



US Army Corps  
of Engineers®

Vol. 34 Issue 7  
July 2013

www.hnc.usace.army.mil

Huntsville Center

# Bulletin

## Editor's note ...

This is the last monthly hard copy of the Huntsville Center Bulletin. The Bulletin will now be published quarterly with the first quarterly edition published in October.

## On the inside ...

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## Utility rate intervention can save Army installations money

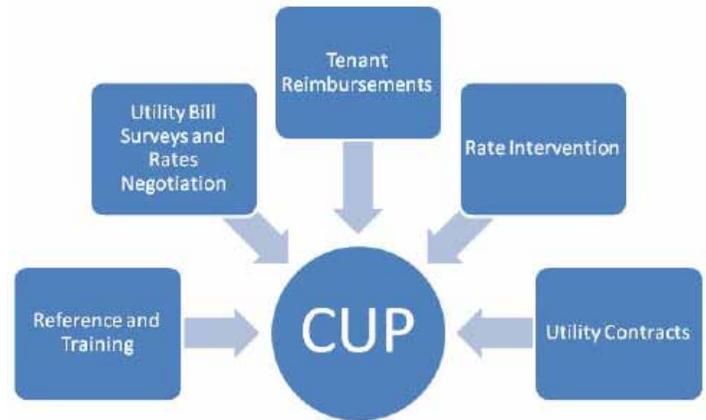
By Debra Valine  
Public Affairs Office

Wouldn't it be great if there was someone you could call if the utility company was trying to raise the cost for energy? If you're an Army garrison, there is.

The U.S. Army Engineering and Support Center, Huntsville's Commercial Utilities Program (CUP) is staffed with two public utility specialists who can provide a utility rate intervention and help negotiate a lower utility cost for you.

"In 2012, the Army paid approximately \$1.3 billion for utilities consumed at garrisons and other land-holding facilities, Army wide," said Bernard Givan, the assistant deputy Army power procurement officer. "The Commercial Utilities Program could save the Army millions per year."

CUP can assist and ensure installations are paying the best utility rates and review utility bills to ensure that utility



companies are charging properly, installations are being reimbursed by tenant organizations, taking advantage demand side management options, maximizing peak reductions, etc.

CUP provides the following services and benefits to installations:  
1. Utility Rate Intervention – CUP provides technical support to U.S. Army Legal Services and manages utility consultants that provide expert witness testimony before utility regulatory bodies in opposition to rate increase petitions filed by regulated utility companies. CUP can negotiate with unregulated utilities for

the best rates available to the installation. The benefits are significant cost avoidance and savings that can be as great as \$7 - \$8 million annually Army wide.

2. Installation Utility Management Evaluations – CUP assists and trains installation personnel to review utility billings to ensure billings are accurate, use the appropriate rate, exclude taxes for which the Army is exempt and includes any credits, e.g., for power outages. CUP also assists and trains installation personnel to calculate fair and equitable rates for utility consumption by reimbursable tenants. These benefits

See **UTILITY** on page 5

# Commander's thoughts

**T**eam,  
Unless something happens at the last minute, furlough will go into effect the week of July 8. By now you should have received a decision letter letting you know the furlough is official. Our Corps of Engineers leadership has fought from the beginning to lessen the impact of furlough, and I thank them for that.

As difficult as this is, I have tried to explain to everyone that as a reimbursable organization we must still deliver for our customers. Where we have issues we need to manage expectations. There is nothing more important than making our customer happy as they have options where to spend their program dollars. If we help them, they will continue to use us into the future.

This month we celebrate the 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the All Volunteer Force July 1 and our independence from Great Britain July 4. Folks celebrate the Fourth of July in many different ways: patriotic displays, family picnics, parades, etc. I hope all of you have a safe and happy holiday. A history of the Declaration of Independence is available online at [www.archives.gov/exhibits/charters/declaration\\_history.html](http://www.archives.gov/exhibits/charters/declaration_history.html). It's an interesting read, if you have the time.

The July issue of the Huntsville

Center Bulletin will be the last monthly hard copy of the publication. The Bulletin will now be published quarterly with the first quarterly edition published in October. Going to a quarterly hard copy publication doesn't mean news and information about the important work being done by Huntsville Center employees will stop.

