

The **Castle**

Savannah District, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers

February 2005

Bragg bags new barracks!

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In Honor of Black History Month:
Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

Bragg's smokin' new firehouse

Iraq: Opening doors of opportunity

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Are you in th' Groove?



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The Castle

News magazine of the Savannah District, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers

Commander and District Engineer
Col. Mark S. Held

Chief of Public Affairs
Billy Birdwell

Editorial Director
G. Jeanne Hodge

Editor
Jim Cunningham

Staff Writer
Jim Cunningham

Photographer
Jonas N. Jordan

Layout
Jim Cunningham

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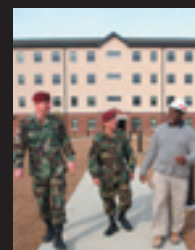
FRONT COVER

Capt. Brian W. Parsons, Master Sgt. Gregory J. Milewski, and Robert Ford Savannah District's resident engineer discuss the new CAB barracks amenities.

BACK COVER

Glistening fire trucks now occupy the new firehouse at Fort Bragg.

Photos by Jonas Jordan.





Held

by Col. Mark S. Held

Since arriving in May I've had the privilege to see the Savannah District face some daunting challenges – overseas deployments, first modular barracks construction and hurricane recovery responses. I've seen you all at work and sometimes at play. I've now seen for myself what I'd always heard about the Savannah District – it's full of the finest talent in the Corps of Engineers.

Now it's time for me to report back to you on what now needs to be done and where we need to take this District.

These six topics will give you a glimpse of the future of the Savannah District and the areas where we will concentrate our efforts.

Issue: Safety.

Everyone who works in this District – government civilian, military or contract employee – needs to make this their personal priority. I live it and I expect each of you to live it, daily. In 2004 10 people drown in Savannah District lakes. None of the 10 wore life jackets. Some were outside designated swimming areas. One worker, alone at a job site, fell from a 12-foot ladder to a concrete floor. He almost lost his life. Another worker fell on ice and may not fully recover. You can see that safety must be 24 hours “on” and zero hours “off.” We will not pay mere lip-service to safety, not this year, not any year.

Issue: Fighting the Global War on Terrorism.

America is waging a war. Victory in this war is no less vital to our nation, fighting no less deadly to our troops and citizens, and our daily work no less focused on it than during the other world wars. We work for the premier power projection platforms in the nation. We design and construct buildings for

Waiting for the line to jerk

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fully 30 percent of the active duty Army along with portions of the Air Force and the Navy. Our work directly supports troops actively engaged in war fighting. They can't do their job unless we do our job.

Issue: Transforming the Army.

The Army is changing to meet the needs of 21st Century America. We can help lead that change or we can become irrelevant. The Army is becoming faster and more flexible. We must become faster and more flexible if we expect to meet the needs of the Army. Our modular barracks projects at Fort Stewart and upcoming at Forts Benning and Bragg are examples of our efforts to build to meet the needs of today's Army. We must think about what the war fighting commander needs now and will need in the next decade.

Issue: Execute the mission.

I've seen how well you do your job. I know you work hard. Now is not the time to relax. Our military mission is growing. Already the largest in our history, it will get bigger over the next years as we meet the challenges of the transformed Army. Our three large lake projects remain major operations and real estate and regulatory continue to execute important programs. In the coming months and years we will face not only our routine mission, but new challenges as the District seeks new and expanded activities.

Issue: Support regionalization .


Savannah District is the leader in the South Atlantic Division's regionalization efforts. Some of you have resisted this change, but this change will happen. In fact, there will be more change every year. Col. Michael J. Walsh, South Atlantic Division Commander, has set course of developing five interdependent

districts operating virtually. Our districts will no longer be stand-alone entities. While there will be change, we foresee no loss of jobs or forced relocations. We will become a more efficient, agile organization. Get out in front of regionalization – don't get left behind by it.

