

# Falls City Engineer

U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Louisville District

July/August 2018

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Olmsted: standing in the  
midst of giants







## Falls City Engineer

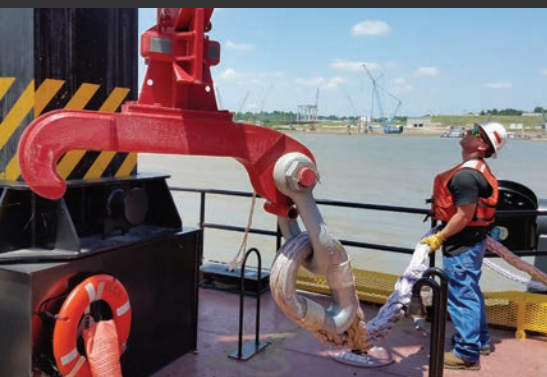
Vol. 10, Issue 3

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**On the cover:** USACE Louisville District personnel continue testing new equipment which will raise the wickets on the dam at Olmsted, Illinois. (USACE photo by Waylon Humphrey)

 **Please conserve:**  
**Think before you print.**

# Commander's Comments

Team Louisville,

I can't believe summer is almost over! It appears that July decided it would fly by and we did not even have time to blink. July 27, 2018, marked my one-year anniversary as your commander. I can honestly say that it has been a wonderful journey and one I wouldn't trade for anything in the world. Serving as your Commander is an honor, and I don't take my duties and responsibilities of representing you and the great work you do lightly.

Maj. Kevin Lewis, our new deputy commander, is here and will be with us for two years. He is well qualified for the job and will continue to assist us in elevating our craftsmanship throughout the district. Welcome Maj. Lewis!

We are looking forward to the Olmsted Locks and Dam Ribbon Cutting Ceremony Aug. 30, 2018. There is a wide range of individuals and companies who are interested to hear about Olmsted and are excited to see us finally bring it into operation. What a wonderful and significant milestone this is for our district. You have made this project possible and I could not be more Louisville Proud!

This issue of the Falls City Engineer is jam-packed with great stories demonstrating the many contributions you and your teams are making to our nation. You will learn about the "Tapping of the Steel" ceremony as we placed the final structural beam for the Ireland Army Health Clinic Replacement Facility Project at Fort Knox; Ravenna Army Ammunition plant team earning high honors from the Secretary of the Army; how our sponsorship program is making a difference assisting our newest teammates through the on-boarding process; and just how we volunteer in our community highlighting Mr. James Cruz as our third quarter volunteer award recipient.

I also want to congratulate two Louisville District employees who just recently received national-level USACE recognition: Ms. Cristie



**Col. Antoinette Gant**  
*Commander and District Engineer  
Louisville District  
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers*

Mitchell, Program Manager - USACE 2018 Program Manager of the Year, and Mr. Calvin Schmid, Civil Engineer - USACE Construction Management Excellence Award.

There is so much going on in our district at any time, especially now as we enter the fourth quarter of FY18. Thank you for your dedication and focus on executing the mission and delivering the program. I applaud you for your selfless service.

Thanks again for all that you do.

**BUILDING STRONG** and Taking Care of People! We are Louisville Proud!

Col. G

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# Olmsted: standing in the midst of giants



Workers on the Olmsted Dam place tremie concrete inside the Left Boat Abutment Cofferdam October 4, 2016, in Olmsted, Illinois.

*"We choose to go to the Moon! We choose to go to the Moon in this decade and do the other things, not because they are easy, but because they are hard; because that goal will serve to organize and measure the best of our energies and skills, because that challenge is one that we are willing to accept, one we are unwilling to postpone, and one we intend to win."*

— John F. Kennedy, September 12, 1962

John Kelly, public affairs

President Kennedy had no illusions that the work would be hard, the odds daunting, and if all went perfectly, we would just barely make it. That, while spectacular in its achievement, landing on the moon was a reasonable, and necessary, next step for our country. He knew that to stand on the shoulders of giants and achieve great things meant, at its heart, to turn dirt to make history.

It starts with a single idea and a decision to make the world a better place through work and innovation. Then, as with the rivers that drive our countries economic engine, those single ideas grow in time. The same way a small trickle gradually grew into the Ohio River.

