

PALMETTO CASILE



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Charleston District



Contents



On the cover: The Charleston District recently completed the renourishment of Bird Key by dredging material from Folly River. In the photo, the dredge Cherokee can be seen in the background as material pumps onto the beach and is shaped by the bulldozer.

Bird Key Stono	Page 4
Walls Cast at Pierce Terrace Elementary	Page 6
Permitting the Upstate	Page 8
The “Greatest Generation” is Still Great	Page 10
Brig. Gen. Holland Visits S.C.	Page 12
4th Annual Government Agencies Expo	Page 14
A Little TNC Can Make You Think	Page 16
Meet Our: Contracting Team	Page 18
Teaching and Recruiting	Page 20

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From the Commander

As I quickly approach my first year with the Charleston District, I continue to be amazed at the scope of our impact on the nation. Our team of professionals never fails to impress, whether working on permits, managing the construction of a school on Fort Jackson, or designing the next reach of storm damage reduction projects along our beaches, Charleston District's employees are leading with integrity. It is very rewarding to be part of such a fantastic organization.

The District has been doing a lot since our last Palmetto Castle and we're excited to share that with you. When this issue goes to print, we'll be close to starting the emergency renourishment of Folly Beach. This important coastal storm damage reduction project begins the first week of July and is scheduled to be complete in September. We recognize this comes in the middle of summer vacations, but it is critical to renourish the beach as early as possible in the hurricane season so the people and property behind the dunes are well protected. We ask that you bear with us during this short-term inconvenience so we can properly mitigate the risk of a major hurricane striking our coast.

The great news from the Folly Beach project is we are able to use the dredged material from Folly River for the renourishment of the beach, allowing us to complete two projects at once. It is a rarity that the sand from a dredging project is compatible with requirements for the beach, so we are thrilled with this opportunity. Making for an even better outcome, we were also able to renourish Bird Key Stono from the same source (page 4).

In this issue, you'll also read about the visit from our division commander (page 12), the opening of our Greenville Regulatory Satellite Office (page 8), the ongoing construction of the Pierce Terrace Elementary School on Fort Jackson (page 6), and the 4th Annual Government Agencies Expo we participated in (page 14). Also in this issue, you're going to read about a fascinating gentleman who worked for the Corps in the 1940's (page 10) and the four newest members of our contracting office



(page 18) who you may be working with on upcoming projects.

I'd like to wrap up by welcoming our new deputy commander, Maj. Paul Sipe. He comes to us from Fort Stewart, Georgia, where he served as the engineer battalion executive officer, assigned to 188th Infantry Brigade. Maj. Sipe has a diverse background and brings with him a wealth of knowledge and experience. He will primarily manage and supervise the general and administrative staff in support of all District operations and serves in an important leadership role during disaster response missions. We're thrilled to have Maj. Sipe on the team and look forward to integrating him into our district activities.

Have a great summer, and remember to always wear a life jacket when you're out on the water!

Jeffrey Palazzini, PMP
Lieutenant Colonel, U.S. Army
Commander and District Engineer

*Shown above is Lt. Col. Palazzini (right) on a site visit with our Columbia Regulatory Field Office. Amy Cappellino (left) and Brice McKoy (center) explain what the different colors in a soil sample represent.

Bird Key Stono

Article and photos by: Sara Corbett

In between Folly Beach and Kiawah Island lies an isolated island where thousands of birds flock and humans are not allowed.

While this might sound like the beginnings of a scary movie, it's actually Bird Key Stono Heritage Preserve, a 35-acre bird sanctuary that the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Charleston District recently renourished.

"There were thousands of birds flying all around us," said Alan Shirey, environmental engineer. "It was like a scene from 'The Birds,' except they weren't attacking us, they were more interested in their lunch that was being pumped out."

Historically, the District has placed fill on Bird Key Stono when dredging the Folly River Federal Navigation Channel since it's the least cost disposal site for the operations and maintenance dredging of Folly River.

"This project is a win-win," said Shirey. "We are able to be good stewards of the taxpayers' money since pumping the dredged material onto Bird Key is the cheapest way to dispose of the material and protects the environment by increasing the footprint of Bird Key."

