



JAXSTRONG

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JAXSTRONG

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OUR WORK • OUR PEOPLE • OUR DISTRICT

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COMMANDER'S CORNER

MESSAGE FROM COL. ALAN DODD

Environmental successes in 2014

As we approach the middle of fall, I am reminded of the beauty contained in so many places in this country. In some areas, leaves are changing colors while others are experiencing the first blast of cold air. In the Jacksonville District, we are blessed with moderate temperatures that continue to allow us to enjoy our rivers, lakes, and streams. However, as we get further into the 21st century, I am proud to lead an organization that plays a pivotal role in shaping the environmental future of our great country.

The Corps of Engineers is the nation's environmental engineer, creating solutions for the nation's environmental challenges. Nowhere is that more evident than the environmental work we do in Florida and the Antilles. Whether restoring ecosystems that were modified by past development, or ensuring balanced growth in the economy, district staff work with representatives from other government agencies, non-government organizations, and the public to ensure our valuable environmental resources are protected. In 2014, we have made progress on a number of fronts that will lay the foundation for future success.

In late October, we held a ribbon-cutting ceremony at the recently completed Merritt Pump Station, which is one of the first major pieces of infrastructure finished as part of the Comprehensive Everglades Restoration Plan (CERP). Earlier in the summer we wrapped up work on the first phase of the C-44 Reservoir & Stormwater Treatment Area component of the Indian River Lagoon – South project. We reached agreements that will allow work to resume in the future on Kissimmee River Restoration and the C-111 South Dade projects. We continue to pursue innovative solutions as we return about 100 Formerly Used Defense Sites (FUDS) to safe and productive use.

But Jacksonville District isn't only about restoring the environment; we are taking necessary steps to protect aquatic resources through our Regulatory programs. Our district has the largest regulatory permitting program in the Corps of Engineers, issuing 629 individual permits and 2,500 general permits in the recently completed fiscal year. With jurisdictional determinations and other items, more than 9,000 actions were completed.

Environmental sustainment is a key ingredient in the quality of life we enjoy. Another is the time we spend on relationships. I encourage everyone to pause for a moment on Nov. 11th to honor the veterans who fought for our country. And of course Thanksgiving Nov. 27th, offers us an opportunity to connect with family and friends and to give thanks for our country, our freedom, and our quality of life.

Be safe!

Army Strong. BUILDING STRONG®. JaxStrong.

Alan Dodd
Colonel, U.S. Army
District Commander

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ON THE COVER

Brig. Gen. C. David Turner, commanding general of the USACE South Atlantic Division, takes a tour of the Everglades via airboat during his recent visit to south Florida. Turner devoted nearly a week learning about Jacksonville District projects. (Photo courtesy of Jenn Miller)



South Atlantic Division commanding general visits Jacksonville District projects

STORY AND PHOTOS BY JENN MILLER



During his visit, Brig. Gen. C. David Turner met with (from left) Bob Johnson, director of the South Florida Natural Resources Center for Everglades and Dry Tortugas National Parks; Bob Krumenaker, acting superintendant of Everglades National Park and Shannon Estenoz, director of Everglades Initiatives for the Department of the Interior. Jacksonville District commander, Col. Alan Dodd, accompanied Turner for the duration of his trip.

When thinking about Florida, one of the first things that may come to mind is often the Everglades. While restoration of this national treasure is a massive endeavor being embarked on by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Jacksonville District, ecosystem restoration is only a part of the multi-faceted mission of the Jacksonville District.

Brig. Gen. C. David Turner, South Atlantic Division commander, devoted nearly a week learning about the district's projects and meeting with partnering agency officials and district staff during his visit to Florida Sept. 15-19.

"The South Atlantic Division has one of the largest and most diverse Civil Works programs in the Corps," said Turner. "The Jacksonville District staff is performing phenomenal work to develop water resources solutions as they solve some of the nation's toughest engineering challenges."

In addition to overseeing the largest ecosystem restoration effort in the world, Jacksonville District is responsible for the largest shore protection program in the nation and administers the largest regulatory permitting program in the Corps.

"The Jacksonville District's mission extends beyond ecosystem restoration and we dedicate the same kind of energy, enthusiasm, and commitment to each of our mission areas

and the projects associated with them," said Col. Alan Dodd, Jacksonville District commander, who accompanied Turner throughout the duration of his visit. "The projects we build are not only extensive, but bring tremendous environmental and economic value to the nation."

A large portion of Jacksonville District's mission today is to help ensure Florida's ports remain vital in the global marketplace. It has 17 deep draft ports within its area of responsibility and the largest shore protection program in the nation —constructing more than 30 percent of the nation's total shore protection projects.

