

# PALMETTO CASILE



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On the cover: Lt. Col. Rachel Honderd and Wes Wilson discuss the Charleston Peninsula Study, which aims to provide a feasible solution to addressing coastal storm risk downtown, and how it will tie into the infrastructure already in place.

Above: Maj. Joe Owens, Lt. Col. Rachel Honderd and Wes Wilson walk through Waterfront Park in downtown Charleston, discussing aspects of the Charleston Peninsula Study, which aims to provide a feasible solution to addressing coastal storm risk downtown.

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# From the Commander

These past five months have been something I never could have imagined when I took command of the Charleston District a year ago. The pandemic has been lasting and all-encompassing, and there is no one who has not been affected in some way or another. Our office on Hagood Avenue, like many of yours, has been very quiet, with most of our employees still working from home. I think this posture will carry forward for some time as we continue to see the surge of new cases in South Carolina.

However, our team continues to push our projects forward. We recently issued a permit for the filling of wetlands for the Carolina Panthers' new headquarters and training facility (page 4), finished the renovation of the reception battalion barracks at Fort Jackson (page 12), and continue creek restorations in Kingtree (page 14).

I could not be prouder of the District team as they have dealt with this "new normal" while continuing to deliver for our customers and partners. While COVID-19 has had some efficiency impacts on some of our projects, such as delayed delivery dates on supplies, workforce social distancing, and securing PPE, productivity has remained high and we are on track for a successful end to our fiscal year.

Nothing makes my day more than unsolicited positive feedback from a customer. Recently, one of our customers at DLA Distribution sent the team a quick note, saying, "I was a little worried, that given the difficulties that our nation is under with COVID-19 and challenges it has imposed, that some of the support would either go away or take much longer to accomplish. I find myself now reflecting over these past few months and realized that you and your folks have not missed a beat. The exceptional services you all provide continued flawlessly and was timely!"

I wanted to share this because it is truly a reflection of the efforts I am seeing from the entire team across the state. They have stepped up to the plate and delivered during a very difficult time. We are about to enter the last quarter of our fiscal year and the push will be intensified as we support our customers with their year-end needs, but we're ready for the challenge. We will need help from contractors with some big projects that we already know are coming our way next month (page 8).

We just wrapped up the public comment period for the Charleston Peninsula Coastal Storm Risk Management Study where we received close to 500 comments. This was an incredible success under the circumstances of releasing a major study during a pandemic. All of those comments will be incorporated into a final draft report in early 2021, where we'll offer another comment period. A big thank you to all who took the time to comment as public participation is an important part of our



Another topic gripping our nation right now is diversity and inclusion. The federal government has laws in place to ensure we have a diverse civilian and military workforce, but we, including the Corps, need to strive to be better. We need to make sure we are inclusive and a representation of the American people we serve. Diversity in background, experiences and perspectives makes us stronger. My leadership group has started the difficult conversations that lead to understanding and progress. My commitment to you is that we will strive to be a model for others by leveraging diversity and respect to empower our team so that every employee is contributing at their best (page 16).

Enjoy the final weeks of summer. If you continue to be on the water boating, swimming or fishing, please be safe and wear your life jacket. No one ever expects an accident to happen.

Stay healthy and be well.

Rachel Honderd, PMP  
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Commander and District Engineer  
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# Permitting the Panthers

By Sean McBride



In October 1993, the Carolina Panthers officially became the newest expansion team in the National Football League, with their home in Charlotte, North Carolina. However, they were specifically named the “Carolina” Panthers, and not the “Charlotte” Panthers, because the plan was always to embrace the entire region.

While Panthers home games have been played in Charlotte since the start of the 1996 season, their first season was played in Memorial Stadium in Clemson, South Carolina. They have also held training camp each summer for the past 25 years at Wofford College in Spartanburg, South Carolina. Soon, the team will be even more spread between the two Carolinas as the Panthers move their headquarters and practice facility to Rock Hill, South Carolina.

New Panthers owner David Pepper took over in 2018 and began planning for how to expand the presence of the team and financial opportunities. One of these was his intention to build a new team headquarters and practice facility that would allow for the team to work in a world-class facility no matter

