



U.S. ARMY ENGINEERING AND SUPPORT CENTER, HUNTSVILLE



The Bulletin

January 2022



A NEW HOME

■ **Huntsville Center breaks ground on new facility at Redstone Arsenal**

Page 4

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



| | |
|---|----|
| Groundbreaking signifies move onto Redstone Arsenal..... | 4 |
| Supercomputer procurement streamlines after OSD review..... | 5 |
| Small business inclusion recognized by USACE..... | 6 |
| REM program grows..... | 7 |
| Small Business Forum 2021..... | 8 |
| MDA recognizes project manager..... | 9 |
| ISPM honors Thompson with Difference Maker Award..... | 10 |
| Martin honored with DOD disability award..... | 11 |
| Certification program leads to academic degree..... | 12 |
| Customer service satisfaction survey results..... | 12 |
| Engineer's son heading to Naval Academy..... | 13 |
| Focus on Leadership..... | 14 |
| Focus on Health & Safety..... | 15 |
| Focus on Business..... | 16 |
| Focus on Professionals..... | 17 |
| Focus on Human Capital..... | 18 |

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OF ENGINEERS,
U.S. ARMY ENGINEERING
AND SUPPORT CENTER,
HUNTSVILLE



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Commander's Thoughts

“Your safety is extremely important to me and rest assured I take this virus very seriously”



Col. Sebastien Joly

Team,
As we welcome another new year, I hope you all had a very happy holiday season. The holiday season is a special opportunity to spend extra time with family and friends, reflect on the past year, and anticipate the opportunities that lie ahead.

If you were able to participate in the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers-wide town hall on Dec. 1, you heard the 55th Chief of Engineers, Lt. Gen. Scott Spellmon, talk about one of the Administration's top priorities --rebuilding and modernizing the Nation's infrastructure with commitment to stimulate at least \$1.5 trillion in new infrastructure investment. USACE fully supports improvements in the delivery of our Nation's infrastructure needs. The Infrastructure Initiative is an opportunity for USACE to meet current and future needs of the Nation. Although Huntsville Center does very little in the Civil Works mission, I believe we may see an increase in some related installation support, environmental and ordnance work.

Thanks to everyone who took the Federal Employee Viewpoint Survey. The survey is the best tool available to measure your perceptions in many critical areas including leadership practices, training and development, work-life balance and opportunities

for career advancement. The survey results not only provide the Center's leadership with insight into areas where improvements are working, but also where more needs to be done. I always welcome all feedback, positive or negative. The first step to solving a problem is discovering there is a problem and I assure you Center leadership and management will work to address problem areas.

On Dec. 12, I directed all personnel entering Center facilities to resume wearing a face covering in accordance with the July Deputy Secretary of Defense directive after Center for Disease Control recommendations for personnel "In areas of substantial or high community transmission." Data from the CDC that week put the Huntsville Metro area back in the "substantial" level for positive COVID cases as we saw a rise above 50 cases per 100K in the Area Of Interest that we monitor (for both Local and CDC reported rates).

Your safety is extremely important to me and rest assured that I take the virus very seriously. That's why I am also continuing to encourage vaccination against this virus. History has proven that vaccines are a proven measure to better protect you and others from viruses.

Little has changed since the Army directed a standardized notification

memo be issued to each civilian employee about the vaccination mandate in November. However, I will continue to share additional information when it is published by Army and USACE. If you are vaccinated and you have updated your DD Form 3175, there is nothing more for you to do now. If you are not vaccinated on the basis of a medical condition or circumstance, or a sincerely held religious belief, practice, or observance, I encourage you to check out the Safer Federal Workforce website at <https://www.saferfederalworkforce.gov/> for clear guidance. The exemption review process is expected to begin with training for the advisory panel at HQ in January. The panel has received 3,600+ requests and will review each deliberately and provide a recommended determination to the Chief for his final decision. This process is expected to take a considerable amount of time, so please be patient and continue to abide by the Safer Federal Workforce guidance.

Our groundbreaking ceremony was Nov. 5, marking the beginning of construction for the Center's new 205,000 square-foot facility on Redstone Arsenal. The new facility allows us to consolidate off-post leases, consolidate the workforce under one

See COMMANDER

Page 8



Photo by Kristen Bergeson

A groundbreaking ceremony Nov. 5 marks the beginning of construction for Huntsville Center's new 205,000 square-foot facility on Redstone Arsenal. Pictured, left to right, are Huntsville Center's Chris DeMarcus, Martha Cook, Nate Durham, Chip Marin, Deborah Cosby, Kelly Larsen, and Lt. Col. Benjamin Summers; Col. Glenn Mellor, Redstone Arsenal Garrison commander; Greg Hall, Corporate Office Property Trust Vice President; Jake Roth, Redstone Arsenal Department of Public Works; Frank Nola and Christine Jones with Nola VanPeuresm Architects; and Ryder Lett, Mobile District Real Estate Office.

Ground breaking signifies Huntsville Center's move onto Redstone Arsenal

By William S. Farrow
Huntsville Center Public Affairs

Shovels turned dirt during a groundbreaking ceremony Nov. 5 at Redstone Arsenal's Enhanced Use Lease area signifying the beginning of construction efforts to make Huntsville Center a geographic member of Team Redstone.

Huntsville Center in September awarded a new lease executed by U.S. Army Corps of Engineers' Mobile District Real-Estate Office to Corporate Office Property Trust (COPT) for construction of a new headquarters facility for the Center. Participating in the ceremony were representative of Huntsville Center, Redstone Arsenal, Mobile District Real Estate Office, Corporate Office Property Trust (EUL development), Robins & Morten (construction firm) and Nola Van Peursesem (architects).

Huntsville Center's deputy commander, Lt. Col. Benjamin

Summers, said getting to the point of breaking ground for the new construction has been a long time coming.

"Today represents a culmination of five years of multiple contract actions and awards working through significant challenges to get where we are today," Summers said.

Nathaniel Durham, Huntsville Center command program manager, said the new 205,000 square foot facility is expected to be a purpose built, three story building allowing the Center to consolidate its off-post leases, consolidate the Center's workforce, and provide a more secure environment for the Center's staff.

"The new facility will allow us all to be on post near our Team Redstone partners giving us an opportunity to further build those relationships with those we support," Durham said. Durham said construction began in November with full completion expected in 2024. From its original

location in leased offices at Huntsville's expansive Cummins Research Park, the then—named Huntsville Division began its operations in 1967 with less than 100 employees supporting the Army Ballistic Missile Defense program. Over the years, Huntsville Division's mission grew to provide specialized support to the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers by executing projects and programs requiring unique technical expertise that are generally national or very broad in scope, and not normally accomplished by other U.S. Army Corps of Engineers elements. Under USACE reorganization, Huntsville Division became Huntsville Center in 1994 and within a year relocated to a facility at University Place in Huntsville, Alabama—a facility built to accommodate about 600 employees.

