

## USACE 55th Chief of Engineers in town!



Lt. Gen. Scott Spellmon, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers commanding general and 55th chief of engineers, center, receives a brief about LA District projects during a March 19 visit to the district's Prado Dam Resident Office in Corona, California. Also pictured is Justin Gay, LA District deputy district engineer, left, and Col. Andrew Baker, LA District commander, right.

***For the full story on Lt. Gen. Scott Spellmon's visit to the Los Angeles District, see pages 4-5.***



Photos by Brooks O. Hubbard IV, LA District Public Affairs

Lt. Gen. Scott Spellmon, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers commanding general and 55th chief of engineers, left, and LA District Commander Col. Andrew Baker, right, receive an update about the LA District's Santa Ana River Mainstem project from Derek Walker, LA District project manager, center, March 19 in Chino, California.

## Leaders highlight accomplishments at SPL Town Hall

STORY BY BROOKS O. HUBBARD IV  
LOS ANGELES DISTRICT PUBLIC AFFAIRS

LOS ANGELES – Leaders with the U. S. Army Corps of Engineers Los Angeles District recognized employee accomplishments during a Feb. 29 town hall at the district's headquarters in downtown Los Angeles.

In addition to presenting employee awards for the first quarter of fiscal year 2024, Col. Andrew Baker, LA District commander, provided an overview of several of the district's current projects and emphasized Lt. Gen. Scott Spellmon's directive on safety.

Spellmon, the 55th chief of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, reiterated his definition of winning by "Safely delivering quality projects on



Photo by Brooks O. Hubbard IV, LA District

Col. Andrew Baker, Los Angeles District commander, right, and Justin Gay, deputy district engineer, left, pose for a picture during the LA District's Town Hall Feb. 29 at the district's headquarters in downtown Los Angeles.

[TOWN HALL, continued on Page 12](#)

# Fond farewell!



Photo by Brooks O. Hubbard IV, LA District Public Affairs

**Darryl Fust, center, and Cecy Ordonez, right, former chiefs of the Los Angeles District Safety Office, alongside Chris Rainwater, current chief of the Safety Office, left, pose for a picture March 25 as Ordonez departs the LA District to assume her duties as a safety manager with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Headquarters. We wish Cecy the best in her new endeavors!**

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## TEAL TUESDAYS

We invite you to help spread support and awareness throughout the month of April. Let's work together to make a difference and raise awareness.

**"Step Forward in Driving Change Through Unity: Empower, Protect, Prevent."**

If you like to share your photos in teal attire, send them to [debra.a.flores@usace.army.mil](mailto:debra.a.flores@usace.army.mil)

**Sexual Assault Awareness & Prevention Month**





# Closing out busy March, celebrating women, partnerships

SPL team:

**H**appy April! I'm glad to be writing this today from our Phoenix office. I love coming out to Arizona – great food, great running in downtown Phoenix and always awesome hanging out with our Arizona team.

I'm on the road closing out what was a very busy March.

This past week, I visited a few of our projects in Southern Arizona and met with leaders from Davis-Monthan Air Force Base and Fort Huachuca – a first visit to both! I also visited potential future Section 595 projects at the Ak-Chin Indian Community in Maricopa and the Santa Cruz River Heritage project in Tucson; and met two of our dam tenders, Mike Morgan and River Keltz, to get an up-close and personal tour of our Painted Rock Dam.

I mentioned March was busy – earlier this month we hosted the 55th chief of engineers, Lt. Gen. Scott Spellmon at our Prado Dam office; completed a Continuity of Operations Exercise at our COOP site in Phoenix to test our emergency capabilities; networked and shared information with industry leaders about working with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers at the Better Opportunities Open House, or BOOH, in Phoenix; and celebrated your accomplishments over the past year at the Phoenix/Nevada Area Office's Engineer Day – I am looking forward to the California edition.

While I'm on the BOOH, I want to give a special shout-out to Eric Ravelli. Eric oversees our Small Business Program office. He set up this year's BOOH event – no small task given the sheer number of participants and logistics involved. Thanks also to all our LA District employees, who participated in networking with local industry leaders. Our team was able to



COL. ANDREW BAKER  
LA DISTRICT COMMANDER

connect with nearly 400 small business owners looking to do work with us.

For those who may not know, trying to get your foot in the door to do work with the federal government can be daunting. Events like this are a “win-win” – they break down invisible barriers for our industry partners, and they bring more of them to table to help us solve the nation's toughest engineering challenges.

