AEDC commander hosts COVID-19 town hall

By Bradley Hicks

Arnold Engineering Development Complex Commander Col. Jeffrey Geraghty hosted a virtual town hall April 8 to update AEDC personnel on steps being taken to mitigate COVID-19 exposure at Arnold Air Force Base, answer employee-submitted questions and address concerns shared among members of the workforce.

The Facebook Live broadcast came less than a week after the first positive case of COVID-19 at Arnold was reported April 3 and days after base leadership announced a change in operating posture to reduce workforce risk.

"I definitely want you to know that the leadership at AEDC cares about you," Geraghty said to open the town hall. "We care about your health. We are working day and night, weekends included, to try to make sure that we take care of your health. Once that's taken care of, then we can get as much of the mission done as we can, the most important parts of the mission, and then we ensure that we take care of each other within Team AEDC, as well."

Those are my priorities.

During his town hall, Geraghty said the shared goal among base leadership is to keep COVID-19 out of our base entirely. However, we're also committed to communicating transparently and, when there is a case, we are definitely going to let the workforce know. That's just an effort to protect their health, as well."

The decision to move Arnold AFB to an "Operationally Urgent" posture took effect on April 6. In this posture, some mission activities are curtailed and access to the installation is limited to those employees required to complete critical test missions and support functions.

For weeks, Arnold leaders have monitored the situation across the country and in surrounding counties, updating the base Health Protection Condition to keep personnel informed on the exposure risk.

To limit those on base coming from COVID-19 "hotspots," or areas with higher numbers of positive virus cases, 100 percent screening was implemented on March 21 for those seeking entry into the base.

Jolly Green II takes to extremes in AEDC test facility

By Samuel King Jr.

EGLIN AIR FORCE BASE, Fla.—An HH-60W Jolly Green II, the Air Force's new combat search and rescue helicopter, completed a month-long test and rescue mission worldwide in the extreme environments, conditions was a truly unique experience as a pilot and a tester," said Lt. Col. Ryan Croute, an HH-60W pilot and a Squadron pilot, who performed most of the testing.

"Checking out performance under the stress of heat, cold, heavy wind and rain will go on to inform and support those who later have the job of making major employment decisions." Once the lab technicians created the extreme environments, the aircrew would enter the aircraft and perform testing.

An HH-60W Jolly Green II sits under bright lights used to create heat in the McKinley Climatic Lab March 19 at Eglin Air Force Base, Fla. The Air Force's new combat search and rescue helicopter and crews experienced extreme temperatures from 120 to -60 degrees Fahrenheit as well as torrential rain during the month of testing. The tests evaluate how the aircraft and its instrumentation, electronics and crew function under the stress of heat, cold, wind and rain.

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Donations of masks help Arnold AFB battle coronavirus

By Jill Pickett

Donated masks are helping keep members of the Arnold Air Force Base community as safe as possible in the face of the coronavirus threat.

Both N95 masks and reusable cloth masks have been donated to the base. Fifty N95 masks were donated to Arnold AFB Fire and Emergency Services, by a retired member of the Air Force and former base employee. FES Commissary Agency's guidance, issued Master Sgt. Joshua Suggs, Arnold AFB Medical Aid Station branch chief, said the cloth masks will be placed at the entrance to the base and provide mutual aid to other local organizations.

"We greatly appreciate the donation," said Gary Horn, an FES assistant chief. "I don't know how many times I thanked him that day when I picked the masks up."

FES has also been contacted by a local distillery to arrange a donation of a case of disinfectant.

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Asset Management Branch continuously improving test infrastructure management program and readiness

By James Myers

Asset Management Branch

While continuing to operate active test cells, contracting test cells that have been dormant for several years and adding additional capabilities to the increased test workload of the mission, the TSS Asset Management Branch is in lock step with national Aerospace Solutions (NAS), the TSS Asset Health Assurance branch to arrive to demonstrate test savings costs while increasing reliability of the system and reducing the central maintenance (RCM).

RCM focuses on systematic, disciplined process for establishing the appropriate maintenance plan for an asset/system to minimize the probability of failures.


With the challenge of a limited assessment budget, we must find on reducing the overall cost of the sustainment program while increasing the capacity and reliability of AEDC’s facilities.

To work within the sustainment budgetary constraints, the TSSA asset managers along with their NAS counterparts are concomitantly exercising the number of legacy preventive maintenance (PM) activities and increase the intervals between inspections if warranted. They are attempting to have on hand to reduce down time and improve and maintaining and scheduling processes, which results in more efficient scheduling for maintaining the assets.

The maintenance approach of run-to-failure for some equipment is justified based on the cost to PM a component only replacing it once if it fails, but it is imperative that a proper stock level is maintained to support the asset.

