



**US Army Corps  
of Engineers**  
Alaska District

# GOLD NUGGETS

*'Building and preserving Alaska's future'*

October 2011



Photo by Curt Biberdorf

The 673rd Force Support Squadron opened the Illa School Age Program at JBER-Richardson with a ceremony Sept. 12. The center can accommodate up to 225 children ages 5-12 for before and after-school care as well as full-day care during school breaks and summer camps.

## School age program gains new facility

*By Curt Biberdorf*  
Public Affairs Office

Fresh out of class, dozens of children eager to start their after-school care at JBER-Richardson's Illa School Age Program waited outside a few extra minutes Sept 12.

They stood with staff and guests under cloudy skies to watch a grand opening ceremony to celebrate a shining new \$15.1 building as the program moved from a former middle school on Fifth Avenue to the corner of Grady Highway and Arctic Valley Road.

It fulfills a dream born nearly 10 years ago to provide a better place for child care, said Col. Robert Evans, Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson and 673th Air Base Wing commander.

Military construction projects fall under the Army Family Covenant, which is a commitment to soldiers and their families to provide a quality of life commensurate with their service, said Annette Bell, JBER outreach program manager. Bell was involved with the project from the beginning while she was employed with Child Youth and School Services at Fort Richardson.

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers-Alaska District managed the project, and Bristol Design Build Services LLC of Anchorage built it using a military

construction transformation standard design. With only minor variations, new child care facilities will look and feel the same at any Army installation.

When Army families move to a new duty station, both the children and parents will find some comfort in the familiarity of the facility, which reduces the stress on everyone, said Lori Jarvis, Illa School Age Program director.

The program's purpose is to support the readiness and well-being of military families by reducing conflict between mission requirements and parental responsibilities.

Currently enrolled with 103 children, the new building increases the program's capacity from 144 to a range of 195-225 children ages 5-12

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Photo by Curt Biberdorf

**Open interior space allows various activities in the multifunctional gathering area and improves the flow of foot traffic in the new Illa School Age Program building.**

## School age program

Continued from Page 1

for before and after-school care as well as full-day care during school breaks and summer camps.

The former school age program building was at the end of its life and is scheduled to be demolished, said Terry Stone, project manager.

Efforts were made to prolong the 1940s-era structure's usefulness and habitability as long as possible. However, the outdated design and logistics were a challenge. Traffic flow of the children inside was poor, floor plan layout prevented easy oversight, and it reached a point where "we couldn't put up with all the demands on it," said Bell.

By comparison, she said the new

facility falls into the "opposite end of the spectrum. The flow of traffic is so much better. Everything here is uniform. It fits together."

Walk past the registration desk and the facility opens up with tall ceilings and long stretches of unencumbered space. Powder blue walls and white tile floors with a pattern of red, yellow and blue bring color and brightness.

To the left is an area with tables for eating, a full-service kitchen and serving line. To the right is a "multifunctional gathering area" furnished with sofas, tables, chairs, books and board games. At the far end are lockers, all painted blue, with solid surface tops that complement those installed along the

walls, and enough of them for every child.

Rooms on the perimeter are a computer lab, homework center, arts and sciences room, dance studio and four multipurpose activity rooms all with windows for easy monitoring. Chair backs with a heart-shaped dip keep backpacks from sliding off when straps are slung on. The wing leading to the gymnasium features air hockey, mini billiards and foosball table games.

"We try to provide something for every interest," said Jarvis.

The gym is equipped for basketball, volleyball and a video-based dance game. At the back of the room is the exit to a colorful outdoor play structure mounted on top of a foam-like cushioned surface, a covered picnic table area, and farther back, a smooth grass field the size of a regulation soccer field for multiple recreational activities. The area is enclosed by a chain-link fence.

The project also accommodates the childcare providers. Near the main entrance is the director's office, staff training room and staff lounge. Security cameras monitor the facility inside and outside, and rooms are designated for storage and laundry.

"The Corps was really wonderful allowing us to tailor it to our liking," Bell said.