Additionally, the district is working to rehabilitate the massive 143-mile Herbert Hoover Dike, which provides flood damage reduction for local communities and surrounds the second largest freshwater lake in the country, Lake Okeechobee. Since 2007, Jacksonville District has made a significant investment, over \$300 million, in projects designed to reduce the risk of failure of the aging structure.

Lake Okeechobee serves as a source of irrigation for a \$1.5 billion-a-year agricultural industry that produces sugar cane, winter vegetables, citrus and rice. The lake also provides for navigation, recreation, and serves as a source of fresh water for estuaries.

(CONTINUES ON PAGE 4)

GENERAL TURNER (continued from PAGE 3)



During his visit to south Florida Sept. 15-19, Brig. Gen. C. David Turner meets with members of the Jacksonville District's Herbert Hoover Dike project team and saw the massive rehabilitation work first-hand.

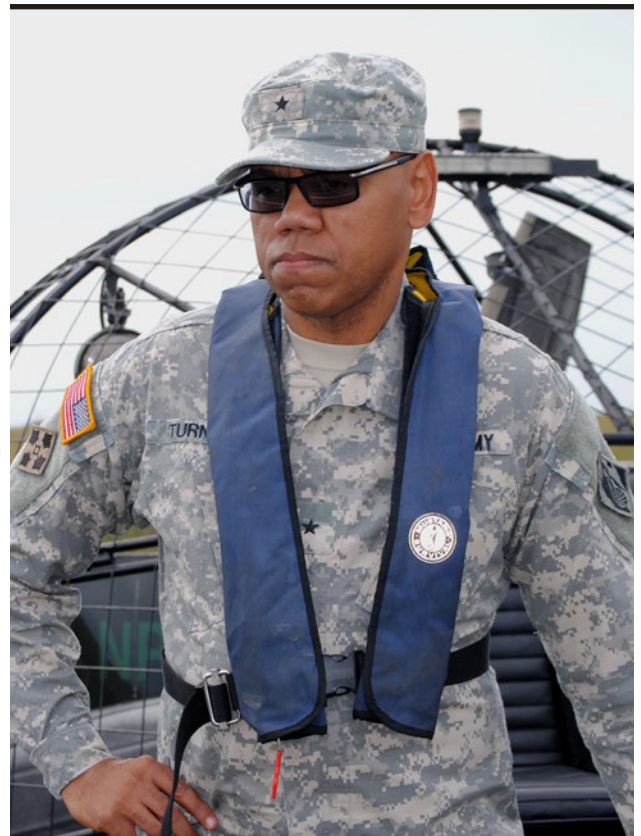
Not only is the district working to rehabilitate the massive earthen dike that surrounds Lake Okeechobee, it is also responsible for managing the water levels of Lake Okeechobee. The lake is managed in accordance with the 2008 Lake Okeechobee Regulation Schedule, which was developed through a rigorous public involvement process and attempts to balance the water needs of many competing interests.

Lake Okeechobee is the heart of the Kissimmee-Okeechobee-Everglades system. Before south Florida was settled, the lake's water levels were controlled by natural conditions such as rainfall, runoff from the Kissimmee River, evaporation, and outflows south into the Everglades. As the population of south Florida grew and agricultural communities began to thrive, the State of Florida and private entities constructed an array of projects to control the lake's elevation.

As a result of the engineering performed as early as the 1880s to make south Florida more inhabitable, the natural flow of water to, and through, the Everglades was severely altered. The construction of roads, canals, and levees created barriers that now interrupt the natural flow of water that's necessary for the Everglades to survive.

The goal of Everglades restoration is to get the right quantity, quality, timing and distribution of water to the Everglades in order to protect, preserve, and restore the ecosystem while meeting other needs such as water supply and flood control. The district's Everglades restoration program is the Corps' single largest ecosystem restoration effort and is being performed in partnership with state and federal agencies.

From flood damage reduction to navigation to ecosystem restoration, the work performed by Jacksonville District is not only unique in nature, but also takes into account many factors when planning and implementing projects. Through collaborative efforts with federal, state and local agencies, progress continues in ensuring the projects being built today contribute to a healthy and sustainable environment for future generations. ♦



Brig. Gen. C. David Turner, commanding general of the South Atlantic Division, takes a tour of the Everglades via airboat during his recent visit to south Florida.

District employee receives national award BY JEAN PAVLOV



Pablo Vazquez-Ruiz receives the Construction Management Excellence award from district commander, Col. Alan Dodd. The award recognizes district personnel who exhibit excellence in construction management and contract administration activities. (Photo provided by Janice Rivera)

The Construction Management Excellence (CME) award was presented to Pablo Vazquez-Ruiz, Jacksonville District's south Puerto Rico resident engineer, during a special ceremony Sept. 7 at the Corps' Antilles office in San Juan, Puerto Rico.

