

## **Dec. 6, 2002 -- Task Force adds two to its ranks**

By Donna Braun, Editor

For now, the Army's Third Wave initiative is in a "wait-and-see" mode.

Requests for exemptions from review have been forwarded to the Assistant Secretary of the Army for Manpower and Reserve Affairs. Decisions on the exemption requests are expected to be announced Jan. 20, White Sands Resource Management Director Herb Carter said.

Once the exemptions are announced, DA will make plans to conduct reviews on areas not exempted. Implementation plans for the reviews will be due to the Army's Non-Core Competencies Working Group sometime in late February or March, Carter said.

Carter said that until the implementation plans are approved, it would not be known exactly how the Army would approach its attempts to privatize more than 200,000 positions.

While awaiting word, members of the White Sands Third Wave Task Force are using the time to familiarize themselves with procedures that could be used during the Third Wave process.

Range Commander Brig. Gen. William Engel appointed four members to the Task Force in early November. Those members are Carter, Workforce Operations Director Liz Ybarra, Deputy Garrison Commander Ron Hickok and White Sands Test Center Deputy Director Vickie Reynolds. Two additional members have been added to the group: John Hyndman of the Installation Support Directorate and Jim Cole, the Deputy to the Commander at the Electronic Proving Ground.

Carter said that White Sands has been quite successful in retaining positions during the Army's previous two waves. However, he said the Third Wave has several key differences from its predecessors.

One key difference is that the Army will be reviewing functions other than base operations.

Additionally, this wave is bigger and is intended to be faster than the previous waves.

Another key difference involves the A-76 competition process, which will likely be used for many areas that are directed to be reviewed, Carter said. With A-76, government employees compete against industry to perform the work. New guidance on the A-76 process was released in November. Carter said a key change in the process is the time frame permitted to conduct an A-76 study. He said the studies must be completed and a contract in place within one year.

He said two key people who are working their way through inches of paperwork to get smart on the regulations regarding this process are Management Analysts Harry Palmer and Steve Mears.

Carter said other options the Army could take during the process include divestiture or privatization. With divestiture, the function would be eliminated and no longer performed by the Army. With privatization, the function would move directly to be contracted out. Additionally, Army officials have said they may look at alternatives to A-76 during the review process, although Carter said most of those options would require some type of congressional action. Carter said some of the alternatives could include an Employee

Stock Ownership Plan, a Transitional Benefit Corporation, negotiations with the private sector, city-base partnerships, strategic partnering or quasi-government corporations. Carter emphasized it is too early to know what the future will hold for positions at White Sands. He said the Task Force and members of the Resource Management Directorate are working hard to be prepared once decisions are made about which areas will be reviewed and what type of review will be used.

Engel has pledged his full support in retaining Army civilian and military positions at WSMR and has promised to keep the work force informed on developments about the proposed privatization.