

# Engineering IN EUROPE

## Joint Task Force East

District takes first steps in Romania to set up shop for incoming troops

## Partnering with our neighbors

Open minds and open discussions move District in the right direction



US Army Corps  
of Engineers  
Europe District  
Vol. 3 Fall 2006

# From the Commander



## By embracing change positively and fostering business partnerships, we will build a better future

There is one interesting and ironic aspect of our lives that is constant: Change!

Some view change as difficult and stressful, whereas others welcome it with open arms. Some label change as bad; others, good. No matter how you view it, we need to seek ways to embrace change in a positive manner that promotes success.

Many things have effected change over the past year and a half since I've been in command. From business processes to adjustments in the workforce, the District continues to be flexible to maintain the momentum of its substantial success.

However, we are not alone in our endeavor to achieve our highest potential. Customers, local national partners, and contractors all play key roles along with us in striving for excellence.

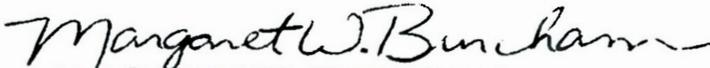
Europe District holds a partnering conference every year to discuss the development of previous or ongoing projects and to introduce new initiatives to its business partners. District employees, *bauamt* personnel, architect and engineering firms, and customers gathered in Wiesbaden Nov. 8-9, to share their thoughts on carving a direction for this next year.

District employees suggested last year that the *bauamts* consider the District's evaluations of Architect-Engineering firms when making pre-selection decisions on project awards. The proposal to have a database of ratings was accepted by the group this year as a topic for continued discussion and analysis.

It was suggested that those involved with ongoing actions try to interact on a more frequent basis. This was suggested to help cultivate some of the initiatives and to continue the momentum started at these annual conferences. Clearly, our goal is to increase quality communication among partners.

These annual gatherings certainly help build a rapport between the District and its partners. I want to thank all of those who attended. Your commitment to enhancing our communication and working together through these changes will lead toward a more efficient business process and a more effective construction product.

(Editor's note: For more specific information on this topic, please read "Partnering with our neighbors" on pages 10-13.)

  
MARGARET W. BURCHAM  
COL, EN  
Commanding

# Engineering in Europe

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### On the Cover

Chief of Engineers Lt. Gen. Carl A. Strock, the Commanding General of USACE, explains the organization's strategic direction to participants at the Dec. 12, 2006, town hall ceremony at the Taunus Theater in Wiesbaden. During the presentation, Strock described how USACE serves as a global organization and provided guidance on how the audience could personally help address worldwide engineering and environmental challenges.

Cover photo by Volker Ramspott, TSAE-TSC Wiesbaden

## Successful Army lodging program in progress



Graphic by Marisa Richards

*Story and graphic illustrations by Justin Ward*

**F**ive new Army Lodging facilities are currently being designed by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Europe District, making for the biggest undertaking of its kind in Europe.

Dorothy Richards, the program manager of the facilities team, has been working with representatives from MWR's Army Lodging office and the Army Community and Family Support Center (CFSC), now called Family and Morale,

Welfare, and Recreation (FMWR), for more than a year on finalizing locations and size requirements of the new facilities.

In total, the five projects amount to more than \$112 million and account for 639 new hotel rooms, located throughout the European theater.

"This is the largest lodging push that I've witnessed," said Richards, who has been involved in non-appropriated funds projects like these since she arrived at the District in 2002.

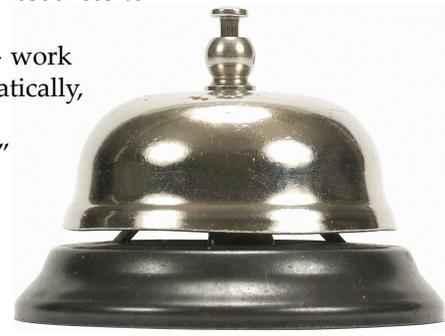
The lodging push comes as a result of the issuance of the Army's restationing plan, which details a final blueprint for where U.S. forces will be stationed in Europe. The results of that study show the military's forces amassing in several existing military facilities, including Chievres, Wiesbaden, Stuttgart, Ansbach, and Grafenwöhr.

Through the course of discussions following the restationing plan's issuance, Richards' team, run by program

manager Steven Daniels, learned that the existing lodging facilities at some of these "enduring installations" were deemed inadequate to meet the predicted future needs of the installation. Consequently, new lodging facilities were ordered at each of the above-mentioned sites – and the resulting requests for design and engineering support came to the District.

"We're excited to get the work," said Richards. "We're an engineering and construction business; that's what we do. This is big for the Army and big for the District."

Normally, requests for new Army Lodging facilities are few and far between, said Chris Parry, a lodging project manager. So, to appropriately respond to the surge of work, Parry said his office decided to "stand up a team and dedicate resources to it from that perspective – work it programmatically, rather than individually."



That team, composed of Parry and Patrick Roybal, a lodging project manager, was able to think ahead and pioneer a new way of standardizing designs in Europe, said Richards. The foresight helped them confront the potential design and redesign issues before they even emerged, she said. "Chris and Patrick are both doing a great job as PMs. They're very conscientious and they know the status of the projects. It makes for a good project delivery team."

In the past, because requests for new Army lodging facilities were infrequent, the room design in each new facility could be handled uniquely, without much regard for precedents. However, the freedom of design often led to costly last-minute modifications, ranging from changing the type of ceiling fan to repositioning internal walls.