Olmsted Locks and Dam started this way. It was a way to change the tide of the never ending battle with the Ohio River in humanity's favor.

We had learned significant lessons from our engineering forefathers, who had made a conscious choice to expend every available means to tame our nation's inland

waterways. Olmsted would continue that effort and stand on those giants' shoulders. Bearing witness to the ghosts of our engineering forefathers, fighting against the rapidly deteriorating Locks and Dam 52 and 53. Time would be short.

President Kennedy also knew that it was our people who would have to pick up and carry an idea across the finish line. Olmsted Locks and Dam is no exception to this same reality; better technology made it easier to build on the rivers, but inefficient funding made doing the work more difficult. In the end it was the dedicated people of the Louisville District who would bear the weight and strain of the massive project to carry it to completion.

Employees would literally have to risk their lives to ensure that Locks and Dams 52 and 53 stayed active long enough to innovate and finish Olmsted. Those lock operators would have to board a steam-powered wicket lifter designed in the early 1900s, head onto one of the most dangerous and unpredictable rivers in the middle of winter, and use a 25-foot rod to pull the

wickets up.

Craft workers at Olmsted would have to willingly face down all perceivable elements to ensure that every piece of re-bar, ounce of tremie, and shell placement was perfect. Scaling the 10-story Catamaran Barge in thunderous rain to seize a construction opportunity during historic low and high water seasons.

Those men and women who will be faceless to history, but embody the best of what it means to give more of yourself for the benefit of others.

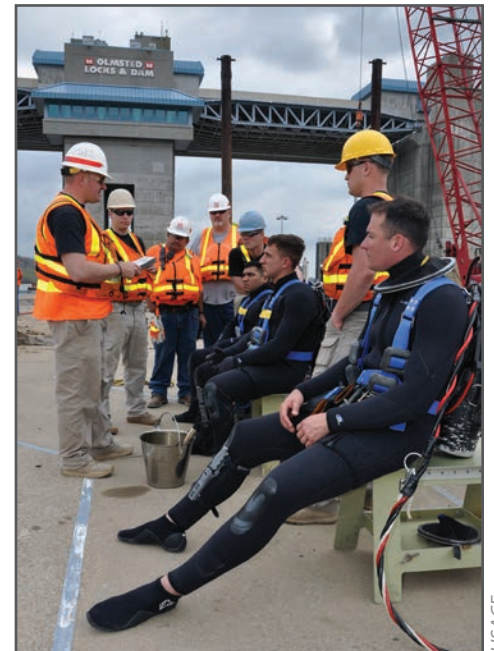
"These professionals never got discouraged; in fact quite the contrary," said Mike Braden, former Olmsted Division chief.

The workers who turned dirt to create a magnificent structure, often called the eighth wonder of the world, should always be remembered.

They stand as giants in comparison to the Olmsted Locks and Dam facility, each person forming a pillar of strength. Their legacy will be that even in the face of death and failure, our Louisville District family never quit, never compromised, and finished the job.

The people are what make this project, and frankly USACE, special beyond

*Continued on next page*



Staff Sgt. Kyle Broughton (left) goes through the pre-dive safety check and final instructions with the primary divers, backup and support staff on the Olmsted middle lock wall April 13, 2010. The wet-suited divers pictured are: (left to right) Sgt. (P) Patrick Morales, Spc. Jacob Feyers and Spc. Thomas Dougherty.





US Army Corps  
of Engineers  
Louisville District

# You Are Invited

Strengthening the Nation's Security through Infrastructure

Please join the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers  
in celebrating the opening of  
The Olmsted Locks - the nation's largest civil works project.