There are several government agencies that work together to protect the bird sanctuary. Bird Key Stono is listed as a U.S. Fish and Wildlife Critical Habitat for Piping Plover and is protected under the Endangered Species Act, but it is owned by the State of South Carolina and maintained by the South Carolina Department of Natural Resources. So the Corps coordinated closely with USFW and SCDNR to ensure that sand was placed in the best locations for the upcoming bird nesting season.

Renourishment on Bird Key Stono was important as the island suffered significant erosion from Hurricane Irma, which left little room for birds to live and nest on. Forty-thousand yards of material was needed to replace the lost sand, approximately 4,000 dump trucks, which cost \$300,000 and was 100 percent federally-funded by the Corps. The cutterhead dredge *Cherokee* was used to suck up sand and water from the floor of the Folly River then pumped onto Bird Key Stono through pipes and, finally, bulldozers shaped the sand.

"It's a rare opportunity for us to renourish Bird Key Stono," said Shirey. "But I know that when we do have the chance, that the project will make a long-lasting impact to the birds and wildlife that reside on Bird Key Stono."

The Corps planned the dredging project around the spring nesting season so that the birds would have a new habitat before the season starts.





Left: The sand mixture is pumped onto Bird Key Stono.

Top Right: The Dredge Cherokee in the Folly River.

Above: Erosion of Bird Key Stono is visible before the renourishment.

Below: Nesting and mating birds rest on Bird Key Stono.





Walls Cast at Pierce Terrace Elementary

Article by: Sean McBride

Photos by: Sara Corbett and Dennis Franklin

When you think of Styrofoam, you usually think of it as holding your latest purchase in place while it's shipped to you in a box through the mail. You pull out your product, recycle the Styrofoam, and never think about it again. The engineers working on the new Pierce Terrace Elementary School at Fort Jackson thought of a whole new way to use Styrofoam- for the walls of the school.

Called insulated concrete form walls, these forms come in 48 inch long by 16 inch tall sections and can be connected together and cut to the exact length needed for the wall. The outsides are foam and are connected by plastic grooved pieces that hold the reinforcing steel bars. Concrete is then poured inside the form to create a stable, insulated wall.

“Using the ICF walls is a huge time saver for our construction process,” said Brian Agan, project engineer. “The form serves as the entire wall, meaning no insulation or vapor barriers have to be added like what usually must be done when constructing plain concrete walls. Also, the interior drywall will adhere directly to the foam, allowing us to make progress that we never could have made with traditional methods.”

After the first layer of ICF was set, the team was also able to concurrently lay the floor slab while the remaining layers of wall were installed. This is the first time the Charleston District has used the ICF walls on a project before, but these have been used around the country on other Department of Defense Education Activity projects.

The ICF walls are just one of the major unique updates for the Pierce Terrace project. The project also calls for pre-cast concrete panels to be used for the walls of the gym. Due to the height of the gym, ICF walls aren't allowed to be used. The pre-cast panels are made offsite in a manufacturing facility and shipped to the school for installation.

“Each panel weighs about 30,000 pounds and it takes an entire truck for one panel,” said Agan. “This process allows for more consistency in the construction of the panels and we were able to install them as soon as the site’s ground work was complete because they were already made.”

The building’s footings, interior underground electrical and telecomm distribution, and plumbing pipe installation are complete. The surrounding areas have been graded and water and overhead power lines have been installed.

With such a huge project going up from scratch, there are a lot of moving pieces to be coordinated and the \$27 million school is still on track for completion in time to give the teachers and administrators time to move in before the doors officially open to students in August 2019.



Opposite: The interior view of the insulated concrete foam walls, showing the various parts of the wall before concrete is poured inside.

Top Right: An aerial view of the Pierce Terrace Elementary School project.

Center Right: A view of the insulated concrete foam walls, showing their connection.

Bottom: The precast concrete panels installed for the gym are held up temporarily by poles as they set in place.



Permitting the Upstate

Article by: Sean McBride

Photo by: Ada Krzywicka

On March 28th, Charleston District leaders were in Greenville, S.C., to officially open the District's newest field office. The opening of the Greenville Regulatory Satellite Office signaled the growth of the area and the need for a Corps presence in the Upstate.