With five new facilities budding, the District's team knew that the simplest solution would be to standardize the rooms, effectively making puzzle-piece modules that could be placed into the hotel's blueprints. "As long as they keep the integrity of what the room size and layout is, they can almost orient it anywhere and in anyway to make it fit the architecture," said Roybal. "So, in a way it sort of simplifies for

## Wiesbaden Lodge



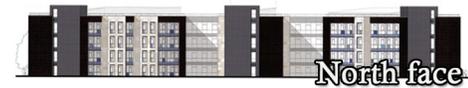
**UP CLOSE:**

Cost: **\$32M**

Construction award: **summer 2007**

Size: **164 units**

Interesting fact: **Ultra-modern design**



North face

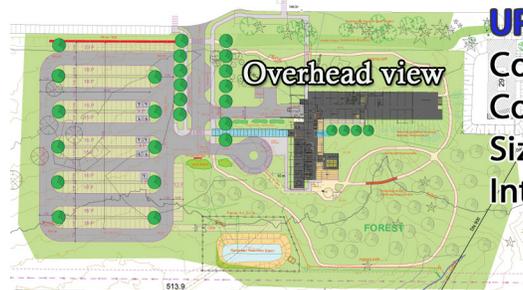


South face



East face

## Stuttgart Lodge



**UP CLOSE:**

Cost: **\$34M**

Construction award: **fall 2008**

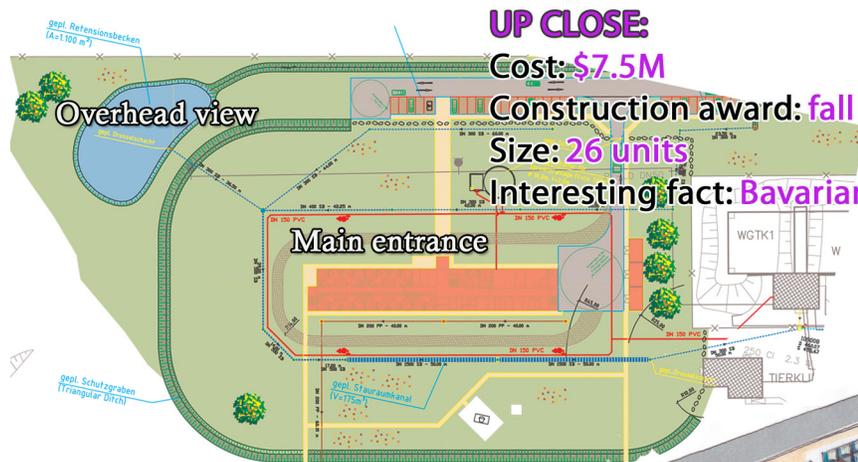
Size: **218 units**

Interesting fact: **Seven stories**



South face

## Ansbach Lodge



**UP CLOSE:**

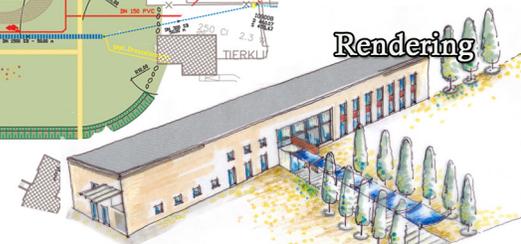
Cost: **\$7.5M**

Construction award: **fall 2008**

Size: **26 units**

Interesting fact: **Bavarian design**

Rendering



# Chievres Lodge

## UP CLOSE:

Cost: **\$15M**

Construction award: **spring 2007**

Size: **95 units**

Interesting fact: **Services NATO, SHAPE communities**



them – located in Wiesbaden, Grafenwöhr, Ansbach, and Stuttgart – will incorporate the standard room modules.

The \$31 million, 164-room Wiesbaden lodge will be the first hotel to be built using the standardized modules, said Roybal.

“From that one project, we’ve now established a standard for all new-build projects,” he added.

The standardized room modules come in three sizes – standard, extended stay, and extended stay family suite.

But although their appearance may be more traditional in nature, Roybal said the exteriors of the buildings are not impacted by the rooms.

The exterior design for the Wiesbaden lodge, for example, is ultra-modern, said Roybal, incorporating a curved lobby and futuristic entrance. “We’re very satisfied with the design. It’s unique, functional, and meets the users’ requirements. It’s probably the best architectural design I’ve seen in my career.”

Construction for the Wiesbaden lodge is expected to start in summer 2007 and be completed by spring 2009.

# Grafenwöhr Lodge

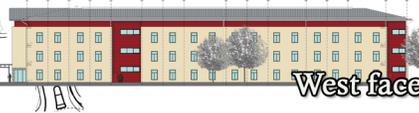
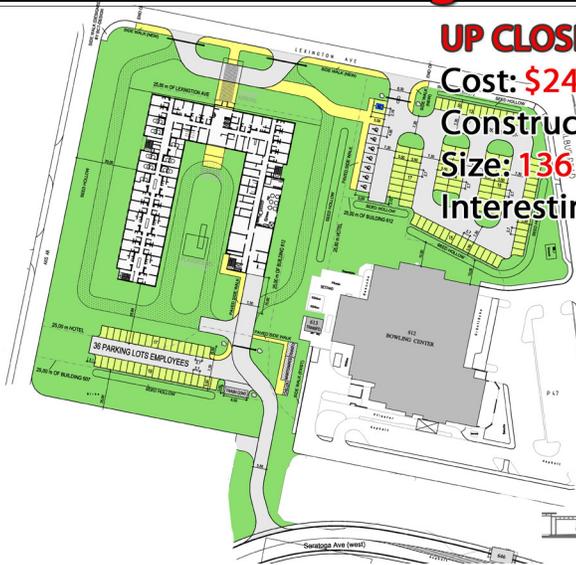
## UP CLOSE:

Cost: **\$24M**

Construction award: **spring 2008**

Size: **136 units**

Interesting fact: **Near PX, commissary**



them how to lay out the facility.”

This doesn’t mean that the new lodges will be cookie-cutter, said Parry. “That’s not the case at all. The finishes will be different, as will the colors, the textures – all that stuff is going to match the architecture of the building and the local area. These are just the standard for the rooms.”

The standardization also simplifies work for other Corps employees, said Parry. “The

direction that an architect or a mechanical engineer is giving the Wiesbaden A-E (Architect-Engineering firm) is the same direction they’re giving the Grafenwöhr A-E because they know what the requirements are and what the desires are for Army Lodging because they’re working all the Army Lodging products,” he said. “So we’re not doing different things. It just makes it more efficient.”

