



US Army Corps
of Engineers®
Far East District

EAST GATE EDITION

Prioritizing People

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FED Takes Aim at Increased Diversity with AMIE Internship Program

By Edwyna W. Brooks
FED Public Affairs

“Our District is looking for the industry’s finest graduates and top talent to help design and build our nation’s future by working with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers,” says Lt. Col. Dennis McGee, Deputy Commander Far East District.

As an organization known for its engineering excellence across the Korean peninsula, the Far East District has achieved that notoriety due in part to their focus on acquiring diverse and exceptional talent. Their organizational culture is agile, innovative, collaborative, and inclusive. These traits have consistently allowed the Corps to outperform other organizations who have not created such priorities in hiring.

“When we examine the industry’s engineering changes and the new ways projects are being designed, the Corps is even more determined to seek new and diverse perspectives adept at uncovering advanced problem-solving strategies to keep up with those rapidly changing technologies. Our partnership with Advancing Minorities Interest in Engineering (AMIE) is just one of the ways we go about increasing the range of perspectives we bring to our projects,” says Far East District Commander, Col. Christopher Crary.

As the District looks to become an increasingly efficient and effective solution in the marketplace, it will continue invigorating its current staff to deliver leading engineering and environmental solutions on the peninsula.

“For the Pacific, the challenge is greater following a year-long pandemic. In this battle for talent, we must focus our efforts on emerging diverse markets to successfully attract, recruit, and retain a highly-skilled workforce capable of meeting current and future readiness and mission requirements in the Korean Peninsula. One way to get after this goal is to support Advancing Minorities Interest in Engineering (AMIE) in order to increase the participation of individuals with disabilities, minorities, and women,” says Mr. Stephen Brown, FED Equal Employment Opportunity Manager.



Samuel Coleman, FED AMIE alumnus speaks to Armed Forces Network about his internship. (FED file photo)


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Col. Lee Woo-sik (left), Chief, Program Management Team, MURO and Col. Garrett Cottrell (right), Deputy Commanding Officer - Transformation, United States Army Corps of Engineers Far East District, sign the Acceptance Request Letter for the SPT060 Warehouse Area Site #1 - Buildings B and C on Nov. 13. Then members of the Project Delivery Team posed for a group photo to commemorate the turnover of the facilities. (Photos by Lee Mee-ra)



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www.pof.usace.army.mil

FED Takes Aim at Increased Diversity with AMIE Internship Program

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Kenith Ward, Project Engineer for the Far East District's Security Operations Resident Office explains the significance of the AMIE program, "it allows the interns to learn the process of a project from the cradle to the grave. USACE-FED requires an integrated workforce with various skill sets in order to make a project successful.

Incorporating Project Management, Engineering, and Design, along with Construction allows the interns to understand that obtaining a certain degree does not pigeonhole you into one field. It provides an opportunity for them to see what actually happens in different sections and how they are all tied to a single mission."

Kenith is a primary sponsor of the AMIE program. He works with a team of other FED employees, who help announce, select, and mentor the students once they arrive in South Korea. "We allow them to experience the interactions between multiple Divisions in FED to give them an understanding of how each department is intertwined. Most importantly, the AMIE program provides our interns with the opportunity to experience the South Korean culture. Our AMIE sponsors incorporate multiple tours (DMZ, city tours, food tours) and adventures throughout South Korea; providing our interns with an experience they will never forget."

Samuel Coleman recalls his time as a USACE AMIE intern, "The AMIE internship opportunity was amazing. I was able to work in various areas within the FED including project management, engineering, and construction.

The experience has led me to expand what I wanted to do in engineering into project and construction management. My Points of Contact were exceptional in helping me navigate through the program, Korea, and the various military installations we visited."



"I really enjoyed visiting some of the area's attractions. I would highly recommend this program to anyone interested in the STEM field," says 2019 AMIE Intern, Samuel Coleman. (FED file photo)

Coleman is currently working on his master's degree in structural engineering at the University of Florida.

The Far East District will begin accepting applications for this year's AMIE internship via USA Jobs in January. This opportunity is available to students pursuing a qualifying degree or certificate from an accredited high school, college, trade school, or advanced degree program.

