

Open Channels

Katrina: one year later

By Pam Vedros

Hurricane Katrina was one of the largest natural disasters in the history of our country. More than 1,300 lives were lost when this storm reached Category 5 strength less than 12 hours before landfall. Surge reached from 28 to 30 feet along the Mississippi coast, and with 127 mph winds at Louisiana landfall, 75 percent of New Orleans was flooded.

“We had been tracking Katrina all along,” recalled Brigadier General Robert Crear, Commander of the Mississippi Valley Division U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. “When it seemed imminent that Katrina would make landfall along the Gulf Coast, I activated our emergency operations centers in all six districts.”

The Mississippi Valley Division is responsible for Corps of Engineers water resources programs in a 370,000-square-mile area in portions of 12 states from Canada to the Gulf of Mexico. Its subordinate districts are headquartered in St. Paul, Minn.; Rock Island, Ill.; St. Louis, Mo.; Memphis, Tenn.; Vicksburg, Miss.; and New Orleans, La.

For the past 12 months, the Mississippi Valley Division, in conjunction with other federal, state and local partners, have continued an unprecedented, multi-faceted effort to assist in the recovery and rebuilding of

the areas affected by this devastating hurricane.

Engaging more than 3,800 personnel at its peak, this is the largest disaster recovery operations in the history of the Corps of Engineers. Cumulatively, more than 8,000 Corps employees have provided assistance. As a comparison, during the Florida hurricanes in October 2004, approximately 1,500 Corps employees supported the hurricane recovery efforts; while in February 2005, 127 Corps employees were involved.

The Corps conducts its emergency response activities under two basic authorities: the Flood Control and Coastal Emergency Act (Public Law 84-99, as amended) and the Stafford Disaster and Emergency Assistance Act (Public Law 93-288, as amended). Under the Stafford Act, the Corps supports the Federal Emergency Management Agency in carrying out the National Response Plan, which calls on 26 Federal departments and agencies to provide coordinated disaster relief and recovery operations.

The Mississippi Valley Division has a primary role in support of the National Response Plan. The plan describes the basic structure by which the federal government will

mobilize resources and conduct response and recovery activities to assist states and local governments in coping with the consequences of significant natural or man-made disasters, to include terrorist events.

Within this plan, the Department of Defense has designated the Corps as the primary agency for planning, preparedness and response under Emergency Support Function #3, Public Works and Engineering. The type of assistance provided by the Corps includes restoration of critical public services and facilities, including supply of adequate amounts of potable water and ice, temporary restoration of water supply systems, provision of temporary emergency electrical power, temporary emergency housing, structural evaluation of buildings and damage assessment, and clearance, removal, and disposal of debris.

Following Hurricane Katrina, the Mississippi Valley Division, with support from sister divisions throughout the Corps was able to stand up a large response force in a matter of days. Just hours before Katrina arrived, the division’s emergency response team was tasking specialized response teams of all types from around the world to support the traditional USACE missions tasked by FEMA during disaster response.

(see Katrina, next page)



-Katrina-

Four days prior to Katrina landfall, recovery field offices were stood up at Keesler Air Force Base in Biloxi, Miss., and Baton Rouge, La.. Colonel Charlie Smithers, Commander of the Corps' Memphis District, headed up the Louisiana RFO, and Colonel Tony Vesay, Commander of the Corps' Vicksburg District, was tasked to lead the Mississippi RFO.

Shortly thereafter, on September 1, General Crear established his Mississippi Valley Division-Forward command post aboard the Motor Vessel *MISSISSIPPI* in Baton Rouge. The *MISSISSIPPI* serves as an inspection and workboat for the Mississippi River Commission, with 90 percent of its time spent as a working towboat for the Memphis District. Its main role is moving barges, equipment and supplies on the Mississippi River in support of the Corps' mat sinking operations. Within the first two weeks, more than 1,500 Corps personnel had deployed to the Louisiana and Mississippi offices.

Recap of Hurricane Katrina recovery efforts:

Water & Ice Missions - complete

The Corps orders ice and water for transport to disaster victims under the direction of FEMA, and awards advance contracts with commodities suppliers and then activates those contracts when a disaster is anticipated or has occurred. Following Hurricane Katrina, ice and water were delivered by the contractors to specified staging areas for further distribution, at the appropriate time, to points closer to disaster victims.

Final distribution to individual victims was accomplished through local governments. Approximately 170 million pounds of ice and more than 5,500 truckloads of bottled water were delivered to the affected areas. One ice truck equals 40,000 lbs. of ice and serves 5,000 people. One water truck equals 18,000 liters; 3 liters per person serves 6,000 people.