Of the five new hotels, four of

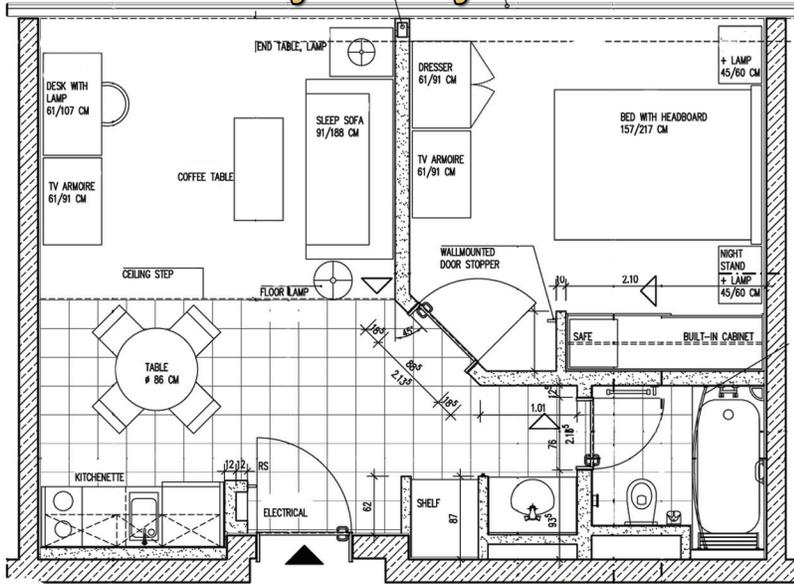
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Construction for the Wiesbaden lodge is expected to start in summer 2007 and be completed by spring 2009.

# Lodging Room Modules

## Standard Floor Plans

### Extended Stay Family Suite



UP CLOSE:

Size: 450 square feet

(41.82 square meters)

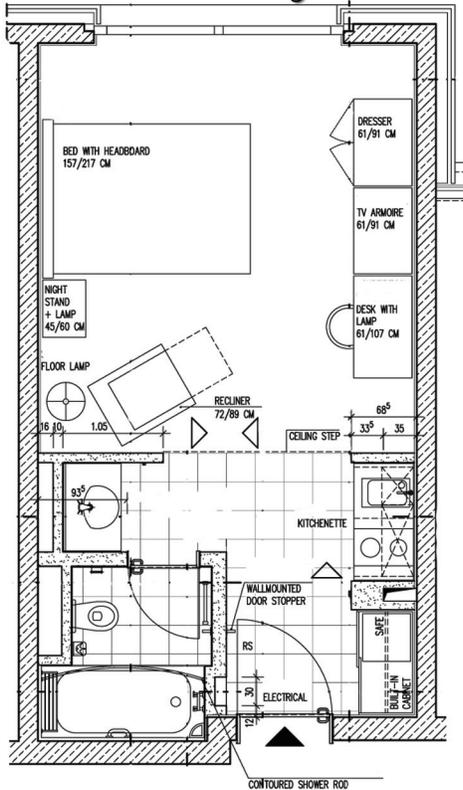
Dimensions: 7.62m x 5.65m

Functionality: PCSing family

Unique aspects: Kitchenette, separate living and bedroom areas

Interesting fact: Can be connected with Standard Guest Room

### Extended Stay Guest Room



UP CLOSE:

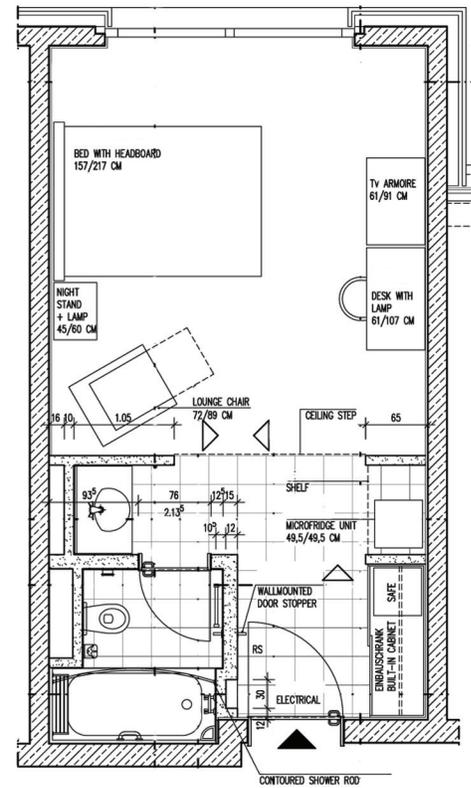
Size: 300 square feet (27.88 square meters)

Dimensions: 3.96m x 7.3m

Functionality: PCSing couple or single

Unique aspect: Kitchenette

### Standard Guest Room



UP CLOSE:

Size: 300 square feet

(27.88 square meters)

Dimensions: 3.96m x 7.3m

Functionality: Normal TDY guest

Unique aspect: Microfridge unit

Interesting fact: Can be connected with Extended Stay Family Suite

## MENTORING THE engineers of tomorrow

*Story and photos  
by Justin Ward*



In school, most of us learn a lot of theory. Class after class and book after book, the academic theories we learn pile up. Usually, it's only when we start our first job out of school that we actually put that theory to practice and can discern the abstract from the concrete.

However, for highschoolers at General H.H. Arnold High School in Wiesbaden, Germany, putting theory into practice can be done before they even graduate.

Through the school's career practicum program, students take several hours each week to understand the actual employment settings for a job that they are interested in learning more about.

It is designed to provide school-to-career experiences and training to students interested in finding out more about actual employment settings, allowing them to acquire learning and self-management tools as well as apply learned problem solving skills in the work environment.

For Victor Klunk, a senior who is enrolled in the

program, that job is (potentially) mechanical engineering.

