

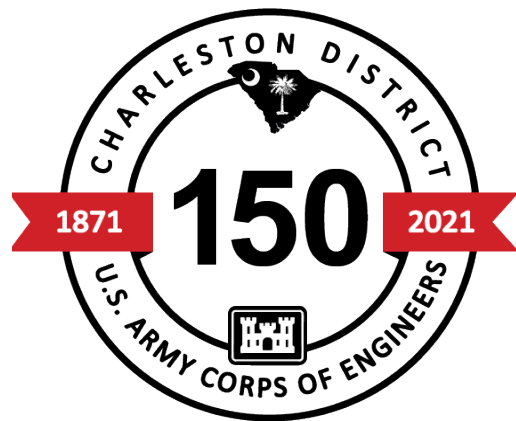


U.S. ARMY CORPS OF ENGINEERS, CHARLESTON DISTRICT

# PALMETTO CASTLE







## Celebrating 150 Years

### Commander

Lt. Col. Rachel Honderd  
(843) 329-8000

### Deputy, PPM

Lisa Metheney

### Communications Chief

Glenn Jeffries

### Editor & Writers

Jackie Pennoyer

Dylan Burnell



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Colleagues, partners, teammates and friends of the Charleston District, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers:

It is hard to believe that nearly two years ago I joined the Charleston District team. Even harder to believe, is that we are preparing to observe the time-honored change of command military tradition. I will relinquish command to Lt. Col. Andrew Johannes, a talented and seasoned leader. In this edition, we highlight many of the events, project milestones and some of the people who left an indelible mark on my heart (all of you) and who have shaped my experience as the 88th district commander. As we celebrate 150 years of world-class service, these projects mark this moment and contribute to the growth and prosperity of South Carolina and the nation far into the future.

We all found silver linings during the pandemic, so we asked a few members of our staff and some stakeholders to reflect on the year and share a few new skills they've acquired (page 15). These personal stories are a great reminder of how resilient we are and how precious life's simple pleasures can be.

We are on the final stretch of the Charleston Harbor Post 45 Deepening project, vitally import to the state and nation's economies. You may have seen all the dredge activity these last few months in the harbor as you drove over the Ravenel or the Don Holt Bridges. Perhaps you spotted them while boating or sitting on the beach on Sullivan's Island. We typically have no more than two dredges in the harbor at one time, but this spring we had up to nine, depending on the day, working simultaneously around-the-clock to deepen the harbor to 52 feet (page 9).

Charleston witnessed a historic moment with the recent arrival of the largest ship to call on our port yet, the CMA CGM Marco Polo. Ships like these are the reason we address transportation inefficiencies in the harbor. This ship could call on the port safely because we are nearing 100 percent completion of the Wando Turning Basin (page 11).

I am often asked, "What do you do with the material you remove as part of the Charleston Harbor Deepening?" The restoration of Crab Bank — a win-win for everyone — is one way we do this. The project, cost-shared with the Department of Natural Resources (page 13), uses 660,000 cubic yards of material dredged from the harbor to expand the footprint by about 30 acres, giving threatened bird species like the brown pelican seasonal nesting habitat. Work begins this fall.

We recently announced the Charleston Peninsula Study will transition from an Environmental Assessment to an Environmental Impact Study (page 5). This gives the study more time to define mitigation measures and offers expanded public engagement with a draft report release late summer or early fall this year.

The District's regulators amaze me as they go about their daily work. Often the face of USACE to the public, our regulators interact with everyone from businesses like Wal-mart and Amazon to concerned community members and find the right balance between the environment and development (page 7).

Partnerships are essential in everything we do (page 21). Thanks to all of you for supporting us and our missions these last two years. It has been one of my life's greatest honors to serve as the commander of this District. Together, we have overcome unprecedented challenges, discovered our enduring resiliency and developed our skills in innovation and teamwork.

As we approach summer, I want to share some thoughts on safety. Hurricane season is in full swing, so now is the time to ensure our families and communities have an all-hazards plan in place. Dredging will continue to be active in the harbor, and I ask for your help spreading the message of safe boating operations in the harbor and surrounding areas. Always steer clear of dredges, which are active construction sites on the water. The Ravenel Bridge walk, USS Yorktown and Joe Riley waterfront park are a few great viewing spots!

Have a glorious summer and again, thank you all. This experience is truly the most amazing culmination of nearly 24 years of military service. It has been an honor and privilege to partner with you and serve side-by-side with the incredible professionals on this WORLD CLASS Charleston District team.