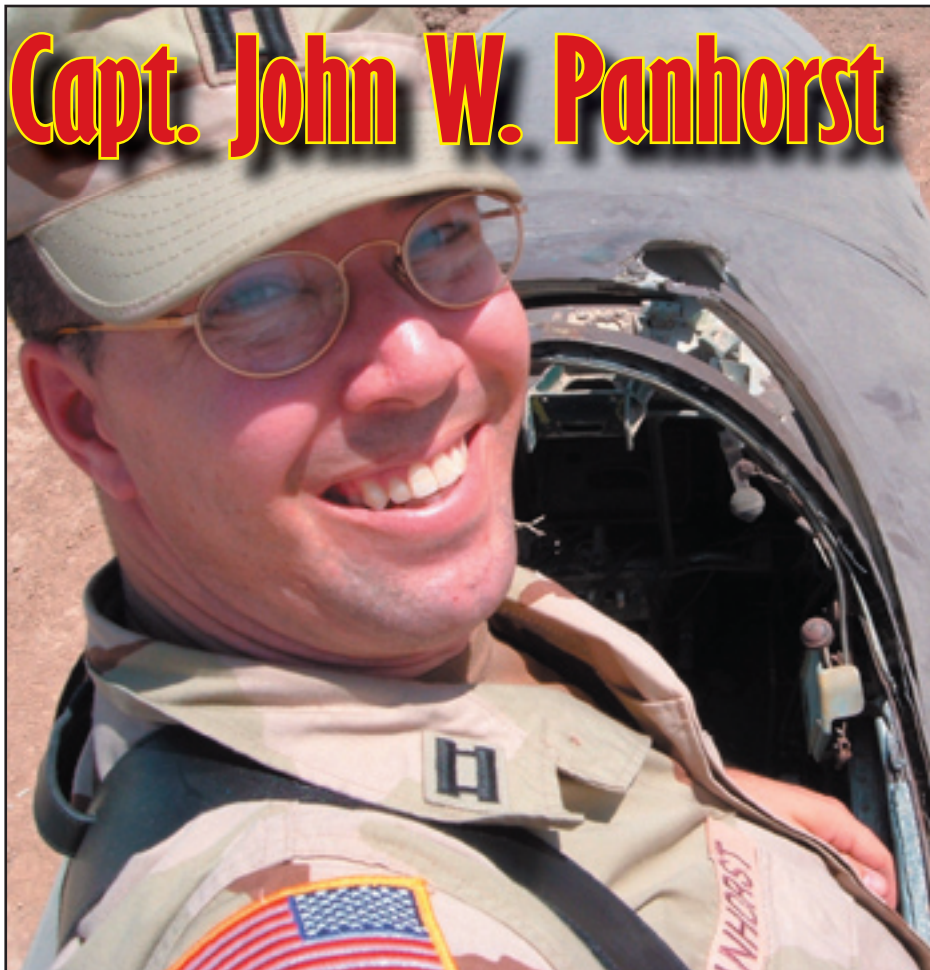
Issue: Enhance our relationship with our customers.

Without our customers we have nothing and will lose our reason to exist. We must spend more time communicating with the people we do our work for. Sending notes and e-mail to our customers is good, but face-to-face, frank discussions on how we can improve are much better. In my travels around Savannah District, I've met with customers at Forts Stewart, Bragg, Benning and Gordon as well as Hunter Army Air Field and MOTSU. I visited with Air Force customers at Pope and Seymour Johnson Air Force Bases. They like our work, but they need us to improve. We will see more use of Senior Executive Review Groups (SERG) during and after our projects. The SERGs lead to real change, making us a better organization. Communications must lead to learning. Learning must lead to positive change.

OK. This is where I see us going over the next months and years: Safety, war fighting, transformation, continued mission execution, support for regionalization and communicating with our customers.

Five out of six of our GS- 15s are eligible for retirement. One has already gone and one has announced retirement for this spring. This will cause change by requiring us to get used to new leaders. It will take all of us to reach these goals. This talented District can and will do it. 