Externally focused articles will be published regularly on our public website, [www.hnc.usace.army.mil](http://www.hnc.usace.army.mil); the Army website, [www.army.mil/USACE](http://www.army.mil/USACE); and our social media. Articles more for Huntsville Center personnel will be posted on the Intranet site.

In June, we said farewell to Rick Suever, the chief of the Business Management Office. As always, these celebrations are bittersweet. We hate to see a valued employee retire, yet at the same time we wish them all the best. Rick had served 37 years in the federal government, with most of that at Huntsville Center. Dan Heinzelman, Resource Management director, will take over as the BMO chief. Until we hire a new RM director, Linda Sisk will be the acting director.

In May we conducted the post award meeting for the geothermal contracts under the \$7 billion renewable energy multiple award task order contract. The remaining technologies, solar, wind and biomass will be awarded by the end



**Col. Robert Ruch**

of the calendar year. Each technology presents its own unique challenges as they work their way through the system. However, once in place, task orders for future projects should be easier and quicker to award.

Now that it's officially summer, many of you will probably be out enjoying water sports or other activities. As Victor Taylor, Safety Office chief, recently pointed out, there has been an increased number of drowning fatalities at public recreation facilities. With the hot temperatures, there is also the risk of a heat injury. While you're out having fun, whether on the water or not, please keep safety in mind.

Thank you for all you do. Each of you is a valuable team member that contributes to keeping Huntsville Center great.

## Hail & Farewell

**Hail: Tiffany Atkins**, Installation Support and Programs Management **Farewell: Katherine Thrasher**, Engineering Directorate; **Shannon Walls**, Directorate of Contracting



**US Army Corps of Engineers**

*The Huntsville Center Bulletin is printed by digital copier as an official publication authorized under the provisions of AR 360-1. Opinions expressed are not necessarily those of the U.S. Army. Inquiries can be addressed to Public Affairs Office, U.S. Army Engineering and Support Center, Huntsville, Attn: CEHNC-PA, P.O. Box 1600, Huntsville, AL 35807-4301. Phone: DSN 760-1693 or commercial 256-895-1693. The Bulletin is also online at [www.hnc.usace.army.mil](http://www.hnc.usace.army.mil). The Huntsville Center Facebook page is located at <http://bit.ly/HNCfbPage>. The Twitter page is located at <http://twitter.com/CEHNC>. Circulation: 500.*

## BULLETIN

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



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# The Bulletin asks:

*What does Independence Day mean to you and how will you celebrate it this year?*

“ It is a time to remember those who gladly gave their lives for our freedom. I proudly served my country as a Soldier for more than 15 years. Independence Day makes me remember how important my service really was. This is why I continue to serve as an Army civilian. I'll spend the day with family and friends and take part in some local festivities. I have a five year old who will celebrate a birthday the same week, so I'll probably be busy planning the perfect birthday tea party for her as well. ”

Lakeshia Dunigan  
Engineering Directorate



“ Having a son in the Army who is deployed in a combat zone is a very personal reminder of the price paid by others so we can enjoy the freedom we have and the dedication required for us to remain free. Our celebration will be low-key because we are caring for my elderly and ill father-in-law. An annual tradition for my family is watching the Fourth of July concert and fireworks show broadcast from Washington, D.C. in the evening. We'll be joined in the house by our two large, normally outside dogs who get scared by the fireworks. ”

Bill Noel  
Ordnance and Explosives Directorate



“ I was in the Army for nine years, and was deployed. I'm proud to have served with a great unit. Unfortunately, we lost some of our guys, which changed the way I view the Fourth of July now. I see it as a time for us to reflect on the sacrifices of those who served. I will spend time with my family in Tennessee. We usually get together to grill out and shoot fireworks. ”

Brandon Bradley  
Center Contracting Directorate



A history of the Declaration of Independence is available online at:  
[www.archives.gov/exhibits/charters/declaration\\_history.html](http://www.archives.gov/exhibits/charters/declaration_history.html)

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## Employee Spotlight

# Nicholas Stolte

By Jo Anita Miley  
Public Affairs Office

**N**icholas Stolte works as an environmental engineer in Huntsville Center's Environmental Munitions Center of Expertise, Military Munitions Division.

Stolte says he works in the most public field of engineering. Although engineering can be quite tedious for some, Nolte often looks for fun and resourceful ways to interact with people.