Another significant focus is to increase intrusives PMs on large motors, valves and pumps while predicting test conditions by the TSSA Asset Management Branch.

Announced closures/ cancellations include:

- The Arnold AFB Medical Aid Station. Those requiring medical assistance are to report to their nearest emergency room.
- The Arnold AFB Legal Office. The office will remain closed for a unspecified duration for legal reasons.
- The Arnold AFB Fire Office. The Fire office will remain closed for a unspecified duration for legal reasons.
- The Arnold AFB Family Support Center. The Center remains closed due to the current health emergency.
- The Arnold AFB Inactive Line Recreation, including Mariana, Farm, Camp, Dogwood, Ridge, and Arnold Golf Course.
- The Mulligan’s Grill restaurant.
- The TSSA asset managers along with their NAS counterparts are concomitantly exercising the number of legacy preventive maintenance (PM) activities and increase the intervals between inspections if warranted.
- The Arnold AFB Golf Course, the Arnold AFB TSS allows in the Golf Course.
- The Arnold AFB Recycling Program.
- The Arnold AFB Service companies and events have been canceled until further notice.
- The Arnold AFB Base Command and Base Command.

For more details can be found at https://www.arolndafb.com/closures.

Purchases of leisure items, installation visitors, including local and Central Exchange visitors, must first pass an enhanced screening process, which includes questions related to family and friends, current health status and recent travel history.

More details can be found at https://www.arolndafb.com/closures.

Confined to base personnel are: Commissary and Base Exchange at Arnold AFB in response to coronavirus. Base Exchange patronage without regard to user or patron.

 merely closed, activities canceled at Arnold AFB in response to coronavirus

By AEDC Public Affairs

In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, officials at Arnold AFB have moved to cancel all events that are not essential, facilities across the base.

These changes have been imposed to limit possible community transmission of the virus.

Base personnel are asked to avoid nonessential essential mass gatherings, parties, social events and other functions as at time.

Assessment Branch

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An HH-60W Jolly Green II gets hit with 45 mph winds and drenched under 130 gallons-per-minute rain in the McKinley Climatic Lab March 19 at Eglin Air Force Base, Fla. The Air Force’s new combat search and rescue helicopter and crew experienced temperature extremes from 120 to -40 degrees Fahrenheit as well as torrential rain during the month of testing. The tests evaluate how the aircraft and its instrumentation, electronic and safety systems function under conditions that will face the operational Air Force as part of the HH-60W combat search and rescue missions.

(U.S. Air Force photo by Samuel King Jr.)
Local Air Force advocates attend AFMC events

By Bradley Hicks
AEDC Public Affairs

Locals serving in an organization that advocates for local Air Force bases, Air Force Materiel Command and the Air Force as a whole attended Arnold Engineering Development Complex leadership recently to attend the AFMC Senior Leader Conference and the AFMC Annual Excellence Awards banquet.

Volunteer bill authority President Brian Skelton and local business man Mike Niederhauser, members of the AFMC’s Civic Leader Program, along with AEDC Commander Col. Jeffrey Hair Georgetown and AEDC Bioenvironmental Chief Master Sgt. Robert Heckman, attended the event held last month at Wright-Patterson Air Force Base, Ohio.

Along with advocacy, the purpose of the Civic Leader Program is to serve as a liaison to ascertain information from AFMC leadership to share in their communities. According to AFMC, CLP members from across the country meet twice annually to hear updates on AFMC and Air Force issues.

“At the Senior Leader Conference, the CLP members from across all of the AFMCs are able to hear directly from AFMC leadership, participate in panels and collaborate with their community,” Skelton said.

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Mike Niederhauser, left, and Brian Skelton, third from left, members of the Air Force MATERIEL Command (AFMC) Civic Leader Program were joined by Arnold Engineering Development Complex leadership at the AFMC Annual Excellence Awards Banquet, March 11 at Wright-Patterson Air Force Base, Ohio. Also pictured from right are AEDC Superintendent Chief Master Sgt. Robert Heckman, and AEDC Commander Col. Jeffrey Hair Georgetown. Air Force Test Center (AFC) Commander Maj. Gen. Christopher Azazano, Arnold Air Force Base engineer and AEDC Bioenvironmental Engineering Award winner Yancee Burchett, Burchett’s wife Lisa and AEDC Executive Director Dr. Elise Bjorkman.

AEDC’s Civic Leader Program is for its members to form friendships, “Gen. Bunch encouraged all of us to get to know our local AFMC Base CLP member,” Niederhauser said. “With these friendships, we have worked together for a common goal, especially with our communities. Skelton and Niederhauser were two of the approximately 20 CLP members who attended the Senior Leader Conference, held March 10-12, and the awards banquet, which was held on March 11 and honored the top AFMC Airmen for 2019.

