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Savannah State University and Army Corps of Engineers renew partnership

SAVANNAH, GEORGIA – Savannah State University and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers' Savannah District renewed their 20-year partnership, committing both organizations to enhance career training and internship opportunities for students at the institution.

SSU President Dr. Earl G. Yarbrough, Sr., and Colonel Edward J. Kertis, Savannah District commander, signed the agreement during a ceremony on the campus in the historical Hill Hall. The ceremony took place on Feb. 19, 2010. Several Corps members who are SSU graduates and one of SSU's Engineering majors observed the signing.

The partnership marks a commitment by the university and Savannah District to enhance the preparation of SSU students for careers in engineering, science, technology and mathematics and other disciplines through employment opportunities, internships, lecturers and field trips. The partnership will enhance the diverse workforce of engineers, scientists and technicians and other disciplines sought by the Corps of Engineers.

"It's critical for the Corps to aid in the development of future engineers and scientists who will sustain our great organization," said Ralph Barrett, chief of engineering division with the Savannah District. Partnering with Savannah State University to help develop highly qualified graduates and bringing them into the Corps is a step in the right direction, he said. Barrett serves on the advisory council at the university and will participate in the development of new or improved curricula.

The partners jointly developed short-term courses for in-service engineers and technicians. The Corps will provide summer employment for students, assist the engineering department faculty, help develop engineering curricula, and assist in recruitment and job placement opportunities.

"Both our organizations stand to benefit from this union," said Dr. Yarbrough, "in terms of opportunities for our students as we educate the next generation of engineers and for the Corps who will provide training and experience for our young people."

Colonel Kertis agreed that the partnership mutually benefited both agencies. "The Corps is continually seeking young engineers and scientists who will help us provide quality engineering services to the Armed Forces and nation."

The Corps is comprised of 34,000 dedicated Civilians and Soldiers delivering engineering services to customers in more than 90 countries worldwide. The Savannah District manages and oversees a multi-billion dollar military construction program at 12 Army and Air Force installations in Georgia and North Carolina. District members work to strengthen the Nation's security by building and maintaining America's infrastructure, and protecting and restoring the environment, cleaning sites contaminated with hazardous, toxic or radioactive waste in an effort to sustain the environment, and dredging the waterways to support the movement of critical commodities. -30-