A bit of background from a USACE enterprise-wide perspective: in fiscal year 2023, we had another record year for our small business partners. USACE awarded \$10.6 billion to small businesses – \$1 billion more than FY22 and the highest total in USACE history!

We also hosted a USACE Headquarters-led Formerly Used Defense Site Program Focus Review with project and program managers from throughout SPD at the Los Angeles District headquarters in downtown LA. Big congratulations to our own SPL FUDS team! With minimal staffing, they delivered and awarded seven out of seven FUDS' projects last year, thanks to an incredible group of hardworking experts, Program Manager Harry Hendler and Military Branch Chief John Oshima.

I'd like to highlight that April is National Sexual Assault Awareness and Prevention Month, or SAAPM.

Sexual assault is an issue that affects our entire community. The goal of SAAPM is to raise awareness about sexual violence and to educate communities and individuals about their role in prevention.

SPL will be participating in several events throughout the month in honor of SAAPM, including “Teal Tuesdays,” which include gathering photos of participants wearing teal; a walk/run event at

Whittier Narrows Park; and a “Paint the District Teal” decorating contest.

Whether you work in the field, report to an office or work from home, you can participate in these activities. Stay tuned for more details about these and other events on the district's Intranet homepage, via district-wide emails and the NewsCastle Newsletter.

Closing out this month's column, I'd like to note that March was Women's History Month. This year's theme was “Women who have made great achievements.”

Throughout history, women from diverse backgrounds and disciplines have shattered barriers to pave the way for future generations. These trailblazers embody resilience, courage and a relentless pursuit of excellence! Women have proven the pursuit of greatness knows no gender.

Women's History Month serves as a reminder to honor their contributions, acknowledge the progress made and continue to champion equality for all.

The Army is replete with stories of courage, sacrifice, determination, honor and integrity from women who have made a lasting impact on our military and our nation. Each of us has a story. Some of us may have hundreds of pages, while others are still writing their first few chapters. No matter where you are in your life and career, remember there is no one else who has or who will ever have your exact story. Please continue to write yours.

All the best to you and yours for a great April! I'm very much looking forward to kicking it off with a family trip during my daughters' spring break. We'll be at the beach, so if you see me walking around looking a little more pink than usual, that's why.

Proud to be SPL!

~ Col. Andrew Baker

Commander, LA District

**To learn more about the LA District, right click on the icons:**



# Chief of Engineers visits projects in SoCal, hosts SES Town Hall

BY BROOKS O. HUBBARD IV  
LA DISTRICT PUBLIC AFFAIRS

LOS ANGELES – The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Los Angeles District hosted Lt. Gen. Scott Spellmon, 55th chief of engineers and commanding general of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, or USACE, during a March 19 visit to several project sites in southern California.

Spellmon began his visit by hosting a USACE Senior Executive Service virtual recruitment town hall at the Prado Dam's Resident Office in Corona.

Spellmon was joined by LA District Commander Col. Andrew Baker, LA District Deputy Engineer Justin Gay and several LA District project team members.

Spellmon discussed USACE's more than \$90-billion-program and the importance of getting up-and-coming leaders ready for their next level of civilian service – the Senior Executive Service – for those who choose to pursue it.

Karen Pane, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers' director of Human Resources, Senior Executive Service, explained USACE's recruitment efforts and detailed her personal experiences in her own Senior Executive Service career.

Pane said she started her career as an emergency trauma nurse in 2006 and was also a nurse in the U.S. Naval Reserve Nurse Corps. She continued her federal service with various government agencies, including as the chief human capital officer with the U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement, before joining USACE.

There are currently seven vacancies within USACE's Senior Executive Service program.

Following the town hall, Spellmon presented commander's coins to several LA District team members, recognizing them for their outstanding years of service and dedication to USACE's mission.

Spellmon then met with military officers, who support the district and region, to discuss their professional development and future assignments in the U.S. Army Engineer Regiment and USACE.

"If you're passionate about engineering, there are plenty of opportunities out there (in USACE) to do that," said Spellmon, who became chief of engineers in September 2020.

Baker and his project management team then provided updated project information about the Prado Dam Santa Ana River Mainstem, Santiago Creek flood-risk management and the San Clemente Beach Nourishment projects in Southern California.



