

The

castle

Savannah District, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers

January/February 2006

Savannah Harbor Expansion Project

How has regionalization impacted the project?

Commander and District Engineer
Col. Mark S. Held

Chief of Public Affairs
Billy Birdwell

Editorial Director
G. Jeanne Hodge

Editor
Rashida Banks

Staff Writers
Rashida Banks
Tiffany Holloway

Photographer
Jonas N. Jordan

Layout
Rashida Banks

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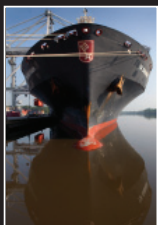
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Photos by Jonas Jordan



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Photo by Jonas Jordan

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Customer survey results show improvement in customer communication

The work that the Corps does everyday involves more than just spending money and constructing buildings. When you truly get into our business process, it's about building teams and executing our projects no matter what the challenge. An integral part of that team is our customers, and they are not always going to have the same point of view as we do - but that's normal.

In the FY04 Customer Survey, we discovered some interesting things about the way we interact with our customers. We discovered that we had not listened to some of the things our customers had to say. In particular, they were critical of our costs, our time growth, and our cost escalations - all of which are out of our control. In FY05 we decided to make a concerted effort to spend more time with our customers discussing what is important to them.

In FY05 we substantially moved forward in our customer survey, and that tells me that we are communicating with our customers more frequently. More communication does not necessarily mean that we are doing a better job, but it's important because it helps our customers to better understand our business processes. For example, if a customer understands up front what the problems are with cost escalations in the market or why we charge a fixed rate, he or she will feel like he is apart of the process.

This has definitely been an eye-opening experience for me. I have a customer that I know on a personal basis that I thought was really happy with everything that we do. However, I got his customer survey back and I was shocked. He was not happy at all. Everything on the customer survey that he was complaining about happened in the years before FY05.

I gave this example to make a point. There is a perception about the Corps among our customers. If you get one customer that forms a negative opinion about the Corps then you may be stuck with that opinion for the rest of their career. However, we have made great strides in changing these ideas about the Corps.

As we continue to listen to our customers, we need to focus on three things: executing our projects; providing outstanding customer service; and taking care of our people. If we continue to accomplish those three things, then we are generally in good shape.



COL Mark S. Held
District Commander



Our customer surveys are very important, because they give us insight into what we are doing right and wrong. They aren't always perfect, but they give us a better understanding of our customers and vice versa.

Transferring Logistics via the HPO

By Rashida Banks
Editor/Staff Writer
Photo by Jonas Jordan

The Corps Logistics Management function will undergo a total transformation this year as a result of being approved as one of eight Department of Defense High Performing Organization (HPO) program candidates.

Originally in response to the President's Management Agenda (PMA), competitive sourcing initiative, LM was scheduled for competition under Office of Management and Budget (OMB) Circular A-76, Performance of Commercial Activities.

Now, as a result of being approved as an HPO, LM's transformation process will be slightly different from that of IM/IT's A-76 Competitive Outsourcing process. An HPO is similar to an A-76 competition except that employees will not have to compete against the private sector.

"Logistics is in a better position than IM/IT because we don't have to compete with the contractors for our own jobs," said Jim McKinney, chief, Logistics Management Office.

An HPO is limited to activities with less than 600 full-time employees (FTEs). Corps-wide Logistics has 554 positions, including districts, divisions, centers, and labs. After the HPO process is complete, McKinney said that Logistics will be smaller and more efficient, with only 375 positions.

"We still have to comply with the basic rules of A-76... We had to conduct studies and processes in cost and everything to determine how we can work more efficiently and still provide the same kinds and levels of services," said McKinney.

McKinney said that when the HPO stands up, it will be an entirely new Field Operating Agency (FOA).

"Every [logistics] position in the Corps will be abolished and a new organization will be created. Logistics will no longer belong to the district and division. This is similar to the way the finance center operates now. However, we will have "delivery points" where we will have personnel providing logistics activities at the district," said McKinney.

Savannah district currently has 12 positions, but under the HPO, McKinney said that there will only be six.

"Everyone will have to internally compete for the new positions just like IM/IT is doing in their A76. It's much the same process, but the biggest key for us is that we don't have to compete against the contractor."

The HPO will operate under a regional concept, according to McKinney. "The Corps is using regionalization in everything, so we are basing our regions on where we are already established as a region."

In each region, there will be a team leader or Regional Logistics Liaison. SAD is one region. One addition will be that Huntsville's Logistics office will become apart of SAD.

Under the new organization, 98 percent of the functions currently offered will still be available.

"There will be new job descriptions and new titles, but the functions will remain the same. We will be a fee-for-service organization," said McKinney. "Whatever it costs to have six people in Savannah plus a share of the cost for the Logistics Activity Center is what the Corps will pay for its support."

McKinney said that one benefit to the new system is that logistics will own all of the deployable personnel support to disasters.

"Almost three-fourths of the positions will be identified through the job description as being emergency essential deployable. We

won't have to go out and recruit people. We can respond quicker and we will have a bigger pool to respond," said McKinney.

