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Huntsville Center

Bulletin

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Huntsville Center supports Afghanistan recycling program



Courtesy photo

Afghanis working in a recycling plant in Anbar Province. The recycling program supports economic development surrounding recycling at U.S. military installations there.

**By William S. Farrow
Public Affairs Office**

Huntsville Center's
International
Operations

Division is working with partners to help bring recycling and reusing initiatives to Afghanistan partners.

The environmental support contract with AECOM, a professional technical and management support services firm, establishes a recycling program which combines waste management with economic development

and social contribution in Afghanistan.

Project manager Bruce Railey, Huntsville Center IO division, said the program supports an economic development strategy by partnering with Afghanis to build sustainable Afghan businesses surrounding waste recycling that extends beyond U.S. military installations there and into local communities.

He said besides typical waste recycling, the program also reduces

the solid waste stream by incinerating large quantities of unsorted solid wastes at military facilities.

"The integrated solid waste management programs center on source segregation, collection and reuse, and waste composting projects diverting tons of waste and emissions from burn pits to incinerators and reduces fuel usage," Railey said.

According to Railey, first year program results

See *RECYCLING* on page 5

Commander's thoughts

Huntsville Team, January was a busy month for the Center. We've been promoting our Energy Programs at Department of the Army, the Energy and Opportunity Symposium in Colorado Springs and the NetZero Conference in Chicago.

Our Energy Programs, especially the Energy Savings Performance Contracting Program, are gaining momentum as installations strive to meet President Barack Obama's directive that federal agencies use ESPC to make \$2 billion worth of energy efficiency upgrades over the next two years, as well as supporting the Army's energy reduction goals of 30 percent energy and 15 percent water reduction by 2015.

For the first quarter of FY12, ESPC awarded six contracts totaling \$90.5 million, which is more than all of last year. Over the holidays, contracts were awarded for Fort Bliss, Texas; White Sands Missile Range, N.M.; and Fort Buchanan, Puerto Rico. ESPC uses/leverages private financing to make infrastructure improvements to reduce energy and water consumption to achieve Army and Executive goals as well as achieve energy security goals. Private companies pay for the upgrades and get paid back through energy savings for up to 25 years. This means the installations can get these improvements at little up-front cost

to them.

In January we also had our ISO Surveillance Audit and I attended the Winter Leaders Conference. The auditors came back to review where we are on the findings that were discovered during the last audit and help us prepare for the re-registration audit that will be coming up later this year. The Winter Leaders Conference is an opportunity for all the leaders in USACE to get together and discuss a way ahead for the Corps. Contracting also had its annual Procurement Management Review, which is also an audit.

Most of you probably remember the tornadoes last April and the resulting power outage here in Huntsville. In an effort to ensure that we maintain power, folks in ACE-IT and Logistics have been installing an uninterruptible power system that will ensure we have power for up to 8 hours in the event of an outage. I know that's good news for all of you.

We're also working to install Voice over Internet Protocol phones. VoIP works similarly to Skype where you make phone calls, conduct meetings, etc., using the Internet rather than traditional phone lines. The result should be a sizeable reduction in our telephone bill.

In January we celebrated Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. with a special observance Jan. 12. Pastor O. Wendell Davis from Union Chapel Missionary



Col. Nello L. Tortora

Baptist Church spoke to us. The Voices of Triumph from Oakwood University sang several songs, and our own Lillian Fox from Contracting opened the program with "The Star Spangled Banner."

In February, we'll observe African-American History Month and the contributions made by African Americans. We will partner with Redstone Arsenal for a program set for Feb. 15, 10 a.m., at Sparkman Center's Bob Jones Auditorium. More information about this event will come out by e-mail.

In February we also recognize Engineer Week. During that week, students from A&M University will visit the Center and have an opportunity to talk with some of our engineers.

We're well into the second quarter of fiscal year 2012. Thank you for your hard work that makes Huntsville Center great.

