Business Conference for Department of Defense Engineering, Construction and Environmental Programs, Dec. 10-12.

These annual events are a small part of the work we do each year to ensure our small business goals are met. I'm proud of the work we've done with small businesses, and I'm confident we can continue to meet and exceed our goals.

With everything that's been going on, and many events planned for December, we also have to remember performance objectives are coming due and annual evaluations have to be loaded into the centralized Automated Nature of Action system, or as we know it AutoNOA, by Dec. 15. Let's make sure we get these done -- they are



Col. Robert Ruch

critical to our workforce development and recognition.

We plan to have a Holiday Town Hall Dec. 13 at 10 a.m., at the University of Alabama Huntsville's Chan Auditorium.

I also want to make sure each of you have had an opportunity to review the Combined Federal Campaign materials before the Dec. 14 deadline.

As I write this, we've achieved about 25 percent of our goal, so I'd like everyone to consider supporting one of the worthy charities. Together, we can make a difference.

As I told you in an e-mail a few weeks ago, having seen the devastation of Hurricane Sandy up close, I know there are many people hurting this year and our support can make a difference.

As always, keep safety in mind during this special time of year as you enjoy the holidays with family and friends. I look forward to seeing each of you in 2013.

Hails and farewells

Hail: Harry G. Weise, Chemical Demilitarization Directorate; Horace Spoon, Sally Parsons, John C. Stevens II, Elizabeth Stiles, Erin Zeanah, Jerry Lee Sims, Engineering Directorate; Christopher T. Shepard, Center Contracting; Tracy Brooks, Ordnance and Explosives Directorate; Spc. Andrea Kelley, Executive Office. Farewell: Felix Marrero, CT.



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Commander..... Chief, Public Affairs..... Editor .. Col. Robert Ruch .. Debra Valine ... William S. Farrow

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The Bulletin asks: "How does government employee's annual ethics' training help the Center meet its mission goals?"



• It reinforces the core values that we, as public servants, should all adhere to in the performance of our duties. The integrity of our organization depends on our ability as individuals to recognize ethical dilemmas and respond in an appropriate manner. Without integrity and public trust, we could not carry our mission.

> Clay Weisenberger Office of Counsel

• It's important so you can be aware of what you can and cannot do within the limits of your office and your job. The Office of Counsel is so very important for leadership and management in that when ethical issues arise you know you can talk to them before you make a final decision. \blacksquare

Cynthia Hall Center Contracting Directorate





▲ It gives us the necessary refresher training to remind us of the importance of being ethical. For me, the training is critical to the success of the Center's mission because of the large number of contracting actions the Center executes and their impact within the Dept. of Defense. It is so important that every employee understands ethics violations and how the decisions they make can impact themselves, their program, Huntsville Center, the Corps and the Army. ● ●

> Nathaniel Durham Installation Support and Programs Management Directorate



The 2012 Tennessee Valley Combined Federal Campaign is under way. The campaign covers the following counties in the North Alabama area: Cullman, Lawrence, Limestone, Madison, Marshall, Morgan, and Lincoln County, Tennessee. Federal employees working in these counties may participate in the campaign. For information regarding, visit the Website at:

http://amcomdmz.redstone.army.mil/cfcp/cfcp_main

Employee Spotlight Raven Webb

By Jo Anita Miley Public Affairs Office

Where do you work and what is your job title?

I am a contract specialist and intern with the Huntsville Center Contracting Directorate's business operations branch.

How long have you worked for the Corps?

I have worked with the Corps and Huntsville Center since March 2010.

In your own words, what is your job? What do you do?

I review procurement documents, ensuring all contractual actions leaving Huntsville Center meet regulatory requirements, are in compliance with current internal and external policies, and verify those documents are consistent with good business practices.

Review the Campaign Plan goals and objectives. Which one(s) apply to you?

There are multiple Campaign Plan goals and objectives that are applicable to my job. However, there is one that really applies for my current job; Goal 4 Objective 4a: "Identify, develop, maintain, and strengthen technical competencies among the USACE workforce."

My job involves chairing peer review and acquisition review boards, communicating and coordinating acquisition initiatives, strategies, and policies among various Huntsville Center directorates.

How do you see your job making a difference and contributing to the Corps' success?

