

The Mobile



US Army Corps
of Engineers
Mobile District



December 14, 2007

**Around
Mobile
District**



**Relevant
Ready
Responsive
Reliable**



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Click here for Nov. 16 answers to Test Your Knowledge

Did You Know.....

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers dates back to June 16, 1775 when General George Washington appointed Colonel Richard Gridley as chief engineer of the continental army.

From the slopes of Bunker Hill to jungles of Southeast Asia, a primary mission of the corps has always been to provide combat support. The army engineers also have the responsibility for military construction ranging from building of military bases here and overseas to construction of ammunition plants and missile sites.

Test Your Knowledge?

How many years does it take for most Christmas trees to grow to an average retail sales height of six feet?

- 1) 2-5 years
- 2) 6-9 years
- 3) 10-13 years

On the Front Page



Ron Brannon
See page 4

The Mobile

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The Mobile is an unofficial publication authorized under provisions of AR 360-1. It is designed through desktop publishing and distributed electronically by the Public Affairs Office. Circulation is 1,300.

The views and opinions expressed herein are not necessarily those of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers or the Department of the Army

The Mobile is electronically distributed monthly and is a Command Information publication of the Mobile District, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers

Contributions are welcome and encouraged. If you have news tips or suggestions for articles, call 251-690-2505 or e-mail CESAM-PA@sam.usace.army.mil. Written material may also be mailed to P.O. Box 2288, Mobile, AL 36622



Lt. Col. Payne Promotion Ceremony

(Photos by Adrien Lamarre)

Brig. Gen. Joseph Schroedel, South Atlantic Division, Commander officiates Lt. Col. R. Daren Payne promotion ceremony, Dec. 7 in Mobile, Ala. Holding with tradition his parents, Mr. and Mrs. Payne were present to pin his silver leaf cluster. Mobile district employees congratulates Lt. Col. Payne and his parents on his promotion and accomplishment while serving the nation.



[Click here
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Ron Brannon, engineering division, first in the district to achieve the designation, Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design Accredited Professional (LEED AP) with the U.S. Green Building Council.

(Photo by Tom Whiteside)

Col Jorns presents Dennis Mekkers with certificate of completion from the South Atlantic Division, Leadership Development Program (LDP).

(Photo by Adrien Lamarre)



Col Jorns on behalf of the Vicksburg district presents Michael Lopez, real estate division, Achievement Medal for civilian services for his efforts in the hurricane katrina mission.

(Photo by Adrien Lamarre)



Davidson High School learning to become the best from the best Story and photos by Lorraine Sutton Evans

Mobile District was well represented by Jonathan Ashley and Tymon Wallace, engineering division and Jeanna Childers, real estate division at Davidson High School, career fair, Thursday, Nov. 15. While visiting the corps table, students seized the opportunity to view an interactive computer model depicting the operation of a reservoir on the river. Ashley expressed to the students the fulfillment of being an engineer employed by corps. Wallace showed the students how their experience with computer games is a great start toward becoming an architect. He allowed the students to design a building using 3-D software on his computer. The frequently asked question was; why do the corps need foresters? Childers explained to them that not all federal property is developed. This land consists of trees and other natural habitat that needs to be maintained. Students learned that mobile districts six foresters manage and maintain eight timber disposal sites and six agricultural and grazing programs on



Wallace and Childers discuss with the student the fulfillment of serving the nation



(Top) Ashley allow students the opportunity to view the operation of a reservoir model on the river via computer (below) Ashley and Childers explain their jobs with the corps

military bases in five states. Foresters at the corps also manage the disposal of timber on thirty-three lakes and along locks and dam.

Working for the corps was what some students say they will consider, after graduation from college. They are now armed with information concerning careers that are held by corps employees.

The district employs some 366 engineers. In addition, it also employs biologists, ecologists, boat pilots, archeologists, agronomists, rangers, statisticians, economists, architects, foresters, attorneys, geologists, chemists, real estate specialists, nurses, photographers, accountants, computer specialists and personnel in other disciplines.





Mobile District 2007 Christmas Party Photo Gallery Click here

*Photos by
Adrien Lamarre*



Reward for new members

Mobile Government Employees' Credit Union is offering a \$20 reward and gift for sponsoring a new member who opens an account and begins savings through payroll deduction. There is no limit on the number of members you can sponsor. To take advantage of this offer, contact Mr. Pond, 251-694-4100.

Credit Union Holiday Schedule

Today - Dec. 21: Normal operating hours (11:30 a.m. - 2:30 p.m.)

Dec. 24-28: Open Dec. 27 **ONLY**

The Credit Union will resume normal operating hours, January 2, 2008



Legal Corner

Help Us Help You!

When anyone outside the Corps asks for records or information about the work you do or about the Corps, it's important to understand that sometimes you should not just hand it over. How do you know? Office of Counsel wants to help you understand how we can help make your job easier when it comes to such requests.

Certain requests for information should be processed under the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA). In the coming weeks, Office of Counsel will be providing tips about how best to answer requests you might get and better identify what should go through FOIA.