Hails and farewells

Hail: **Megan Brantley**, Center Contracting; **Ronald Atkins**, Resource Management; **Claudia Kowalski**, **Susan VanDerbeck**, Engineering Directorate; **Sharon Gresham**, Installation Support and Programs Management. Farewell: **Chris Paden**, Office of Counsel; **Justin Alford**, ISPM; **Harshad Patel**, **Liz Hayes**, **Ulrike Berg** (Pueblo), Chemical Demilitarization Directorate; **Sherri Mattern**, CT; **Randall King**, Ordnance and Explosives.



US Army Corps of Engineers

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BULLETIN

Commander..... Col. Nello Tortora
Chief, Public Affairs..... Debra Valine
Editor..... William S. Farrow



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The Bulletin asks:

“What are your New Year’s resolutions for fitness?”



“Basically, it’s going to be body pumps on Tuesday and Thursday, Yoga on Wednesday and one cardio workout at the Life Center. My goal is to maintain my current fitness level and also compete in two triathlons this year.”

John Goolsby
Installation Support and Programs Management



“My fitness plan for 2012 is to watch my portion intake, detoxify my body on a regular basis and incorporate more cardio workouts.”

Rhonda Pittman
Engineering Directorate



“I have to keep working out. I hate to work out, but I’ve got to do something to get healthy. After all, a good workout does make you feel better. I’m not there yet, but I want to lose weight and stay healthy. ”

Patty Mooneyham
ISPM



Science and Engineering Apprentice Program

On-line applications are now being accepted for the Science and Engineering Apprentice Program. The program places academically talented high school students with interest in science and math in Department of Defense laboratories at Redstone Arsenal for an eight-week period during the summer. Students will receive a \$2000 stipend for participation. Application deadline is Feb. 25. To apply online, visit the Website <http://www.usaeop.com>

Employee Spotlight: David Curry

By JoAnita Miley
Public Affairs Office

Where do you work?

I work in the Center Contracting Directorate at Huntsville Center.

How long have you worked for the Corps?

I have worked for the Corps and Huntsville Center for a year

What is your job title?

I am the chief, Operations and Support Division, and deputy, Center Chief of Contracting.

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

There are two facets to my job, as my job title alludes. As deputy, my job is to support the Chief of Center Contracting and execute his vision for our team. I provide strategic direction for our team in support of Huntsville Center's mission while operating under the authority of the USACE National Contracting Organization.

As a division chief, I also help manage the execution of internal and external contracts to the Center and its customers, respectively, while complying with all regulations and policies.

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

The contracting office certainly supports all goals and objectives



Curry

that are applicable to the Center, and we continually strive to deliver innovative, resilient, sustainable solutions to our customers as they support the armed forces and the nation.

Also, the goals directly applicable to the National Contracting Organization are 3a (Reinstitute USACE Procurement Management Reviews), 4a.1 (Develop a Get Well Plan to achieve DAWIA Requirements, and 4a.2 (Implement USACE Procurement Management Reviews) apply to my directorate.

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

We (Center Contracting) provide our customers with sound contracting solutions. The contracts we handle affect our customer's

well-being in a positive way. When our customer is successful in their mission then the Corps is also successful.

I also help to ensure we have talented employees on our team who enjoy coming to work every day.

Policies, procedures and contracts mean nothing without talented people to execute the mission.

What do you love about your job?

I've been blessed with an amazing opportunity to work with the best talent the Corps has to offer. I really enjoy working with a world class team that is making a difference.

I also love the fact that I can provide leadership and serve others on a daily basis. Every day I want to work hard to earn that right to serve. Both aspects give me a sense of high accomplishment. My job is both satisfying and rewarding.

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

Envision this: 11p.m., Sept. 30, Sharon Butler literally running down the hall and giving me the chance to help on a last minute contract award. I was pumped. I felt like the coach put me in the game for the final play from scrimmage...and we scored.

Who says there isn't white knuckle excitement in contracting?

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

Officials stress election year rules

By Donna Miles

American Forces Press Service

With election activity steadily picking up, defense officials are in the process of issuing regular election-year guidance to remind military and Defense Department civilians that they're subject to rules regulating their involvement in political activities.