According to the EPA, lead can cause serious health problems if too much enters your body from drinking water or in other sources, and will affect individuals differently. Lead can cause damage to the brain and kidneys, and can interfere with the production of red blood cells that carry oxygen to parts of your body. The greatest risk of lead exposure is to infants, young children, and pregnant women. Scientists have linked the effects of lead on the brain with lower IQ in children. Adults with kidney problems and high blood pressure can be affected by low levels of lead more than healthy adults.

Lead is stored in the bones, and it can be released later in life. During pregnancy, the child receives lead from the mother’s bones, which may affect brain development. The consumer can reduce their exposure to lead in drinking water by the following:

1. Run the cold water 15 to 30 seconds to flush out the water in the faucet, sink or bathtub.
2. Drink and cook with cold water that has been stored in lead-free water systems and in non-corrosive pipes and fixtures with lead solder, from which many significant amounts of lead can enter into the water, especially hot water. The MCLG, or maximum contaminant level goal for lead is zero mg/L. It is the level of a contaminant in drinking water below which there is no known or expected risk to health. MCLGs allow for a margin of safety. The action level for lead is 0.015 mg/L. It is a combination of a contaminant which, if exceeded, triggers treatment or other requirements which a water system must follow.

For your information call the water utility at 931-454-8955 or Bioenvironmental Engineering at 931-454-8425.

AEDC Bioenvironmental Engineering

During routine potable water sampling in June 2017, AEDC Bioenvironmental Engineering discovered elevated levels of lead in the drinking water of buildings, which had elevated levels of lead because they are more likely to sustain corrosion.

AEDC’s Bioenvironmental Engineering continues to use sampling to ascertain information from AFMC leadership to share in their communities. According to AFMC, CLP members from across the country meet twice annually to hear updates on AFMC and Air Force issues. At the Senior Leader Conference, the CLP members from across all of the AFMCs are able to hear directly from AFMC leadership, participate in panels and collaborate with their community, Skelton said.

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A screening process has been implemented at Arnold Air Force Base to ensure the health of Arnold Engineering Development Complex personnel during the novel coronavirus disease, or COVID-19, pandemic.

Screening procedures began March 23 and continue to be modified as necessary. As of April 6, only employees involved in executing operationally urgent operations are allowed to enter the base.

Col. Charles Roberts, Chief of the Arnold Engineering Development Complex Test Support Division, observes Arnold Air Force Base Contractor Security personnel entering the base a series of COVID-19 screening questions as a requirement to be allowed entry to the base March 23. The questions include if individuals have tested positive for COVID-19 or have been in contact with someone who has tested positive, locations of recent travel or if experiencing relevant symptoms.

Among those堡问 that have been assisted by the screening process is the Base Defense Operations Center, the center where guards stand post, he said. "Time Marchuk (project manager for the Facility Support Services contract), Kevin Holton, and the entire Security Contractors leadership team has been instrumental in executing the policies and procedures put forth by the Department of Health," Ramsey said. "I would like to ask their workforce to remain patient and flexible as there may be more changes to procedures depending on the length of this situation."
National Aerospace Solutions donates supplies to local health department

By Bradley Hicks
NAS Public Affairs

To support the local fight against COVID-19, National Aerospace Solutions recently donated a large quantity of personal protection equipment to the Coffee County Health Department in Decatur, Ala.

Bechtel, the parent company of NAS, has provided disaster relief supplies from existing inventories at its Bechtel Equipment Operations center in Texas to NAS, located throughout the country. The supplies were provided to the local social service projects to serve as donations to local medical facilities and first responders.

NAS is part of the National Aerospace Solutions, or NAS, an employee-owned joint venture of Bechtel and the Tennessee-based Arnold Air Force Base, and the AEDC Test Operations and Support Center at Arnold Air Force Base, and worked with Bechtel Equipment Operations to secure multiple cases of N95 masks, nitrile gloves and coveralls in various sizes, spray bottles, disinfectants, toilet paper, paper towels and hand sanitizer.

When NAS General Manager Dr. Rich Tipton learned NAS would be receiving the supplies, he tasked NAS Executive Officer Jon Garrard with finding out where they would be put to the best use.

"As part of the AEDC Team, I'm very pleased that NAS and its parent company Bechtel can help medical providers in the local community in their work to combat COVID-19," Tipton said.

Garrard contacted the Coffee County Health Department (CCCD), which is part of a 3-county COVID-19 health response group. CCCD facilities within this group have been sharing supplies.