THIS WEEK'S TIP

If anyone who is not working directly with the district asks for information about work you are doing, please give us a call and ask if the information they are looking for should be released. Requests can come in many forms; verbally, by letter, e-mail or fax.

Contact Keri Schenter, 251-690-3289 or Keri.Schenter@usace.army.mil



Congratulations



to Chris Ludwig, operations division, and his wife on the birth of their daughter Kaitlyn Ludwig on Nov. 4.



to Shiquina L. Andrews the daughter of Michelle Andrews, operations division on her graduation, from Auburn University at Montgomery, Master of Science.

Condolences

to Terry Williams, engineering division on the death of his brother, Abraham Williams.

to Memphis Vaughan, engineering division on the death of his brother, Kevin Scott Vaughan.

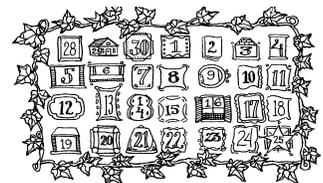
Briefs

Cookie Cutter Week, Dec. 1-7.

Food historians believe that Dutch and German settlers introduced cookie cutters to America and that German lebkuchen or gingerbread were the first cookies associated with Christmas. Sugar cookies, among the most common to be made with cookie cutters, are believed to have originated in England.

Advent, First Sunday, Dec. 2. Advent —

The four weeks before Christmas — marks the official holy season for many Christian churches. Some congregations light four candles — one for each Sunday — and one on Christmas Eve or Christmas Day to signify Christ's birth.



Hanukkah, Dec. 5-12.

Jews all over the world celebrate the festival of lights beginning on the 25th of the Jewish month of Kislev. In addition to lighting the Hanukkah candles, traditional activities include singing songs, playing games, and giving small gifts. Many also read the Hallel — Psalms 113 through 118 — from the Old Testament, which gives thanks to God.



Poinsettia Day, Dec. 12.

According to the University of Illinois, poinsettias are the best-selling flowering potted plants in America (though the showy red and white parts are not actually flowers, but leaves). Last year during the holiday season, consumers bought more than 61 million poinsettias, totaling \$220 million. There are 100 different kinds of poinsettias, including red, pink, white, and marbled varieties.

First Day of Winter, Dec. 22.

The ancient Celts believed that on the winter solstice, the sun stood still for 12 days. To banish evil spirits and to lure the sun to return, they lit a yule log on the first day of winter and burned it for 12 hours. The winter solstice, the shortest day of the year, marks the astronomical start of winter.

Kwanzaa, Dec. 26-Jan. 1.

“Kwanzaa” is Swahili for “first fruits.” The founders purposely chose Swahili as the official language of this African American holiday because it is spoken throughout Africa and therefore is not limited to a specific ethnic group or country. Kwanzaa celebrates African values of family, community responsibility, commerce, and self-improvement.

Links of Interest

2008 Pay and Leave Calendar
Office of Personnel Management
Eagls (Government Travel Card Services)

Situational Awareness

DoD Reduces Across-the-Board Raise Under NSPS

The National Security Personnel System (NSPS)—DoD’s “pay-for-performance” system—moved another step toward full implementation last week as 110,000 employees currently working under the new rules found out they will not get the regular across-the-board pay raise that many expected to get this coming fiscal year. Deputy Defense Secretary Gordon England announced in a memo that instead of awarding the full scheduled FY 2008 general pay and cost-of-living increase—predicted to be 3.5 percent across the board—he was assigning half of the money to the new NSPS.

Les Melnyk, a DoD spokesman told FEND that this means that 110,000 “Spiral 1” employees that are now part of NSPS will get one-half of their raise in the form of an across-the-board hike, while the remaining half of the pay hike allocated by Congress will fund NSPS “pay pools.” Pool money is to be divvied up among employees based strictly on performance ratings, Melnyk explained. That means, of course, that not everyone will receive a share of it.

[Click here for full story](#)

Group Increases Scholarships for Feds’ Children

The non-profit association WAEPA said it has expanded its year-old college scholarship program for children of federal employees. WAEPA President John Seal said the “tremendous” response after the group introduced the program last year—along with the high quality of the applicants—convinced the nonprofit’s board to increase the number of scholarships for the second year of the program. As a result, the group has established the

following 65 scholarships for the 2008-2009 academic year: One \$4,000 scholarship, renewable up to three years for a total of \$16,000; three \$3,000 scholarships, renewable up to two years for a total of \$9,000 per award; six \$2,000 scholarships, renewable for one year for a total value of \$4,000 per award; and 40 \$1,000 scholarships. [Click here for full story](#)

Lawmaker Calls for Citizenship Check of All Feds

In the wake of a security failure involving a former FBI and CIA employee, Rep. Steve King, R-Iowa, is asking President Bush to order a complete re-verification of every federal employee's citizenship. King made his request on Nov. 14, the day after former FBI and CIA employee Nada Nadim Prouty pleaded guilty to conspiring to fraudulently obtain citizenship and illegally accessing the FBI computer system. According to court documents, Prouty entered the United States on a one-year, nonimmigrant visa from Lebanon in 1989. She faked a marriage to an unemployed U.S. citizen and in 1999 was hired by the FBI as special agent at the bureau's field office in Washington. Prouty, who joined the CIA in 2003, resigned from the agency as part of her guilty plea. Earlier this year, King, the ranking Republican on the House immigration subcommittee, highlighted a government report showing that 11,000 local, state and federal employees did not have legal immigration status. [Click here for full story](#)