The new organization must begin initial operations by Oct. 1, 2006 and be completely in place by April 2007.

New equipment installed in gym



Photo by Jonas Jordan

Tom Brockbank, a Center of Standardization (COS) program manager, Engineering Division and Jeff Morris, a regional economist, with Mobile District exercise on the new treadmill and elliptical machine that was installed in the fitness center on Jan 12. The new equipment installed includes 2 elliptical machines, 1 treadmill, and 1 recumbent bike. "It's all a part of Logistics making the area friendly for employees," said Jim Mckinney, chief, logistics management. McKinney said that more equipment will be replaced as funding becomes available.



Photos by Jonas Jordan

2005 South Atlantic Division Leadership Development Program graduates shown CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT: Frank Araico, Sherry Manthorne, Diane Hudson, Ed Krowlikowski, and Stan Knight. NOT SHOWN: Timothy (Mark) Wade and Brian Craft

SAD Leadership Development Program graduates class of 22, one-third from Savannah District

The South Atlantic Division 2005 Leadership Development Program (LDP) recently graduated a class of 22, 7 of which were from Savannah District. The program, which kicked off in January 2005, consisted of a diverse group of professionals from throughout the South Atlantic Division, the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), and the Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS).

The class, known as "Team Phoenix" participated in several activities and site visits throughout the course of the year-long training, including attending a Congressional Briefing Conference for South Atlantic Division and South Pacific Division US Army Corps of Engineers in Washington, DC and several site visits to different military and civil works projects throughout SAD.

The training also entailed the completion of a group project. The team's project for this year was the development of a systemic strategic Process.

Savannah District graduates included: Frank Araico, Project Management Division; Sherry Manthorne, Information Management; Ed Krowlikowski, Engineering Division; Stan Knight, Operations Division; Diane Hudson, Real Estate Division; Mark Wade, Operations Division; and Brian Craft Operations Division.

Elam graduates from Sustaining Base Leadership and Management Class



Dr. Francis J. Harvey, Secretary of the Army presents Ethel Elam, an information technology specialist with a certificate acknowledging her completion of Army Management Staff College.

Ethel Elam, an information technology specialist with information management recently graduated from Army Management Staff College. Elam completed the Sustaining Base Leadership Management Course, which is designed to prepare future leaders to manage the Army's sustaining base. A graduate level professional development course in leadership, SBLM teaches communication and problem solving, national security, military doctrine, resource management, and a variety of other skills. Emphasis is placed on strengthening the bond and cooperation between civilian and military leaders through shared knowledge of core values, missions, and resources. The program, which is centrally funded, is designed for GS-12s through GS-14s (or equivalent) who are interested in career progression and a higher level of responsibility.

ON THE MOVE

New Arrivals

Baran, David N.
Harrison, Marion JR
Herrick, Joseph D.
Hodge, Ronald T.
Imborek, Dennis G.

Construction
Construction
Real Estate
Construction
Construction

Departures

Mooney, John D.
Walker, Stephanie T.

Project Mgmt.
Operations

African American 'firsts' with the Corps of Engineers



GRAFTON TYLER BROWN

Grafton Tyler Brown was the first African American artist to depict California and the Pacific Northwest. He worked for the Corps of Engineers as a draftsman at the St. Paul office during the 1890s. He prepared maps, charts and drawings in support of the engineers' principal duties. These included the improvement of navigation on the Upper Mississippi River, its major tributaries in Minnesota and Wisconsin, and the Red River of the North as well as the construction of reservoirs at the headwaters of the Mississippi.



HUGH G. ROBINSON

In 1978, Hugh G. Robinson, a West Point graduate, became the Corps first African American general officer. He served as deputy director of Civil Works and in 1980 assumed command of the Southwestern Division, a position he held until his retirement in 1983 as a major general.

Robinson was also the first African American to serve as military aide to a president. He was appointed a military aide to President Lyndon B. Johnson.



COL. YVONNE PRETTYMAN-BECK

In 2003, Col. Yvonne Prettyman-Beck became the first African-American woman and the 54th Commander of the Norfolk District. Colonel Prettyman-Beck assumed command of the Norfolk District Aug. 3, 2003 following her most recent assignment as Operations Officer in the Joint Operations Directorate, the Joint Staff, the Pentagon, Washington, DC. As Norfolk District Engineer, she oversees the Corps' water resources development and the operation of navigable waterways for four river basins in the Commonwealth of Virginia. She is also responsible for the Corps' military design and construction projects for Army, Army Reserve and Air Force installations throughout Virginia.



LT. GEN. JOE BALLARD

In 1996, Lt. Gen. Joe Ballard was the first African American to head the Army Corps of Engineers. Ballard served as commander from Oct. 1996 until Aug. 2000. Prior to his selection as Chief of Engineers, Lt. Gen. Ballard served as the Chief of Staff of the Army's Training and Doctrine Command, Fort Monroe, Va. He served in a wide variety of command and staff positions in the U.S. and overseas, including Commanding General of the U.S. Army Engineer Center and Fort Leonard Wood, Mo. Lt. Gen. Ballard served two combat tours in Vietnam.