By ensuring all procurement documents that Huntsville Center issues are in compliance with regulations and are good business practices, I help Huntsville Center professionals remain experts in what we do, elevating the standard of contracting practices throughout the Corps and other federal agencies.



What do you love about your job?

I love working on the BOB team. Every day is different. I like that I get to work on a variety of new and challenging issues. I also love the fact that we are making a difference in the lives of the War Fighter and their families. They put their lives on the line for us, so it feels good to give back.

Any special moments/memories about your job you'd like to share?

I recently participated in a source selection board at the Center. I learned a lot about the acquisition process. In Feb., I also had a chance to spend two months at the Regional Principal Assistant for Contracting Office in Winchester, Va.

During my visit, I took part in several high visibility projects which gave me insight on how the PARC works to provides global business advisory support and innovative contracting solutions to sustain customers in support of the Joint War Fighter. As an intern, both opportunities were great experiences that will help me grow professionally.

The *Employee Spotlight* is intended to let our Center employees shine for positively impacting our organization through mission achievements. Employees are nominated on a monthly basis and are featured monthly on the Huntsville Center Web site. If you'd like to nominate someone within your office for this recognition, please contact Jo Anita Miley, Public Affairs Office, at 256-895-1585, or e-mail: **JoAnita.Miley@usace.army.mil.**

IMF

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furniture and case goods, lounges and waiting rooms, some patientroom furniture, and other types of loose furnishings. These products are typically delivered and installed using GSA schedule contracts..

The name change reflects how the program has branched out from sole-source-contracted medical systems furnishings to office furniture and related products the customer needs, said Joseph Serena III, program manager.

Items now range from waiting room chairs to medical staff offices to special installations for pharmacies and labs, offering the customer one source for both systems products and other related items.

"The new name is intended to more accurately reflect the mission we actually execute, and the products and services we actually provide." he said.

The growth of the program's mission is easy to track, in the "other furniture and furnishings" category, the work grew from two orders in fiscal year 2006 to 66 orders with more than \$3.5 million in fiscal year 2012.

IMF uses Blanket Purchase Agreements for systems products, coupled with General Services Administration contracts for other furniture and furnishings, getting the best value for the customers who also often have tight schedules to manage, Serena said.

"We have broadened our vision supporting the Army medical mission," said Julia Chlarson, IMF and IO&T branch chief.

"This required a new name to signify our capabilities. We found that some customers did not come to us because of the IMMSS name – they would say, 'Huntsville only does the modular piece," Chlarson said.

"They thought we could not meet their needs, but we can. We are so proud to be there for our medical customers."

New Internal Review chief focuses on staff training, best practices

By Jo Anita Miley Public Affairs Office

hio native Lori Cordell-Meikle was welcomed as the new internal review chief for the U.S. Army Engineering and support Center, Huntsville, Aug. 13.

Cordell-Meikle comes to Huntsville Center from the Army's Security Assistance Command where she was an accountant.

Cordell-Meikle is a business administration graduate from Athens State University, and began her federal career in 2008 in the National Aeronautics and Space Administration Office of the Chief Financial



Lori Cordell-Meikle

Officer in Washington where she served as the lead auditor and audit liaison representative.

From 1999 to 2007 she served as the Senior Federal Accountant Oakwood University in Huntsville, Ala.

She also held a position as the Sponsored Programs Director at the school from 1999-2004.

Cordell-Meikle said being at the helm of the internal review office for the past several months has been very rewarding and she is confident that the internal review office is moving forward in the right direction.

Cordell-Meikle said she has a positive attitude about her new position at Huntsville Center and hopes to accomplish a lot for the Center during the next few years. She explained that her focus is on training her staff, to ensure internal audit standards are met, and Best Practices, as appropriate for the Center, are adopted and carried out by the internal review office.

Cordell-Meikle said she also wants to change the way employees view her office.

"Individuals often make the assumption that internal review always focuses on what is being done incorrectly," Cordell-Meikle said.

"I want everyone at the Center to know I will be asking for their Best Practices, because all of what is done in internal review is not bad."

New Interim Guidance published, assists Army garrisons, tenants with utility rates

By William S. Farrow Public Affairs Office

Recently released document provides Army installations with standardized instructions for achieving maximum utilities reimbursement opportunities and thereby reducing the amount of appropriated funds required to pay for purchased utilities, was written corroboratively by Huntsville Center and U.S. Army Corps of Engineers HQ personnel.

