

2001 Emerging Leaders Conference
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Trip Report

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The Emerging Leaders Conference was a very rewarding and challenging experience for me and I will take back this perspective and enthusiasm to my job, District and coworkers. Some of the many, many, many notable experiences during the week were:

Dynamics of Leadership Seminar, Dr. Nap Dufault, Ph.D.: Wow, what an effective way of learning about yourself and the dynamics of working with others. The application and results of the self assessment tests opened up a whole new way of thinking and understanding myself and why I do things the way I do, treat and deal with people the way I do, care about specific issues and just ask “why” sometimes? I was able to answer some very critical questions about my career and myself.

EL group discussion with General Flowers: A wonderful opportunity to ask questions and get feedback from our top source. Very candid and seemed genuinely interested in each question. I told General Flowers how much I wanted the Vision to become a reality and asked if all senior leaders were thinking the same way? Gen. Flowers thought that the acceptance of the vision was going along far quicker than he had anticipated and that most senior leaders were very supportive of the people, process and communication goals. He stated work force morale is the first thing on his plate and he will emphasis leadership, people, a positive workplace and a culture of caring within the Corps.

Emerging Leaders Team Presentation: We did it! 36 very different but leadership minded individuals came together in the end for a presentation to the Senior Leadership on how we can “achieve the vision” thought caring, well trained people, thought out processes and open communication. Through video, live presentations, a brochure, a booklet and a powerful PowerPoint presentation we were able to relay to the senior leaders what we need to achieve the vision and tell the Corps story and tell it in many different and positive ways. Submitted 36 Just Do it Plans, identified seven main topics that need special attention by senior leadership if we are to achieve the vision and 2 video commercials to help the Corps tell our story.

Guest Speaker, Mike Grunwald, the Washington Post: Mr. Grunwald is the reporter who frequently covers and writes about controversial issues affecting the Corps. Mr. Grunwald’s talk was a very thought provoking and informative. It was great that he was invited to the conference to share his viewpoint and see what all the Corps is about. The viewpoint he has of the Corps from the outside with no direct knowledge of the Corps mission until he wrote his first story was frightening. His perception of the Corps could very well be how the general public perceives us under the same circumstances. We need to be open and engage our critics with honest dialogue. We need to educate the nation about the Corps vision and mission and dispel old myths and untruths. When people see or hear something about the Corps we want and they will have an informed and educated viewpoint to base judgments on.

Networking Opportunities and Shadowing time: The time I spent introducing myself and interviewing our Senior Leaders was very beneficial in understanding the Corps overall mission and the many challenges it faces; personnel, PMBP, Civil Works, funding, public perception, breaking down the stovepipes, etc. I had the opportunity to ask questions and get feedback on some issues I did not understand or knew little about. Rob Vining was very helpful in explaining our relationship with congress and how we work with them. A luncheon with the RE Directorate, Linda Garvin, gave me a better idea of how RE at HQ operates and what we as Emerging Leaders out of the RE arena can do to enhance those operations.

The entire ELC/SLC was an experience that I wish all Corps employees could attend. It was informative and you could see our senior leadership in action, trying to sort out and understand the Corps changing mission, vision and culture. Achieving the vision was General Flowers main focus and you could see he was willing to model the way. Thanks to all who help and support me in the EL program.