The Greenville office is the third regulatory field office the District has opened since 2000, joining Columbia and Conway. The environmental permitting needs around the state have grown tremendously in that time, creating a need for District employees to be more strategically located.

"So much growth has occurred in the upstate in the last few years that our Columbia Regulatory Field Office was having difficulty keeping up with permit applications in a timely manner," said Lt. Col. Jeffrey Palazzini, district commander. "In order to provide the level of service that Upstate residents deserve, we're opening this office to manage the enormous workload and improve customer service to this area of the state."

The satellite office consists of two project managers who cover nine counties; Abbeville, Anderson, Cherokee, Greenville, Laurens, Oconee, Pickens, Spartanburg and Union. Over the past five years, there have been



more than 1,700 regulatory actions in those nine counties alone. That averages close to 200 actions per year in those counties. Previously, with the closest office located in Columbia, it was challenging to conduct the required onsite visits and face-to-face meetings due to the distance. At that time, a project manager was driving weekly from Columbia to Greenville, which is approximately 100 miles one-way and three hours roundtrip, to handle this work. With two project managers living and working in the Upstate, approximately 204 hours of travel time per year can be saved, minimizing the impact to both taxpayer dollars and permit processing times. This will allow the District to better balance the developmental needs of the area with the protection

of the environment, which is the dual mandate of the Regulatory Division.

“The satellite office will allow us to provide improved services to citizens, businesses and governmental officials,” said Palazzini. “Being in Greenville will improve permit processing time, and, ultimately, maximize the success of the Regulatory program.”

The Greenville Regulatory Satellite Office is located at 150 Executive Center Drive, Suite 205, providing easy access to highways to quickly reach any sites necessary. If you have questions or permitting needs in the Upstate, you can call 864-609-4326.



Lake Jocassee from Jumping Off Rock, just outside of Greenville, SC

The “Greatest Generation” is Still Great

Article and photos by: Sara Corbett

The generation of people born between 1910 and 1924 are known as “the greatest generation.” They are celebrated for being humble, savers, hard-working and devoted. George Isgitt embodies all of the traits from his generation and more.

Isgitt was born in 1923 in Darlington, South Carolina. He remembers the Great Depression and saving every penny, jobs were scarce so you worked hard at the one you had, but he won't make a big deal about the struggles he overcame. However, devotion is the strongest “greatest generation” quality that comes through in Isgitt, which is obvious as he talks about his recently-deceased wife of nearly 70 years. Isgitt was also dedicated to the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Charleston District.

At the young age of 18, Isgitt started his federal career on Jan. 23, 1943 with the District. Now, at the age of 95, he fondly remembers his days as a Corps employee.

“When I first started, the Corps was in the courthouse downtown,” said Isgitt. “I was in the basement where we had our reproduction machines set-up. I would get to work at 5:30 p.m. and get off at 4:30 a.m., because the machines would run day and night to make blueprints for companies to build airports, barracks, churches, hospitals, extend runways. We were running prints for all that.”

He loved working for the Corps and working in reproduction. So much so that, despite being 75 years ago, Isgitt is able to recall the tedious process for making blueprints in the 1940s and, with no computers or copy machines, it was no small feat.

“The machine was electric and run by ammonia,” said Isgitt. “You'd get these sheets of blueprint, you'd run them through

the machine and the ammonia would develop the print. We'd run off hundreds of sheets a night and we'd have to hand roll them so that each contractor got a set of blueprints.”

He worked for the Corps until 1945 then left to work in the mailroom at the Naval Shipyard. In 1948, Isgitt returned to the Corps, where he stayed until 1961. He finally retired from the Naval Weapons Station in 1980. His return to the Corps only increased his commitment to the organization and the work he did there.

“I had several roles when I returned, I was the photographer, I processed blueprints... I was chief cook and bottle washer,” said Isgitt. “I did a little bit of everything.”

Since the process for blueprint reproduction and photograph reproduction are similar, Isgitt became the District photographer where he was responsible for taking photos, developing the film and prints using a darkroom.

“I didn't know anything about photography, but in one night they had me trained,” said Isgitt. “I had a darkroom with an enlarger to make 8x10 photos and I had to develop them by hand.”

