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# Huntsville Center Bulletin



U.S. Army Engineering and Support Center, Huntsville

# Command *Strategic Review*

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***Setting the path forward ...Page 6***

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## Hail and farewell

### Hail:

Todd Kirk, William Moebes, Amos Jackson, William Gregory, Regina Smith, Chace Bowman, Edward Teer, Hannah Niedergeses, Gerian Hardy, Installation Support and Programs Management Directorate: Deborah Drake, Caroline Brown, Linda Derby, Peter Wren, Sheena Espindola, Amber Blackwell, Barbara Rich, Brian Wing, Marc Nguyen, Pam Dodd, Robin Boateng, Parrish Weaver, Shelia Welch, Center Contracting; Ed Norton, Malynda Jones, Engineering Directorate; Lee Alexander, OE; Brian Jordan, Environmental and Munitions Center of Expertise.

### Farewell:

Angela Bell, Mark McDonald, ED; Africa Welch-Castle, Gina Gill, ISPM; Karen Baker, Small Business Office; Aimee Ghee, Human Capital Management Office; Melissa Scogin, Office of Counsel.

*\*Editor's note: Cover image stock photo*

# Commander's thoughts



**H**untsville Team,  
There are several big issues facing the Center.

For the past several months, you've been hearing about the building renovation for our facility at 4820 University Square.

As of April 3, we do not have a clear plan for how the General Services Administration and the lessor will make much needed improvements to this building. GSA, who manages the lease on our behalf, is working closely with us. At this point, we do not know how much work will be accomplished this year. We are hoping to know more in the coming weeks, but no promises.

A lot of things are on the table, and I'm asking you to be flexible. My apologies to the entire team. We are continuing to meet with GSA, the building owners, and high-level officials, trying to work this issue. The plan I discussed in the last commander's column ran into some issues that required us to rethink the plan.

Another important issue is deployments. There seems to be a lot of confusion about deployments. There is a need for people to deploy, whether it's to Afghanistan, Iraq or to the various areas to support Emergency Support Function 3. ESF 3 is the public works and engineering support that we provide in support of Department of Homeland Security and the Federal Emergency Management Agency following natural disasters.

USACE loves that we have folks who want to deploy; it contributes to developing an expeditionary mindset in our personnel and commands. Deployments are so important to the broader USACE mission, that

while supervisors can "approve" a deployment request, I alone reserve the right to deny a deployment request.

I am mindful that supervisors have a lot on their plates: we must continue to execute the Huntsville Center mission for our stakeholders; we must ensure our employees get the needed professional and mandatory training opportunities; and we must ensure that new employees learn our programs and unique business processes.

However, we cannot assume an unnecessary amount of risk by allowing one section to become depleted. As a result, we occasionally have to tell a volunteer that we need to delay the deployment to ensure we have balanced all competing demands. In other words, in the vast majority of cases, it is not an issue of "IF" an employee can deploy, but "WHEN."

This is the art of balancing missions that need deployees with home station responsibilities. A policy memorandum will be coming out that explains the deployment process for those employees who are interested.

The Total Army Performance Evaluation System (TAPES) rating program ended March 31 and we are transitioning to Department of Defense Performance Management and Appraisal Program (DPMAP).

All of you should have completed the training and be working toward performance objectives under the new system. You should receive your final TAPES appraisal by the end of April and be put on your DPMAP objectives.

The Huntsville Center's 50-Year Anniversary history, "Engineers without Borders," is available online at:

[www.hnc.usace.army.mil/About/History/](http://www.hnc.usace.army.mil/About/History/).



**Col. John S. Hurley**

Take time to look it over. Huntsville Center has done many unique and interesting missions over the years.

Planning is underway for this year's Engineer Day picnic and awards ceremony. The request for nominations will be coming out; please take the time to nominate deserving employees for the awards. Deadline to have the nominations to the Public Affairs Office is May 1.

The picnic will be June 1 at the Carol Hudson Recreation Area (near the Tennessee River) on Redstone Arsenal.

We'll be looking for volunteers to help with the planning of the picnic. If you want to help, please contact Martha Cook.

As we head into spring and summer, remember to stay safe in all your outdoor activities. If you plan to travel abroad, whether for official or personal travel, be sure to check with our Security Office for a briefing on that area. Some areas, such as Cancun, Cozumel and Mexico City have State Department issued travel bans in effect due to terrorist or other violent activity in the area.



**US Army Corps  
of Engineers**

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## BULLETIN

Commander..... Col. John S. Hurley  
Chief, Public Affairs..... Debra Valine  
Editor..... William S. Farrow



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## Employee Spotlight :

# Employee earns DOD-level honors

**By Stephen Baack**  
**Public Affairs Office**

**A** long-time employee of Huntsville Center is the recipient of the Department of Defense's Individual Achievement Award in Facilities Engineering.

Valerie Clinkenbeard, the acquisition liaison manager for Huntsville Center, received the award personally from the undersecretary of defense for acquisition, technology and logistics in December at the Pentagon.

Clinkenbeard, who has been in her role for 10 years, was nominated by her supervisors in the Engineering Directorate for her work managing contract source-selection evaluation activities, which includes oversight of about 20 separate contract acquisitions worth more than \$6 billion at any one time. She also coordinates in developing the technical criteria for evaluating contractors, and she selects and trains the people on the contractor evaluation boards.

"She works on dozens of acquisitions that the Center is trying to put in place," said Wade Doss, chief of the Center's Civil Structures Division, Clinkenbeard's supervisor and one of two people who nominated her for the award.

"She's responsible for staffing on many of the evaluation boards; making sure the right resources are on those boards – technical and otherwise. She works with contracting to get them through the process, which can last months if not years. So, she's really directly impacting the process of putting these contracting vehicles in place, which positively affects the Center for years to come."



**Valerie Clinkenbeard**

About a dozen awards sit atop a cabinet in her office, which Clinkenbeard said she's grateful to have received, but she said nothing compares to this one.

"There's no better award out there that I could ever get," she said. "This is the highest award I could receive in my entire career. There's nothing else I could do. ... I almost feel like it's a recognition of a lot of the different things that I have done over my career," she added.

When Clinkenbeard arrived at Huntsville Center in 1995, she had 10 years of experience working as an engineer in the private sector and was making the jump to civil service for the first time.

She said, at the time, she was worried she would be bored.

"An 80-hour workweek was not atypical," she said of her old private-sector job. "It really wasn't. I was so burnt out, but you never had time to be bored, and I was doing construction. There's nothing more fun in the world

than to work on a construction site. It is the epitome of engineering.

"I was really worried that I was coming to a government facility where I would be in an office and would be bound to a desk, and most of what I would be doing was just reviewing things that other people had done," she said.

After in-processing the morning of her first day at Huntsville Center, she returned from lunch and dove into her work headfirst. Her first assignment was to write a scope of work for a geotechnical investigation of the Anniston Chemical Agent Disposal Facility. Clinkenbeard said she's kept busy ever since.

"I've never had an opportunity to 'be bored,'" she said. "I've always had an opportunity to do unique, different things."