"I myself have never really had a job before," said Klunk, who spends about three hours each week with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Europe District. "And this program gives you a look on the inside of what it's going to be like when you're not in high school and you don't really have your parents around to help you with everything."

At the District, Klunk has been learning about both mechanical engineering and computer-aided design from John Wutzer, a mechanical engineer who has volunteered to be Klunk's mentor for the year.

Wutzer said he's glad to see students like Klunk get the chance to test out the field early on because the work experience teaches both the technical and social aspects of the workplace.

"He's taken on everything that we've given him so far," Wutzer said of Klunk. "Anything that's needed to get done, he's been right there for us."

Wutzer said he volunteered to mentor a student

in the program before and thought the experience was beneficial to both the student and the District.

"We were very busy at the time trying to get a lot of projects out," he said. "So, when somebody came along who was willing to learn and help us out, it certainly helped us meet a lot of deadlines."

In total, about 60 students from the high school participate in the program each year, said Duane Kroseman, the high school's program manager. These students' career interests vary greatly, he added, but the majority of the students are able to find employers whose missions align with the students' interests.

Originally, the program was meant to act as a capstone for the students, said Kroseman, piecing together the knowledge the students learned throughout high school into a cumulative format.

But the students don't look at the program as being a capstone, he added. "They are looking for an experience right now. They're looking at it as being a 'let's-try-this-out-and-see-what-this-feels-like' class."

Most students leave the class having gained maturity, responsibility, and interpersonal skills, Kroseman said. "And a lot of them feel like they gain the

experience of seeing what a job situation really looks like, as opposed to sitting in a classroom, opening a book, and listening to a teacher talk."

He said he believes many students enter the class simply because they want to feel like they've grown up a bit. "Maybe just getting the chance to move away from the school," he proffered.

Some even say they learn what they don't want to do in the future, Kroseman said.

The program is very popular and successful with both students and employers, Kroseman added, with students getting class credit and real-life experience and employers getting some much-needed help.

"Most of my employers are repeat employers," said Kroseman. "In fact, the Corps of Engineers in particular has been

very useful to me in the last few years," he added, mentioning that the District has been participating in the program for more than 10 years.

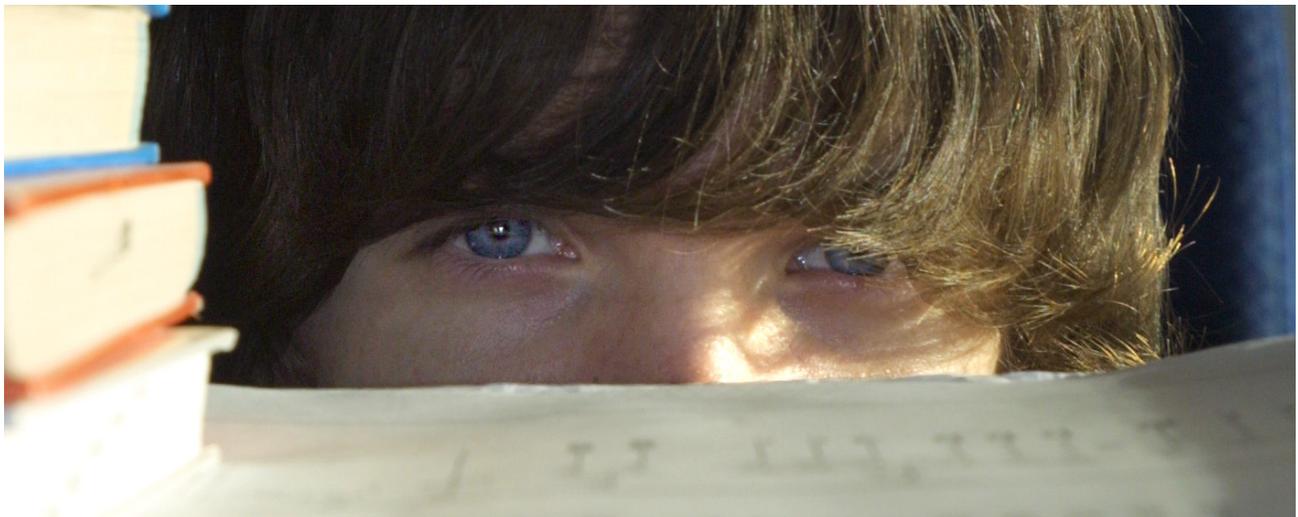
"We're just thankful to have the no-cost help," said Wutzer. "And we're glad to see these students come in and get a chance to work in the field. I wish I had had the opportunity this young."

Wutzer said he hopes the Corps of Engineers makes an impression on Klunk, but moreover hopes Klunk takes the opportunity to find out what's best for him. "I hope it assists him in making the decision on what

would be the best career choice for him in the future, because it would be a shame for someone to think that maybe engineering is the right path for them, take it, go to school for four years, and then get out and say, wow, I wish I hadn't done this."

**"We're glad to see these students come in and get a chance to work in the field. I wish I had had the opportunity this young."**

**-John Wutzer,  
mechanical  
engineer**



## partnering with our neighbors

For two consecutive years now, the District's annual partnering conference has been a huge success. Open forums, open arms, and open minds made way for the development and follow-through of some of the most progressive initiatives taken in recent history, indicating the direction to take on the road to success. Momentum is truly in the making. What will happen next?

*Story and photos by Justin Ward  
Graphic by Marisa Richards*



**L**ike clockwork, Europe District holds a partnering conference every year to discuss the development of previous or ongoing projects and to introduce new initiatives to its business partners. And for years, the feedback was the same – progress is good, now what?

But the past two years have been different.

Last year's annual partnering conference saw its share of action, with the District bringing forth 10 new proposals, many of which may have been deemed too progressive only a couple years earlier, said Gary Meden, the District's project management branch chief.

According to Meden, it was the first time such progressive initiatives intending to standardize some complicated and irregular processes throughout Germany were brought up publicly. Previously, Meden said he heard a lot of the same issues being discussed, but only during breaks.