The District has several of Isgitt's black and white photos that he took during his time with the Corps, including photos from the infamous fire at the Charleston Tidewater Terminal that happened on June 17, 1955. At the time, the Tidewater Terminal was one of Charleston's main port terminals and home to the Corps' survey crew and several other agencies and businesses. When the fire took place, the Corps' offices were in the Customs House on Bay Street, which was right down the street from the terminal.



Once he mastered the blueprint and photograph reproduction process, he took on the process of making copies, which was similar to the other processes he oversaw. And, like everything else, was a time-consuming process.

“Back then, if you wanted to make a copy of a document you had to use a Photostat sheet, they didn’t have all these computers they have now,” said Isgitt. “You had to get sheets of 8x10 paper and put it in this thing that was like a big camera, you’d take the picture, run down to the dark room to develop it. To develop it, you had to put in the developer, then the stop bath to stop the development, then the fixer to preserve it, then you had to wash it for 20-30 minutes and finally you had to dry it. It’d take hours to do it.”

While Isgitt didn’t start working for the Corps until 1943, he was very familiar with the agency. His father, John, worked for the Corps starting in 1938 as a chauffeur for the District Commander, which he has fond memories of and will humbly talk about his father’s various awards.

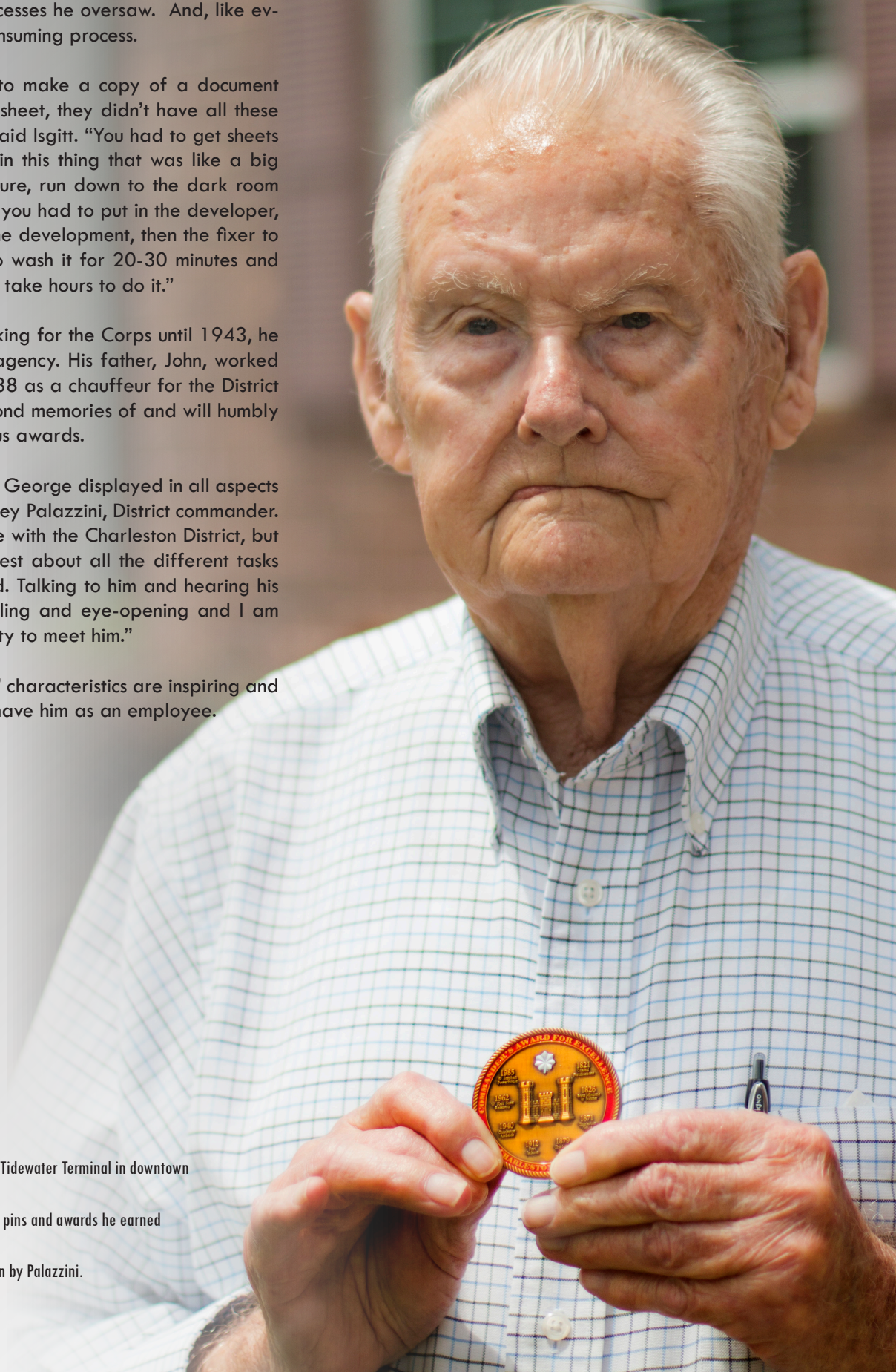
“I am in awe of the devotion George displayed in all aspects of his life,” said Lt. Col. Jeffrey Palazzini, District commander. “He is very proud of his time with the Charleston District, but you can tell he is very modest about all the different tasks and various roles he fulfilled. Talking to him and hearing his stories was incredibly humbling and eye-opening and I am grateful I had the opportunity to meet him.”