To Your Health

Relief for Aching Feet

If holiday shopping has left you with aching feet, follow these steps to a soothing foot massage :

1. Soak feet in warm water for 10 minutes.
2. Dry feet; warm hands and then begin rubbing in lotion or mineral oil while feet are propped up.
3. Stroke the top of the foot, working from toe to ankle. Use gentle but firm pressure to avoid tickling.
4. Use a circular motion with your thumbs and fingers over the sole of the foot, paying special attention to the arch and ball of the foot.
5. Massage and stretch the toes. Gently squeeze the end of each toe. Use the index finger to slide between each toe.
6. Rotate the foot at the ankle about five times in each direction.
7. Finish the massage by repeating the all-over foot massage. Wipe off any excess lotion or oil with a thick towel. Slip feet into thick cotton socks to retain moisture.

Don't Overdo Teeth Whitening

While it's nice to have pearly whites, the American Academy of Cosmetic Dentistry says you can overdo it with home whitening products. They recommend discontinuing or reducing applications if these symptoms appear:

- Excessive sensitivity, especially to cold foods
- Redness, irritation, and bleeding of the gums
- Translucent or blotchy appearance of teeth

Washing Your Hands



According to Dr. Chris Coulter — chief medical officer for Precept, a health management provider — washing your hands five to six times a day decreases your chances of getting sick by 50 percent. “For most people, that means washing them for 20 seconds every time you



go to the bathroom, before and after meals, and after taking public transportation,” he says.

Safety Corner

Shopping Sense

The sheriff’s office in Broward County, Fla. offers these safety tips for holiday shoppers:

- Make several trips to your car to drop off packages while shopping rather than trying to carry too many items around with you.
- Put packages and bags in the trunk or otherwise keep them out of sight to deter thieves.
- Leave the mall or shopping center well before closing time to increase the likelihood that you won’t be walking out alone.
- If you are leaving the store at closing time, ask mall security or the package pick-up service to escort you to your vehicle.

Hanging Outdoor Lights

According to the Home Safety Council, falls are the number one cause of home injuries and deaths. Falls from ladders while hanging outdoor lights can be particularly serious, since the injury may be compounded by falling on sharp bushes or tree limbs. Plan to do your decorating in daylight and well in advance of winter snow and ice. And follow basic ladder safety rules whenever using a ladder:

- Straight or extension ladders should be tilted at about 75 degrees. That means the base should move one foot out for every four feet of height.
- The ground under the ladder should be firm and level.
- Keep your body centered on the ladder. If you need to reach areas to the side of the ladder, move the ladder rather than leaning too far.

Wrap Rage

That’s the term that medical experts are giving to the frustration that many people have opening sealed plastic packages typically used for electronic goods and expensive gadgets and toys. According to the American College of Emergency Physicians, during the holidays emergency rooms across the country are flooded with patients who have injured their hands trying to open gifts secured in these anti-theft packages. Safety experts suggest removing the packaging prior to gift wrapping it, so the recipients will not be in a rush to open the gift or have it opened for them. The Philadelphia Hand Center at Thomas Jefferson Hospital also offers these precautions:

- Use heavy-duty scissors rather than everyday scissors, X-acto knives, or razor blades.
- Cut away from the body to avoid puncture wounds as a result of a knife or scissors slipping out of control.
- Make sure that the hand restraining or holding the package is out of the way of the path you are cutting.
- Be careful handling freshly cut plastic when prying open the package. The sharp edges can cause lacerations.

Today’s Quote

Children really brighten up a household. They never turn the lights off.
— Ralph Bus





Answers to November 16, Test Your knowledge:

How many States and miles are in the districts area of responsibility?

Answer: Military construction includes five States and Civil works covers 96,000 square miles

How is business classified as being a Hub-Zone business? Is the Mobile district downtown office classified as a Hub-Zone business?

Answer: No, the district is not classified as a Hub-Zone.

HUBZone is a reference to a US Small Business Administration (SBA) program for small companies that operate and employ people in Historically Underutilized Business Zones (HUB Zones). The HUB Zone program was created in response to the HUB Zone Empowerment Act created by the US Congress in 1998 [1]. Based on the Act, small businesses will be designated as HUB Zone certified if they have the following criteria:

1. The business must be a small business based on the North American Industry Classification System (NAICS)[2] for size standards.
2. The business must be entirely owned by citizens of the United States.
3. The primary facility for the corporation, which is defined as the location with the most employees excluding customer sites, must be in a HUB Zone.
4. 35 percent of a company's staff including consultants (e.g. 1099) must reside in a HUB Zone.

[Click here for more information](#)