"Last year was the first time I actually had a whole presentation on things we wanted them to do to help us," said Meden.

But there was some push back, Meden admitted. "That's OK. There's always going to be push back because change isn't easy."

At this year's conference, participants saw a continuation of that progress, said Meden. So much so, that the traditionally staid conference was alive with energy, taking on an air of openness

and directness not seen in the five years that Meden has been on the job.

"A lot of the things we brought up last year, they've been thinking about for a year and that's probably why they were a little impassioned about it," Meden said. "Once they saw it was OK to open up issues to the entire floor, it got everyone thinking that way. Hopefully every year will be like that."

According to Meden, it was "the best two-way communication we've had at any partnering conference."

The frank discussions at the conference, held Nov. 8 and 9 in Wiesbaden, started with a presentation of how the public law coordination process works and quickly led to an opinion-gathering session on the benefits and concerns of using such a process.

After the initial presentations, open and

candid discussions continued over the two-day conference. The desire to express ideas and discuss even previously dormant initiatives spread infectiously, said Meden. Discussions were encouraged even when they exceeded the scheduled times by more than an hour, he added.

One of the issues discussed was an initiative put forth by the Corps last year requesting that *bauamts*, or German construction agents, complete written evaluations of the performance of the construction contractors. Although initially met with some rejoinders, the proposal was later accepted by the group as a topic for future discussion. The District will work with some *bauamts* in 2007 to start these evaluations on a trial basis.

"Any time you bring up 10 issues ... there's little to no chance that all 10 of them will move

**"... the best two-way communication we've had at any partnering conference."**

**-Gary Meden, project management branch chief**

**Erhard Frey, assistant branch chief for the District's host-nation programs, presents to stakeholders at the partnering conference the new spreadsheet for the tracking of secondary services costs. The conference, held at the Ramada in Wiesbaden Nov. 8 and 9, made great strides in building rapport among the attending organizations.**



forward at the same speed,” said Meden. “But at least it gets people thinking about the ideas so that we can have a discussion the following year and move forward. Several of the issues did move forward since last year’s conference.”

Winfried Schuch, from LBB Idar-Oberstein, said of this year’s conference: “This is how it should be.” Open, two-way communication is essential to progress, he said, because while it doesn’t always resolve all the issues immediately, it gets them out on the table for others to think about. But he also added that the discussions have to continue outside of the conference.

“Outside of these meetings here, we have to get more independent working groups together,” he said. “I prefer to have working groups for special points ... meeting four or five times a year, and then [presenting] the solution to the auditorium.”

Matthias Marks, *leitender Baudirektor*, SHBA Reutlingen, agreed, adding that day-to-day business often gets in the way of these discussions. “And if you come together once a year then it’s just an exchange, it doesn’t go further than that. You can never do more than just raise an issue or question or give a suggestion.”

One forward-thinking initiative proposed last year that took wings outside the conference walls is called the “A-E selection” initiative, in which the District has asked to be a part of the A-E (Architect-Engineering firm) selection process normally reserved solely for the *bauamts*.

“In the past, we’ve noticed that the U.S. has sometimes been displeased with our choice of the designer,” said Marks. But after having been the lead manager on a project that included the District in the A-E selection process, he said he’s very happy with the outcome and believes the concept should be broadened to make it the rule, not the exception.

Schuch, who recently included the District on an A-E selection board to build a C-130 hangar on Ramstein Air Base, said he felt comfortable with the partnership because he knew that the District’s

early approval would mean endorsement throughout the project.

“We wanted to know that everyone could accept the A-E,” he said. “If we cannot come together we cannot hire them.”

One caveat to the initiative put forth by Schuch was the minimum threshold for involving the District in the A-E selection. “We must have a borderline. It can’t be done for a project of \$1 million or whatever,” he said, arguing that the time and labor costs to the *bauamt* would be the same as the costs for a larger project.

Marks concurred, reasoning that the inclusion of



**Matthias Marks, *leitender Baudirektor*, SHBA Reutlingen, gives short remarks after accepting several Silver Castle awards on behalf of his team at this year’s partnering conference. At the conference, Marks discussed with participants his organization’s experience with the “two-step search procedure” for an Army Lodge project in Böblingen.**



**Col. Margaret Burcham gives closing remarks after thanking the guests at this year's partnering conference at the Ramada hotel in Wiesbaden. In total, more than 50 of the District's most important stakeholders came to the meeting, which took place Nov. 8 and 9.**

the District in A-E selection should depend on the situation.

"There shouldn't be a regulation that says when the U.S. should and should not be involved," Marks said, "but rather it should be done on a case-by-case basis."

Meden said he was glad to see such an active discussion at this year's conference and added that the candor helped create opportunities to advance some of the initiatives even further.

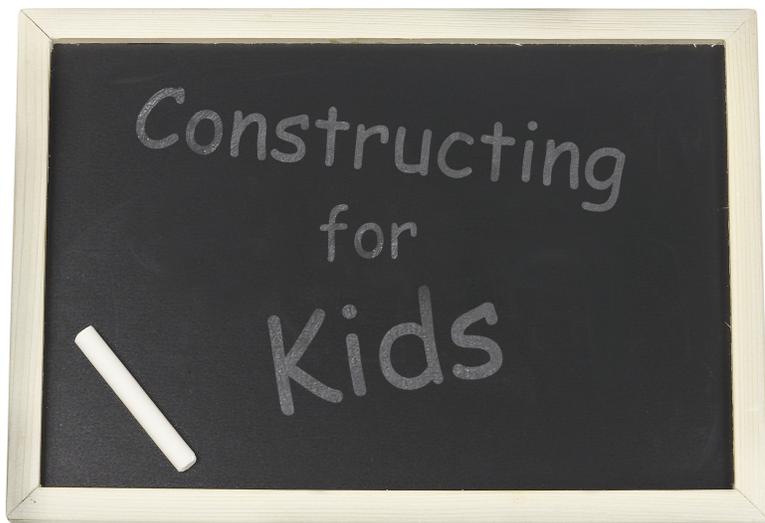
"I'm happy with the progress that we made from last year's conference," Meden said, "and am looking forward to seeing what next year's has in store."