Since then, the Center has grown to employ more than 1000 people and adapted its missions to provide specialized solutions across a broad spectrum of global enterprises.



Supercomputer procurement streamlines after OSD process review

By William S. Farrow
Huntsville Center Public Affairs

For the next five years, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers is no longer required to seek Office of the Secretary of Defense approval order for supercomputers.

This change streamlines Huntsville Center's High Performance Computing program's process to procure supercomputing systems for its stakeholders.

Tasha Davis, Senior Procurement Analyst, Headquarters USACE, Directorate of Contracting Office of the Senior Contracting Official-Alexandria (SCO-ALX), said the change ensures that programs across the DoD have the timely availability of industrial resources (and associated services) to meet current national defense and emergency preparedness program requirements, including Huntsville Center's HPC program.

The Center's HPC program was created in 2012 to provide cradle-to-grave procurement of supercomputers specifically for the HPCMP.

However, the PDT expanded their reach to offer their critical program-management and contract-support services to all federal agencies.

They are currently the only execution team within the DoD that has three major acquisition vehicles in place to provide key supercomputing deliverables in a cost-effective and efficient manner.

Davis said in the past, the challenge for procuring supercomputers was the approval process.

"The Deputy Under Secretary of Defense (Industrial Policy) had to approve in writing and authorize any priority rating that a defense contractor used to acquire a supercomputer," she said.

Davis said process for requesting approval to rate any order within USACE required multiple levels of approval that were external to Huntsville Center and the review process could easily add on more than two months to the acquisition milestone schedule.

"The approval of orders for supercomputers were at the DoD level, meaning coordination for each approval would mean multiple routing and reviews prior to routing for review and approval at the OSD level, where the likelihood of the reviewers being familiar with USACE's specific programs would be minimal," Davis said.

However, Davis said after research, analysis, and discussion with Deputy Under Secretary of the Army (Industrial Property) and Deputy Assistant Secretary of the Army (Acquisition Policy and Logistics), SCO-ALX was able



U.S. Army photo

A computer scientists uses a supercomputer at Aberdeen Proving Ground, Md. A procurement streamline changes the way Huntsville Center's High Performance Computing Program procures supercomputers for its stakeholders.

to confirm that the DoD guidance for supercomputers was outdated and did not align to more current DPAS DO Rating guidance, which is a contract or order placed in support of a national defense program.

Since the change, Davis said for the next five years, USACE is no longer required to seek OSD approval on each order for supercomputers where a DO Priority Rating is requested for use.

"The approved memorandum covers the USACE Enterprise (Huntsville Center, and the Engineering Research and Development Center)," she said.

"In addition to the five-year approval for DO Ratings of supercomputers, we have learned that there are no additional approvals required to rate orders or contracts that fall under of the approved DoD assigned Programs."

Davis said if the five-year memorandum had not been approved, for every single order or contract for supercomputers, even if for the same program, the procurement process would remain cumbersome.

"A DO rating request would be required, the Contracting Officer would have to complete a Request for Special Priorities Assistance Form (FORM BIS—999), provide an overview briefing of the programs and route through the various approval levels to OSD for final approval."

Small business inclusion recognized by USACE

By William S. Farrow
Huntsville Center Public Affairs

Huntsville Center's Office of Small Business Programs was recognized during the Society of American Military Engineer's Federal Small Business Conference at the Georgia World Congress Center in Atlanta Nov. 17.

The Center won in four U.S. Army Corps of Engineers' small business categories top dollar awards for Fiscal 2021.

During the ceremony, Lt. Gen. Scott Spellmon, 55th Chief of Engineers and Commanding General of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, said he was proud of all the work USACE has done to include small business in the mission.

"What a banner year we had in fiscal 2021--\$7.5 billion in small business acquisition. That's incredible," Spellmon said.

"We have to have every tool available and use effectively to deliver this (small business) program for the Corps, and today is about saying a formal 'thank you.'"

Huntsville Center's received recognition taking top awards in USACE for: District or Center Overall Highest Small Business Award by Dollar (\$708 million); District or Center Overall Highest Small Disadvantaged Business Award by Dollar (\$358 million); District or Center Overall Highest Woman Owned Small Business Award by Dollar (\$137 million) and District or Center Overall Highest Small Disabled Veteran Owned Small Business Award by Dollar (\$110 million).

Rebecca Goodsell, Huntsville Center Office of Small Business Programs chief, said the awards show the willingness of Huntsville Center's project delivery teams' determination to include small business in projects across Huntsville Center's portfolio.



Lt. Gen. Scott Spellmon, 55th Chief of Engineers and Commanding General of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, poses for a photograph with (from left) Colleen O'Keefe, Huntsville Center Contracting chief, Rebecca Goodsell, Huntsville Center Office of Small Business Programs chief, and Ken Bryant and Erica White, Huntsville Center contracting officers at the Society of American Military Engineer's Federal Small Business Conference at the Georgia World Congress Center in Atlanta Nov. 17.

"These awards reflect not just the OSBP's team's success, but also spotlight our dedication to small businesses," she said.

Huntsville Center's more than 1,000 employees manage nearly 3,000 ongoing projects at any given time.

These projects fall into five portfolios: Medical, Facilities and Base Operations, Energy, Operational Technology, and Environmental.

The portfolios comprise 43 program areas, as well as eight mandatory and six technical centers of expertise, and 17 centers of standardization.