You may learn more about the FED's AMIE program here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dQIoKUVleTg>

(On the right) Samuel Coleman and Oluwaferanmi Olulana bid FED farewell after their 2019 Summer Internship. (FED file photo)



9,000 Hours and an 18-Month Upgrade Prove Fruitful for the FED

By Edwyna W. Brooks
FED Public Affairs

In 2019, Far East District developed a comprehensive plan to identify and subsequently fortify its technological vulnerabilities. This ongoing plan of action spanned 18 months and has involved the onboarding of six new Information Management specialists dedicated to the new endeavor.

The team's existing personnel was sent to Cyber Security, VMware, Red Hat Linux, and other training to optimize the department's technical capabilities. Additionally, the FED's growing information technology requirements warranted an expansion of its virtual hardware and storage, leading to a \$200,000 data center expansion.

"The revamp has increased security and the speed of the systems we're using", says Denny Headrick, Application Administrator and Information Management Operations for the District.

This acquisition expanded the VMware clusters in both the District's primary and secondary sites and resulted in an additional 32 logical central processing units, 18 terabytes of solid-state storage, and an increase of 30 terabytes standard storage increase at each location.

An additional \$460,000 purchase was initiated to put in effect a modern backup solution for FED servers on a daily and weekly basis that would also retain data in the event of a catastrophic system failure. This item was received in February of 2020 and placed into use one short month later in March. This system now backs up 50 servers daily and has the capability to restore



Aaron Aguilar, Information Technology Specialist/Telecommunication Officer works in one of the District's telecommunications rooms. (Photo by Yo Kyong-il)

anything from single files to entire servers. Upgrades in the team's Share-Point application cleared the system's high-security vulnerabilities; meeting all current security standards.

"In this digital age it is essential for us to have fast, secure and reliable computers and networks and this effort greatly increased all of those things for the Far East District. This effort allows our great engineers, designers, and other personnel to perform excellent work," says Edward Stayton, Chief of Operations Service Branch.

Mr. Stayton and his staff of 8 have currently invested over 9,000 man-hours into the IMO overhaul due to be completed in April 2021.

Edward says, "At the start of this project there were many varied things to be done without ample time or resources to do them. As a team, we decided which tasks took priority, we worked on those until completion and then moved on down the list. The

challenge was keeping the momentum for the team but through informal team member sessions and weekly formal meetings, we kept the entire team informed and on track with our progress."

"Our IMO section has undergone a Herculean effort to upgrade, repair, and modernize our network over the past 18-24 months. We have invested a lot of time, money and sweat-equity improving our systems and it has been a huge success," says Deputy Commander, Lt. Col. Dennis McGee.

This extensive project was seamless for the teams outside of the IMO Branch.

Denny Headrick remarks, "It's always rewarding in IT when you can perform a major upgrade without the majority of people being impacted. We had so few issues, most people were unaware of the upgrade."

The IMO Branch is to be commended for their gargantuan effort, set to be concluded in April 2021.

A Mother's Guidance Results in Two Generations of FED Employment

By Edwyna W. Brooks

FED Public Affairs

Success leaves clues and a long-term position with the Far East District gave Mihui Yun great career advice to share with her daughter Emily who discovered a profession in civil engineering by following some good advice from her mother, a 41-year employee of the FED Central Resident Office (CRO) in Osan.

"Emily is smart. I knew she could study and become an engineer and I knew it would provide job security and a good future for her," Mihui Yun says.

Emily heeded her mother's sound guidance and obtained her degree with Mihui's support all the way. Emily says, "My Mom would call me to make sure I was awake and prepared for my college exams throughout my entire college career. Because of my mom, I had the vision to reach for the dream of becoming an engineer and the grit to push through the challenges that were in my way."

Emily Chong was born in Songtan, South Korea and moved to North Carolina at the age of fourteen where she completed her middle and high school education. She graduated from North Carolina State University, due in part to her mother's urging, with a degree in civil engineering. Following graduation, Emily returned to Korea to begin an internship in Osan with Base Civil Engineering. Upon successfully completing the program, she returned to the states and began working for the US Army Corps of Engineers in Georgia's Savannah District as a resident engineer intern where she completed a USACE Pathways Program at Robins Air Force Base.

The Corps' Recent Graduate Program allowed Emily to advance within the organization before using her educational background and on-the-job experience to garner her latest position as a construction control representative for the FED Family Housing Resident Office (FHRO).