**BUILDING STRONG and Taking Care of People!**

## Olmsted Locks and Dam Opening Dedication Ceremony

Due to an unforeseen circumstance, the date for  
the Olmsted Locks and Dam Opening Dedication Ceremony has changed to:

Thursday, the thirtieth of August  
at ten o'clock in the morning Central Daylight Time

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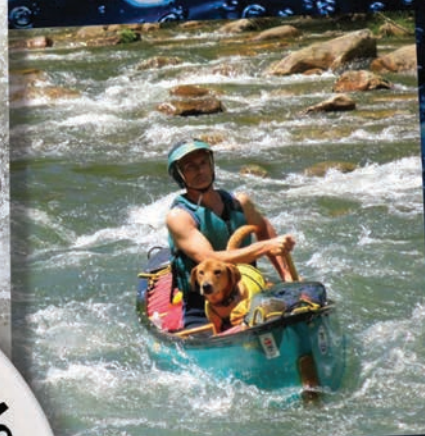
comprehension. That faceless public servant who represents the best of our focused energies and sheer desire are the giants who walk amongst us.

With the upcoming ribbon cutting at Olmsted Aug. 30, most visitors will be fascinated by the sheer size of the facility. Louisville District will see the ceremony for what it is, a chance to witness the giants of our time, finally landing on their moon.

Take a second that day to find a craft worker, shake their hand, and thank them for keeping President Kennedy's promise from decades ago. Building Olmsted not because it was easy, but because it was hard.

Chances are, in that moment, as you shake their hand and look into their eyes, you will see the best in all of us.

The Louisville District is hosting a public, national level ribbon cutting at Olmsted Locks and Dam Aug. 30, 2018, 10 a.m. CDT. The goal of the event is to give the public and stakeholders an update on the operational phase of the project; to introduce them to the project staff and site; and to show integral features of work such as grouting, cutoff wall construction, and instrumentation and monitoring devices for dam safety including piezometers and weirs.



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US Army Corps  
of Engineers®





## Ireland Medical Clinic project 'topped off' with last structural beam

Katie Newton, public affairs

A major milestone was reached on the Ireland Army Health Clinic Replacement Facility Project at Fort Knox, Kentucky June 14, 2018, when the final structural beam was hoisted into place 'topping off' the steel structure of the 101,373 square-foot facility.

All project partners placed their command coins and signatures on the beam before it was hoisted into place marking a historic milestone for the construction



Katie Newton

U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Louisville District Commander Col. Antoinette Gant, along with Matt Lowe, USACE Veterans Affairs Division chief and Project Manager Steve Farkus, (far right) are pictured adhering the Louisville District coin onto the final structural beam prior to it being placed on the Ireland Medical Clinic.

project.

"This is done truly in a team spirit," said U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Louisville District Commander Col. Antoinette Gant during her ceremony remarks. "We show today by what we're doing that this is just the beginning. As we finish the steel portion of it the more complex parts actually start and that's where we are getting to the meat of what's to be delivered here."

The new \$80 million clinic will provide the Fort Knox community with a state-

of-the-art facility to provide patient and family centered care. The medical clinic replacement facility will include primary and specialty care, behavioral health, ancillary services and administrative support activities.

The clinic is scheduled to open to patients in 2020 after which the existing Ireland Army Community Hospital, which serves the present Fort Knox community, will be demolished.



Katie Newton

The final structural beam is secured in place during the topping off ceremony held at Fort Knox, Ky., June 14, 2018, for the Ireland Medical Clinic.

## Environmental

## Ravenna Army Ammunition Plant team earns high honors

Katie Newton, public affairs

The Ravenna Army Ammunition Plant Environmental Restoration Team earned high honors from the Secretary of the Army for cleanup efforts at Camp Ravenna in Ohio, which allowed for construction of two critical training ranges for the Ohio Army National Guard.

The environmental restoration team, which is a multi-agency team composed of the Ohio National Guard, The National Guard, and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Louisville District, were presented the award by Eugene Collins, the Deputy Assistant Secretary of the Army for Environment, Safety and Occupational Health during the ceremony held on site Wednesday, June 13, 2018.



Ohio National Guard Office of Public Affairs

USACE Louisville District employees Craig Coombs, Nathaniel Peters and Angela Schmidt were all present to receive the award with fellow team members from the Ohio Army National Guard.



# Mattydale Reserve Center ready for training

Katie Newton, public affairs

A new state-of-the-art Reserve Center has reached completion in Mattydale, New York. The 68,836 square-foot training facility is being turned over to the 99th Readiness Division in support of the 14 Army Reserve Units which are assigned to the facility.