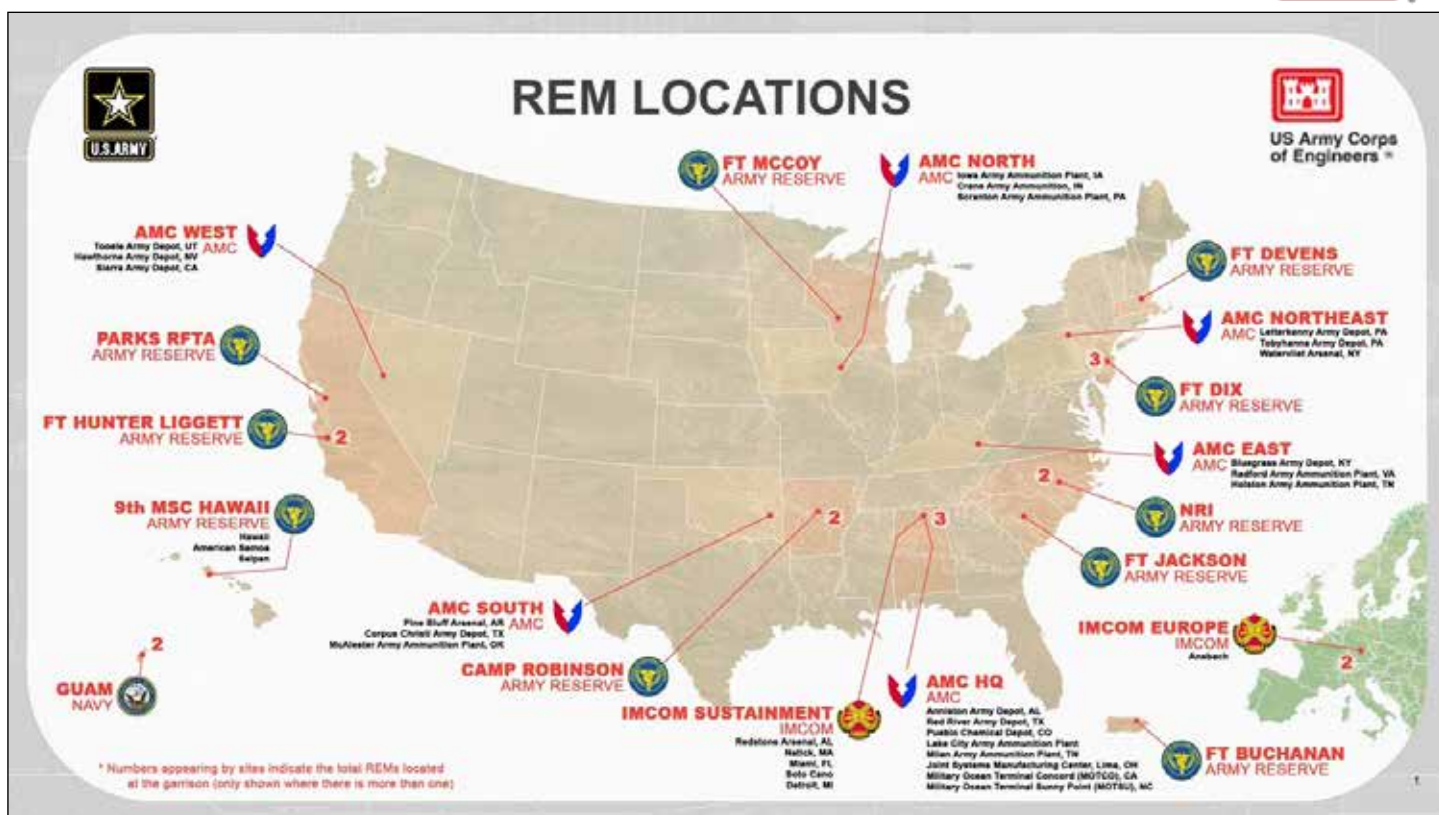
"Huntsville Center is committed to involving small businesses, and many of the Center's contracts require large contractors maximize opportunities

for small businesses to participate as subcontractors," Goodsell said.

The Center exceeded all its small business goals for fiscal year 2021, awarding 43 percent—over \$700 million—of its total contracts to small businesses.

"Small business is the engine that powers America's economic growth, and the Center's small business policy focuses on maximizing attainable prime and subcontracting opportunities for small business firms from across the nation," Goodsell said.

Huntsville Center's Small Business Program team consists of Goodsell, Nicole Boone, Betty Guillott and Leander Young.



Huntsville Center graphic

A map showing locations of Huntsville Center's Resource Efficiency Program locations. A \$45 million Blanket Purchase Agreement adds additional capacity to the program serving military installations around the globe.

Resource Efficiency Manager Program grows

By William S. Farrow
Huntsville Center Public Affairs

The award of a new \$45 million Blanket Purchase Agreement in February adds additional capacity to Huntsville Center's Resource Efficiency Manager program.

The BPA allows additional REM contract awards and four additional contractors (for a total of seven contractors) increasing the availability of REMs to meet the REM program's progression.

"The REM program continues to grow, and the program has had a lot of recent interest from the Army, Navy and Department of Energy," said Teresa Whalen, Resource Efficiency Manager (REM) Project Manager Contracting Officer Representative.

Huntsville Center's REM program posts contracted REMs to military installations to support energy efficiency programs. Each REM maintains a high level of energy related education and must be a certified energy manager.

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

Additionally, REMs work closely with other Huntsville Center energy programs to assist in finding maximum energy, water, and waste savings.

Contractors who are on the recently awarded BPA are: Green Powered Technology; SIA Solutions; Redhorse Corporation; FEDITC LLC; Lindahl Reed Inc.; SAIN Engineering Associates, Inc; Energy Engineering & Consulting Services, LLC.

The contractors represent small women owned business, small veteran owned business, small businesses and one large business. All companies will have the opportunity to submit quotes for international work, while small businesses will be considered for national call orders.

Whalen said the REM program values teamwork and the project development team, contractors, customers, and REMs work closely to stay on the forefront of energy initiatives.

The current monthly report format allows the customer to provide top projects for the REMs to focus on and clearly communicates to the REM, the contractor and the REM program specifically which efforts are most vital to each garrison.

"As the needs of the garrison change the priority list can be altered through communication with the REM team," Whalen said.

Center's programs, capabilities spotlighted during Small Business Forum 2021

By Kristen Bergeson

Huntsville Center Public Affairs

Subject matter experts from the Huntsville Center joined other U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Redstone Arsenal and Small Business Administration personnel to participate in the Society of American Military Engineers Huntsville Post's virtual Small Business Forum Oct. 20.

Hundreds of participants, mostly small business owners and business representatives from across the country, logged in to learn about Huntsville Center's more than 40 programs and upcoming acquisitions.

Col. Sebastien Joly, Huntsville Center commander, provided an overview of

the Center's unique mission and highlighted the technical expertise of its workforce.

"We are the Corps of Engineers' one-stop shop for solving technical problems around the globe, and we pride ourselves on our subject-matter expertise that allows us to come up with the best possible solutions to the nation's toughest challenges," he said.

The Huntsville Center team includes 115 professional engineers, 51 project management professionals, 21 contracting officers holding warrants valued at \$500 million or higher, 17 registered architects, 24 registered interior designers, and more. Twenty of these experts hold doctoral

degrees in their respective fields.

"This is really indicative of the expertise we find at the Center and what allows us to be the subject matter experts in many cases for the Department of the Army," said Joly.

Colleen O'Keefe, Huntsville Center chief of contracting, emphasized the importance of partnering with industry.

"As the pandemic has shown us, we cannot do this alone," she said.