DID YOU KNOW?

African-Americans and the Corps of Engineers have history together. The Alaska Highway was constructed by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers by the all-black 93rd, 97th, and 95th Army General Service Regiments.

Even when there was frequent bigotry and prejudice comments telling them they wouldn't be able to complete the road.

The road was constructed in eight months and 12 days. It was built as an emergency measure to provide an overland military supply route to Alaska.

The 95th Regiment had the task of building a bridge over the Sikanni Chief River in British Columbia, Canada, in five days. They completed the 30-foot bridge in three and a half days.

Cutts recognized as 'Modern Day Technology Leader'

By Rashida Banks
Editor/Staff Writer
Photo by Jonas Jordan

For Keysha Cutts, an environmental engineer in the regulatory office's Northern Section, stepping forward has been her way of life. Recently she "stepped forward" to accept honors from the Career Communica-

tions Group as one of the 2006 Modern Day Technology Leaders at the Black Engineer of the Year Awards Conference in Baltimore, MD.

"When someone takes the time to recognize your efforts/achievements in a positive light, it is definitely flattering. It is encouraging and motivating," said Cutts of receiving the recognition. "I will strive to continue to

do a good job and be seen in a positive light, with hopes that I am encouraging someone else to move in a positive direction as well."



Cutts

Now in its 20th year, the Black Engineer of the Year Conference is the nation's largest gathering of African-American

professionals.

Cutts, a 1999 Civil Engineering graduate of Morgan State University began her career with the Alaska District in 2000 where she served as a project manager for the implementation of the nation's National Missile Defense efforts in Delta Junction, Alaska.

A former Advancing Minorities Interest in Engineering (AMIE) Student Intern, Cutts serves as the branch representative responsible for introducing the Regulatory program to Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCU).

"USACE has always done a great job at recruiting from diverse talent pools. However, as an African-American female, I find a greater importance in the need to seek new and innovative ways to recruit and retain a diverse workforce. Specifically, African-Americans because I have seen how easy it is to overlook the HBCUs and smaller universities where minorities are mostly represented," said Cutts. "Someone had the drive and desire to ensure that the Corps was represented at places such as Morgan State and the Black Engineer Conference, where I was recruited... It is important to me to ensure that the drive and desire is not lost within the organization."

Cutts finds her current position as a Regulatory Specialist to be very interesting and is dedicated and eager to continue growing as a vital part of the Corps' Regulatory Program.

"Regulatory is a very interesting field. It offers a variety of learning opportunities, because the environment is constantly changing. Regulatory puts you right into the circle of life and I am grateful for the opportunity to be a part of preserving our environment/future," said Cutts.

District area office at Robins Air Force Base wins AFMC award



Rick Powers, the area engineer at Robins Air Force Base and Homer McBrayer, chief of Construction Division are presented the 2005 Air Force Material Command District award for construction at Robins by Jim Pennino, AFMC Command CE of Directorate of Installations and Mission Support.