For a while, she said, she was content with doing those unique, different things as a nonsupervisory engineer.

While examining her five-year career goals as part of her Individual Development Plan during her first job assignment, she told her supervisor she had no aspirations to be a supervisor herself.

"I was a typical engineer: I didn't think anybody could do it as well as I could," she said. "I knew I'd rather do it myself than rely on somebody else."

That might surprise people who now work with Clinkenbeard, who has since accumulated a wealth of experience developing new programs, leading teams and mentoring junior employees. Clinkenbeard took on her first supervisory position in the now-defunct Technical Management and Design Integration Branch in the Engineering

The **Employee Spotlight** is intended to let Center employees shine for positively impacting the organization through mission achievements. Employees are featured quarterly in the Huntsville Center Bulletin. If you'd like to nominate someone within your office for this recognition, please contact William S. Farrow, Public Affairs Office, at 256-895-1694, or email: [william.farrow@usace.army.mil](mailto:william.farrow@usace.army.mil).





Cover illustration by Michael May

## A good read

The latest Huntsville Center history, ***Engineers without Borders: A history of the U.S. Army Engineering and Support Center Huntsville 1967-2017***, is available online in PDF format at [www.hnc.usace.army.mil/About/History](http://www.hnc.usace.army.mil/About/History). The latest history was written by Damon Manders, a contract historian employed through the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, St. Louis District.

## Spotlight

Continued from page 4

Directorate. That branch provided technical management for other programs throughout the Center.

During her time there she helped stand up the Facilities Reduction Program, put the first contract in place, and hired technical managers for the program.

She also served as project manager for the design of chemical demilitarization incineration facilities and then took on the role of chief of the Electronic Technology Division, which included a then much-smaller Utility Monitoring and Control Systems operation.

"At the time UMCS was a little, bitty-tiny program," she said. "They kept forgetting to put them on the [Program Review Board], they were so small. My first year there, I came on in June, and they were expecting to do about \$10 million worth of work. Around August, one of the project managers came up to me and said, 'Valerie, it looks like we're going to \$94

million worth of work."

Clinkenbeard said the program continued to grow when she empowered the members of her team to go out and secure new work even if it meant expanding their responsibilities. UMCS now has the largest contract on her acquisition list at a value of \$2.5 billion.

"You have to have that little bit of fearlessness in you to do that," she said.

"Some people want to stay the same size. They're afraid of growth and they're afraid of change."

Clinkenbeard embraced that fearlessness when a need arose for someone to serve as a link between the Pre-Award Branch of the Contracting Directorate and the Center's project managers.

The goal in establishing this link would be to improve the continuity between new Multiple Award Task Order Contracts that the Pre-Award Branch put into place and the follow-on task orders that project managers were responsible for.

The subject came up during a

Program Review Board, during which Boyce Ross, who leads the Engineering Directorate, stressed the need for someone to fulfill the role.

"I was sitting there and I thought, 'I could do that,'" she said.

Clinkenbeard has been at it now for a decade, with breaks now and then that included serving as the acting manager of the Furnishings Branch.

"Wonderful" is the word she uses to describe her career. In reflecting on her time at Huntsville Center, she is careful to give credit to her supervisors for empowering her to do new and interesting things, and the opportunity to give her time and expertise to coaching junior employees along the way.

"I've gotten to where I love the challenge of doing something no one else has done before, and I love solving problems, and I love mentoring people," she said.

"Those are truly the things I love the most about my job. And my management, they let me do all of them."

# Command Strategic Review helps strengthen communication, sets path forward

By Debra Valine  
Public Affairs Office

**M**ore than 40 senior leaders from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Headquarters and the Engineering and Support Center, Huntsville met Feb. 13 and 14 here for the Center's triennial Command Strategic Review.

The CSR is a working session and collaborative event between HQ USACE, Campaign Plan (UCP) Objective/Action Champions and the major subordinate command (MSC) counterparts to ensure alignment with the UCP and review progress of specific current year priority actions. Huntsville Center's last CSR was in 2015.

During his opening remarks, Maj. Gen. Michael C. Wehr, USACE deputy commander, said, "We are here to build trust and relationships, look at what it takes to get alignment, hold ourselves accountable and try to anticipate changes that are around the corner.

"We are going to set the scene by showing where the Center is today," said Col. John S. Hurley, Huntsville Center commander. "We want to ensure a Common Operating Picture, and where we are going in the near term. We will illustrate some of our best practices rather than things that are broken; a lot of things are going right."

One of the big goals of the CSR is to stay in step and synchronized with HQ and where we want to go.

"We need to get things simple so that we can get things done," Hurley said. "Our CSR goal is to improve communication between USACE HQ and Huntsville Center so that we can support the campaign plan."

At the conclusion of the day-and-a-half CSR, USACE and Huntsville Center champions had created a list of actions with suspenses that would help



Photo by David San Miguel

**Maj. Gen. Michael Wehr, deputy commanding general U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, right, and Col. Christine Beeler, left, listen as Col. John Hurley, U.S. Army Engineering and Support Center, Huntsville commander discusses actions presented during the Center's command strategic review Feb. 13-14.**

do just that.

After a quick overview of Huntsville Center by Hurley, UCP action officers presented best practices and strategic focus areas identified during the Center's strategic offsite conducted Feb. 22-23, 2017.

Colleen O'Keefe, Huntsville Center's chief of Contracting talked about best practices in acquisitions, starting with the Center already obligating more than \$407 million for FY18, as well as another \$1.4 billion to support power grid restoration in Puerto Rico. Huntsville Center is the fifth highest of 13 USACE MSCs in program execution thus far for this fiscal year. She discussed in-process and planned acquisitions and their contract value.

O'Keefe explained that the Center uses a combination of acquisition tools from multiple and single award indefinite delivery contracts to 8(a) set-asides as well as strategic sources such as General Services Administration and the Army's Computer Hardware, Enterprise Software and Solutions contract vehicle. The Center used strategic sourcing for almost 18 percent of their acquisitions in FY17.

Betina Johnson, division chief,

Ordnance and Explosives Design Center, recapped Huntsville Center's Strategic Engagement Plan that provides a roadmap to building long-term business relationships with key stakeholders.

"The discussions following the briefing focused on the interaction between HNC and HQ as well as HNC and other MSCs," Johnson said. "Additional strategic engagement partners were identified such as HQ USACE Office of Counsel and GSA Acquisition Gateway POCs. The processes identified and the relationships formed as part of the Strategic Engagement Plan have greatly increased HNC's reception and reputation by HQ and other USACE MSCs."

Dee Benson, chief of Business Practices, demonstrated the Enterprise Data Warehouse and its capability to manage various business factors in real-time.

"The Business Practices team at Huntsville Center started using Qlik Sense to develop dashboards December 2017," Benson said. "Our data visualization was transformed instantly, resulting in a number of returns on

**Continued on page 7**

## CSR

Continued from page 6

investment, such as a reduction in overhead hours, increased data integrity, on demand data access and quick and easy data story telling.