Since the conference, discussions have continued, said Meden. In late November, several District members including the district commander met to discuss initiatives with several local and regional *bauamt* personnel in Rheinland-Pfalz. The future, Meden said, holds even more of these discussions in store.

### at a glance...

## NAU's top, ongoing partnering initiatives

- **Cross-leveling work** – The District is seeking creative ways to equitably share work between bauamts as well as introduce the concept of standard design centers.
- **A-E selection** – The District is seeking to have a voice in the A-E selection process.
- **Contractor schedules** – The District is requesting a more detailed construction schedule, including interim completion milestones, critical path, and clear end dates.
- **Contractor evaluations** – The District is seeking to make an official database of the A-E firms' evaluations of construction contractors.
- **Functional designs** – Also known as Design-Build, the District is looking to expand to all bauamts the ability to award construction contracts based on functional designs.



## DoDDS partnership advances projects

Problems, amendments, modifications, and interpretations. Each element can tax a relationship to the point of collapse. And on many design and engineering projects, these elements can arise. But through strong project management plans, aggressive flexibility, and, above all, a human touch, partnerships in this arena can flourish. With that goal in mind, DoDDS-Europe and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Europe District, have found a way to make it work.

*Story by Justin Ward*

Sixty years ago, when the Department of Defense Dependents Schools (DoDDS) was established, school-aged dependents of American DoD employees living in Europe had it rough. Some “schools” were in requisitioned houses, barracks, or unused utility buildings. Empty shell cases were made into lamps. The teachers only had red chalk, which was said to turn into tempura paint when mixed with water.

Thankfully, DoDDS has evolved.

Today, DoDDS-Europe has 98 schools and about 40,000 students. All schools are fully accredited and produce some of the smartest students in the American pool, with test scores consistently higher than national averages.

Some of the most technologically advanced classes include video production, robotics, CADD, and the Cisco Learning Institute.

Many of these high-tech classrooms owe their existence to the employees of the Corps of Engineers, Europe District, who have been responsible for their design and construction.

“The support that the project managers give us – and everybody behind the scenes as well – I don’t think we could ask for too much more,” said Tim Krause, DoDDS Europe security program manager. “Even when we do run into bumps in the road, we

can sit down and work it out. You can’t ask for more from the Corps.”

Currently, the District is working on more than \$85 million in projects for DoDDS, said Mark Brideweser, the District’s DoDDS program manager.

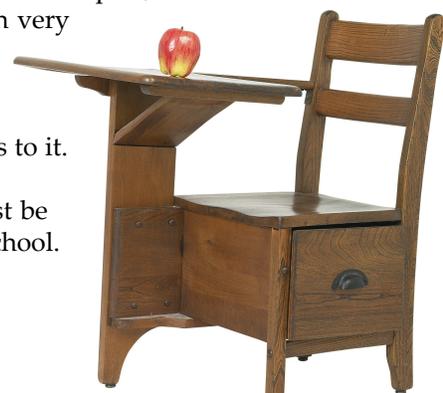
One large and complex project the District is currently managing is the design of a renovation and addition for Gen. H.H. Arnold High School in Wiesbaden. The project, estimated at about \$15 million, is very complex, said Dana Luedtke, the project manager, involving the construction of a new gym and new specialty classrooms, such as art, music, cosmetology, and JROTC.

The relationships Luedtke has built with both DoDDS and construction personnel over the years has made her projects successful, she said.

“It’s always helpful if you work with people from previous projects,” she said. “Whatever problems we have, we can always solve it quickly.”

On the DoDDS side, Wayne Hartmann, the chief of facilities and security branch for DoDDS Europe, said the Wiesbaden project is large and complex, but added that the District has been very flexible in dealing with the constraints of the site.

“It’s a big project,” said Hartmann, “with a lot of pieces to it. And it’s a tough site due to the topography and because it must be built adjacent to our existing school.



It's been difficult, but we're continuing to work to find the best solution."

The largest program the District is managing is the \$36 million Netzaberg complex, currently under construction at Grafenwöhr.

"That is the highlight of our program," said Brideweser. "It's interesting and challenging, but I think we have built the relationships there to make it work."

The man on the ground at Grafenwöhr, Walter Bogdanow, the deputy resident engineer, agreed that Netzaberg is a difficult project with significant challenges in both design and construction, but he added that the relationship with both the DoDDS representatives as well as the construction agent has made the project run more smoothly.

One of the many great people Bogdanow has worked with in the last two-and-a-half years has been Michael Lueb of the local *Baudienststelle*, said Bogdanow. "He's a real hard charger. Totally dedicated."

Bogdanow said that, because of Lueb, many difficult challenges are being resolved. "He's not concerned with purely architectural aspects, but also

mechanical, electrical and civil works. It's great to have one person to be able to go to on the project and get things done. We've been blessed to be working with him on this difficult project."

Hartmann said that, although the project is not problem free, it has been progressing well and he is optimistic.

"The Corps worked with us well to come up with a good team," Hartmann said. "We were able to get an A-E that we had worked with successfully before, and we were happy about that."

In addition to traditional military construction projects, the District also helps DoDDS stay current on force protection measures.

The program, currently being implemented at 13 schools, analyzes the security risk at each DoDDS school on a rotating basis, completing the cycle in about three years, said Hartmann. Any security vulnerability found during the analysis is addressed, said Hartmann, and protected against.

Hartmann inspects these schools personally with the help of District force protection representative Carrol Harris.

"Working with those guys is my favorite part of the job," said Harris of the DoDDS personnel involved with the project. "We have a project management plan that's pretty well done and we have the right contracting vehicles. The whole team just works really well."