Capt. John W. Panhorst



▲ Capt. John W. Panhorst standing in the cockpit of a wrecked MiG - 15

Opening doors of opportunity

by Jim Cunningham

photo courtesy of Capt. John W. Panhorst

Iraqi men and women gained a foothold on preparing a better life for themselves because of the Corps' mission in Iraq. Savannah District's Capt. John W. Panhorst played a part in developing the opportunities for Iraqis to find work and learn new job skills while deployed in Iraq.

"The average Iraqi citizen that I talked to wants the same things we all want. They want to be able to provide for their family, shop for groceries without being accosted. They want to be able to earn an honest living, celebrate free religion, and not be told what to do," said Panhorst, the operations officer, Area Office, Gulf Region North Division from May 22 to Nov. 11, 2004.

The U.S. Army and Iraqi security forces strive to provide safety so that the nation's workers can find work and provide for their families.

"We are having a stabilizing effect on Iraq. With American assistance,

War on terror

the Iraqis are able to focus on making life better. There is a lot of construction going on, not just projects that the Corps is doing, we saw a lot of new homes and other projects going on in different local communities. The contractors we were working with wanted the work and the opportunity for work," Panhorst said.

Because much of the Iraqi workforce was unskilled in construction, the Corps had to teach them every aspect of the job, just so the project could meet modern standards.

"They were basically unskilled labor building cinder block walls. They would get the blocks set-up and then smear a layer of mud or mortar on them, take a smoke break, then come back and stack more blocks on. In 118 degree heat that mortar doesn't stay wet very long, so it has already hardened," said Panhorst.

Realizing that the workforce had no idea how to build a cinder block wall, the Army decided to educate the workforce and teach them the proper skills.

"We had to build a three and a half kilometer portion of the perimeter wall around the Iraqi Army base. It was made from cinder block, so we had to bring the Iraqi workforce into a classroom and teach them from the beginning how it should be done," he said. "We would go out and work with the Iraqi workforce on a training wall, then have the Iraqi quality control representatives look at it and tell what was good and what needed to be done over again," he said. With patience the Americans managed to teach the Iraqis to lay bricks properly.

The Iraqis had their own way for mixing concrete mortar.

"They mixed their mortar with their feet! They would stir some cement and whatever sand they could find and then they would literally mix it up with their feet," said Panhorst.

Panhorst found that many things are changing in Iraq since the Corps has been there; many old traditions were beginning to change.

"You could see a few women working along with the men. The education and opportunities we provided in the way of work and job skills gave the Iraqi laborers more choices than pan-handling, sitting around doing nothing, or picking up arms and shooting at you," Panhorst said.


Panhorst can see how his job was part of a larger picture of the reconstruction of Iraq.

"I served in two different locations while I was over there. I was the Operations Officer for each area office in the Gulf Region North District. We expanded to electrical projects, new Iraqi army bases, hospitals and schools, border forts, and a couple of landfills," he said.

"We rely on air transport since there are no ports in the middle of the country. A lot of things are closely tied to one another. There were a lot of growing pains. It was like taking a lot of different picture puzzles and throwing them in the floor and trying to make them fit into one large scene," he said.

When asked if he would go back.

"I believe in the mission, I believe in the work, and I would go back in a few years," Panhorst said. "It was tough, it's tough for everyone. I was able to take lots of pictures to show the family that I was OK and to remind them what Daddy looks like," he said. "Corps employees are very fortunate to have telephone and e-mail communications available to keep in touch with the family," said Panhorst.

The tough conditions seemed a bit less tough on Panhorst when he returned, knowing that the conditions for the Iraqis were a little better because of his work. 