Jennifer Haapoja, chief of Human Capital, and Valerie Ward, a human resources strategic adviser, presented Human Capital best practices, such as leader development programs and supervisory training, hiring practices, and managing turnover.

Focus areas addressed acquisitions, third-party financing, industrial controls cybersecurity and small or micro project execution.

“HNC is a unique organization; not like other divisions,” said Albert “Chip” Marin, Huntsville Center’s Programs Director.

“We do specialty programs that are predominantly O&M (operation and maintenance) funded – Sustainment, Restoration and Modernization (SRM). We have unique requirements that cause challenges. We approach those unique challenges through focus areas. Last year, we obligated nearly \$2.5 billion in O&M money. We are seeking ways to better communication and collaboration with HQ to deliver the programs. We will need help from HQ in doing that.”

### Focus Area 1

**Acquisition, supports UCP Goal 4, Prepare for Tomorrow: Objective 4c: Streamline USACE business, acquisition and governance processes and optimize financial management.**

Marin, Huntsville Center’s lead for focus area 1, said the Center is requesting substantive dialogue regarding acquisitions that will improve the capability to deliver the program through timely, accurate and adequate acquisition tools.

Marin explained the problem centers on major acquisitions of \$10 million or more becoming increasingly difficult to put in place. He said ever-changing law, regulation and policy are adding steps to the process without a requirement to remove any steps, which means longer time frames to put acquisitions in place, which drives up cost.

“The intent of the Acquisition Focus Area is to establish a vertical Project Delivery Team from HQs, through the PARC (Principal Assistant Responsible for Contracting), down to the MSC, Center and district level to look at actual processes being used to plan, assess and acquire contracts to do work,” Marin said. “The contention is that which is actually occurring is not necessarily what the acquisition process states should be happening. If we look at actuality with an eye for how we can streamline the process, we can

shave months off of the process, lowering both our costs and the costs to offerors in preparing proposals.”

Focus Area 2, Energy Programs 3rd Party Financing, supports UCP Goal 1, Support National Security

Lisa Maddox, a project manager in the Energy Division, presented Focus Area 2, Energy Programs 3rd Party Financing as a way for installations to build energy infrastructure through Energy Saving Performance Contracts, Utility Energy Services Contracts and Power Purchase Agreements. Huntsville Center leads USACE and the Army in this effort, and making the Huntsville Center the 3rd Party Financing (Energy) Technical Center of Expertise (TCX) would allow others to capitalize on the Center’s more than 20 years’ experience using “other people’s money” on energy projects. It is USACE’s intent to franchise these types of projects out to the geographic districts as the program and processes become more mature. In support of the president’s public private partnership vision, the focus area strategically positions USACE to acquire other types of facility, utility and infrastructure projects through third party financing once the necessary legislative changes are in place and promulgated.

### Focus Area 3

**Industrial Controls – Cybersecurity, supports UCP Goals 1 and 4.**

Daniel Shepard, the chief of Huntsville Center’s ICS Cybersecurity Technical Center of Expertise, discussed cybersecurity in planning, designing and constructing projects that involve control systems. He stressed that cybersecurity mandates must now be incorporated into the standard USACE business model and in how USACE delivers projects for its internal and external stakeholders. His recommended plan to approach cybersecurity is to have HQ USACE designate Huntsville Center as the Mandatory Center of Expertise (MCX) for Control System Cybersecurity, with a focus on military programs. He explained Huntsville Center’s unique technical cybersecurity capability that is critical for other USACE organizations to leverage to ensure successful project execution. He said making Huntsville Center the mandatory center of expertise (MCX) would help ensure adequate quality control for projects.

“Knowing the volume of projects that have cybersecurity requirements are vast, Huntsville Center sees that the opportunity to engage and franchise this technical capability to the geographical districts as a virtual technical resource at the site level is a must have to ensure successful execution,” Shepard said. “Further, the MCX should be the authority responsible for ensuring that a training program is established to provide the field the technical training needed to support

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## Facetime

Photo by Stephan Baack

Command Sgt. Maj. Bradley J. Houston, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers command sergeant major, has lunch with Soldiers at the U.S. Army Engineering and Support Center, Huntsville, during his March 28-29 visit to meet members of the organization and learn more about Huntsville Center's missions. In a candid and informal setting, Houston drew from his nearly 30 years of Army experience, spending the majority of the lunch hour answering the Soldiers' questions on leadership, Army education, deployments, Army readiness, physical fitness standards, possible upcoming changes to the Engineer Regiment and the Army. Houston has served as the USACE command sergeant major since June. The group of nine Soldiers was a mix of commissioned and noncommissioned officers, as well as those serving on active duty at Huntsville Center and those who work for the organization as civilians but serve in separate capacities for the U.S. Army Reserve and National Guard.

## CSR

### Continued from page 7

the critical nature cybersecurity.

The proposed MCX should establish the operational and technical parameters and count on the geographical districts to execute but, be the top level resources to assist when they run into issues or challenges."

### Focus Area 4

**Micro/Small Projects also supports UCP Goal 1.**

David Shockley, chief of the Facilities Division, said discussion

regarding the USACE enterprise business model for micro and small projects would make it possible to franchise them through manageable, scalable and predictable processes using normal enterprise tools and systems.

He would like to provide USACE a set of processes and associated costs codified by Huntsville Center, give those processes and their associated costs an MSC-level review and establish a way to provide those documented process and cost expectations to districts along with a way for them to be reimbursed.

Shockley said the return on

investment would be a huge impact in allowing districts a chance at serving the installations in their area of operations on micro and small projects; and doing so would improve relationships with stakeholders and customers.

Extensive discussions and breakout sessions helped establish tasks and the way ahead in the focus areas.

"All great comments," Wehr said. "Everything was well presented. No requests are unreasonable. No doubt that we can get where we need to go. We need to shape it (the future) before it shapes us."



# Program fielded for data visualization

Compiled by Public Affairs staff

The power of visual analytics and dashboards is no secret. Harnessing that power and putting it in the hands of the employees at the U.S. Army Engineering and Support Center, Huntsville was recently accomplished by fielding an innovative data discovery program.

At the heart of any decision group or directors' board for top Fortune 500 businesses lies a team of specialists compiling and preparing data for their consumption to make key decisions about the next move.

The goal of the Huntsville Center Business Practices Office is to bridge the gap between the Center, the Army Corps of Engineers and these top companies by developing tools that can provide near real-time data in a visual capacity that can be easily digested, allowing for more intuitive analysis.

For Huntsville Center, this required groups of analysts and technical staff across the command several days to process and compile data from antiquated reporting systems into manually developed charts and graphs that were usually several weeks older than the information they presented.

Additionally, the reports were static and limited to a set trend or story they tell.