Rachel Honderd, PMP  
Lt. Col., U.S. Army  
Commander and District Engineer  
Rachel.A.Honderd@usace.army.mil

## CHARLESTON PENINSULA STUDY EXPANDS ANALYSIS, PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT THROUGH NEXT YEAR

By Jackie Pennoyer

The Charleston Peninsula Coastal Flood Risk Management Study, which investigates the effects and risks of storm surge flooding on the Charleston peninsula, transitioned from an Environmental Assessment to an Environmental Impact Statement earlier this spring.

The transition extends the \$3 million federal feasibility study's original three-year timeline by several months, enabling the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, the City of Charleston and cooperating agencies to conduct further analysis on project impacts, define mitigation measures and expand public engagement through additional public meetings and the release of a revised draft report later this year for public review.

The study is now expected to publish its completed findings in a final report to Congress in Fall 2022.

As part of the transition, USACE and the City hosted a public scoping meeting March 30 to collect public comments and provide a thorough update on the study's progress since release of an initial draft report in April 2020. The transition also included a formal 30-day public input period, which ran through April 22.

To help facilitate a productive transition to an EIS, the study specifically requested input from the public on other potential coastal storm surge risk alternatives, other potential impacts of the proposed action and any

other relevant information or analysis. All comments submitted during the public scoping meeting and input period will be included in the Draft Integrated Feasibility Report/Environmental Impact Statement.

The transition to an EIS does not alter the study goals, expand the authorized focus on coastal storm surge or change the City's role in the study. The study's original goals remain the same: to reduce the risks to human health, life and safety and reduce economic damages of coastal storm surge events through a cost-effective, environmentally-sound and feasible solution.

Over the next several months, USACE will use public and agency input, as well as the results of additional modeling and analysis, to continue to refine the proposed federal action and develop more specific strategies to mitigate impacts to historical, visual, community and natural resources.

USACE will hold a 45-day comment period following the Draft Feasibility Report/EIS, which is released September 2021. During this period, USACE will also host a public meeting to present the study's updated findings and facilitate public review. Comments submitted during this period will be addressed in the final report.

For the latest on the study, visit [www.sac.usace.army.mil/charlestonpeninsulastudy](http://www.sac.usace.army.mil/charlestonpeninsulastudy).









## USACE REGULATORS WORK TO BALANCE DEVELOPMENT WITH ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

By Dylan Burnell

While many people may know the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Charleston District because of their numerous civil works projects and community involvement, another division with a great impact on the area is the Regulatory Division. The Regulatory Division supports economic development and the creation of jobs, while also committing to no net loss of aquatic resources.

Since 1899, the Charleston District Regulatory Division has been responsible for regulating activities and construction in, over and under South Carolina's waters and wetlands. Originally intended to ensure safe navigation in our waterways, the USACE authority expanded during the 20th century to include the regulation of the discharge of dredged and fill material in S.C. waters.

In 1972, the Clean Water Act made USACE the primary regulators of "the waters of the United States," eventually to include many wetlands. Under the Act, USACE assumed permit authority over any and all dredging and filling activities in or around waterways.

Today, the Regulatory Division reviews over a thousand permit applications and jurisdictional determination requests every year from all over the state. The projects that are reviewed range from things like a homeowner wanting to build a driveway over a stream in their yard, to major investments like the building of the new Carolina Panthers Headquarters or the construction of BMW's Spartanburg plant.

An important part of the regulatory process is jurisdictional determinations, or JDs. A JD is the official USACE determination of whether an area meets the federal definition of wetland or other water of the United States. For wetlands and waters within USACE jurisdiction, development that would unavoidably impact waters of the U.S. must receive a permit from the USACE prior to the discharge of material into those waters.

The permitting process begins with the regulator asking: "Will this project affect wetlands or waters of the United States?" If so, the permit application review will include evaluating the effects the development

may have on a range of environmental issues, including historic properties and protected species in the review area relevant to the activity requiring a permit.

Ultimately, regulators will assist the applicant by identifying and permitting the alternative that meets the project's overall purpose while first minimizing, and then offsetting unavoidable impacts to waters of the U.S. through appropriate compensatory mitigation.