"What I love most about my job are the people," Stolte said. "There is a huge diversity of technical expertise and cultural diversity on our project delivery teams. Each person adds a unique and interesting perspective that keeps ideas fresh. The coming together of these personalities on a project is what makes my job fun."

Since Huntsville Center's projects are not limited by traditional geographical boundaries, Stolte acts as an advocate for use of innovative technology on munitions response projects. He takes an active role on PDTs at Headquarters, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers tracking and prioritizing an inventory of more than 2,000 munitions response sites throughout USACE.

Stolte said his team works closely with team members to ensure quality and consistency in the way USACE executes munitions response projects.

This is accomplished by providing the necessary guidance and training



to the project teams that are actually doing the work. Working with so many project teams allows him to recognize opportunities for gains in program efficiency and improvement in the quality of project execution and deliverables.

"My job allows me to bring together a diverse group of people with skill-sets from across the nation: we have engineers, geologists, geophysicists, chemists, geographers, risk assessors, biologists and ecologists, to name a few," Stolte said. "I advise PDTs on policy, procedures and technology related to the munitions response projects. Working at the EM CX also gives me a broad view of the Corps' environmental programs."

While the EM CX directly supports all four of the USACE Campaign Plan Goals, Stolte said he focuses on Goal 4: Prepare for tomorrow, since

he works so closely with the different project delivery teams. He helps build resilient people, teams, systems and processes to sustain a diverse culture of collaboration, innovation and participation to shape and deliver strategic solutions. Also, a large part of his job involves recognizing what USACE is doing well, and finding ways to continuously improve the Military Munitions Response Program and Formerly Used Defense Sites programs. This is particularly significant because the EM CX has mandatory oversight.

Stolte said performing his job isn't always easy. The greatest challenge for him is to improve his program in spite of the barriers that often exist with even the best ideas for transformation.

It takes a lot of perseverance and motivation to move forward and not become frustrated when he needs to implement a new initiative or change a course of action. It's very important that he identifies potential problems and finds innovative solutions as quickly as possible. Having a strong team helps him do this, he said.

"Our group focuses on building strong teams, and I can find some pretty resourceful ways to get this done; whether it's teaching an online class or educating kids about the 3R's in regards to unexploded ordnance safety (Recognize, Retreat Report)," Stolte said.

"By fine tuning the machine today, I'm ensuring it will be running more efficiently tomorrow," he said "It's how we prepare for tomorrow, and the highlight of my career."

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The **Employee Spotlight** is intended to let Center employees shine for positively impacting the organization through mission achievements. Employees, or teams, are nominated on a quarterly basis and are featured quarterly on the Huntsville Center website. 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](mailto:JoAnita.Miley@usace.army.mil).

## UTILITY

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include tangible savings, cost avoidance and increased funding from non-Army tenants.

3. Utility Rate Surveys – CUP verifies that an installation is receiving benefit of the lowest rate offered by a utility company and if not, recommends steps to be taken to obtain the lowest rate offered; identify other potential utility cost savings associated with improved peak demand reduction and load management, e.g., upgrading substations to accept higher voltage service offered for a lower utility rate, etc. Utility rate surveys contribute significantly to the success of rate intervention and installation utility management evaluations and potential benefits are identified.

4. Negotiate Special Rate Contracts – The Installation Management Reform

Task Force recently recommended that the Army convert its utility contracts that are now tariff based (existing rate schedule) to special rate contracts. CUP can negotiate a special rate design with the utility company whereby if the installation aggressively manages its energy demand to reduce the utility's cost of supplying energy then in return can receive the special rate from the utility.

The chief of engineers is the Department of the Army's power procurement officer and is responsible for administration of the purchase and sale of utility services and for policies, engineering, rates and legal sufficiency in connection with all utility services and contracts in which the Army has a monetary interest.

Unlike other initiatives, CUP doesn't reduce energy usage, but reduces the overall cost for energy. CUP and the Army Regulatory Law Office have helped the Army achieve cost avoidance

in excess of \$5 million per year since FY09, Givan said.

FY12 examples of successful interventions include Fort Riley, Kansas and Fort Leavenworth, Kansas where the utility requested a \$650,000 increase in annual revenue. The final decision/settlement was \$150,000 which provided an annual cost avoidance of \$500,000. Also in FY12, the electric utility servicing Fort Knox, Ky., and Blue Grass Army Depot, Ky., requested an increase of \$810,000 per year. The final settlement was \$540,000 resulting in an annual cost avoidance of \$270,000.