Photo by Brooks O. Hubbard IV, LA District Public Affairs

**Mike Padilla, Chicago District project manager, second from left, points out a feature of the Santiago Creek Flood-Risk Reduction project, to Lt. Gen. Scott Spellmon, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers commanding general and 55th chief of engineers, second from right, during a March 19 tour of the project in Santa Ana, California. The joint project is being completed by both the Chicago and LA districts.**

Following the meeting, Spellmon joined Baker and the LA District team on a tour of the Santa Ana River Mainstem and Santiago Creek project sites, where they provided an overview of the projects within the Orange County area.

As the 55th chief of engineers, Spellmon's number one priority is "People," as he has previously stated:

"This team of highly engaged professionals and those of the Engineer Regiment have

served our nation extremely well," Spellmon said. "We owe them the best training, the best education and the best tools, so they can stand up and deliver on their full potential.

"I am committed to serving our workforce by providing them with the tools and products they need to succeed every day, and, more importantly, to continue to shape a culture that embraces and thrives on diversity, inclusiveness and adaptability."



Photo by Brooks O. Hubbard IV, LA District Public Affairs

**Lt. Gen. Scott Spellmon, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers commanding general and 55th chief of engineers, third from right, receives a brief about LA District projects during a March 19 visit to the district's Prado Dam Resident Office in Corona, California.**



# Recognition for a job well done!



Photos by Brooks O. Hubbard IV, LA District Public Affairs

Lt. Gen. Scott Spellmon, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers commanding general and 55th chief of engineers, pictured right in all four photos, recognized several Los Angeles District team members for exemplary work during his March 19 visit to the Los Angeles District. Pictured with Spellmon are, clockwise from the top photo: Mark Cohen, chief of the Operations Division; Kathleen Rabet, administrative support assistant; Fernando Cano, project engineer; and Michael Rogalski, program manager, Mega Division.



Photo by Brooks O. Hubbard IV, LA District Public Affairs

Lt. Gen. Scott Spellmon, 55th chief of engineers and the commanding general of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, center, poses with Soldiers from the Engineer Regiment, including from the LA District, during his March 19 visit to the Prado Dam Resident Office in Corona, California. The engineers were at the Prado office to complete Officer Professional Development.



# SPD commander tours San Diego projects



Photos by Orville "Dan" Collins, LA District Public Affairs

**Col. James Handura, commander of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers South Pacific Division, center; Greg Lugar, Los Angeles District program manager, left, and John Drake, LA District chief of the Interagency and International Support Services Branch, right, discuss the progress of the Tijuana River Barrier project during a tour of the project March 6 in San Diego County, California.**

**BY ORVILLE "DAN" COLLINS  
LOS ANGELES DISTRICT PUBLIC AFFAIRS**

SAN DIEGO – Col. James Handura, commander of the South Pacific Division, took a tour and received updates on three Los Angeles District projects, which have been fully funded through completion, March 5-6 in San Diego County, California.

"It's always worthwhile for me to get out to see the projects firsthand, to talk to the folks in the field and to get a sense of how things are going," Handura said. "I like to discuss with our team where I can help at my level or how we can help at the division level."

## **BROWNFIELD PATROL STATION**

On March 5, Handura visited with the Corps' Los Angeles District team to discuss the progress of the Brown Field Border Patrol Station in San Diego County. The facility is the future home of the Department of Home-

[SPD VISIT, continued on Page 7](#)



**Capt. Greg Sacenti, Los Angeles District project engineer, left, leads a tour and discusses the Veterans Affairs Spinal Cord Injury/Community Living Center with Col. James Handura, commander of the South Pacific District, second from left; Col. Andrew Baker, commander of the LA District, right, and other LA District team members March 6 in San Diego, California.**



Photos by Orville "Dan" Collins, LA District Public Affairs

**Col. James Handura, commander of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers South Pacific Division, front right, and John Drake, Chief of the LA District's Interagency and International Support Services Branch, front left, discuss the future goals of the Brown Field Border Patrol Station during a tour of the project March 5 in San Diego County, California.**

#### [SPD VISIT, continued from Page 6](#)

land Security's 400 U.S. Customs and Border Protection agents.

Construction of the station is nearly complete and includes a 50,000-square-foot facility with parking; a two-lane sally port; vehicle wash facility; helipad; dog kennel; communication tower; water wells; ATV canopy; leach field and a septic system.

#### **VASCI/COMMUNITY LIVING CENTER**

Handura, accompanied by Col. Andrew Baker, LA District commander, met with the Corps and VA teams and its contractors March 6 to tour the new standalone, four-story San Diego VA Spinal Cord Injury Community Living Center.