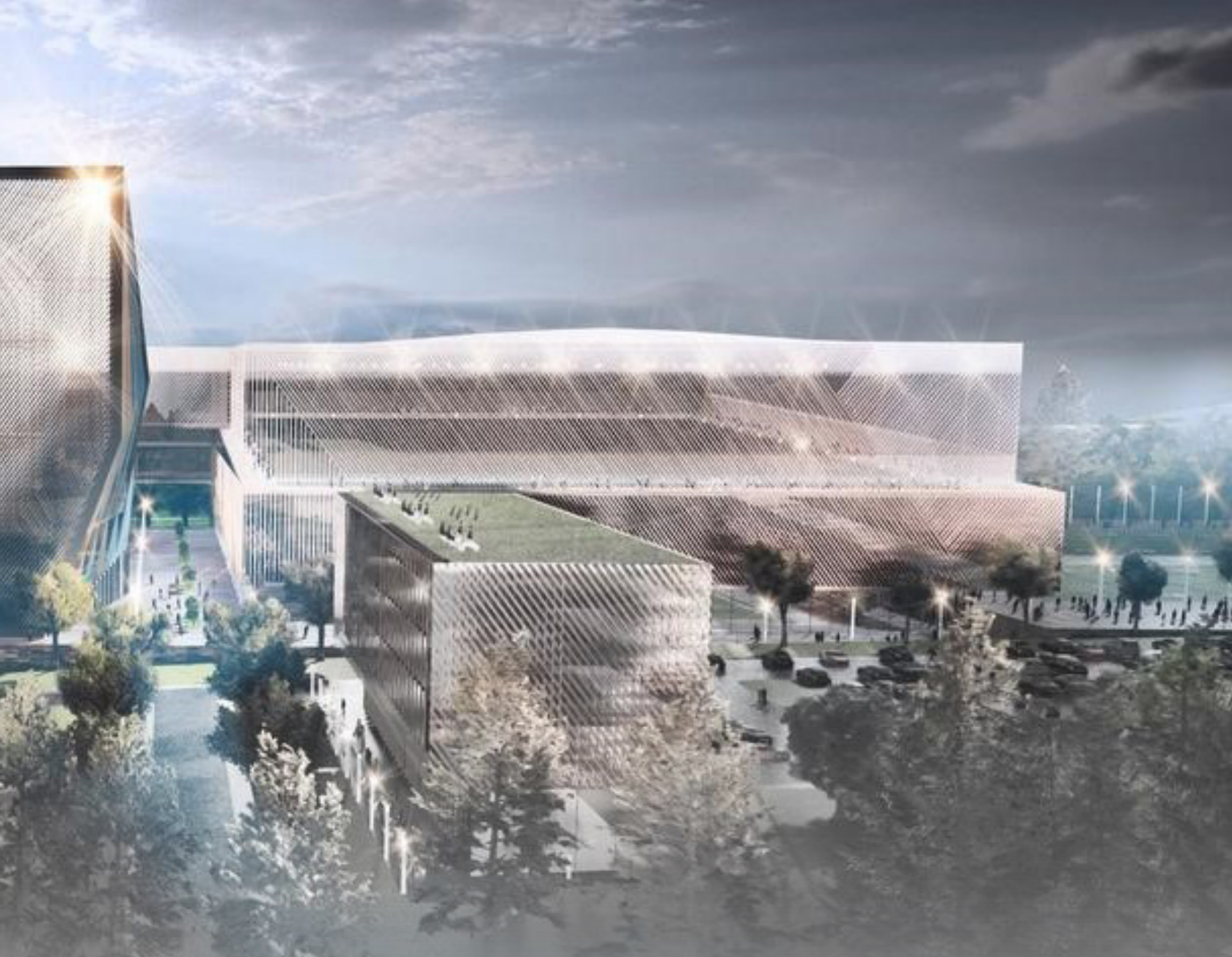
the weather conditions. He also planned to make the facility more about the community and not just about where the team practiced.

“This is going to be a showcase down here and bring people to the region,” said Pepper.

In 2019, a site was selected and purchased by the team. Use of the selected site would require filling 0.87 acre of wetlands and 4,991 linear feet of tributaries protected under the Clean Water Act. Since construction would fill these waters of the United States, a permit was required from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers.

As a potential boon for the local economy, the South Carolina Department of Commerce made this a priority project for themselves and began early discussions with the Corps, thanks to a good working relationship established over many years. The Panthers were looking to get construction of the complex going as quickly as possible, so pre-application meetings began with all parties in July 2019 so that everyone could fully understand what the others needed in order to get it done.





"We told them they needed to know everything they wanted to do from the beginning," said Richard Darden, regulatory project manager. "Not just the team facility, but all the surrounding aspects, like medical, commercial and residential parts. Having the full scope at the beginning makes it smoother."

The Corps visited the site and potential mitigation area with the applicant to see everything that was going on. These visits helped refine the scope of the application.

"The Panthers worked to avoid and minimize impacts as much as possible before their official application, so there isn't that much impact to wetlands," said Darden. "The quality and condition of the streams onsite was low, so their mitigation at a tract adjacent to Landsford Canal State Park represents a desirable offset to the project's wetland and stream impacts."

The Panthers were motivated to move quickly and were ready with a complete application when they submitted it.

This allowed the public notice to go out from the Corps on the same day the application was received.

After the review process was complete, the Corps issued a permit to the Panthers on May 14<sup>th</sup>. As mitigation for impacts, the Panthers will preserve and enhance 3.38 acres of wetlands and 9,003 linear feet of tributaries in an area located directly adjacent to Landsford Canal State Park in Chester County, which is about three times the return compared to the impacts.

