

# The Mobile



US Army Corps  
of Engineers  
Mobile District



November 16, 2007

Around  
Mobile  
District



**The Tomb of the  
Unknowns at  
Arlington National  
Cemetery**

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## Did You Know.....

**T**he U.S. Army Corps of Engineers surveyed and mapped the Great Lakes and marked all the boundaries of the United States as well as most State Boundaries.

Mobile District is one of five districts making up the South Atlantic Division. The other districts are Charleston, Jacksonville, Savannah and Wilmington. Mobile District is the largest district in the Division and by workload, one of the largest districts in the nation!

## Test your Knowledge?

How many States and miles are the district area of responsibility?

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

*Click here for last week's answers To Test you Knowledge*



## On the Front Page

A soldier guards the remains of three unidentified American soldiers at the Tomb of the Unknowns, also known as the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier. Located at Arlington National Cemetery in Arlington, Virginia, the memorial is guarded every hour of every day (Photo by: George Disario/The Stock Market)

## The Mobile

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## Mobile District regulatory division gets closer to the customer...

By Lorraine Sutton Evans

When first establishment, Mobile District's Regulatory office operated as a branch of Operation Division. The branch covered an area spanning almost 66,000 square miles, serving customers in approximately 96 counties in Alabama and Mississippi. Two sections, the Jurisdiction Determination and Enforcement Section and the Permit Evaluation Section, processed standard and general permits as well as letters of permission; permits issued through an abbreviated processing procedure between Federal and State agencies.

Two years ago, Regulatory Branch became Regulatory Division and a new approach of getting closer to the customer while simultaneously reducing the operating budget was born.

### Reorganized to Enhance Responsiveness

Regulatory division was immediately reorganized to better serve its customers. Regulators became project managers, operating with a "cradle to grave" concept. The District areas of responsibility were divided geographically. Interstate 10 running through Alabama and Mississippi became the dividing line. Inland Branch north of Interstate 10, was managed by Bill Bunkley and the Coastal Branch south of Interstate 10, was managed by Tunis McElwain. The district's desire to better serve customers in central and northern Alabama and in Mississippi resulted in opening a new field office in Birmingham, Ala., with satellite office in Montgomery, Ala. and Columbus, Miss. The Coastal Branch opened a field office in Biloxi/Gulfport, Miss. to serve Coastal Mississippi. "Gone are the days of driving five to six hours to meet with 20 customers in one week to view prospective projects. The days of at least twenty-four weeks out of a fifty-two week year of overnight temporary duty are over," said Cindy House-Pearson, team leader in Birmingham, Ala. "Gone are the days of frustrating our customer." Regulatory Division's reorganization logistically placed them in a better position to continue the mission of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers' regulatory program and provide responsive service to customers.

### Serving the nation

With the strategic change customers no longer have to travel four hours or more to the district office for pre-application meetings. The Birmingham field office covers thirty-one central and northern counties in Alabama;



*Jason Steele, team leader, Mississippi Coastal Branch (photo by Adrien Lamarre)*

Montgomery field office covers 13 central and southeastern counties in Alabama; and Mississippi field office covers 16 central and eastern counties in Mississippi and 3 counties in Alabama.

A primary goal of the regulatory program is to protect the nation's aquatic resources, including wetlands. The regulatory program also plays a key role in protecting endangered species.

The corps encourages applicants to begin taking steps early in their planning process to avoid or minimize adverse environmental impacts. The corps expedited general permit program also motivates applicants to seek solutions that avoid or minimize harm so that they can receive a quicker permit decision.

The Corps permit system is designed to be fast, fair and efficient. Most permit decisions are made in 60 days or less. Many projects are authorized under nationwide or regional general permits, which provide faster decisions in instances where there will be minor

environmental impact. The average processing time for general permits is 21 days. Nearly 80,000 of the



permits issued by the Corps each year are general permits.



*Nicholas Baggett (left), project manager, Columbus, Miss. Field Office holds pre-application meeting with U.S. Department of Justice. (USACE Photo)*

In many cases, the Corps works with potential applicants during the planning and design of projects so that problems can be spotted early on and addressed, saving costs and reducing potential environmental harm.