The 44 page document, known as the Interim Guidance of Rates for the Sale of Utilities Services, supersedes the outdated TN 420-41-1 published in 1992 as a supplement to the AR 420-41, Acquisition and Sale of Utilities Services. The AR420-41 was published in 1990.

The Army Installation Command and Office of the Assistant Chief of Staff for Installation Management have both been eagerly awaiting the Interim Guidance.

In the Nov. 9 memorandum to Lt. Gen. Michael Ferriter, Assistant Chief of Staff for Installation Management, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Lt. Gen. Thomas Bostick, Commanding General, USACE, explained that the guidance will "assist our Army garrisons with utility acquisition invoice review, calculation of utilities sale rates and to properly bill reimbursable customers for utility services."

Bostick also wrote in the memo that the garrisons' immediate need for this guidance "warrants its dissemination prior to publication of the revised AR 420-41 and its supplemental handbook due to be published by the end of FY 2013."

Writing the revised AR-420-41 is a shared effort between USACE HQ's Rafael Zayas, Deputy Assistant



A proactive CUP program reduces the "gap" between utility costs and the installation's department of public works funded budget. CUP recommends that the bill payer be the "Q" MDEP (QDPW) charged across the Army.

Power Procurement Officer, and CUP Program Manage Bernard Givan and Bob Hennessee of Huntsville Center's Energy Division's Commercial Utilities Program.

Givan, Assistant Deputy Army Power Procurement Officer, said there are three general customer categories on garrisons: intra-Army, other Defense Department(non-Army) and federal, and non-federal organizations such as Army and Air Force Exchange Service entities.

Givan explained that these customers fit into various utilities salerate schedules depending upon specific conditions or exemptions.

"These conditions could be imposed by statute, Defense Department directives and instructions or Army policies and regulations, utility industry fair market prices and the Army cost of providing the utility service," Givan said.

"Combine accurate tenant payment with their other CUP services such as utility rate intervention cost avoidance the garrison is likely to see savings of several thousand dollars annually," Givan said.

"CUP is not only the center of expertise for tenant reimbursement oversight and the conversion of tariffbased utility rate arrangement to special utility contracts, but also provides utility rate intervention support and installation utility rate reviews too," Givan said.

According to Givan, USACE receives numerous requests from Garrisons and major commands for assistance on utilities acquisition and sale actions to make informed utility acquisition decisions.

Citing a recent rate intervention at Fort Knox, Ky., which successfully avoided rate increases of \$1.3 million and \$500 thousand annually each succeeding year for the life of the garrison's various generating plants, Givan said he thinks CUP is a tool garrison commanders should continue using to save on the cost of utilities.

Despite diligent efforts by

See CUP on page 7

Focus: Utility Monitoring and Control System **Mandatory Center** of Expertise

> has Indefinite Delivery/Indefinite Quantity contracts for procurement and installation of UMCS, smart meters, fire alarm systems, heating, ventilation and air conditioning systems, Supervisory Controls and Data Acquisition and other automated control systems, as well as A&E contracts for design, survey and other engineering services that are available to support any government agency worldwide.

UMCS major functions

- To develop and maintain UMCS/EMCS criteria and guidance, such as technical manuals, guide specifications, design courses and specialized criteria for program support
- To review all designs and procurement packages prepared by Corps districts and divisions
- To provide technical assistance during design and installation; To actively participate in all factory and field tests
- To actively participate in all factory and field contests

CUP

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installations to reduce their energy consumption, the gap between future utility costs and the utility budget is expected to increase further, Givan said.

Mission

he Utility Monitoring and Control System Mandatory Center of Expertise at Huntsville Center

consistent approach to UMCS design, procurement and

assistance to all field operating activities, Army major

UMCS design to Corps personnel, Architect Engineer

commands and other government agencies.

installation of UMCS projects and has provided technical

As the MCX, Huntsville Center has provided training for

firms, and other government agencies. Huntsville Center

was established in response to recurring problems in the design and installation of UMCS projects throughout the Department of Defense. The MCX has maintained a

"Because installation's utility bills are a "must fund," budget shortfalls are often paid from other Base Operation and Support accounts, diminishing sustainment of real property assets. Our main objectives are to identify ways to reduce utility services by intervening rate case increases, conducting installation

utility rate surveys and performing utility contract management oversight."