"It was a really positive process for us," said Darden. "Responsiveness and cooperation allowed us to work together quickly to get this done in less than five months."

The Carolina Panthers hope to complete the facility and begin using it in 2022 as they seek their first Super Bowl title.

\*Rendition provided by the Carolina Panthers



# Peninsula study draws sweeping public engagement

Article and photos by Jackie Pennoyer





After an extended 60-day public review period, the draft report for the Charleston Peninsula Coastal Flood Risk Management Study has received nearly 500 comments from community members and stakeholders across the region.

The Army Corps of Engineers, Charleston District, which manages the three-year, \$3 million, fully federally funded study, began investigating coastal storm risks on a low-lying stretch of the Charleston peninsula in October 2018. This area includes the region's most robust medical district — resting on flood-prone, reclaimed marsh — and historic resources dating back to some of the nation's first settlements.

The study was requested by the City of Charleston to augment the community's proactive discussions about comprehensive, long-term flood reduction strategies. The Corps' study, which integrates findings by the Dutch Dialogues and considers other city actions and climate-related concerns, primarily examines storm surge and the risks of coastal storm events — both significant threats for the peninsula and within the Corps' jurisdictional scope.

The initial comment period kicked off April 20 after the state and nation had already begun dealing with the uncertainty associated with the coronavirus. In addition to the already expanded public comment period, the study team mounted a dynamic outreach strategy to help foster an engaging public review and keep the study on a congressionally mandated timeline.

As part of the draft report release, the team designed and launched an interactive online presentation, walking viewers through the report's exhaustive analysis and presenting findings through GIS mapping. The study team dedicated hours each week to taking one-on-one calls with citizens, engaged over 1000 community members through joint virtual webi-

nars with the city, and made print copies of the study's draft report available for zero-contact pickup outside the district downtown office.

The district received sweeping and constructive feedback across every facet of the Charleston community. Homeowners, teachers, realtors, engineers, local government officials and historic and environmental groups all submitted feedback on the draft report.

This input, as well as the study's partnerships and ongoing collaboration with local, state and federal agencies, are vital to the Corps' commitment to public service and ensure the Corps develop a solution that is both effective and aligned with the interests of the community.

Over the next six months, the team will review all public input, further refine the study's tentative measures and conduct successive study analysis. These refinements, including those on storm surge wall alignment, impacts on the surrounding communities, viewshed impacts, nonstructural elements and environmental considerations, will be available for comment during a second public review period for that purpose in early 2021.

All submitted comments will be addressed in the final report. In the meantime, the district will update the frequently asked questions section on the study website to address the public's top questions.

Top left and opposite left: Lt. Col. Rachel Honderd, Maj. Joe Owens and Wes Wilson walk in Waterfront Park to discuss how the project ties in.

Opposite right: The team walks along the existing Battery to discuss how the project will tie in.

Below: Charleston under flooding conditions (photo by Alexandria Preston).





# The competitiveness of contracts

By Sean McBride

The Charleston District executes over 700 contract actions per year. These actions are what gets water lines laid, barracks built, harbors dredged, beaches renourished, and dams repaired. These actions also provide office supplies, facility investment services, data collection and many other items that allow us to deliver our program in support of the nation.

The Federal Acquisition Regulation governs the contracting process, with the goal of ensuring that the government is never wasting taxpayer money and is always getting a fair and reasonable price on a job. While there are several categories of contracts that can be awarded, no contract can be awarded without going through at least some part of the FAR. Every contract is competitive in one way or another. The goal is to get the right people on board to complete the mission in the best possible way, while being a good steward of the taxpayer dollar.

Before every contract begins, the District conducts market research. This is done through reviewing recent history, knowledge of the marketplace, capability briefings and “sources sought” notices, which are public advertisements listing the general requirements of the project to gauge interest and capabilities from small businesses. Responses to questions, related to bonding levels, relevant experience, scheduling capabilities, and more, are analyzed by the market research team to determine if there is enough small business interest to set the contract aside for a small business.

If there is enough interest, the contracting team uses the information gathered to make a determination on how the project will set aside. It can be a competitive small business contract or an 8a “sole source” contract through Section 8(a) of the Small Business Act.

A sole source 8(a) contract can be awarded if a qualified 8(a) small business is deemed to be responsible and able to perform the activities required and the contract can be awarded at a fair and reasonable price. When an 8(a) sole source is considered, the market research team reviews a list of the most qualified contractors and often conducts interviews to determine interest and capability. In the last eight years, the District has awarded an average of 89 contracts per year under Section 8(a) for an average of more than \$25 million per year.

“The 8(a) program is vital to the success of our mission here in the Charleston District,” said Charlene Figgins, chief of contracting. “With a high-volume workload and a lean staff, our relationship with contractors who have the ability to design and build our construction projects is one of the ways

that we can ensure mission execution. The 8(a) sole source program allows us to award such projects in a more efficient manner.”