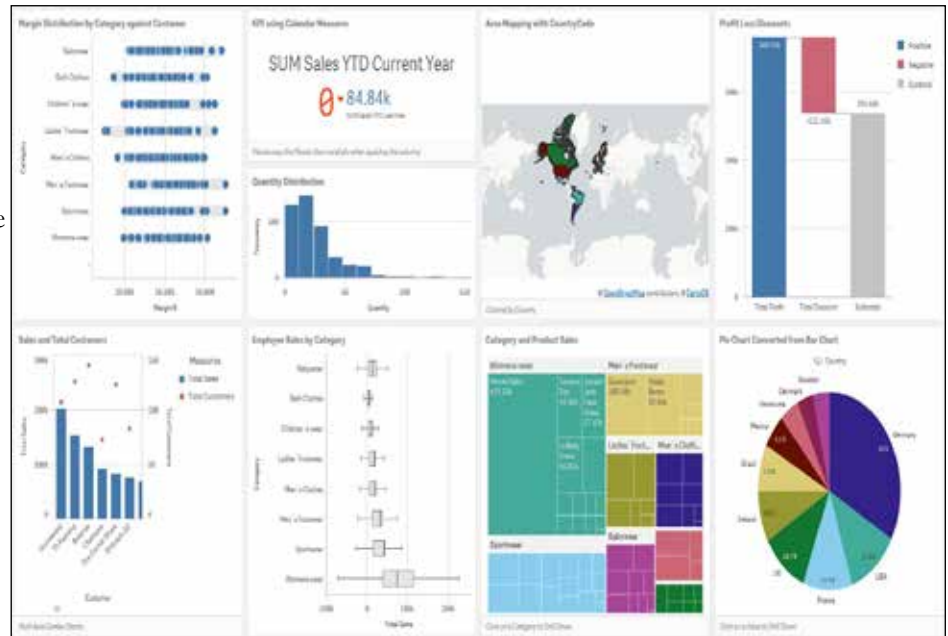
The Business Practices Office is meeting this challenge with Qlik Sense software.

Qlik is a leader in data discovery delivering intuitive solutions for self-service data visualization and guided analytics. Built on a modern architecture and powered by the patented, industry-proven Qlik data indexing engine, Qlik Sense gives users the unrestricted ability to create personalized data analyses and explore the relationships that exist in data to reveal connections instantly.

"Before using Qlik, the type of assets needed to make these tools required advanced coding skillsets combined with a familiarity of USACE Automated Information Systems (AIS), leading to the use of outsourced talents to develop our dashboards," said Dee Benson, chief of Business Practices.

"Furthermore, the available software was limited to small refined points of data that did not allow for the fast intuitive dashboards that we originally envisioned."

Qlik Sense lets users create apps through a drag-and-drop experience that delivers relevant analysis, interactive reports, and dashboards critical to decision-making and operations. Users can freely explore their intuition since they are not limited to predefined paths they must follow or questions they



**A screen capture provides a digital dashboard view of the type of visual information of various data the Qlik Sense software can provide. This real-time data in a visual capacity that can be easily digested, is now available to Huntsville Center users.**

must formulate ahead of time.

The Qlik associative data indexing engine allows users to easily expose relationships among data dimensions, uncovering insights that are hidden in traditional hierarchical, query-based data models. This provides users with the freedom to explore data at any point in their analysis.

"Qlik Sense is a tool that lets users with basic analytical skills develop comprehensive dashboards for their specified use," Benson said.

"It has the capability of importing spreadsheets for stand-alone use or combining with Enterprise Data Warehouse resources for all-inclusive analysis."

Qlik Sense is estimated to be available to the entire Army Corps enterprise in April 2018. Business Practices is currently developing dashboards for customers within Huntsville Center with user training and familiarization after its release.

The Center realized immediate efficiency returns on investment in several business processes. Qlik has improved the Center's visual analytics by including intuitive association of aspects that once took several slides and graphics to connect.

"We are excited about all the possibilities that are before us for future applications of Qlik," Benson said. "We are confident that Qlik will be equally transformational to the Corps enterprise."

For more information about Qlik, contact Westbrook at 256.895.8244 or [james.r.westbrook@usace.army.mil](mailto:james.r.westbrook@usace.army.mil) and Benson at 256.895.1451 or [deeneen.p.benson@usace.army.mil](mailto:deeneen.p.benson@usace.army.mil).

# Auditing course destined for D.C.

By Mark Thompson  
Public Affairs Office

A government auditing class developed by internal review (IR) professionals at the U.S. Army Engineering and Support Center, Huntsville may be on its way to the Pentagon after its recent debut at the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Learning Center (ULC) last week.

Members of the Huntsville Center IR office created then helped conduct and instruct a Generally Accepted Government Auditing Standards (GAGAS) refresher course that provided 32 continuing professional education (CPE) hours to 33 students in IR positions with USACE and the U.S. Army Reserve Command (USARC) during the first week of March.

Lori Cordell-Meikle, chief of the IR Office at Huntsville Center, said auditors from across the continent and ranging in experience levels from supervisors to those new to the field came to Huntsville to brush up the foundational principals of government auditing.

But the idea for the class was born out of a necessity to meet regulatory guidelines for auditing certifications for both Department of Defense Financial Management Certification and requirements under Army Regulation 11-7; requiring 80 hours of CPE every two years with 24 hours to come from audit specific courses.

"I'd been having a challenge providing the required CPE hours for my staff," Cordell-Meikle said. "I decided to take on the initiative to solve this issue for my office."

The idea came in 2014 after Cordell-Meikle had a conversation with Jorge Roca, now retired Department of the Army IR director, who indicated he concurred with the need for training but funding did not permit formulation of training at the time.

From that time forward, Cordell-Meikle started planning how to meet the identified need. It was while she was on her 120-day detail at USACE Headquarters where she solidified the actual course date and the partnership with USARC.

Cordell-Meikle's initiative brought Dr. Valisa Farrington-Lynch, an auditor with HQDA, Financial Management and Comptroller Office in the Pentagon to Huntsville.

Farrington-Lynch came to audit the new Huntsville Center inspired course and observe its instruction to see if it meet the rigorous standards necessary to be deemed a CPE course for Army auditors.

She said the class met those standards and was very resourceful in providing a background on auditing, and now she'd like to bring the instructors and the course from Huntsville to the Pentagon.

"We're trying to bring this course to the Washington, D.C. area," Farrington-Lynch said. "In my everyday life, I'm



Photo by William S. Farrow

**Jurelder Solomon, U.S. Army Engineering and Support Center, Huntsville internal review auditor, provides instruction during the Generally Accepted Government Auditing Standards (GAGAS) course March 8 at the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Learning Center.**

responsible for training with all the IR offices that fall under HDQA."

The course also may be developed as an audit course at the ULC in the near future, Cordell-Meikle said. She has been working with John Barnett, director of the ULC, to accomplish this over the last eight months).

Along with Cordell-Meikle, Center employees Audwin Davis, director of Resource Management, and IR auditor Jurelder Solomon served as instructors, along with Ernest Lutz, IR chief with the Corps of Engineers' Engineer Research and Development Center and two USARC personnel, E'Meka Mosquera and Steven Khone.

Col. Darrell Boazman, Army Reserve 3rd Medical Command IR chief, was among the first students to participate in the class. He said the GAGAS course checked a couple of crucial boxes for auditors.

"What this course allows all of us to do, from the IR community, is all be on the same page," Boazman said.