The 197-square-foot facility includes a 50-bed Spinal Cord Injury center; 33-bed Community Living Center; outpatient clinic; and physical, occupational and aquatic therapy areas.

"We are working toward completion of the VA Spinal Cord Injury/Community Living Center, and we're excited to get it done," Baker said. "This project is going to have a huge impact for veterans and the San Diego area."

#### **TIJUANA RIVER BARRIER PROJECT**

Later that day, Handura met with Corps' representatives to tour the Tijuana River Barrier project in San Diego County.

#### **ABOUT THE LA DISTRICT**

The LA District is a world-class organization providing engineering solutions that re-

spond to the needs of the nation, our environment and the communities we serve.

The Los Angeles District encompass a 226,000-square-mile area across Southern California, Arizona and portions of Nevada and Utah. The district is engaged in about 200 projects across its area of operations and employs about 800 personnel.



**Col. James Handura, commander of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers South Pacific Division, left, and Eric Strom, Los Angeles District project engineer, right, discuss updates to the Brown Field Border Patrol Station during a tour of the project March 5 in San Diego County, California.**



# LA District conducts COOP exercise in Phoenix

BY ROBERT DEDEAUX  
LA DISTRICT PUBLIC AFFAIRS

PHOENIX – The Los Angeles District Emergency Management team conducted the Continuity of Operations, or COOP, training exercise March 11-12 at the district's area office in Phoenix.

The COOP is designed to review, practice and assess the district's response to a catastrophic event using virtual scenarios.

"There is an expectation from our higher headquarters, and, more importantly, from the American people, that we are ready to respond in the event of a disaster," said LA District Commander Col. Andrew Baker.

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers is required by Army Regulation 500-3 and the Presidential Policy Directive 40 to have a Continuity of Operations Plan to ensure it can respond and perform essential functions in the event of an emergency.

"The focus of our training scenario was to ensure our leadership knows how to execute our Continuity of Operations Plan should a disaster occur that precludes us from using our primary command and control facility in Los Angeles," said David Kingston, the LA District Emergency Management Branch Chief.

The training focused on three objectives:

- A thorough understanding of the district's written Continuity of Operations Plan.
- Familiarity with the layout and capabilities of our Alternate COOP site, which is the Arizona-Nevada Area Office in Phoenix.
- To understand the relationships between the LA District and its sister districts in Sacramento and Albuquerque, as they have the responsibility to take on the LA District's mission essential functions should it not be able to carry them out in the event of a major disaster.

"I think the training went well," said Joshua Jimerfield, a civil planner with the South Pacific Readiness and Contingency Operations office. "I felt there was good discussion and that the exercise provided valuable insight into the logistics of a COOP in a virtual environment. I also believe these types of exercise are invaluable in their ability to highlight how critical COOP and all-hazards plans are to senior leaders."

Along with the South Pacific Division, the Sacramento and the Albuquerque districts also sent emergency managers to assist the LA District with training objectives.

"I enjoyed the COOP exercise," said LA District Contracting Chief Mary Fronck. "It



Photo by Robert DeDeaux, LA District Public Affairs

**The Los Angeles District Emergency Management team hosts the second day of the Continuity of Operations training exercise March 12 at the LA District's Phoenix/Nevada area office in Phoenix. The training exercise is designed to review, practice and assess the district's response to catastrophic disaster scenarios.**

was very engaging, and I learned more about our response operations through the exercises. Coordination and communication are key, especially now, before an event occurs."

The Emergency Management team provides engineering services to respond to national and natural disasters to minimize damage and help in recovery efforts.



Photo by Robert DeDeaux, LA District Public Affairs

**U.S. Army Corps of Engineers South Pacific Division Readiness and Contingency Operations representatives and Emergency Branch managers pose for a photo following the first day of the Continuity of Operations training exercise March 11 at the LA District's Phoenix/Nevada Area Office in Phoenix. The Los Angeles District Emergency Management team hosted the training event with the support of the Sacramento and Albuquerque districts.**



# LA District hosts Business Opportunities Open House

PHOENIX – The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Los Angeles District hosted the spring Business Opportunities Open House March 13 at the Midtown Hilton Garden Inn in Phoenix.

The semi-annual Business Opportunities Open House, or BOOH, focused on facilitating partnerships with businesses and highlighting contract opportunities.