Isgitt’s “greatest generation” characteristics are inspiring and the Corps was fortunate to have him as an employee.

Opposite Left: Isgitt’s photo of the fire at Tidewater Terminal in downtown Charleston.

Opposite Right: Isgitt shows Palazzini the pins and awards he earned during his career.

Right: Isgitt was given a commander’s coin by Palazzini.



Brig. Gen. Holland Visits S.C.

Article by: Sean McBride
Photos by: Dennis Franklin



In May, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers South Atlantic Division Commander Brig. Gen. Diana Holland visited South Carolina to see several projects the Charleston District is currently working on. Holland started her day by speaking to the students at Ashley Hall School about her time in the Army before heading to Folly Beach. There, she met with Folly Beach Mayor Tim Goodwin and his staff to discuss the upcoming emergency renourishment project the District will oversee, which will protect the people and property behind the dunes from any storms or hurricanes this season. Holland then imparted some wisdom on the recent graduates from the District's Leadership Development Program Tier 2 over lunch. The group discussed challenges facing the organization now and what she sees as her top priorities for the Division.

Holland later traveled to the Cooper River Rediversion Project and met with the District's St. Stephen Powerhouse staff. She learned how the District provides hydropower to more than 40,000 homes in the area and talked with South Carolina Department of Natural Resources staff about the fish lift on site.

Holland also visited Columbia, S.C., where she learned about delineating wetlands from the Columbia Regula-

tory Field Office and stopped by Fort Jackson to see a number of military construction projects currently underway. She spent most of her time viewing the Pierce Terrace Elementary School project that is bringing a brand new 21st century school to the base for the children of the soldiers stationed there.

Having Holland see the Charleston District's projects gave her a better perspective on the workload the District's employees face and the importance of these projects to South Carolina and the nation.

Above: Holland presses the button to start the St. Stephen fish lift operation.

Opposite page, clockwise from top left:

- Holland goes on a wetland delineation with the Columbia Regulatory Field Office.
- Holland speaks to the students at Ashley Hall School about her road through the Army.
- Holland visits the Pierce Terrace Elementary School at Fort Jackson and sees the insulated concrete form walls.
- Jim Carter, powerhouse manager, shows Holland schematics at the powerhouse.
- Holland visits the Pierce Terrace Elementary School site and sees the precast concrete walls denoting the new gym.
- Holland stands on Folly Beach meeting with Mayor Tim Goodwin about the upcoming emergency renourishment.
- Holland spent the morning meeting with District headquarters employees.



4th Annual Government Agencies Expo

Article by: Sara Corbett
Photos by: Dennis Franklin



The fourth annual Federal Executive Association's Government Expo was a great success for several reasons, but the biggest being the addition of state government agencies to the Expo.

On May 11, more than 30 federal and state government agencies set-up booths, displays and equipment at the National Park Service's Fort Sumter National Monument at Liberty Square to interact with and educate the public about the various services each organization provides.