Several sets of rules help to protect the integrity of the political process, DOD officials said. DOD Directive 1344.10 applies to members of the armed forces, whether they serve on active duty, as members of the reserve components not on active duty, as National Guard members in a nonfederal status, and military retirees. In addition, the Hatch Act applies to federal civilian employees, and employees also are subject to widely published DOD guidance that discusses participation in political campaigns and elections.

These rules are designed to prevent military members' or federal civilian employees' participation in political activities that imply – or even appear to imply – official

sponsorship, approval or endorsement, officials said.

The concern, they explained, is that actual or perceived partisanship could undermine the legitimacy of the military profession and department.

That's not to imply, however, that military members and civilian employees can't participate in politics. The DOD encourages its military and civilian members to register to vote and vote as they choose, they said. Both groups can sign nominating petitions for candidates and express their personal opinions about candidates and issues.

However, officials emphasized, they can do so only if they don't act as – or aren't perceived as – representatives of the armed forces in carrying out these activities. The bottom line, officials said, is that they should steer clear of any activity that may be reasonably viewed as directly or indirectly associating DOD or the military with a partisan political activity, or that "is otherwise contrary to the spirit or intent" of the rules described.

RECYCLING

continued from page 1

of the contract include additional local business opportunities, establishment of segregation and reuse contracts, vendors for recyclables in multiple locations, and projects for treating petroleum contaminated soil associated with the burn pits.

Suzanne Thomas-Cole, AECOM associate program director said AECOM currently has 10 recycling specialists deployed in Afghanistan developing and implementing recycling initiatives in an environment with limited infrastructure for recyclable materials.

"We won an award under the Huntsville Center Worldwide Environmental Remediation Services contract for environmental management support that consisted of finding and mobilizing 10 recycling professionals to perform as recycling specialists for USFOR-A," she said.

Since June the specialists have been deployed to locations throughout Afghanistan. Thomas said at most installations solid waste is dumped into pits, covered with fuel and burned. In a few instances, waste is disposed of in poorly operating burn boxes and incinerators.

"Burn pits create serious air pollution problems around the camps and bases not to mention personnel exposure issues to the smoke and particulate," Thomas said.

However, by implementing recycling programs Thomas said AECOM reduces what is being burned by at least 60 percent.

"In fact, we believe that we can eventually eliminate the burn pits with this program," she said. "Our numbers tell us that we can also substantially improve the operations of their incinerators by removing the wet waste (food

waste) that they are now trying to burn," she said.

There is plan for development of a food waste composting program at a facility owned and operated by an Afghan women's partnership – resulting in 60 new jobs for the Afghan community.

Thomas also said there is significant cost savings to the Army in each of the initiatives and the plan is to eventually use incinerators built in country to reduce the use of very costly decrease the hazards associated with fuel transport in country.

Railey said one of the most important aspects of the program is the counter insurgency angle to this initiative.

"We're providing opportunities for local Afghans to develop businesses based on this recycling program and carrying it beyond the Army fence-line to local cities and towns," Railey said.

Huntsville Center awards \$50 million Energy Savings Performance Contracts

By JoAnita Miley
Public Affairs Office

Huntsville Center recently awarded two energy savings contracts valued at more than \$50 million. The contracts will improve energy conservation measures at Army installations in New Mexico and Puerto Rico.