The job of a regulator is demanding and requires multiple steps and analyses. It is a fast-paced and high-pressure role that has the immense responsibility of protecting America's waterways and associated wetlands. It is the determination and devotion of these regulators and their support staff that contribute to making the Charleston District a world-class organization.

South Carolina has 33 regulators whose backgrounds include experience in similar agencies and extensive education in the natural and physical sciences. They work closely with other local and federal agencies such as the Environmental Protection Agency, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, National Marine Fisheries Service and the S.C. Department of Natural Resources to balance economic development and environmental protection.

The role of regulators in South Carolina has grown as development in the Lowcountry and elsewhere has steadily increased over the past years. USACE regulators continue to stand ready to balance economic growth with the commitment to the protection of the nation's waters.

For more information on the Regulatory Division or how you can help protect America's waters, visit the Charleston District's website at [www.sac.usace.army.mil/Missions/Regulatory](http://www.sac.usace.army.mil/Missions/Regulatory).



## HISTORIC NUMBER OF DREDGES READY CHARLESTON FOR FUTURE, LARGER SHIPS

By Jackie Pennoyer

The news is out: Charleston, S.C. is on track to have the deepest port on the east coast and harbor some of the world's largest ships.

Large container ships, even super-post-Panamax vessels like the 1300-foot-long CMA CGM Marco Polo which cruised into Charleston's harbor this May during high tide, will soon have safe passage here at any tide, fully-loaded.

These improvements in navigation are due to more than a century of continuous deepening and maintenance dredging led by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Charleston District and the South Carolina Ports Authority's strategic vision, as well as the District's most recent deepening project, Post 45.

When the Corps initially began dredging Charleston Harbor in the mid-nineteenth century, principal entry channels were as shallow as 12 feet deep at low tide, forcing approaching ships into treacherous entry procedures and, over time, closing the harbor off from larger, more modern vessels and an ever-globalizing trade network.

At the time, the District's deepening work was believed so vital to the regional economy that in 1878 the News & Courier — now Post and Courier — wrote, "[The] commercial effect will undoubtedly be great. There will no longer be any doubt ... Charleston will soon become the receiving and distributing point for a vast section of the country now supplied by longer lines and at greater cost by Baltimore and New York. The field is open to Charleston."

Today, in addition to maintenance dredging, Charleston District is deepening the harbor from 45 feet — a federally-authorized depth it achieved in its most recent deepening project which completed in 2004 — to 52 feet. The work is anything but simple. Stretching across roughly 40 miles of open ocean and inner channels, the dredging is broken up into five separate contracts and has required a historic number of dredges to work around-the-clock to complete the deepening work by the end of next year.

At one point in the project's five-year timeline, nine dredges worked simultaneously, excavating and pumping millions of cubic yards of silt and sand from the ocean floor, across various points in the harbor, the most ever seen at one time in Charleston District's 150-year history.

The project is currently scheduled to complete the extensive deepening work by Winter 2022. Once complete, the project will remove 40 million cubic yards of sediment — the equivalent of 12,230 Olympic pools — from Charleston Harbor's federal channel.

A partnership with the S.C. Ports Authority, the \$600 million project will improve navigation, open the port to a fleet of fully loaded modern vessels, facilitate trade and ultimately reduce the costs of consumer goods. For every dollar invested, the project is projected to return more than \$6 to the economy.





PICTURED ABOVE ARE THE ONLY TWO \$600 MILLION INFRASTRUCTURE PROJECTS IN THE LOWCOUNTRY: THE RAVENEL BRIDGE (\$632 MILLION) AND THE CHARLESTON HARBOR POST 45 DEEPENING PROJECT.