"CUP is a proven dollar saver, which is very important in these times of sequestration," Givan said. "The annual savings far exceed the cost for running the program. An estimated annual cost of \$2 million to proactively run the program has projected savings of between \$12 and \$24 million per year."



Photo by William S. Farrow

### SHARP stand-down

Complying with Secretary of Defense Chuck Hagel's Sexual Harassment Assault Response and Prevention stand-down, Lt. Col. William Burruss, Huntsville Center deputy commander, conducts an engagement with Huntsville Center supervisors June 24. After the stand-down, supervisors engaged their employees encouraging prevention of sexual harassment and sexual assaults by creating a climate that respects the dignity of every member of the Army Family.



## Mission Focus:

**Operation and Maintenance Engineering Enhancement Program**

# A tool for meeting defense department medical facility maintenance needs

### By Mike Hunter Installation Support and Programs Management

Inadequate maintenance of medical facility systems and real property installed equipment can have dire consequences, jeopardizing the welfare of patients often already weakened and more susceptible to infection or other medical complications.

The Operation and Maintenance Engineering Enhancement Program, administered by the U.S. Army Engineering and Support Center, Huntsville, provides a simplified process to respond to the growing operation and maintenance needs of Department of Defense medical facilities.

The OMEE program applies a systematic approach to the operation and maintenance of medical facilities to make sure these facilities serve their intended function efficiently and safely, and to ensure medical facility components reach or exceed their life expectancy.

Other benefits derived from OMEE services are improved patient comfort and care, better working environment for the health care providers, easier compliance with codes and standards, reduced life safety violations, increased reliability of systems and equipment and better long-range planning.

OMEE has two suites of Indefinite Delivery/Indefinite Quantity service contracts that use low-cost, quick-response task orders to execute maintenance requirements for DoD installations worldwide. These contracts can provide scheduled maintenance, corrective maintenance, pest management, aseptic management, grounds maintenance, biomedical equipment maintenance and repair/replacement services in support of medical facilities. Medical facility systems maintained include all mechanical,



Courtesy photo

**An example of pumps found in a mechanical room in a hospital. The OMEE program maintains the facility and performs preventative maintenance and repairs to these type pumps as well as other mechanical systems.**

electrical, architectural, utility and site systems, equipment and components. The OMEE program contractors were selected for their experience and ability to perform in medical facilities and their knowledge of the *Joint Commission and Accreditation Association for Ambulatory Health Care* requirements along with other medical codes and standards. Relevant medical facility accreditation bodies, such as TJC, evaluate DoD healthcare facilities at least once every three years. Failure of any DoD medical facility to qualify under any or all of these standards may result in short- or long-term loss of DoD capacity to medically serve its patient population.

DoD medical facilities the OMEE program serves include: hospitals, clinics, pharmacies, veterinary facilities, dental treatment facilities, medical training and research facilities, utility and energy plants supporting medical facilities, labs and medical storage facilities. The OMEE program provides for medical O&M services over a facility footprint of nearly

22 million square feet at more than 60 DoD installations, ensuring the sustainment of safe, reliable facilities to support the growing medical needs of our war fighters, their families and retirees. Demands on the OMEE program have continued to grow, with contract obligations increasing approximately 20 percent per year in each of the past four years.

All indications are that this trend of ever-increasing medical facility sustainment requirements will continue in the near future. The TRICARE 2012 Military Health System Stakeholder's Report describes a DoD patient population of greater than 9.7 million comprised of active duty military, reserve military personnel, military dependents, military retirees and others. TRICARE beneficiaries have increased by 500,000 in just the past five years.

The cumulative effects of 10 years of war continue to place a significant demand upon the DoD health care

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# Suever retires, cites value of service

By James Campbell  
Public Affairs Office

**R**ick Suever, Huntsville Center's chief of the Business Management Office, retired recently closing out a career that began more than 37 years ago as a young Cooperative Education Program student employee at the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers South Atlantic Division Laboratory.

"I think the most rewarding part of my career is serving the public," Suever said. "It's what I enjoyed most, and that's what is most important to me."

Suever's experience coming up through the Corps of Engineers is varied, but he said one project stands out as he looks back on his career.