District commander Col. Alan Dodd presented Vazquez-Ruiz with the national award. Vazquez-Ruiz received an additional recognition on behalf of South Atlantic Division's (SAD) Chris Smith, chief of Construction and Engineering, for his support to the Design and Construction and Evaluation team during the construction of the Portugues Dam.

"USACE remains an integral part of our nation's Army, and the strength of USACE is our people," Dodd said. "Working together, we are engineering solutions for the nation's toughest challenges. I'm very proud of the work USACE is doing and thank you, individually and collectively, for what you do each day."

The CME is an award presented annually that recognizes district construction personnel who exhibit excellence in construction management and contract administration activities. This merit-based award is open to all personnel in General Schedule 0800

occupational series positions in district construction organization and programs, including military programs, civil works, hazardous, toxic and radioactive waste or environmental and support for others.

"Pablo really deserves this recognition as 2014 Construction Management Excellence Award recipient," said Edwin Cuebas, chief Quality Assurance branch. "Not only for the success of the Portugues Dam but for his 30 years of excellent service and dedication to the Corps of Engineers."

A native of Ponce and a graduate of the University of Puerto Rico, Mayaguez campus, Vazquez-Ruiz joined the Corps in 1979 and has been the resident engineer for the Ponce resident office since April 2001. In 2011 he was elected Jacksonville District's Engineer of the Year.

"This honor is certainly a reflection of Pablo's exceptional individual performance as resident engineer," said Steve Duba, chief of Jacksonville District's Construction Division. "He would be the first to say that it is also a reflection of the performance of a whole host of people throughout the District who contributed to the successful completion of the Portugues Dam." ♦

District employees participate in Hispanic Heritage Month cook-off

BY JEAN PAVLOV



Employees participate in the second annual Hispanic Heritage Month cook-off. Entrants competed for first place in appetizer, main dish and dessert categories. The sanctioned Equal Employment Opportunity special emphasis activity was held Oct. 2. (Photo courtesy of David Kimery)

The Second Annual Hispanic Heritage Cook-off contest was held Oct. 2, in the district's downtown office. Event coordinator Jose Bilboa said, "Hispanics take pride in meal preparation, the tradition of each dish and how recipes are passed from "abuela" to "mama" to "hija" (grandmother to mother to daughter). Every country that makes up the Hispanic culture uniquely prepare meals which are entrenched with the region's history whether it's mole from Mexico, ajiaco from Cuba, mofongo from Puerto Rico or paella from Spain."

The winners of this year's cook-off were Colleen Shanklin (pan de maiz, a sweet Mexican combread with spicy beef), Tori White (ropa vieja, a shredded beef dish) and Ivonne Butler (flan, a baked custard). ♦



Serving their dishes in the Hispanic Heritage Cook-Off contest are (L to R) Colleen Shanklin, Yolanda Bringham, Murika Davis and Lisis Batista. (Photo courtesy of David Kimery)



Hispanic Heritage Month festivities bring employees and students together

BY JEAN PAVLOV



Englewood High School students received a plaque for their participation in the district's Hispanic Heritage Month closing ceremony held Oct. 7. The students who are in the school's English for Speakers of Other Languages program, competed against district employees in the "Are you Smarter than a High Schooler?" event. (Photo by Ty Erickson)

After a month-long observance of Hispanic Heritage Month (HHM), Jacksonville District held a closing ceremony at its downtown office, Oct. 7. The event attended by district staff, hosted students from Englewood High School with a competition, "Are you Smarter than a High Schooler?"

The event, based on a game show hosted by Jeff Foxworthy, had a team consisting of Corps employees competing against the high school students. The students, who attend Jacksonville's Englewood High School, are participants in the school's English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL). According to Duval County Public Schools, the program is designed to improve the language proficiency of students whose native language is not English. Students who participated in the event were all born in Spanish-speaking countries.

The game had three categories with point values ranging from 100 to 500 points. The students chose questions geared toward current trends of arts and entertainment. The students won the game.

"The game-type atmosphere was a fun way for everyone to learn a few things about the Hispanic culture that they might not have known," said Bilbao "and offers students an opportunity to learn about the district and how diversity plays an important role in being a successful organization." Bilbao, an engineer in the district's Engineering Division, coordinated the event.

Other HHM activities included a cook-off, Oct 2, with appetizer, main dish and dessert categories. The winners were Colleen Shanklin, Tori White and Ivonne Butler.