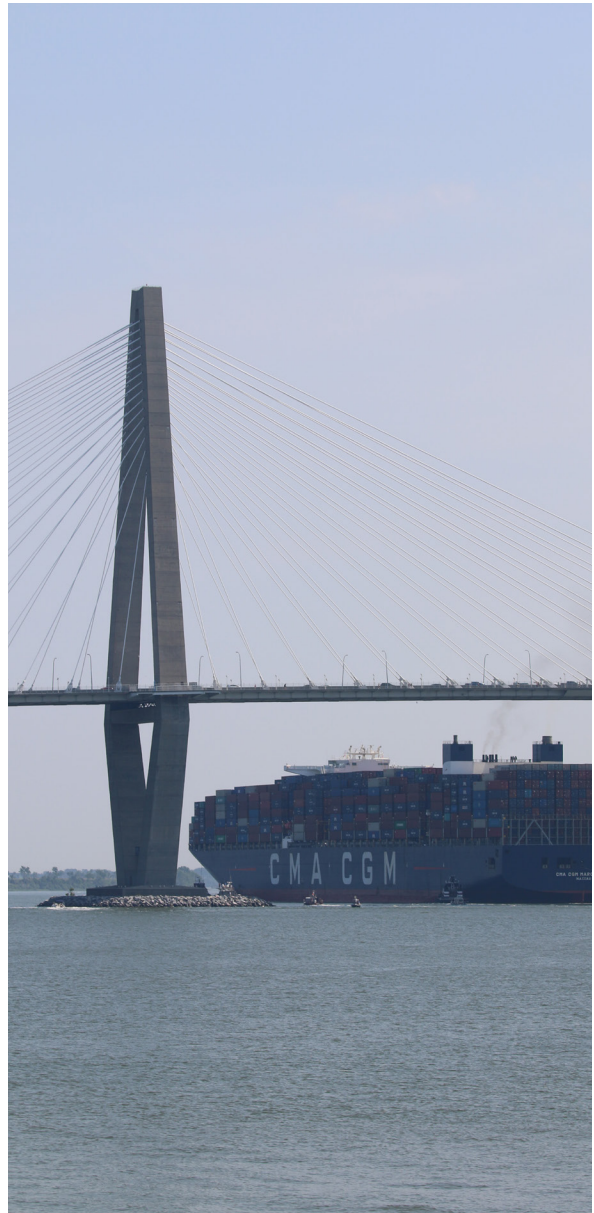


## MAKING HISTORY

The CMA CGM Marco Polo, the largest container ship to call on the U.S. East Coast, seamlessly glided into Charleston Harbor at high tide on May 28, 2021. Charleston was the ship's last stop before embarking overseas. The 1,300-foot-long ship was able to visit due to the Charleston District's ongoing Charleston Harbor Post 45 Deepening Project. The Wando Turning Basin is also now 99 percent complete and was an important factor in enabling the vessel's safe entry. Once Post 45 is complete next year in 2022, other post-Panamax vessels like the Marco Polo can call on Charleston any time, at any tide.











"WE LOOK FORWARD TO THE SUCCESSFUL COMPLETION OF THIS PROJECT  
AND TO A DAY IN THE NOT-TOO-DISTANT FUTURE WHEN SEABIRDS AND  
SHOREBIRDS WILL RETURN TO CRAB BANK AND VISITORS WILL AGAIN BE ABLE  
TO EXPERIENCE WHAT MAKES THIS AREA SO SPECIAL."

ROBERT BOYLES, SCDNR DIRECTOR





## CHARLESTON DISTRICT, SCDNR ADD 32 ACRES OF NESTING HABITAT TO CRAB BANK THIS FALL

By Jackie Pennoyer

This spring, the Charleston District worked with the South Carolina Department of Natural Resources (SCDNR) to reevaluate the location of the placement site for the Crab Bank Restoration project slated to start later this year.

Situated just off the banks of the Town of Mount Pleasant in Charleston Harbor, Crab Bank is a thin moon-slivered islet and designated seabird sanctuary historically used by threatened native shorebirds for prime nesting grounds. Over the last several years, the island has gradually eroded due to hurricanes and other storms, diminishing the natural habitat, eliminating high nesting ground, and reducing bird populations.

Sponsored by SCDNR, the federal beneficial-use project will restore 32 acres of critical high nesting grounds through the one-time placement of roughly 660,000 cubic yards of compatible material dredged from the Charleston Harbor Post 45 Deepening Project.

"We are excited to begin this important project for our community," Lt. Col. Rachel Honderd, district commander, said at a meeting April 15 with U.S. Sen. Lindsey Graham, town leadership and state officials. "It's a win-win for the environment, and the restored sanctuary will continue to serve as an ecological and economic asset for the Lowcountry."

Following through on earlier commitments to reevaluate the placement location prior to construction, the District concluded that shifting the placement 1,400 feet further to the southeast provided the same level of benefits as the original plan and enabled the contractor to take advantage of more areas of existing shallow water.

"All parties worked together on a solution that allows the project to move forward," Graham said. "Thanks to the efforts of local leaders, the Army Corps, the SCDNR, and Sen. Scott and Rep. Mace — this common-sense decision will benefit the community and the environment. I was honored to be a part of it."