"Being the USACE PM for the Maglev Program was the capstone project for me," Suever said. "Not only was it unique and exciting, but it was a perfect example of how the PDT concept should work."

Congress asked the Department of Transportation to perform a comprehensive study of a high-speed, magnetically levitated ground transportation system. Seeking engineering expertise, the Corps of Engineers was asked if they could contribute, and Huntsville Center became a part of the project delivery team. The final report was delivered to Congress in the early 1990s, and Suever said he keeps copies of the Center's work on the landmark study to this day.

"This was a project that involved multiple agencies, new technology, input from industry and multiple levels of the



**Rick Suever**

Corps of Engineers," Suever, said.

The conclusion of the National Maglev Initiative was that it would be both possible and beneficial to the country, but it would require significant federal government investment.

"I still keep in touch with many of the people I worked with on that project," Suever said. "I think it was important to all of us." Suever said he was also able to see the changes that took place in the Corps of Engineers over the years, and he points to the collaborative nature and customer focus of current processes as the

most beneficial.

"I can remember the days when it was different," Suever said. "Everyone worked in isolation within their own functional area and work processes were more sequential."

With the development of the Project Management Business Process, and the multi-disciplinary Product Delivery Team concept, the Corps and the Center have gone through big changes that benefit everyone involved – particularly the customer, Suever said.

At his retirement ceremony June 25, an assortment of former military and civilian officials from around the Huntsville area along with Soldiers, civilians, family members and friends from Huntsville Center gathered to wish him farewell.

"Looking across the room and seeing how many of you have gathered here to celebrate with Rick his accomplishments over his career lets me know how much he is appreciated," said Col. Bob Ruch, Huntsville Center commander.

## MAINTENANCE

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system and facilities. For example, behavioral health appointments among active duty and their dependents rose steadily from approximately 3 million in 2006 to 5.7 million in 2011. Increased in and outpatient numbers within the DoD health care system have translated into greater demands for the types of medical facility O&M services which the OMEE program can provide.

The scope of OMEE services is performance based (instead of the detailed descriptive statement of work) which results in the government and contractor working as a team to provide enhanced efficiency, cost savings, clear work requirements, superior

performance and improved customer satisfaction. Task order awards are not solely based on low bids, but are the result of numerous selection and award factors. Since these ID/IQ contracts have numerous qualified contractors available to provide these services, the selected contractor has a vested interest to provide superior services that will ensure repeat task orders in the following years.

In addition to providing O&M services for DoD medical treatment facilities, the OMEE program also supports medical training and research facilities that help our troops be better prepared for combat. OMEE provides for facility O&M services at complex, one-of-a kind laboratories and test

facilities, developing ways to prepare Soldiers for combat in all environmental conditions, or improving the protection of our troops from chemical and biological agents in the field.

The concept of "flexibility" underlies every aspect of the OMEE Program's innovative methodology in contracting to provide O&M services.

Whether it is one-stop shopping, improved responsiveness, increased partnering or the contract's yearly "option to renew," the enhanced customer service is an integral part of the OMEE process. This process can and has opened new options for government facility managers.

# Evaluation ensure accurate position sensitivity

By William S. Farrow  
Public Affairs Office

**H**untsville Center Security Office along with the Civilian Personnel Advisory Center are conducting a Position Sensitivity scrub that could result in supervisors evaluating an employee's position sensitivity designation.

Proper position designation is the foundation of an effective and consistent suitability and personnel security program.

The process determines, through the evaluation of national security and suitability requirements, what type of security investigation, or background check, is required and how closely an applicant or incumbent is screened for a position.

Lori Byrd, Huntsville Center Security Officer, said conducting a position sensitivity scrub involves gathering information from Defense Civilian Personnel Data System the Joint Personnel Adjudication System

and security files and using that information to ensure the position's PS is at the appropriate level. She said if an evaluation is required, a notification will be sent via e-mail from the security office to the supervisor.

"If we receive conflicting information after pulling the data, we will contact the supervisor and work with them to set the appropriate PS level," Byrd said.

According to Byrd, the process is expected to be completed in October.

## Source selection procedures procure best value

By Jeffery D. Byrd  
Directorate of Contracting

**S**ource Selection is used in competition negotiated contracting to select the proposal expected to result in the best value to the government.

Normally, the contracting officer is the selecting official, but there are many cases in which the agency head or other official may be the selection official. It's imperative for the source selection official to be very knowledgeable regarding best value methods because they are accountable for the decision making.

