

RIP RAP

U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
Albuquerque District

USACE SPA, 4101 Jefferson Plaza, N.E., Albuquerque, NM 87109

Cranes visiting Bosque del
Apache Wildlife Refuge

Photo by Ronnie Schelby



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District Engineer,
Lt. Col. Jason Williams

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Strong Resource Oversight is Key to USACE Future

By Dean Hall, Chief Financial Officer

The District Resource Management (RM) team's vision is, and has always been, to continuously build value to our customers via our reputation for strong fiscal accountability.

We strive to achieve this by staying well-informed on district, regional and national priorities and supporting our leaders, decision makers and customers with current and reliable financial and resource information.

One of the most exciting, albeit stressful, characteristics of Corps districts is the diversity and volatility of our funding sources. This means the majority of the USACE workforce relies upon a continued and consistent flow of new projects requiring the Corps' problem solving capabilities.

In the current age of economic struggle and uncertainty, availability of resources are limited, and the nation is once again calling on its government to keep us safe and secure and to do its part to foster economic recovery and growth, only now maybe with less resources than we've been provided in the past. To do our part to remain a strong and highly relevant organization, we must be able to consistently demonstrate successful, high quality and enduring results, and be actively engaged in the process of identifying potential future priorities that will naturally call upon USACE capabilities.

As we proceed into FY 11 and beyond, the RM team will fulfill its role in achieving our goals by ensuring our workforce has the training and knowledge necessary to make legal and prudent fiscal decisions and can properly and efficiently account for the work we perform for our customers. We will achieve this by continuing our emphasis on teaching practical fiscal law



Photo by Lisa Lockyear

Dean Hall (left) and District Quality Manager Greg Allen discuss the Corps' Quality Management System.

concepts and financial business processes, as well as training the District team on how to use CEFMS effectively. We are partnering with managers to expand the use of direct time and attendance input to CEFMS, a change that we hope will streamline and add consistency to our payroll accounting.

We will continue to engage across District functions to improve our processes and ability to properly account for assets, cost-shared projects and matching of our period financial expenditures with work performed. In addition, we will work with our corporate service providers, such as ACE-IT, to identify and achieve cost savings.

RM has taken on a new role of overseeing implementation of the USACE Quality Management System (QMS) in the District. We believe an effective implementation of QMS will provide the transparency and accountability our customers and the nation rely on.

Overall, RM looks forward to helping the District realize continued success and sustained value to the nation in 2011 and beyond. 

Corps Recognized for Support of American Indian Science and Engineering Society

The Albuquerque District was honored to be a sponsor of the 2010 national conference of the American Indian Science and Engineering Society (AISES), which took place Nov. 11-13.

AISES Corporate Relations and Events Officer Sandy Langelier (at right) presented District Engineer Lt. Col. Williams with a memento at a reception honoring sponsors of the conference.

The mission of AISES is to substantially increase the representation of American Indian and Alaskan Natives in fields involving science, technology, engineering and math (STEM).

Since 1977, AISES has worked to remove barriers to fuller representation and participation in the STEM disciplines among native people, as students, professionals, mentors and leaders.

More than 200 Native Nations are represented within AISES, and AISES enjoys the support and partnership of corporate, government, academic and Tribal decision-makers.

The AISES conference, held for the past 32



Photo by Ronnie Schelby

years, focused on providing professional development, leadership, traditional cultural activities and the largest career fair in Indian Country, all centered around STEM.

Attendees of South Pacific Division's Senior Leadership Conference, held Nov. 16-18 in Phoenix, Ariz., focused on the Division's most valuable asset, PEOPLE. Among conference topics were, "Strengthening our Human Capital and Family Readiness Network," "Building the Team," "Reinforcing our Common Regional Picture" and "Setting Strategic Priorities for People, Processes, Programs and Connections."



Corps Takes Winterization Steps at Project Sites



By Mark Slimp, SPA Public Affairs

Docks like the one at Cochiti pictured above have to be removed as the weather turns colder.

Everyone has heard about winterizing homes and cars, but how many people know that the Corps winterizes projects too?

Every year under the leadership of Karl Martin, chief, Lake Operations Branch, his team of dam supervisors and team members perform a number of complex and routine procedures to prepare the District's nine dams, adjacent lakes and recreation facilities for the winter.