“The purpose of today’s event is to create dialogue between business owners and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers,” said Eric Ravelli, the LA District’s deputy of the Office of Small Business Programs. “This is our signature event that makes the process of working with USACE easier. Participants are able to talk to our subject matter experts on a one-on-one basis, so that we can make connections, build business relationships and deliver our programs by finding what capabilities are available through local industry.”

During the event, more than 375 business owners met with LA District division chiefs, and program and project managers.

“It takes a team of invested stakeholders,

[BOOH, continued on Page 11](#)



Photo by Robert DeDeaux, LA District Public Affairs

**Eric Ravelli, LA District deputy of the Office of Small Business Programs, left, speaks with participants at the Business Opportunities Open House March 13 at the Midtown Hilton Garden Inn in Phoenix. Small businesses represented more than 75 percent of the participants. This is Ravelli’s seventh year hosting the event for the LA District.**

## FUDS in Review:



Photos by LA District Public Affairs

**Project and program managers with the Formerly Used Defense Site program from across the South Pacific Division met March 5-7 for a division FUDS Focus Review at the Los Angeles District headquarters building in downtown LA.**

**The purpose of the three-day review was to collaborate among FUDS program managers across the region and leaders with USACE headquarters.**

**Joining the team for the review were: Lara Beasley, chief of the Environmental Division, Senior Executive Service, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Headquarters; David Hibner, director of the Army Geospatial Center and Research Lab, Senior Executive Service, South Pacific Division; Justin Gay, LA District deputy engineer; Randy Tabije, FUDS program manager with the South Pacific Division; Harry Hendler, LA District FUDS program manager; and John Oshima, chief of the LA District’s Military Branch, among many others.**



**(ABOVE) Lara Beasley, chief of the Environmental Division, Senior Executive Service, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Headquarters, right; and David Hibner, director of the Army Geospatial Center and Research Lab, Senior Executive Service, South Pacific Division, left, participate in the FUDS Focus Review March 5 at the LA District.**

# LA District Soldier receives high honors for service



Photo by Richard Rivera, LA District CIO/G6

Col. Andrew Baker, Los Angeles District commander, foreground, presents the Bronze de Fleury Medal to Maj. Donnell Smith, former LA District acting deputy commander and project manager, front, March 18 in Los Angeles.

BY BROOKS O. HUBBARD IV  
LA DISTRICT PUBLIC AFFAIRS

LOS ANGELES – A Los Angeles District Soldier received one of the highest awards for his service to the organization during a March 18 ceremony at the district's headquarters in downtown Los Angeles.

Maj. Donnell Smith received the Bronze de Fleury Medal for his outstanding performance and service as the acting deputy commander for the LA District and as a project manager for the San Diego VA Health Care System, among other accomplishments.

According to the citation signed by Los Angeles District Commander Col. Andrew Baker, Smith was recognized for his leadership style – defined by transparency, integrity and a commitment to fostering a collaborative environment, while serving as the interim Los Angeles Deputy District commander.

Throughout this period, Smith led the district in coordinating district administrative functions and instilling a positive leadership approach. His contributions included overseeing logistics, implementing a strategic reduction of space that resulted in an annual savings of more than \$1 million in rent and providing crucial support during the transition of a new command team.

As a project manager, Smith undertook the responsibility of overseeing the initiation of proj-

ects valued at about \$30 million.

Smith was cited as having adept management skills, coupled with a keen understanding of engineering principles and processes, that ensured the successful initiation of projects that were not only complex but also critical to the nation's infrastructure and mission capability.

In addition to the Bronze de Fleury, Smith was presented with the Meritorious Service Medal for his service to the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and the Army Engineer Regiment.

The Meritorious Service Medal is a military award presented to members of the U.S. Armed Forces, who distinguish themselves with outstanding meritorious achievement or service to the U.S.

"I thank you for all you've done for the district," Baker said. "It seems like the opportunity to work on a program like the San Diego VA hospital is your way to give back, and we appreciate it. We're going to miss you."

Smith has served 18 years of military service, with 12 of those years with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers.