According to Federal Acquisition Regulation Part 15.101-2 Tradeoff Process, unless a lowest price technically acceptable evaluation approach is being used, the source selection will involve some form of trade-off. All participants involved in the source selection must uphold integrity throughout the procurement process. Changes of the Clinger-Cohen Act of 1996 were incorporated into FAR 3.104-3, which covers Four General Areas:

■ **Prohibition of disclosing procurement information**

■ **Prohibition of obtaining procurement information action required of agency official when contacted by offerors regarding no-federal employment**

■ **Prohibition on former officials' acceptance of compensation from a contractor**

There are two basic organizational approaches to Source Selection:

**Informal Source Selection – Contracting officer makes award decision with assistance of technical evaluation and price analysis. This approach is generally used for acquisitions lower than those thresholds described in Defense Federal Acquisition Regulation Supplement 207.103.**

**Formal Source Selection – Generally used in high-dollar**

**acquisitions. Normally an official above the contract officer must select the source.**

Major Source Selection consists of the following elements:

**Sources Selection Authority** – Makes the final selection decision. The SSA should be at a management level above the contracting officer and technical official.

**Source Selection Advisory Council** – The SSAC is optional and at the discretion of the SSA. The SSAC reviews the evaluation of the Source Selection Evaluation Board and make a recommendation to the SSA. For Army acquisitions, an SSAC is required for all acquisitions over \$100 million.

**Source Selection Evaluation Board** – Assists the contracting officer in developing the source selection plan and evaluating proposals in accordance with the source selection plan and request for proposal.

**Past Performance Evaluation Group** – May be a part of the SSEB or they may be independent, but their primary duties are to evaluate the performance risk.

**Advisors** – Experts, government and non-government, called upon to provide advisory assistance to the source selection team.

Source selection officials have the power or right to decide or act according to their own independent judgment. The primary rule is that the SSA shall have a rational basis for making the selection decision based upon his or her comparative assessment of the proposals against the evaluation criteria and may use reports and analyses prepared by the evaluation team.

# Engineering profession showcased for local youths

By Jo Anita Miley  
Public Affairs Office

A traveling exhibition for libraries, “Discover Tech: Engineers Make a World of Difference,” is in Huntsville for the summer.

The exhibition is part of the STAR Library Education Network led by the Space Science Institute’s National Center for Interactive Learning and is supported through a grant from the National Science Foundation. The exhibition includes guest engineers and lecturers in an effort to inspire students to pursue careers in engineering.

Tony Torres, chief of the Systems-Cost Division at the U.S. Army Engineering and Support Center, Huntsville, spoke at a Discover Tech mentoring session in the Madison Public Library media room June 6. Torres, a civil engineer, put together a science, technology, engineering and math presentation for students that showcased different types of engineers, their roles in society and the future job outlook. He also gave an in-depth discussion on the building methods engineers used to design the library. He encouraged the students to “build a better room.”

“Being that I am an engineer, I can quickly pick up on some problems with how this room is designed,” he said. “Let’s talk about a couple of things that could have been done differently when the engineers were planning this room. What are some of the first things we (engineers) look at when we are working on a new building: who is going to use the building and what will they put in it?”

Torres told the students he has enjoyed his 35-year engineering career.

“I’ve worked on some great projects that have helped make the world a better place for you, but I’m getting older and will retire soon,” he said. “Someone will have to take my place one day, and I’m hoping it will be one of you.”

Sophie Young, adult program coordinator for the Huntsville/Madison County Public Library, said this year marks the first time the exhibit has come to the Huntsville area. Discover Tech also includes a 750-square foot exhibit, housed at the library from May 18 through July 9. The exhibit has an inventor’s lab, hand crank generator and interactive quiz game.

Young said Discover Tech is very much a community effort. The library system partnered with local science and engineering organizations for speakers, engineering activities and outreach collaboration to support STEM activities for students throughout the summer.

“We are pleased with the response we’ve gotten from local



Photo by Jo Anita Miley

**Tony Torres, right, speaks to children about the importance of Science, Technology, Engineering and Math in society.**

business to support Discover Tech. These organizations are making an investment in our future,” Young said. “It’s an excellent tool for raising STEM awareness in our youth. We’re excited about Discover Tech, and we’re happy to share the excitement.”