The Corps has managed nearly 25 projects valued at almost \$470 million on JBER-Richardson during the past several years, and another \$465 million worth of construction projects is planned during the next four years, said Col. Reinhard Koenig, Alaska District commander, before presenting a ceremonial key to Jarvis.

He said the work represents a major commitment to military members and their families, and "is one point on the continuous stream of making things much better for everyone who works here at Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson."



Photo by Curt Biberdorf

Col. Reinhard Koenig, district commander, presents a ceremonial key to Lori Jarvis, Illa School Age Program director, at the opening of the program's new facility on JBER-Richardson Sept. 12.

## GOLD NUGGETS

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Col. Reinhard W. Koenig

**Deputy Commander**  
Lt. Col. James R. "Bobby" Stone

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and Project Management**  
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# F-22 repair training advances with new facility

By Curt Biberdorf  
Public Affairs Office

Engine roar from F-22s flying overhead reinforced the vital role of the 372nd Training Squadron, Detachment 14, as the unit officially opened a new facility on the west side of Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson Sept. 26.

The \$6.2 million F-22 Field Training Detachment Facility project managed by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers-Alaska District and constructed by Siku Construction LLC will help ensure airmen have a level of training befitting the fighter jet.

"The F-22, and I'm so happy that we're hearing the sounds of them flying today, without outstanding maintainers is a static display," said Col. Darren Hartford, 3rd Wing vice commander. He added that the facility provides top-level training to form those "world-class" maintainers to keep them flying.

Although the building looks basic, the project was complicated, said Larry McCallister, director of Program and Project Management.

The building's five fully-automated classrooms are capable of handling new digital training materials with graphics-intensive rather than word-oriented coursework. Instructors who once used transparencies with overhead projectors have transitioned now to a modern audio-visual system and interactive electronic lecterns, said Barry Cossel, Boeing's F-22 training system manager.

Underpinning all of this capability is more than a mile of cable and 500 connections below the raised classroom floors.

"It's like going from an F-15 to an F-22. It's that same advance in technology," said Senior Master Sgt. David Nye, detachment chief. "The potential is endless as to what courses we can create and teach."

The detachment's 15 instructors can teach 34 of the 40 F-22 maintenance courses at the facility, which is the last in the nation to receive the upgrades, Cossel said.

Students will train on the same flightline system as used in the shop so they will not need to relearn it, he said.

"It's really well done to help them be better trained when they get out to the field," said Cossel. "All the training the students are receiving is probably the



An F-22 seat and canopy trainer in the 372nd Training Squadron, Detachment 14, facility also will serve as the fire department's place to practice emergency pilot extraction. (Below) Fully-automated classrooms are capable of handling new digital training materials with graphics-intensive coursework. (Photos by Curt Biberdorf)



best in the military."

Besides the classrooms, two high-bay rooms contain an engine lab with a hoist, and seat and canopy trainer. The trainer will also serve as the fire department's place to practice emergency pilot extraction instead of an F-22.

Students learn how to tear down, build up and troubleshoot in the engine lab. It is set up the same way as the actual shop, unlike the former building, to create a realistic environment easy for students to grasp and remember, Nye said.

An equipment lab is used for advanced wire repair and a future fiber

optics course, he said.

All the classrooms and three labs are networked to an internal server providing instructor curriculum as well as student training aids to create a more interactive environment, Nye said.

Other sections of the project are the communications room, instructor offices, storageroom, student breakroom and an entryway with a flat-screen monitor for scrolling announcements.

The training facility is one of the last F-22 projects managed by the Corps in the past several years. Most are at Fighertown East, but several are located on the west side, McAllister said.



Courtesy photo

(From right) Jeannine LaDuke, realty specialist in the Real Estate Division; Lt. Col. Bobby Stone, district deputy commander; and Allan Lucht, 673rd Civil Engineer Group at Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson, present a ceremonial deed to Bill Sheffield, Port of Anchorage director, signifying the transfer of 48 acres of military property formerly to the port during a celebratory luncheon Sept. 22.

# Land transfer expands Port of Anchorage

**By Curt Biberdorf**  
Public Affairs Office

An extra 48 acres of land are now owned by the Port of Anchorage for use in its expansion.

