

THOLOS

VOLUME 17

FEATURE

Architect of the
Capitol: Organizational
Transformation in
Service of One Another

YEAR IN REVIEW

2020



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RESPECT | We treat one another with civility and kindness, so that we honor the value and dignity of all people. INTEGRITY | We demonstrate honesty, ethics and reliability, so that we earn trust and do what is right. SAFETY | We are governed by the foundation of safety always, so that we can feel safe, make safe and be safe. EMPOWER | We are one team seeking better ways to do our work, so that we all contribute to the success of the AOC.

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YEAR IN REVIEW

2020

PHOTOS BY
AOC PHOTOGRAPHY BRANCH

2020 was a year like no other. Despite the many challenges and impacts created by the COVID-19 pandemic, Architect of the Capitol staff continually went above and beyond to ensure we never failed in meeting our mission.

Here is a look back at the unprecedented year and your many contributions. Thank you for your enduring commitment to Serve, Preserve and Inspire.





The President requests the several heads of Departments
 to take the most prudent and economical arrange-
 ments for the removal of the public offices, Clerks
 and Papers, according to their own best Judgment
 as soon as may be convenient, in such manner
 that the public offices may be opened in the City
 of Washington for the dispatch of Business by the
 fifteenth of June.

John Adams

Philadelphia
 May 15. 1800.

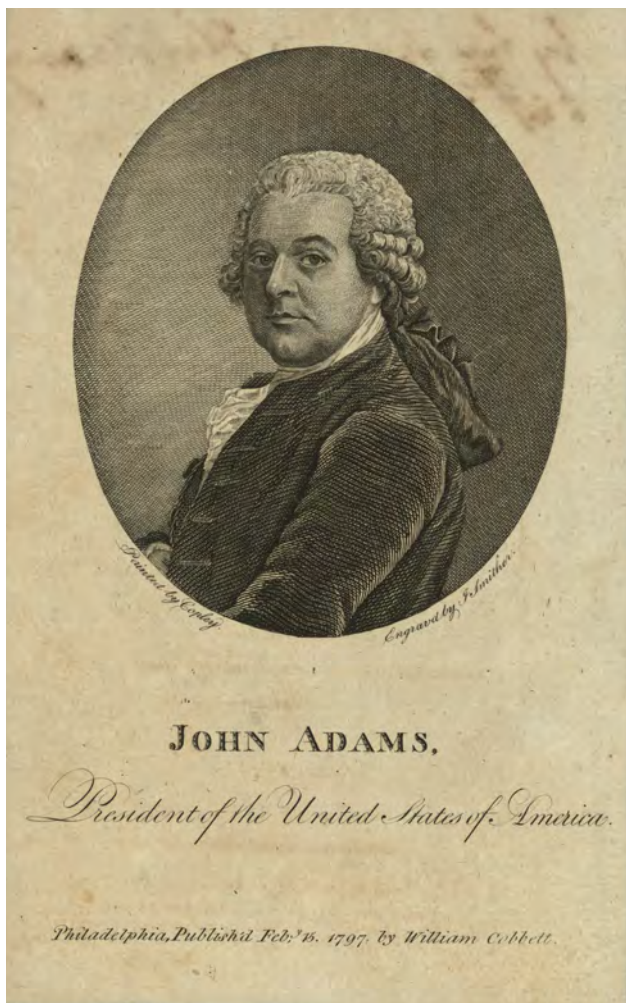
A LOOK BACK

JOHN ADAMS' CARRIAGE RIDE TO WASHINGTON, D.C., IN 1800

WRITTEN BY FRANKLIN BRADLEY
HISTORICAL PHOTOS PROVIDED BY AOC PHOTOGRAPHY BRANCH

President John Adams issued a letter to all federal agencies on May 15, 1800, directing the “removal of the public offices, clerks and papers” from the capital city of Philadelphia. In that single sentence, Adams started the final move of the U.S. government to its permanent home, the newly created city of Washington, in the District of Columbia.

To ensure he arrived in Washington before the deadline he had set for public offices to “be opened in the City of Washington for the dispatch of business by the fifteenth of June,” Adams left Philadelphia on May 27, traveling by carriage with his personal secretary. Though his wife, Abigail, would take the more direct route through Baltimore, those roads were considered to be more difficult to travel.