Lakes


Waterfowl hunts provide unique opportunity

by Jeff Brooks
(Wildlife Biologist)

Waterfowl hunting opportunities are uncommon in Georgia and South Carolina. There are a few state and federally managed areas, particularly near the coast, that offer waterfowl hunting. At the Richard B. Russell Lake project (RBR), three waterfowl impoundments located near the project office are managed to provide wintering habitat for migratory waterfowl. These impoundments are drained in the spring, burned to remove vegetation, and planted in millet, corn, and wheat to provide a good food source for migrating waterfowl. As waterfowl begin to migrate in the fall, these areas are flooded by pumping water back into the impoundments. Several hundred to as many as a thousand ducks on any given day will use these waterfowl impoundments to rest and feed. While this area is managed to provide habitat for wintering waterfowl, RBR also offers recreational hunting opportunities. This year two waterfowl hunts were held for mobility impaired individuals and two



▲ Denny Seymour with Brayden Seymour of Elberton Ga., Robert LaCroix with Sean and Leven of Evans Ga.


hunts were held for youth hunters (15 years and younger). Eleven permanent hunting “blinds” have been constructed around the impoundments. The Corps receives many positive comments from these waterfowl hunts including several from hunters who have reported harvesting their first duck at these impoundments. 



▲ This bald eagle was recuperating at J. Strom Thurmond Lake when the photo was taken. It is a rare opportunity in deed to get this close.

Bald Eagle surveys conducted at lake projects

by Jeff Brooks
(Wildlife Biologist)

On January 10th, the annual bald eagle survey was completed at J. Strom Thurmond Lake. With 1,200 miles of shoreline, this survey is a large undertaking. Four boats surveyed the shoreline, seven vehicles traveled to predetermined points around the lake, and a contractor flew the entire shoreline for this one-day annual event. Lori Brewster, Conservation Biologist at Thurmond coordinated the survey. All observations of eagles as well as waterfowl were recorded. This information is provided to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and state agencies each year as part of a nationwide eagle survey. A total of 14 bald eagles were observed at Thurmond; 10 adults and 4 juveniles. Although this represents an increase over last year's numbers when five eagles were observed, ongoing nesting surveys are necessary to determine how many of these eagles have established territories around Thurmond. Nest surveys provide a better basis for comparing population changes from year to year. Bald eagle surveys will be completed at Richard B. Russell and Hartwell later during the month of January. Last year, one eagle was observed at Richard B. Russell Lake, and two at Hartwell Lake. 



Bragg bags barracks

Fort Bragg gets new Combat Aviation Brigade barracks

▲ The new barracks at Fort Bragg follow the current Army barracks standard, with something extra.



From Here



▲ “From rags to riches” view of the old barracks at Fort Bragg as compared to the new barracks above.

by Jim Cunningham
photos by Jonas Jordan

Until 1996 the American Soldier remained combat ready, and at the same time lived a lifestyle with very little privacy or attention to his personal needs. In nine years, the Army has managed to transform those conditions of lifestyle. Army and civilian personnel know this transformation as the “Army Campaign Plan”.

The well-being of Soldiers and their families is the most important priority to the Secretary of the Army, Dr. Francis J. Harvey.

“They deserve it, they should live just like the rest of America lives, because they’re defending our country. So I am focused and committed to doing that, that’s where the rubber meets the road in terms of that priority,” he said.

Savannah District’s rubber hit the road, in-

deed, at Fort Bragg, N.C., with the completion of the new Combat Aviation Brigade barracks. Soldiers of the Combat Aviation Brigade 82nd Airborne Division will move in by Feb. 6. Not only will they have new barracks for 512 Soldiers, but they also have new brigade headquarters buildings, three battalion headquarters buildings, and 12 company operations facilities. A cursory look at of new barracks at various Army installations may give one the idea that they are all the same with very little about them that is unique.

“We are following the current Army barracks standard. It’s the basic two separate living spaces with the combined kitchen area and a shared bathroom for every two Soldiers. It’s a big improvement in terms of their privacy. Now they have their own bedrooms and they share a common area that has a kitchen with a refrigerator and a microwave, some cabinets and a sink, with a shared bathroom,” said Al-

len Hand, Savannah District’s resident engineer at Fort Bragg.