"I work with an amazing team. Each person brings their own experiences. For example, Mr. Yi and Mr. Kim Se Tong share their engineering experiences and stories with me. The best thing about working with this set of leaders is the wisdom they share with me about Korean construction along with the information from Mr. Aaron Schuff, another seasoned resident engineer. I am glad to work with the FHRO. Our office takes care of each other and our USACE leadership team is second to none."

When asked if there were anything Emily would like to say to her mother for leading her into a career in engineering, her response was heartfelt and to the point, "Thank you for



Emily is seen here with her mother at graduation. (Photo provided by Yun Mihui)

making me strong. You are the best! I love you and thank you for being my Mom."

Emily's mom, Mihui also had kind words for her daughter. "I am very proud of Emily. She took my advice and made a decision that is good for her future. Thanks for listening to your Mom."

The Corps' Recent Graduate Program allows graduates, within two years of their program completion date, the opportunity to obtain a clear path to federal internships.

You may learn more about this and other Pathways Programs by visiting <https://www.usace.army.mil/Careers/Internships.aspx>.

Safety Apprentice Hones Skills by Taking Over 775 Hours of Training in a Year

By Edwynna W. Brooks
FED Public Affairs

Sometimes a job is created just for you. Such is the case for Gregory Pavelka. In fact, his entry into the FED was almost serendipitous.

Pavelka submitted his application to join the USACE team 1 year and 11 months after graduation, allowing him to take advantage of the Recent Graduate Program. This pathway to federal employment is available to graduates for up to two years after graduation; leaving Gregory one month away from missing the opportunity altogether.

"I wanted to work outside of the United States and accepting an apprenticeship with USACE gave me the chance to do that. I'd served five years in the Marine Corps so coming to Korea wasn't a hard thing for me. When I arrived in February of last year, I didn't waste any time getting familiarized with the area," Gregory says. "I jumped in my car and drove to Kunsan, (about 114 kilometers / 70.81 miles away) to force myself to learn the lay of the land."

Now, as an employee of the Far East District Gregory Pavelka is working in his area of interest. His curiosity in proactive workplace safety measures was ignited when he took an OSHA course in college. Since joining the Corps, he has gone on to take advantage of an array of on-the-job training and is skilled in fall protection, electrical safety, machine guarding, excavation safety, crane safety, and accident investigation among other disciplines in order to most effectively perform safety

inspections.

Since his addition to the USACE team, Gregory has taken 775 hours of combined face to face and virtual training to complete phases 1, 2, 3, and 5 of the CP12 program. He is construction safety certified, the primary instructor for the Red Cross CPR and First Aid training, and the point of contact and technical approver for personal protective equipment.

To date, he has conducted over 49 spot inspections and construction safety audits as a safety apprentice. Gregory also coordinates, plans, inspects, and provides follow-up procedures for Pyeongtaek Resident Office (PRO) construction sites.

"I've been able to combine my education with diplomacy and mentorship to help the District protect its bottom line," Pavelka remarks about his duties. "I want to prevent problems before you even know they exist."

Gregory has also worked with team members from the Construction Division to learn to plan, coordinate, and perform follow-up safety inspections with site employees. "It has been my pleasure to work with people who have 20 plus years of safety experience. Pulling from their wealth of knowledge has really helped me throughout my apprenticeship."

"Although I am not here with my family, at the end of the day, I want to make sure each of our team members makes it home every night to theirs," Gregory says. He also remarks that the comradery between him and his



Safety Apprentice Gregory Pavelka takes over 775 hours of training in a year to hone his safety inspection skills. (FED file photo)

coworkers make being away from his family easier. This safety apprentice says he, "brings good cheer," to his office by making homemade meals and desserts for his coworkers. He spends his spare time hiking.



Stephen Brown: The FED's Proactive Approach to Equal Employment Opportunity

By Edwyna W. Brooks
FED Public Affairs

Stephen Brown, Far East District Equal Employment Opportunity Manager is a former Morse code operator for the US Air Force who discovered his love for taking care of others while serving as a first sergeant.

"It didn't take me long to figure out that advocating for people was my specialty. It was something that came naturally to me," says Mr. Brown. "My first job after the Air Force was as a human resources specialist for Guam Army ROTC. From there, I moved on to my first job as an equal opportunity manager."

That was 18 years ago, and Mr. Brown has never looked back. Now, as the Far East District's foremost authority on workplace diversity and inclusion, he attends all senior leadership meetings with a very involved team who values his advice and empowers his approach to equal opportunity.

