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Kansas City District

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Corps opens new telework center today, brings national initiative to Independence

What could be the future of the federal workforce will unveiled this morning when the Kansas City District of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers opens the metro's first telework center at 10:30 a.m. in Independence, Mo.

The Corps' new Telework Center-East, located at 12500 East 40 Highway in Independence, will offer the district's nearly 900-member workforce an alternative to the busy commute into the Corps' downtown Kansas City office. Workers will now be able to choose to make the drive into downtown cut their commute and work from one of the new center's six workstations complete with docking station, telephone and large work surface.

Similar sites have been constructed in Washington, D.C. in hopes of providing employees a reprieve from the city's traffic congestion allowing them to spend less time in the car and more time with their families.

Although centers are designed to combat traffic congestion and keep employees closer to their homes and families, the center also provides the agency with a new tool in preparing for the global war on terrorism.

"The Army has an old adage, 'train as you fight,'" said Col Donald Curtis, the Corps' district commander. "If we have an event where we can't operate from our normal facilities, our people will be adept at operating virtually whether it be at home or from this telework center."

The move to create this center stems from a law passed more than two years ago.

Public Law 106-346 directed the Office of Personnel Management to ensure federal agencies applied the telework policy to 25 percent of the work force by April 2001. An additional 25 percent of the work force was added each subsequent year in hopes of providing every eligible federal employee the opportunity to telework by the end of fiscal 2004.

"Had there not been this initiative we would have pursued it anyway," Curtis said. "I think it's only fair we look at what we can do to enrich the job opportunities here and help our work force balance family and work."

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