"As the event has grown, it was a natural progression to add state agencies," said Glenn Jeffries, FEA co-chair. "Working together, federal and state agencies strive to make a positive impact on the Charleston community each and every day and it's important for the public to see that."

The event kicked-off with remarks from several agency leaders and a dog demonstration from Joint Base Charleston's 628th Security Forces Squadron's Military Working Dog Section. The dog and dog handlers were a crowd favorite, especially with the nearly 200 students in the audience, and showcased how they stop the bad guy and protect the public. As in years past, the Charleston Passport Center hosted a

passport fair for citizens to apply for or renew an expedited passport that has been very successful. This year, the South Carolina Department of Motor Vehicles joined the Passport Center to host a REAL ID driver's license fair. This new federally-required REAL ID driver's license will soon replace the current SC driver's license and will be what is accepted to board an airplane and enter a secure federal facility. SCDMV was able to issue the new ID's directly to citizens on the spot, making the process simple and easy for the public.

The Expo again featured many agencies with different displays about wildlife, nature, veterans and law enforcement, as well as the vehicle lot with several boats, trucks and the mini C-17 airplane for exploration.

The Charleston-area boasts the most government employees in the state with nearly 10,000 federal government employees living and working here. There are more than 30,000 state government employees throughout South Carolina. The Expo provides these government employees the opportunity to proudly showcase their work to their neighbors, students and general public.



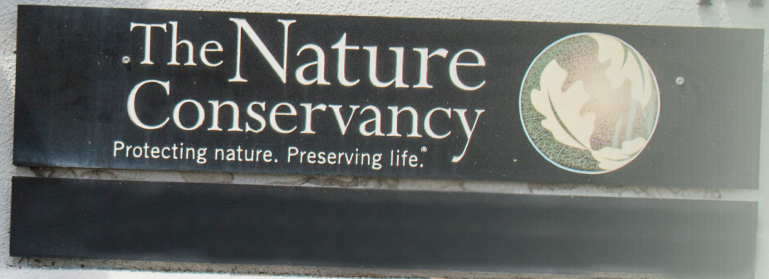
A Little TNC Can Make You Think

Article by: Lisa Metheney
Photo by: Sean McBride

As I discussed in my last article, I wanted to bring some focus to the more informal learning that we get from interactions with businesses and organizations outside of the government. Last time, I touched on some of the things I learned from the 41,000-employee-company Chick-fil-A. Now I want to focus on the insights I gained from visiting with The Nature Conservancy, a non-profit organization with 3,500 employees worldwide.

Throughout my tenure with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, TNC has worked with the Charleston District and other Corps offices on a variety of projects. Some of them were their projects and some of them our projects, but it wasn't until I visited with Mary Conley, the southeast director of marine conservation, that I found out how much TNC and the Corps have in common. Our discussion of our similarities and differences really started me thinking about our District and our missions in the future.

Though approximately 10 percent the size of the Corps in number of employees, just like us, TNC has a worldwide presence and name recognition. Like the Corps,



their headquarters is in the District of Columbia, albeit in Arlington rather than downtown D.C. Their chapters are mostly aligned by state or overseas by country and they have divisions that cover a multi-state area. Like the Corps, they are primarily a project-funded organization. Unlike the Corps, they have a board of trustees who are volunteers that provide leadership to the organization and have a philanthropy group that must fund raise to provide the revenues TNC uses for its work.

One aspect of our organizations Mary and I talked at length about was the area of human resources; everything from who and how we hire, how long folks stay, and what hiring challenges we face were all fair game for discussion. Again, we found exponentially more similarities than differences. Many people think non-profit organizations are full of fresh out of college individuals who come and work for a few years before they go on to a job with a more lucrative paycheck. In the case of TNC, this is not true. They have many employees within the organization who have been there more than 25 years. They do hire interns, both for short-term projects and on a long-term basis, but they also hire seasoned personnel from other government agencies, the business sector, and governmental relations personnel who have worked on Capitol Hill or with lobbyist organizations. Their turnover varies mostly along generational lines (as it does with the Corps).

As Mary and I commiserated about the impact high housing prices in Charleston are having on hiring and the changing workplace and staffing considerations associated with the millennial generation, she said something that became the first nugget of thought from my visit with TNC.

