



For Immediate Release  
 March 18, 2008  
 U.S. Army Corps of Engineers

## **Construction contractor open house aims for better life for all Iraqis**

By A. Al Bahrani  
 Gulf Region South District



Iraqi contractors attend a session of the conference. Front row from left are: Maj. Joseph Brands, USACE Project Manager; Joanne Milo, Chief of Program and Project Management Division; Thomas Eidson, Chief of Engineering and Construction of Gulf Region South District; and John Kassebaun . Attorney at Office of Council, Rod Hill, Chief of Contracting Office of Gulf Region South District. (USACE photo by A. Al Bahrani) *Note – faces of attendees obscured for security purposes.*

**NASIRIYAH, Iraq**—The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers recently concluded a two day construction contractors’ open house here in al-Nasiriyah Camp Ur. Held March 15-16, 2008, the event presented the contract acquisition process for obtaining a construction contract with USACE.

Almost 300 Iraqi contractors representing more than 150 companies were given information at the USACE Gulf Region South district event to help them meet and exceed the U.S. government’s requirements on scope of work, proposals

and other aspects of the bidding process.

“We welcome you to the first, but not the last, contractors’ conference,” said GRS Commander Col. Steve Hill in the conference opening. Thanking General Jameel, commander of Camp Ur, Hill said, “These facilities are all his and he is very gracious to allow us to use his camp and use these facilities to coordinate this two day conference.”

He explained the point of the conference was to help bidders understand the contracting process used to award new

projects that will provide services to the Iraqi people. "I also believe that you are here because you are businessmen, engineers and contractors and you, just like GRS, want to construct quality construction projects that will improve services for the people of Iraq," he said.

Joanne Milo, the district's chief of Program and Project Management Division, said "We want to explain how to submit the most successful proposal that you can. We have lots of work that we are doing and a lot of work that we are going to be doing over the next year." She said GRS wants Iraqi contractors to submit successful proposals to enable good evaluations and award of contracts to local Iraqi contractors.

Milo said it is very important that contractors understand the process and how USACE evaluates proposals based on technical abilities and past performance; what they have done and how well they did it. She also said USACE wants to make certain that contractors understand how they are being evaluated. "So they give us all the documentation that we need so we can evaluate them successfully," Milo said. "We can't build our projects without good Iraqi contractors."

According to Thomas Eidson, chief of Engineering and Construction of the GRS District Office, the many contractors in attendance from across Iraq were very enthusiastic about the opportunity for open discussion and interaction with GRS staff. Many questions led to new questions and at times it seemed like there was no end in sight to the discussion, he said.

"It was very encouraging for me to see the huge interest and enthusiasm for reconstruction work," he said. "I am sure that I will see many of these contractors again as they use the information they gained during this open house to obtain contracts with the GRS."

Hill said that construction and providing services for the people is a tough job. It takes community leaders, engineers, good laborers and management who can ensure quality completion of the project.

"Our conference between GRS and many regional contractors is a strong indicator that many want to help build the future of Iraq and many are willing to meet and partner together to make improvements and ensure a better life for all Iraqis," Hill said. "What a tremendous success!"

Milo said, "Our process is based on fair and open competition. We have a lot of work coming up and we are very much looking forward to doing more work with the Iraqis. Working together and understanding each other and having contractors really understand our process so we can build together."

Lawyer Ali Al-Hamdani, a member of



Providing attendees with information kits for the conference are: (foreground) Abe Curry, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Contracting Office; Lauren Kelly, Administrative Assistant; and GRS Contracting Specialists Mamie Anderson and Karen Johnson. (USACE photo By A. Al Bahrani) *Note – faces of attendees obscured for security purposes.*

Thi Qar Province Businessmen Union, said this was one of the most successful conferences in the province because it gave important guidance useful to correct mistakes in contractors' proposals and it explained how to make successful proposals.

Executive Manager of Al-Murad Company for General Construction in Al-Muthana province, Saad Al-Yasiri said, "We are very happy to have been invited to this conference by the GRS and to meet these professional people. We really liked the way that they explained to us



(From left) Arthur Patterson, U.S. Army Corps of Engineer Provincial Reconstruction Team Engineer / Liaison Officer Muthuna and Thi Qar provinces; Joanne Milo, Chief Program and Project Management Division; Thomas Eidson, Chief of Engineering and Construction of Gulf Region South District; John Kassebaun, Attorney at the Office of Council; and Rod Hill, chief of Contracting at the Gulf Region South district. (USACE photo by A. Al Bahrani)

everything about the proposal process. There were lots of things that we didn't know or didn't care about in our previous proposals, but now everything is clear for us and we can compete strongly to win more projects in the future in order to participate in rebuilding our country."

Eidson said, "Currently the GRS oversees 144 projects and there are approximately 70 new, upcoming projects for the next six months."

For Hill these conferences help build stronger relations between everyone trying to provide projects to build Iraq.

Communication and face to face meetings help improve understanding and help to build relationships between partners who all have similar goals. It helps to show to the people that the government does care and is working hard to make things better, he said.

"I'm proud to be able to serve here in Iraq with so many nice people and professionals," Hill said.

**Note:** A. Al Bahrani is a Public Affairs Specialist with the Gulf Region South district, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Iraq. For more information, contact Betsy Weiner, public affairs specialist at (540) 542-1528 or e-mail requests to [CEGRD.PAO@tac01.usace.army.mil](mailto:CEGRD.PAO@tac01.usace.army.mil). For more information on the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers in Iraq, visit [www.grd.usace.army.mil](http://www.grd.usace.army.mil).