Givan said major benefits to the Army installations employing CUP are simple: substantial costs avoidance (minimizing cost increases) and cost savings (reduction of utility costs).

That's why Givan said he feels it's so important installations understand that although there is a cost associated with CUP activities, cost avoidance and savings achieved by CUP services are so helpful in closing the utility cost gap.

"Historically the savings far outweighs the cost in manpower and contracts required to implement the activities," Givan said.

"Troops are returning from deployment thereby increasing utility use at stateside Army bases. Based on past experience, it is expected that utility rates will rise as energy demand, production costs, and the cost of capital to pay for needed infrastructure improvements increases in tandem with economic recovery.

Small business forum well-attended

By Jo Anita Miley Public Affairs Office

ore than 260 small business owners and representatives of small businesses from across the nation converged in Huntsville Nov. 16 for the U.S. Army Engineering and Support Centers 13th Annual Small Business Forum at the University of Alabama, Huntsville's University Center.

The event gave business owners and representatives an opportunity to meet with Huntsville Center program managers, contracting officials and subject matter experts to talk about the Center's various programs and future contracting opportunities.

In his address to the audience, Huntsville Center Deputy Commander, Lt. Col. William Burruss expressed the importance of the forum.

"We are the nation's engineers," Burruss said. "Many of our programs at Huntsville Center and throughout USACE are highly visible within the Dept. of Defense and have a direct impact on our service members and their families," he said. We need your help in order for us to provide them the best products and services available."

According to Rebecca Vucinaj, Huntsville Center's Small Business Programs Office chief, the information exchanged at the forum allows attendees to get answers to questions they have regarding doing business with the Huntsville Center.

Vucinaj said her office wants to make sure they have the right match when executing upcoming contract acquisitions actions for these programs. The goal of having a forum is to connect with small businesses and make them aware of what contracting opportunities Huntsville Center can offer.

Nicole Boone, a Small Business Programs Office specialist, said their office made sure the various programs within the Center were represented at the forum. The idea was to give contractors an opportunity to make contact with contracting and program management individuals who can speak on contract requirements and outline their expectations and desires for program execution during the event.

According to Boone, program managers, contracting officers and technical experts were well represented at the forum.

Blaine Guidry, Engineering Directorate, Engineering Directorate, is the technical lead for the Facilities Reduction Program. Guidry said he attended the forum to help his teammates answer any technical questions about upcoming contract actions for the program.

"From an engineering perspective, the small business event is a great networking tool for our program," Guidry said. "I am here to support our team because of the upcoming multiple award task order contract acquisitions,"



Photo by James Campbell

Tammy Learned (right), Huntsville Center's Energy Optimization Branch chief, speaks with Rachael Martin, a managing partner at GDP Energy Solutions LLC, of Birmingham, Ala., at the 2012 Huntsville Center Small Business Forum, Nov. 9.

he said. "I'd encourage other technical employees like myself who are assigned to PDT's at the Center to take advantage of this opportunity. It helped me and it helped our program" Dennis Bacon, program manager for FRP agreed.

"Having Blaine here today is an example of the synergy we have within the FRP project delivery team," Bacon said.

Jennifer McClure, Contracting Directorate said she has participated in the forum since 2010. In the past, she worked in an administrative capacity to help with the registration process for the effort. However, she was able to take on a very different role this year.

"I was a greeter. I got to mingle with contractors and answer questions about upcoming contracts, McClure said.

"I've gained a better understanding of how the system works. Becoming more familiar with them makes me more aware of what happens on their end," she said.

"I felt like I was making more of a difference by telling contractors how to get the contracting process started."

Boone said attendees really seemed to appreciate the opportunity to intermingle and network one-on-one with Huntsville Center staff.

To have all of the key players under one roof and have the entire process explained by project delivery team members was a good experience for them.

Vucinaj said she hope everyone took something from the forum that will help them begin the contracting process.

"The information that our vendors can glean from these key players has a direct effect on how businesses strategies to better serve our needs. It's a win for everyone involved." Boone said.

Middle school youngsters learn geographic technology

By Jo Anita Miley Public Affairs Office

Students from the Ed White Middle School saw up close what it is like to be part of a GIS team Nov.14 during GIS Day at the school led by employees from the Corps of Engineers Huntsville Center.