The standard permit process has four general steps:

- **Pre-application/application.** A project is identified and the organization undertaking it develops and submits an application. Corps staff provides input as needed on application and review requirements.
- **Public notice and comment.** Upon submittal of a complete application, the Corps solicits the views of a variety of individuals, agencies and organizations.
- **Evaluation, decision and mitigation.** The Corps evaluates the application and the public comments and seeks to balance public interest factors and the benefits and detriments of the project. A primary goal of the review process is to minimize the impact of projects on the environment. The Corps coordinates with several federal, state and tribal agencies during this process.
- **Monitoring and enforcement.** Once a permit has been issued the Corps continues to monitor the project to ensure that the permit's conditions are met.

In some cases, projects will have an unavoidable impact on wetlands. In these instances, the Corps requires replacement of the wetlands. In Fiscal Year 2003, the Corps issued permits that affected 21,330 acres of wetlands. By contrast, more than 43,000 acres were restored, created, enhanced or preserved under the program. In many cases, several small, separate, low value wetlands were replaced with more environmentally beneficial large wetland complexes.

In addition to the permit process, the Corps enforcement program ensures that anyone that harms the environment fixes the damage. The Corps acts on more than 6,000 reported violations each year.

## A District resource valued at 1200 possibilities

By Lorraine Sutton Evans

(Photos by Adrien Lamarre)



*Willie Patterson, chief, real estate division receives a welcome from Williamson High School, Principal, Terrence Mixon*

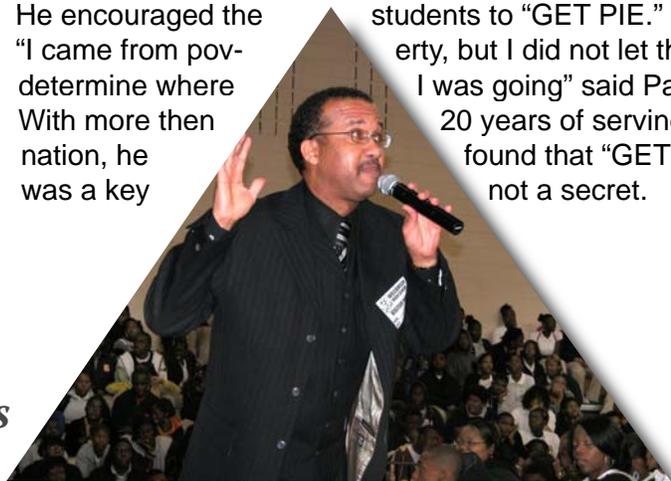
Williamson High School, Principal, Terrence Mixon stated how fortunate they are to have the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers as a Partner-In-Education. Some schools get donations in the form of money and equipment, but the students at Williamson receive resources from the corps that are PRICELESS.

Mobile District has served as Williamson High School Partner- in- Education since the induction of the program in 1984.

One type of resource the corps provides to Williamson was valued at 1200 possibilities. Willie Patterson, chief, real estate division presented to 1200 students, parents and faculty the key to success.

He encouraged the  
"I came from pov-  
determine where  
With more then  
nation, he  
was a key

students to "GET PIE."  
erty, but I did not let that  
I was going" said Patterson.  
20 years of serving the  
found that "GET PIE"  
not a secret.



**G** Grades

**E** Extra-Curricular Activities

**T** Time Management

**P** Performances **I** Image **E** Exposure



## Inter-agency cooperation nets awards

Department of Justice, environment and natural resources division recognize and awards Joanne Brandt, lead biologist, planning division and Doug Otto, branch chief, engineering division. The district employees were awarded certificates of commendation in special recognition of their efforts in assisting the Wildlife and Marine Resources section in litigation support of the Apalachicola-Chattahoochee-Flint (ACF) river basin.