By Tiffany Holloway
Staff Writer

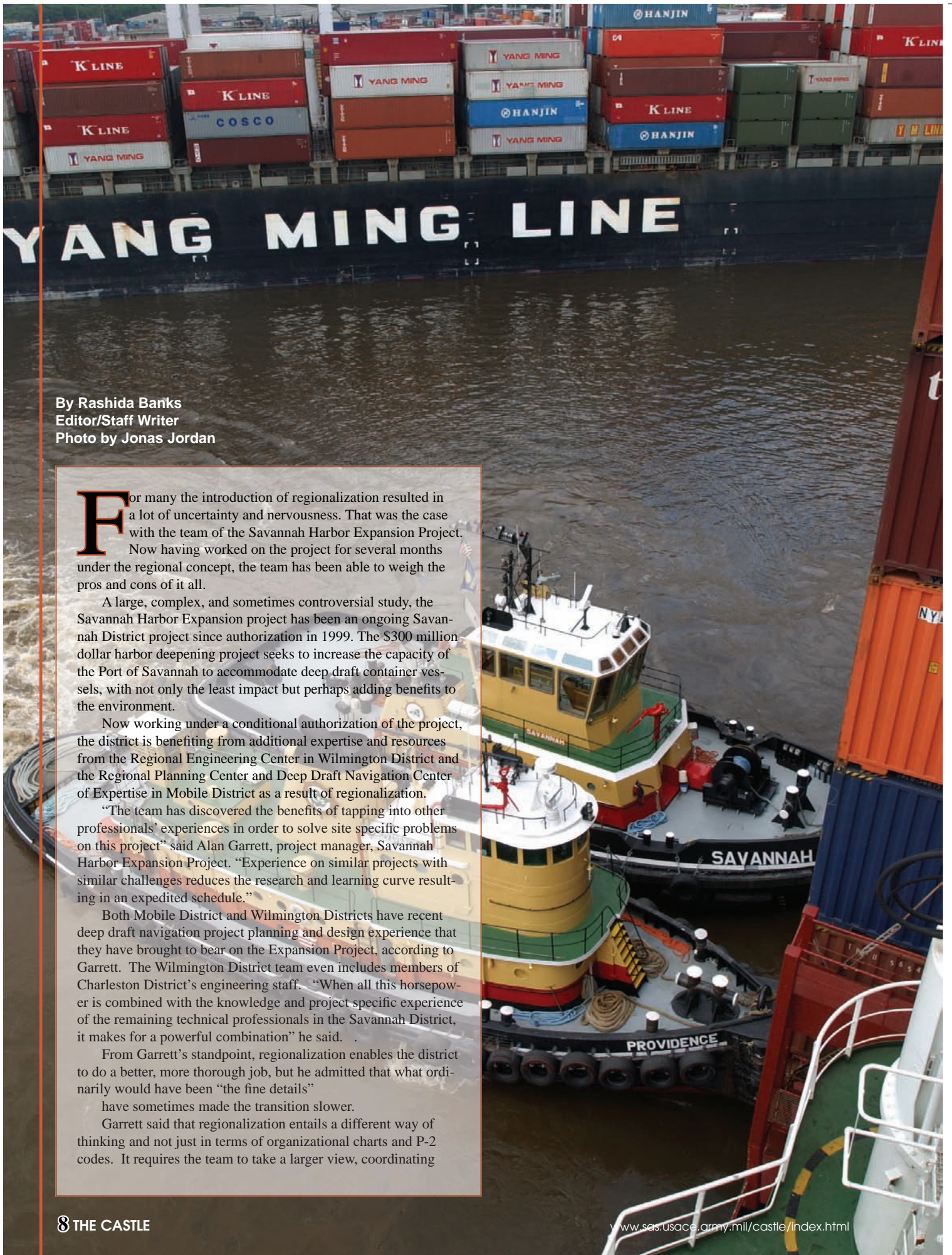
Savannah District flexes its muscles. Not only do team members know the "ins and outs" about the Army and their metrics, they also know the Air Force's metrics. At Robins Air Force Base, the ongoing joke is that Ric Powers, Savannah District's Robins Air Force Base area engineer, bleeds "more Air Force blue than Army green".

The District's area office at Robins Air Force Base won the 2005 Air Force Material Command District agent award for its construction at Robins. Powers and Homer McBrayer, Savannah District construction division chief, accepted the award at a ceremony in Nov. 2005 at Wright-Patterson AFB, Ohio.

"We continuously help Robins achieve the Air Force metrics. We finish our projects on or ahead of schedule, on budget, and we deliver quality products," said Powers.

"We partner with contractors and users, which results in an outstanding working relationship," said Julian Fant, Savannah District's Robins Air Force Base project engineer. "In 2005, we finished a main gate and visitor center as well as a dining facility. During 2005, we also commenced construction on a \$70 million aircraft corrosion control facility."

Other accomplishments in 2005 included: a squadron operations facility, flight simulator renovation/addition, and large item paint facility.



By Rashida Banks
Editor/Staff Writer
Photo by Jonas Jordan

For many the introduction of regionalization resulted in a lot of uncertainty and nervousness. That was the case with the team of the Savannah Harbor Expansion Project. Now having worked on the project for several months under the regional concept, the team has been able to weigh the pros and cons of it all.

A large, complex, and sometimes controversial study, the Savannah Harbor Expansion project has been an ongoing Savannah District project since authorization in 1999. The \$300 million dollar harbor deepening project seeks to increase the capacity of the Port of Savannah to accommodate deep draft container vessels, with not only the least impact but perhaps adding benefits to the environment.

Now working under a conditional authorization of the project, the district is benefiting from additional expertise and resources from the Regional Engineering Center in Wilmington District and the Regional Planning Center and Deep Draft Navigation Center of Expertise in Mobile District as a result of regionalization.

“The team has discovered the benefits of tapping into other professionals’ experiences in order to solve site specific problems on this project” said Alan Garrett, project manager, Savannah Harbor Expansion Project. “Experience on similar projects with similar challenges reduces the research and learning curve resulting in an expedited schedule.”

Both Mobile District and Wilmington Districts have recent deep draft navigation project planning and design experience that they have brought to bear on the Expansion Project, according to Garrett. The Wilmington District team even includes members of Charleston District’s engineering staff. “When all this horsepower is combined with the knowledge and project specific experience of the remaining technical professionals in the Savannah District, it makes for a powerful combination” he said.

From Garrett’s standpoint, regionalization enables the district to do a better, more thorough job, but he admitted that what ordinarily would have been “the fine details”

have sometimes made the transition slower.

Garrett said that regionalization entails a different way of thinking and not just in terms of organizational charts and P-2 codes. It requires the team to take a larger view, coordinating

Regionalization moves Savannah Harbor Expansion project forward

over a much wider area and with a larger number of interested parties.

