



# NEWS RELEASE

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## District turns over teacher training facility to Herat University

KANDAHAR AIRFIELD — A host of senior Afghan and U.S. dignitaries met at Herat University March 26 to formally open a teacher training facility, built with U.S. Agency for International Development funding by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Afghanistan Engineer District-South.

U.S. Deputy Ambassador James Cunningham, Herat Provincial Governor Dr. Daud Saba and Acting Director of USAID in Afghanistan Dr. Jeffrey Ashley spoke at the ceremony. South District Commander Air Force Col. Ben Wham represented USACE.

The \$900,000 facility provides 18 classrooms, four laboratories and archive and library capacity to support graduate education training and to prepare future teachers.



Col. Wham receives a certificate of appreciation after the ceremony from Herat Provincial Governor Dr. Daud Saba. (USACE photo, Mark Ray)

“This ceremony takes place at an auspicious time — the beginning of spring, and Nowruz, the Afghan New Year,” said Cunningham in his remarks. “It is a time of rebirth and growth.”

The facility will train the teachers who will help Afghanistan in its rebirth and growth, Cunningham said. “I thank the Afghan workers who built this facility — they have created a legacy, where students will hone their skills for the renewal of Afghanistan.”

Herat Provincial Governor Saba opened his remarks by quoting an Afghan proverb: “As goes the spring, so goes the year,” he said, speaking through an interpreter. “Today is an auspicious day for the year to come — bright and sunny. More important, by opening this facility, we are opening the doors of education for future generations.”

“The United States has supported education in Herat, with this building and with many other projects over the years,” Saba said. “I appreciate and thank the United States for their support in this hard time — on behalf of the people of Herat, thanks to the Corps of Engineers, USAID and the U.S. Embassy.

“I would also like to thank the contractor, and the many Afghan workers and engineers, for their hard, high-quality work,” Saba said in closing, “They have done their duty for the people of Afghanistan.”

“USAID and the Corps of Engineers are immensely proud of this facility,” said Ashley, acting director for USAID in Afghanistan. “It supports the long-term strategic plan to improve education in Afghanistan, essential for the country’s development and full participation in the international economic community as a productive nation. This building is an example of our combined commitment to education and of the long-standing relationship between the United States and Herat University.”

“This project, and education, have special significance to me, since my parents are both college professors back in the U.S.,” said South District commander Wham. “This facility is an investment in the future of Afghanistan.”

“I would like to recognize our contractor, who dug deep to overcome challenges, and finished this project,” Wham said. “And I want to thank all the members of the Herat Area Office, for their efforts to get the construction back on track and finish the facility. Thanks in particular to Lt. Col. Mark Bartley, Herat Area officer in charge, to Scott Hughes, the U.S. project engineer, to Omid Amiri, the Afghan project engineer, and to Afghan quality assurance representative, Eraj Akbarpour. Your work will benefit generations of Afghan teachers and students.”

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USACE’s Afghanistan Engineer District-South provides design and construction services throughout southern Afghanistan to support the International Security Assistance Force and U.S. Forces-Afghanistan. The work is carried out in Regional Commands South, Southwest and West with the goal of achieving counterinsurgency effects and bolstering the Afghan Government’s services to its people.

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