At Cochiti, some of the major actions taken are removing fish screens and shutting down the flow of water feeding two major diversion channels which flow to a myriad of acequias and irrigation ditches criss-crossing the river basins and nearby farm land bracketing portions of New Mexico, Colorado and Texas rivers.

Fish screens are devices placed into tunnels built into the base of the dams to stop fish from moving downstream into the diversion channels, thus keeping the fish in a more conducive environment.

Martin said, "Every November the fish screens at Cochiti Dam are removed from the tunnels in the base of the dam, and the huge steel bulkhead gates are lowered into place. Those gates stop the flow of water into the irrigation canals, since the growing season has ended and the water is no longer needed downstream for agricultural purposes."

Some of what the dam operators do is similar to normal winterizing that most homeowners engage in this time of year. These steps include draining the water from lines used for swamp coolers and water pipes in unheated outdoor facilities, shutting down air conditioners and preparing furnaces and heaters for safe and efficient operation in cold periods.

At dams that feature recreational facilities, staff pull out the courtesy docks used by boaters, haul in swimming lines and safety buoys and remove handicap fishing

docks, all of which could be damaged by freezing water.

Dam operations staff also close boating ramps in order to keep the public off any lake-ice that may form. By the way, Corps employees aren't being winter "grinches," they are merely concerned about people's safety.

Most of our lakes, if they do ice over, really can't sustain the weight of winter time recreational activities, and usually there are not any rescuers close by to help in an emergency situation.

So, next time you are up on the roof covering your swamp cooler, or having your local mechanic check your car's anti-freeze level, remember some of your Corps colleagues are already hard at work protecting the Corps' assets, and insuring the dam's mechanical infrastructure will stay functional through another cold winter.

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This activity supports our Operations Plan: Action 9 (Establish an enriched culture of discipline and innovation to deliver resilient and sustainable infrastructure solutions).

These activities support our Operations Plan: Action 7 (Execute the regional Military Program and capitalize on Interagency and International Services, or IIS, opportunities).

USACE Happenings

Corps Helps Dedicate New Native American School

By Tom Plummer, Sr. Project Manager

I had the pleasure of joining approximately 300 parents, staff, students and visitors Nov. 24 to dedicate the new community school in Kayenta, Ariz.

The school's principal, Ms. Velma Eisenberger, allowed me to share some remarks about the Corps' involvement in the project, so I explained that, besides designing and overseeing lots of military construction projects and water resource projects, like dams, levees and river channels, the Army Corps is available, for a fee, to assist other Federal Agencies with architectural and engineering services. In this case, the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) requested help in replacing Kayenta's school.

The new school and dormitory cost more than \$31 million and can accommodate 450 students in grades K-8, along with a dormitory for 119 students in grades 1-8. The school was built to exacting standards and is highly energy



Photos by Mark Hopwood, BIA Public Affairs

As a representative of the Corps of Engineers, I expressed our thanks to BIA's Office of Facility Construction and Management for the opportunity to build the replacement school in Kayenta, as well as our thanks to the many contractors who labored long and hard and coordinated with members of the project delivery team to bring this beautiful place of learning to completion.

efficient. It is gratifying to be part of a project that will benefit so many children and give them every opportunity to excel in the future.

Ojo Encino Holds Open House

Corps personnel were invited to attend the dedication and open house for Ojo Encino Day School Dec. 1, in Cuba, N.M. It is another project where the Corps provided assistance to the Bureau of Indian Affairs.

The school replaces an older facility and can accommodate 280 students in grades K-8. The project included an elevated water storage tank and a bus shelter. It is BIA's first design-build school to have its classroom walls and roof built using Structural Insulated Panel Systems built off-site and trucked in. The result will be lower heating and cooling costs.



The Corps helped oversee construction of the Ojo Encino Day School in Cuba, N.M.



Representatives from U.S. Customs and Border Protection, the Corps, VEMAC Construction, Lordsburg Police, and local government conducted a ground-breaking ceremony Dec. 6 in Lordsburg, N.M., to celebrate the start of construction on a new Border Patrol facility there.