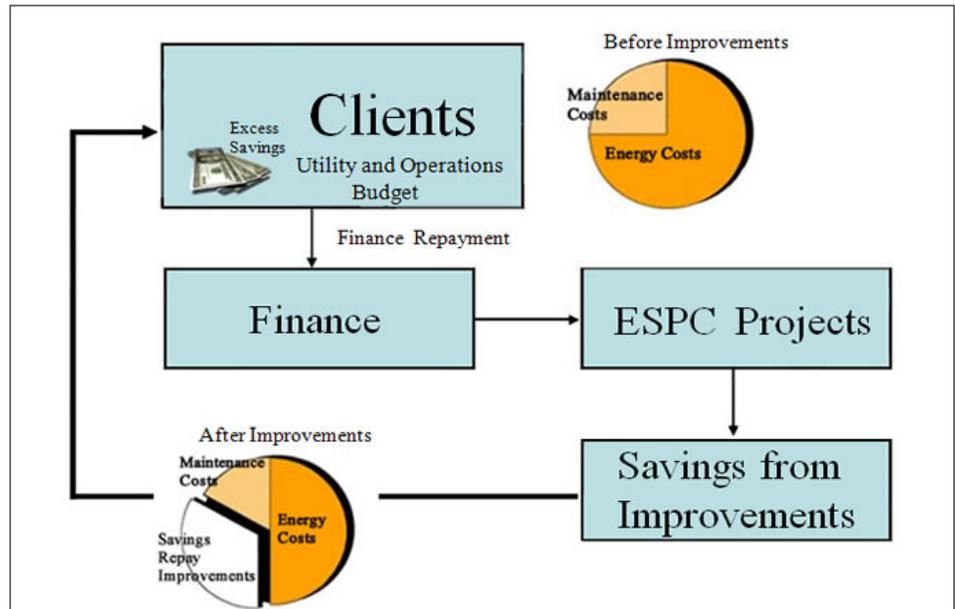
Huntsville Center awarded a \$16.8 million task order to Siemens Government Technologies, Inc. of Arlington, Va., Dec. 22, to install a solar photovoltaic (PV) system and energy conservation measures at White Sands Missile Range, N.M., that will help the installation cut energy use by 10,000,000 kilowatt hours and save \$805,000 annually.

On the same day Huntsville Center also awarded a \$34 million task order contract to Johnson Controls Government Systems, Milwaukee, Wis., to install wind power generation, solar photovoltaic systems, and other energy conservation measures at Fort Buchanan, Puerto Rico and 11 reserve centers in Puerto Rico.

The solar PV system at White Sands Missile Range will help the installation achieve 10.8 percent solar PV renewable energy by the end of FY12, up from the current .5 percent. The government-mandated percentage of renewable energy is 7.5 percent by FY13.

The main component of the Energy Savings Performance Contracting (ESPC) project at White Sands is a third-party owned 4.465 megawatt solar photovoltaic system that will provide the Army with approximately 10,000 solar renewable energy credits annually. This is the largest solar photovoltaic system throughout the entire Army.

The PV system is in excess of 4.5MW qualifying for the 30 percent federal cash grant (\$4.8 million)



Courtesy U.S. Dept. of Energy

ESPC is a partnership between the Army and an energy services company. In consultation with the federal government, the energy services company provides capital and expertise to make comprehensive energy and water efficiency improvements on facilities or implements new renewable energy capability and maintains them in exchange for a portion of the generated savings.

for renewable energy installations encompassing a solar ground mount tracking and carport systems.

“It took the whole Army team – Huntsville Center, White Sands Missile Range Garrison, Assistant Chief of Staff for Installation Management, Deputy Assistant Secretary of the Army and Installation Management Command – to make it possible,” said Michael Norton, branch chief of Huntsville Center’s Energy Division.

“We hope to see more of these type of ESPC projects in the future,” Norton said.

The main component of the ESPC project in Puerto Rico includes air cooled chiller replacement; energy management controls system installation; heating, ventilation and air conditioning system upgrades and window/split air conditioning system retrofits; energy-efficient interior and exterior lighting including street lighting upgraded to LED; occupancy sensors; renewable energy including a

1.2 megawatt solar photovoltaic, solar thermal water heating, and 825 kilowatt wind power generation; water/sewer conservation and irrigation system; and retro-commissioning services.

Overall projected project savings in Puerto Rico is more than \$2 million per year.

“This is a great project that has traditional energy conservation measures as well as renewable and water reduction,” Norton said.

These two projects support President Barack Obama’s directive that federal agencies use ESPC to make \$2 billion worth of energy efficiency upgrades over the next two years, as well as supporting the Army’s renewable energy goals.