The training center features offices, classrooms, an assembly area, physical fitness space, storage area and a weapons simulator room. Additionally, the Corps constructed a 15,129 square foot vehicle maintenance shop and a storage building on site.

The project was designed in-house by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Louisville District and the construction efforts were executed by the USACE New York District.

"The 99th Readiness Division was very pleased with the design of this facility," said Mike Higgins, project manager for the Louisville District. "It's a great looking facility, energy efficient, and the floor plan flows very well for the Soldiers."

The Louisville District, who is the program manager for constructing all



The new Army Reserve Center in Mattydale, New York has been completed for the 99th Readiness Division in support of the 14 Army Reserve Units which are assigned to the facility.

Army Reserve Centers across the United States, delivered this facility under budget allowing the U.S. Army Reserve to save \$1.4 million.

"The project delivery team consisting of the Army Reserves (ARIMD and 99th RD), Louisville District design team and

New York District construction team, communicated very well and resolved issues in a very timely fashion to keep the project on track for a successful turnover," said Higgins.

The Army Reserves plan to move into this new facility in 2018.

## Corps constructs parking area for Army Reserve

Katie Newton, public affairs

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Louisville District serves as the design and construction agent for the Army Reserve ensuring they have the necessary training facilities across the United States and

Puerto Rico. Constructing a new Military Equipment Parking Area in Barstow, California, was one of those recent tasks completed by the district in support of the U.S. Army Reserve 63rd Readiness Division.



The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Louisville District completed a 27-acre parking area for the U.S. Army Reserve 63rd Readiness Division for their military equipment in Barstow, California. The project included general site work and the construction of fencing and solar lighting throughout.

"This was a successful project," said Mike Higgins, project manager for the Louisville District. "The project was awarded to an 8A small business and was completed on time and did not have any cost growth."

Construction began one year prior and was completed in May 2018 by Martin Brothers Construction Inc., allowing the Corps to turn it over to the 63rd Readiness Division a few weeks ahead of schedule.

The project included the construction of an approximately 27-acre gravel equipment storage area, which required resurfacing of the parking area and the installation of fencing with gates and 68 poles with solar-powered security lights.

"Our field construction team based out of Los Angeles District were very engaged and did a great job with quality assurance on site," said Higgins. "Our entire project team was very engaged throughout the process and the strong communication between team members helped to ensure this project's success."



## Spotlight

# Project manager making a difference in his community

Abby Korfhage, public affairs

Louisville District Project Manager James Cruz is using his skills and talents as a tennis player to coach and mentor the team members of the Scottsburg High School girls' tennis team in Scottsburg, Indiana.

Cruz was awarded the Louisville District Third Quarter Volunteerism Award certificate presented to him by Louisville District Commander Col. Antoinette Gant Aug. 13, 2018.

Cruz has been volunteering as an assistant tennis coach for both boys and girls tennis teams since 2002 when he retired from the U.S. Navy. For the last three years, he has focused most of his coaching efforts on the Scottsburg High School girls' tennis program as he would like to take over as the head coach upon his retirement from federal service.

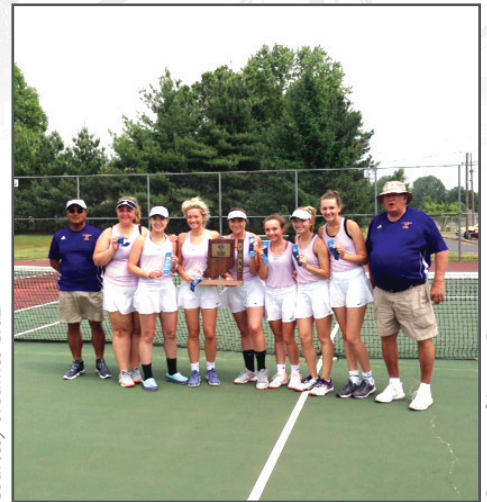
Cruz's team recently won their sectional title this year defeating the defending champion school, who held that honor for six years. Cruz has dedicated a lot of time and effort in leading the Scottsburg High School girls' tennis team to achieve victory and success emphasizing dedication, teamwork and perseverance.