Lordsburg to get Largest Border Patrol Station

Deputy Commander Major Richard Collins addressed an assembled group at the Lordsburg ground-breaking ceremony to explain the Corps' involvement. He told the crowd it had taken five years of planning, real estate acquisition, design, collaboration and support to reach the point of construction for the facility. The station will support 375 agents, plus support staff, with a holding capacity for at least 106 detainees. It will have a main administrative area, vehicle maintenance garage, four-position indoor firing range, horse facility, canine patrol facility, fueling hardstand, car wash and parking for a three-shift operation, as well as space for training and public information functions. Furthermore, the facility will be the newest and largest of the 11 stations in the El Paso Sector and of the six in New Mexico.

"The construction contract for this station was awarded Oct. 27, with a projected completion date of March, 2012," Major Collins said. "We look forward to handing over a top-notch station."



Photos by Lisa Lockyear

This activity supports our Operations Plan: Action 7 (Execute the regional Military Program and capitalize on Interagency and International Services, or IIS, opportunities).

Field Office is Growing and Building Strong on the Border



By Elizabeth Lockyear, SPA Public Affairs

Despite dust, heat, tight deadlines and some remote, rural project locations, Albuquerque District's El Paso Resident Office remains committed to Building Strong and strengthening the nation in the southern part of the District.

The resident office is located in El Paso, Texas, near Fort Bliss. El Paso was recently ranked as the safest city with more than 500,000 in population in the United States despite its close proximity to Juarez, Mexico, which has faced an increase in drug-war-related violence since 2006.

Originally, the office only handled projects in close proximity to El Paso and Fort Bliss. Now, the office has expanded geographically and has projects from Lordsburg, N.M., near the New Mexico-Arizona border, to Presidio, Texas.

Like the rest of the District, the city of El Paso has experienced steady growth during the past 75 years. With a population of a little more than 100,000 in 1930, the city more than doubled by 1960 and doubled

again to more than 500,000 in 1990. Currently, the city population exceeds 750,000.

The El Paso office reflects this growth. Office Resident Engineer Ray Macias said he joined a staff of two others when he started there in 1990. Now there are 11 Corps employees there.

Growth is also seen in the office's budget. Macias said that prior to beginning the border fence project, the office's budget was about \$3 million a year. It increased to \$350 million for the fence and is currently at \$120 million in scheduled placement.

Role of the Office

Each resident office has the vital role of ensuring the District's mission is executed successfully by overseeing quality assurance and contract administration in its area of responsibility.

Contract administration includes a variety of work including payment to the contractor for work performed in accordance with the contract provisions,

modifying the contract as needed to accommodate necessary changes, differing site conditions, review of the adequacy of the contractor's schedules and contract closeout.

The office's resident engineer oversees contract administration with the support of engineer technicians.

The District's Chief of Construction, Lou Askew, said, "These functions can be effectively performed only by personnel located close to the project site."

Each resident office in the District has an assigned Administrative Contracting Officer who has the authority to execute changes within the authority of their warrant. Macias is the ACO for the El Paso office and has authority up to \$100,000 for each change.

Askew added the District office plays a supporting role offering

special skills through the Construction Contracts and the Quality Assurance sections of the Construction Branch. These two sections provide support beyond the technical or contractual capacity of the District's resident offices.

History

The District's history in Southern New Mexico and far West Texas goes back to the early years of World War II when, in 1942, the District was given charge of military construction at Fort Bliss, the largest Army base in the country at the time.

While military construction slowed significantly with the end of World War II, the ensuing Cold War guaranteed military construction was still necessary. One such project was the District's work on the El Paso Intelligence Center at Fort Bliss in the waning years of the Cold War.

However, military construction was no longer the District's main focus in the latter half of the 20th century. Civil works, specifically flood control, became the mainstay of the District's work at that point.

The Resident Office in El Paso was established in the late 1960s and worked with stakeholders and customers on numerous flood control projects including projects in the Northwest, Central and Southeast areas



The El Paso Office has overseen the completion of about 140 miles of border fence in New Mexico and Texas.

of El Paso which are still in use. Over the years, flood control projects were also done in other cities in the resident office's area of responsibility, including levee work in Presidio, Texas. The office also oversaw the construction of housing for Border Patrol agents in Fabens, Texas and flood control projects in Las Cruces and southern New Mexico.