Temporary Emergency Power Mission - complete

As Corps responders battled to help the affected areas recover, one critical mission hummed along without much fanfare, but with an electrifying effect. The power mission brought life to critical services following Katrina. Immediately following the storm, more than 1.3 million homes and businesses in Louisiana, Mississippi and Alabama were without electricity, according to utility companies. Combined, the Louisiana and Mississippi RFOs conducted 1,337 emergency power assessments across the two states and then installed 318 generators. The

offices have now "uninstalled" and returned those generators to storage for the next hurricane season.

Unwatering Mission - complete

The Corps began unwatering the city of New Orleans on September 6, 2005. Lasting 47 days, the unwatering mission was completed on October 23. More than 767,000 acre feet - or 250 billion gallons of water - was removed from the greater New Orleans area. This equates to water 17 feet deep over an area the size of Washington, D.C. The water was pumped into three locations: Lake Borne, the Gulf of Mexico, and Lake Pontchartrain.

Colonel Duane Gapinski, Commander of the Corps' Rock Island District, was given the task of unwatering New Orleans. He also had the task of emergency repair of the levees, which meant that his team was pumping water out of New Orleans in one area and repairing damaged levees in another.

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Mississippi Valley Division



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Generally Speaking

by Brig. Gen. Robert Crear
Commander
Mississippi Valley Division



Labor Day differs from the other holidays we celebrate. All other holidays are in some way connected to conflicts and battles of man's prowess over man, of strife and discord for greed and power, of glories achieved by one nation over another. Labor Day is devoted to no man, living or dead, to no sect, race, or nation.

Labor Day is a creation of the labor movement and is dedicated to the social and economic achievements of American workers. It constitutes a yearly national tribute to the contributions workers have made to the strength, prosperity, and well-being of our country. It has been celebrated as a national holiday since 1894.

Labor unions themselves celebrated the first labor days in the United States. Historians credit Peter McGuire, a leader of the carpenters union, with the original idea of a day for workers to show their solidarity.

The first Labor Day parade occurred Sept. 5, 1882, in New York City. The workers' unions chose the first Monday in September because it was halfway between Independence Day and Thanksgiving. President Grover Cleveland signed a law designating the first Monday in September as Labor Day nationwide.

Labor Day is a day set aside to pay tribute to working men and women; therefore, it is appropriate that the nation pay tribute on Labor Day to the creator of so much of the nation's strength, freedom, and leadership — the American worker.

For most of us, Labor Day means two things: a day off and the end of summer. As you and your family are preparing to celebrate this holiday, please take a moment to think about the various hazards you may encounter and the necessary steps to ensure that you and your family are safe.

Labor Day



Our roadways are the greatest dangers you may encounter this holiday weekend. There will be many travelers hurrying to reach their destinations. Remember, for you and your family's safety, buckle your seat belts, drive defensively and before you start on your trip, get plenty of rest. And if you drink, don't drive.

If you plan to spend time around the water, whether boating, swimming or fishing, remember to buckle up your life jacket, apply sunscreen and drink plenty of water. Remember that alcohol, water and the hot sun can be a deadly mix.

Thank you for all that you do and I want each of you and your families to have a safe and enjoyable Labor Day weekend and, more importantly, to have you return to work next week safe and sound. I'm proud of you all.

Hooah!
RC



Stakeholders discuss closure of Mississippi River-Gulf Outlet

Congress directs Corps to begin MR-GO de-authorization study

By Julie Morgan

The New Orleans District hosted a stakeholder meeting July 27 to receive input on a comprehensive plan to de-authorize deep draft navigation on the Mississippi River-Gulf Outlet.

Stakeholders were introduced to the Congressionally-directed plan and provided an opportunity for interactive planning in its development. The goal of the meeting was to establish a common understanding of the authority and provide an avenue for stakeholders to express their opinions and expectations.

Corps representatives also announced that the Galveston District of the Corps' Southwestern Division has been asked to provide technical assistance and independent oversight on the MR-GO Deep Draft De-Authorization Plan due to the New

Orleans District's Katrina recovery workload.

This was the first stakeholder meeting on the MR-GO that the Corps has held since hurricanes Katrina and Rita. The meeting provided stakeholders from the environmental, business, academic, and shipping arenas, as well as state and local governments, a forum to begin discussions on the many issues surrounding the waterway and its future based on the Congressional directive to develop a plan for de-authorizing the channel.

An interim plan is due to Congress in December 2006 with the final to be included as part of the Louisiana Coastal Protection and Restoration Report, due in December 2007.