The Combat Aviation Brigade’s new home is an exception! It contains what is known as the Aero Medical Facility, which is unique to aviation brigades, because their pilots need exams before each mission.

“It is where they will give their pilots standard pre-flight checkups to check their eye-sight etc.,” said Hand.

“It is not a full medical facility, it has a waiting area and exam rooms, but nothing as complete as you would find in a full clinic,” he said.

For Soldiers accustomed to jumping out of airplanes, one would think that it was as easy as jumping off a log. But on further examination the barracks provides something else that is unique to the Combat Aviation Brigade.

“Something else we are adding to the facilities that they didn’t have before for





▲ Capt. Brian W. Parsons and Master Sgt. Gregory J. Milewski discuss the kitchen area of the new barracks.



▲ Moving furniture in the new barracks made easy with contractor's lift.


Airborne units is C-130 and C-17A [transport aircraft] mock ups on the site near their company operations facilities.

"Before they go out for jumps, they have to practice their jumps, so we built practice-landing platforms where they can practice jumping and landing," said Hand.

The project was awarded to Caddell Construction of Atlanta on June 1, 2001, for \$64.8 million. Caddell put in one million man-hours without any accidents, which is a very significant achievement, with more than 25 subcontractor and up to 200 workers on the site per day with 24,730 man-hours.

The current cost is \$65.5 million, which reflects a very low one percent cost growth. The District's current goal is to hold down cost growth to five percent or less.

"Most projects aren't getting to that goal. A one percent cost growth is a significant achievement for the Corps," Hand said.

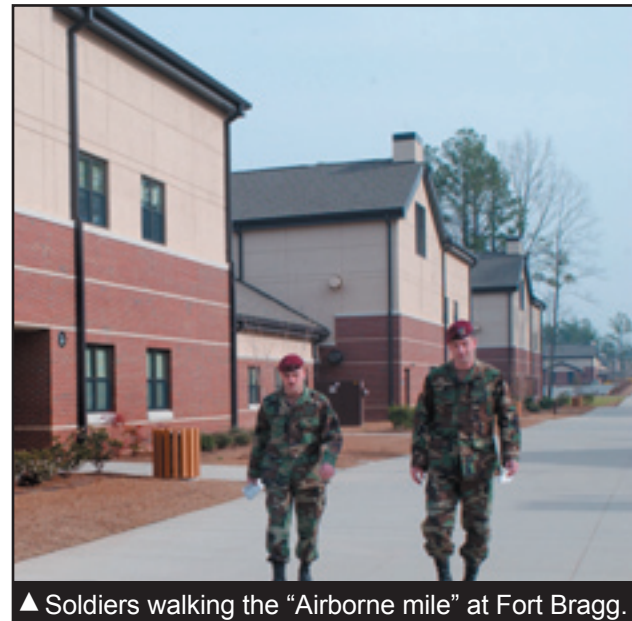
"Providing the best quality of life for Soldiers and their families is very important and I fully support the two major quality of life initiatives: the residential communities initiative and the barracks modernization program, which are closing the gap on inadequate housing for service members," said Harvey. 



▲ C-130 and C-17A mock ups on the site near company operations.



▲ This bridge connects two barracks sites and joins the "Airborne mile" walkway at Fort Bragg.



▲ Soldiers walking the "Airborne mile" at Fort Bragg.



Bragg's smokin' new firehouse



▲ The new firehouse has three times the space and houses four fire engines in more than 7,000 sq. ft. of floor space.

by Jim Cunningham
photos by Jonas Jordan



▲ Lt. Steve Stewart takes exam in the new fire station at Fort Bragg.

Most of the time turning in three things and only getting one in return is not good business, but for the fire department at Fort Bragg, N.C., such an exchange makes perfect sense. On Oct. 13, Savannah District turned over the keys to a new, modern firehouse replacing one built in the early days of WWII that was so small firefighters needed two other buildings just to make it work.

The new firehouse has three times the space and houses four fire engines in more than 7,000 sq. ft. of floor space. The new firehouse is in a better location because recent construction removed key roads the firemen used for emergency response, according to Kathryn Haight, Public Works Business Center Project Manager at Fort Bragg.