The goal was to give sixth-grade students a basic geography lesson using Geographic Information System technology.

Huntsville Center Engineering Directorate employees Michele Maxson, Molly Richardson, Beverly Richey and Kacey Tyra Directorate spoke about everything from their daily use of GIS to how the organization utilizes this technology on project sites during natural disasters around the globe.

GIS Day is part of an annual education initiative that shows how GIS works. Users open their doors to schools, businesses and the general public to showcase real-world applications of GIS. GIS Day is held the third Wednesday in November during National Geography Awareness Week, a geographic literacy initiative



Photos by Jo Anita Miley

Beverly Richey, geographer and GIS specialist at Huntsville Center, helps a student at Ed White Middle School use an online map Nov. 14 during a Geographic Information System activity at the school. More than 150 sixth-graders participated in the GIS Day workshop led by the Corps of Engineers Huntsville Center employees. The school was among six schools in Alabama that observed GIS Day.

sponsored by the National Geographic Society.

The day's activities at the school included online resources, maps and discussions related to geography.

Richey, a geographer and GIS specialist at Huntsville Center, led two 90-minute discussions she said were intended to give students an

See GIS on page 10



Full house

Clay Weisenberger (standing), Huntsville Center Office of Counsel, conducts ethics training to Center employees Nov. 19 in the Center cafeteria. Ethics training is an annual mandatory face-to-face requirement for all government employees. Army Corps of Engineers policy states that deployed personnel are exempt from the annual training requirement but are required to take it as soon as possible after they return. Two more training sessions are set for Dec. 3 at 11 a.m. and Dec. 4 at 1:30 p.m. in the cafeteria.

Photo by Jo Anita Miley

GIS

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introduction to geography that focused on spatial perspective and how to use maps as stories.

"When you write a story, the author (which is you) needs information. For example, your main character in the story needs a name, or an age or a certain color hair," Richey said. "Well, it's the same with maps. Maps need information -- this is what makes GIS. 'G' is a map front end or the 'picture' and the 'I-S' is the information, which is data, whether it is a road name or name of a neighborhood."

Christine Hunt, a sixth-grade teacher at Ed White Middle, attended the GIS event because she wanted to show her students the relevance of the subject matter.

"I think having a geography lesson using GIS technology is important because the students have been allowed to look at maps from textbooks, but today they are allowed to look at maps and research using technology," Hunt said. "The overall goal of the lesson was to help students integrate this lesson using a digital curriculum."

Students also had a chance to ask questions during a fast-paced mapping exercise challenge as part of the workshop.

The students were divided into teams and asked to construct their own "spatial map" by finding a library, post office, hospital, movie theater and mall. Afterward they loaded this information onto an online map.

The students said they enjoyed the day's activities.

"Kayla Black, who took part in the first session, said participating in the day's workshop has changed the way she looks at geography.

"The GIS people showed me how we learn different things every day that help us to make our own 'mind maps," Black said. "I didn't know we actually store these maps in our brain and use them to get around later. I want to learn more about how GIS works."



Kacey Tyra, right, intern at Huntsville Center, helps sixth-graders at Ed White Middle School in Huntsville, Ala. during a Geographic Information System activity Nov. 14 at the school.

The school administrators said they were pleased with the career awareness part in the workshop.

Assistant principal Hovet Dixon said middle school age is where students either start getting involved in the mathematics and the science, or they get discouraged with it.

"The middle school age is that decision point when students decide what courses they're actually going to take in high school," Dixon said. "We want our students to know about unique STEM careers like geographers, geophysicists and GIS professionals. We include some of this into their school curriculum. However, it's always a plus for us when we can bring in outside resources to help reinforce this."

Richey said the Huntsville Center employees are more than happy to share their experiences working with GIS, to encourage the students to follow in their footsteps as GIS professionals.

"I'm excited to join in on the worldwide celebration today saluting geospatial technology and its power to better our lives," Richey said. "GIS is for everyone."



Career awareness

Photo by James Campbell

John Mayes, director of center contracting at the Corps of Engineers Huntsville Center, speaks to Future Business Leaders of America students from Buckhorn High School Nov. 7 during an education event at the center. Mayes partnered with Daniel Heinzelman, director of resource management at Huntsville Center, to coordinate the career awareness event targeted to reach out to Madison County high school students to teach them about possible careers in the business industry. William Livermore, career technical teacher and FBLA coordinator at Buckhorn High, attended the event with 39 of his students.