An initiative from the meeting resulted in several stakeholder groups agreeing to meet independently to review previous documents, plans and proposals related to the MR-GO with the intention of finding areas of agreement within their own plans.

Corps/stakeholder meetings will occur frequently during plan preparation to continue public involvement. A second stakeholder meeting will be held in mid-August. By that time, a web site will be developed containing historical and current information on the development of the MR-GO De-Authorization Plan.

Comments. The public is invited to mail comments, plans or proposals throughout the planning effort to the MR-GO project manager at USACE, Gregory Miller CEMVN-PM-C, P.O. Box 60267, New Orleans, LA 70160-0267.

Small Businesses to get 43 percent of total contract awards

By Amanda Jones

The Corps' Small Business Program set a target this year for each district to contract 43 percent of the total contract obligations to small businesses. So far this fiscal year (FY) we've only procured 23.82 percent. But according to Randy Marchiafava, chief of Small Business, "We've obligated over \$614 million in small business contracts," a significant amount in comparison to the approximate \$65 million and \$85 million procured in FY 2004 and 2005, respectfully.

Our percentages are low because they are based on the total obligated dollar amount for the district, which also includes Task Force Guardian (TFG), the Hurricane Protection Office (HPO), the

Protection and Restoration Office (PRO) and the Regional Field Office (RFO). "The percentages are set for normal situations and we are obviously not in a normal situation," said Col. Richard Wagenaar, district commander.

In the past, the majority of the money was in dredging, which is usually too much for small businesses to handle. This FY we've obligated over \$2.5 billion, including \$1.3 billion for debris removal and \$166 million for the blue roof mission.

"For the debris mission, all of those contracts are large business contracts from outside the state of Louisiana," said Marchiafava.

"Almost all of the construction work that's been done since the storm by small businesses has been local Louisiana contractors. That money stays right here in the state. That's why it's so important to do business with small businesses when you can. But there has to be a balance," admits Marchiafava, "because there's only a certain capacity that small businesses can do. If they could do the large contracts, then they wouldn't be small businesses."

But Marchiafava is still optimistic. "We've just entered the fourth quarter of the fiscal year, so the district's small business percentage still has time to grow." Col. Wagenaar is also optimistic because he believes that small businesses are "an integral part of our execution strategy."



Outfall Canal Update

Orleans-London Avenue & 17th Street Canals

What will happen when another tropical storm hits?

By Leo Skinner, contractor

Everyone in New Orleans has a story to tell about where they were when Hurricane Katrina hit last August. About a year later, nearly everyone knows where they will be in the event of another hurricane or tropical storm. Ray Newman is no exception.

Newman, of Operations Division, knows exactly where he will be if and when the next storm hits the area. "I'll be in the city of New Orleans directing my team's work from the 17th Street Canal pumping station, making sure the floodgates are closed and rain water is flowing out of the city into Lake Pontchartrain."

Newman has been visiting his team's home away from home on a weekly basis, at the same time reviewing and rewriting gate closing and pumping procedures with his staff. Although the pumping system will be fully automated, USACE staff will be on-site at all three locations to monitor pumping activity and assure the flood protection system continues to function properly.

Having grown up in the Lakeview area of New Orleans, Newman says he feels connected to the city. "This is the most exciting work I've been involved in and I understand the responsibility of restoring the public's faith in our flood protection system. This is an important assignment and I take a lot of pride in it."

Newman is one of three canal captains assigned to manage operations at the three outfall canals on Lake Pontchartrain during times of tropical storm activity. The other two captains are Carl Robinson and Donald Constantine. Each captain has a four-member support staff. In case a tropical event has enough surge to force gate closures, teams will be at the 17th Street, London Avenue and Orleans Avenue sites and canal captains will be at nearby pumping stations with the New Orleans Sewage and Water Board.

According to James St. Germain, project manager in the Hurricane Protection Office (HPO), crews are working 24/7 to get the interim pumping structures ready at the three outfall canals. Once completed, the interim floodgates and pumping system will maintain water levels within the canals and lower the risk of floodwall failure.

"This has been an unprecedented operation with activity around the clock," said St. Germain. "Our contractors have been very good and have really stepped up the pace to get these structures operational."

St. Germain added, "When a tropical storm is detected in the Gulf and might impact New Orleans, the Corps district commander can make the decision to begin gate closure, and will notify local officials prior to lowering the gates. The decision to close the gates is based on water surge."



Ray Newman, canal captain for the 17th Street Canal.