Torres said he is pleased with the participation he got during his career event in Madison. He said he would like to have this career discussion with older students, maybe high school or college-aged. He wants to inspire the next generation of engineers.

“Many of us (engineers) will be retiring during the next decade, so it is crucial that we take a look at how we are going to replenish the work force,” Torres said. “It is necessary to have events like this, because it may be the one thing that gets students thinking about pursuing a career in engineering. We need more of you to consider becoming an engineer.”

# Science, arts symposium keeps students focused

By Jo Anita Miley  
Public Affairs Office

Students from local summer camp and home school programs took a field trip June 20 to the historic Cooper House in downtown Huntsville to attend the Tennessee Valley Jazz Society's first Science and Arts Symposium. They got to meet scientists, engineers, mathematicians and even an artist or two.

The Aviation and Missile Research Development and Engineering Center and the Engineering and Support Center, Huntsville collaborated on this science, technology, engineering, math and arts education outreach event, providing mentors and judges for the science and technology competition.

The experience gave students a clearer picture of what skills are needed to work in careers, particularly in the fields of science, technology and mathematics. It also gave them a chance to learn about what it takes to one day become an Army civilian.

Also participating as mentors or judges at the symposium were AMRDEC employees Ekundayo "Dayo" Lewis, systems engineer, and Cheryl Gittens, educational outreach coordinator; Alyson Garnes, engineering student; Faith Ryder, engineering student and Huntsville Center employee; and Atidya Williams, a work force development specialist in the center's Business Management Office.

Dr. Patrick Taylor, an electrical engineer in AMRDEC's Propulsion Technology, Weapons Development and Integration Directorate, took lead on the science and technology competition, providing hands-on mentoring for students who are a part of the Madison County 4-H Robotics Club.

"Why do you think your robot



Photo by Cherlyn Gittens

**Dr. Patrick Taylor, center, an engineer at the Aviation and Missile Research Development and Engineering Center, explains robotic principles to Madison County 4-H Robotics team members during the Tennessee Valley Jazz Society's Science and Arts Symposium.**

doesn't run as fast as you'd like, and how can you improve its functionality?" Taylor asked.

"Walk us through your process and we'll help you fix this problem. We solve issues like this in our lab every day."

Howard Bankhead, director of the Tennessee Valley Jazz Society's Youth Life Development Program organized the event as part of the weeklong 2013 Jazz-N-June Festival.

Bankhead said the purpose of having a Science and Arts Symposium is to help kids work on character development and provide them an introduction to STEM and art careers by individuals who are working in these fields.

Team Redstone organizations were invited to participate in the event to showcase their education initiatives.

Over the course of three hours, students were immersed in art, music and science, taking part in art activities, robotics and science demonstrations, and watching a live jazz ensemble

performance.

Bankhead said historically, the summer is a somewhat dormant period for education, making it a perfect time for Jazz-N-June to offer fun and enjoyable educational opportunities. His goal for the event is to help students stay focused. He said he is pleased with the participation from Team Redstone volunteers.

"The Jazz Festival's major thrust is now youth development, and we believe that giving our youth more opportunities to experience wholesome and educational activities will promote a positive change in their character development," he said.

"Today the students met actual scientists, engineers and artists who are showcasing their respective talents, skills and crafts. Every child in attendance had an opportunity to learn something new about science and art. It's a win for everyone involved."

# Distracted DRIVING



## Army hosts event, raises awareness

By Lori Yerndon  
Army Combat Readiness/  
Safety Center

**M**otor vehicle accidents involving a distracted driver kill thousands of people each year on America's roadways. Anytime drivers text, use a cell phone or navigation system, change a radio station, eat or drink, or do anything that diverts their attention from the road, the opportunity for an accident to happen increases exponentially.

For some accident victims, they were merely in the wrong place at the wrong time and a distracted driver slammed into their vehicle. No matter the circumstances, organizations across the nation agree that distracted driving has become an epidemic on U.S. highways.

Joining the nationwide effort to raise awareness of the risks associated with this unsafe practice, the U.S. Army Combat Readiness/Safety Center hosted its first-ever distracted driving event, "So you think you can drive ... distracted?" June 4.

