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News Release

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DoD selects first group for National Security Personnel System: three Army Corps of Engineers' Divisions among those selected

Galveston – Three U.S. Army Corps of Engineers divisions and their subordinate districts will be included in the initial implementation of the Department of Defense National Security Personnel System (NSPS), announced today by DoD. DoD plans to convert employees in grouping called Spirals. Spiral One will include approximately 300,000 general schedule, U.S. - based Army, Navy, Air Force and other Department of Defense civilian employees. Spiral One will be rolled out in three phases over an 18-month period beginning as early as July 2005. The first group in Spiral One will number about 60,000. In addition, the NSPS Labor Relations system is scheduled to be implemented across DoD by summer 2005.

The Corps' South Pacific Division, San Francisco, Calif.; Southwestern Division, Dallas, Texas; and Mississippi Valley Division, Vicksburg, Miss.; were selected to take part in the first group of the Spiral One implementation. Approximately 8,300 Corps employees will be included in the first grouping of Spiral One. Other Corps of Engineers organizations will be included in future groupings in Spiral One.

Since NSPS was signed into law on Nov. 24, 2003, DoD officials and the Office of Personnel and Management have been working with DoD employees, to include supervisors, managers, human resources and equal employment opportunity practitioners, general counsel and financial management professionals, and union officials to develop design options for the new civilian personnel management system.

The proposed regulations will appear in the Federal Register this winter, which will initiate a formal public comment period, as well as a period for a formal "meet and confer" process with employee representatives to discuss the proposed regulations. Upon completion of the comment period, the department will develop more specific implementing regulations, which will be finalized in the spring.

The announcement of the first phase of Spiral One participants at this time allows the leadership of those affected organizations to position themselves and look ahead to help prepare DoD employees for the conversion. This will include training in what are called "soft skills," such as interpersonal communication, team building, and conflict management, to help people adjust to the change.

Spiral Two will comprise the remainder of the eligible workforce and will be initiated following an assessment of Spiral One and after the secretary of defense certifies the Department's performance management system. The law provides that the NSPS human resources system may not apply to organizations with more than 300,000 employees until the secretary of defense determines and certifies that the department has a performance management system in place that meets the statutory criteria established for the NSPS performance management system. Spiral One will provide the basis for this certification prior to the deployment of Spiral Two. Spiral Three will comprise the DoD labs should current legislative restrictions be eliminated.

Congress authorized the new personnel system as part of the fiscal 2004 National Defense Authorization Act. “NSPS provides an opportunity to improve the effectiveness of the department through a simplified personnel management system that will improve the way it hires and assigns, as well as compensate and reward its employees,” said Navy Secretary Gordon England, the DoD senior executive overseeing NSPS. “It will provide the department with a modern, flexible and agile human resource system that can be more responsive to the national security environment, while preserving employee protections and benefits.”

In a written welcoming statement to all employee participants in Spiral One, Mary Lacey, Program Executive Officer for NSPS, said, “We will gain experience with the procedures we put in place, and I am counting on you to provide feedback in identifying any improvements as we implement the system to the entire workforce.”

England called the implementation of NSPS a historic occasion that will provide challenges and opportunities to manage change in the human resources arena in a beneficial and productive way to support the modern missions of the Department of Defense.

The new system will be fully implemented in the July 2007/January 2008 timeframe. To view the NSPS Spiral One participants: <http://www.defenselink.mil/news/Dec2004/d20041214osd.pdf> For additional information about the Department of Defense National Security Personnel System (NSPS), please visit www.cpms.osd.mil/nsps.