Cranes will be used to raise and lower the gates until they are fitted with winches.

Massive pumps about the size of a train engine car are being installed to help pump water from the city, through the canals and into Lake Ponchartrain. The capacity of the pumps at the closure structures is less than the city's drainage stations. Therefore, pumping operations at the city's pump stations will be limited to the capacity at the closure structure to maintain the safe water level in the canal.

Gates and pumps are operational at the Orleans Avenue and London Avenue canals, with capacities of 2,200 cubic feet per second (cfs) and 2,800 cfs, respectively. The capacity of the inland pumps is 10,000 cfs at the 17th Street Canal; 2,700 cfs at Orleans Avenue Canal and 8,000 cfs at the London Avenue Canal.

(see Canals, next page)



-Canals-

Following gate closure, pumps will be used to maintain safe canal elevations according to the following specified levels: 5 feet for 17th Street. and London Avenue and 8 feet at Orleans Avenue.

Because the temporary pumps are not complete, an emergency operational plan has been developed and will go into effect if a tropical storm threatens the area.

Current plans are to build permanent pumping stations at each one of the three outfall canals. HPO is overseeing these projects and has started work on options for placement of these permanent stations and will seek public input.

St. Germain noted that construction on the interim outfall canals and pumps should be completed later this year, but he emphasized that construction schedules can change. “Considering the size of the project and the short time frame for

completion, we always have to allow for construction and manufacturing delays,” said St. Germain.

However, Ray Newman is ready now. He knows that every day that passes without a tropical storm brings him closer to the end of the 2006 hurricane season. He understands that protecting residents from hurricane flooding is a team effort and he is ready to play his part. “We have to work as a team, it all has to come together at the right time,” said Newman. “I know we can do it!”

Baumy awarded Wheeler Medal

By Roger Cawley, contractor

For Walter Baumy, the clock never stopped. “I could always hear it going tick tock, tick tock,” he said.

Baumy, Chief, Engineering Division, was the senior civilian and engineer assigned to Task Force Guardian after Hurricane Katrina slammed into southeastern Louisiana. What stands out in his memory is the relentless sense of time ticking away and the countdown reminders at Task Force Guardian Headquarters of how much work had to be done and how little time they had.

Their challenge was formidable: restore the hurricane protection system’s 169 miles of damaged earthen levees and concrete floodwalls, and repair most of its existing pump stations before the onset of the next hurricane season.

Teaming with Task Force Guardian Commander, Col. Lewis Setliff, Baumy said the priorities of the task force were clear from the start: “We were to restore the system and rebuild confidence.”

Day after day for nearly nine months he and his teams shouldered 75-hour plus work weeks creating the processes for handling decision-making and then executing the details of a huge array of projects, each of which was crucial to achieving Task Force Guardian’s mission by June 1, 2006. “We needed to build a quality product and demonstrate that we had. We knew it was a good product,” Baumy said.

In doing just that, and in recognition of his leadership in achieving the goals of Task Force Guardian, Walter Baumy was awarded the Wheeler Medal by the Society of American Military Engineers (SAME) May 31, 2006. The award is presented to SAME members for “outstanding contributions to military engineering by a civilian or uniformed member of the Army.”

In remarks to the presentation audience, the Society’s Executive Director, Robert D. Wolff noted that, “Baumy’s demonstrated leadership,

technical competency, strategic engagement and engineering wisdom enabled production of 59 distinct construction projects in an unprecedented accelerated timeframe.”



(see Baumy, next page)



-Baumy-

While personally honored by the award, Baumy prefers to credit his team. "What was asked of us was a huge job," he said. "The magnitude of construction and level of protection required would ordinarily take years to design and construct. We did it in months. Our team possessed such a high level of skill, energy and teamwork combined with a tremendous sense of duty and pride that I consider it an honor to have served with each and every team member."

Baumy took three days off during that nine-month stretch: Mother's Day, Easter and a college-awards event recognizing his daughter, Rachel. "A mandatory three-day shutdown at Christmas and at New Year's was ordered" he remembers, "because everyone on the team was working so hard and needed a break. We knew it was going to be a tough finish."

In the high-profile, deadline-driven pressure cooker he called work, where there was no typical

day except for its length, Baumy says the real source of his strength those days was his family, especially his wife, Ami. "When every day was a countdown, she kept me straight and kept me going," he said.