*Pictured is James Cruz holding conference and sectional championship trophies.*

"I coach because I want to expose our Scottsburg youth to a sport that I've greatly benefited from," said Cruz. "Aside from its obvious fitness benefits, tennis has been a great networking tool for me."

Throughout the fall and winter months, Cruz hosts open indoor courts for both the Scottsburg High School and Scottsburg Middle School girls tennis teams three days a week. During the girls spring season he attends daily tennis practices and on days



*The Scottsburg girls' tennis team won their sectional championship match May 19, 2018.*

the team has a tennis match he travels with the team to provide coaching. On average Cruz volunteers about 15 hours a week during the girls' tennis season.

The Louisville District uses an outreach website to track volunteers like Cruz within the district. This site was created to encourage employees to develop opportunities and list them on the site for additional collaboration and to get others involved.

## Louisville District employees win national-level USACE awards



*Louisville District Program Manager, Cristie Mitchell, was selected as the USACE 2018 Program Manager of the Year for her work as the program manager for Air Force Reserve.*



*Louisville District Civil Engineer, Calvin Schmid, stands in front of the St. Croix body slob debris management site August 7, 2018. Schmid was selected for 2018 USACE Construction Management Excellence Award.*

Abby Korfhage, public affairs

Two Louisville District employees have received national-level USACE recognition.

The Program and Project Management Community of Practice recently selected Cristie Mitchell, Louisville District program manager, as the USACE 2018 Program Manager of the Year for her work as the program manager for Air Force Reserve.

Mitchell was recognized and presented with the USACE 2018 Program Manager of the Year Award at the 2018 National Awards Ceremony in Washington, D.C. Aug. 2, 2018, during the 4th Quarter Executive Governance Meeting.

"Cristie proved with teamwork and strong leadership skills that she could execute the program and get it awarded ahead of schedule," said Sharon Raque, Louisville District Army Reserve Chief.

This prestigious national recognition also welcomes Mitchell as a member to

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the Program and Project Management Community of Practice steering committee for a three-year period.

Calvin Schmid, Louisville District civil engineer, was also recognized Corps-wide for his selection of the FY18 USACE Construction Management Excellence Award for his efforts as project engineer and contracting officer's representative at the Rock Island Arsenal in Rock Island, Illinois.

Schmid worked with contractors, stakeholders and USACE personnel from three different districts to safely deliver quality projects. He ensured project safety by proactively communicating USACE requirements to all parties and by assuring rigorous adherence to contract requirements.

In his first two months as the contracting officer's representative for the Rock Island Arsenal Army Family Housing

contract, Schmid successfully negotiated over 18 changes totaling in \$212,000, allowing modifications to be issued.

"Calvin's effort during this two month period reduced the backlog of pending changes by 50 percent on this contract," said Don Peterson Louisville District Rock Island Resident Engineer. "These efforts, in addition to what he was already doing, clearly demonstrated that Calvin is very deserving of this award."



## Workforce & Family Support

### Resources for Getting Help

USACE Critical Incident Stress Management (CISM) Team has trained peer supporters who can confidentially listen and provide assistance during times of stress or life change, 314-925-5250 (24x7) or email [cism-vm@usace.army.mil](mailto:cism-vm@usace.army.mil) (confidential).

National Suicide Prevention Lifeline: 1-800-273-8255 to speak confidentially with a person trained in suicide prevention (24x7).

## Louisville District welcomes new deputy commander

*Abby Korfhage, public affairs*

Maj. Kevin Lewis, the Louisville District's new deputy commander, brings with him years of experience in engineering management.

Before arriving in Louisville, Lewis was deployed to Kabul, Afghanistan, and served as the Director of Plans for the Combined Security Transition Command, an organization responsible for funds directed to the Afghan Government and Armed Services. Lewis started with the district in July 2018, but his career with USACE began in May 2016, as the aide to Lt. Gen. Todd Semonite, USACE Commanding General and 54th U.S. Army Chief of Engineers.

In Lewis' new role, he is determined to set the foundation for Semonite's three goals for the organization — to deliver the program, strengthen the foundation and achieve the mission — by working behind the scenes to help Louisville District continue success.

