



NEWS RELEASE

U.S. ARMY CORPS OF ENGINEERS

BUILDING STRONG®

For Immediate Release:
March 28, 2012

Contact:
Dave Melancon
david.a.melancon@usace.army.mil

USACE helps “build” Afghanistan’s future engineers

HERAT, Afghanistan -- In a departure from its usual brick and mortar building projects, the Afghanistan Engineer District-South contributed to the building of the next generation of Afghanistan’s engineers April 12.

A flat-bed truck carrying nine wooden shipping crates and three pallets of drafting and computer equipment was delivered to the Herat University Information Technology Center.

The load included about 6,000 pounds of engineering laboratory equipment and “workbench” systems. These systems demonstrate engineering concepts and give the engineers-in-training hands-on experience with fluid dynamics, turbines, electric systems, concrete testing, hydraulics, sand and sediment tanks, pump systems, air flow studies and particle flows. In addition to the hardware, the delivery included transformers, pulleys, sensors, computer connections and expendable supplies such as dyes, sealants, fittings and O rings.

The equipment and supplies will help build a stronger Afghanistan by building strong engineers, said Air Force Col. Benjamin Wham, South District commander.

“We are building Afghanistan’s next generation of engineers,” he said. “Instead of learning from just textbooks, these new designers and builders will learn through hands-on experimentation, which reinforces engineering concepts. They can then use that knowledge to rebuild their county, keep buildings operating and maintained and help their communities grow.”

Earlier deliveries to the university consisted of textbooks, surveying hardware and GPS units, classroom and office furniture and equipment.

“We are providing the state-of-the-art lab equipment, books, drafting tables, desks and those things that support engineer training,” explained Karen Rippey, project manager at the South District.



Herat University engineering students and faculty watch a crate filled with engineering equipment being lifted from a flatbed truck for delivery to the school’s Information Technology Center April 12. The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers-provided equipment and supplies will be used to teach the next generation of Afghan engineers. (USACE photo)

The equipment and supplies will help Afghan students and their country use modern techniques, said Rippey.

“The new Afghan engineers will have the skills and knowledge to maintain the buildings, roads, bridges and electric systems provided by USACE, the U.S. and other governments and non-governmental agencies, thereby safeguarding those investments. Additionally, the locally trained engineers will help to rebuild Afghanistan’s war devastated infrastructure.”

The current generation of Afghan engineers received their training at other countries’ universities, Rippey said. Some of whom are now the professors at Herat University.

“This [latest shipment] was the biggest shipment by far,” said Christine Weisenberger, a district project data control specialist deployed from the USACE Detroit District. “The other shipments consisted of things like rulers, text books, drafting equipment, plotters and printers, paper and supplies.”

Weisenberger and a team of other USACE employees went to the university and the Herat Area Office April 9 to map out a delivery plan for the supplies.

Masoud Fayeq, an eight-year Afghan USACE employee working in the Herat Area Office, deserves much of the credit for the successful delivery, said Weisenberger. His knowledge of the university and local authorities ensured that the delivery got through.

Following his meeting with Weisenberger, Fayeq called the university to ensure the equipment could be offloaded and securely stored. He then called a shipping company to arrange a time and location for the delivery, arranged for a crane to lift the pallets, contacted the delivery truck driver to give him directions to the university and engineering school and navigated the cultural differences between the U.S. and Afghan ways of doing business.

“He’s the guy who made the calls to the university engineering school. He’s the guy who made the coordination to get the crane,” Weisenberger said. “Masoud is the reason why this happened. He gets the credit for taking it, rolling with it and problem solving.”

Fayeq said he visited the university twice before the delivery and made several phone calls to find a convenient and safe offloading site, arrange security for the equipment within the university building and track down a crane to lift the pallets and crates from the flatbed truck.

“I am very glad that I had a small part in the mission of delivering new lab equipment to Herat University,” he said. “As an Afghan who is a part of this community, I really appreciate the effort of coordinating and donating this high tech lab equipment which certainly increases our future engineers’ knowledge of international standards and testing.”



Herat University engineering students push a crate filled with engineering equipment into a storeroom in school’s Information Technology Center building April 12. The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers-provided equipment and supplies will be used to teach the next generation of Afghan engineers. (Courtesy photo)

Rippey said there are still more shipments awaiting delivery to the engineering school. Although not as massive as April's load, these final shipments will include additional equipment, school supplies and classroom furnishings.

The deliveries should be completed by the end of May, she said.

The \$1.06 million project, which kicked off in 2009, uses Commander's Emergency Response Program funds, explained Rippey.

The Commander's Emergency Response Program is a cornerstone of the International Security Assistance Force counter-insurgency strategy. It allows commanders to respond to urgent humanitarian relief and reconstruction requirements with projects that immediately benefit the local population.

-30-

You can find more news and features about the district on our [homepage](#). You can also follow us on [Facebook](#) and find interesting photos about the district on our [Flickr page](#).