“The days are past when each district could operate in a vacuum, dredging however it felt was appropriate” Garrett said. “Economic and environmental considerations are now also regional in scope as the cumulative impacts of large harbor improvement projects gain the attention of the public. Including all interested stakeholders has become an extremely important and sensitive subject that is crucial to the project’s success.”

In this regard, the Corps regionalization process has again proved worthwhile. “It saves time and worry when someone else can provide a proven plan for resolving highly sensitive issues” Garrett said. “On the Expansion Project, this helps the Savannah team meet the Congressional intent of the new authorization which required other federal agencies to approve the project plan.”

“Todd Boatman, a Project Manager with the Mobile District Planning Division, is responsible for writing the study reports for the project. He has worked out of the Savannah district office on an average of about one week each month since he began working on the project in 2005.

“I’m still trying to get up to speed and trying to do so very quickly,” said Boatman.

Because of regionalization, Boatman said that he is getting a lot of cross-training.

“It’s not a one way street,” said Boatman. “The Savannah District is gaining additional planning resources from Mobile, and I am learning a lot about deep draft navigation. This type of exchange is going to make us stronger as a division. We just have to figure out how to make it all work.”

One of the complications of the project has been determining and addressing the impacts that deepening the harbor will have on the

environment.

Susan Rees, a coastal environmental team leader with Mobile district has also been working closely with this aspect of the project since the onset of regionalization.

In addition to her current workload with Mobile District, Rees oversees the environmental activities of the project such as water quality and marsh succession modeling. She also serves as a member of the deep draft navigation center of expertise team where she oversees technical peer reviews and the study of the Floridan Aquifer.

With the added workload, Rees said that the process has been challenging.

“Part of the challenge has been my joining in the middle and learning about the project, while still trying to move forward. We didn’t have the luxury of sitting back and learning all about the project before we proceeded,” said Rees.

Another challenge has been funding.

While the added resources have helped to move the project forward, Hope Moorer, program manager, Navigation Improvement Project, Georgia Ports Authority said that there is not enough funding available.

“The fiscal year 2005 and 2006 budgets were determined with less staff working on the project,” said Moorer. “Additionally, since new expertise was added to the PDT and several of the scopes for the study were able to be finalized, the project had more work to do than had been budgeted. The project was short of funds last year and is facing the same problem this year.”

As the lead federal agency, the Corps is responsible for overseeing the preparation of the General Reevaluation Report (GRR)/Tier II Environmental Impact Statement, which includes an economic analysis and impact evaluation. The Georgia Ports Authority, which is the non-federal interest for the project, provides the up-front funding for data collection, analysis and development of tools. The Corps also works in conjunction with three other cooperating agencies – The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, the Environmental Protection Agency, and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration’s, National Marine Fisheries Service.

Although the team members are dispersed in different locations throughout SAD, Moorer said that technology has made the physical location of the team members a “non-issue.”

“The unanticipated travel has increased costs somewhat, but most of our work now doesn’t require attendance in person,” said Moorer.

The team communicates more frequently now through video teleconference, email, and telephone.

Although aware of the challenges, Moorer and other members of the Harbor Expansion team, can clearly see the benefits that regionalization has had on the project and are confident in the progress it has resulted in.

“...Overall I am very positive about the progress of the project. The Savannah district team has been excellent to work with. There has been a lot of good coordination amongst team members,” said Boatman.

Cadell Construction and the Savannah District receive merit award

By Rashida Banks
Editor/Staff Writer
Photo by Jonas Jordan

Caddell Construction and the Savannah District received a Merit Award from Associated Builders and Contractors, Inc. for construction of the Combat Aviation Brigade Barracks and Operations Complex, Ft. Bragg, NC.

The \$65.8 million design-build project has greatly improved the quality of life for Soldiers of the Combat Aviation Brigade, 82nd Airborne Division that have been fighting the Global War on Terror.

"It symbolizes our professionalism in working with the Contractor in a team effort to deliver outstanding projects to the Army," said Allen Hand, the Resident Engineer on the project.

The project consisted of a new Brigade Headquarters Building, three Battalion Headquarters buildings, 12 Company Operations Facilities, 4 Barracks buildings that house 512 soldiers, an Aero Medical Facility, and a Dining Facility.



Many Savannah District team members, Ft. Bragg Public Works team members and Contractors contributed to make the project a success, according to Hand. Hand said that "every contribution, no matter how small or large", was necessary in completing the project, however the following team members "lived and breathed the project on a daily basis for three and a half years and therefore deserve special recognition".

THE TEAM

Cleveland Harding
Jim Polhamus
Robert Ford
Mike Himes
Stephanie Morgan
Joe Ortiz
Randy Peacock

Camille Cole
Ed Cain
Nathaniel Hermann
Martin Munoz
Wilhelmina Pierce
Evelyn Williams
Wade Jones

Atlantic Intracoastal Waterway Agency holds conference in Savannah

By Tiffany Holloway
Staff Writer
Photo by Jonas Jordan

The Atlantic Intracoastal Waterway Agency (AIWA) had a conference December 15, 2005 in Savannah. Brigadier General Michael Walsh, Commander U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, South Atlantic Division welcomed guests said that even though navigation, "does not have the glamour of aviation or the daily visibility of our trucking industry" it has a good story to tell of significant contributions.