In the last decade, the District has exceeded its small business goals almost every year, awarding as much as 81 percent of contracts to small business in fiscal year 2015. With only a couple months to go before the end of FY20, the District has awarded 84 percent of contracts to small businesses so far.

“The Charleston District is proud to work with and help develop small businesses as often as possible,” said Figgins. “The Corps is always looking for innovative ways to work, and those ideas often come from small businesses. This helps build our base of capable contractors and strengthens the nation’s economic development.”

So what happens when a global pandemic hits in the middle of the fiscal year and the nation needs help ensure the medical demand can be met? The Corps’ motto “Essayons” means “let us try.” At the direction of FEMA and the state of South Carolina, the District brought engineering and contracting expertise to help plan for the COVID response, as all other Corps districts did across the country.

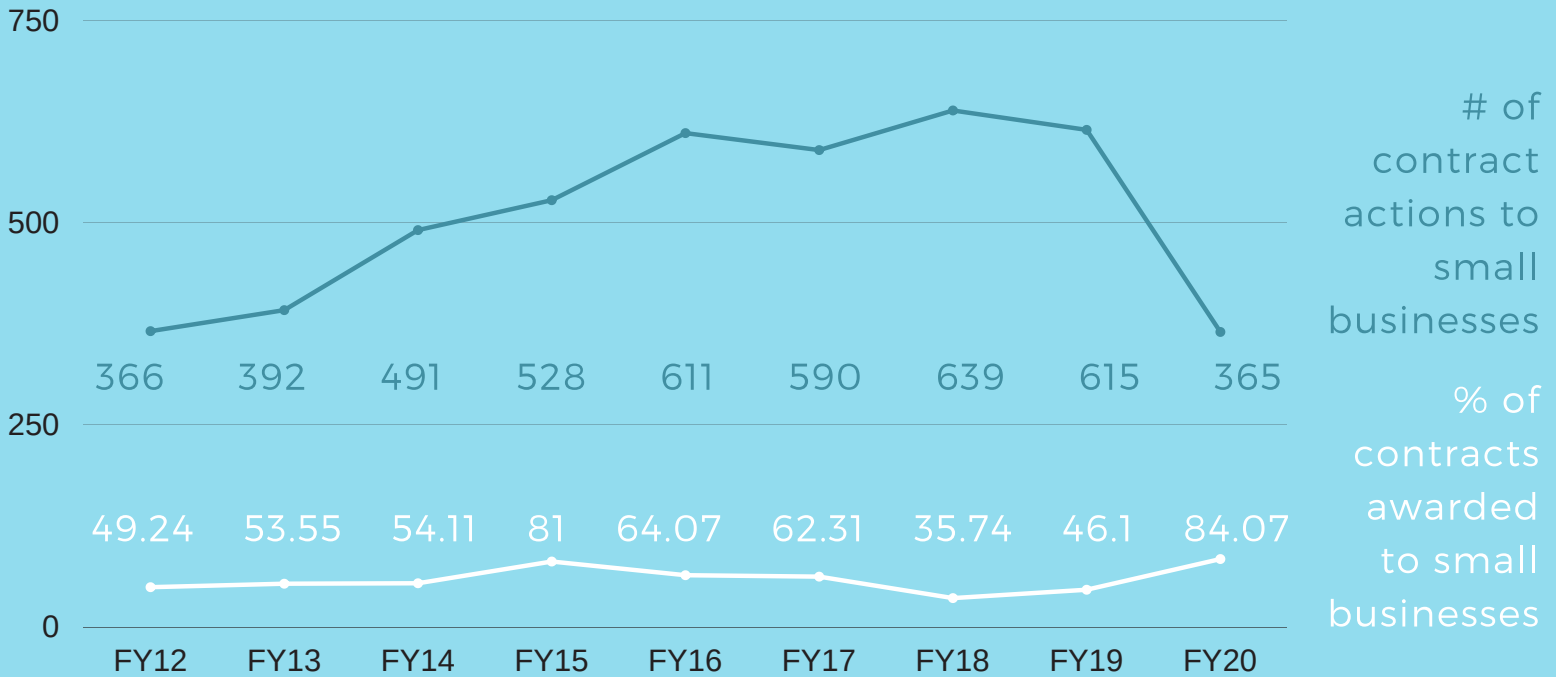
While the District’s contracting staff was working from home, the contracting team was extremely busy soliciting information from contractors on their capabilities to set up alternate care facilities to treat patients with COVID-19. This was being done on top of keeping other contract actions on schedule for normal construction projects.

“While we didn’t end up awarding any contracts for alternate care facilities, our team was well-prepared to move forward should the need for those facilities rise,” said Figgins. “Our dedicated staff performed extensive market research and worked with our construction and engineering offices to narrow down our list of potential contractors. We also drafted all contract-related documents in advance so that if we received a request to move forward, we would have been able to make an award in a manner of days versus the typical cycle of months.”

