

ENERGY SOURCE

Defense Logistics Agency Energy

Spring 2015



DLA ENERGY AMERICAS

from the commander

Brig. Gen. Mark McLeod, USAF Defense Logistics Agency Energy

The other day, I was asked, "What do you think is the 'heart and soul' of DLA Energy?"

Without a doubt, it's our regional commands – Middle East, Europe & Africa, the Pacific, and our featured region in this quarter's edition of the *Energy Source* magazine, Americas. DLA Energy's core processes of contracting and acquisition certainly power our engine of success globally, but it is the direct processes, interfaces, relationships we build, nurture and enjoy out of the regions that translate our world-class processes into world-class customer support.

Sitting here in the headquarters, it becomes easy to see our "Energy" world from the inside (here at Fort Belvoir, Virginia) outward. While that may be good for operations here in the Washington, D.C. area of responsibility, it's not the best way to address the myriad issues our customers encounter, either with our internal processes or with their various customers. Thus I've adopted an "outside-in" approach during my time here in Energy, shaped by both my previous experience in a combatant command and by the feedback from our regional experts. That's why we are focusing so heavily on addressing future COCOM requirements (positioning, capability and capacity), enterprise Sustainment, Restoration and Modernization program velocity, Enterprise Business Process performance and executive agent authorities that place us in the best position to synchronize the Department of Defense fuel infrastruc-

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Back cover by: Jonathan Stack

ture prioritization and right-sizing. warfighters first – then effectiveness and efficiency for DoD.

Not surprisingly, DLA Energy Americas professionals proudly carry out this mission set throughout our nation and beyond its borders every day. Keep turning the pages and you'll see their important efforts on behalf of President Obama's rebalance to the Pacific initiative, the activities and contributions of our quality assurance representatives and the outstanding support we provided to the Federal Emergency Management Agency via the 2015 Quartermaster Liquid Logistics Exercise. In addition to their uncompromising mission support, I think you may also find the article on America's management team attendance at the "True Growth Academy" interesting and illustrative of their commitment to improving both organizational efficiency and culture/climate environment.

World-class support and innovation emanating from Houston and San Pedro, California? YOU BET! Enjoy the following pages and see if you agree.



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Growing Americas' Leadership



By Christopher Goulait

Members of the Defense Logistics Agency Energy Americas team sought out training to boost their leadership skills and develop both better leaders and a better organization.

To do so, management teams from DLA Energy Americas at Houston and DLA Energy Americas at San Pedro, California, attended the True Growth Academy Nov. 11-14, 2014, in Cypress, Texas.

DLA Energy Americas at San Pedro Deputy Director David Ray and DLA Energy Americas at Houston Deputy Director Tracy Keenan discussed who was selected for training, and why it was important for their teams.

“DLA Energy Americas at San Pedro targeted our leaders at the management and supervisor level to attend the True Growth Academy to develop, mature and sustain the leadership skills to lead high-power teams – teams able to achieve optimal mission success and innovation by mentoring and leading their employees to fulfill their individual and team potential in a positive manner,” Ray said.

The San Pedro office first selected supervisors and chiefs to attend an initial training session in June 2014, which was then expanded to include more leaders in the November session. Similar management teams were chosen by the Houston office.

“DLA Energy Americas at Houston understands the value of this training, and is making all efforts to afford supervisors the opportunity to attend,” Keenan said. “The course takes you on a deep journey to understand what makes you tick, document key life events that changed you and come out the other side with an action plan to live a better life and in the process be a better leader.”

“This is a comprehensive look at who you are and where you want to be in your life and as a leader,” Keenan added. “The course looks at both personal and professional to help you determine where you want to be in the future.”

The sub-regional offices' goals were to grow authentic leaders, Keenan said. They were looking to develop managers who people want to follow, by helping them to identify their life's purpose and core values and behaviors.

Those goals were met, said DLA Energy Americas at San Pedro Supplier Operations Division Chief Bowdoin Swenson, one of the training attendees.

"Several months before attending, each student had their boss, peers and direct reports conduct a confidential 360 survey of our leadership style and effect, as well as a self-assessment," Swenson said. "The True Growth advisors used this feedback in one-on-one sessions to help each student understand their strengths and blind spots, and develop an action plan to improve their leadership effectiveness."

Group sessions were also conducted to discover individual's core values and purpose, and develop action plans to authentically change participants and their organization for the better, Swenson said.

"I learned more about my fellow leaders who were with me at [the academy] in four days than I discovered after having worked with them for a year," Ray added. "We developed a high-level professional bond that is resulting in leadership

cooperation and teamwork at a new high level that would not have been achieved without having gone through the process."

While building better leaders benefits the supervisors themselves, the real benefit is to the teams and the organization they lead, Keenan said.

"Authentic leaders build stronger teams, have better loyalty and employee retention, and consistently improve the culture," Keenan said. "By understanding what makes our fellow leaders tick, we will improve how we work together as a team."

The workforce benefits in other ways as well, explained DLA Energy Americas at San Pedro Customer Operations Division Chief Dan Schmidt, another participant.

"We now have a strong commitment to a common set of core values and purpose that has resulted in a renewed focus on teamwork," Schmidt said. "Leaders motivate and empower our employees to strive towards team excellence and fulfill their individual potential."

A focus on "positive energy" in the workplace results in a stronger team that is able to better innovate and support DLA Energy's partners, he said.

"We are also focusing on giving our employees realistic feedback and positive coaching to overcome workplace challenges and achieve greater mission efficiency and effectiveness," Schmidt said. "This has resulted in great increase in trust at all levels, and an unprecedented unity of purpose driven by a re-dedication to our team's core values of integrity, teamwork and trust."

Members of the Houston and San Pedro teams said the course providing these payoffs to the organization was unique compared to previous training with similar goals.

"Many of us are former military and have been through various levels of military leadership training," said participant and DLA Energy Americas at San Pedro Quality Assurance Branch Chief Mike Lambrecht. "All of us as government supervisors have had the DLA leadership training. This course was different in that it went deep into what are 'your core values' to rediscover them and identify your leadership behaviors and life's purpose."

"The one-on-one coaching and the group exercises with your leadership team together made True Growth more effective than other leadership training," he continued.

The program was not your typical leader training program, Keenan added, it truly was a life-altering event that makes

you a better supervisor and leader.

Ray said he attended the course expecting a refresher of his previous military leadership training, but came away with a different experience.

"I came out of this transformed," Ray said. "This was taking leadership core values and application to a level I never experienced before."

Results from the experience were qualified through 360 degree surveys issued after attendees completed the course.

"I have received some great feedback from my employees and teammates as a result of the survey and being more deliberate in communicating my values and the team's values towards our common goals and purpose," Lambrecht said.

"It has helped me to improve myself in a manner that is open and honest with me and my employees, and the same for them. This positive approach has strengthened relationships and been a catalyst for a much higher level of teamwork," he added.

Due to the results of the November course, more of DLA Energy Americas' leadership will attend the training in April. 