Hartmann said he deliberately chose the Corps for this project because of its broad expertise.

"It's purely voluntary for us," he said of the decision to hire the District to assess and fix security vulnerabilities. "There aren't many places that have the interdisciplinary piece that covers the entire gamut of military force protection. I think it's been a really good program. And we're particularly pleased with Carroll Harris."

Brideweser said that, although the relationship between DoDDS and the District has been ongoing for many years, the decision to use the Corps is still a choice.

"They choose to work with us because they know our knowledge base and they know our services," Brideweser said. "We just hope to provide the flexibility they require when issues and challenges arise."



Photo by Seth Robson

An aerial view of Grafenwöhr's Netzaberg school complex shows the state of construction as of October 2006. When complete, the \$36 million project, consisting of an elementary school and a middle school, will accommodate about 1,400 students.



Photo by Amy Baker

## romania joint task force - east

*Story by Justin Ward*

A thin, muddy road gently follows the curve of the rolling green hills in this part of Romania, forming a fine border between one small-scale subsistence farmer's parcel and another.

This cracked thoroughfare, barely more than a well-worn cart path, has seen its share of horse-drawn wagons through the years. They serve as symbols of the simple, agrarian lifestyle that has existed here for hundreds of years and attest to the hardy spirit of the community.

Yet soon, the familiar clip-clop sounds of the carts will fade. In their place will be booms and beeps of construction. Progress. Near this stretch of green earth will be the first enduring U.S. military presence in a former Warsaw Pact country: Joint Task Force - East, Romania.

At 353 feet above sea level, in a largely unpopulated agricultural region about 16 miles northwest of the port city of Constanta, Romania, there is an arborous, limited-use military facility called the Mihail Kogălniceanu 34th – or simply, MK.

The 78 buildings on this abandoned base that once supported about 3,000 troops are old, the vast majority not considered salvageable. The site itself is austere and overgrown, with only a minimal caretaker staff remaining on base.

Before long, demolition and construction will start on MK, making way for invited U.S. troops who are estimated to arrive as early as mid-2008 as part of the U.S. military's transformation process.

Between now and then, however, an army of red, Corps of Engineers castle logos will pop up – from the sides of trailers to the backs of jackets of engineers walking around, conducting inspections.

The engineers and other employees from Europe District will be setting the stage for an influx of about 130 staffers, local nationals, and as many as 2,100 service members rotating through this co-use facility at any given time.

District employees there will be planning, designing, and managing the construction of basic facilities, including billeting, a clinic, and a communications center that will run the nearby armor and infantry training ranges. These facilities, to be used for training and mobilization,



*Photo by Jessica Schoplick, AMEC GmbH*



**Mihail Kogălniceanu, former publicist, historian, and Prime Minister of Romania, for whom the base is named.**

**Large and colorful trees distinguish the Mihail Kogălniceanu base from the surrounding wheat and soy fields of the agricultural Black Sea basin. The base, located only about 10 miles from the Black Sea, sees relatively mild weather the majority of the year.**

will breathe new life into this old installation.

More importantly, they will bring capital to a country just starting its partnership with NATO and still gearing up for its Jan. 1 entrance into the European Union.

In October, the first stirrings of a rebirth began to appear on MK, with representatives from the District's environmental and logistics offices heading to the base to take important first steps in helping this foreign base meet current U.S. military standards.

Amy Baker, an environmental protection specialist with the District, went to the joint-use MK installation situated next to the Constanta International Airport for a couple days in late October to better understand the current environmental conditions and assess possible site contamination.

"We did a visual inspection to look at the surface features and buildings and figure out what kind of activities they did there," Baker said. "That kind of helps you decide where you're going to do environmental sampling and drilling."

Baker said during the contractor's field work, emphasis is placed on both a visual inspection as