"When the CCCD found out NAS and Bechtel were holding these protective supplies, they were very grateful and said they would make sure it got to the best place, where it was needed," Garrard said.

As the PPE arrived, Garrard and fellow NAS employees Michelle Belcher delivered it to the health department on April 2. The facility is providing COVID-19 testing supplies, delivery on April 2, on April 5 and two deliveries on April 9.

Each case of masks contained 100 masks, each case of gloves contained 10 gloves, each case of coveralls contained 25 pairs, each case of toilet paper contained 96 rolls, and each case of paper towels contained 96 rolls. The health department is reviewing multiple cases of each of these items, as well as multiple quantities of the sanitizers and disinfectants.

All NAS, Bechtel Equipment Operations shipped 1,358 pounds in disaster relief items to NAS for donation to the CCCD.

Garrard said those at the CCCD were very appreciative of the donation.

"They were extremely grateful," he said. "They said, 'I'd give you a hug, but we've got to keep our social distance.'" Madison Toney, assessment and planning coordinator and public information officer for the Tennessee Department of Health Center for Regional Offices, said those at the CCCD and the TDH regional office wished to express their "sincere thanks" for the PPE sent by NAS.

"The donated masks and gloves will continue to help to protect not only our staff in the health departments but also our patients and community members that we assess and treat," she said. "We are working diligently to slowly get the spread of COVID-19 under control and appreciate the support from local community members and agencies.

"We would also like to thank the Arnold Air Force Base and all of the community members for all of their hard work and dedication in following the recommended ways to prevent the spread of COVID-19. With all of us working together to protect ourselves and our fellow community members, we will win this battle to slow the spread and lessen the effects of COVID-19."
By Leslie McGowan
Arnold AFB Legal Office
Arnold Legal Office (AEDC/JA), in commemoration of National Crime Victims’ Rights Week (NCVRW), April 19–25, plans to host a very special training event to meet our Special Victims Counsel and Paralegal to raise awareness about crime victims’ issues and rights and introduce the community to the important resources and services available. According to the most recent National Crime Victimization Survey from the Bureau of Justice Statistics, about 3.3 million Americans age 12 or older were victims of violent crime in 2018. AEDC/JA will commemorate the advancement of victims’ rights and highlight issues surrounding victimization by holding a training event presented by the Special Victims Counsel (SVC) May 8 at 1 p.m. in the Commander’s Conference Room.

The Judge Advocate’s office is honoring Capt. Janessa Britto (SVC), and Staff Sgt. Ryan Fleming, (SVP), who are our champions coming from Scott Air Force base assigned to AEDC/JA in advocating for expanded support and services for communities affected by crime, specifically sexual assault. The Office for Victims of Crime (OVC) leads communities throughout the country in their annual observances of NCVRW by promoting victims’ rights and honoring crime victims and those who advocate on their behalf. This year’s theme –Seek Justice | Ensure Victims’ Rights | Inspire Hope –recognizes the individuals and groups whose advocacy has propelled the victims’ rights movement forward for the past half century, inspiring in victims and their loved ones a feeling of hope for progress, justice and healing.

OVC and the legal office encourage participation in victim-related observances throughout the year. OVC hosts the annual National Crime Victims’ Service Awards Ceremony in Washington, D.C., to honor outstanding individuals and programs that serve victims of crime.

For additional information about this year’s NCVRW and how to assist victims in your own community, please contact the Arnold AFB Legal Office at 931-454-7814. For additional ideas on how to support victims of crime, visit OVC’s website at www.ovc.gov.

By Deidre Moon
NAS Public Affairs
Acquisition Team members with National Aerospace Solutions, LLC, the Arnold Engineering Development Complex Test Operations and Sustainment contractor at Arnold Air Force Base, attended the 2020 Small Business Industry Day on March 5 at Tennessee State University in Nashville.

Cindy Dixon, a subcontract administrator and small business advocate, with the help of Meron Agonafir and Frances Samples, both negotiated buyers, manned the NAS exhibit at the event, which was hosted by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers.

“As always, the event was a success,” Dixon said. “We were able to meet with over 50 vendors in one or more of the socio-economic categories, capable of providing services and products that NAS acquires.”

The NAS Acquisition team regularly attends Industry Day events to help educate area suppliers and subcontractor interested in conducting business with the company.

NAS participates in Small Business Industry Day in Nashville

On March 5, Meron Agonafir and Frances Samples, negotiated buyers, with National Aerospace Solutions, LLC, the AEDC Test Operations and Sustainment contractor at Arnold Air Force Base, speak to an interested vendor during the 2020 Small Business Industry Day at Tennessee State University in Nashville. NAS Acquisition team members attended the event to share information about the company with small business vendors. (Courtesy photo)