As the end of the fiscal year approaches, the District is still carrying out our mission while our employees continue to work from home. Approximately 300 contract actions worth an estimated \$200 million remain to be awarded this fiscal year, including for the Post 45 Harbor Deepening, Fort Jackson Starship Combined Heat and Power Project, and the Marine Forces Reserve Windy Hill Whole Center Renovation. And as we do with all our contract actions, we will continue to follow the FAR and award contracts that are fair and reasonably priced.



# SMALL BIZ BY THE #'S



**\$1,186,243,331**

total dollars awarded  
to small businesses  
since 2012

**8(A) CONTRACTING  
SINCE 2012:**

**13.1%**

average of small business  
awards

**\$239+ million**  
in total dollars

**782**


total actions



# Folly Beach Feasibility Study

Article by FBFS Project Delivery Team

Photo by Sara Corbett

A large yellow CAT bulldozer is positioned on a sandy beach, partially submerged in shallow water. The bulldozer is facing away from the camera, towards the ocean. In the background, another similar bulldozer is visible further along the beach. The ocean waves are breaking onto the shore, and the sky is clear and blue. The beach is bordered by a line of dark rocks.

Beach erosion and storm surges are constant threats along the Atlantic coast. The Lowcountry has experienced coastal storm flooding problems with regularity in the last 100 years. Folly Beach is no exception. Accordingly, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers is reevaluating what can be done to provide a more resilient coastal flood risk management solution through the Folly Beach Feasibility Study.

The study is reevaluating the current 50-year project on Folly Beach, which has been impacted by the increased frequency of recent major storm events. The study will determine if a reformulated 50-year project is warranted for construction before the end of the current project, which ends in 2043. Should a new project be recommended by the Corps and authorized by Congress, it would supersede the existing project.

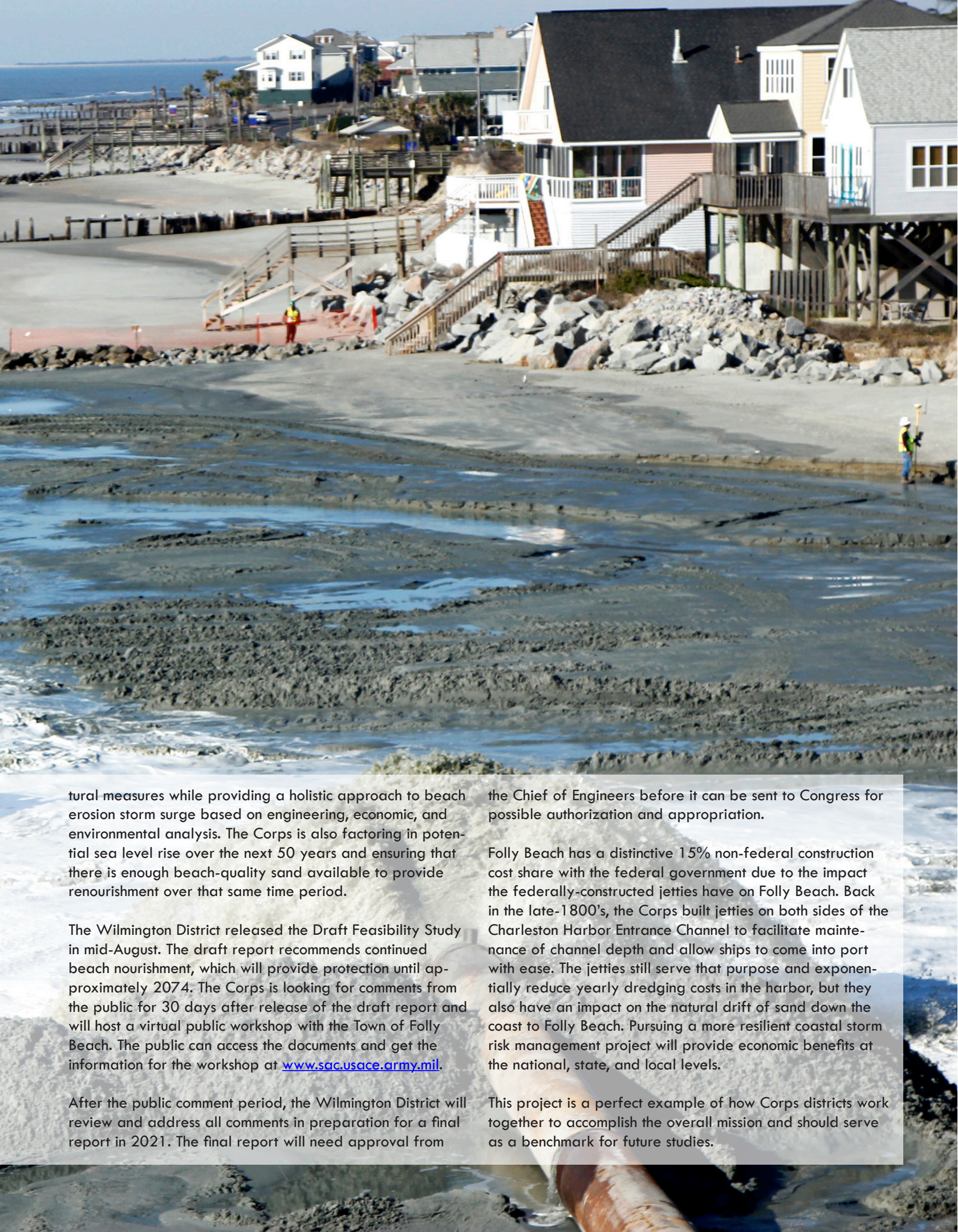
“This study and construction could preserve the longevity of the beach and the town,” said local resident Eric Warren at