Huntsville’s energy team has been recognized for outstanding achievements with multiple federal energy and water management awards, Vice Presidential Hammer awards and USACE project delivery awards.

Visitor policy changes at Center

By James Campbell
Public Affairs Office

Security procedures followed in military and other federal buildings are always being adjusted, and some new rules are in place for the U.S. Army Engineering and Support Center, Huntsville.

“The changes staff will notice primarily involve visitors, and we’re going to have to work together and communicate in advance to conduct our business without unnecessary delays,” said Lori Byrd, chief of the Security Office.

One change will impact visitors who are not U.S. citizens. The Security Office needs to coordinate with the visitors’ staff sponsor well in advance so that 24-hour notice can be provided to USACE Headquarters.

“It can be embarrassing for a sponsor if a business person or even a family member is turned away due to their citizenship status, so this is something we need everyone’s help with,” Byrd said. Most anyone who would visit the Center for business lives or works in the U.S. legally so the issue

isn’t primarily immigration related but security related, Byrd explained.

In terms of other visitors, the only government contractors who will get a non-escort badge are those who are here to work in the facility or on it, Byrd said.

Additionally, sponsors of visitors who normally qualify for a non-escort badge must provide the Security Office with visitor names, dates, times and government or civilian status with their non-escort badge request 24 hours in advance.

“We don’t want visitors who otherwise wouldn’t need an escort to be tied-up in the security process or have an escort if they don’t need one,” Byrd said. “Coordinating these visitors well in advance should make everything go well.” Additionally, a USACE employee from another unit can be given a non-escort badge once verified.

It could also be as simple as reminding your visitors ahead of time to bring proper identification and to make sure it isn’t expired, Byrd said. Family members over age 16 also require a valid I.D.

The security officers who are the first face-to-face contact with visitors also said it helps them do their job when visitors are cleared in advance.

Problems arise when an unannounced visitor has to be delayed outside while their staff sponsor is contacted, said John Odom, a protective security officer here. Odom said it’s also better for sponsors to have a seat in the lobby to allow the guards to direct the visitors when they first enter the building.

Even something like forgetting to sign in a child visitor at the front desk could be a serious problem if something were to happen that separated a child from their parent, said John Gray, also a PSO at the Center.

“As our posture is adjusted, it’s always best to contact the Security Office as soon as you plan to have visitors,” Byrd said. “That way we can make sure we have a friendly and secure environment for guests.”

Huntsville Center offices elsewhere follow the procedures established for their facility, Byrd said.



Photo by William S. Farrow

Huntsville Center commander Col. Nello Tortora presents Brig. Gen. Harrison, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers National Contracting Organization director, a memento during a townhall meeting at the Center regarding NCO and Army acquisition matters Jan. 13. During the meeting, The general was also briefed on several major acquisitions in process for Huntsville Center.

Center employees supported war in Iraq

By Debra Valine
Public Affairs Office

Huntsville Center employees supported the war in Iraq by deploying to perform a variety of functions in support of Corps of Engineers projects.

The war in Iraq has ended; however, deployment opportunities exist for Afghanistan.

According to Jeffrey Davis, Huntsville Center's deployment coordinator, some 70 Center employees volunteered to serve in Iraq, which comes to approximately 1 percent of the Huntsville Center work force.

"I deployed to Iraq twice," said Quintessia Fuller of Huntsville's Internal Review Office.

"In January 2008 for 18 months, I worked in a dual role of accountant and program analyst. I returned from a five-month deployment in April 2011 after serving as a program analyst.

"There are so many things to say about deploying and my experience, in particular, but if I had to pick a couple words, I would say exciting and humbling," Fuller said.

"Volunteering for Operation Iraqi Freedom and Operation New Dawn was exciting because it is a major part of history. This is something I am proud to have been a part of and can share with others. There is also excitement whenever you meet new people and learn new things. The friendships that I made while working in Iraq developed from sharing a common focus in completing the mission and supporting one another through long work hours and home sickness.

"Each deployment was humbling by making me aware of my abilities and my limitations," Fuller said.