"This office is dedicated to retaining and developing the people we have but we are also excited about the opportunity to recruit new talent straight from college via Advancing Minorities in Engineering (AMIE) and the Workforce Recruitment Program. We'd like to see more women here in the STEM field along with additional diversity," says Mr. Brown.

"This is my second time with the Corps and one of the reasons I was happy to return to the organization is because I get to work with a team of professionals. In most other assignments you don't get the opportunity to be proactive and you sometimes find yourself reacting to complaint after complaint. Here, I get to get out, talk to people, and speak to our managers. This approach allows me to address an employee concern before it rises to the level of complaint."

Mr. Brown's proactive approach to equal employment also includes diversity listening sessions with mid-level managers that help District leaders move beyond the discomfort that oftentimes accompanies speaking about race and inclusion in the workplace.

Additionally, he holds lunch and learn sessions that address issues of equality in the workplace. One of this EEO

manger's most recent lunch and learn sessions addressed reasonable accommodations as the Corps reaffirmed its commitment to recruiting, retaining, and advancing disabled individuals throughout the workforce.



Stephen Brown facilitates the conversation on reasonable accommodations for individuals with disabilities in a recent lunch and learn session. (FED file photo)

He leads the vanguard as an advocate and intricate part of District's Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Council. Empowered by FED Commander Christopher Crary, Stephen Brown is able to maintain his proactive approach to EEO via his efforts to continually enhance the District's cultural awareness, identity trends, and best practices. He has helped the organization push past the surface level conversations to address and eliminate cultural stereotypes and simultaneously reinforce what it means to employ equal opportunity management in the workplace.

Mr. Brown explains the joy of working for the FED modestly, "I enjoy being a neutral third party and advocating for others."

Chris Caywood: To the Corps and Beyond

By Edwyna W. Brooks
FED Public Affairs

After four and a half years with the Far East District, Design Branch Chief Chris Caywood is leaving the organization for a new position with the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA).

"I am going to miss the family styled work environment here at the Corps," Chris says. "We have a very cohesive team here that enjoys spending time together be it basketball games or team dinners."

Chris' career began in the private sector where he used his civil engineering background to design subdivisions. From there he was able to utilize his experience to join the Far East District as a Senior Civil Engineer.

Caywood's Design Branch is comprised of a 45-member team of architects, engineering technicians, specification writers, and administrative assistants dedicated to producing

high quality designs and services.

Some of Chris' significant design projects include the US Army Garrison Humphreys Unaccompanied Enlisted Personnel Housing, Kunsan Air Base's Unmanned Aerial Vehicle Hanger, and Camp Walker's new Family Housing construction.

"I've enjoyed the TDY assignments and charrettes with our amazing stakeholders here at the Corps."

Now at Nasa, Chris will be able to use his skills in design to build new facilities as the head of the projects and engineering branch. There he will lead the design and construction facilities program at the Langley Research Center.

"I am looking forward to expanding my experience and knowledge base in Virginia as I embrace their new leadership styles. NASA holds top ranking for their effective leadership style and teamwork. I've worked with an amaz-



Chris Caywood, Design Branch Chief left the FED for NASA after four and a half years of service. (FED file photo)

ing group of people for the last four and a half years. It's time to see what the future holds."



Members of the Far East District celebrate Thanksgiving at FED headquarters with safety measures in place such as masks, social distancing, and returning to their work areas with food to enjoy their meal on Nov. 19. (Photo by O Sang-song)

The Kenneth Helms Travel Guide

By Edwyna W. Brooks
FED Public Affairs

Kenneth Helms, Far East District Contracting Officer is a retired Army diver and former Marine engineer.

“I was born in France and my sister was born in Okinawa, so being around other cultures has always been something easy for me to pick up.”


Having served in Korea in the 80’s during his active duty career, Mr. Helms has been able to see the growth of the Camp Humphreys installation over time.

“You can’t compare what is to what it was. I used to run across the airfield to my barracks. It’s amazing what they’ve done to this place,” says Mr. Helms.

“I had a background as a cost and fixed fee contracting officer, so joining the FED’s relocation team to support their cost and fixed fee actions was a perfect fit.” Falling back into life in Korea was not hard for this Army kid born abroad. In fact, Kenneth and his wife are enjoying their last stint of federal employment before retirement.

“I’ve found that if you try and learn a few words or something about the culture, people will appreciate it and they will show you things.”