Construction will begin in September and is expected to last a few months. Upon completion, SCDNR will monitor the recolonization as the restored sanctuary once again becomes an ecological and economic asset for the Lowcountry.

"We look forward to the successful completion of this project and to a day in the not-too-distant future when seabirds and shorebirds will return to Crab Bank and visitors will again be able to experience what makes this area so special," said Robert Boyles, director, SCDNR.



CELEBRATING 150 YEARS

## LIFE INTERRUPTED: WHAT HAS THE LAST YEAR TAUGHT YOU?



### ROBERT SORENSON

Interagency & International Services Project  
Manager

I came on board in March 2020, the day Covid-19 hit the division, and had three days in the office to take over a program. The introduction to USACE was completely virtual, and I had to get up-to-speed on the newly-developed means and methods. Covid-19 taught me that a world class organization can adapt, turn on a dime and not only not skip a beat, but pick up the pace! This past year was the first of what I hope are many years working in an outstanding mission-focused organization that cares as much about its employees as it does about its mission.

### MOLLY HOLT

Civil Engineer

I've learned from working at home the past year that painting my home office red was a terrible idea. A fresh coat of calming blue paint does wonders to my mood and productivity. Working from home really also forced me to learn how to refine my time management skills. The past year, I've worked on prioritizing my tasks, focusing on what needs to get done right now, and breaking work up into smaller chunks to help me to feel less overwhelmed and be more productive!



**SCOTT GLASS**

Chief of Operations

I learned the ability to be more flexible and how to leverage different approaches to do work that I hadn't considered before. Early on we were just doing phone calls, but later, we started to Skype and turn our cameras on. We could see the dogs running around and the babies crawling in dads lap during a meeting. I think it brought some connection to humanity for us as people, as well as getting to see a glimpse into someone's life outside of work. It goes both ways though, on one hand, I found I tend to work more by having my office in my dining room. But it also affords me the opportunity to talk to my wife during the day or take a short walk in-between meetings. I have been able to take advantage of those opportunities and it really has been a blessing to have that. As much as I want to be back in the office, I will miss that aspect.

**RICHARD DARDEN**

Regulatory Project Manager

I have learned something that I probably already knew, which is that people are Resilient, and more resilient than ever. They are also incredibly understanding. We have all been on tons of virtual meetings and teleconferences, and you will hear dogs barking, kids screaming, sometimes even a toilet flushing. And the person says sorry, but everyone says 'no problem' because we all understand what is going on. To experiences everybody's incredible level of understanding and patience with one another has been really great.







**KIM STENSON**

South Carolina Emergency Management Division (SCEMD) Director

The past year has tested the endurance and proven the durability of the state's existing emergency management system that we have worked so hard on in South Carolina. Local first responders, county and state emergency managers, along with all of the people who make up the state's emergency response team have all been tasked with missions we've never done before during any disaster response. From securing much needed personal protective equipment to coordinating mass vaccination efforts, this past year has proven flexibility is key in any emergency.

If you do not have a plan during an incident such as this pandemic, it's very easy to become overwhelmed with the feeling that you have to do everything alone because you don't know where to turn for help, or even what help is available. Developing emergency plans in advance will help you work through any predictable issues. The relationships you build and the discussions you have while creating or updating that plan will help see you and your entire team through any number of issues you can't foresee but you know you're prepared for.



ROBERT H. BOYLES, JR.

South Carolina Department of Natural Resources (SCDNR) Director

During the pandemic we found ourselves in the midst of a situation that was fluid, dynamic, and at times frustrating. The extensive closings and the directives to isolate/disperse drove many thousands of South Carolinians to seek refuge in the outdoors. While this posed certain challenges, our staff was able to quickly and effectively pivot to the new realities of COVID, and we worked tirelessly and creatively to continue to provide opportunities for South Carolinians to safely enjoy the outdoors throughout the pandemic.





## A BUSY SUMMER FOR FORT JACKSON AS ONE PROJECT FINISHES, TWO OTHERS GET STARTED

By Dylan Burnell

It will be an active summer at Fort Jackson, as a major Charleston District construction project finishes and two others get started.

The completion of the Semmes Lake Dam will mark the end to a milestone project that has been in the works since 2015. At the same time, the mobilization of the teams constructing Basic Training Complex Four Phase Two and Reception Complex Phase One will set new projects in motion for the base.

