

Portfolio transition essential to AFCEC's design and construction mission

By Mila Cisneros

AFIMSC Public Affairs

JOINT BASE SAN ANTONIO-LACKLAND, Texas – The Air Force Civil Engineer Center's Facility Engineering directorate continues to advance design and construction capabilities, and deliver critical Department of Defense infrastructure more efficiently.



The directorate, known as "CF," realigned its contingency military construction (MILCON) portfolio in the U.S. Central Command region to improve operational support overseas and align with AFCEC mission priorities.

"Commanders at Air and Space Forces installations rely on AFCEC to deliver MILCON programs they need to accomplish their missions," said Lt. Col. Gary Moore, deputy director at CF. "Our professionals provide full-spectrum engineering solutions, ensuring infrastructure has a long lifespan at the overall lowest lifecycle cost."

Consisting of five divisions, the CF directorate plays an essential role in strengthening installations and accelerating readiness and resilience.

CF's reorganization transferred the CENTCOM construction program from the Strategic Design and Construction division, or CFS, to Military Design and Construction division, or CFM. This action supports AFCEC's Built Infrastructure Investment and Recapitalization line of effort. Part of AFCEC's Unity of Effort initiative, BII&R aims to deliver adaptive, resilient, right sized and sustainable infrastructure.

"Under the BII initiative, this portfolio transfer helps us stay focused on the appropriate lines of effort within the directorate," said Col. George Nichols, Strategic Design and Construction division chief.

The shift will further strengthen relationships with mission partners to include the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and the Naval Facilities Engineering Systems Command on overseas design and construction efforts, Nichols said.

The change was also triggered by a reduction in U.S. funded construction projects over the last several years due to the drawdown of forces across the Middle East area of operations, Nichols stated.

Overall, the CF mission will not change just the lead division responsible for the portfolio, Moore said.

Led by John Ahern, the incoming chief of CFM's Overseas Design and Construction branch, the reorganization will support the contingency MILCON program and all other MILCON-scoped projects from the same division.

AFCEC — in partnership with U.S Air Forces Central Command, USACE's Trans-Atlantic Division and Middle Eastern District teammates on the ground — supports emerging missions in the CENTCOM region.

The program stretches from Northeast Africa across the Middle East to Central and South Asia and includes design and construction of hangars and support facilities, airfield ramps or dining and lodging for Airmen.

The newly appointed branch chief brings 41 years of military and civilian experience to AFCEC, having served in various civil engineer roles at Yokota Air Base, Japan; headquarters Pacific Air Forces and U.S. Air Forces in Europe in addition to the Mission Support Group deputy role at Scott Air Force Base, Illinois.

Ahern credits his participation in a wide array of civilian developmental education programs over the years for growing his leadership skills.

CDE is a fantastic way to get the skills and experience to meet the needs of the Air Force mission, Ahern said. "I encourage civilian members to take advantage of the educational opportunities in the CDE program portfolio to advance professionally."

During a year-long program at Air War College, Ahern gained extensive knowledge on the challenges in the Middle East, great power competition and the related broader strategic issues.

This experience is vital to our overseas design and construction missions and to better operate in increasingly contested environments, Nichols said.

"I use my extensive installation-level experience to keep the installation perspective at the forefront of everything we do," Ahern said. "It's important to recognize challenges down to the squadron level and deliver real solutions as we rely on mission partners to successfully deliver construction programs that support our mission."

Ahern will closely collaborate with stakeholders across the DoD to provide facilities design and construction on time and within budget, providing exceptional BII support to the warfighter.

"My mission is to build internal and cross-cutting coalitions to achieve common goals and increase trust between CF, DoD construction agents and Air Force stakeholders," Ahern said.

Since joining in June, Ahern is quickly settling into his new role.



"I am excited to be part of the AFCEC team and I look forward to working with my great teammates to support our nation's missions overseas," Ahern said.