“We have a relative ease in recruiting,” she said. “We are a well-recognized name in the environmental community. People want to work somewhere that has a solid mission and is a trusted organization.”

I put an asterisk by that comment as we moved on but it would stick with me.

Good leaders focus not just on the here and now, but on the future and what challenges that may bring. Mary was open and forthright about what she sees are challenges TNC must deal within the coming years. This was an area I didn't think we would have as much in common due to their fundraising-based business model. Mary

talked about the challenge of TNC taking the successes they have had recently, such as their Living Shorelines program, and moving that forward to where it is recognized as a best practice and becomes a regular way of people doing business and thinking about resiliency instead of just “a project” that TNC does. She spoke about the need to further develop initiatives that combine the public and private sectors and non-governmental organizations as a way to solve issues and leverage funding. Her final challenge she outlined brought me my second nugget of thought.

“How will we [TNC] make our story and our mission relevant to the next generation and our next generation of donors?”

And there was asterisk number two.

Following the visit, the two asterisked statements kept coming back to me. I think it is because they are so related to each other. The Corps has a long history with a mission dedicated to the well-being of the nation. That mission may have grown somewhat since the days of George Washington. Could Washington have imagined all that the Corps would be doing for the nation in the future? Building barracks and dining facilities for our nation's soldiers; probably. Building waterways for commerce; most likely. Serving the nation in times of disaster, possibly. Designing and constructing dams that would not only reduce flood damages but would also provide power to people from the east coast to the west coast; doubtful. Restoring power to Puerto Rico; probably not.

Like TNC, our employees come to work for the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers because we have a solid mission and are a trusted organization. However, looking into the future, how do I ensure our mission is relevant to the next generation of employees and the next generation of taxpayers? What are the missions we are going to have that I, like Washington, haven't imagined yet? I'm not sure I have all the answers to this question yet, but I think the start is to continue to focus on providing our customers, stakeholders, partners, and the public with the best solutions to every problem we are asked to solve and to continue to hire, train, and support the 215 highly skilled employees of the Charleston District. Our mission remains to deliver engineering solutions for the nation's toughest challenges. I hope you find us relevant in your world.

Meet Our: Contracting Team

The Charleston District's Contracting Office has acquired four new, highly-talented people in the last few months. These are the people who write up the contracts that deal with the projects we're doing for our customers. They have many things to look for when getting contracts in place and we wanted to let you get to know them!



Shirley Lawson

843-329-8164

Which of our customers do you typically do contracts for?
Marine Forces Reserve and its 160 nationwide-installations.

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

I spent 21 years working for the U.S. Air Force, at six different bases, with experience in purchasing various medical supplies and pharmaceuticals for Laughlin Air Force Base Texas and Offutt AFB Nebraska, construction contracts for Howard AFB Panama, construction and service contracts for Grand Forks AFB North Dakota, and construction, indefinite delivery/indefinite quantity, and architecture and engineering contracts for Joint Base Charleston.

What is the most rewarding part of your job?

Being able to support the U.S. military nationwide and still contribute to the Charleston environmental infrastructure.

Highlight a notable milestone or memory in your career.

My civil service career started with volunteering in the contracting office at Howard AFB in Panama, which led to being hired and accumulating over 20 years of service while being an active duty military spouse and moving six times.

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

To be able to work on various projects between civil works and military construction and learn all aspects of how the Charleston District supports not only Charleston and South Carolina but all of its various customers nationwide.

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

I love history and geography, and it is great to live in a city with such a rich history like Charleston!



Josh Hill

843-329-8208

Which of our customers do you typically do contracts for?

I support the 81st Readiness Division to provide effective business solutions in support of base operations maintenance.

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

I have a great deal of experience in setting up multiple award task order contracts. These MATOCs assist in streamlining the awarding and ordering process, ensure fast delivery of the requirement, and allow the government to leverage its buying power. I understand the challenges associated with getting a large contract into place and the benefits these tools can provide to the district.

What is the most rewarding part of your job?

Finding creative ways to effectively procure customer requirements and deliver them under-budget and ahead of schedule.

Highlight a notable milestone or memory in your career.