Border Fence

One of the ripple effects of the September 11 attacks was a renewed focus on border security. The Corps was called upon to deliver when federal legislation authorizing the border fence was passed in 2006.

The project was full of challenges, including a tight timeline for fence construction. Construction started

in June 2008, and the primary fence had to be completed by Jan. 19, 2009.

The project not only had time constraints, but those who worked on it said there were other challenges. One was the project's political controversy. Another was the remote location of sections of the project.

Despite these and other challenges, the El Paso Office oversaw the successful, on-time construction of approximately 140 miles of fence in New Mexico and Texas at a cost of \$355 million. And the project hasn't stopped completely. The office is getting ready to award two more (smaller) portions of the fence.

IIS Program

While the office was working on the fence,

Continued—

additional growth came from an acceleration of projects through the Interagency and International Services program.

Through the IIS program, the Corps provides engineering and construction services, environmental restoration and management services, research and development assistance, management of water and land related natural resources, relief and recovery work and other management and technical services to non-Department of Defense federal agencies, state and local governments, tribal nations, private U.S. firms, international organizations and foreign governments.

Most IIS work is funded on a reimbursable basis.

The office's biggest IIS customers have been two agencies within the Department of Homeland Security, the United States Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) and the United States Customs and Border Protection, which includes the Border Patrol.

In the past decade, the El Paso office worked on housing for Border Patrol agents in Presidio, Texas and has upgraded facilities and built dormitories, an infirmary and a laundry for ICE.

One of the bigger projects was the construction

of a 49,000 square foot Border Patrol station in El Paso.

Soon after the grand opening of the El Paso station in August 2009, work was completed on a 29,000 square foot, \$16.2 million Border Patrol station in Fort Hancock, Texas. The ribbon-cutting was held in December 2009.

While construction on these two stations was wrapping up, the groundbreaking ceremony for a new \$25 million Border Patrol station in Lordsburg, N.M., was held Dec. 6, 2010. Plans are being made for a groundbreaking ceremony for an approximately \$15 million Border Patrol Station in Fabens, Texas, in the spring of 2011. A third, \$13 million Border Patrol station in Presidio, Texas, is in the design stage.

Fort Bliss

Starting in 2005, Base Realignment and Closure (BRAC) has brought large changes to the military. BRAC is the process used by the Defense Department to restructure military installations so they are more efficient and effective in supporting the nation's military forces.

As a result of BRAC, Fort Bliss will have approximately 20,000 more soldiers and their families by 2011.

This increase in personnel heightened the need for new and upgraded infrastructure on post.

Officially the Corps' Fort Worth District handles military construction at Fort Bliss. However, with the unprecedented construction requirements from BRAC, six Corps' Districts stepped

Continued—



Photo by Lisa Lockyear

The Corps helped with the project management for Company Operations Facilities on Fort Bliss, which now house administrative functions.

in to lend a hand. Albuquerque District joined the Sacramento, Little Rock, Galveston, Tulsa and Fort Worth districts on the \$2.6 billion Fort Bliss expansion.

Albuquerque’s task was to provide project management support for the Company Operations Facilities on post.

Civil Works Projects

The El Paso office also continues to provide support for Civil Works projects in the Southwest. The Corps is constructing a million-gallon water tank in Jal, N.M., as part of the community’s potable water system.

Additionally, the office is working to put in a waste water system on Las Cruces’ West Mesa. This project will also support the upcoming Las Cruces Army Reserve Center being overseen by the El Paso Resident Office.

Looking Ahead

The past decade has been a period of transition for the entire District, and the El Paso Resident Office has been no exception. Exponential growth has pushed the office to overcome numerous challenges, yet the office has consistently produced quality, on-time product delivery.