a public meeting. “It will help to protect the residents, the Charleston community, and the revenue from tourism in Folly Beach.”

Normally, in the past (and in the future), a Folly Beach study would have been performed by the Charleston District. However, because the Charleston District received several studies in the 2018 emergency supplemental funding after Hurricane Irma, the Wilmington District volunteered to help since, at that time, they had no studies in the North Carolina area. This was a good fit since the Wilmington District is a coastal district in the South Atlantic Division with proximity to the Charleston team and its historical knowledge of Folly Beach.

This 100% federally-funded study is to be completed within three years and evaluate possible actions intended to provide long-term risk reduction from coastal storms on Folly Beach. This study is evaluating alternatives for struc-





tural measures while providing a holistic approach to beach erosion storm surge based on engineering, economic, and environmental analysis. The Corps is also factoring in potential sea level rise over the next 50 years and ensuring that there is enough beach-quality sand available to provide renourishment over that same time period.

The Wilmington District released the Draft Feasibility Study in mid-August. The draft report recommends continued beach nourishment, which will provide protection until approximately 2074. The Corps is looking for comments from the public for 30 days after release of the draft report and will host a virtual public workshop with the Town of Folly Beach. The public can access the documents and get the information for the workshop at [www.sac.usace.army.mil](http://www.sac.usace.army.mil).

After the public comment period, the Wilmington District will review and address all comments in preparation for a final report in 2021. The final report will need approval from

the Chief of Engineers before it can be sent to Congress for possible authorization and appropriation.

Folly Beach has a distinctive 15% non-federal construction cost share with the federal government due to the impact the federally-constructed jetties have on Folly Beach. Back in the late-1800's, the Corps built jetties on both sides of the Charleston Harbor Entrance Channel to facilitate maintenance of channel depth and allow ships to come into port with ease. The jetties still serve that purpose and exponentially reduce yearly dredging costs in the harbor, but they also have an impact on the natural drift of sand down the coast to Folly Beach. Pursuing a more resilient coastal storm risk management project will provide economic benefits at the national, state, and local levels.

This project is a perfect example of how Corps districts work together to accomplish the overall mission and should serve as a benchmark for future studies.







# Fort Jackson Reception Battalion Barracks Renovation

By Sean McBride

Buildings constructed in 1972 are still in use whichever way you turn your head. Buildings much older continue to be used every single day with no problem. However, the condition of a building constructed in 1972 can range from bad to great depending on how it has been maintained and for what purpose.

As with many buildings constructed almost 50 years ago, the Reception Battalion Barracks at Fort Jackson had seen better days. Many of the building's systems had aged beyond their useful life and were failing to provide the quality that incoming soldiers deserved to see from the U.S. Army. Knowing that inadequate living conditions negatively affect the in-processing of new soldiers and that conditions would only continue to get worse if not repaired, the leadership at Fort Jackson came to the Charleston District to complete a renovation of the facility.

The 56,000 square foot facility is used to receive and process trainees in preparation of basic combat training. With 50,000 new soldiers coming to Fort Jackson each year, this was a priority project.

The facility had seen better days. The building's systems all needed replaced, including the HVAC, plumbing and electrical. But the building itself needed major upgrades, including replacing the roof, doors, windows, walls, floors and ceilings.

"The inadequate living & working conditions negatively impact the training mission," said Col. James Ellerson,

former garrison commander at Fort Jackson, who requested the project. "The facility has never undergone any building systems repairs, only patchwork repairs in recent years. Failure to restore this building will result in a negative impact on the mission of the 120<sup>th</sup> Adjutant General Battalion, which is to receive, process, motivate, and begin soldierization of receptees prior to Basic Combat Training."

The nearly \$18 million project was started in October 2018. The Charleston District team got to work with the laundry list of repairs needed. Each of the failed systems was removed and replaced with a new one that was up to current standards. All of the flooring, walls, insulation, ceilings, and roof were removed and replaced with quality materials that will last through the next several decades.

The renovation was completed in March 2020 and turned back over to Fort Jackson.

This project was the sixth barracks renovation that the District has completed for the 120<sup>th</sup> Adjutant General Battalion. The battalion is currently residing in the building and are happy with the work, but is now dealing with issues related to COVID-19.