The new fire station contract was awarded in Sept. 2003 for \$1.3 million. The contractor, EDT of Marietta Ga., built the fire station under an 8A-negotiated contract, which is limited to \$1.5 million, and was awarded in Sept. 2003, according to James Gehle, Construction Field Staff

representative for Savannah District.

"EDT brought the project in on time and on budget with very few difficulties," Gehle said.

"They hit the ground running as soon as the contract was let," said Gehle. "We had very good design drawings and few changes on the contract," he said.

EDT and Knight Architects of Atlanta, Ga., consulted with Savannah District and Fire Chief Roger Miller to ensure everyone was familiar with the project and to keep mistakes from happening, according to Joe Savage, Project Manager for Savannah District.

"EDT worked six days a week and kept it on budget and on time. Meetings included the construction contractor, Knight Architects, and Chief Roger Miller in the final design consultation to make sure everyone was intimately familiar with the design," said Savage. "Chief Miller was instrumental in making the project happen," he said.

Everyone involved had to be careful that mistakes didn't happen because of the type of funding that was given for the project. Because the project is a UMMCA project, Unspecified Minor Military Construction Army, the amount that can be spent is

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capped at \$1.5 million; This leaves no room for luxuries, according to Haught.

“It also leaves no room for mistakes,” said Savage.

Fire Chief Steve Blackburn expressed his excitement about the new station.


“We moved from a very small facility that was built in 1941 that was basically falling down around us,” said Blackburn. The fire fighters were training in one building, bunking in another and answering emergency calls from yet another separate building.

“This new fire station is much bigger, much nicer, and state-of-the-art. Before they had three different buildings doing the same function that this one building will do,” said Gehle.

“We will have a large training room in this new building; we had no training area in the old one, it will replace three small facilities,” said Blackburn. “We have more bay space, it will house four engines, the old station had space for only three.”

The new building received a silver award from the Army SPiRiT rating system, according to Savage.

SPiRiT, Sustainable Project Rating Tool, provides guidance to support sustainable design and development principles to the project team and contractor. An independent review panel will use SPiRiT to determine the rating level of the project at its conclusion to be bronze, silver, or gold.

Trading three 63-year-old buildings for one new and modern one, in this case, makes perfect sense. 



▲ Firefighter Joe Quinn and Lt. Walter Arnold prepare lunch in the new kitchen area of the new firehouse. This new firehouse provides all comforts firefighters need during their long shift hours.

People on the Move

Arrivals

Date Arrived	Name	Office
12/20/2004	Brian M. Close	DB
12/20/2004	Redmond S. Gill	PM-
12/13/2004	Charles A. Wallace	OP
12/20/2004	Andrew J. Caparisos	IM-P
12/20/2004	Jason M. Manthorne	

Departures

Effective Date	Name	Office
12/11/2004	Dana K. Polacsek	EN
12/11/2004	Erin T. Spiller	OP
12/12/2004	Allison L. Vaughn	PD-Co-op
12/27/2004	Romona McNeill Saines	CD
12/27/2004	Rosemary E. McPhaul	CD
12/12/2004	Karl L. Weber	EN-Co-oP
12/17/2004	Michael G. Bringman	PM-Co-oP
12/12/2004	Judith Cochrane	

Special Feature



In Honor of Black History Month: Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

by Rashida Banks,
Public Affairs Specialist

In honor of Black History Month, I would like to take a moment to reflect on one of history's great icons – Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Although Dr. King's birthday became a National Holiday more than 18 years ago and is celebrated in the United States and in more than 100 nations around the world, many of us still do not know why we honor him.

We can honor Dr. King for so many things, but the image that stands out the most is that of the dreamer.

Dr. King realized the potential of American diversity way before his time. His vision to make the American Dream a reality for all people regardless of race or religious belief, inspired thousands of people to make a difference.

