

Louisville District leadership holds annual open house

Abby Korfhage, public affairs

The Army Corps of Engineers Louisville District held an open house Jan. 31 at the Marriott Hotel, downtown Louisville.

The event included presentations by district leaders followed by an open networking session where attendees could talk individually to the district's contracting officials and senior staff.

Louisville District Deputy Commander Lt. Col. Kevin Lewis welcomed the group which included contractors who could potentially do work to support the Louisville District missions.

Louisville District Commander Col. Antoinette Gant was the first presenter and shared the vision and mission of USACE and discussed the importance of collaboration and partnering.

"The Corps' foundation is strong, and the vision is clear, but we need our stakeholders and contractors as partners in the collective mission of not only the



Abby Korfhage

A crowd of approximately 300 attended the open house hosted by the Louisville District Jan. 31, 2019.

Louisville District, but also the Great Lakes and Ohio River Division and the Corps worldwide," Gant said.

Following Gant's presentation, Cristie Mitchell, Military Project Management Branch chief, gave an overview of the district's military programs including project updates, programmatic funding outlook and future contracting opportunities. Mitchell also talked about investing in each other to create relationships and build a partnership.

"Delivering on our commitments is just so important," Mitchell said. "We are excited to partner with you to deliver these projects."

Deputy for Small Business Crystal Harbin and other presenters emphasized that doing business with the Corps requires pre-planning and provided tips for contractors.

"Tailor your proposal for the project you are putting in for," said Contracting Reserve Branch Chief, Chris Brackett.

"When places have industry days - go,"

Harbin said. "Networking is so important."

Although projects are advertised on the Federal Business Opportunities website, Harbin also explained all active contracts are listed on the Louisville District website, which is a great resource when searching for potential subcontracting opportunities.

Other presentations included veteran affairs, operations, civil works and architect-engineering opportunities.

"I look forward to our open house every year," said Harbin. "It's a great opportunity to network with firms that have current contracts with us and make connections with new firms that are pursuing work. Being able to provide information on our upcoming opportunities allows us to partner with industry earlier in the acquisition process which has proven to be a win-win situation for everyone. Delivering the program is vital and events such as this ensure we stay on the path towards success."

Approximately 300 businesspeople attended the event.



Abby Korfhage

Crystal Harbin, Louisville District deputy for small business, talks with contractors at the open house Jan. 31 in Louisville, Ky.

CE-SOHMS: moving safety from a checklist to a culture

Todd Hornback, public affairs

The Corps of Engineers Safety and Occupational Health Management System, known as CE-SOHMS, is a Corps-wide program focusing on employee safety that Louisville District is working to incorporate into each employee's everyday work processes.

John Bock, chief, engineering division, serves as the CE-SOHMS champion. His role includes facilitating efforts and assisting with the implementation plan, ensuring resources are adequately allocated, serving to track and highlight implementation efforts while monitoring progress, outcomes and sustainment.

"The safety and occupational health management system is essentially a means of managing risk and assuring the effectiveness of the identified control measures," Bock said. "As champion, I want to encourage employee support while assuring the district has the resources needed to make the program successful. It is about the safety of our employees with an emphasis in continuing a safety culture."

Tim Fudge, chief, operations division agreed.

"We're trying to make it a proactive, safety change—to make it part of the culture," Fudge said. "It is not to be looked at as just the district; it is part of a much

larger program."

The larger program involves every district member. Chad Shultz and John Hovis, maintenance mechanics and collateral duty safety officers at Monroe Lake near Bloomington, Indiana, reinforced that safety is not new to the Corps, but CE-SOHMS has some benefits for networking and exchange of information.

"We were already tasked that each employee leave with the same number of fingers at the end of each day," Hovis said. He added, that CE-SOHMS, "keeps everyone involved in the safety program."

This involvement includes the

Continued on next page



in place, we come up with best practices and solutions to correct problems. We as an organization need to consistently train employees on CESOHMS. As safety advocates, we need to assure our employees are safe. It goes hand in hand with the processes we do.”

The CE-SHOMS program will have three stages of implementation:

Stage 1: Groundwork for the safety program including the establishment of processes documentation with regards to current safety programs.

Stage 2: Implementation and communication of guidance

Stage 3: Continuing and constant improvements and feedback.

CE-SOHMS is a program intended for Corps of Engineers employees, but can easily support site-specific work with our contractors to improve safety for employees and contractors alike.

Metrics for the program include continuing current processes while focusing on communicating the program to all levels of the workforce.

“CE-SOHMS provides a framework for our existing programs,” Bryan Ammon, safety and occupational health specialist, Louisville District, said. “The expectation is that safety should be instinctive, but that’s not necessarily the case. It’s unrealistic for any one person to know everything about safety; the expectation is that they know where to find the resources to be successful.”

So what is expected of district employees?

- Share information and lessons learned
- Support the program
- Be vigilant
- When announced, volunteer for the

Employee Safety Committee

The district is planning to establish an Executive Safety Council and an Employee Safety Committee. The employee safety committee will be comprised of volunteers who want to assist in molding the safety culture throughout the district by addressing new and unique challenges associated with integrating a safety and occupational health management system into daily activities.

“Safety needs to be instilled into our culture; not just an afterthought,” Louisville District Commander Col. Antoinette Gant said. “To continue to be Louisville Proud and building strong, safety for our employees at the district office, construction sites and projects must be paramount.”

consolidation of safety records and documentation in the Qualtrax system. Under this scenario, safety plans and after action reports can be shared and made site specific. According to Hovis, networking is made easier through the system. Before, emails could be sent to district CDSOs, but with Qualtrax, the email lists are built within the system.

For example, employees can easily share information on successful corrective actions for slips, trips and falls among the four lakes in the Middle Wabash Area.

The safety emphasis involves employees at field locations and the Mazzoli Federal Building.

“Employees in the building really do not think about the safety program. They think it applies to people in the field and at construction sites,” said Denise Bush, chief, contracting division. “This brings it from the field and into the building site.”

Josh Gitchel, contract specialist and collateral duty safety officer, serves on the CDSO Committee, and focuses on safety for contracting division employees. Gitchel brings his experience as an Emergency Medical Technician into the office. Bush noted Gitchel as a shining example of how the CE-SOHMS philosophy promotes sharing information—a standard where employees can bring safety ideas to supervisors in an open and forthright

discussion.

For example, Gitchel reported that fire extinguishers in the Mazzoli Federal Building hallways were expired. Although the building’s General Services Administration oversees the building, the concern is noted and shared.

The example drives the message that safety is each employee’s responsibility such as cleaning up or reporting a spill to avoid a potential slip or fall.

Any employee can report hazards in the field and in the Mazzoli Federal Building by clicking the “Report a Hazard” icon on the Louisville District Intranet or using this link:

<https://team.usace.army.mil/sites/LRL/SO/Lists/SafetyIssues/NewForm.aspx>.

CE-SOHMS follows in the safety shoes of several programs including the Voluntary Protection Program, known as VPP, and the Seven Castle Five Star program—where Louisville District offices have received accreditation and awards. The Wright-Patterson Area Office garnered the recognition for one of the first Corps offices within USACE to be accredited in VPP.

“This program, if embraced by employees and supervisors, should reduce the costs of employee mishaps,” John Hearn, quality assurance lead for WPAFB resident office and LRL CDSO chairman, said. “When a self-evaluation program is

USACE