"These experiences made me want to improve, both personally and professionally. I was but a minor part of a much bigger picture and I am proud to have been able to support the



Huntsville Center's Spencer O'Neal, left, deployed to Iraq in support of the ordnance disposal mission.

soldiers, sailors, and airmen in my small way. I am proud of those I served with and their dedication to the mission. I would do it again with no reservations."

Fuller was responsible for 147 projects worth approximately \$405 million, weekly monitoring of all district funding documents, training on the Corps of Engineers Financial Management System and all accounting functions for the district.

Gerald Ramos, in Huntsville's Medical Operations Division, was in Iraq from August 2007 to October 2009. He served as a deputy chief, project management; chief, civil works and energy sectors; and program manager.

"I spent 4 tours in Iraq," Ramos said. "These were the best professional experiences in my 25 years working for

the Army. It provided the opportunity to take on responsibilities far beyond what would be given elsewhere. It also provided the opportunity to become an important participant in executing a critical Army mission."

Ramos supervised and mentored project managers and project specialists at two different locations. He was responsible for identifying, developing and implementing strategies and policies to assure quality and efficient project execution.

He was hand selected by the Gulf Region District commander with concurrence from the Department of State to complete projects such as the Basrah Children's state-of-the-art Pediatric Cancer Treatment Center

See **IRAQ** on page 9

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worth more than \$166 million.

Some of his other accomplishments were the successful execution of more than 600 projects totaling more than \$2.27 billion in Gulf Region Central and the successful execution of more than 119 active projects totaling more than \$634 billion in Gulf Region South.

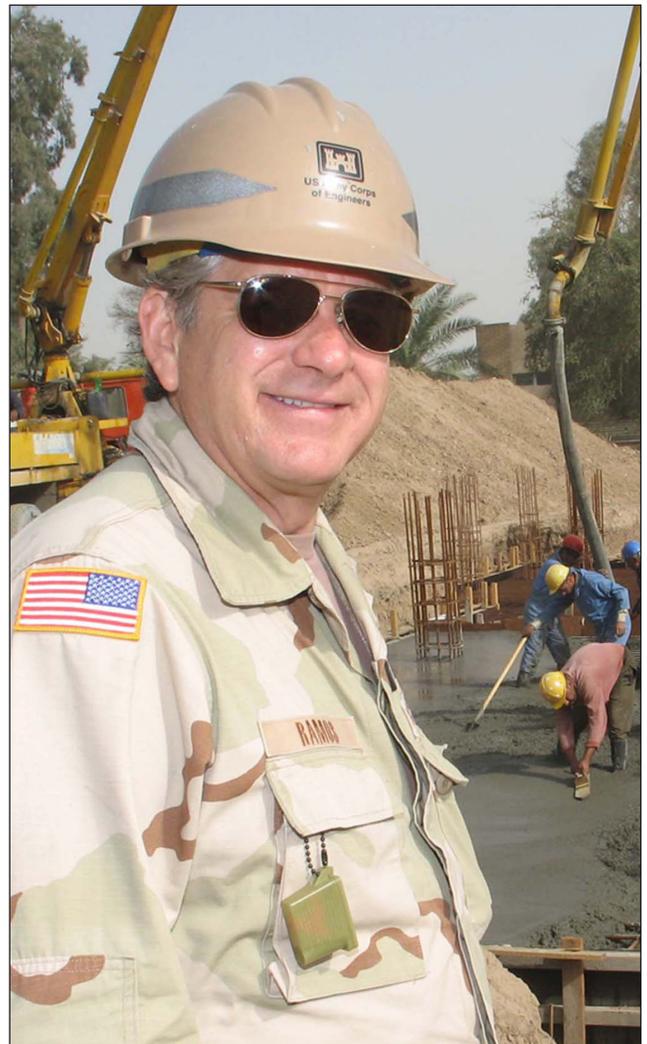
He also coordinated the receipt, installation, testing and commissioning of more than 4,000 pieces of hospital equipment donated by Project HOPE.

