

Command Philosophy

On the day he took command of the Savannah District, Col. Jeffrey M. Hall provided team members with his command philosophy, indicating the importance he placed on ensuring the team understood his background and how it shaped his command approach. “As with each of you, I have been shaped by my experiences and by the leaders and colleagues with whom I have served,” he said.

Based on his philosophy, Hall spoke with *The Castle* staff about his leadership approach and expectations.



Col. Jeffrey M. Hall

The Castle: What would you describe as the most important expectations you have for the district?

Hall: As I said when I took command, it is an honor and a privilege to serve with the Savannah District. It has a distinguished reputation of excellence at all levels. At the same time, I bring certain expectations with me as the new commander. The key principles I have followed over the years focus on precision performance, responsive power and agility, smooth operation, time-honored workmanship, and ensuring a meaningful experience for the customer. These are by no means all inclusive or in any specific order; however, they are some of the characteristics of great organizations.

The Castle: What do you see as the key to a meaningful experience with the customer?

Hall: Communication is key! We cannot over-communicate with our customers. According to the Project Management Institute, 90 percent of a project manager’s time is spent communicating with customers and the project delivery team (PDT). Customers want to be an integral part of the PDT. Just like us, they want to be heard and have us understand and address their concerns and limitations. They want to be kept informed about the current status of their projects along with any issues that may add scope, cost, and/or schedule. Effective two-way communication is essential to the customer understanding us, and our understanding of them and is also critical for our organization’s success. Most importantly, we must do what we say we are going to do.

The Castle: How do you view employee empowerment—showing initiative?

Hall: The bottom line is Savannah District employees are empowered. Employees should stay within their authority, do what is right and take the initiative. They don’t need permission, but I do ask that they keep their leadership, managers, and teams informed. When given direction and guidance, my expectation is the employee will take the mission and execute. Likewise, if the direction is unclear, I expect the employee to ask for clarification. Leaders and managers should provide an end state or vision, and the employee and/or team should develop and execute the plan to achieve the specified outcome.

The Castle: More than 1,000 people—across three states—make up the Savannah District. How do you intend to make them feel like part of the team?

Hall: First and foremost, we must take care of our people. The greatest resource of the district is, and will always be, our people. Every team member shall treat each other with the utmost respect and dignity. Leaders and managers should make their employees feel part of the team by keeping them informed and involved. We must capitalize on employees’ unique skills, experiences and backgrounds as well as afford them the necessary training opportunities to succeed.

Second, Savannah District is a “Team of Teams.” Whether you are in the technical, contracting, personnel, logistics, support or legal field, every employee is part of a functional team—sometimes multiple ones. These teams rely on talent, initiative and drive of the individual members so that Savannah District remains a world class organization. However, even with extensive individual talent, we need to work as a team – pull in one direction, not in many different ones. Also, leaders and managers need to recognize high-performing individuals and teams.

Last, but not least, two-way communication is essential to the team. It is difficult to celebrate successes and help with issues unless you know about them. So I ask you to think, “Who else needs to know?” and communicate with them.

The Castle: What is the overarching theme to your philosophy?

Hall: Provide sustainable solutions to our customers, ensuring we deliver quality, on time and on budget with integrity, respect for others, and safely.

Operating in a customer-focused industry and a rapidly-changing environment, we must be responsive, agile, flexible, and have a disciplined approach to accomplish our missions. We need to leverage emerging technologies, industry best practices, and USACE capabilities in order to deliver sustainable solutions to our customers.

Additionally, we must operate with a common set of organizational values, the Army Values, the Soldier’s Creed, and the Army Civilian’s Creed and processes.

As Larry the Cable Guy would say, “Let’s Get’r Done!”