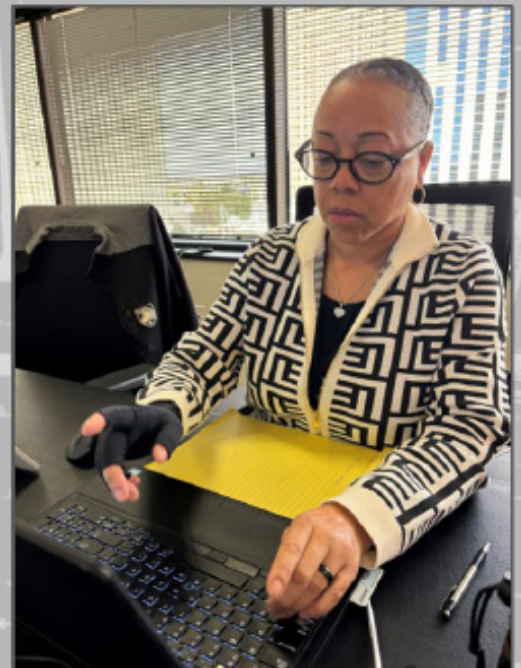
Smith's career as an engineer officer began in the 307th Engineer Battalion Airborne as a route clearance platoon leader, where he exhibited exceptional leadership skills and an innate ability to inspire those under his command.

[HIGH HONORS, continued on Page 11](#)

## Around the District

*"I appreciate how I've learned countless skills to use in the Emergency Management work force. Everyone is amazing. It really makes the work fulfilling when you share tasks with people that are friendly and mission oriented."*

Angela is updating the Continuity of Operations Exercise and the All-hazards plans for the district. She is a retired Army veteran from Virginia. Angela has been with the Corps for 11 months.



Angela Drew  
Emergency Management Planner





## [BOOH, continued from Page 9](#)

sponsors, dedicated contractors and committed USACE employees to build strong and enduring facilities for the communities we serve,” said LA District Commander Col. Andrew Baker. “This event brings all the right people together.”

The BOOH had three distinct goals – to create competitive bids on upcoming projects, support small businesses in the area and build partnerships through open lines of communication with stakeholders.

“This was the most widely attended BOOH since the district started the event,” said LA District Deputy Commander Lt. Col. Stephen Brooks. “It is important for leaders to create connections among contractors, USACE and other partners to better serve the engineering and construction needs within our district’s area of responsibility.”

Small businesses represented more than 75 percent of the participants.

“I think the Corps did a fantastic job with this event,” said Gregory Cabello, vice president of TBCO Construction and General Engineering. “I had questions about a few things when I first arrived. I met the people who helped get those questions answered, and I got to network with other businesses I may partner with in the future.”

The event also was supported by the Arizona Procurement Technical Assistance Center, Society of American Military Engineers and USACE’s Sacramento Small Business Program office.

“This is a highly successful event,” Ravelli said. “I know it makes an impact for our small



Photo by Robert DeDeaux, LA District Public Affairs

**From left to right, U.S. Army Corps of Engineer Los Angeles District Deputy Commander Lt. Col. Stephen Brooks; Eric Ravelli, the LA District’s deputy of the Office of Small Business Programs; and Sacramento District Procurement Analyst Vernon Simpkins pose for a picture after welcoming participants and partners to the spring Business Opportunities Open House, or BOOH, March 13 at the Midtown Hilton Garden Inn in Phoenix.**

business communities and helps the Corps meet mission objectives.”

In fiscal year 2023, USACE enterprise-wide had another record year for its small business partners, awarding \$10.6 billion to small businesses – \$1 billion more than FY22 and the high-

est in USACE history.

The next BOOH is scheduled for the fall in Southern California.

To learn more about doing business with USACE, visit [www.spl.usace.army.mil/Business-With-Us/Small-Business-Program](http://www.spl.usace.army.mil/Business-With-Us/Small-Business-Program).

## [HIGH HONORS, continued from Page 10](#)

Smith departs the LA District and will continue to serve at USACE’s Pacific Ocean Division.

### **ABOUT THE DE FLEURY MEDAL**

The de Fleury Medal is an award of the Army Engineer Association and was named in honor of Francois-Louis Teissedre de Fleury, a French engineer, who served in the U.S. Continental Army during the Revolutionary War.

There are four levels of the de Fleury: Steel, Bronze, Silver and Gold.

### **USACE WORKFORCE**

USACE has about 38,500 professionals stationed in 39 different countries working on projects in 110 countries. The workforce is made up of engineers, scientists, researchers and a multitude of other disciplines and specialties all working together to safely deliver quality programs projects on time, within budget, safely.



Photo by Richard Rivera, LA District CIO/G6

**Maj. Donnell Smith, former LA District acting deputy commander and project manager, left, receives the Meritorious Service Medal from Col. Andrew Baker, Los Angeles District commander, right, March 18 in Los Angeles.**

time and within budget” by directing all divisions and districts across the Corps to establish daily Safety and Occupational Health meetings at every project site, regardless of its size.