Work in the IIS program will continue, with the Department of Homeland Security remaining one of

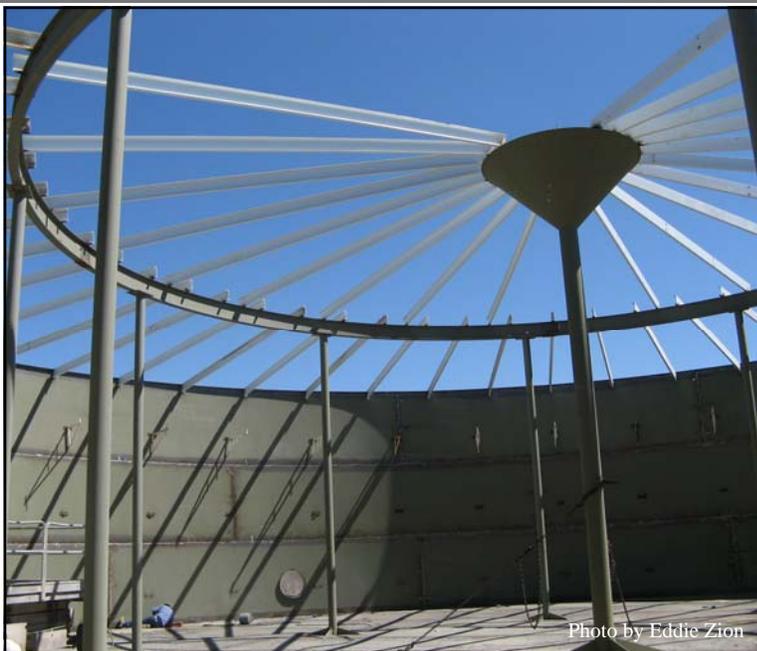


Photo by Eddie Zion

The Corps is overseeing the construction of a million-gallon water tank in Jal, N.M., as part of the 595 program. This program allows the Corps to provide water related environmental assistance and resource protection to non-federal interests in New Mexico.

the biggest customers.

Plans are underway for two large Special Operation Groups projects totaling \$5 million, to be located on Fort Bliss. Additionally, the

Resident Office is involved in numerous smaller projects for DHS and other agencies at various stages of development.



El Paso Resident Office Staff

- Ray Macias III:** Office Resident Engineer
- Kamal Otman:** Civil Engineer
- Rike Krueger:** Civil Engineer
- Jerry Nelson:** Civil Engineer
- Jesse Duarte:** Civil Engineer
- Art Aranda:** Construction Control Inspector
- Eddie Zion:** Construction Control Inspector
- Larry Baca:** Construction Control Inspector
- Darlene Duarte:** Engineering Technician
- Natalie Tapia:** Project Technician
- Karla Benitez:** Resident Intern

Deployed During the Holidays

By Loretta Gonzales, Deployed to Iraq

My deployment is just about to come to an end. Although I am counting the days until I leave, it is with bittersweet feelings. I am excited to get back to my family and my work at the Albuquerque District Office, but I am sad to leave my friends and my job here.

I was away for many family events to include birthdays, Halloween, my 30th Wedding Anniversary and Thanksgiving; I counted heavily on SKYPE to keep in touch. I was able to SKYPE with my family for their Thanksgiving dinner and was able to sing Happy Birthday and see my granddaughter blow out her candles on her birthday cake and watched as she opened her presents. It was midnight for me, but I felt included and it lifted my spirits!

Coming to Iraq, I did not anticipate filling in for the S-1 (Human Resource) position. Once I arrived, I realized that I would be doing S-1 work along with administrative and timekeeping tasks. I had to learn very quickly what needed to be done in all aspects of administratively running an area office. It has been a challenge, but I appreciate the knowledge I have acquired in all aspects of this position.

I am very proud to have had this opportunity to experience deployment, from the moment I became interested and all it took to get here, like medical appointments, training, saying

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This picture was taken when Loretta received her first care package from home. She will depart Iraq on Dec. 17 and return to work in Albuquerque on Jan. 8.

goodbye to family and co-workers, processing through UDC, flying in a C130 in full battle gear and riding with a “set” team from Baghdad to Tallil.

Once I got here, I had to endure the heat, the long 10-hour days, 7 days a week (except not as long on Fridays); responding to alert warnings and heading to the bunker. Something I’ve enjoyed is working with the local nationals. I know these experiences will make me a better person, and I will never take for granted my family and the life I have in the Land of Enchantment.

Employees to be Trained for Investigation Boards

By James Jaffe, Safety Officer

A Board of Investigation (BOI) is an official Army investigation of the following accident types: a fatal injury, a permanent total disability, a permanent partial disability, hospitalization of three or more people, property damage of \$500,000 or more, or any accident for which the District Commander determines is warranted due to the complexity of the accident or its potential for a negative impact on the Corps.