"It also gives us an opportunity to network with other organizations within the Army community and come together and have one common language."

Sound auditing is a cornerstone in ensuring government dollars are used correctly, according to Cordell-Meikle.

"It gives the taxpayer assurance that we are effectively and efficiently utilizing the funds we are entrusted with," Cordell-Meikle said. "So it lends credibility to the work that we do to support not only our commands but the warfighter and the nation at large."

# Ribbon cut on Energy Division solar project, Redstone Arsenal readiness enhanced

By William S. Farrow  
Public Affairs Office

**M**ore than 60 people attended the Redstone Arsenal Solar and Battery Project ribbon cutting ceremony Feb. 23 marking full operation of the renewable energy project and battery storage system that generates on-site, fuel-free power for use on the installation and its tenants.

The new 114-acre, renewable solar energy complex, located on Magazine Road, generates about 10 megawatt, alternating current, on-site solar renewable energy.

The project was developed by Redstone Arsenal's Directorate of Public Works, the Army Office of Energy Initiatives and the U.S. Army Engineering and Support Center, Huntsville's Energy Division.

Huntsville Center awarded the contract to SunPower Corp., of San Jose, California, in 2016 and managed the project throughout development.

Huntsville Center's Power Purchase Agreement Program develops and provides life cycle project management for large (10 megawatts or greater) and small scale (less than 10 megawatts) renewable energy projects that leverage private sector (third party) financing.

Financing for the project was provided by Birmingham, Ala.-headquartered Regions Bank.

SunPower designed, built and will operate and maintain the system that brings energy diversity and cost avoidance to Redstone Arsenal.

Redstone Arsenal purchases the electricity produced by the project at a rate less than current and projected utility cost, and is expected to save about \$80,000 per year, or \$1.5 million over the term of the Power Purchase Agreement.

Redstone Arsenal Senior Commander Lt. Gen. Edward M. Daly, said the project is a tremendous step forward in



Photo by Mark Thompson

**Paul Robinson, Huntsville Center Energy Division chief, and Col. John Hurley, talk shop after the Redstone Arsenal Solar and Battery Project ribbon cutting ceremony Feb. 23 at the Arsenal. Huntsville Center awarded the contract and managed the project throughout development.**

support of Army readiness as well as energy resiliency.

"Redstone Arsenal is at the forefront of Army transformation, leveraging science and technology to produce new capabilities in support of the nation's objectives," Daly said.

"Today, we celebrate a significant achievement; the Army's first privately funded and economically viable source of energy generation and storage."

During the ceremony, guest speaker Jordan Gillis, Acting Assistant Secretary of the Army (Installations, Energy & Environment), said in 2017 the Army established a requirement for its installations to become capable of providing necessary energy and water to sustain critical missions for 14 days in the event of major disruption.

He said currently the network of Army installations depend on a commercial power grid that's vulnerable to disruption due to aging infrastructure, physical or cyber attacks

and severe weather. "The garrison here at Redstone needs no reminding of devastating consequences of extreme weather events like the series of storms and tornadoes that knocked out power at this installation for a week in 2011," Gillis said.

Through diligent energy management, Gillis said Army installations will become robust and resilient platforms to support the warfighter and save taxpayers money.

Energy resilience, he said, enables Army readiness while it continues working toward the goal of achieving energy and water resilience on its installations through projects like the one here at Redstone Arsenal.

"I'm confident projects like this one will help Army installations meet the high standard of resilience," Gillis said.

"The solar array coupled with the battery storage system provides increased energy diversity and cost avoidance to team Redstone."



# Task Force POWER mission spikes

By Stephen Baack  
Public Affairs Office

**W**ith a growing number of American troops in Afghanistan, there is no shortage of electrical safety and repair work for Huntsville Center's Ordnance and Explosives Design Center.

This electrical safety mission is part of Task Force POWER, Afghanistan, which is a congressionally mandated program that provides 10 electrical inspector and repair teams for Department of Defense facilities throughout the country. POWER stands for Protect Our Warfighters and Electrical Resources.

The Ordnance and Explosives Design Center's Global Operations Division has been managing this mission since 2010, when U.S. troop numbers were at their highest at nearly 100,000.

Since 2011, though, the number has dropped with the transfer of authority between NATO and Afghan forces. By the start of 2017, all but nearly 9,000 U.S. troops had departed Afghanistan and many facilities had been demolished in the wake of their exodus.

An order from the new administration in late 2017 to increase that number is now expanding the electrical mission for the Ordnance and Explosives Design Center.

"Now that we have more forces coming in, expansion is going on again and semi-permanent buildings are being put up again as well," said Eduardo Granados, chief of Global Operations for the Ordnance and Explosives Design Center.

"As U.S. forces and military engineers wire those for electricity, our teams are supporting them. Our teams go in to help make sure everything is wired correctly so that those buildings are safe and sound for the new troops coming in."

According to a Feb. 9 report from Global Operations, since May 2015,



Photo by Eduardo Granados

**Andrew Brand, project manager with Task Force POWER, Afghanistan, leads an inspection of a new Dining Facility at Camp Oqab, Afghanistan, in September.**

Task Force POWER, Afghanistan has mitigated 190,185 life, health and safety hazards and non-code-compliant electrical deficiencies in 9,124 facilities in the country.

Global Operations' Andrew Brand is the on-site program manager and contracting officer's representative.

Brand, who is based at Bagram Airfield, has been in theater since September. He serves as the liaison between stakeholders and the 10 teams of contractors he oversees, ensuring all requests can be accomplished and, more importantly, that all finished work meets safety standards.

"The military [here] is currently in a growing phase, and so that means a lot of buildings that were not in use are now being turned back online," said Brand.

"In some cases, the buildings were used by others and the electrical [wiring] was incorrectly adjusted or added to. Our teams are in the process of inspecting and repairing those buildings to safe working conditions."

Before Huntsville Center took on the mission, electrical safety concerns in the U.S. Central Command area of responsibility were thrust into the spotlight after a number of service members were electrocuted in Iraq.

"It then became a congressional

mandate that the ground forces in those countries have electrical safety programs to prevent that," said Granados, who added that Huntsville Center consequently took on the mission in Afghanistan.

The mission is not without its share of challenges. Granados said certain areas are off limits at the moment because they have been deemed to be too hostile, and Brand said movement over the rugged, mountainous terrain must be via aircraft. These complications can cause delays, but Brand said he is grateful everyone involved is flexible.

"We are fortunate to have end users that are understandable and work with us," Brand said.

"Movement does not only include people. Getting material between locations can be extremely time consuming and difficult. We have a great group of workers and property guys here that do the best with the situation, but it is still a challenge."

Brand said the mission is not slowing down any time soon, and he doesn't envision it will end until all U.S. troops return.

"By far, the most rewarding part is seeing direct impact with the work that I am doing and the Soldiers," Brand said.