COVID-19 has cancelled the transfer of many troops from Fort Jackson, which has led to the need for more bed space. The battalion is still processing in new troops, but less are leaving. Luckily, the new space arrived just in time to provide assistance.



Photos from inside the renovated building, provided by the Fort Jackson Resident Office



# Three flood risk management projects

By Sean McBride

The Charleston District has simultaneously been working with three municipalities to restore three creeks that were damaged by intense rainfall from Hurricane Joaquin in 2015.

In 2015, the District conducted post-storm inspections with the Town of Summerville, Town of Kingstree and Sumter County to evaluate the impact of the storm and damage to Sawmill Branch, Kingstree Branch, and Turkey Creek.

Each creek is a federal flood risk management channel that was originally built by the Army Corps of Engineers and is maintained by the municipality who serves as the project sponsor. During the storm, each creek had major inflows with the existing channel struggling to move all the water and led to flooding beyond its banks. The amount of flooding led to significant damage, causing additional concern during hurricane season and future rainfall events.

“Each channel is designed to accommodate a specific intensity storm event, such as a 25-year storm, but not larger intensity storms such as a 100-year storm,” said Nova Robbins, project manager. “In order to perform as designed, it is important that the channel be maintained properly, and any damage be repaired so that it can handle rainfall and move water efficiently.”

Each year, the District inspects these creeks to ensure they can perform as designed and establish a baseline condition. If it is determined a declared-disaster caused damage, the projects become eligible for federal flood control and coastal emergencies funding to make the repairs.

This became the case after Hurricane Joaquin in 2015, when a large storm system drew in moisture from the hurricane and flooded much of South Carolina to historic levels. When these creeks were overtopped, the towns had significant flooding issues.

The flooding of the creeks also eroded the banks on each side, causing more problems. Now, the banks were collapsing and reducing the performance of the channel.

After the storm, the District received \$2.2 million in federal funding to restore the creeks back to their pre-storm conditions. Sections of the creeks that were most impacted are being restored and having their banks re-graded. In Kingstree Branch, the crew is installing gabion baskets to hold up the banks.

Gabion baskets are large wire baskets filled with rocks and secured into the ground. This allows for a more vertical bank and makes the earth behind it less likely to be washed away because it has a solid structure supporting it.

The District has completed the work at Sawmill Branch and is currently working on Turkey Creek and Kingstree Branch. All work is anticipated to be complete in late Summer 2020.

This work is somewhat irregular for the District, taking place this far inland from the coast. As one of the Corps' primary missions, the District oversees numerous flood risk management projects throughout the state. Soon, the creeks should be restored, improving protection for the citizens of these communities.







Above: Gabion baskets being installed in Kingtree Branch.



Above and opposite: Bank stabilization at Kingtree Branch.







# Committed to Diversity

By Sean McBride

2020 has been a unique year. In this case, unique means that topics that don't normally reach the forefront of American news cycles have dominated the headlines. A pandemic, elections, and a racial divide are the conversations happening at dinner tables this year instead of who won last night's game or what movie we're going to go see this weekend.

The topic of racial inequality has loomed as one of the biggest topics in our country today. A historically-subdued voice that has had a few shouting moments in history has been handed a megaphone and is finally being heard by all.

Diversity and inclusion have long-been imperative for the Charleston District to ensure a diverse workforce that represents all people from different backgrounds and cultural identities. This includes people in varying stages of their career, education and work experience in an inclusive environment that nurtures a sense of belonging, empathy and mutual respect for all. It extends beyond recruiting to hiring, onboarding, daily aspects of work, team building, organizational culture, performance management and development, succession planning, and mentoring.

It starts with a simple policy letter, signed at the beginning of every new commander's tenure, which affirms their commitment to diversity and inclusion in the workforce. From there, a system of training on the types of equal employment opportunity and organizational requirements for a model EEO program are prescribed that each employee must go through. One example where the Charleston District extends their commitment is through its diversity programs.

"We participate in national observances and have special emphasis programs focused on the goal of improving employment for under-represented groups of minorities, women and people with disabilities in the workplace," said Jessica Byrd, equal employment opportunity officer. "Within these programs, we try to enhance education and promote cultural awareness, build morale and camaraderie and support career development for all employees."

The District often brings in speakers to talk about topics for Black History Month, Women's History Month,

Hispanic Heritage Month and many more. The District recognizes that diversity and inclusion requires an investment from the highest senior leaders to the newest employees. The programs that are most well-received are those that have speakers from within the District who can share their experiences.

One recent example was during Black History Month when a senior leader shared his career journey as a black male looking for employment in the 1970s and 80s and inspired others to pursue their career aspirations. Another example was when the District held a seminar on the Workforce Recruitment Program and had three entry-level employees that started as WRP interns in the District share how the WRP propelled their careers. The WRP helps college students and recent graduates with disabilities land temporary and permanent jobs in the government.