"Together we must provide our elected leadership the information to make the business case that needs to be made," said Walsh.

RoseMary Lynch, executive director of AIWA, said that she wanted guests to have a better understanding of the waterway and its issues.

"I want people to know that they can help with the issues," said Lynch.

John King, an AIWA board member, from Hampstead, N.C. said that he attended to network and to help with the planning of the future funding and dredging of the

waterway.

"The Corps does a good job even though their budget has been cut," said King.

He said that the waterway was going to be needed with the way our national security is set up plus, the rails and trucking industry are becoming overwhelmed.

Stephen Furlough of Norfolk, Va. a board member, said that his company, C & P, moves bulk grain and fertilizers, steel, liquids, government tows, construction, and heavy loads.

"It's unacceptable to have the low depths along the waterway," said Furlough.

He also said that he attended the conference to let people know not only the waterway is in danger but many jobs.

The conference included speakers from: Corps of Engineers, Coast Guard, Marine Industries Association, and Boat U.S. and Gulf Engineers and Consultants.



Regulatory office recruits students from Savannah State University

By Rashida Banks
Editor/Staff Writer
Photo by Jonas Jordan

Marine biology, biology and environmental science students from Savannah State University received a lesson in Regulatory 101.

Jeff King and Keysha Cutts, regulatory specialists with Operations Division spoke with the students in an effort to teach them about the Corps Regulatory Program and make them aware of Cooperative Education opportunities available within the Corps.

“How many of you have heard of wetlands?” asked Jeff King, as he addressed a group of students from SSU. “If interested in the Co-Op, you will learn about wetlands and how they function. It will give you the opportunity to see how applied science is used in the decision making process, and you will be put in a working environment where you can learn about other environmental issues as well.”

Terry Kobs, a regulatory specialist who was recruited through the district’s Cooperative Education, program came along to give the students first hand knowledge of what the program is all about.

Kobs, a biology major who graduated from Savannah State University in Dec 2002 said that he has always been an outdoors person, so the regulatory program sparked his interest.

“It’s good to get out and let people know about the program, and that it’s available to students,” said Kobs.

Dr. Eugene R. Mesco, biology program coordinator, Savannah State University said that he urges students to participate in these types of sessions because it makes them aware of their options.

“I encourage students to get the needed experience. I can’t tell you how many biology majors are pre-med, because many of them are not aware of their options,” said Mesco.

Karissa Greer, a freshman biology major at Savannah State said that she came to the session to explore some of the options that she has within the biology field. Several other students came for the same reason.

Many of them left with a better understanding of what the regulatory program is all about and some expressed an interest in applying for the Co-Op position.

Students interested in the Co-Op position with Regulatory Branch should contact Carol Bernstein at (912) 652-5503.



Jeff King, a regulatory specialist with Operations Division, speaks with marine biology, biology, and environmental science students from Savannah State University about the Corps’ regulatory program.

District opens regulatory field office at Lake Lanier

The district recently opened a field office in Buford, Ga to serve the public in approximately 22 counties in the Northeast Georgia area. The office is located at 1025 Buford Dam Road.

The Lake Lanier Office was opened as a test location to “better serve customers in North Georgia area,” said Ed Johnson, chief Northern Section, Regulatory Branch.

“When people build commercial structures, many times wetlands and streams are affected. It’s our job to regulate those waters,” said Nick Baggett, a regulatory specialist who staffs the one-person office.

The Regulatory Branch of the Savannah District administers the regulatory program for the entire state of Georgia under Section 404 of the Clean Water Act and Section 10 of the Rivers and Harbors Act of 1899.

If you are planning work in a river, stream, or wetland, in the Northeast Georgia area should contact the Lake Lanier office at 770-904-2365.



The new regulatory office located in Buford, Ga serves the public in approximately 22 counties in the northeast Georgia area.



CSI: FORT GILLEM



Photo: Larry Chelko, U.S. Army Criminal Investigation Laboratory (USACIL) director and COL David Phillips, the deputy of the Provost Marshal General of the Army and the Commanding General of CID cut the "crime scene: do not cross" ribbon at the Ribbon cutting ceremony for the new Criminal Investigation Laboratory at Fort Gillem.

“This facility is one that will enhance timeliness, it is one of integrity, it will boost the morale of the workforce, and it will help us live out our theme: ‘justice through science.’”
-Robert Smith, project manager, Fort Gillem

By Tiffany Holloway
Staff Writer
Photo by Jonas Jordan

Criminal Scene Investigation (CSI) eat your heart out. Savannah District enables crime fighters such as the Criminal Investigation Command (CID) to have a state-of-the-art facility.

TV viewers know how the first scene starts, well, those of us who are CSI buffs. Someone commits a heinous crime and the CSI team has one hour to find the “perp,” identify the victim, plus the what, where, how and why in a mysteriously dark lab. In reality, it takes several weeks for a quick investigation said Chris Taylor, forensic chemist and project officer of the lab.