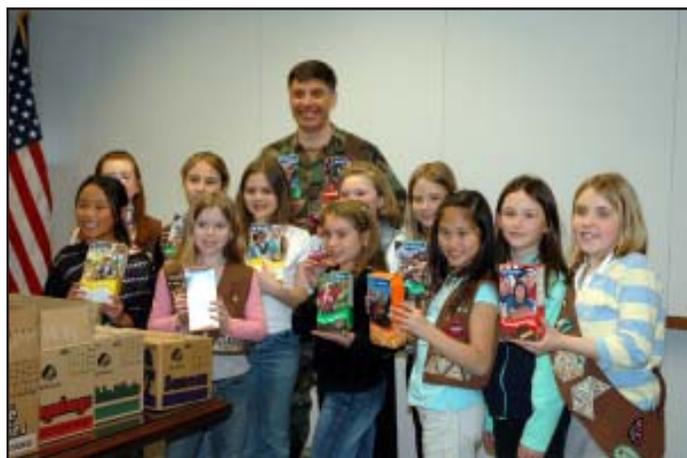
He also points to the inspiration of people around him, like Col. Setliff. At one of the many meetings they both attended, Baumy recalls one in particular when a local resident named Henry took the microphone and angrily questioned whether the Corps was up to the task of protecting them. Baumy said Col. Setliff carefully listened and then responded by inviting Henry to tour some Corps construction sites and projects. A few weeks later, back at the meeting hall, there was Henry again. "This time," Baumy recalls "Henry had a different message.

Holding onto the microphone, Henry now told his neighbors: "You people have nothing to worry about."

The medal and the recognition are a long way from his

first days with the Corps in 1974 pushing soil tubes in the Soils lab while a student at the University of New Orleans. The next year after graduation he joined the Corps as a full-time employee. A native of St. Bernard Parish, he's resided with his family in Mandeville since 1989.

Looking back on this period of his career, Baumy admits he didn't realize at the outset how much work would be required to restore hurricane protection levels before the start of hurricane season. The Wheeler Medal Award citation comes close: "... he oversaw the restoration of more than 169 miles of ravaged hurricane protection systems, 68 pumping stations and four water control structures. This \$800 million construction program was executed in the 276 days between August 29, 2005, and June 1, 2006, when Hurricane Katrina struck and the start of the new hurricane season. Baumy was also personally involved in the engineering of improved designs of the earthen levees protecting the City of New Orleans, and in the stability improvements to miles of floodwall repairs."



Girl Scout troops 779 and 839 helped contribute to the mission of nation building and returning Iraq to the Iraqi people. The above left photo is in St. Paul with Col. Mike Pfenning, district commander. The troop sent Girl Scout cookies to the Corps' Gulf Region office in March. In June, they received their thank you. "I cannot tell you how wonderful those cookies were for the Soldiers, Sailors, Airmen and Defense Department civilians here," said Lt. Col. John G. Kunkle (right photo, first left), on assignment as deputy commander, Gulf Region North District. Kunkle is St. Paul District's deputy commander.



Gone fishin'

by Jeff Kapaun

The Corps of Engineers' Mel Rieman Recreation Area on Lake Ashtabula, Valley City, N.D., hosted 35 kids at the 18th annual Take a Kid Fishing Day June 3. The event was held in conjunction with National Fishing Week.

Fishing day falls on the first weekend in June, when fishing is free throughout North Dakota.

The goal is to introduce children to fishing.

The kids, ages 6 to 10, live in the Barnes County area and participated in a variety of educational programs and hands-on fishing experience.

Twenty volunteers from three agencies helped to run the event. Participating agencies were the Corps, Barnes County Wildlife Federation and the Valley City Women of Today.

Volunteers divided the kids into groups with half the youngsters fishing and the rest going through the interpretive programs.

An hour-and-a-half later, the groups switched so everyone got to fish and participate in the programs. Interpretive activities included a casting game to teach proper casting techniques. The most accurate casters in all five age groups received prizes.

Mike Stanley, a cooperative program ranger at Lake Ashtabula, displayed the portable model of a low-



Mike Stanley, a Lake Ashtabula co-op student (center), and volunteer Eugene Pederson (left), show youngsters the model low-flow dam and how it works at the 18th annual Take a Kid Fishing Day at Lake Asthabula, held June 3.

flow dam and explained the dangers associated below these types of dams.

Also, kids learned to tie a fishing spinner – made from scratch – to show their parents.

“This was the best fishing year we have had in a long time,” said Stanley, watching the kids catch numerous smallmouth bass, a few perch, crappies, bluegills, and as always some bullheads. The kids also learned to release fish back into the lake so another person could enjoy catching them some day.

For many of the youngsters, it was their first time to cast a line into the water or bait a hook.

