

## **2001 Emerging Leaders Conference (ELC)**

I had the honor of representing the Nashville District as an Emerging Leader at the Emerging Leaders Conference (ELC) held in Chicago, IL on August 3-10, 2001. The Emerging Leaders Conference was held in conjunction with the Senior Leaders Conference (SLC), which was held August 6-10, 2001. This allowed the Emerging Leaders to interact with the Senior Leaders, and included a social team building activity, joint learning sessions, two luncheons and the National Awards Ceremony and Banquet.

The first four days of the ELC were used to profile the thirty-six Emerging Leaders selected for the conference. Dr. Nap DuFault, our facilitator, had completed his analysis of the data, which we were required to furnish prior to the conference. Based on his analysis and through my interactions within the group and team exercises, I was able to determine the following: my leadership style, how effective I am as a leader, what others within my district think of me, how I interact within groups, and what I can do to be better at what I do.

During the first joint SCL/ECL session LTC Flowers open with his view of "The Road Ahead". It included his four-year timeline, issues discussed during Corp-wide visits (succession management, training, people taking care of people, empowerment, and the Project Management Business Plan), Strategic Leadership in Learning and Vision Campaign Plan updates. BG Peter Madsen briefed "The Learning Organization," Mr. Michael Grunwald, Washington Post, discussed "Covering the Corps" and Mr. Dominic Izzo, briefed the "Civil Works Perspective". I was impressed with the Chief's desire for the Corps to pattern itself after the Macey's Santa Claus and tell our customers "if we can't do it, we can tell you who can". In addition, Mr. Grunwald's talk was very informative; we can learn from our critics.

We were tasked with developing a project for presentation to the Senior Leaders with the theme: USACE Emerging Leaders: Helping to Achieve the USACE Vision. Individually we developed "Just do it Plans" to assist in achieving the vision within our districts. We then selected six to present to the Senior Leaders; two for each of the strategic goals (people, process and communication). We also developed and presented three video commercials, one for each of the strategic goals and a list of topics for the Senior Leaders to pay special attention to for the betterment of the Corps. We also created and distributed a pamphlet, which explained how to just "do it" and a consolidated handout of our individual "just do it plans". This exercise taught me the importance of trust and teamwork. We could not have completed the project without the assistance of the total team. We had to trust that everyone would do their part and put the good of the total team ahead of the agenda of oneself.

The conference ended with LTG Flowers' Town Hall Meeting. He stated that sometimes we may need to create "Pottersville" as in the movie "It's a Wonderful Life". This will enable others to see how things would be if the Corps did not exist. The Chief shared his priorities: 1) developing themes for the FY03 budget (both civil and military); 2) rewarding corporate behavior; 3) sharing lessons learned; and 4) transitioning to a learning culture.

This was indeed an eye-opening experience for me; I know and understand more about myself. This knowledge will enable me to actively listen and understand others better both on a personal and professional level. It was great being able to meet and work the Senior Leaders and my fellow Emerging Leaders from throughout the Corps. Quality takes place when we interact. I have returned to Nashville as a new and improved Corps employee with the desire to help others make their jobs easier. How may I assist you?

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