The Albuquerque District last had a BOI in 1994, as a result of a fatal accident that occurred at one of our lakes.

The Family Readiness Group (FRG) recently sent boxes of holiday goodies to the District's employees serving overseas: Robert Garcia, Brian Johns, Lance Faerber and Vera Moseley. Two are serving in remote locations without access to a store.

The boxes were funded by employee donations and money raised at the various ethnic food tastings held over the past year at the Albuquerque office. The FRG sends a special thanks to Gary Gamel, MSG Lujan and Bruno Quirici. If you would like information on the Family Readiness Group, contact Theresa Esplain, Angela Sims or Crystalin Medrano, pictured left to right.

That accident was a preventable mishap, and the investigation resulted in important upgrades to the lake's electrical system, as the 65-year-old electrical wiring may have met code at the inception of the dam, but it was obsolete and dangerous for operations today.

One of the top priorities of our Commander is to ensure that the District is ready with a trained cadre of BOI personnel.

At present, there are four BOI trained members.

The safety office is scheduling another five District employees to take the BOI training by the end of this year.

This should insure we have a cadre of qualified and trained people ready to investigate.

The hierarchy of the board is a safety advisor, recorder, board president and other technical experts.

The board has 30 days to investigate and write its report, after appointment by the commander. The report will decide who is at fault and the suggested outcome.

The board will use the 3W approach of investigations: What happened? Why did it happen? and, What changes should result from the incident happening?



Health Benefits Open Season to End Soon

Federal employee health benefits open season runs from Nov. 8 through Dec. 13. Open Season elections go into effect Jan. 2. Changes to your FEHB enrollment must be made through the ABC-C. Information on 2011 premiums is available at <http://www.opm.gov/Insure/health/index.asp>.

Federal Employees Dental and Vision Insurance Program (FEDVIP): Your coverage automatically continues if you are currently enrolled. Open season information is available at <https://www.benefeds.com>.

Flexible Spending Account (FSAFEDS): If you are currently participating in FSA, you must re-enroll for 2011. Enrollment information for 2011 is available at <https://www.fsafeds.com>.

PlanSmartChoice, an online suite of health plan selection tools, is free to all federal employees. For a demonstration or to register, visit their website at <https://www.plansmartchoice.com>.

The new cost comparisons for 2011 are available at www.opm.gov/insure/health/rates/index.asp, www.opm.gov/insure/dental/rates/index.asp, and www.opm.gov/insure/vision/rates/index.asp.

To enroll in federal employee dental and vision insurance programs, go to:

www.benefeds.com or call

877-888-337 or TTY, 877-889-5680.

Committee Seeks New Members

The Recreation Committee is seeking new members. Watch for the committee's by-laws to be posted on the intranet in the next couple of weeks. Commitment is one to two years with no grade requirements. Contact Leslie Rodriguez (505-342-3697) or Jeannette Alderete (505-342-3431) for more information.

Locations Given Away on Facebook

Have you heard about the new "PLACES I CHECKED INTO" application? It automatically posts and displays your current location unless it's disabled. Check your privacy settings to see if it's enabled or disabled on your profile. For more information, contact the Public Affairs Office at 505-342-3106 or (cespa-pa@usace.army.mil).

Thrift Savings Plan Adds Roth Option

As early as January 2012, the Thrift Savings Plan will launch a new Roth investment option. It will let participants make taxable contributions to federal retirement accounts and then make tax free

withdrawals in retirement. The Roth option is expected to benefit uniformed service members and select groups of federal civilian employees.

Federal Gov't Must Use Plain Language

The Senate recently passed legislation requiring the federal government to use clear language in documents and eliminate confusing jargon.

Sponsored by Sens. Daniel Akaka, D-Hawaii and George Voinovich, R-Ohio, the 2010 Plain Writing Act would give federal agencies one year to implement the use of clear language in all public documents.

Sale of Paper Savings Bonds Ends

The U.S. Department of the Treasury announced an end to the sale of paper savings bonds through employer-sponsored savings programs. However, employees interested in bonds can register for electronic savings bonds with TreasuryDirect. With TreasuryDirect, a free online system, you can buy, manage and redeem electronic EE and I savings bonds and other Treasury securities anywhere and anytime. To learn more go to: www.treasurydirect.gov