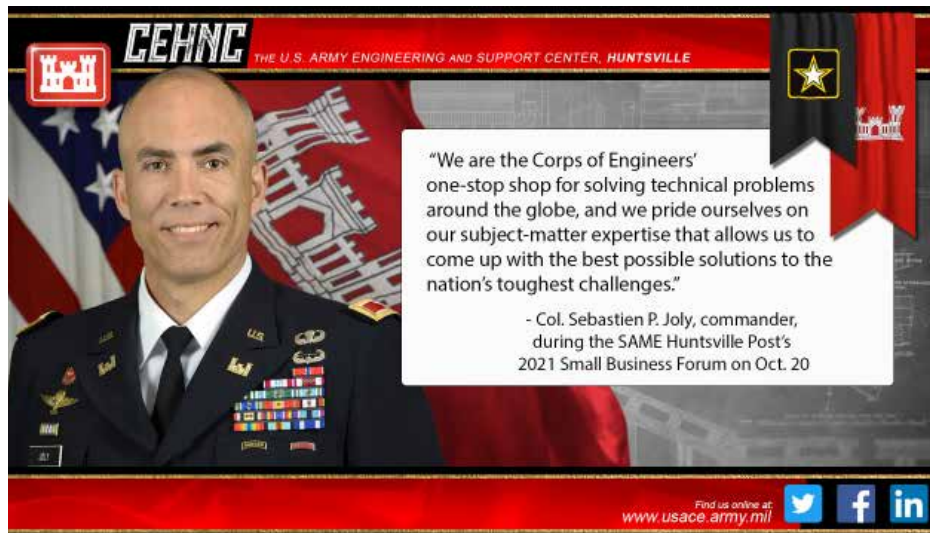
"It takes all of us, all of our industry partners and the government to solve these problems. We're asking small businesses to reach out to the larger ones, reach out to our Small Business Office, to market yourself and work with us so we can match you with projects."

Huntsville Center is committed to involving small

businesses, said O'Keefe. In fact, many contracts require that large contractors maximize opportunities for small businesses to participate as subcontractors.

The Center exceeded all of its small business goals for fiscal year 2021, awarding 43 percent—over \$700 million—of its total contracts to small businesses.

Due to the success of the interactive roundtable discussions offered for the first time during the 2020 Small Business Forum, virtual attendees once again had the opportunity to get a closer look at individual programs via breakout sessions with program managers and contracting specialists.



COMMANDER

From Page 3

roof, and provide you with a more secure environment. Our new location within the gates of Redstone Arsenal, will provide us a greater an opportunity to further build relationships with our Team Redstone partners.

Our next federal holiday coming up is Martin Luther King Jr. day on Jan.17, and that day presents you with

an opportunity to give back to your community as the holiday is also a national call to service. The national Martin Luther King Day of Service challenges Americans to transform the King Holiday into a day of citizen action volunteer service in honor of Dr. King, and I encourage you to lend a hand in any way you can to help the local community. The Volunteer Center

of Madison County and the United Way of Madison County have aggregated some wonderful volunteer opportunities for families in Madison County.

Please get in touch with them and learn about all the ways to give back to your community.

Thanks for all your hard work and
ESSAYONS!



Missile Defense Agency recognizes project manager for ‘Magic Behind the Mission’

By William S. Farrow
Huntsville Center Public Affairs

In a project that should have taken a year, a Huntsville Center project manager finished in six months, earning high-level kudos from the stakeholder.

Huntsville Center’s commander, Col. Sebastien Joly, beamed with pride as David Nieman, Missile Defense Agency Mission Support Facilities director, and Rickie Stanford, MDAMSF facility engineer, presented Huntsville Center’s Tara Clark, Missile Defense Mandatory Center of Expertise branch chief, with a letter of appreciation Nov. 4 at the Center.

“Seeing the appreciation our stakeholders have for our people and the work they do is the best part of my job,” Joly said prior to the awarding of the LOA.

The LOA from Scott Vickers, Missile Defense Agency director of mission support, praised Clark for her management of an MDA Executive Office Renovation Project at Fort Belvoir, Virginia.

Expected to take over a year to complete, the project was finished in only six months due to her superb project management skills, consistently effective communication and focused prioritization, Vickers wrote.

“These improvements to MDA Headquarters will enhance the operation capabilities within the executive suite for the execution of the MDA mission. You demonstrated ‘The Magic Behind the Mission.’”

Headquartered at Fort Belvoir, the Missile Defense Agency is a research, development, and acquisition agency within the Department of Defense. Its mission is to develop and deploy a layered Missile Defense System to defend the United States, its deployed



Photo by William S. Farrow

David Nieman, Missile Defense Agency Mission Support Facilities director, present Huntsville Center’s Tara Clark, Branch Chief, Missile Defense Mandatory Center of Expertise, with a letter of appreciation Nov. 4 as Col. Sebastien Joly, Huntsville Center commander, and Rickie Stanford, MDAMSF facility engineer, stand by.

forces, allies, and friends from missile attacks in all phases of flight.

Huntsville Center’s Ballistic Missile Defense Mandatory Center of Expertise (BMDMCX) provides standard U.S. Army Corps of Engineers support and technical expertise to MDA and ensures standardization of design where applicable; maintains technical expertise; leverages technical knowledge; and assures consistency and efficiency in delivery of BMDS facilities and infrastructure. Although most of the work the BMDCX completes for the MDA is at its many operational facilities around the globe, the work also includes facility improvements even at MDA’s headquarters.

Nieman said he knew Huntsville Center had the project management expertise to get the headquarters renovation done quickly while ensuring project quality.

Clark said the project was challenging MDA had a requirement for the work to be complete before July 4,

and work had to be completed around the schedules of MDA leadership. She said the initial site visit to develop the in-house simplified design was made in January with the design completed by February and the construction contract award was made by March.

“The project delivery team was comprised of the BMDMCX team (including engineering, contracting, and project management), the MDA team, and the contractor all working very closely and using daily touch point calls to expedite submittals, track long lead items, and prepare for operational impacts which caused our contract to be unable to work certain days and times,” Clark said.

“Though not technically complicated the team understood from the beginning that failure was not an option and that we all needed to work together to make sure we met the critical timeline.”

ISPM honors Thompson with 2021 Difference Maker Award

By Kristen Bergeson
Huntsville Center Public Affairs

A project manager with the Furnishings Program has earned top honors from the Huntsville Center's Installation Support and Program Management Directorate.

Daphne Thompson, who has worked at Huntsville Center since January 2009, received the ISPM Directorate's 2021 Difference Maker Award during an awards presentation in December.

Thompson was selected for the directorate-level award from six division-level nominees in recognition of her outstanding work ethic and professionalism, said Tom Meier, ISPM Military Support Division chief.

"Daphne is an integral part of the leadership within the Furniture Project Delivery Team," said Meier.

"On her watch, the team has made several cultural shifts that have made a significant positive impact on the program and Huntsville Center as a whole."