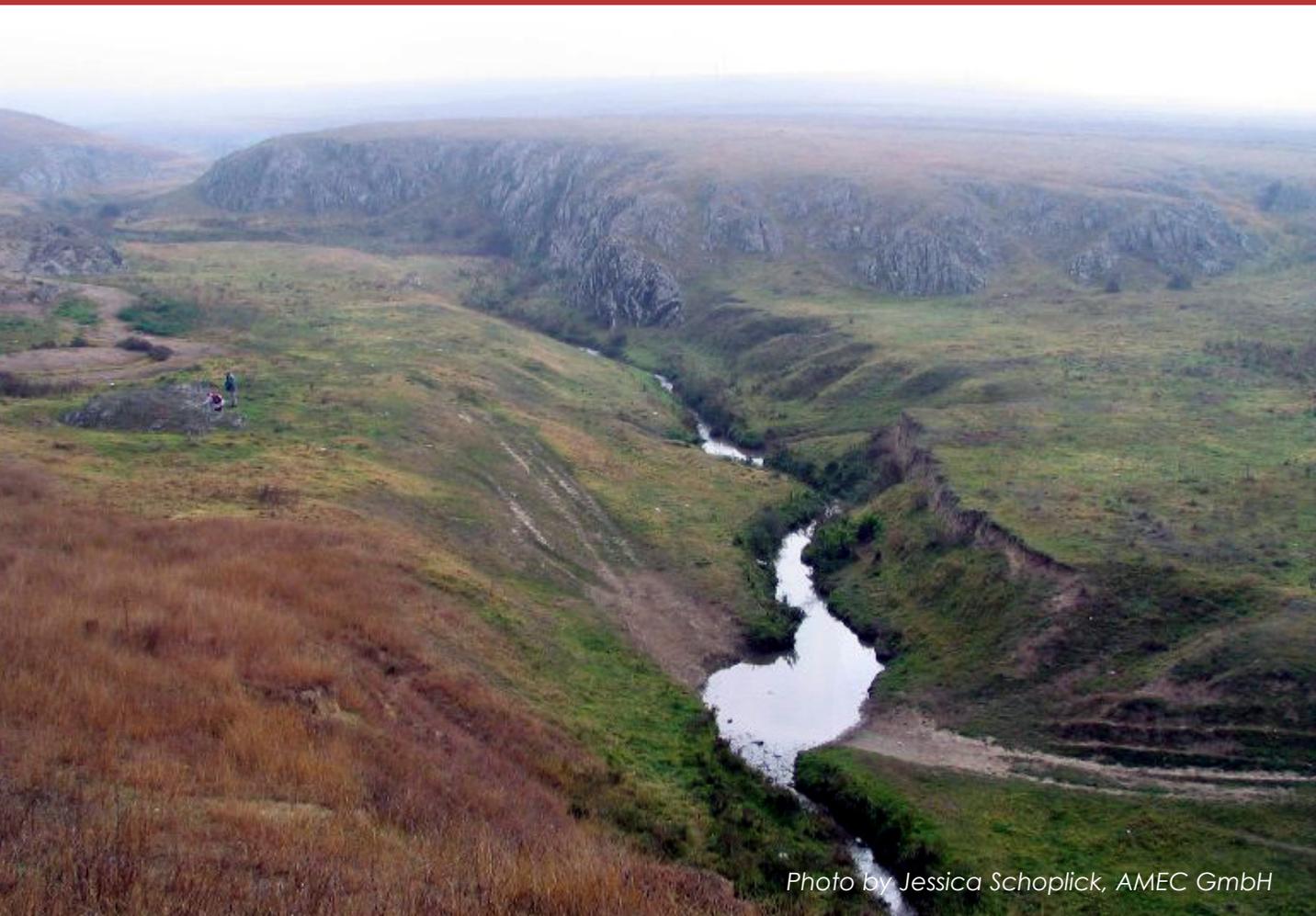


Photo by Jessica Schoplick, AMEC GmbH

**The rural lands surrounding the MK site in southeast Romania will soon be the backyard of an estimated 2,100 troops rotating through the site at any given time. The first stirrings of development began recently, with personnel from Europe District arriving to plan for the influx of rotating troops.**

well as on what's called 'sniffing' the soil, which she said helps determine the most likely areas of contamination.

During the inspection, Baker said her team found a burn pit, a small landfill, a forgotten munitions bunker with various unknown types of ammunition inside, and various under- and aboveground storage tanks, all of which were potential environmental hazards. These sites, and more, were chosen as drilling sites, she said, where soil samples will be taken to about 10-12 meters.

Although the actual results

from the samples won't be known for another couple of months, ultimately, the findings will both provide a snapshot of the present environmental condition, including any potential health hazards or environmental concerns, as well as serve as a record for post-deployment environmental actions.

On the logistics side, Kevin Anderson, the District's logistics chief, went to the site in early November for a boots-on-the-ground fact-finding tour.

Anderson said his job there was manifold, from setting up

the lodging contracts, to purchasing basic supplies, to figuring out how Corps employees will get to work every day.

"We are the initial party going in," he said. "We are the first steps on the ground ... starting in the middle of nothing. No military support, nothing. It's like throwing us in the middle of the desert and saying, 'make it happen.' "

Logistically, Anderson's task is to set up an office to support up to 11 people.

"We're thinking about getting a big container for the office –



Photo by Jessica Schoplick, AMEC GmbH



Photo by Jessica Schoplick, AMEC GmbH

**A 1910 casino stands as a main attraction in the downtown area of the Eastern Romanian port town of Constanta, located only about 25 miles from the MK site. In summer, tourism is a principal industry here.**

probably about 20 feet by 40 feet. Then we can load it up with office furniture, supplies. You know, enough to get them by for a couple of months. I'm thinking about pallets of papers, pens, you name it. Just for daily operation."

Another big issue Anderson is facing is how the employees will get to the office each day.

His options, he said, are leasing vehicles, renting vehicles, or using General Services Administration (GSA) vehicles. None of these options, he said, were easy.

"The information I found out was that leasing vehicles was outrageous. First, it's lease-to-own. They won't have just a plain old lease option. And the rental companies ... You're looking at 24,000 euros a year just to rent vehicles. The other option is taking GSA [vehicles] down there. But then we have to transfer it down there, figure out the insurance and licensing and the Romanian laws."

While Anderson's work may be cut out for him, he said he enjoyed the trip and saw it as a big learning experience.

"This whole first trip was like

– wow – an eye-opener," he said. "An amazing experience."

He said the Romanians he met served as great hosts, catering to his every need. "They'll do translations for you or whatever else you want," he said. "They are bending over backward to help."

He further explained his amazement through one

particular illustration: "There was a 14-year-old little kid going down the road passing cars on a horse. Bareback," he said. "I don't know if that was common, but still."

He said scenes like these bring up unique safety challenges.

"Horses don't have taillights and headlights," he said.

From his experiences, Anderson said he is determined to create a welcome packet, informing newcomers of the peculiar and sometimes anachronistic safety issues that may arise on their visit to the region.

Both Anderson and Baker agreed that the experiences they had were interesting and educational, giving them a better idea of the significance of the military's movement to go east.

"It's probably the most interesting TDY I've ever done," said Baker.

"We're building this super high-tech facility in the middle of where people are riding around like this," she said pointing a picture of a farmer riding around on a horse cart.

Momentum is expected to continue in the Black Sea region, with talks already underway on where to locate another training base in Romania's neighbor to the south, Bulgaria.

"You can really feel this kind of energy of like, wow this area's really going to change," Baker said. "It's going to be interesting just to see how it develops."



Photo by Jessica Schoplick, AMEC GmbH

**A view from the air base reveals a windswept plain. The area, about 10 miles from the Black Sea, is situated near the Danube River Delta, a large, fertile everglade that is now a UNESCO World Heritage Site.**

## *The road east*

An empty road near Romania's Mihail Kogălniceanu installation denotes the peaceful quiet of inaction. Soon this installation will be peppered with demolition and construction crews actively improving the site to meet the needs of the estimated 2,100 service members who will rotate through as early as mid-2008.