“With the help of the volunteers they were getting pretty good at it by days end,” said Stanley.

Barnes County Wildlife Federation sponsored the event and provided volunteers and funding to make this event an annual success.

Volunteers provided hot dogs, chips, pop and ice cream.

All participants received a combination rod and reel to take home, as well as a bag containing coloring books describing different fish provided by the Corps and North Dakota Game and Fish Department.

Each kid also took home their own tackle box with various tackle included.



Corps tracks with kids at Sandy Lake

by Jeff Steere

The Big Sandy Water Institute is a summer educational and recreational program focusing on teaching students how to enjoy and preserve local water resources and natural resources through environmental education, fishing, canoeing, kayaking, snorkeling, boat and water safety and swimming.

These classes are held at five locations, including the Corps' Sandy Lake Recreation Area, McGregor, Minn. Rice Lake National Wildlife Refuge, Savanna Portage State Park, Long Lake Conservation Center and the Catholic Youth Camp also host classes.

Other classes included bog walks, hypothermia, boat safety and rescue, impaired vision, bird watching, animal tracks, orienteering, introduction to global positioning systems, fish ecology and fish identification, archery, tree planting and gardening.

Participants also get to go on a field trip to Paul Bunyan Nature center and Three Bear Lodge and Theme Park. A family fun day is scheduled for the last day of the Big Sandy Water Institute at the Big Sandy Recreation Area where participants and their families enjoy kayak races, water balloon toss, swimming, fishing and a picnic lunch.

This year's classes started June 19 and finished Aug. 3 with a two-week break for Red Cross swimming lessons after July 4. This is the institute's fifth year, with more than 1,850 kids participating in the first four years.

The Corps is among 12 public or nonprofit program sponsors.

Corps' personnel helping out this year included Tammy Wick from the headwaters office; Pat Duffney, park ranger, Pokegama Dam; Terry Ladd park ranger from Sandy Lake; and Jeff Steere, park manager, Sandy Lake.



Photo by Tammy Wick

Ranger Terry Ladd (right) instructs students about animal tracks during the Sandy Lake Water Institute, June 22. When conditions are right, he takes the participants for a walk to find tracks on shore or on a sandbar. High water levels this spring hampered locating tracks, so Ladd built a form (above) and filled it with dirt. "We used pre-cast molds of animal prints for the kids to press into the dirt and then we let them fill them with plaster of paris," said Tammy Wick, headwaters office. The institute averaged about 27 students per day after the first two weeks of classes.



Nearly 200 individuals attended the St. Paul District annual summer awards ceremony and picnic hosted at the Corps' Eau Galle Recreation Area in Spring Valley, Wis., June 23. The planning committee arranged for a gathering to honor and remember co-workers who are deployed overseas.



The running referee

by Mark Davidson

Why does Jodi Kormanik, a hydraulic engineer in water control section of the St. Paul District, run? Does she run on the basketball court as a referee to stay in shape for marathons?

Or does she run in marathons and other races to stay in shape for basketball?

On June 17, Kormanik ran in her second Grandma's Marathon in Duluth, Minn. It was the marathon's 30th anniversary and a record 7,206 runners started the 26.2-mile race.

"I finished in 4:53:54," said Kormanik. "Not as good as I wanted to, but the conditions were brutal. For the first time in Grandma's history the black flag was raised. This was an extreme warning for the runners due to the heat and humidity.

The female marathon winner, Halina Karnatsevich, 37, of Belarus, took the lead right from the gun and won with a time of two hours, 33 minutes and 39 seconds.

Kormanik and 6,912 other runners finished the race. She finished in 4,784 place out of all of the runners. Out of 2,607 female runners who finished the race, she placed 1,580.



Kormanik runs in half-marathons, marathons, 10k races and other races about 10 times a year. She runs about 20 miles a week to stay in shape.

"I actually just started running [in] January 2005," said Kormanik. "Prior to then, I would guess the longest I had run is maybe two miles. I found running to be a great stress reliever. It's something you can do that gives you time to think or not think, you can do it alone or with a friend, and the only costs are new running shoes every three months."

But competitive running is not the only athletic activity Kormanik does. She also is a basketball referee. She was a referee five years ago for just one season of springtime American Athletic Union basketball games, mostly on the weekends.

"Then, this past basketball season I decided to take it more seriously and I became a Minnesota State High School League basketball official," said Kormanik. "I started contracting games from various basketball organizations and even refereed one varsity high school girls game during this past winter season."

Even though the high school basketball leagues are not going on now, Kormanik is officiating summer basketball about one to two weekends a month. A typical tournament will allow her to referee about eight to 10 games over two days.