Located just outside of Columbia, Fort Jackson trains roughly 50,000 new recruits every year. On average, more than 50 percent of all incoming Soldiers and 60 percent of the Army's female Soldiers are trained at Fort Jackson every year — including Charleston District Commander Lt. Col. Rachel Honderd.

In 2008, Charleston District reassumed responsibility of Military Construction projects at Fort Jackson. Since then, the District has executed over \$1.3 billion in projects including new builds, operations and maintenance, and facility investments services.

A highly anticipated project expected to be completed this summer is the Semmes Lake Dam. After historic flooding in 2015 caused a breach in the structure, Fort Jackson, along with assistance from the Charleston District, created a plan to fix it. Following two years of construction, it is set to finish this summer and will be a major milestone for the base to restore stormwater retention capacity and provide recreational opportunities for the community and visitors.

The first new military construction project to break ground this summer will be the final phase of Basic Training Complex Four. Formally known as a Basic Combat Trainee Complex, it has all the required facilities to house and fully train the Army's new recruits, while also being in close proximity to field training areas and ranges. Complete with barracks, dining facilities, physical training areas, support buildings and a battalion headquarters, these complexes are pivotal to the successful mission of Fort Jackson.

The new construction includes the addition of three barracks and company operations facilities, three physical fitness pits and other required site work. When completed next year, it will give Fort Jackson the capacity to house an additional 720 initial entry trainees.

The second project will be the first of two phases, consisting of major changes to the Reception Complex where new recruits are introduced to Army life. When trainees first arrive to Fort Jackson as civilians, they are brought to the Reception Complex where they receive uniforms, medical checks and some initial training. After a few weeks, they are broken into groups and sent to a battalion until graduation.

David Dodds, construction division chief for the USACE Charleston District, says the facility is key to introducing civilians to Army life.



"It is their initial exposure to the Army, what the Army does and how they're going to be trained for the next series of weeks until graduation. This new reception complex will give Fort Jackson a first-class facility to bring civilians in and turn them into Soldiers," Dodds said.