John Adams' portrait while President

Adams chose the western route across Pennsylvania before turning back through Maryland. The roads on his route were better than those the First Lady traveled, but the additional miles extended his trip to eight days.

He would enter Washington on its western edge, in Georgetown. Upon hearing of Adams' planned arrival, prominent residents of Georgetown met and unanimously resolved, "That an address on the part of this town be presented to the President of the United States upon his arrival here."

In fact, the President was celebrated all along his route, which might have made his journey less tedious. He was escorted by the cavalry both when he arrived in

and departed York, Pennsylvania, which also marked the occasion with the ringing of church bells. Residents of these rural areas considered any visit by the President a great honor, and Adams stayed in many towns and attended church services along the way.

Adams likely hoped that these constituents remembered his visits fondly because 1800 was an election year, and he was in a fierce fight against Vice President Thomas Jefferson.

Without mass media or easy travel available to the candidates, the presidential contest was largely carried out in partisan newspapers. That made the necessary trip from Philadelphia to Washington an opportunity for Adams that wasn't available to his opponent. The editor of one paper that supported Jefferson cast aspersions on Adams' route, asking, "Why must the President go fifty miles out of his way to make a trip to Washington?"

Despite his longer route, Adams arrived almost two weeks ahead of the June 15 deadline he had set for federal agencies to open in the new capital. As planned, he was greeted with a public address by the citizens of Georgetown that reads, in part, "In every situation to which you have been called by the public voice, we recognize with delight your unvarying devotion to the public good conspicuously manifested in your discharge of the duties of the high station you now fill."

Adams' reply the next day congratulated them "on the translation of the Government to the city so near you." While agencies would open for business shortly, the President himself would have to live and conduct his business in a boarding house for five more months before his residence was ready that November.

That was the same month that Congress was able to meet in the U.S. Capitol Building for the first time, even

though some rooms were still unfinished. Construction of the U.S. Capitol was a laborious and time-consuming process: building sandstone had to be quarried by hand in Virginia, then ferried to the relative wilderness of Capitol Hill. In 1799 alone, 20 tons of plaster from Paris had been boiled in vats and troweled onto 10,000 square yards of walls and ceilings, bound to 240,000 feet of wooden lath with 1,000 bushels of hair.

Even that effort wasn't enough to finish the interiors, and accommodations were made to ensure Congress could occupy the building on schedule. Wooden staircases would temporarily serve in lieu of the grand marble staircases intended for the building. Senate

Chamber columns that would eventually be stone were wooden shafts skimmed with plaster. The hearths of the fireplaces that would heat the rooms were laid with three pieces of sandstone, which could be reused to pave the new city's footpaths when marble hearths and mantles were later available.

"The original interior ... was simple and straightforward, lacking the elaborate materials and designs that were beyond the city's means," observed former Architect of the Capitol Historian William Allen. These conditions and the continued presence of workers weren't likely to bother Adams, who had written to his wife, "Let frugality and industry be our virtues."



Georgetown view in 1801

“LET FRUGALITY AND INDUSTRY BE OUR VIRTUES.”

On November 22, 1800, President Adams made the trip from his new residence, which was then called the President’s House, to the U.S. Capitol at the other end of Pennsylvania Avenue, the only paved road in Washington at the time. He addressed a joint session of Congress whose members were crowded into the new Senate Chamber, with spectators filling the gallery on the floor above. Jefferson was en route to Washington when Adams spoke allowing the incumbent to avoid an awkward encounter with his opponent who would have presided over the Senate.

Standing near his opponent’s empty chair to speak, Adams gave credit to the people for the successful move while acknowledging the work to be done. “I congratulate the people of the United States on the assembling of Congress at the permanent seat of their Government, and I congratulate you, gentlemen, on the prospect of a residence not to be changed. Although there is cause to apprehend that accommodations are not now so complete as might be wished, yet there is great reason to believe that this inconvenience will cease with the present session.”