"During a weekend in late June in Rochester, Minn., I refereed a total of 15 games in three days," said Kormanik. "The games that I reffed ranged from eighth grade to high school varsity, both girls and boys."



Kormanik will be attending a basketball official's camp in Duluth this summer to get ready for the upcoming season. She plans to referee a full time schedule this upcoming basketball season. This means she will officiate one to two high school varsity games a week along with some ninth grade, sophomore and junior varsity games.

Kormanik played basketball, fast-pitch softball, soccer and tennis in high school and also played fast-pitch softball in junior college. A St. Paul District employee since December 1997, she certainly knows sports and has experienced many different kinds of referees.

"I believe it takes a certain type of individual to referee. You can't give just anyone a whistle and expect him or her to be able to call a good game, and I think that the kids out there playing should have good referees," she said. "I have made the choice to become a dedicated official that will continue to work at becoming better each year."



Meet and greet held at Fountain City Service Base

by Russell Williams

The Equal Employment Opportunity Office's Special Emphasis Program field subcommittee hosted a meet and greet for 23 new employees on a calm, sunny day at the Fountain City Service Base, Fountain City, Wis., June 29. This was the second time the field subcommittees hosted the meet and greet.

"It makes the committee seem worthwhile," said Judith Harris, clerk, Lock and Dam 5A and member of the field subcommittee. Harris and Terry Fluekiger, committee field chair, worked with the field subcommittee to plan the meet and greet.

Harris said the team built on the format established the year before. They invited all new employees and anyone else who may want to attend.

A light lunch was served that included hot dogs, beans, chips, cookies and beverages.

After lunch, all the new employees were introduced by their supervisor. Other employees introduced themselves afterwards.

"The event provided another opportunity to bring the field and the district office together," said Michael Knoff, chief, hydraulics and hydrology branch. "We're trying to tear down the us-and-them attitude of 'you're a new employee so you come to the district office in St. Paul for the meet and greet.'"



The field subcommittee of the Special Emphasis Program Committee organized the meet and greet held in Fountain City, Wis., June 29. Front row, from left: Judy Harris, Lock and Dam 5A; Tammy Wick, Headwaters Project Office; and Lupe Santos-Jensen, special emphasis program manager. Back Row: Dave Nelson, Headwaters Project Office, Terry Fluekiger, Lower St. Anthony Falls Lock and Dam, Rojean Heyer, Lock and Dam 7; and Chris Botz, Lake Ashtabula. Members not pictured: Nate Johnson, contracting; Bryan Peterson, Fountain City; and John Dickson, Lock and Dam 8.

Knoff said this is especially beneficial in the summertime when the bulk of new employees are field employees. For the people from the district office, this was an opportunity to see project sites in the field.

"People out there got to know who people in the district office are and where they work," said Harris. "Col. [Michael] Pfenning, district commander, introduced himself to all new employees. This lessened their worry about meeting the colonel, because he is in charge of the whole district."

The field's meet and greet accomplishes one of its 2006 initiatives and focused on meeting its overall mission to "find ways and develop resources to increase the

representation of qualified women, minorities and people with disabilities in permanent positions at Corps field locations." With the support of the commander, district leadership and other SEPC subcommittee members, a diverse group of new and current employees traveled and participated in the meet and greet.

The diversity of the new employees shows both the district's focus and progress in achieving a diverse workforce, said Lupe Santos-Jensen, Special Emphasis Program manager.

(see Meet, next page)



-Meet-

New employees enjoyed the meet and greet.

Benjamin Cox, a student from the University of Minnesota-Twin Cities, works in the regulatory branch. Cox learned of the Corps through a career fair at the university where he spoke with Marita Valencia, a regulatory section chief, and Daniel Seemon, ecologist in regulatory.

“It’s nice to get out and see the maintenance, surveying and dredging activities going on at the Fountain City facility,” said Cox.

Another University of Minnesota - Minneapolis student, Maler V. Annamalai, said, “It was also very, very nice to meet other people in the district.” She works in the hydraulics section, engineering and

construction division. Annamalai also learned of the Corps through a career fair, where she spoke with Jodi Kormanik, hydraulic engineer.

Annamalai, originally from Singapore, is a civil engineering student. “I went down with two new employees, met more new employees and other people and saw hands-on examples,” she said.

Joseph Titus, Jr., a student at Humboldt High School in St. Paul, said, “It was good meeting new people and getting a lay of the land.” Titus is working in regulatory branch this summer.