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers-Alaska District role in transferring the property from Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson was recognized during a celebration of the port’s 50th anniversary and 25-year partnership with the Port of Tacoma Sept. 22.

Port Director Bill Sheffield received a ceremonial deed for the former Whittier-Anchorage pipeline fuel tank farm bordering the northern edge of the Government Hill community and operated by the Army and Department of Defense from 1942-1996.

“We’re proud to be a long-standing community partner through our dredging program, which keeps shipping lanes open and the port accessible while supporting the ongoing expansion project,” said Col. Reinhard Koenig, district commander. “Our role in facilitating the successful transfer of military property to the port represents the further strengthening of this relationship.”

Most of the newly-acquired land is bare except for the

port’s security visitor center. It also is expected to be the site of the new port administration building.

The push by the Alaska District Real Estate Division to facilitate the transfer began in 2005. With a value estimated at \$10.3 million, the property was paid for with in-kind consideration from the port that included accepting responsibility for any future environmental cleanup on the property, indemnifying the government against future environmental liability, and constructing a military direct-access road from JBER to the port, said Jeannine LaDuke, realty specialist.

The legislation authorizing the transfer allowed the Port of Anchorage to apply the value of future environmental liability, including defending the government as needed, against the value of the property rather than paying cash to the government is among the first of its kind, LaDuke said.

The legislation “allowed us more tools in the toolbox” when dealing with sites contaminated by fuel storage tanks but required more detailed and complex negotiations to complete the transfer, she said.

After the tank farm closed, the Defense Energy Support Center removed and treated about 30,000 tons of fuel-contaminated soil, which was replaced by clean backfill.

# Local show fills airwaves with Hispanic music

By Curt Biberdorf  
Public Affairs Office

Dave Luera gives Anchorage “something new” every Sunday night.

The human resources specialist at the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers-Alaska District is host of “Algo Nuevo”—Something New—on KSKA 91.1 FM. The music program on the public radio station plays cumbia, marangue, salsa and other styles of Latin music from 7:45-11 p.m.

“I enjoy the program so much that it’s probably the best few hours of my week,” Luera said, who never thought he would be involved in radio.

Luera, 54, was born and raised in Deming, N.M. Spanish was spoken at home, and English became his second language. In 1977, he enlisted in the Air Force, serving his first 18 years in vehicle maintenance before switching careers to become a first sergeant for his last four years.

His final duty station was in Alaska, where he retired in 2001 and settled in Anchorage. After trying several jobs, he pursued a career in the human resources field and eventually landed a position with the Army’s Civilian Personnel Advisory Center for Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson. He was assigned to the Alaska District in March 2010.

“It’s been awesome,” Luera said. “I really enjoy it here.”

## Radio reality

Although having no radio background or broadcasting ambition, music has always been an active part of his life. Luera and his brothers learned to play the guitar while growing up, and he played in several bands and made a 45 rpm record with one of them.

He gave up playing in bands upon joining the Air Force, but his music collection flourished. He owns about 400 each of 45 rpm records, LP records and cassette tapes as well as nearly 1,000 CDs and counting.

When KSKA canceled its local Hispanic program in 2007, an unexpected opportunity opened.

Some friends told Luera that the show had a limited music selection and encouraged him to contact the station with an offer to share his variety of tunes. In July that year, he called the station’s program director, Bede Trantina, who invited him to the studios at the Alaska Pacific University campus for an audition.

All Luera desired was to lend his music collection, but he agreed to make an audition CD with several songs. At the tryout, Trantina told him to go past the planned cutoff time. Twenty minutes stretched to 40 minutes. Afterward, Luera figured that was the end of his venture into radio.

Puzzled that he listed his experience as “none,” the 32-year radio broadcasting veteran was impressed with Luera’s announcing skills and music selection. Three days later, Trantina invited him to start a two-hour program for the upcoming Sunday.

“My head was spinning,” Luera said. “Here I was going to present music for a program and now I have to produce it? It was thrilling and nerve-racking. I wanted to prove to myself that I can do it.”

He chose the name “Algo Nuevo” because it was a new show. It was a fresh start for Hispanic radio in Anchorage and filled a vacant market niche.