"I think of this organization as a duck that sits on water going from point A to point B," said Lewis. "The Louisville District Commander Col. Gant is the head of the duck looking out and who has the vision, the Deputy District Engineer is the tail of the duck moving us along and I am the feet under the water kicking away." Lewis explained the hard working machinery of this organization that often goes unseen is what keeps the water calm at

the surface.

Louisville District's diversity of people and its mission are what Lewis is most excited about.

"With my background being 100 percent tactical Army, it is refreshing to see different people and their different ways of thinking," said Lewis. "I also worked with Col. Gant while in Afghanistan so I am very excited to work with her again."

Lewis graduated with a bachelor's degree in computer science from Jackson State University in Jackson, Mississippi, and received his master's degree in engineering management from the University of Missouri. Lewis' mantra is 'faith, family and fun.' Faith is what drives him, family keeps him on his feet and fun keeps him going. Lewis has been married for 15 years and has two sons. He is an avid sports fan from Atlanta and loves to read. Lewis also enjoys running and runs 8-10 miles every day.

Lewis' decorations and badges include Bronze Star Medal, Defense Meritorious Service Medal, Meritorious Service Medal (with 3 Bronze Oak Leaf Cluster), Army Commendation Medal (with Bronze Oak Leaf Cluster), Navy Commendation Medal, Army Achievement Medal (with Bronze Oak Leaf Cluster), Valorous Unit Award, Joint Meritorious Unit Award, Meritorious Unit Commendation, Army Superior Unit Award, Parachutist Badge, Ranger Tab and Sapper Tab.

"I want the district to know that I am committed to ensuring this district remains the best district in the Great Lakes and Ohio River Division (LRD) and hoping LRD becomes the best division in the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers."



Louisville District Deputy Commander, Maj. Kevin Lewis, joined the Louisville District July 25, 2018.



# New employee sponsors take stress out of first day

Abby Korfhage, public affairs

Starting a new job can be exciting and nerve-racking. While first-day jitters may be unavoidable, one might also be confused about what to expect, scared at the idea of starting something new, or overwhelmed at figuring out how to be productive from day one. That is where a sponsor comes in.

The Louisville District sponsorship program was created in spring 2017 to ensure new employees have a smooth transition and integration into their jobs at the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers.

“Effective sponsorship is an important part of an individual’s first impression of his or her organization,” said Kim Haddox, Louisville District Knowledge and Quality Management officer.

Louisville District new civilian employees are assigned sponsors who will reach out to them before their official start dates. The sponsor is there to provide the new employee with realistic expectations, basic guidance and answer any questions to ease the transition into a new job since relocation or changing employers can be overwhelming.

“I had a really good experience as a new employee,” said Mark Palmisano, Engineering Student Trainee. “I only worked directly with my sponsor, Corey Knox, my first two weeks, but after that, I was still able to ask him questions and receive help even when he wasn’t working on the same project.”

Employees that started at USACE within the last few years make the best



Corey Knox (right), chemist, shows new employee, Mark Palmisano, engineering student trainee, where to find information for a report Palmisano is putting together for an environmental project Aug. 2, 2018.

sponsors. Knox, who joined the Louisville District in 2017, also had a positive sponsorship experience.

“I didn’t feel like an elephant in the room when I first started at the Corps,” said Knox, Louisville District Environmental Chemist. “It was nice to come in and have my sponsor meet me at the door and take me to my new office. Having gone through this program as a new employee a year ago, I felt confident in taking on the roles of being a sponsor to Mark.”

Each assigned sponsor is trained to ensure he or she is able to perform the tasks

related to sponsorship. First day obstacles such as parking, having the correct in-processing documents and knowing where to go are less stressful when someone has already discussed them with you. It also provides a familiar face for that new employee to help make the first weeks at a job more enjoyable.

“I think the sponsor program is important because of the transition process,” said Knox. “USACE has a lot of different processes and there is a better chance of success if you have someone to help guide you in that understanding.”



Dick Kennard (left) and Dave Brancato (right) served as Knox’s sponsors when he started at the Louisville District May 2017.

**Are you interested in becoming a sponsor?**

Talk to your supervisor or contact Kim Haddox for additional information.