*Commander, COL Jorns presents Joanne Brandt, lead biologist, planning division with certificate of commendation from the Department of Justice (Photo by Adrien Lamarre)*



*Commander, COL Jorns presents Doug Otto, branch chief, engineering division with certificate of commendation from the Department of Justice (Photo by Adrien Lamarre)*



# Lunch and Learn Session



Monday, November 19, 2007

11:30 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.

2nd Floor Conference Room

Guest:

American Red Cross

Alabama and Central Gulf Coast Region

Mr. Evan Duffy



## The district gets pumped-up

(Photos by Adrien Lamarre)

The District office got a drum line performance from Williamson High School Band and Cheerleaders, Wednesday morning. The Lions roared through the halls with one message:

**DONATE-TO-CFC  
DONATE-TO-CFC  
DONATE-TO-CFC  
DONATE-TO-CFC**



*SFC Gonzalez (second right) welcomes Williamson lions to Mobile district*



*(Top) Corps employees enjoying the musical reminder to donate  
(Below) Lion and his crew poses with CFC, Loan Executive, Harriette Holland, program management.*



*Williamson Cheerleaders chanting reminders to donate*



*Williamson Drum Line glazing engineering division with joyful beats*



*SFC Gonzalez, engineering division awards Williamson band student with letter of appreciation*

Remember only two weeks left to contribute to Combined Federal Campaign, fill out your pledge cards today.



## Mobile District 2007 Christmas Party

*Click on castle for ticket information*

A festive graphic for a Christmas party. At the top center is a small illustration of a castle with a red bow around its base. The castle is flanked by two strings of colorful Christmas lights (red, yellow, green, blue) with gold stars. Below the castle, the text reads: "2007 Mobile District Office" in a simple black font, followed by "Christmas Party" in a large, stylized red font with a dotted underline. Underneath that, in a smaller red font, is "GREAT TIME, GREAT MUSIC, GREAT FOOD!". The date and time are listed as "Friday, December 7th" and "2:00-5:00 pm". The location is "Wintzell's (605 Dauphin Street)" and the music is by "Matt Akridge". The entire graphic is decorated with small blue snowflake icons.

## Condolences

to Robin Overstreet, project management on the death of her husband, Gary Overstreet, November 8, 2007.

## Briefs

### Department of the Army Introduces

The Department of the Army is pleased to offer [The Work](#) automated employment verification service that allows you and salary verified within a matter of minutes. This fast, secure service is used for mortgage applications, reference checks, loan applications, and apartment leases.



[Number for Everyone®](#), an to have your employment

Anything you need that requires proof of employment. It is quick, accurate and best of all it's easy.

***[Click here for more details](#)***





## Federal Benefits Open Season

The Federal Benefits Open Season will run from November 12, 2007 to December 10, 2007. Detail information is available at [www.opm.gov/insure](http://www.opm.gov/insure). Some individual plan brochures are on the second floor near the bulletin board. If you do not see a particular plan brochure, please click on [logo](#).

### Mobile District Bay Way Toastmaster member makes lessons-learned humorous

Katie Burge-Roland, planning division won the Toastmasters humorous speech contest for Area 15, Sept 6. "Wedding Planning...What a Disaster" was the title of her speech.

Bayway Toastmasters meetings are held Thursdays, 11:30 a.m., 2nd floor conference room. Everyone is welcome to attend and participate in the quiriness that lets us escape from the daily office drudge.

Bonus: *learn something new that you never knew you wanted to know.*

## Links of Interest

[2008 Pay and Leave Schedule](#)

## Situational Awareness

### Decision time: More options for health care, vision, dental coverage

By Stephen Losey

Federal employees and retirees have three big decisions to make on their 2008 health care coverage. They must choose a health insurance plan, decide if they want separate dental and vision coverage and, in the case of employees, decide whether to set aside money in flexible spending accounts for health and dependent care expenses.

Far too often, employees and retirees stick with their old plans rather than exploring alternatives, said Walt Francis, a consultant who writes the annual Checkbook health care guide for federal employees. By punting, feds may spend hundreds or thousands of dollars more than necessary on premiums, deductibles and other costs, he said. [Click here for full story](#)

### Postal Service expects stamp price increase in '08

By Stephen Losey

Stamp prices likely will increase in 2008, the chairman of the U.S. Postal Service's Board of Governors said Thursday.