Each edition is recorded during the week, which allows



Courtesy photo

**Dave Luera, human resources specialist at the Alaska District, records his radio show “Algo Nuevo” at the KSKA studios in Anchorage.**

him to listen and critique his performance, Luera said. Extraneous studio noises picked up on the microphone and seconds of dead air were eliminated, but he still finds ways to refine his skills.

“I’ve learned a lot of little tricks along the way,” Luera said.

He spends almost six hours weekly filling out a playlist, answering e-mail and preparing the studio. Playlists with the name of the song title, artist name, album title, CD label and duration are archived on the KSKA Web site.

Luera announces first in Spanish and then English, but admits he sometimes “gets carried away” and forgets the English. During breaks, he mentions the show’s sponsors, thanks the audience, and gives “shout outs” to friends and listeners for special occasions and to acknowledge song requests.

## Widespread appeal

Listeners are invited to send Luera e-mail, and he receives about 10-15 messages weekly at the station address [algonuevo@alaskapublic.org](mailto:algonuevo@alaskapublic.org). Many of the notes merely extend greetings, but they sometimes are more memorable.

Bands have thanked him for playing their music. E-mail is the easiest way to request a song, but finding it is not always simple.

When a woman requested a song to dedicate to her husband but only knew the band name, Luera bought a CD of the artist, listened to it and guessed the right song to play.

“She was so impressed,” he said.

Another listener asked if Luera could type and provide the lyrics to one of the songs on the show so that guests could sing it during a family member’s 75th birthday party.

With the Internet, people can listen to his show online wherever they are connected. Last year he received a note

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## Around the district

### Annual award winners

Outstanding employees and teams of the year are as follow:

**Engineer/Scientist GS-05-12:** Julie Anderson

**Engineer/Scientist GS-13-15:** Monica Velasco

**Support GS-02-09:** Debbie Uhlinger

**Support GS-11-15:** Aldone Graham

**Managerial/Supervisory/Team Leader:** Lorraine Cordova

**Celebrate Safety Individual Award:** Staff Sgt. Paul Routhier

**External Team, Northern Area Office Warrior-in-Transition:** Maj. Jesse Anderson, Ellen Lyons, Heather McBride, Dave Obermeyer, Michael Volsky

**Internal Team, Finance and Accounting:** Ted Boom, Juliet Brown, Leanna Dagley, Julie McLaughlin, Scott Sailor, Judy Storey, Mark Viotto, Clay Williamson, Debbie Zell

**Safety Performance, Celebrate Safety Team:** Jana Allen, Vicki Bell, Curt Biberdorf, Heidi Clay, Lynn Maurer, Christopher Morgan, David Prado, Luis Menendez, Paul Schneider, Jessica Skinner, Holly Thibault, Ernie Woods

### Fourth quarters award winners

The district recognized the following employees for their outstanding performance in the 4th Quarter of Fiscal Year 2011:

**Engineer/Scientist GS-05-12:** Eric Marcellus

**Support GS-02-10:** April Shepherd

**Support GS-11-15:** Heidi Clay

**Managerial/Supervisory/Team Leader:** Dave Williams

**External Team, Gustavus Bulk Fuel Construction:** Ron Broyles, Christine Dale, Melanie Peterson, Cindy Saldana

**Internal Team, Chena Project Office Modernization:** Eric Adams, Monica Bardsley, Julian Baxter, Coleman Chalup, Allen Churchill, Kevin Clark, Christine Dale, Alexander Dalsfoist, Bobby Davis, William Davis, Tim Feavel, David Gerland, Diana Gerland, Brent Goering, Audrey Harrop,

### Radio show Continued from Page 5

from a woman tuning in that he thought was from the Lower 48 but was actually in Nicaragua. One way the show gains listeners is when they search for an artist's name online find it in the Algo Nueva playlist, he said.

The show's popularity as measured by the DAR.fm podcast service in late September ranks Algo Nueva No. 3 out of 24 Latin radio shows, topped only by stations in Mexico and Canton, N.Y. It ranks No. 35 out of 133 Anchorage radio shows listed on the site.