Thompson is responsible for streamlining the process for collecting critical project data in compliance with new requirements established by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Headquarters. This was a tedious and challenging task for the Furniture



Daphne Thompson

Program because of the large quantity of contract actions, said Arthur Martin, ISPM director.

"Daphne figured out a way to input individual projects, which brought one of the hardest programs in the center into compliance, and that process is now being used as a model for other programs," said Martin. "If it can be used for Furniture, it can be used for any of our programs."

Thompson was also the lead on a recent project to provide box fans for hundreds of Cadets' rooms at U.S. Military Academy West Point. The effort was in response to an emergency request to mitigate an air conditioning outage during hot weather. Under

Thompson's leadership, the team was able to award a contract and have the fans delivered in only eight days.

Though Thompson was instrumental in ensuring the timely completion of the project, she was reluctant to take full credit.

"My contracting team and engineering design team were a huge part of the success," she said. "It seemed to be an impossible task, especially during our busiest time of the year. The PDT recognized the urgency and importance of the request and pulled together to figure out a way to get it done."

Thompson said her work can be demanding, but finding the motivation to do it is easy.

"Ensuring our soldiers and their families have nice furniture to make their temporary homes feel more comfortable is important to me. Our soldiers sacrifice a lot to serve our country, and this is a way I can give back and directly support them," she said.

"The Furniture Program is a great team to be a part of. It's like a great big family. Although we have a heavy workload, the strong relationship we have amongst our team members and leadership makes the job a little easier and more enjoyable."

ISPM Division-Level Difference Maker Awards



Lisa Albert, Facility Technology Integration Division



Dale Adkins, Energy Division



Tanja McCracken, Facilities Division



Brandy Kuebbing, Medical Division



Brandy Hicks, Electronic Technology Division



Martin honored with DOD disability award

By Kristen Bergeson
Huntsville Center Public Affairs

The Secretary of Defense presented the head of one of the the largest directorates at Huntsville Center with an award for outstanding service and notable achievements during the 41st annual Department of Defense Disability Awards ceremony in October.

Arthur Martin III, director of the Center's Installation Support and Project Management directorate, was one of only 21 servicemembers and civilians with disabilities to be recognized for their contributions to the DOD mission.

The awards honor those whose attributes best epitomize the qualities and core values of their respective military department or DOD component, said Clarence Johnson, director of the DOD Diversity Management Operations Center.

"These individuals have found ways to streamline services, cut spending, and create a better and more positive work environment for us all," said Johnson.

"Their contributions have furthered the path to equity for individuals with disabilities and have strengthened our workforce."

Martin, a below-knee amputee on his left side, oversees the ISPM directorate that partners with USACE Major Subordinate Commands, Districts, Laboratories, Centers, Directorates of Public Works and other government agencies to provide life-cycle, world-wide support in providing maintenance, repair, operation, and upgrade services for their facilities and infrastructure. The directorate's 31 programs are responsible for executing contractual obligations totally more than \$2.5 billion, one of the largest amounts for any single USACE district or division.

Recent projects supported by his award-winning programs include the effort to restore power in Puerto Rico following the devastating storms of 2017 and the Federal Emergency Management Agency's mission to convert hotels, barracks and arenas into alternate care facilities during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Martin, who has been with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers for 35 years, said he knew he wanted to serve the Nation from a young age.

In high school, he dreamed of being an Army officer but was told by a recruiter that amputees were automatically disqualified. His guidance counselor helped him find an alternate route to serving as a civilian.

"I am satisfying my desire to serve, but it required a path," Martin said.

"This award speaks to all those who serve via an alternate path or continue to serve after sustaining a combat-related or



File photo

Arthur Martin, Installation Support and Project Management Directorate chief, received an award for outstanding service and notable achievements during the 41st annual Department of Defense Disability Awards ceremony.

other injury. This is for them as well as me."

According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, only 17.9 percent of individuals with disabilities were employed in 2020, compared to 61.8 percent of individuals without disabilities.

Huntsville Center and the DOD is committed to addressing this employment disparity by providing opportunities and programs to increase the number of employees with disabilities.

"It's important to recognize that having a physical disability or some other challenge doesn't mean you can't contribute," Martin said.

"People with disabilities have a whole lot to offer, a whole different vantage point that can really benefit the DOD."

The DOD holds its Disability Awards Month each year in October, which was National Disability Employment Awareness Month.

USACE certification program leads to academic degree for program manager

By William S. Farrow
Huntsville Center Public Affairs

Jesus Ramirez recently completed a certification program that not only enhances his ability to contribute to Huntsville Center's mission, but also added an academic degree to his accomplishments.

Ramirez, Program Manager with Huntsville Center's Fuels Program, recently completed Auburn University's Competitive Professional Development Training Program in Building Construction -- a professional development partnership program between the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and Auburn University.

The target audience for the program is Construction Management Professionals, Contracting Officers, and Contract Specialists involved in construction acquisition and administration of construction contracts.

"The program is designed to give us a better understanding of the construction industry as well as construction processes and issues," Ramirez said.

The training Ramirez received provided him with the tools needed to analyze large, complex construction changes and consisted of graduate-level college courses in Construction Cost Estimating, Scheduling and Project Management, Contracting Business, and Business and Construction Law, enough course hours to earn Ramirez a master's in construction management.

Ramirez said while the program supports mission-related competencies



Jesus Ramirez

and USACE strategic goals by concentrating on subjects related to construction management and business, it also increases its participants' proficiency in their current duties.

"The program prepares us for leadership positions within the USACE Directorate of Contracting and the Construction Community of Practice," he said.

Dennis Bacon, Fuels Program branch chief, said Ramirez certification not only enhances Ramirez' value to the Fuels team, but provides a greater competency as a leader.

"Jesus is improving his professional knowledge and education which enables him to better support the Fuels Program and the Huntsville Center to provide specialized support to DoD in order to sustain a worldwide robust fueling capability in support of the Army, Navy and Air Force service components," Bacon said.

Survey: Customer satisfaction up in FY21

By Kristen Bergeson
Huntsville Center Public Affairs

Ninety-six percent of customers were satisfied with their overall experience and would recommend Huntsville Center to other organizations, according to the Center's annual stakeholder satisfaction survey.

The fiscal year 2021 survey—which was conducted from May 24 to July 23, 2021—showed substantial improvement in customer satisfaction from previous years' surveys, said Chip Marin, Huntsville Center's programs director.

"I applaud all of our employees on the continued upward trend on stakeholder satisfaction with the work we do on their behalf," said Marin.

"The scores on overall stakeholder satisfaction increased from 85-to-96 percent in the last three years."

"This did not happen by coincidence. It is only through genuine understanding of our stakeholder's requirements and what their measure of success is, combined with unparalleled dedication to service and professionalism that this occurred."