Although construction on the U.S. Capitol continued beyond that session, Adams’ residence in Washington would end the next year, when Jefferson was inaugurated as the next President. The U.S. Capitol was where the hotly contested election was finally decided by the U.S. House of Representatives in 36 ballots over six days. Jefferson was then the first President inaugurated at the U.S. Capitol in the same Senate Chamber where Adams had welcomed Congress a few months earlier.

Adams wasn’t there to witness the proceedings, however, having already left Washington for his home in Massachusetts. For this trip, Adams took the shorter route north.



1. Philadelphia 2. Downingtown 3. Lancaster 4. York 5. Frederick 6. Rockville 7. Georgetown ★ Final Destination: Washington D.C.

RESPECT

INTEGRITY

SAFETY

EMPOWER

RESPECT | We treat one another with civility and kindness, so that we honor the value and dignity of all people. **INTEGRITY** | We demonstrate honesty, ethics and reliability, so that we earn trust and do what is right. **SAFETY** | We are governed by the foundation of safety always, so that we can feel safe, make safe and be safe. **EMPOWER** | We are one team seeking better ways to do our work, so that we all contribute to the success of the AOC.

FEATURE

ARCHITECT OF THE CAPITOL: ORGANIZATIONAL TRANSFORMATION IN SERVICE OF ONE ANOTHER

WRITTEN BY DR. GANELLA SMITH,
ORGANIZATIONAL TRANSFORMATION PROJECT MANAGER

Change seems to be a common theme over the past year. Change that requires us to wear masks when running errands, transforms our homes into schools and has us socially distanced when what we need, now more than ever, is to connect with family and friends. COVID-19 has touched each of us in a different way, yet through all this change, the Architect of the Capitol (AOC) has continued to serve Congress and the Supreme Court. The AOC is committed to building an agency that supports our people and prepares us for a better and brighter future. With that said, this month we have started our organizational transformation journey.

YOU MAY BE ASKING, WHAT IS THAT? WELL, SIMPLY PUT — IT IS WHAT AN AGENCY DOES TO CHANGE HOW WE TREAT ONE ANOTHER IN THE WORKPLACE SO THAT TOGETHER WE CAN **RISE UP** TO THE AGENCY'S VALUES.

RESPECT

We treat one another with **civility** and **kindness**, so that we honor the **value** and **dignity** of all people.

INTEGRITY

We demonstrate **honesty**, **ethics** and **reliability**, so that we earn trust and **do what is right**.

SAFETY

We are governed by the **foundation of safety** always, so that we can feel safe, make safe and **be safe**.

EMPOWER

We are **one team** seeking better ways to do our work, so that **we all contribute** to the success of the AOC.

Organizational transformation is possible when we at the AOC have shared workplace values that influence the choices we make and the actions we take to do our work to meet our mission. These changes will build an AOC that operates more transparently and efficiently. Through our efforts, it is most important that we appropriately empower every AOC employee and help each employee thrive within the new structure.

Recently, AOC leadership identified key initiatives, which are opportunities for change that are important to the agency's long-term success. These are referred to as "Big Rocks." The Big Rocks are the AOC's priorities. By addressing these, we can build a safer, more inclusive, more effective AOC — a place where we all want to work.

In all, there are seven Big Rocks intended to improve the work experience at the AOC.

TOUCH E P S E R

We treat one another with **civility** and **kindness**, so that we honor the **value** and **dignity** of all people.

AOC **R**ISE



**HUMAN CAPITAL STRATEGY:
ATTRACTING AND INCENTIVIZING
THE BEST WORKFORCE**

The AOC is responsible for some of the most iconic buildings and grounds in the world. Our workforce takes care of our country’s legacy, and we need to take care of our workforce. We will recruit and welcome team members who have the skills to make us successful, and we will ensure our current team members have the tools they require and the recognition they deserve to advance and grow with the AOC.



**AOC UNIVERSITY: TRAINING FOR
THE FUTURE**

Once we hire the right people for the job, we want them to thrive at the AOC. Training and development will be ongoing so our employees learn the skills that will prepare them to advance in the agency. Training and development will align with the AOC’s mission, and there will be a focus on employee development to support career mapping and growth in the agency. We are investing in our people for the future success of the AOC.