Distracted driving awareness focus on smart phones

Driving Awareness Month, a time for Americans to reflect on the importance of not driving while impaired or distracted.

Distracted driving is driving while doing another activity that takes the driver's attention away from driving and increasing the chance of a motor vehicle crash.

According to the U.S. Department of Transportation Website *Distraction*. *Gov*, there are three main types of distraction: visual—taking your eyes off the road; manual—taking your hands off the wheel; and cognitive—taking your mind off what you are doing.

The site states that in 2010, more than 3,000 people died in crashes that were reported to involve a distracted driver and more than 400,000 people were injured.

Distracted driving activities include things like using a cell phone, texting, and eating. Using in-vehicle technologies (such as navigation



systems) can also be sources of distraction.

While any of these distractions can endanger the driver and others, texting while driving is especially dangerous because it combines all three types of distraction.

A recent Center of Disease Control analysis examined the frequency of two major distractions—cell phone use and texting—among drivers in the United States included the following findings: 25 percent of drivers in the United States reported that they "regularly or fairly often" talk on their cell phones while driving and 9 percent of drivers in the United States reported texting or e-mailing "regularly or fairly often" while driving.

Risk factors for these activities alone include taking the driver's attention away from driving more frequently and for longer periods than other distractions. Younger, inexperienced drivers under the age of 20 may be at highest risk because they have the highest proportion of distraction-related fatal crashes.

However, distracted driving can be prevented as many states, including Alabama, enact laws banning texting while driving. As of Aug. 1, drivers throughout the state can be pulled over and receive a traffic citation for texting or e-mailing while driving.

Federal employees should also be know that in 2009, President Obama issued an executive order prohibiting federal employees from texting while driving on government business or with government equipment.

(William Farrow contributed to this article.)

Ethics Corner: A holiday poem

By Clay Weisenberger Office of Counsel

he holiday season - a time for good cheer! For egg nog and parties and friends to be near. I must be careful, lest I accept free A gift not permitted, no matter how wee.

Part two-six-three-five of the 5 CFR Explains in detail the relevant bar. It defines the term "gift" to mean all things worth money.

That's basketball tickets or jars full of honey.

Some gifts may be taken but some are *verboten*.

The source is the key - it's the rule that I'm quotin.'

When from me or others the source seeks some act, I must find an exception or I could be sacked.

Even others who give can cause problems for me; if my job prompts the giving - my position, you see. But lucky for me, exceptions exist. They're in subpart B and should not be missed

I can pay market value if the gift I do like. Or I find a nice way to say "go take a hike." I can always say no, but need not decline, if worth \$20 or less, then the gift can be mine.

This exception has prompted some very loud hollers. It says gifts are okay if worth twenty dollars. But surely the public is certain to see, I could never be bought for a sandwich and tea.

Restrictions apply so it does not suffice, to pay twenty bucks for a gift twice the price.

And in any one year I can't use it, of course, to go over the limit - \$50 per source.

For gifts that a friend or my sister might send, the rules recognize I don't want to offend.

Regardless of value, it only must be that their motive to give wasn't business, but me.

The rule's much the same in the case of my spouse, who happens to work as she can't stand our house.

Although her employer is one of those sources, I can go to their parties and avoid more divorces.

In the case of most parties, the rule's not so clear as the agency must have an

interest, I fear.

If worth more than twenty and it's no friend true, then I'd better seek guidance or I could be blue. What of those in the office with whom I share much? Are all treats a taboo - must we always go dutch?

The rules here are different, they're in subpart C. They okay some gifts, even to and from me.

I can give to my boss a limit of ten, a baseball, a cap or even a pen. If not to my boss, or my chain of command. To a friend I can give more without being canned

I always look forward to my office party. We're all in good moods and the food is so hearty.

If no arm is twisted, collecting's okay; to make sure that everyone has a good day.

So go forth with good cheer and know there's no reason, to think that the gift rules will ruin your season.

If you have any ethics question, call me at (256) 895-1140 or send e-mail to clay.weisenberger@usace.army.mil

DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY ENGINEERING AND SUPPORT CENTER, HUNTSVILLE P.O. BOX 1600 HUNTSVILLE, AL 35807-4301

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