The survey included questions addressing stakeholder relationship dynamics and general characteristics of services such as safety, quality, cost and timeliness.

Highlights from the survey include: All core scale questions received an average rating of 4 out of 5 or higher. Overall satisfaction with product planning and acquisition delivery was reported by 94 percent of respondents, up from 87 percent on the previous year's survey.

Of the 195 customers who returned completed surveys, 113 gave the highest possible rating (5 out of 5) on all questions.

Eighteen percent of stakeholders said they will require more services from Huntsville Center in the next five years; 62 percent indicated they will require the same services from the Center in the next five years; and only six percent said they will require fewer services in the next five years.

When asked to weigh the importance of scope, schedule, cost, quality and safety, respondents in previous years have consistently ranked quality the most important factor. .



Engineer's son heading to Naval Academy

By William S. Farrow
Huntsville Center Public Affairs

Ray Hall, Architect and Engineering Contracts and Criteria specialist for Huntsville Center's Range and Training Lands Program looked on Dec. 15 as his son, Sparkman High School senior Kenny Hall, signed a letter of intent to attend the Naval Academy where he will play football for the Midshipmen.

Although Kenny has always excelled in football, Ray has coached his only child academically, ensuring Kenny will receive a top-notch education.

Chicago native Ray is a civil engineer with more than 23 years of government service and over 21 years of service to the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. His USACE career beginning at Chicago District and he has been a member of the Huntsville Center team since 2004. Ray received his master's in civil engineering from the University of Alabama in Huntsville in 2019.

"I've always made it a top priority that Kenny works as hard in the classroom as he does on the football field," Ray said. "I had a reading list for him—set goals for him to read so many books a month and I'm always looking at his grades and offering guidance for him to be better academically."

Ray also supported Kenny's football career by providing him with the tools needed to increase his strength and quickness. After COVID cut into the time Kenny could spend training at the Sparkman field house, Ray converted the family garage into Kenny's personal training space.

Ray's fatherly mentorship has paid off for Kenny, a cornerback on the Sparkman Senators' football team. After sophomore and junior seasons in which Kenny excelled on the field with 56 total tackles, 24 solo tackles, a sack, an interception and two fumble recoveries, the college recruiters came calling.

Kenny's athleticism and his academic achievement (4.17 grade point average) led to 10 scholarship offers with six coming from Ivy League schools.

In June, the Hall's travelled to the northeastern U.S. and toured campuses of schools offering scholarships. Upon returning to Huntsville, he took a month to make his decision. For Kenny, the choice was clear, and he signed a commitment to attend the U.S. Naval Academy.

"They went the extra mile to ensure my family was taken care of, and that meant a lot to me," Kenny recalls.

However, as excited as Kenny was about his decision to attend Navy, he still had obstacles to overcome. In a 2021 spring game, Kenny injured his shoulder. Although he carried on with his off-season training over the summer, he knew something wasn't quite right. During the second game of the 2021 season, Kenny's shoulder "popped" during contact,



Kenny Hall, son of Ray Hall, Huntsville Center engineer, signed a letter of intent Dec. 15 to attend the Naval Academy where he will play football. Kenny's athleticism and his academic achievement (4.17 grade point average) led to 10 scholarship offers with six coming from Ivy League schools.

and the Sparkman trainers told him his season was finished.

He had a torn labrum, cutting short his high school football career.

"It was heartbreaking not to play all my senior season," Kenny said.

After surgery and rehabilitation Kenny continued hitting the books and the weights. He is looking forward to the fall as a Naval Academy plebe and is considering studying mechanical engineering.

Kenny said he knows the experience the Naval Academy experience isn't for everybody, but he's looking forward to the opportunity on the field and in the classroom, as becoming a Naval officer and serving his country is in his blood.

"My dad is an engineer working for the Army Corps of Engineers and many of my relatives served in the military, so military service is a part of us," Kenny said.

"It can be intimidating—the (Naval) academy only has a six percent acceptance rate, but I'm looking forward to the challenge."

Ray said he feels the experience and education Kenny gets at the Naval Academy will lead him to a successful career.

"I'm hard on him," Ray said. "He's a well-grounded, well prepared kid. He works hard and it's great to see him reap the fruits of his labor."

FOCUS ON LEADERSHIP

To be a better leader, remember ETHICS

By Colleen O'Keefe
Huntsville Center Chief of Contracting

We've weathered some difficult times these past few years with a pandemic, tense social climate, and divisiveness. It affects our families, our friends, our psyches—yet we are a resilient family with an important mission, so we persevere.

Leaders, regardless of position or title, can help us push through challenges and effectively use resources by employing ETHICS.

What do I mean by ETHICS? I think effective leaders Empower, are Transparent and Honest, strive for Inclusion, continuously Communicate and finally Set the Tone.

Empower

Research shows people are their happiest, most fulfilled and enthusiastic when in control of themselves and their surroundings. Empowerment means taking the training wheels off and letting people learn how to balance while pedaling, steering, and applying brakes. It especially means falling, scraping knees, wounding dignity, and yet getting back on that bike.

I've heard people say, "So-and-so isn't ready yet; they need more seasoning." Is anyone ever "ready" for the next assignment? The only way to grow those skills is to "Get on your bikes and ride!" The leader should be there with antibiotic and band aids—coaching, teaching, and beaming with pride. Maybe that person isn't ready for the next step yet. If we'd told the person what we felt their gaps were, they might've become defensive and tuned us out. But experience on the



Colleen O'Keefe

bike, and input, helps them understand and grow.

Transparency, Honesty

Just like the "I" and "H" are pronounced as one sound in the word "ethics," Transparency and Honesty are inseparable. How are we transparent if we aren't honest? This means from our viewpoint a true assessment of a person's performance. Kudos often reinforces behavior, builds pride and confidence.

However, we must recognize skill gaps or errors too. Not just, "You're satisfactory, and I've got to move onto other things" at appraisal time, but sincere input on a regular basis. Transparency and honesty should go both ways. Is the person getting the coaching, tools and feedback they need? Since everyone's experience is unique, we need to know what they feel they need from their perspective.

If it's something we can't afford as a reimbursable organization, we need to provide background and look for alternatives. If there is a negative

perception, can we reframe the person's experience? "You think the team lead displays favoritism? Could it be the other person completes tasks quickly and accurately making them the 'go-to' for high visibility jobs? Do you have the personal courage to ask for the next assignment?"

Inclusion

I come by inclusion naturally as one of eight siblings. We work together to overcome challenges such as my mother's Alzheimer's and father's failing health. Each sibling provides their unique support with income tax preparation, medical or religious advice, IT support, estate management, physical security and companionship. None of the support needed was more or less important than any other.