Fuller and Ramos are representative of the level of work accomplished by Huntsville Center employees in Iraq.

Each of the 70 employees provided support that was crucial to winning the war.



More than 70 Huntsville Center employees supported U.S. and coalition efforts in Iraq. Left, Huntsville Center Commander Col. Nello Tortora presents Quintessia Fuller, Huntsville's Internal Review Office, with an award for her service in Iraq. Bottom left, Doug Rhodes, inspects an empty Russian bomb before disposal efforts in Iraq. Bottom right, Gerald Ramos at a work sight in Iraq.



Photos courtesy Huntsville Center

Center personnel participating in Scale Back Alabama initiative

By William S. Farrow
Public Affairs Office

More than 40 Huntsville Center employees are taking a shot at losing unwanted weight as Scale Back Alabama 2012, a statewide weight-loss contest designed to help Alabama fight obesity and to encourage participants to develop lifelong healthy habits, gets under way.

The program, now in its sixth year, has resulted in a total weight loss of nearly 760,000 pounds and healthier lifestyles for thousands of Alabamians. According to an annual report from the Trust for America's Health and the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, Alabama has the second highest obesity rate in the nation.

The 10-week contest is free of charge and is targeted to adults 18 and older. The program primarily focuses on the workplace and utilizes local businesses, schools and organizations as weigh-in sites.

To participate, teams of four register and have their initial weigh in at a local site during the week of Jan. 21-27. Participants who complete the contest and are on a team in which every member loses at least 10 pounds are placed in a drawing for one of three grand prizes, the top prize being \$1,000 per team member.

"Scale Back Alabama is a motivational boost for the new year for people who know they need to lose weight," said Marsha Russell, Huntsville Center's Life Center director.

Russell said this is the fourth year the Center has participated in the event. She said the Center's most successful year was 2010, when 31 Huntsville Center teams lost a collective 661 lbs.

She said many people return to participate every year and even though participants may gain back some of the weight they lost, the team concept is



Photo by William S. Farrow

Professional mountain biker Grace Ragland, guest speaker for the Scale Back Alabama kick off at Huntsville Center, talks to attendees about setting goals.

motivational for the four person teams.

"As a team, participants are motivated more than trying to lose weight on their own and they seem to have more success. (Losing) 10 pounds in 10 weeks is doable for just about everybody and the program has been a great success for Huntsville Center and Alabama," Russell said.

A Scale Back Alabama kick-off rally took place in Huntsville Center's Life Center on Jan. 25. Attendees were encouraged to participate in the program by guest speaker Grace Ragland who shared her story about her fight with Multiple Sclerosis and overcoming obstacles to become a world-class athlete.

Ragland is a member of Team Compaxon, a group of 10 athletes afflicted with multiple sclerosis. Compaxon, a drug used to treat MS, is the sponsor of the team comprised of 10 athletes each excelling in different sports. Ragland is a competitive mountain biker and has competed in and won many prestigious and grueling

mountain bike races.

As an 18 year old college freshman, Ragland was diagnosed with MS in 1980. Although she led a physically active lifestyle before her diagnosis, she said the disease triggered a focus on her fitness and training.

"I know the benefits of being active and MS is my main competitor in life and so I'm winning the race against MS," Ragland said.

As a member of Team Compaxon, Ragland said she has the opportunity to speak to about 20 groups a year. "I used to say if I could make a difference in one person's life then I've done my job, but now I see that I'm touching many people's lives and it's not just people with MS, it's people with all kinds of challenges, such as losing weight."

Ragland said a team's success in a program like Scale Back Alabama depends on an individual approach.

"People have to set some goals, find what motivates them and keep their eyes on the prize."

Huntsville Center employees celebrate Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. legacy

By JoAnita Miley
Public Affairs Office

More than 100 people attended the Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. celebration Jan. 12 at the U.S. Army Engineering and Support Center where they were reminded to “Remember! Celebrate! Act! and the holiday is “A Day On, Not a Day Off!”

Col. Nello Tortora, Huntsville Center commander, opened the program by sharing how Dr. King encouraged Americans to come together to serve humanity.