Photo by Stephan Baack

John Lewis, third from right, describes a training site layout to Col. John Hurley, commander of the U.S. Army Engineering and Support Center, Huntsville, and Huntsville Center Program Director Albert “Chip” Marin, during the leaders’ Jan. 11 visit to Redstone Arsenal. Accompanying them, from left to right, are Bill Sargent, director of Huntsville Center’s Ordnance and Explosives Directorate; Roger Young, project manager with APTIM; Jason Watson, Redstone environmental site manager; and Ashley Roeske, project manager with Huntsville Center’s Chemical/Biological Warfare Materiel Division.

## Munitions site removal project makes progress

**By Stephen Baack**  
**Public Affairs Office**

**T**he mission to investigate and remove World War II-era chemical warfare materiel suspected to be buried in 17 sites at Redstone Arsenal has reached a new milestone as Huntsville Center’s Chemical Warfare Design Center leads fieldwork at the post’s 10th such site.

The sites were identified by Alabama’s regulatory authority in 2010 for remediation as part of the federal government’s Resource Conservation and Recovery Act. This remediation includes investigation of these 17 sites and, as a required interim measure, removal of any discovered chemical warfare materiel.

As the Army’s executing agency for chemical warfare materiel responses, the Engineering and Support Center, Huntsville’s Chemical Warfare Design Center, has been providing support to the Garrison Installation Restoration Program by managing the mission at these sites since 2010, during which time the center and contractor APTIM have investigated 262 test pits, recovered more than 2,200 conventional munition remains and more than 15,000 pounds of munition debris.

The ordnance in question originated from the U.S., Great Britain, Germany and Japan, and was at Redstone during and

after the war for reworking and demilitarization. When the war ended, the goal of these operations shifted to ordnance disposal.

“After World War II, the approved practice for disposal of munitions and items like this was to bury them or to create trenches and pits and blow them up and then bury the remains – and it was an approved practice then,” Ashley Roeske, project manager with Huntsville Center’s Chemical/Biological Warfare Materiel Division, said.

Starting in the late 1960s there was a renewed concern about the risk these disposal methods posed to the environment and to public health and safety. Since the 1990s, the U.S.’s policy on chemical weapons has been to eliminate all recovered chemical warfare materiel, according to a 2012 report from the Committee on Review of the Conduct of Operations for Remediation of Recovered Chemical Warfare Materiel from Burial Sites.

According to the same report, the Army has safely destroyed more than 90 percent of its legacy chemical weapons and chemical warfare materiel from the World War II and Cold War eras.

Col. John Hurley, Huntsville Center commander, and Albert “Chip” Marin, Center program manager, took a tour

**Continued on page 14**





Courtesy photo

## Advancing

Huntsville Center's Stacey English, Lorena Henderson, Nanette Hill, Susan Parsons and Wes Johnson recently graduated the Army Management Staff College's CES Advanced Course, March 9 at Redstone Arsenal. The course focused on Army civilians leading a complex organization in support of national security and defense strategies; integrating Army and joint systems; inspiring vision and creativity; implementing change and managing programs.

## Munitions

Continued from page 13

of the site Jan. 19 to see operations on the 7-acre site at Test Area 1. These operations occur at night to minimize disruption to normal installation operations, including daytime range tests.

The leaders' visit included observing site-specific training, which teams are required to undergo before embarking on intrusive fieldwork. The two weeks of training includes practicing with remote-controlled excavators on a nearby site mockup and running through a variety of scenarios and decontamination procedures.

At this site, as with the other 16, teams have the potential of finding both conventional munitions, such as mortars and artillery, and chemical agents, such as nitrogen mustard blister agent and tabun nerve agent. Since field work began in 2016, teams have not encountered any chemical warfare materiel. Roeske said when they do find something, the teams are prepared.

"We've been very proactive about considering every situation that we can possibly think of," Roeske said.

"So if we find something, that's what we're there to do, and we do have the contingencies in place to handle that."

The safety measures in place are numerous, Roeske said, including continuous air monitoring for chemical agents, the full-time presence of an ordnance and explosives safety specialist, daily safety briefings, regular status updates to the site's command post and strict accountability procedures.

"In addition to site setup, teams check their exclusion zones and make sure that they have marked their exclusion

zones, and that there is nobody from the public or who's not essential who is within those exclusion zones," Roeske added.

"They constantly check them throughout the work day. Along with that, they coordinate with the installation's emergency operation center."

The next step for this site is the pre-operational survey. "That's a team of inspectors who come out and check our readiness: 'Are we doing everything in accordance with our plans?'" Roeske said.

After the survey, and only once approval is secured, intrusive investigations begin. During this interim-measures phase, teams must safely assess and remove munitions.

Fieldwork on the sites under the current contract are projected to last through fiscal 2019, and fieldwork on the remaining sites for this entire interim-measures phase is projected to last through fiscal 2042. The timeline for the corrective-measures phase is much longer, but Hurley said he is already happy with the Center's success.

"It's fantastic that the Corps of Engineers – Huntsville Center – can be part of that mission," he said.

"I've done environmental remediation in different places for about 12 years now, and folks are truly satisfied and fulfilled when they get to work on and see the results of an environmental remediation project. It's great to build a building and see a finished product, and there's a certain happiness in an engineer in that, but when you know there's an area that's not safe for people – and you go in and remediate that area, and that area can then be reused – there's a tremendous satisfaction from that."



# REM Program workshop set for June

By William S. Farrow  
Public Affairs Office

Huntsville Center's 2018 Resource Efficiency Manager Workshop is set for June 19-20 in Huntsville.

The workshop provides training for currently contracted REMs, their company representatives and REM program customers.

Workshop topics focus on third-party financing, utility cost reduction and energy audit programs, cost engineering, energy security, energy information management and measurement and verification.

The Center's REM program provides services intended to increase the effectiveness of Army garrison energy programs by identifying and reducing energy and water costs.

The REM program provides the service through an on-site certified energy manager contractor, referred to as a REM.

John Trudell, Huntsville Center REM program manager, said garrison energy programs realize immediate savings through actions such as correcting billing errors and resetting building temperature setbacks.

"The REM Program adds value to our customers through a competitive and cost effective contract award and management process," Trudell said.

He said long term actions involving energy savings project development and project implementation savings validation of MILCON projects.

"The energy managers provide assistance to garrison energy programs through their review and analysis of data, identifying ECMs for new project implementation, preparing project implementation documents, tracking energy savings project performance, and documenting these activities in a monthly report for validation of savings.

Trudell said the REMs' qualifications include a degree in a related field, years



Graphic illustration by Michael May

of experience, and attainment of their Certified Energy Manager (CEM) certification.

"The REM level varies by the education level, number of years of experience, and certifications. The contract management process provides full contract support to include the development of the performance work statement with the specific requirements for the site, a contracting officer's representative (COR), quality assurance, review of the REM monthly reports, payment of invoices, and contract closeout, Trudell said.

"The process ensures a highly qualified experienced REM is provided at the lowest price thus providing our

customers with the best value. The REM qualification level (I, II, or III) is decided with the customer prior to sending out the request for proposal."

Trudell said in FY17, the program's 23 REMs identified more than \$25 million in savings at 15 locations.