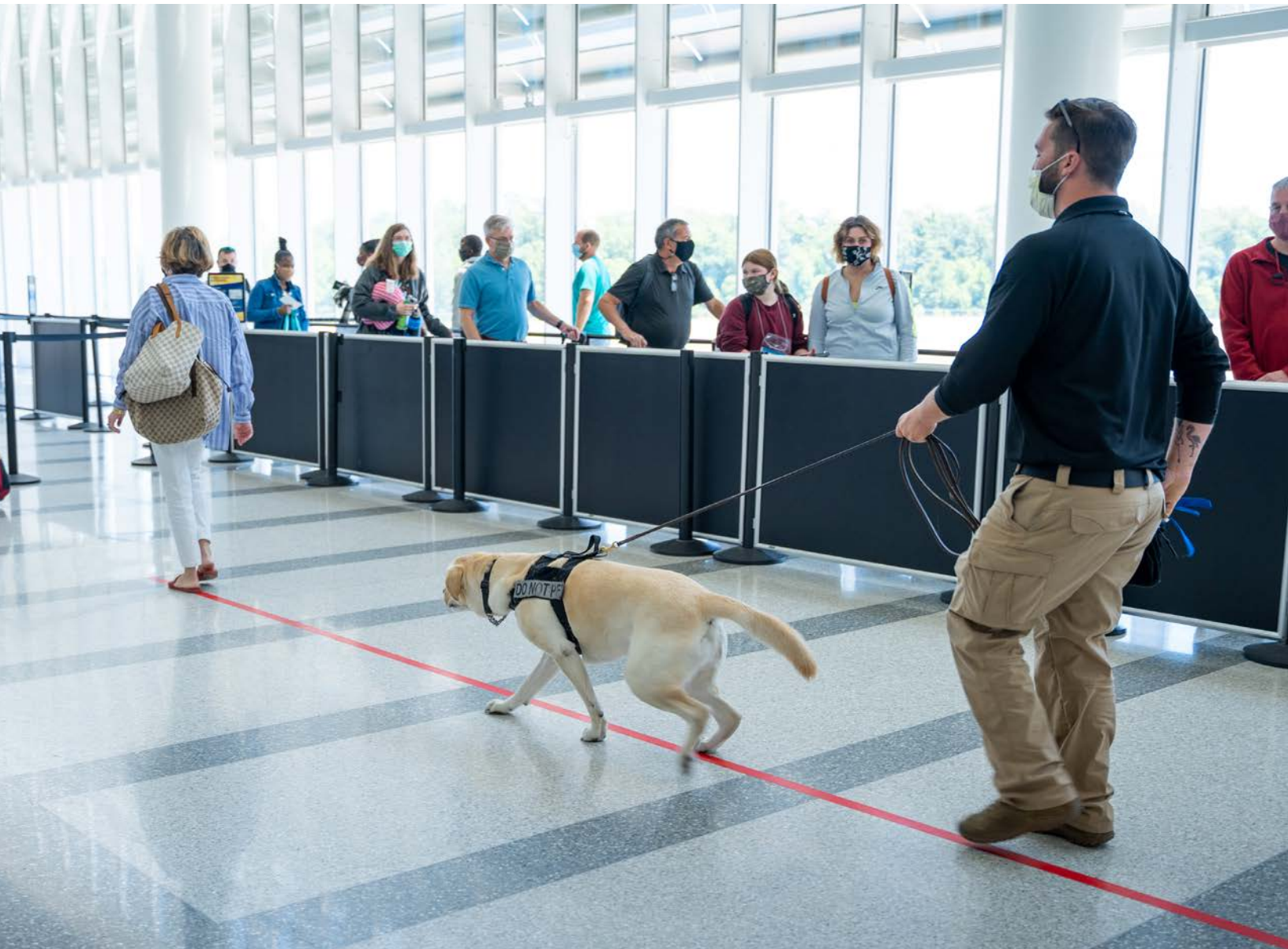
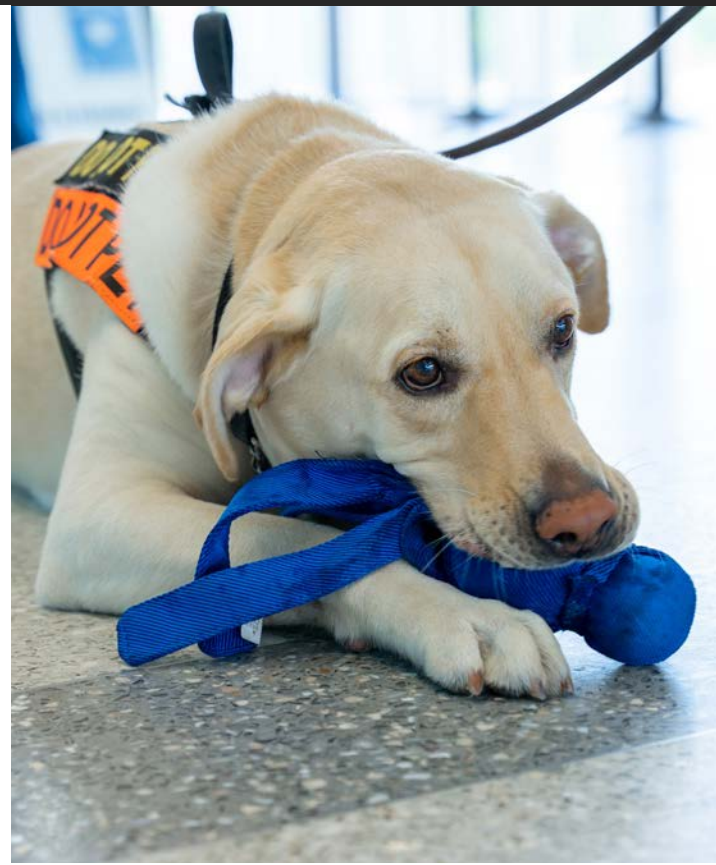
The first phase will include the construction of a clothing issue point, a permanent dining facility, landscaping, parking and other buildings. Construction of Phase One is scheduled to be completed by 2023. Phase Two — currently in the

design process — is slated for an early 2022 calendar-year.

As Fort Jackson continues to provide quality facilities to enable their core mission, the role of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers is to scale up to support the growing construction workload as well. The world-class Charleston District stands at the ready to assist this strategic and important base with whatever projects are needed.









## CHARLESTON DISTRICT VOLUNTEERS TEST TSA CANINES, UNDERSCORING FEDERAL PARTNERSHIPS

By Jackie Pennoyer

The Charleston metro area is home to more than 45 federal agencies and roughly 12,000 federal employees all working together to keep people safe and the communities of South Carolina thriving.