On Jan. 11 Fort Gillem, Ga., opened its new CID lab facility that Savannah District built. The ribbon-cutting event, held inside, included a performance by the National Anthem by the 214th Ground Forces Band, an Invocation followed by remarks from Larry Chelko, U.S. Army Criminal Investigation Laboratory (USACIL) director and COL David Phillips, the deputy of the Provost Marshal General of the Army and the Commanding General of CID. Guests watched Chelko and Phillips cut the “crime scene: do not cross” ribbon.

Robert Smith, Savannah District’s project manager for Fort Gillem, said that the CID lab at Fort Gillem is the first of its kind in the Department of Defense and the Army. Previously, the lab operated out of a 1942 World War II warehouse structure.

“USACIL always had the smartest employees and had the high tech equipment but worked in less than ideal facilities,” said Chelko.

“This facility is one that will enhance timeliness, it is one of integrity, it will boost the morale of the workforce, and it will help us live out our theme: ‘justice through science.’”

The project officer, Taylor said that the old lab had mechanical problems and the CID personnel grew when two overseas labs consolidated at Fort Gillem.

The \$25 million project has 88,000 sq. ft. that include: temporary hazardous waste holding facilities, conference room, meeting/video teleconference room, and training areas.

There are seven technical divisions that include druggist chemistry, forensic, fingerprint, digital evidence, firearms, DNA, and trace evidence. Each division does something different and usually handles separate cases. For example, the forensic division might focus on ink on a copier, or fax machine. Meanwhile the digital evidence division focuses on audio and visual items, such as viewing a videotape to zoom in on a license plate. Trace evidence division is the “catch all.” They might find fiber, paint, glass or even gunshot residue.

The biggest challenge of constructing the lab was the strict mechanical and electrical codes.

“We had to make sure that there was a constant temperature,” said Smith. “Savannah District has never built a lab before. We have come close with building a hospital, but not a lab.”

When Smith had to solicit the architecture and engineering firm, he had to make sure they had lab experience.

“That was the key,” said Smith. “A firm out of Atlanta had the lab experience. They actually had experience with the FBI lab in Washington, D.C.”

Smith said that Savannah District has plans on expansion.

One project, Combined DNA Index System primarily known as CODIS, will be built this year. Once a Soldier commits a crime, their DNA will be put in CODIS. This means when they get out of the military they can be identified in the future for other crimes. The other project, still in agreement, may make the Army’s DNA and trace evidence divisions the primary command for the Air Forces’ work as well as the Navy’s.

Taylor said the Corps played a big part in getting their needs met.

“They were wonderful to work with,” said Taylor.

Fort Gillem faces closure under BRAC. Taylor said that Fort Gillem will turn into a 420- acre site with four tenants: 81st Reserve Command, CID lab, Southeast’s in-processing center, and National Guard.

With the success of this project at Fort Gillem, don’t be surprised if Hollywood comes knocking for a special CSI- on- location series. Yes, it’s that good.



Michael Villarreal, a forensic chemist at Fort Gillem’s new criminal investigation lab examines evidence under a microscope in the trace evidence lab.

Savannah Federal Credit Union Celebrates 75th Anniversary

By **Rashida Banks**
Editor/Staff Writer
Photo by Jonas Jordan

The Savannah Federal Credit Union celebrated its 75th anniversary on Feb. 17 during its annual meeting of shareholders.

The SFCU has had a longstanding relationship with the Corps since its founding in 1931 by eight Corps employees who saw the need to start a credit union on behalf of all federal employees.

During the ceremony, Jane Evans, manager/CEO, Savannah Federal Credit Union presented Col. Mark S. Held, district commander with a plaque in appreciation of 75 years of sponsorship and support from the Savannah District.

"The Corps has been our sponsor all these years...I think they started a good thing," Evans said as she presented Col. Held with the plaque.

Evans said that for many years, the Corps was the only agency that used the credit union. As time passed, other federal employees became aware of the benefit of the credit union and began to join.

Other companies such as the Savannah College of Art and Design and Armstrong Atlantic State University have been added to the field of membership through recent years, but Evans said that to date the Corps is still the largest user of the credit union. These companies were also presented with plaques in recognition of their support.

Evans also recognized volunteers, such as members of the Board of Directors, which consists of members of the credit union who establish policies and interest rates, and conduct the financial affairs of the credit union.

"Our credit union could not exist without our volunteers," said Evans.

The SFCU has changed tremendously since Evans began working there in 1983, when there were only \$500,000 in assets and 2 part-time employees.

Since that time, the SFCU has evolved into a robust institution with \$13.5 million in assets and 6 employees, serving over 1,800 members.

Of the 6 employees working at the credit union, Juanita Mustipher, head teller, Deborah Blackston, loan officer/IRA specialists,



Jane Evans, manager/CEO, Savannah Federal Credit Union presents Col. Mark S. Held, district commander, with a plaque in appreciation of 75 years of sponsorship and support from the Corps.

and Jane Evans have a combined service of over 56 years.