**ENTERPRISE ASSET MANAGEMENT
(EAM): EQUIPPING OUR STAFF WITH
THE TOOLS THEY REQUIRE**

Training will only take us so far and our people will need the right tools to get the job done. As the AOC evolves, so will its IT system needs. Currently, assets are managed by multiple parties using different systems. To manage our physical assets, we will use EAM across the AOC to track maintenance, mitigate out-of-date technology, restore reliability, reduce long-term costs, and provide a system to forecast resource needs and requirements.

RECENTLY, AOC LEADERSHIP IDENTIFIED KEY INITIATIVES WHICH ARE OPPORTUNITIES FOR CHANGE THAT ARE IMPORTANT TO THE AGENCY’S LONG-TERM SUCCESS. THESE ARE REFERRED TO AS “BIG ROCKS.” THE BIG ROCKS ARE THE AOC’S PRIORITIES. BY ADDRESSING THESE, WE CAN BUILD A SAFER, MORE INCLUSIVE, MORE EFFECTIVE AOC — **A PLACE WHERE WE ALL WANT TO WORK.**

INTEGRITY

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4

BUILDING OFFICIAL: KEEPING OUR STAFF AND CUSTOMERS SAFE

We have a responsibility to provide a safe environment for ourselves and for everyone who works on or visits the Capitol campus. Our facilities and grounds host people from around the world; this should be a safe place. To do this, the AOC will establish a Building Official program to minimize and manage risk. This will improve how we oversee safety and code compliance to keep our iconic buildings maintained for future generations.

5

VISION 2100 MASTER AND STRATEGIC PLANS: LEAVING OUR LEGACY

Continuing a tradition of safety at the AOC will be important as we look ahead. We are building the future of the AOC for generations to come and the work we do here will endure long after we're gone. The Capitol campus is one of our country's most important national sites; we have an obligation to maintain its legacy. Vision 2100 will serve as the "North Star" guiding our long-term vision for the Capitol campus and setting the direction for how we accommodate Congress, the Supreme Court and the Library of Congress for the long term. We have an opportunity to make sure the work and planning we do today has a lasting impact for future generations.

6

REORGANIZATION: BUILDING A STRUCTURE TO SUPPORT OUR PEOPLE AND MISSION

To make these Big Rocks work, we need a structure that supports these initiatives by opening up communications between leaders and staff and removing barriers that get in the way. This will allow for better coordination and adjustment when we need to head off issues.

7

CULTURAL BEHAVIORS TRANSFORMATION: CREATING THE ENVIRONMENT WE WANT

Of all the Big Rocks, this one is most dependent on the people of the AOC. While values like respect can be declared by AOC leadership, how our values show up day-to-day depends on everyone in the organization. How we live out our values is demonstrated in how we treat our co-workers and customers. If we're not invested in creating a better work environment for one another, then we will fail ourselves and our mission. Together we can make the AOC a great place to work.

SAFETY

**We are
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and be safe.**

AOC **R**ISE

You may be wondering how we will do this and as the organization transformation lead, I can assure you we will be working throughout the AOC to coordinate the leadership support, tools and updates needed to help our people get involved and stay informed. Change is not easy, but it is necessary to fulfil our AOC mission to serve Congress and the Supreme Court, preserve America's Capitol and inspire memorable experiences. As General Norman Schwarzkopf Jr. once said:

“THE TRUTH OF THE MATTER IS YOU ALWAYS KNOW THE RIGHT THING TO DO. **THE HARD PART IS DOING IT.**”

Each of us at the AOC knows there are things that need to change to create the best possible workplace for all of us. It is our responsibility to enlist in the change together so when all is said and done we can take pride in an AOC that reflects our values. As we move through the next months, I hope to hear and share stories about how you are experiencing the positive changes that have grown from this transformation. It is a pleasure and an honor to serve with you all each and every day.

EMPOWER

**We are one
team seeking
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do our work, so
that we all
contribute to
the success of
the AOC.**

AOC **RISE**





SPOTLIGHT ON SAFETY

NEW PESTICIDE RECERTIFICATION PROGRAM

WRITTEN BY KATE HOLDER
PHOTOGRAPHY BY KALEENA DWYER

One of the most important credentials for Architect of the Capitol (AOC) gardeners to obtain and maintain, is pesticide applicator licensing. It's a certification that advances the AOC's core value of safety in multiple ways.