They don different uniforms, work all hours, and travel across state lines and sometimes internationally to provide a vast array of critical government services that uphold the vital integrity of our public transportation systems, supply chains, cyber networks, harbors, hospitals and natural resources.

And they do this important work largely behind-the-scenes in federal facilities, laboratories, air craft, ships, terminals and military offices scattered across the state's 32,000 square-miles.

To synchronize efforts and streamline federal collaboration — particularly in emergency situations — the organizations have formed an all-volunteer committee which brings federal executives and military leaders across the state together on a routine basis. Known as the Federal Executive Association, the organization provides agencies with a forum to share important news, solve problems and work together on issues that matter most to local communities.

One of the unique ways FEA encourages federal teamwork is through calls for volunteer support.

This spring, the local Transportation Security Administration office issued a request for volunteers to help train government canines providing security at the Charleston International Airport. The airport relies on the working dogs' acute sense of smell to identify fatal hazards and explosive material on a passenger or in their luggage or carry on.

Glenn Jeffries, corporate communications chief, and Molly Holt, civil engineer — two employees with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Charleston District — responded to the call and paid a special trip to the airport.

As part of the exercise, TSA officers gave Jeffries and Holt carefully-secured hazards to place in their baggage and instructed them to go through security lines unannounced. The exercise is meant to test both the working dogs' and dog handlers' ability to identify the dangerous substances.

In both visits, the working dogs immediately picked-up the scent of the planted hazard. In fact, Jeffries had barely entered the line before the working dog on-duty picked up the scent, pulling the handler across cordoned lines, tail stiffened, nose guiding, to the affected carry on.

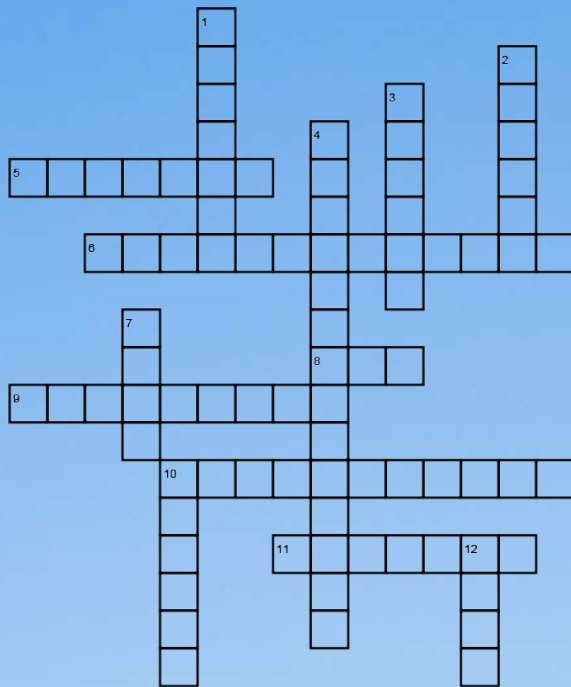
"When one of our federal partners asks for support, you roll up your sleeves and help," said Jeffries, who also serves as the FEA civilian chairman. "Whether it's responding to a hurricane, a global pandemic or something as simple as spending a few minutes of your day to help another agency improve its services."

The federal agencies in the Charleston-area FEA include the Department of State, Department of Homeland Security, U.S. Food and Drug Administration, Federal Bureau of Investigation, U.S. Customs and Border Protection, Social Security Administration, National Park Service, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, Department of Veteran Affairs, Joint Base Charleston, the Coast Guard, Naval Information Warfare Center Atlantic and many more.



## CROSSWORD

### 150 Years of History



#### Down:

1. Charleston District's first district engineer
2. Training base built by Charleston District in Greenville, S.C. following WWI
3. One of two lakes neighboring the Cooper River Rediversion Project
4. USACE's first national defense mission was known as the \_\_\_\_\_ Program
7. Moves an average of 750k fish every year (Abbr.)
10. A five-sided, five-foot-thick masonry fort built in 1860 by Charleston District
12. Foundational law for the Regulatory Program

#### Across:

5. One of the state's first forts, constructed by Charleston District
6. Type of USACE engineers who first visited Charleston
8. Acronym for major Charleston District construction program
9. Type of dredge used by Charleston District to deepen Charleston Harbor in the 1800s
10. One of eight cities where Charleston District build an airfield in 1940s
11. A jetty constructed by Charleston District in 1837 to protect Fort Moultrie and prevent erosion on Sullivan's Island