Celebrated each year Sept. 15 thru Oct. 15, Hispanic Heritage Month is an official, sanctioned Equal Employment Opportunity special emphasis activity. ♦



Jacksonville District commander, Col. Alan Dodd speaks with students from Englewood High School. The students competed against district employees in a game show type event, "Are you Smarter than a High Schooler?" Dodd told the students the Corps of Engineers needed people of all backgrounds and heritages to make our nation better. v (Photo by Ty Erickson)

'Rising Tides' documentary explores coastal erosion



Coastal engineer Jason Engle has a relaxing moment with Big Monster Entertainment film crew members prior to an hour-long interview on the Flagler Beach pier. Big Monster interviewed Engle for a "Rising Tides" documentary that explores the topic of coastal erosion on a global scale. The production crew is traveling worldwide, interviewing scientists, engineers, city planning experts, nonprofits, homeowners, government officials, and others to explore all angles and possible solutions. "Ultimately, our goal is to offer an interesting and educational perspective on this issue and let viewers decide what should or should not be done to combat it in the future," producer Ryan Rossell said. Engle provided a look into historical data and potential impacts of rising sea levels and storm events on Florida, and how Jacksonville District incorporates its findings into coastal processes to reduce risks. The severe erosion of Flagler Beach (behind Engle) threatens the community's evacuation route and other infrastructure. In August, Jacksonville District presented the Flagler County Hurricane and Storm Damage Reduction Project to the Civil Works Review Board, which unanimously approved it. Leadership anticipates a Chief's Report this month. (Photo by Susan Jackson)



HONOR ★ COURAGE ★ LOYALTY



VETERANS DAY 2014

HONORING ALL WHO SERVED

NOVEMBER 11, 2014





NATIONAL AMERICAN INDIAN HERITAGE MONTH

**“Native Pride and Spirit:
Yesterday, Today and
Forever”**

2014



Created for DEOMI by Robert G. Bizon

Image of Tlingit helmet taken from the web. The helmet is in the collections of the Springfield Science Museum, Springfield Museum, Springfield, MA.

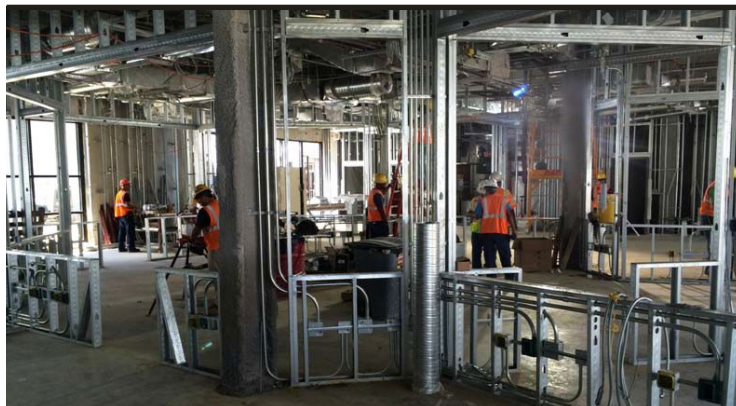
Progress continues at Antilles Middle School BY AMANDA PARKER

Since construction began on the Antilles Elementary School at Fort Buchanan, Puerto Rico in 2012, the project is 50 percent complete. The school consists of five buildings, A, B, C, D, and E which are in varying stages of completion. There are three academic wings, an administrative wing and a gymnasium/cafeteria wing.

District project manager Frank Grant says, "Everyone is working as hard as they can to have construction completed for the 2015-16 school term." Grant says once the Corps completes its work, "We will turn things over to DoDEA (Department of Defense Education Activity. It [DoDEA] will outfit the school for student use."



Construction at the Antilles Elementary School's gym is steadily progressing. The gymnasium, one of the school's five wings is having its roof installed. The school is scheduled to be complete for the 2015-16 school year. (Photo courtesy of Frank Grant)

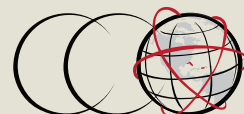


Building Area B, one of the school's academic wings is 50 percent complete. Workers are installing HVAC duct work, metal studs, gypsum board, door and window frames, chilled water piping and electrical conduits and wiring in Building Area B. The state-of-the-art school is one of the first DoDEA schools to incorporate 21st century design elements. (Photo courtesy of Frank Grant)

The state-of-the-art school is one of the first DoDEA schools to incorporate 21st century design elements. It will serve approximately 890 students and a staff of 120 and will include a gym, health services, art rooms, flexible studio learning areas and exploratory and outdoor spaces. The two-story school will also have an open floor plan that will accommodate future flexibility of the interior spaces and encourage collaboration. Once completed, the school is expected to achieve a Leadership Engineering and Environmental Design (LEED) Silver rating as an energy efficient and environmentally sustainable school. ♦



Happy Thanksgiving



Corporate Communications Office
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Jacksonville District

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