The first day of the workshop provides training for the REMs and is only open to the REMs, their company representatives, and the REM program garrison customers. However, the June 20 workshop is open to all interested parties and highlights the support and energy savings REMs provide their customers and the energy technical and project support provided by the Center's Energy Division.

# First aid attendants train, certify

**By Stephen Baack**  
**Public Affairs Office**

**T**welve Huntsville Center employees completed their certifications for first aid, CPR and automated external defibrillator operation during a March 1 session at the U.S. Army Engineering and Support Center, Huntsville.

The Huntsville Center Safety Office organized the training and certification through the American Red Cross. According to Wanda Griffin, safety technician with the Safety Office, a series of certifications is scheduled annually for the Center's first aid attendants.

"We have first aid attendants assigned on each floor and two in each suite to include the Beville Center," said Griffin. "No other employees can register for this training unless they are a first aid attendant or a Safety Office employee."

Leading the training and certification was Red Cross instructor Victor Churchill, who has 22 years of experience teaching CPR and first aid. Churchill, who is based in Birmingham, said he makes it an effort to relate his training to participants in a personal way. When he incorporates a scenario into his training, he most often describes the victim as someone the student knows.

"I always talk about the victim being a mom, grandma, baby, child – someone like that – so it makes it personal for them," Churchill said.

"I really think they walk away with more of this stuff if they aren't detached from the information all day long, which isn't easy to do with these classes because it's a long day and, really, it's not the most comfortable subject in the world."

From his own perspective, though, Churchill does not need to rely on hypothetical examples. Not only does he have his own stories to draw from,



Photo by Stephan Baack

**Huntsville Center employees practice chest compressions on medical dummies during a first aid and CPR training and certification session March 1. Along with their primary duties, the employees serve as first aid attendants for and must certify annually.**

he said the number of former students he has encountered with their own stories has been surprisingly high.

"In fact, Churchill said he could spend eight hours recounting stories from former students in which they needed to use their first aid and CPR skills on strangers or loved ones.

Several years ago, Churchill ran into a former student at a supermarket who said he needed to use CPR on his own wife – twice. The first time, the student froze and panicked for a moment until he was able to hear Churchill's voice in his mind leading him through the steps.

"I didn't anticipate people coming up to me after class and doing that," he said. "I guess in the back of my mind I knew that sooner or later somebody in class was going to have to use something they learned in class. That's part of the reason I do stuff the way I do, but I just didn't think that I would get the feedback from them."

Until students need to use their skills in the real world, Churchill said, in general, they do not seem to appreciate the very real possibility that someone will need their help.

"Most people walk around with the

idea that if something goes wrong, all they're really going to have to do is call 911," he said. "I don't think their posture is, 'I don't need it,' or, 'It's not important'; I think it's more like, 'I'm not going to have to do it because it's not going to happen to me, or somebody else is going to come to the rescue.'"

For medical emergencies for anyone at Huntsville Center, Griffin advises taking the following steps:

- **Dial 911**
- **Notify your nearest first aid attendant**
- **Alert the on-duty security guard to prepare for the arrival of an emergency vehicle**
- **Arrange to escort the emergency responders to the person in need of help,**
- **Contact the Safety Office to notify them of the situation**

These instructions, which includes a list of first aid attendants and their contact information, are located between the main restroom entrances on each level. Also at each of those locations is an automated external defibrillator, or AED, in a wall-mounted cabinet. Griffin added that each first aid attendant maintains first aid supplies, as does the Safety Office.

Although this training was only open to first aid attendants and Safety Office employees, the Red Cross offers a continuous rotation of courses and certifications throughout the U.S. for members of the public – including the course Churchill provided. Learn more and sign up by visiting [www.redcross.org/take-a-class](http://www.redcross.org/take-a-class).

Griffin added that, for government employees who need first aid and/or CPR training to perform site visits on their jobs, the training can be scheduled and paid for by their organization.

To learn more about first aid and CPR training, or about medical emergency procedures, call the Safety Office at 256-895-1584, 256-895-5292 or 256-895-1225.





Photo by Stephan Baack

**Col. John Hurley, commander of the U.S. Army Engineering and Support Center, Huntsville, signs up for the 2018 Commander's Fitness Challenge at the organization's Wellness Center. Next to Hurley are members of the Huntsville Center Wellness Committee.**

## 2018 Commander's Fitness Challenge fit for all

**By Stephen Baack  
Public Affairs Office**

**L**ead by example, Col. John Hurley, Huntsville Center commander, officially kicked off the second-annual Commander's Fitness Challenge by being the first to sign up at the Wellness Center Jan. 11.

The challenge is designed to give participants an opportunity to monitor and improve their fitness and overall health throughout the first half of the calendar year, and beyond if they should so choose. Hurley stressed that, like last year, this is not a weight-loss contest, nor is it a fitness competition.

"The main goal is just to inspire people to make a small change in their life that would result in them becoming healthier or to improve their overall wellness," Hurley said.

This could mean setting aside even 10 or 15 minutes to take a walk with a co-worker during lunch, Hurley said, or squeezing in a quick workout before or after work. Because employees have such varied missions and schedules, any extra time they want to schedule during their duty schedule will have to be arranged through supervisors.

To help participants document their progress, the Huntsville Center Wellness Committee has created an online tracker on the Center's SharePoint site. The tracker lets participants record fitness-related data such as body weight, steps, running and cycling mileage, minutes walked, number of fitness classes and others. Participants can track whichever metric they choose, or all of them.

Robert Jackson, a member of the Wellness Committee,

said he is excited to be part of "Season 2" of the challenge and is ready to help employees reach their health and fitness goals. In addition to the tracker, Jackson recommends people take advantage of the equipment and classes at the Wellness Center on the first floor of the main building.

Jackson stressed that tracking one's fitness goals and using the gym are not requirements to participate in the Commander's Challenge, but he recommended that Center employees use "peer power" to help them achieve their goals. "There are a lot of different reasons people decide to do this, just like any fitness endeavor," Jackson said.

"Some people just want to be healthier, and this gives them the push to do it, especially when you know a lot of other people are doing it. That sense of community can help foster that positive environment. 'If I know some of my friends are doing it and some of my co-workers, that'll help push me to do it and be more conscious about health as well.'"

Jackson, who works as a mechanical engineer in the Engineering Directorate Mechanical Branch, said he and the other members of the Wellness Committee are also planning to host at least a few small challenges like a push-up contest, which they did last year. Participation in the mini challenges is strictly voluntary.

"Those challenges are just to help keep folks engaged and thinking about it," said Jackson.

Hurley recommends participants approach this challenge from a sensible perspective by avoiding pitfalls common in starting a fitness regimen. These include working too hard too soon and setting goals that are too aggressive.





Photo by William S. Farrow

Panelists respond to questions during Huntsville Center's Women's History Month 2018 event March 29.

## Persistence empowers womens to gender equality

By William S. Farrow  
Public Affairs Office

**D**uring the U.S. Army Engineering and Support Center, Huntsville's Equal Employment Opportunity office-sponsored Women's History Month 2018 event March 29, five female panelists of different ages and backgrounds sat before an audience and spoke in depth about gender-based obstacles and the persistence required to succeed in the workforce.