Certified AOC gardeners keep themselves safe by using proper pesticide application techniques; other workers and visitors to the Capitol campus stay safe thanks to the gardeners' sound applications; and, ultimately, the environment is safeguarded by AOC pesticide applications that increasingly emphasize integrated pest management (IPM). IPM is a holistic approach that promotes the most environmentally friendly solutions to pest issues whenever possible.

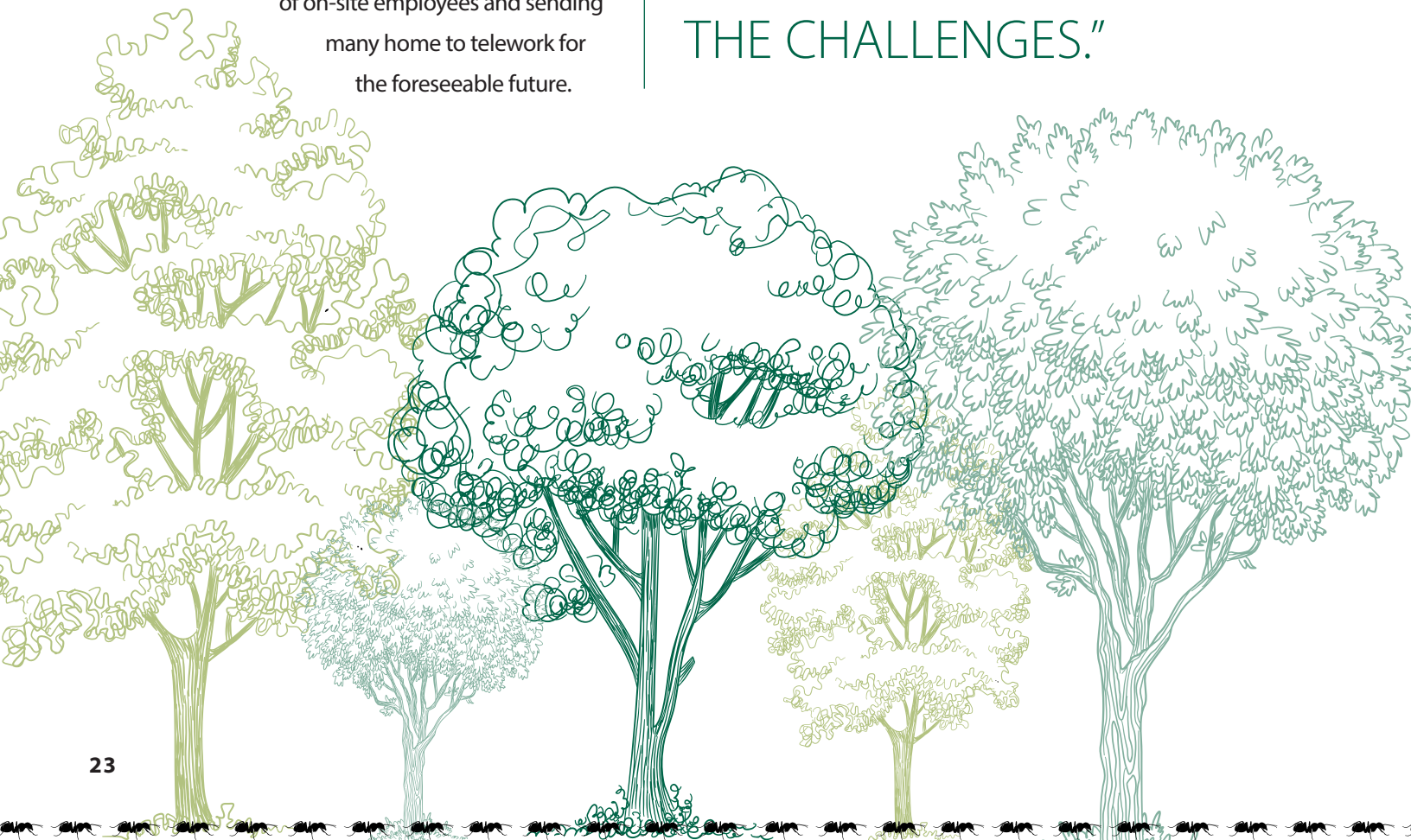


“Many of our AOC gardeners are required to maintain their pesticide applicator certification from the D.C. Department of Energy and Environment,” said Jim Kaufmann, Director of the AOC’s Capitol Grounds and Arboretum. In a normal year, the approach to certification and recertification was, respectively, to study for and take the certification exam on site at the D.C. Department of Energy and Environment (DOEE), and maintain recertification annually by attending full-day continuous education trainings at various locations in the Washington, D.C., metropolitan area.

However, 2020 was no normal year.

After the COVID-19 outbreak in March, the DOEE suspended on-site administration of the certification exam; the regional recertification trainings were also canceled. Meanwhile, AOC workforce schedules throughout the agency were radically altered — including rotating smaller shifts of on-site employees and sending many home to telework for the foreseeable future.

“WE TRANSITIONED OUR GARDENING STAFF TO ON-SITE CREWS AT 50 PERCENT CAPACITY DOING A WEEK-ON-WEEK-OFF KIND OF ROTATION,” SAID KAUFMANN. “IT WAS STRESSFUL BUT IT ALLOWED US TO ACCOMPLISH OUR MISSION CRITICAL WORK AND MUCH MORE DESPITE THE CHALLENGES.”





"We transitioned our gardening staff to on-site crews at 50 percent capacity doing a week-on-week-off kind of rotation," said Kaufmann. "It was stressful but it allowed us to accomplish our mission critical work and much more despite the challenges."

To be sure, AOC gardeners still had landscapes to maintain during the pandemic as well as recertifications to complete. Recertifications during the pandemic required a new approach. A former Capitol Grounds and Arboretum Plant Health Specialist working with the DOEE and the AOC's Human Capital Management Division, Training and Employee Development (TED) Branch developed a streamlined online training that served as both a pesticide recertification training and as preparation for the certification exam.