This has been a major tenant in Kenneth’s time here in Korea and as is one of the team’s most traveled across the peninsula. He shares his travel guide below.

City/Area	Kenneth’s Review
Taeyan	<p>The beach is amazing. Chollipo Arboretum is probably one of the most amazing gardens, stones, and ocean views I have seen. Visit the small fishing villages for amazing seafood.</p> 
Hyeonchungsa Shrine	Thirty minutes away. Huge park with museum and turtle ship along with Admiral Yi’s residence.
Nan Sak Beach	Lots of great food close to a surfy beach.
Jeounju	World famous restaurant for bibimbop located here.
Danyang Mountain	Caves and a huge village used in many Korean dramas, a beautiful river and space for paragliding.
Namhae	German Village and memorial for Koreans who worked in the German coal mines. Famous for its anchovies, beautiful beaches, and great food.
Gyeongju Historic Area	Bulguksa Temple, Seoguram Grotto and Daereungwon Ancient Tombs.

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The Kenneth Helms Travel Guide

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Yeosu	<p>Nice seaside drive with temples, hikes, and islands.</p> 
Tongyeong	<p>Nice mountain, cable car, and bob sled track down the mountain.</p>
Busan	<p>Haeundae Beach with lots of food, concerts, shopping. Haedong Yonggunsu Temple located on the rocky coast. Gukje Market is a huge market located here with a large variety of items.</p>
Daeya Mountain	<p>Killer hike with a beautiful creek and waterfalls.</p>
Yeoungin Mountain	<p>Thirty minutes away and offers great hiking, zip lining, small museum, and azaleas on the whole side of the mountain in the spring.</p> 

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The Kenneth Helms Travel Guide

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Buyeo	Cliff and park. 
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“I find something I like in everything,” Kenneth Helms says. He plans to continue traveling and sight-seeing with

his wife, Carrie. Additionally, they have visited Thailand and Bali.



(Photo on the left) Col. Garrett Cottrell (left), Deputy Commanding Officer – Transformation, United States Army Corps of Engineers Far East District, Gen. Kim Seung-kyum (center), Combined Forces Command (CFC) deputy commander, and Stephen Bruch, U.S. Forces Korea Transformation and Restationing Director (right) visited the four star housing to benchmark future CFC Deputy Commander residence at U.S. Army Garrison Humphreys Nov. 18. (FED file photos)

FED Holiday Decorations



20-12

01 December 2020

Tips to Help You Safely Deck Your Halls

Christmas is coming quickly, and decorating will soon bring us all joy. Joy can quickly be replaced with misery and despair when our decorations cause an incident. We've already experienced one fire this year by a contractor, so we do not want to repeat their mistakes. Please follow the simple fire prevention rules below to keep everyone in the buildings we occupy safe.



- ✓ Trees and decorations: Only labeled as fire retardant trees, wreaths and other decorations are allowed in FED. Place it at least three feet (one meter) away from a heat source, and near an electrical outlet. Never put candles on a tree.
- ✓ Decorations may not be hung from or be affixed to fire protection equipment or systems including but not limited to sprinklers, smoke detectors, and strobe lights nor shall they be placed so as to block visibility from, or access to fire protection items and systems. Decorations or displays shall not be located so as to obstruct any exit corridor, doorway or stair. No decorations or other objects shall be permitted that reduce corridor clearances to less than eight feet.
- ✓ Lighting: Electric lighting shall be UL listed, not overload circuits or lighting sets, nor shall extension cords be used. All outside lighting must have GFCI protection. Wiring shall not be frayed or in any way be altered from its original configuration. Wiring shall not be strung across walking surfaces, through doors or ceilings, or placed under carpeting. All electrical lighting must be approved by facilities and the safety office to ensure there will be no overloading of circuits. Before you string on the lights, inspect the bulbs, sockets, and cords for damage. String no more than three strands of lights together.
- ✓ Decorate Doors: Fire and smoke doors may not be decorated more than 10%. Open flames of any type (including candles) for holiday parties or displays are prohibited. All combustible holiday and party decorations shall be removed from the area immediately following the event. Gift wrapping of fire doors and other building fire-protection components is prohibited.
- ✓ The Section supervisors/CDSOs will: Inspect all holiday decorations and ensure they verify that flame retardant and properly displayed.
- ✓ If you have any question, contact the safety office at 755-6523/6107!

Make sure you keep these safety tips in mind to keep your Holidays a joyous occasion for everyone!

