

Reduced budgets, new base operating services contract limit what civil engineering can provide customers

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Transformation is happening all over the Air Force and civil engineering is no different. With reduced budgets and limited manpower, the days of abundant work orders, short grass and multi-million dollar project funding years has ended.

Like so many functional areas across the Air Force, CE has had to find efficiencies any way possible, including cutting Headquarters Air Force and major command staffs.

The Air Force Civil Engineer has made the tough decision that CE can no longer do everything it has always done for our customers.

With the CE transformation that began in 2012, the work priority system has changed quite a bit. Additionally, grounds maintenance and custodial levels of service were standardized across the Air Force.

Bottom line -- there is less done by CE across the Air Force simply because there is not funding to sustain what has historically been done.

Another change is how CE projects are prioritized and funded. It is now done centrally at the Air Force level. Vance projects are competing with projects from bigger bases like Randolph Air Force Base, Texas, and Langley Air Force Base, Virginia.

All projects are scored using a complex formula that considers the importance of the building or facility to the mission, age and how well maintained a building is along with whether there are safety, health or fire hazards.

The resulting scores for all of the projects are put into one list, the Integrated Priority List. The Air Force approves projects until all available funds are spent.

When the new Base Operating Services contract started Aug. 1, the changes in work priority, grounds maintenance and custodial services impacted Vance.

These changes and reduction decisions were not made locally but at the Air Force level and with the new contract, AETC and Vance are required to implement the changes like the rest of the Air Force.

In the past when your organization rearranged offices, added equipment or got a new commander, someone would turn in an Air Force Form 332, "Base Civil Engineer Work Request," to have walls moved, additional electric plugs installed or the commander's office painted.

All of this type of work is considered routine.

Under the new Civil Engineering Work Priority system, Priority 1 is emergency corrective maintenance work. This is work needed to continue mission operations. No one goes home until the emergency is fixed.

Next is Priority 2A preventive maintenance.

Priority 2B is contingency construction training. This does not apply to Vance because CE is contracted.

Priority 3A is scheduled sustainment work for high mission or equipment sustainment risk.

Priority 3B is scheduled sustainment work for moderate mission or equipment sustainment risk.

Priority 3C is scheduled sustainment work.

Priority 4A is scheduled enhancement work.

Priority 4B is all other enhancement work.

Risk based priority will be according to the Prioritized Asset List, which is determined by the facilities board. The original PAL for Vance was approved in 2014 and will be re-validated this fall.

All of this is in accordance with Air Force Instruction 32-1001, “Operations Management,” and the BOS contract.

Most bases no longer receive funding supplies and materials to do routine work. However, for the Vance BOS contract, it is possible AETC will provide limited funding each year.

Routine work requests that are called in by the facility manager or submitted on an AF 332 will be collected. Then depending on the funding available, some will be accomplished. Some of these requirements will be combined into projects to compete in the IPL process.

Another noticeable area of change will be grounds maintenance. In the new BOS contract, the Air Force grounds levels of service will be implemented.

Under those standards are four categories for mowing grass at Vance.

First is the Bird/Wildlife Aircraft Strike Hazard standard, which primarily affects the airfield. Grass is mowed to between 10 and 14 inches high.

The second standard is Improved. Approximately 20 percent of the grass will be mowed 2 to 4 inches high.

The third standard is Semi-Improved. Approximately 30 percent will be mowed 7 to 14 inches tall.

Almost 50 percent of the base is considered in the last standard, Unimproved, and will be mowed only once per year.

If you have traveled to other bases over the past couple of years, you have seen what this looks like. Vance was allowed to delay implementing the standards until the new BOS contract was effective.

In the area of Custodial Services there are several changes. Some will see a reduction in services, some will see increased services and most will see little change from before.

The biggest change will be an increase in frequency of service in the student training areas with the implementation of the new Level 3 - Academic Category.

The Flight Rooms, hallways, bathrooms and operations desks in each of the flying training squadrons along with the classrooms in the 71st Operations Support Squadron, briefing areas of the civilian simulator instructors and the runway supervisory units will see an increase in frequency of service.

Trash will be emptied and bathrooms serviced daily during the week and vacuuming will be done every two days.

The remaining areas of the building outside of these specific areas, and most of the areas on base, are considered Level 2, the basic category.

Level 2 will have trash emptied once per week, vacuumed twice a month and bathrooms serviced every two workdays.

If individuals want their trash emptied more often, they must take it out themselves and then replace the bag in the can. The contractor is not provide extra bags.

A bag must be in the trashcan or the custodians will not empty it.

Areas like the Gym, Youth Program buildings and certain other buildings have special standards that must be met. These have their own special category in the contract.

Additionally there is a Level 1, Prestige category, which includes the 71st Flying Training Wing commander's suite of offices, the Enid Room at Base Operations where DVs are received, Demand Reduction lobby and restrooms, Base Chapel, Chapel Annex, Vance Club and the restrooms in the Library, Airman & Family Readiness Center and Education Center building. They will receive weekly floor sweeping and mopping, weekly trash collection and restroom service every two workdays.

As Vance moves into a new BOS contract, we move into a new era in Civil Engineering and join the rest of the Air Force in meeting the Air Force levels of service. The funding is simply not there to continue as we have in the past.

We ask your patience during this transition. However, be assured that while we may not be able to do everything that we have in the past, CE will continue to strive to provide world-class customer service.