"If they could only add another zero to my pay," said Luera with a laugh, who is a volunteer. At least the radio show is the most inexpensive of his hobbies, which include drag racing a car he built on his own and restoring a 1968 Chevrolet Camaro Z28.

Last year Algo Nuevo expanded to 3 hours, 15 minutes, and he said he thinks the show has a future, but his one wish is for an earlier time slot. That would make it easier for more people to experience "something new."

Robert Kaye, Christine Morgan, David Obermeyer, Scott Olson, Jose Oquendo, Dave Piening, Stephanie Powers, John Schaake, Ronald Shafer, Jessica Skinner, Michael Suprenant, Ron Toombs, Thomas Underwood, Mike Utley, Michael Volsky, Surendra Wadhwa, Joe Williams

**Safety Team, Bear Safety Training:** Michiel Holley, Victor Ross

### In memoriam



Aaron Wilson, archaeologist in the Civil Works Environmental Resources Section, died suddenly in Anchorage Sept. 26. Wilson served in that role since January 2006. He was 31 years old. A memorial service was held Oct. 2 at the Cremation Society of Alaska in Anchorage. In lieu of flowers, donations may be made to the Aaron Wilson Children's Fund at any Wells Fargo branch, account No. 6581931976, or sent to 2711 Engineer's Cutoff Road, Juneau, AK 99801. Condolences may be sent to Bonnie Lanz at the same address.

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Photo by Curt Biberdorf

### Diversity training

James Braxton, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Equal Employment Opportunity director, leads diversity training at the headquarters building Sept. 16. During his first visit to Alaska, he also reviewed the Special Emphasis Program with the managers during a working lunch.

## Upcoming events

- Oct. 1-31** National Disability Awareness Month
- Oct. 24** Renaming of 2nd Street for B.B. Talley
- Nov. 3** AGC Conference
- Nov. 6** Daylight saving time ends
- Nov. 9** SAC Basket Auction
- Dec. 10** Children's Holiday Party
- Dec. 15** District Holiday Party

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### Basket auction to raise funds for SAC

The Social Activities Committee is planning a silent basket auction for Nov. 9. Donated themed baskets from organizations will be accepted to help raise funds for the district's holiday party. Suggested themes are automotive, bath, commuter, movie, cooking, date, family time, baby, pet, chocolate, bread and bakery, tools and holiday. Any person or organization willing to donate a themed basket may contact Stasia Wierzbicki. Each basket should be delivered with a list of items inside and a suggested starting bid. Baskets need to be dropped off by Nov. 7. Baskets may be viewed Nov. 8 from 11:30 a.m.-1 p.m. and bid on via silent auction Nov. 9 from 1-3 p.m. in the headquarters atrium.

### Contracts awarded

**Arctic Survival Forward Operating Location**—The district awarded this FY2011 project at Eielson Air Force Base to Bristol Design Build Services LLC Sept. 22 for \$1,275,385. The project includes five bedrooms, two bathrooms, kitchen/dining area, living area, office, laundry area, exercise room, instructor equipment storage and mechanical room.

**Denali Commission Program**—Studies at Saint Michael and Holy Cross, and construction of inner-harbor facilities at Hydaburg were three new projects issued by the commission totaling \$1.8 million.

**Environmental Due Diligence Audit**—The district awarded Phases II and III Environmental Due Diligence Audit for the Coast Guard's Long Range Navigation Station in Tok for \$230,000. The audit is to confirm the presence of contamination and then determine the extent of contamination and perform limited removal as needed.

### Projects completed

**Railhead Operations Facility**—The district held a final inspection and achieved beneficial occupancy date on this FY2010 project at Fort Wainwright Aug. 31. The project involved construction of a new rail operations facility featuring rail, concrete end ramps, hardstand for marshaling tactical vehicles, a container transfer pad, rail operations building, security fencing and high-mast lighting for 24-hour operations.

**Arctic Utilidor Phase II**—The district held a final inspection and achieved beneficial occupancy date on this FY2010 project at Eielson Air Force Base Sept. 1. The project replaced and upgraded the lines for the steam main, condensate return, water and sewer.