"We are all guilty of driving distracted and putting ourselves and others at risk when we're on the road," said Brig. Gen. Timothy J. Edens, director of Army Safety and commanding general, U.S. Army Combat Readiness/Safety Center. "We hope today's activities will demonstrate just how dangerous distracted driving

really is."

Thirty-three Soldiers and Department of the Army Civilians, between the ages of 21 and 45, negotiated a one-mile driving course that simulated urban driving while observer/controllers attempted to "distract" them as they drove. Throughout the course, drivers encountered hazards designed to replicate distractions that drivers face daily. They dealt with objects suddenly jutting across the road, "passengers" attempting to get their attention, blaring music, continually ringing cell phones and a barrage of text messages.

"The training was very realistic and helped point out your weaknesses and strengths," said Spc. Hilary Phillips, U.S. Army Aeromedical Research Laboratory.

"I think it (the training) will definitely teach people to be safer drivers."

Once the drivers completed the course, their performances were critiqued. Then the drivers listened to a testimonial from a Crestview, Fla., man familiar with the consequences of distracted driving.

In 2011, Rusty Fine's 18-year-old niece, Megan Warman, was texting and driving on her way to school. She veered off the road slightly, overcorrected and her car flipped at least six times. She died 10 days later from her injuries. Fine was also Megan's legal guardian, and he said the impact of her death was devastating.

"Never in a thousand years did we think this would happen to Megan," Fine

said. "But it did and it can happen to any family. It's important that the word gets out about how dangerous it is to drive distracted."

The National Safety Council reports that thousands die needlessly each year because people continue to use their cell phones while driving, handheld or hands-free.

Here are some facts from the NSC and the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration that are indicative of how rampant and dangerous distracted driving is:

- Drivers who use handheld devices are four times more likely to be involved in crashes serious enough to cause injury.
- Sending or receiving a text takes a driver's eyes from the road for an average of 4.6 seconds; the equivalent, at 55 mph, of driving the length of an entire football field, blind.
- Eleven percent of all drivers under the age of 20 involved in fatal crashes were reported as distracted at the time of the crash. This age group has the largest proportion of drivers who were distracted.
- In 2011, vehicle accidents involving a distracted driver accounted for 387,000 personal injuries.
- About nine percent of all drivers are talking on cell phones at any given daylight moment. Text messaging creates a crash risk 23 times worse than driving while not distracted.

# **Ethics Corner: Maintaining impartiality in performing public duties**

**By Clay Weisenberger  
Office of Counsel**

**W**hen can a contractor ride in a government vehicle? It depends on the facts. A rental car is considered a government vehicle if it is being used for official travel. If you, a government employee, and a contractor employee are attending a meeting and are TDY, it would seem to make sense that you could share a vehicle to go to and from the airport, hotel and meeting location together. It would, after all, save money, and ensure everyone arrived at the same time.

**But are those the factors that have to be evaluated to determine if this is allowable under the ethics rules?** No. Generally an Army employee who is engaged in official travel in a vehicle that is paid for by the Army may not permit the contractor employee to ride in the vehicle. However, there are exceptions. The specific facts must be presented to the ethics

counselor who will determine if this is allowable under the ethics rules. If it is, this should be noted on the Army employee's travel orders in case anyone raises a question later.

One example where a contractor employee can ride in the government vehicle is where the government employee and contractor employee are attending a meeting and the place where the meeting is to be held limits the number of vehicles that can be allowed access.

If the meeting is for official purposes, and both the Army employee and contractor employee are attending to conduct official business, then they could ride in the same vehicle to and from the meeting.

Here is another example of a situation that might arise. An Army employee and a contractor employee must attend a meeting in Atlanta. The meeting is to conduct official business. The contract provides for the contractor to be reimbursed

travel expenses to attend meetings. The Army employee plans to drive a government vehicle from Huntsville, to Atlanta. The Army employee has a good working relationship with the contractor employee and would enjoy the company on the drive to Atlanta. After all, they are going to the same meeting for official purposes.

**Can the contractor employee ride in the government vehicle with the Army employee?** Based on these facts, the answer would be no. There could be other relevant facts that could make this answer "yes." The point to remember is that a government employee cannot automatically offer a ride to a contractor employee, or vice versa, just because it might save time and money.

If you plan ahead, Office of Counsel can work with your particular situation to see what may or may not be allowable. Please make sure you get our input before you act.

If you have any questions, contact Clay Weisenberger at 256-895-1140.

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