The training, which begins with the 55-minute introductory course, includes several additional courses and is offered on AOC Learn, the agency's learning management system. The course was approved by the DOEE and launched in October 2020.

Over two dozen AOC gardeners have taken the training from Capitol Grounds and Arboretum, Library Buildings and Grounds, Supreme Court Building and Grounds, and the U.S. Botanic Garden. Furthermore, for the first time, DOEE representatives came to the Capitol campus to administer and proxy the certification exam for new AOC gardeners. The exam took place in a large room in the Hart Senate Office Building where everyone could safely social distance.

"The course was well received and definitely helped our newer staff members prepare for the certification exam," said Katie Serock, a Gardener Supervisor for Capitol Grounds and Arboretum who took the training for her recertification. "Achieving and maintaining the

pesticide applicator credential is also required in order to advance in our field, so it's an important step in our employees' development to provide them more technical horticultural knowledge."

TED not only worked to get the new pesticide applicator training online in a few short weeks, the branch has also been working nonstop since the early days of the pandemic to convert as many of the AOC's in-person employee development programs as possible to virtual learning.

"COVID-19 presented an opportunity that I didn't know was a need for training until the pesticide courses," said Betzabel (Bessy) Plaza, a Human Resource Specialist in TED. "Employees were suddenly teleworking and some were issued an agency iPad or iPhone for the first time, so I started converting all of our courses to being mobile friendly and the pesticide ones were among the first to offer that feature."

The success of the AOC's new pesticide applicator recertification program bodes well for employee training opportunities that offer more platforms and flexibility to support a changing workforce. "It's a great use of the agency's technology," said Kaufmann, "and it also reflects the strong commitment to enhanced employee development that Architect of the Capitol Brett Blanton envisions for the AOC in the years to come."





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The Architect of the Capitol strives to meet its mission 24 hours a day, 365 days a year to **serve** Congress and the Supreme Court, **preserve** America's Capitol, and **inspire** memorable experiences for all who visit the buildings and grounds.

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FRONT COVER PHOTO BY:

KALEENA DWYER

BACK COVER PHOTO BY:

THOMAS HATZENBUHLER