Mustipher said that she enjoys working with the people. "We have some wonderful members," she said.

The SFCU has developed a reputation for "caring about people and providing personal and secure financial services for all of its members," according to Evans.

"Credit unions traditionally have served people of modest means. It's a community where people help other people. One member saves so another member can borrow," said Evans.

Evans recalls one member who would always save enough in his checking account so that another coworker could purchase a car.

"That person really understood the value of cooperative efforts through the credit union," said Evans.

The SFCU provides a full range of products and services including home equity, personal, auto, and construction loans and a full range of savings products including certificates of deposit, Christmas club and Individual Retirement Accounts (IRAs).

Because credit unions are cooperative financial institutions where the members are the owners, Evans said that all of the

profits benefit the members in the form of services such as lower interest rates on loans, higher interest rates on savings, and new or improved services. In fact, this year the credit union paid a bonus .75% on all savings accounts at year end, because they enjoyed a profitable year.

Lillian Lindsey, a retired realty specialist was recognized as being the longest term member of the credit union present at the meeting. Lindsey, who has been a member of the credit union since 1962, said that she remained a member so long because the credit union was "always there" when she needed it.

"I was able to purchase a new car to attend my son's graduation," said Lindsey.

The credit union is currently located in the General Services Administration (GSA) Building at 124 Barnard St. Room B110, on the first floor (across from the Corps).

Membership is open to current, contract and retired employees of the federal government and their family members. The faculty and staff (current and retired) of Armstrong Atlantic State University, Savannah College of Art and Design, Telfair Art Museum, and Sullivan's Administrative Managers and their family members can also join.



Clemson University Walking/Running trail across the top of Clemson University lower diversion dam near the Walker Golf Course and Madren Center was reopened to the public on January 4 after being closed for almost two years.

Clemson University Walking/Running Trail Reopened to Public

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers' Hartwell Lake Office announced the walking/running trail across the top of Clemson University lower diversion dam near the Walker Golf Course and the Madren Center was reopened to the public on January 4th. The trail had been closed since December 2003 when seismic remediation work began on the upper and lower diversion dams to strengthen the two earthen dams to withstand earthquakes that could cause them to fail.

The final phase of work included replanting grass to prevent erosion and to stabilize the disturbed area on the crest of the dams and the berm area where work was performed. The grass on the lower dam is now established allowing for the reopening of the trail.

The grass is not established across the upper diversion dam. In order to prevent erosion, the walking/running trail on the upper dam will remain closed until the grass is re-established.

The dams were built in the 1960s to protect 390 acres of Clemson University property

from flooding valuable lands, recreation facilities, structures, and athletic facilities when Lake Hartwell was created. "When the dams were designed more than 40 years ago, seismic considerations were not required," said Col. Mark Held, commander of the Savannah District, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. The dike remediation was approved under the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Dam Safety Assurance Program and authorized and funded by Congress under the Water Resources Act of 2000, Public Law 106-541.

The Corps of Engineers and Clemson University worked together closely throughout the project to ensure public safety concerns were addressed and that University activities were not adversely impacted during the seismic remediation construction. Completing the remediation has provided residents, students, faculty and visitors to the area, with an enhanced peace of mind regarding safety in the event of even a moderate earthquake.



IN MEMORY OF Daytonia J. Hibberts

Daytonia "Day" J. Hibberts, 53, a project records coordinator with Engineering Division passed away January 25 in Savannah.

Mrs. Hibberts was born in Charleston, West Virginia and had been a resident of the Savannah area since 1989.

For the last five years "Day" attended Southside Assembly of God and was active with their choir. She was an accomplished musician and soloist and used these talents to help underprivileged children by volunteering as an instructor with a youth choir.

Her efforts and talents volunteering with such events raised money for many local charities. She also participated in mission trips, where she shared the gospel and her talents to those abroad. For the past year, she had been active with the Tres Dias Community.

Mrs. Hibberts had a passion for shopping, her times away from volunteering or work could easily be spent at a mall or any other shop around town.

Mrs. Hibberts is survived by her son, John C. and wife Jennifer Runyon of Charleston, West Virginia; daughters, Charity Lee and husband Ricky C. Deloach of Richmond Hill, Chastity N. and husband Timothy of Richmond Hill; brother, Charles Gillenwater; sisters, Debbie Mitchell and Gina Risk; sister in Christ, Carol Elkins; twelve grandchildren, two nieces, one nephew, her loving dog "jazz" and a host of friends.

Funeral services were held on Saturday, Jan 28 at Southside Assembly of God.

Memorial Contributions should be made to the Southside Assembled of God, 401 Tibet Avenue, Savannah, GA 31406, in memory of Daytonia "Day" Hibberts.

JUSTICE THROUGH SCIENCE

The Criminal Investigation Lab purchased the rights from Walt Disney to use Mickey mouse as a part of their logo. Em zrrilit lum ver ad ectet la feum alisim ver sim vel in hent ipit, velit, quat, sum velessit lum vulput il eugueros ent am iniamet, volore dolesto