“Dr. King realized that service is the great equalizer among us all,” Tortora said.

“Through unity and purpose within our organization we can make great things happen. Everybody can be great, because everybody can serve.”

Guest speaker Dr. O. Wendell Davis, a local community activist and pastor of the Union Chapel Missionary Baptist Church, focused on Dr. King’s “I Have a Dream” speech, citing that many have made a dream of their own and are merely interpreting Dr. King’s dream.

“Dr. King and many others during the Civil Rights Movement dreamed dreams, but they were not personal and selfish dreams,” Davis said. “They dreamed an all-inclusive dream that helped all humankind. They dreamed of a nation that provides all the basic necessities for everyone. Many of you have forgotten, but perhaps by posing this question, you will remember: *What is the dream?*”

Davis also challenged everyone in the audience to take a few steps forward to make their own dreams come true.

The Voices of Triumph Gospel Ministries from Oakwood University sang “Truly Free,” “Manifest” and a “Great is thy Faithfulness and For Every Mountain” medley during the celebration. Huntsville Center’s Lillian Fox sang the National Anthem, and Pat



Photos by JoAnita Miley

The Voices of Triumph Gospel Ministries from Oakwood University sang “Truly Free,” “Manifest” and a “Great is thy Faithfulness and For Every Mountain” medley during the celebration.

Haas provided the invocation.

Victor Taylor, chief of the Safety Office at Huntsville Center said he enjoyed the program, especially the guest speaker and choir. The songs rendered by Voices of Triumph reached him, and Dr. Davis really inspired him.

“I liked the way the guest speaker took a different approach to using Dr. King’s speeches,” Taylor said. “He didn’t just use quotations from his ‘I Have a Dream’ speech and paraphrase, like most speakers do. He took the message from the speech and brought it to us on a personal level so that we can implement it within our own lives. He gave us something we can really use.”



Guest speaker Dr. O. Wendell Davis, pastor of the Union Chapel Missionary Baptist Church, speaks about Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.’s “I Have a Dream” speech.

Ethics Corner

Misconceptions About Annual Leave

By Chris Paden
Office of Counsel

One of the greatest benefits of being a government employee is the government's leave program. However, although a benefit, the leave policy is also greatly misunderstood. Here are some common misconceptions about your leave:

Myth: Since I have an accumulated balance of annual leave, I can use it whenever I like.

Fact: You are entitled to accrue annual leave at a rate established by your years of service, but just because you have a leave balance, you are not entitled to take it whenever you like. Your leave approval official (your supervisor) can deny your request to take annual leave based upon mission requirements.

Myth: All I have to do is call in and just leave a message stating that I am taking annual leave for that day and I will be covered.

Fact: A supervisor can deny leave. If you call in and state that you are on leave, the supervisor can deny it and your absence will be categorized as Absent Without Leave. AWOL is unpaid as well as being subject to disciplinary action.

Myth: Since my supervisor already approved my

request for annual leave, they can't later deny it.

Fact: Just because your supervisor granted your request for annual leave, does not mean that changes cannot be made. In fact, a supervisor has the authority to deny annual leave, in total or in part, after they first approved it.

So, what is the proper leave etiquette? According to CEHNCR 690-1-5, App A, 1 Aug. 01 (the Center's leave regulation): *When absence from duty can be foreseen, prior approval of annual leave will be obtained. CEHNC Form 894, Time and Attendance Worksheet, will be used to document prior approval of annual leave. In cases of emergency, employees will contact their immediate supervisor or his/her designated representative by telephone or personal message and request approval of annual leave except where circumstances beyond their control prohibit this. This should be within the first two hours of the employee's normal tour of duty.*

Leave is a great benefit of government service, but just remember that using your annual leave is at the discretion of your supervisor. If your supervisor feels your annual leave would have an adverse impact on the mission, your supervisor, has the authority to deny your request for annual leave.

If you plan ahead and keep the mission requirements in mind, getting your annual leave request approved shouldn't be a problem.

For more information, call 256-895-1103.

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