Jim Miller said when the Board of Governors recommends a rate increase — which he said probably will happen in "the next few months" — it will be capped at the rate of inflation. Congress passed a law in 2006 that called for a more predictable, inflation-based system of postage rate increases.



The Postal Regulatory Commission issued new rate-setting regulations Oct. 29, eight months ahead of the deadline set by Congress. The governors could have filed one last rate case under the old regulations, which had no limits but decided against it. [Click here for full story](#)

## Suicide Prevention Part Of Law Designed To Help Veterans

President Bush signed a bill that provides for improved screening and treatment for veterans at risk of committing suicide.

The law requires mental health training for Department of Veterans Affairs staff, a suicide-prevention counselor at each VA medical facility, and mental-health screening and treatment for veterans who get VA care. It also supports outreach and education for veterans and their families, peer support counseling, and research on suicide prevention.

The VA inspector general reported last May that Veterans Health Administration officials estimate 1,000 suicides a year among veterans receiving care within VHA and as many as 5,000 a year among all veterans.

## Today's Quote

*—I am still determined to be cheerful and happy, in whatever situation I may be; for I have also learned from experience that the greater part of our happiness or misery depends upon our dispositions, and not upon our circumstances.*

*Martha Washington-wife of George Washington*

## Today in History

- 1907 Oklahoma became the 46th state of the union.
- 1914 Federal Reserve System formally opens
- 1933 The United States and the Soviet Union established diplomatic relations
- 1965 1st public announcement about Walt Disney World
- 1973 President Nixon authorizes construction of the Alaskan pipeline
- 1982 An agreement was announced in the 57th day of a strike by National Football League players.



## *Answers to November 2, Test your knowledge:*

When did Mobile District officially become a district of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers?

Answer: Although the history of Mobile District can be traced back to 1815, it did not become a district until 1888 when other corps districts were formed.

How many kilowatt hours of electricity does the district generate a year?

Answer: U.S. Army of Corps of Engineers is the largest supplier of hydroelectric power in the United States. Mobile District generates two and a half billion kilowatt hours of electricity.



## A Bit of Veterans Day History

**1918**

World War I (WW I), then normally referred to simply as The Great War. Ended with the implementation of an armistice (temporary cessation of hostilities—in this case until the final peace treaty, the infamous Treaty of Versailles, was signed in 1919) between the Allies and Germany at the eleventh hour of the eleventh day of November, 1918.

**1919**

November 11: President Wilson proclaims the first Armistice Day with the following words: “To us in America, the reflections of armistice Day will be filled with solemn pride in the heroism of those who died in the country’s service and with gratitude for the victory, both because of the thing from which it has freed us and because of the opportunity it has given America to show her sympathy with peace and justice in the councils of the nations...” The original concept for the celebration was for the suspension of business for a two minute period beginning at 11 A.M., with the day also marked by parades and public meetings.

**1921**

Congress passes legislation approving the establishment of a Tomb of the Unknown Soldier in Arlington National Cemetery. November 11 is chosen for the date of the ceremony. According on October 20, Congress declares November 11, 1921 a legal Federal holiday to honor all those who participated in the war. The ceremony was conducted with great success.

**1926**

Congress adopts a resolution directing the President to issue an annual proclamation calling on the observance of Armistice Day. Throughout the 1920s and 1930s, most states establish November 11 as a legal holiday and at the Federal level, an annual proclamation is issued by the President.

**1938**

Congress passes legislation on May 13 making November 11 a legal Federal holiday, Armistice Day. The United States has no ‘actual’ national holidays because the states retain the right to designate their own holidays. The Federal government can in fact only designate holidays for Federal employees and for the District of

Columbia. But in practice the states almost always follow the Federal lead in designation of holidays.

**1954**

On June 1, President Eisenhower signs legislation changing the name of the legal holiday from Armistice Day to Veteran’s