The theme, "Nevertheless She Persisted," brought attention to each panelists' persistence to succeed professionally and also shed light upon how the Center has changed over the years.

In his opening statement, Boyce Ross, director of the Center's Engineering Directorate, said although women today have achieved equality and parity, he specifically noted how times have changed during his 35-year career at the Center.

"When I got here in 1983, I can't remember a woman in a senior leadership position," he said. "But now when you look at our workforce, we have women as division chiefs, and we have Gina (Elliott) filling in for the deputy commander who is deployed. We have come a long way."

Panelist Meagan Brantley, Center Contracting, is a 2015 graduate of the Army internship program and has experienced working contracts for multiple Center programs.

Brantley said she comes from a generation that has not been restrained because of her gender. She grew up in a home where her parents had independent careers but shared household responsibilities. She and her sisters were pushed and encouraged that they could "have it all."

Brantley said she never experienced any gender inequality until she stepped into the workforce in 2012. That inequality, however, was minor.

When Brantley began working as a contract specialist at the Center, she recalled some of the questions she faced were on a more personal level, focusing more on on her

relationship status, not on her professional or educational credentials.

"How is that relevant?" she asked the audience rhetorically. "I'm not really offended by it, but it was just something I noticed when I started here," Brantley said.

Panelist Kay Sommerkamp's stepped into the workforce more than 30 years ago when key laws regarding equality . Sommercamp, a lawyer working in the Center's Office of Counsel, is a retired Army colonel who was commissioned in 1985 after graduating from law school.

She recalled how different attitudes toward women were then, especially for women serving in the military. She remembered instances in her career where decisions or comments made by male officers didn't seem appropriate or just. But often saw gender bias as a personal challenge to move forward.

"A lot of times when one door closes another door opens," she said.

Panelists Betina Johnson, Ordnance and Explosives; Lillian Fox, Center Contracting; and Valerie Clinkenbeard, Engineering Directorate, echoed personal stories of gender challenges they have experienced in the workforce and how to best deal with certain situations.

All three women have science, technology, engineering and mathematics-based education degrees. Johnson and Clinkenbeard are engineers who began their careers in male-dominated sections.

They said their careers have advanced through the power of attitude and persistence. Clinkenbeard also believes in the importance of mentoring to move other women forward in their careers.

Although Fox' career has been mostly in the contracting career field, she too believes in the power of mentoring.

"I took my challenges as learning opportunities to gain trust from leadership, be a positive influence and a role model for others to follow," she said.

# Employees participate in 43rd Annual AAMU Youth Motivational Task Force Conference

**By Angela Morton  
Equal Employment  
Opportunity**

For two consecutive years a Huntsville Center employee received the “Michael Nobels Newcomer” award. Keanna Houston, Center Contracting, took the award for her work as a first-time consultant supporting the 43rd annual Alabama A&M University Youth Motivational Task Force Conference March 11-13.

Houston was credited for her dedication and enthusiasm at the 2018 event, following in the footsteps of Shirley Burke-Mitchell, also with Contracting, who won last year.

“Winning the Michael Nobel’s award was a complete honor,” Houston said.

I was just having fun and inspiring young people like myself to never give up and take advantage of every opportunity given to them. The fact that I was recognized was an amazing and humbling experience, and I look forward to going back year after year.”

Other Huntsville Center employees participating in the event included Felicia McBride, Joel Williams, Pamela Smith and Veronica Hannahs, all with Contracting Directorate, and staff from the Center’s Equal Employment Opportunity office.

The group of seven served as consultants to discuss career opportunities in the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and the federal government. They explained how the work world operates and shared their personal career experiences. These professionals provided students with the direction and insight so necessary in making realistic career decisions.

“I was thoroughly impressed with Alabama A&M University’s investment in the success of their students,” Houston said.

“Being a graduate of AAMU, I



Courtesy photos

**Keanna Houston displays her “Michael Nobels Newcomer” award for her work as a first-time consultant supporting the 43rd annual Alabama A&M University Youth Motivational Task Force Conference.**

remembered hearing about this program but never really thought much of it until Felicia McBride asked me to be a consultant and represent Huntsville Center.

“For three days I met amazingly talented students and networked with professionals from all over the country,” she said. “I learned so much from this experience and even was inspired to do more for my own career.”

One of the highlights of the year for AAMU students is the visit of YMTF consultants. The National College YMTF program has helped more than 5 million students become aware of the variety of careers available to them in the private and public sectors.

Throughout the day, teams of two to four professionals visited classrooms across campus where they shared career advice, trials, challenges, triumphs, words of wisdom and encouragement.

Through their personal accomplishments, the consultants

showed, first-hand, the personal and professional rewards that can be reaped from hard work and perseverance. They discussed possible solutions to problems students may face and informed them of skills they will need to succeed in the workplace.

In addition, they took the opportunity to inform students of the Pathways Program at the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and how they can use the skills they learn in their degree programs in fields such as contracting.

Mock interviews were conducted in the afternoon, as well as an evening session on mentoring.

Planned and organized by the AAMU Career Development Services, the event is an outreach effort that leads to getting the right people for the right job and sites Huntsville Center as an organization that contributes to the local community, expands partnerships with local schools and increases employee participation.

# Hatch Act compliance begins with candidacy

**By Melanie Braddock**  
**Office of Counsel**

**T**he U.S. Office of Special Counsel issued guidance in 2017 regarding the Hatch Act and President Donald Trump's status as a candidate in the 2020 Presidential election.

In that guidance, OSC advised that an incumbent President is considered a "candidate" for purposes of the Hatch Act when he officially announces his candidacy for reelection.

The OSC also advised that once that happens, like with any other candidate, the Hatch Act prohibits federal employees from engaging in activity directed at the success or failure of the President's candidacy while they are on duty or in the workplace.

On Feb. 28, President Trump announced the appointment of a campaign manager "for his reelection committee as the advanced planning for the 2020 race begins."

This act means that President Trump now has officially announced his candidacy for reelection. Accordingly, the OSC provided updated guidance to federal employees.

The updated guidance reminds federal employees that the Hatch Act prohibits them from engaging in political activity while on duty or in a federal room or building.

As discussed above, the definition of political activity is broad and encompasses more than displays or communications (including in-person and via email or social

media) that expressly advocate for or against President Trump's reelection.

As a general reminder, federal employees may not:

- **Use official authority or influence to interfere with an election**
- **Solicit or discourage political activity of anyone doing business with the agency**
- **Solicit or receive political contributions**
- **Be candidates for public office in partisan elections**
- **Engage in political activity while on duty, in a government office, wearing an official uniform, using a government vehicle, or using government e-mail/communications (including social media)**

The Hatch Act prohibitions apply 24 hours a day, seven days a week, 365 days a year (and 366 in a leap year), so there is no "day off" or "time off" from these restrictions. Make sure that you are Hatch Act compliant.

If you have questions, please feel free to contact me at (256) 895-7373 or send an email to: [Melanie.L.Braddock@usace.army.mil](mailto:Melanie.L.Braddock@usace.army.mil)

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