It is a pet peeve of mine when people are labeled "C" players because of their skill set or someone's expectation of what an employee should be. A Chatty Cathy may resolve a miscommunication on an invoice and avoiding an interest payment because of a hallway conversation. Leaders identify underperformers and, subsequently, those whose skills are underutilized.

We then provide them the tools and guidance to become better assets to the organization. Leaders should help employees play to their strengths and minimizes weakness by showing them how to build support networks.

Communication

Communication is the glue which holds this all together—both up and down the chain of command, within the

See LEADERSHIP
Page 15



FOCUS ON HEALTH & SAFETY

Distracted driving is danger driving

Courtesy Huntsville Center Safety Office

Drivers today are rushed, and many have become accustomed to multi-tasking while driving. However, driving and trying to do other tasks decreases the safety of the driver and passengers, because the driver doesn't have as much control of the vehicle and cannot drive defensively by anticipating other drivers' actions.

When drivers perform additional tasks while driving down the road, the result can be tragic. Serious traffic accidents have occurred because drivers were momentarily distracted and took their attention away from driving.

Drivers should follow the same precautions when driving a GOV or rental car for official travel, just as you follow when driving for personal use. Think twice about driver distractions. If you have to do something that requires your attention, pull over. Safe driving takes concentration.

Typical driving distractions include:

- Using a smart phone or reading or sending texts.
- Operating a car stereo.
- Fishing around in the interior cabin for something.
- Grooming.
- Drinking or eating.
- Looking for an address or setting up a car's GPS.



Safety tip reminders:

- Cell phone use is prohibited while driving a Government Owned Vehicle. If you receive an urgent call, pull over to take the call or return the call upon arrival at your destination. Text messages should wait until you're at your destination to read or respond.
- Using a hands-free, voice-activated cell phone can still distract.
- Program the GPS, familiarize with the route, and set the radio before driving.
- Wait to eat or drink until arriving at the destination.
- When traveling with others, avoid arguments or stressful conversations. Allow them to control the radio, but don't allow them to play music too loud or create noise that could be distracting to the driver.

Safety first

Huntsville Center's Safety Office staff Joe Fentress, Steve Smith, Greg Bayuga, Kyle Shireman, Emily White, Kellie Williams and Tara Payne were recently awarded the U. S. Army Corps of Engineers' Chief of Engineers' Safety Award of Excellence in recognition of the Center's outstanding safety record and the team's exceptional work in implementing the USACE Safety Management System. (Not pictured are Rod Amacher, Andrew Boston, Wanda Griffin,

Photo by Kristen Bergeson



FOCUS ON BUSINESS

Strategic Engagement Portal and Dashboard— A Revolutionizing USACE Initiative

By Russ Dunford and Angela Rackard
Huntsville Center Business Practices Division

Strategic Communication is a Headquarters, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers initiative to revolutionize how USACE executes the mission and preclude “reinventing the wheel.” Across USACE and the ‘Business Management’ community, there is a push to improve our communications with our customers and stakeholders.

Huntsville Center is leading the way with an automated system designed to strengthen our stakeholder relationships and satisfaction, and ultimately project management, within cost, schedule and performance.

Huntsville Center is stakeholder funded. The Center is as parallel to a “business” as any government entity can be. Huntsville Center is dependent on “stakeholders” requesting, and therefore, funding the mission effort. Communication is key in such a relationship, and relationships are key to Center success.

Ever face the departure of a coworker? All their contacts and history of their dialog with a stakeholder often goes with them. Private industry faces the same fate and counters it with “Customer Relationship Management” software such as Salesforce.

To solve this challenge the Huntsville Center Resource Management Directorate’s Business Practices Division team

built the Strategic Engagement Portal with a status dashboard tracking key communications with stakeholders.

Knowledge Management is a huge initiative in industry, as well as in USACE. Therefore the USACE Strategic Engagement Portal and Dashboard was built to mirror Huntsville Center’s Strategic Engagement Plan (SEP) and serve as the Knowledge Management repository for USACE “Strategic Communication.”

The SEP is a “plan” signed by the Huntsville Center commander, appoints Center liaisons for each USACE stakeholder, and establishes how often communications should occur — defining not only who liaisons are to engage, but the frequency of the engagements. If you can’t recall this information, the SEP will send automatic email reminders.

The SEP website was deployed in 2020 and improvements have been made via the BPD spiral-development process and includes the ability to add external USACE engagements and the ability to email an engagement “report” to other interested parties from within the site eliminating the “cut/paste” requirement.

The [SEP dashboard](#) is continuously available to Center and USACE liaisons on SharePoint and will track each engagement and send automatic email alerts to the responsible Center and USACE liaison when it’s time to reach out to stakeholders again.



A screenshot from the Huntsville Center Strategic Engagement Plan website. For more information regarding the use of the site or to gain access to the site, send an email to Russ Dunford or Angela Rackard in the Huntsville Center Business Practices Division.



FOCUS ON PROFESSIONALS

Employee Spotlights

From staf reports

Col. Sebastien Joly, Huntsville Center commander, presented a Department of the Army Civilian Service Achievement Medal Dec. 6 to **Laura Lokey-Flippo** for her leadership and oversight of a team supporting the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers response to the COVID-19 pandemic. Her efforts set positive conditions for successful support of the Countermeasure Acceleration Group's COVID-19 manufacturing expansion effort.

Joly presented a letter of appreciation to **Richard Locklair** Dec. 6. Locklair was recognized by Lara E. Beasley, Environmental Division Chief, Headquarters, USACE as the central program manager for the Army Materiel Command Environmental Program in FY21.

Darren Hunter, received a commander's coin for his leadership and work ensuring the Commercial Utilities Program met its FY21 commitments and obligations despite being understaffed by 25 percent.



Lokey-Flippo



Locklair



Hunter

Teresa Whalen received a commander's coin for mentoring other project managers in the Energy Planning Branch and assisting with other complex requirements. She was also critical in supporting Source Selection Evaluation Boards and awards for the Resource Efficiency Manager Program.

Scott Barnhart was recognized for his support to Huntsville Center's Safety Program. Barnhart, a Critical Incident Stress Management Peer Counselor, provided Suicide Prevention Awareness Training to the Center's work force for the last two years. Conducting the training is not part of his job description, but Barnhart volunteers to provide the training and help employees during crisis.

Christopher Moore was recognized for his support to the safety program by exemplifying the intent of a safety management system involving all parties. During site visits, he confirms safety is being implemented throughout the project site. His initiative and willingness to build upon his program's safety culture reflects positively on the Medical Repair and Renewal Program as Huntsville Center implements CE-SOHMS and creates a proactive safety culture.



