



IDEA EXCHANGE 2.0

Program Connects Teams and Sparks Innovation Across GSID

Top left: D.C. Bindery Machine Operator Ed Mercer visited the Stennis Secure Production Facility to shadow the Die & Perforation team and identify ideas he could bring back to Washington, D.C.

Top right: D.C. Bookbinder Alan Clemente said his experience in Stennis reinforced the value of collaboration and continuous improvement.

Opposite top: GSID Operations Manager Rachel Trussell said teammates participating in the Idea Exchange 2.0 Program are sharing ideas, solving problems and building relationships that strengthen the Agency.

Opposite bottom: Stennis Bindery Machine Operator Kendon Necaie traveled to the Nation's capital to collaborate with D.C. teammates and returned more motivated and with a new perspective on improving processes and the quality of our passports.

When teammates from Government Secure & Intelligent Documents' (GSID) Washington, D.C., and Stennis, Mississippi, production facilities visit their sister location, they're doing more than observing another shop—they're sharing ideas, solving problems and building relationships that strengthen the Agency.

That's the goal of Idea Exchange 2.0, a program that promotes collaboration, continuous improvement and knowledge sharing between GSID's two production sites.

The program began before the COVID-19 pandemic, when larger groups regularly traveled between the two facilities. After being paused during the pandemic, GSID leadership revived it with a renewed focus.

"We really wanted to restart the program because teammates enjoyed meeting their counterparts at the other location," said Rachel Trussell, GSID Operations Manager. "Even though we all do the same work, each shop has developed its own way of doing things."

That friendly rivalry between the facilities inspired a greater opportunity.

"There's always a little competition," Trussell said. "One location hears the other is breaking production records and thinks, 'We can do that, too.' We wanted to turn that healthy competition into information sharing."

Today, participants are selected through GSID's C4 (Concern, Cause, Countermeasure, Confirm) continuous improvement program, where teammates submit ideas to improve processes and eliminate waste. Once an idea is successfully implemented, it becomes the focus of an Idea Exchange visit.

"When teammates travel, they take one of those successful ideas with them," Trussell said. "It gives them a project and a conversation starter instead of just saying, 'I'm here to watch what you do.'"

During the weeklong exchange, participants work alongside teammates performing the same job, comparing processes, sharing techniques and identifying opportunities to improve.

"People start talking about how they do things at home versus how they're done at the other shop," Trussell said. "That's where we get the biggest return. Someone sees



something they've never thought about before and says, 'We should try that back home.'

The exchanges also help break down organizational silos by fostering relationships that continue long after the visit ends.

"We have too much technology available not to talk to each other," Trussell said. "Whether it's Teams, smart boards, email or phone calls, there's no reason someone should feel disconnected just because they're in another location."

Unlike the original program, which sent larger groups, Idea Exchange 2.0 now sends just two or three teammates at a time, minimizing production impacts while encouraging more meaningful collaboration.

"The feedback has been overwhelmingly positive," Trussell said. "People have really enjoyed it. They've learned a lot, and they've loved meeting others who do the same work they do."

The program's impact is reflected in the experiences of participants like Kendon Necaise, a Bindery Machine Operator at the Stennis facility, Alan Clemente, a Bookbinder from the D.C. facility, and Ed Mercer, a Bindery Machine Operator from the D.C. facility.

Necaise traveled to Washington, D.C., to share an idea focused on improving material traceability by revamping load tickets, or Traveler Cards, used throughout the production process.

"My idea was to improve our load tickets for better material traceability throughout production," Necaise said.

While he enjoyed visiting the Nation's capital, Necaise said the greatest benefit came from collaborating with teammates.

"The most valuable part was working with people who brought so many different perspectives," he said. "I've come back more motivated and with a new perspective on improving our processes and the quality of our passports."

For Clemente, the exchange centered on sharing technical knowledge with fellow bookbinders. He and his counterparts compared methods for operating the Melzer machine more efficiently and reducing waste.

"We exchanged experiences on running the Melzer machine more efficiently to produce consistent results with minimal waste," Clemente said. "I also shared how to resolve a monitor screen issue on the Melzer—a small but valuable nugget of information that directly helped the team and ensured stable operations."

Clemente said the experience reinforced the value of collaboration and continuous improvement.

"The most valuable part was gaining a greater appreciation for collaboration and mutual respect," he said. "Exchanging ideas leads to innovation and a better understanding of shared challenges."

Mercer visited the Stennis Secure Production Facility to shadow the Die & Perforation team and identify ideas he could bring back to Washington, D.C.

"I went with an open mind, hoping to gain a few tips and tools that I could bring back to our D.C. location to improve our production workflow," Mercer said.



After comparing operations side by side, Mercer discovered the two facilities had more in common than he expected.

"The most valuable part of the visit was seeing that our workflow processes are very similar, with only a few variations," he said. "I identified several best practices that improve processing times and efficiencies, and I've already implemented and shared those improvements with my colleagues."

Mercer said the experience reinforced the value of learning directly from teammates.

"The Idea Exchange Program was an excellent experience that I would highly recommend to others," he said. "It was a valuable opportunity to learn from another team, exchange ideas and bring back practical improvements that benefit our operation."

For Trussell, the program is also about investing in employees.

"I want people to have opportunities that maybe I didn't have early in my career," she said. "Continuous improvement doesn't come from leadership alone. It comes from the people doing the work every day."

She believes Idea Exchange recognizes teammates who are committed to improving their workplace while giving them opportunities to grow.

As more teammates participate, Trussell expects Idea Exchange 2.0 to remain a key part of GSID's culture—strengthening partnerships, sharing ideas and driving continuous improvement across both facilities.