While Dr. King and others learned first hand about the civil rights movement, my

knowledge of the movement comes mostly from history books. What I did learn first hand was about the true power of diversity.

I have been blessed to attend school, live and work with people of different cultures and backgrounds. Having had this opportunity, I learned early on that it is our diverse backgrounds and unique perspectives that contribute to the richness of our nation and the successes of our workforce.

Even within the Savannah District Corps of Engineers, our different backgrounds and viewpoints give us a competitive advantage and help us to come up with better ideas and solutions.

Dr. King once said that “the ultimate measure of a man is not where he stands in moments of comfort and convenience, but where he stands at times of challenge and controversy. The true neighbor will risk his

position, his prestige, and even his life for the welfare of others.”

He lived by these words. King spoke out against injustice, even when it was unpopular to do so. In a sense, he was an angel in disguise, giving hope to the hopeless and power to the powerless in the form of words. In the midst of danger, hatred, and mindless bigotry, Dr. King remained vigilant to accomplishing his dream. This is why we honor him.

Let his courage, his conviction, his dedication, and most importantly his dream serve as an example and source of inspiration to us all. If you strongly believe in something, strive to make it a reality. Just as he did. We are the reality of Dr. King's dream, and his legacy lives in each of us. The best way to honor him is to continue to promote, teach, and live his dream - the American Dream.

Safety

New rules for vehicle operators

by Patrick Spoor, Savannah District Safety and Occupational Health Specialist

The new Safety and Health Requirements Manual is now in effect for most new contracts and government operations.

A significant change in the new safety manual that affects both government and contractors concerns motor vehicle operations.

Paragraph 18.B.01 (a) states: Operator of USACE motor vehicle/equipment or USACE employees using their vehicles on official business, either on or off USACE projects, and operators of contractor motor vehicle/equipment being used on USACE projects may only use cellular telephone with hands-free devices while the vehicle is in motion. Prior to using a hands-free cellular phone, drivers shall find a safety place to bring the vehicle to a stop. This requirement does not preclude passenger(s) from using cellular phones while the vehicle is in motion. The use of headphones and earphones is prohibited while operating a motor vehicle/equipment. Also, paragraph 18.B.01 (b) states: Operators of USACE motor vehicles shall not eat, drink, or smoke while the vehicle is in motion.

Remember, while much focus has been placed in recent years on alcohol-related driving and speeding, less attention has been paid to other forms of potentially unsafe driving behaviors that draw drivers' attention away from the primary task of driving. By reducing distractions, we can decrease the potential for motor vehicle accidents. Drive safe!

Info. Management

DISTRICT IN THE GROOVE

by Rashida Banks,
Public Affairs Specialist

Corps employees who telework, are finding it very difficult to communicate with their virtual counterparts. Those days are soon to be gone.

At least this is what the Corps hopes to accomplish with the implementation of Groove Virtual Office.

“The Corps is a very geographically dispersed organization, so Groove is being implemented to help support virtual teaming,” said Sherry Manthorne.

Several Corps employees have already begun using the software. Gordon Ryan, District Webmaster, is one such employee.

“Groove is the best collaboration software I have seen,” said Ryan. “It is easy to use so most folks should be able to get

a lot of use out of it.”

Groove will save time; greatly reduce travel costs, and minimize e-mail traffic.

“We will no longer have to e-mail copies of documents to team members every time they are updated...this will cut down on a lot of duplication and wasted effort,” said Ryan.

According to Manthorne, the software's unique capabilities will provide employees with the ability to work offline and then have document changes automatically synchronized once they reconnect.

“Groove is interesting, because it's not reliant on a server,” said Manthorne. “It resides on your computer. If I update my workspace and you are a member of my workspace, it will automatically update your workspace as well.”

The software includes a variety of features such as project management tools, meeting organizers, a sketchpad, a calendar, and several other features to help communication between group members.

To discover more about Groove Virtual Office visit: <https://corpsinfo.usace.army.mil/ci/groove/help/index.html>.