Whalen



Barnhart

LEADERSHIP

PDT, and with peers. Communication only occurs if the receiver, in fact, receives. We use our strategic thinking every time we communicate. Who is the receiver of the information and what is the best delivery method? Which is better, a text to the boss saying you must stay home with a sick child or a phone call since they may need more information from you? Do we have an executive summary at the top for busy folks or a BLAB (Bottom Line at the Bottom) so they must wade through an entire email? Who else would benefit from knowing—PDT members, chain of command, peers?

If we are trying to be transparent and honest but our tone or word choice offends, we will fail to communicate. If we need information from someone else, we should make it easy for them to answer with what we need. Provide a suspense, a format, examples, or samples. Build good communication skills by acknowledging them: "Thanks for providing that information to me in case the front office has questions," or "I appreciate the heads up on early time and attendance."

Set the tone

All of us are leaders, whether we have

supervisory duties, lead a PDT, are training a coworker. We set the tone by exemplifying ETHICS: Empowering—helping to grow our peers, subordinates and other leaders; Transparency and Honesty—having the personal courage to align our actions and words while providing meaningful feedback up and down the chain of command with peers and PDT's members; Inclusion—embracing diversity by showing every employee deserves assistance with growth and meaningful work; Communicating—sharing our knowledge, lessons learned/best practices, triumphs and failures.

FOCUS ON HUMAN CAPITAL

Planning to retire by 2025?

Retirement dates important in decision process

Courtesy Human Capital Office

Before presenting the best dates to retire during these years, it is important to review retirement rules and issues affecting employees covered by the Civil Service Retirement System, CSRS Offset employees, Federal Employees Retirement System, and “Trans” FERS employees.

“Trans” FERS employees are employees who had at least five years of CSRS service and who voluntarily transferred to FERS. “Trans” FERS employees are subject to the FERS rules with respect to retirement eligibility and are eligible to receive two annuities—a CSRS annuity based on the years of service they are covered by CSRS and a FERS annuity based on the years they are covered by FERS.

Effective date of retirement

CSRS employees (including CSRS Offset employees) who retire on the first, second, or third day of the month will have their retirement become effective on the next day of that month, and their first retirement check will be dated the first day of the following month.

For example, if a CSRS or a CSRS Offset employee retired on Jan. 2, 2021, the employee’s retirement became effective on Jan. 3, 2021. The first CSRS annuity check will be dated Feb. 1, 2021.

If a CSRS or a CSRS Offset employee retires on the 4th through the last day of the month, then the employee’s retirement becomes effective the first day of the following month with the first annuity check dated the first day of the month thereafter. For example, if a CSRS or a CSRS Offset employee retired on Jan. 5, 2021,



File photo

the employee’s retirement becomes effective on Feb. 1, 2021, and the retired employee’s first CSRS annuity check will be dated March 1, 2021.

FERS employees, including “Trans” FERS employees, are treated differently with respect to the effective date of their retirement and the issuance of their first FERS annuity check.

No matter which day of the month a FERS/“Trans” FERS employee retires, the employee’s retirement becomes effective on the first day of the following month, with the issuance of the first FERS annuity check on the first day of the month thereafter.

For example, if a FERS employee retired on Dec. 31, 2020, then the employee’s retirement took effect on Jan. 1, 2021, and the annuitant’s first FERS annuity check was dated Feb. 1, 2021. If a FERS/“Trans” FERS employee retired on Jan. 2, 2021, the employee’s retirement became effective Feb. 1, 2021, and the retired employee’s

first FERS annuity check was issued Mar. 1, 2021.

An annuitant receives an “interim” annuity check equal to approximately 40 to 90 percent of the full annuity check. “Interim” checks are sent while the Office of Personnel Management’s retirement office adjudicates the recently retired employee’s retirement file. Neither CPAC nor the HNC Human Capital office can expedite the processing of a retirement package.

Unused annual leave

All retiring employees are paid in a lump sum for any unused annual leave hours as of the day of their retirement. The lump sum payment will be directly deposited into the same bank account that a retiring employee’s regular paychecks were directly deposited within 10 to 40 days following the retirement date.

See **RETIRE**
Page 15



RETIREMENT



File photo

RETIRE

An employee must be in “employee status” for his or her entire last pay period of work (work the full 80 hours) to accrue the full amount of annual leave hours for that last pay period.

An employee who retires before the official end of the pay period will not accrue any annual or sick leave hours for that last period worked.

Retiring employees who have more than 240 hours of unused annual leave towards the end of the leave year do not want to retire after the start of the new leave year. This is because of the “use-or-lose” rule for unused annual leave that affects most employees.

Unused sick leave

All retiring employees (CSRS and FERS) get credit for unused sick leave in the computation of annuities. Just

like the process for unused annual leave, a retiring employee wants to retire at the end of a pay period to accrue the full amount of sick leave hours for the last pay period worked. Unused sick leave hours can be used only for CSRS or FERS annuity computation purposes and not for retirement eligibility purposes.

With this background information in mind, the following table presents the best dates for CSRS or CSRS Offset and FERS/“Trans” FERS employees to retire during 2022, 2023 and 2024. The dates presented were selected using the following guidelines:

1. Except for Jan. 3, 2022, Dec. 31, 2023, and Dec. 31, 2024, all of the dates presented are the official end of a pay period; that is, the second Saturday of the pay period.

2. For CSRS or CSRS Offset employees, the best day of the month to retire is within the last three days of the calendar month or the first three days of the following month. For FERS/“Trans” FERS employees, the best day of the month to retire is within the last three days of the month.

The dates shown in the table below were determined based on OPM’s 2022, 2023 and 2024 leave year calendars used by most federal agencies. It is provided for informational purposes only.

Federal employees should verify all information regarding retirement planning with the Army Benefits Center-Civilian and, if desired, a financial planning professional before making any decisions.

| Calendar Year | Leave Year Beginning to End Date | Best Days to Retire: | |
|---------------|--|--|-----------------------------------|
| | | CSRS/CSRS Offset Employees | FERS/“Trans” FERS Employees |
| 2022 | 1/2/2022 to 12/31/2022 (26 pay periods) | Jan 1, Jan 29, Feb 26, July 2, July 30, Dec 3, Dec 31 | Jan 29, Feb 29, Jul 30 |
| 2023 | 1/1/2023 to 1/13/2024 (27 pay periods) | Jan 28, Sep 2, Sep 30, Dec 31 | Jan 28, Sep 30, Dec 31 |
| 2024 | 1/14/2024 to 1/11/2025 (26 pay periods) | Mar 2, Mar 30, Jun 1, June 29, Nov 2, Nov 30 | Mar 30, Jun 29, Nov 30, Dec 31 |

About Huntsville Center

HNC

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

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

FY2021 40+ Programs

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

\$1.9B

**“HNC Delivers
Innovation”**

In fiscal 2021, Huntsville Center awarded contract actions totaling more than \$1.9 billion in obligations for its stakeholders.



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