In response to the directive, Baker’s Safety team established three primary safety goals for the fiscal year: Celebrate a “Safety Hero” in monthly situational report; conducting mandatory “Safety for New Employee” sessions for 100 percent of new hires; and conducting and participating in daily safety huddles.

Justin Gay, LA District deputy engineer, emphasized ensuring the safety briefings are relevant to the activities that are happening at the project site at any given time.

“Many of us have talked about this quite often, about using those activity hazard analysis as it relates to the features of work that you’re performing,” he said. “For those who have never been to project sites, insist that the contractor inform you of what the risks are and give you a safety in-brief. Don’t be afraid of that because it ensures you get home at the end of the day.”

Following the safety discussion, Baker discussed several of the district’s on-going beach nourishment projects.

#### **SURFSIDE-SUNSET BEACH**

Work on Stage 13 of the Surfside-Sunset Beach Nourishment project – at \$23.13-million – began in November 2023.

The construction contract was awarded to Manson Construction in October 2023. The overall project received \$15.5 million in federal funding from the fiscal year 2022 Omnibus Work Plan budget.

The project is designed as remediation for beach erosion and damage largely incidental to federal flood control, navigation and defense projects.

It is intended to provide periodic beach nourishment of about 1.8 million cubic yards of sand every five years, restoring 17 miles of coastline – from the mouth of the San Gabriel River down to the Newport Bay Harbor entrance.

For Stage 13, about 1.1 million cubic yards of sand is being placed on the Surfside Beach area. The sand was deposited along a stretch of beach south of the Naval Weapons Station Seal Beach and is expected, by way of natural currents, to move south to Huntington, Bolsa Chica and Newport Beach. This project was several years in the making and is estimated to be completed in March.

#### **SAN CLEMENTE BEACH**

“Although we have seen some challenges with San Clemente, the team is working incredibly hard to overcome these challenges and make the San Clemente Beach Nourishment project a success,” Baker said.

The authorized project for coastal storm-damage

reduction in San Clemente includes construction of a 50-foot-wide beach fill along a 3,412-foot-long stretch of shoreline, using 251,000 cubic yards of compatible sediment.

Additionally, the area is set to receive renourishments every six years on average over a 50-year period, for a total of eight additional nourishments – seven of which will have the same cubic yards of sand moved, while the last will require 84,000 cubic yards.

The work followed the signing of a project partnership agreement in February 2023 between the Corps and the City of San Clemente.

#### **SOLANA – ENCINITAS BEACH**

In January, dredging and sand replenishment operations began at Solana Beach, and it’s already halfway complete,” Baker said.

The purpose of the project is to reduce coastal storm damage and erosion along a 7,200-foot-long stretch of shoreline and includes construction of a 150-foot-wide beach fill using 700,000 cubic yards of compatible sediment.

In addition to the initial construction, the project includes 13 beach renourishments over a 50-year period at about \$417 million, with a 50/50 federal-sponsor cost share.

Baker thanked the team for all their hard work and for how smoothly the operation was progressing.

After the completion of work, the dredge will then move to Encinitas, where construction is estimated to be completed in 45 days. At Encinitas, initial construction includes building a 50-foot-wide protective berm along 7,800 feet of shoreline, with beach renourishment cycles every five years.

#### **RIO DE FLAG FLOOD CONTROL**

After severe fires, Flagstaff and its surrounding area has been subject to flooding from the Rio de Flag and Clay Avenue Wash tributaries. The project consists of channel modifications, bridge enhancements, a detention basin and floodwall construction.

The LA District received \$79 million in federal funds for the Rio de Flag project and plans are to award the first construction contract for the Lower Rio de Flag and Clay Avenue Wash reaches in 2023.

Phase 1, 2 and 3 have been constructed. The Stage 1 portion of the project, which includes Phase 4-Lower Rio de Flag, and Phase 6-Clay Avenue Wash is next in line to be constructed. The final segment to be construction is Stage 2, which includes the Phase 5-Upper Rio de Flag Reach.

“I want to thank the team for the amazing work they did to deliver the PACR in time for WRDA 24,” Baker said.

#### **PL84-99 SUPPORT TO HOPI TRIBE**

LA District’s Emergency Management Branch received a request for direct assistance from the Hopi Tribe when flooding and associated sediment deposits from an unusually strong monsoon season overwhelmed communities in Polacca, Arizona.