## Deployments

**Iraq**—Sheldon Longnecker

**Afghanistan**—Theodore Champine, Warren Colburn, Leanna Dagley, Lt. Col. Matthew Dooley, Capt. Daniel Fox, Scott Haan, John Keys, Patricia Lora, John Mitzel, Heather Moncrief, David Purdy, Carmon Roy, Gary Weiler, Jim Wolfe



Ted Champine, construction representative at the Elmendorf Resident Office, deployed to Afghanistan Sept. 11 as a project engineer and is scheduled to return April 8, 2012.



Courtesy photo

### Moose season

Chris Eason of Fairbanks shows his bull taken last month during the Chena River Lakes Flood Control Project annual moose hunt for people confined to wheelchairs. Volunteers accompany the participants as they pursue quarry from blinds built by the Borealis Kiwanis Club of Fairbanks.

## Farewells



Photo by Curt Biberdorf

Sgt. 1st Class Keith Baltozer, noncommissioned officer-in-charge of the 62nd Engineer Detachment (Forward Support Engineering Team-Advance), receives the Army Commendation Medal from Lt. Col. Bobby Stone, deputy district commander, during a farewell gathering at the headquarters building Sept. 23. During his tour in Alaska, Baltozer became an expert in all aspects of FEST-A equipment and operations and achieved perfect equipment readiness status ahead of schedule. His next assignment is at Fort Lewis, Wash.



Photo by Curt Biberdorf

Laura Walker, Quality Management representative, receives the Army Superior Civilian Service Award from Col. Reinhard Koenig, district commander, during her retirement ceremony at the headquarters building Sept. 29. Walker is joined by her husband, Bill. Significant accomplishments during her 29-year career were ensuring that the district achieved and maintained ISO 9001-2008 certification, designing and implementing unique project codes, and creating the district's automated timekeeping system.

## Accolades



File photo

Merv Mullins, civil engineer in the Emergency Management Office, received two awards Aug. 26. He earned the Bronze Order of the de Fleury Medal for his superior service to the Engineer Regiment as it supports the Army. He also received the Commander's Award for Civilian Service for exceptional performance of his duties from November 1970 to August 2011. Mullins set and reset precedence with his development of the Catastrophic Disaster Response Plan, his work in planning and coordinating the annual Cold Weather Response Workshop, and his work in the Flood Control Coastal Emergency Program.



Photo by Luis Menendez

Stan Wharry, Humanitarian Assistance Program manager, receives the Commander's Award for Civilian Service from Col. Reinhard Koenig, district commander, at district headquarters Sept. 30. Wharry led the initial \$7 million program to its current \$20 million size that is providing more than 100 projects to Bangladesh, Cambodia, Laos, Nepal, Sri Lanka and Vietnam. His success in delivering facilities to the Office of Defense Cooperation Bangladesh resulted in the U.S. Agency for International Development signing its first memorandum of agreement with the district for delivery of a three-year multipurpose cyclone shelter program. Because he exceeded expectations with the two-year program, U.S. Pacific Command continues to fund Humanitarian Assistance.



Photo by Jim Fleming

## Winter break

After beginning work in May, construction of a boat harbor in Akutan finished for the season Oct. 1. The \$31.9 million project, funded by the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act and Aleutians East Borough, will establish an entrance channel and mooring basin along with two rock breakwaters. Currently, the water level in the newly-dredged basin is about 7.6 feet. The contractor, Knik Construction Co. Inc. of Anchorage, will resume work in the spring with the project slated for completion in September 2012.



## Hispanic Heritage Month

Various activities in the district honored Hispanic Heritage Month from Sept. 15-Oct. 15. (Below) Ray Lammon, Equal Employment Opportunity manager (left) and Miguel Herrera, Hispanic Employment Program manager, make breakfast burritos Sept. 28. Sales of burritos and pan dulce (lower left) Sept. 21 helped raise funds for prizes for the top finishers in the salsa recipe contest. (Left) John Budnik, Regulatory Division, samples homemade salsas entered in the competition Sept. 30. (Photos by Luis Menendez)