"WRP has been one of our biggest success stories for diversity and inclusion," said Byrd. "We have been an employer of WRP interns since 2012 which has provided us another avenue to reach top talent and improve representation of people with disabilities in our organization, many of which are also veterans."

Another area of success with diversity and inclusion is the representation of women in STEM within the District. For example, of the environmental biologists in the office, 50 percent are women. The District is heavily involved in various community outreach engagements and with today's youth, educating them on the Corps' mission and promoting STEM and interest in federal careers. These efforts are two-fold, to attract a diverse workforce for today and to also build the diverse workforce for tomorrow.

"We are committed to diversity and inclusion for all people, regardless of race, gender, religion or anything else," said Byrd. "We want to attract a diverse workforce and select the best qualified candidates in every area."

Despite all efforts and success in some areas, Byrd says we are still not where we need to be in terms of diverse representation amongst our employees in all segments of the organization. Diversity and inclusion is an ongoing and ever-changing challenge and as the nation seeks to be better, the District continues on that path to be better as well.



# Meet

## Jeff Livasy

Interim Chief of Programs and  
Civil Works



### **Explain your job.**

Our branch oversees a diverse mission conducting studies, construction, and operations and maintenance of navigation, environmental infrastructure, coastal storm risk management, and flood risk management projects in South Carolina. I also serve as the District's congressional delegation point of contact, ensuring strong relationships with congressional staffers and providing regular updates on our projects, appropriations, and public concerns.

### **What is the most unique thing you bring to the District?**

I have an innate drive and passion for improvement. I consistently engage to ensure our field teams have quality design packages, our ineffective internal processes are reworked, our IT systems get improved, and that our staff have leadership support and the tools needed to execute.

### **What is the most rewarding part of your job?**

Building "things." I measure the pride in my job not by the dollars I make or position I hold, but by being able to show my two boys the work we do not for ourselves, but for others.

### **Highlight a notable milestone or memory in your career.**

Being part of large construction projects that improve the quality of life for our service members, the mission effectiveness of the Department of Defense, and the economy of South Carolina. My fondest memories are turning over quality projects after years of oversight and especially the specific actions that saved taxpayers' dollars.

### **What goals do you have for your career at the Charleston District?**

Continuous improvement and growth, serving in leadership roles where I can add value, and being an advocate for our mission, our dedicated workforce, and our stakeholders.

### **What is something that most people don't know about you?**

I graduated from Virginia Tech twice in 2001; the first in May to get my bachelor's degree and the second in December to get my master's degree. Go Hokies!



# Our:

## Maj. Joe Owens

Deputy District Commander

### **Explain your job.**

I'm the new Deputy District Commander which means I have several hats that I wear. Most prominent is acting as the District Commander's Chief of Staff which means ensuring synchronization of the Districts efforts.

### **What is the most unique thing you bring to the District?**

An outside perspective. My background in the Army is very tactical, so I am seeing the Charleston District enterprise with a fresh set of eyes.

### **What is the most rewarding part of your job?**

The people! I'm a big people person so I've loved meeting the team over this first week or two. I get energy from being a part of a team, and the Charleston team is a great one to be on.

### **Highlight a notable milestone or memory in your career.**

In 2012 I was a Company Commander in the 82<sup>nd</sup> Airborne Division on Global Response Force status. We were activated and given no-notice orders to Afghanistan as part of the surge there.

### **What goals do you have for your career at the Charleston District?**

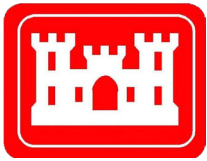
First and foremost I want to be a contributing member of the team; doing whatever I can to help the district and our employees succeed. Second, I want to learn the USACE system and culture.

### **What is something that most people don't know about you?**

I'm a big college sports fan.







# Welcome Col. Jason Kelly!

By Sean McBride

On June 22<sup>nd</sup>, Col. Jason Kelly assumed command of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, South Atlantic Division. Col. Kelly assumed command from Maj. Gen. Diana Holland at a ceremony in Atlanta, Ga., where he will serve as the commander for a region that includes North Carolina, South Carolina, Georgia, Florida, Alabama and Puerto Rico.

Col. Kelly most recently served as the director of the office of the chief of engineers at the Pentagon. There, Col. Kelly provided advice on engineer matters and coordinated actions with the Army Staff, Joint Staff, Combatant Commands, Army Service Component Commands, Army Commands, and the U.S. Army Engineer School. The Director oversees actions impacting engineer force structure, resourcing, manning, training, equipping, deployment, and transformation. He also coordinates support to domestic and overseas contingency operations through the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and Army Operation Centers.

Col. Kelly has prior experience with the Corps, having previously served as the commander of both the Afghanistan District and Norfolk District.

Welcome, Col. Kelly!

**\*\*Editor's note-** just prior to press time, it was announced that Maj. Gen. (P) Scott Spellmon was confirmed as the 55th Chief of Engineers and will be succeeding Lt. Gen. Todd Semonite. We look forward to your leadership, sir!