The district performed flood-response activities under emergency management authority Public Law 84-99, Emergency Response to Natural Disasters, which gives the Corps the authority to provide emergency assistance to local, state and tribal governments before, during and after flooding events.

As part of the assistance request, the district built several HESCO barriers to protect Hopi tribal homes after the flooding.

The tribe recounted the positive experience they had with the Corps during the Southern California Post-Fire Mitigation, Recovery and Resilience Workshop for Tribes in March 2023 in Southern California.

“I just want to recognize the Emergency Management Branch for their hard work building and maintaining positive relationships with our tribal partners and for the work they continuously do keeping our communities safe,” Baker said.

Following an overview of projects, Baker then recognized 1st Quarter Award winners. They were:

- Kevin Inada Employee of the Quarter award: Michael Rivera
- Mike Cogan Safety Employee of the Quarter award: Cameron Amick
- Innovator of the Year award: Glen Tucker
- Rising Star award: Whitney Bishop
- Compass award: Abigail Banaga
- H2O Helping Hands for Others award: Christopher Rainwater and Portia Pham.
- Outstanding PDT Member award: Veronica Li

Baker also announced the District’s Project Delivery Team of the year: Sentinel - The Ground Based Strategic Deterrent Program at Vandenberg Space Force Base, California.

Team members from the LA District include:

- Shaun Frost, chief of Construction, Source Selection Authority

- Steve Weiss, lead project scheduler
- Patrick Klein, budget analyst
- Raj Cooper, contracting officer
- Stanislav Sekakov, contract specialist
- Mary Wrightson, Office of Counsel
- Prisco "Eric" Ravelli, deputy, Office of the Small Business Programs
- John Stephens, area engineer
- Delvin Rivas, deputy area engineer
- Doug West, engineering tech
- David Jorgenson, resident engineer
- Capt. (P) Matthew Hall, project engineer
- Ilhan Gayle, contracting officer representative



# First Quarter Award winners



Photo by Richard Rivera, LA District CIO/G6

**Employee of the Quarter: Michael Rivera**



Photo by Richard Rivera, LA District CIO/G6

**Mike Cogan Employee of the Quarter: Cameron Amick**



Photo by Richard Rivera, LA District CIO/G6

**Compass Award: Abegail Banaga**



Photo by Richard Rivera, LA District CIO/G6

**Rising Star Award: Whitney Bishop**



Photo by Richard Rivera, LA District CIO/G6

**H2O Helping Hands Award: Christopher Rainwater and Portia Pham (not pictured)**



Photo by Richard Rivera, LA District CIO/G6

**Hiliary Innerbichler receives a commander's coin from Col. Andrew Baker**



Photo by Richard Rivera, LA District CIO/G6

**Julia Yang receives a commander's coin from Col. Andrew Baker**



Photo by Richard Rivera, LA District CIO/G6

**Jon Sweeten receives a commander's coin from Col. Andrew Baker**





# CHANGE THROUGH UNITY

## EMPOWER • PROTECT • PREVENT

### ELIMINATING SEXUAL ASSAULT AND SEXUAL HARASSMENT BY WORKING TOGETHER TO BUILD A RESPECTFUL CULTURE FOR ALL

To continue to build a respectful culture for all members of the Army team, we must unite to strengthen connectedness among the ranks and to eliminate sexual assault and sexual harassment. When team members have a strong bond with one another, they interact in ways that demonstrate mutual respect, they honor boundaries, and they live by the seven core Army values.

#### Eliminating behaviors of sexual assault and sexual harassment will require everyone to:

- Honor boundaries that others set.
- Be aware of, and practice, healthy relationship behaviors.
- Work together as a unit to solve conflicts and increase connectedness.
- Challenge norms that suggest that disrespecting or discriminating against women, minorities or LGBTQ individuals is OK.
- Encourage friends to take care of their mental health.
- Understand how your actions and words affect others.
- Keep resources and important phone numbers close by in case someone needs support.

Remember, anyone can be the target of sexual harassment and assault, regardless of gender, age, race, ethnicity or employment status. If you or a team member is experiencing sexual assault or sexual harassment, the following resources, including reporting assistance and training materials, are available to help:

- **Sexual Harassment/Assault Response and Prevention Program**
  - Contact your installation's SHARP office for more information.
- **Contact the DOD Safe Helpline:** Telephone: 877-995-5247



Contact the DOD Safe Helpline: 877-995-5247

[www.armyresilience.army.mil](http://www.armyresilience.army.mil)