While working for the Kansas City District, I worked on a levee rehabilitation team, in support of a flood event along the Missouri River. The flood event lasted for several months and I worked on 13 of the 30 levee rehabilitation contracts. The experience was rewarding since the impact I had was immediate and helped many people get back to their lives.

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

My immediate goal is to come in and assist where I can, but gain an understanding of the program I am supporting. Long-term, I am looking forward to utilizing my experience to assist in improving contracting as a whole.

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

I am an avid fisherman. I particularly enjoy inshore fishing.



Ashley Chester

843-329-8021

Which of our customers do you typically do contracts for?

I provide support for Joint Base Charleston, the 81st Readiness Division program, and Fort Jackson.

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

I have mostly post-award construction experience as a contracting officer for very unique and unusual projects, most notable being a \$30 million humanitarian aid program in Haiti and a \$158 million construction project for the U.S. Navy's Nuclear Power Training Unit. I hope to be able to apply that post-award perspective into acquisition strategy and pre-award processes.

What is the most rewarding part of your job?

I like being in a position where I can make a difference. Being able to see and hear about tangible deliverables resulting from a contract action I've worked that directly supports our military and at the same time offers the best value for the taxpayers is extremely rewarding.

Highlight a notable milestone or memory in your career.

In 2016, I was awarded NAVFAC Southeast's Employee of the Year award. To be recognized across the entire southeast region for my contributions as a contracting officer serving in a supporting role in an organization focused on engineering and project management was a huge honor and great milestone in my career.

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

I enjoy researching and strategizing new potential process improvements. I'm looking forward to being an active participant on teams that are continuously looking for ways to improve processes and hope to provide valuable input to find new and innovative ways to get the job done as efficiently and effectively as possible.

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

I enjoy planning out, designing, and working on house projects and renovations. There's something really rewarding about taking something old and making it new, refreshed, and, often, more functional.



Tonya Willis

843-329-8180

Which of our customers do you typically do contracts for?

I typically work on Civil Works and Defense Logistics Agency projects.

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

I've been in contracting for eight years and have worked at the Europe District, USACE Headquarters, and Humphreys Engineer Center Support Activity. I'm bringing my experience from those organizations to the District.

What is the most rewarding part of your job?

The best part of my job is knowing that I'm helping make a difference in the area of environmental maintenance, remediation, and protection. Servicing and protecting our beautiful coast means future generations will be able to live and enjoy the area, just as I do. So when you hear the phrase "nothing could be finer than to be in Carolina," you know it's true.

Highlight a notable milestone or memory in your career.

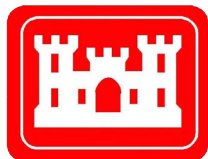
The most notable memory in my contracting career was participating in the annual Operational Contract Support Joint Exercise in 2015 at Schofield Barracks, Hawaii. OCSJX is a joint service, multinational exercise that teaches contracting personnel how to work effectively in a contingency environment. I was able to re-experience being a Soldier by doing weapons training, vehicle roll-over training, and eating MREs (yuck). I made great friends with all the service members and learned that I'm pretty fierce with an M4. This event literally dragged me through the mud and I enjoyed every moment!

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

My goal is to learn and become an expert at Corps contracting. I'd like to be an asset to the District by becoming a Contracting Officer.

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

Most people don't know that I was an Airborne Soldier and that I used to teach hula/Siva Samoa.



Teaching and Recruiting



By: Sean McBride

Charleston District Survey Technician Jennifer Kist recently presented to the student body and alumni at Cape Fear Community College in Wilmington, N.C., about the Corps and the mission of the survey team. Kist talked about her role surveying the federal waterways of South Carolina and the importance of monitoring these channels. Kist was there in part to tell the students about a new recent-graduate position opening up on the survey team soon and was there to answer any questions they might have about the field or the Corps.

Kist also regularly speaks at the College of Charleston about the Charleston District's GIS capabilities and the research she recently conducted while working at the Corps' Engineering Research and Development Center in Vicksburg, Miss. There, she developed a method for extracting previously unused information from hydrographic sonar data and detailed how this data can be used to determine different material types, such as hard bottom on the seafloor and to distinguish objects such as turtle shells or unexploded ordnance. She is also going to be teaching an express class at CofC this fall on her research and hydrographic survey techniques.