Prior to ending the meet and greet, the SEPC chairs presented 2006 accomplishments and 2007 initiatives to the commander and senior leaders.



Steve Lenhart, upper area lockmaster, is about to shake the hand of Adrian Swanson, a newly recruited lock and dam operator. Next, going left, are Amy Thomas, clerk, and Brian Gray, a student employee — all at Lock and Dam 2 in Hastings, Minn., and Arlan Baukol, a temporary lock and dam operator at Upper St. Anthony Falls Lock and Dam, Minneapolis. To Baukol’s right, behind Lenhart, is Robert Turner, Lock and Dam 1, Minneapolis.

St. Louis District Blue Roof Team Covers the South FEB Awards a job well done

By Nicole Dalrymple

June 1 marked the start of the 2006 hurricane season and all eyes focused on New Orleans. But Hurricane Katrina also heavily battered the south half of Mississippi, though with far less media scrutiny than New Orleans received.

Mississippi’s coastal region was devastated. Katrina’s full brunt left absolute devastation south of I-10.

The Vicksburg District, which led the Corps’ response and recovery efforts in Mississippi, recently received an email from a citizen who had benefited from one of the Corps programs – Operation Blue Roof.

Operation Blue Roof is a program administered by the Corps, in which contractors install temporary blue plastic roofs over storm-damaged ones. The program allows people to move back into their homes and out of the shelters, minimizing disruption to family life and preventing additional weather damage while homeowners await the installation of a new roof.

“I just wanted to thank all the people who installed ‘blue roofs’ on the Mississippi Gulf Coast after Hurricane Katrina,” wrote Keith Stuart, an employee of the City of Biloxi.



Vick James (L) shows Col. Lewis Setliff early entries into a growing stack of Rights of Entry forms - necessary before Corps and contractor employees could legally enter private premises.

(see BlueRoof, next page)



-BlueRoof-

In a June 2 e-mail, Stuart said, “We just had our new roof installed. The Corps roof saved our house and belongings. Thank you.”

The temporary roofing mission in Mississippi was executed by the St. Louis District’s Temporary Roofing Planning and Response Team with assistance from Nashville District’s roofing team. The teams are two of five in the nation. The others are in Jacksonville, New York and Omaha Districts.

The St. Louis team deployed for an initial 30 days, working 7 days a week, and more than 12 hours a day, with many team members staying over two months. The team rotated back to St. Louis, but in late December many members were reactivated to go to Louisiana to assume Omaha’s District’s management of the ongoing roofing mission there.

During their deployment to Mississippi, the team activated roofing contractors, met with homeowners and managed installation of more than 57,000 blue plastic roofs. Living conditions were austere due to the extensive damage.

Appreciation and recognition has come to the team since the storm but accolades are not why they do this work.

“The team cares about people first,” said Vick James, the team’s resident engineer. “We’re there to help them and that’s what we stay focused on.”

St. Louis FEB recognizes team

Noteworthy recognition came May 3, when the Greater St. Louis Federal Executive Board awarded its 2006 Excellence in Government Team



In some Mississippi neighborhoods, virtually every home required a temporary blue roof to safeguard belongings and structures.

Award to the District’s Temporary Roofing Planning and Response Team. While the award specifically lists the 70 District team members, hundreds more came from Corps offices around the country, as well as from other federal agencies, including the Bureaus of Reclamation and Indian Affairs.

“This recognition by the FEB is greatly deserved,” said Lt. Col. Gregory Raimondo, acting District Commander. “The District’s response to last year’s hurricane season has been outstanding.”

I applaud the willingness of team members to leave their homes and families on short notice and work under challenging and stressful conditions to help others.”

Preparation

A day prior to Hurricane Katrina’s landfall, a five-person team departed St. Louis. Driving to Mississippi with action officer Lou Dell’Orco, mission manager Greg Bertoglio, mission specialist Mike Rodgers, and logistics specialist Charlene Boecklen was mostly

uneventful, recalls contract specialist Joan Brickey. “It wasn’t until we were 25 miles outside of Vicksburg that we ran into all the traffic from the coast.”

While four team members continued on to Vicksburg, action officer Lou Dell’Orco stopped in Jackson, where he would work in the Joint Field Office with federal, state and county officials.

As part of the National Response Plan, there are multiple emergency support functions, or ESFs. The Department of Defense, through the Army Corps of Engineers, is the lead agency for ESF 3: Public Works and Engineering Emergency Response.

The Corps’ missions include ice, water, temporary roofing and housing, and debris removal.

The hours preceding the storm were hectic and filled with coordination.

“Before Katrina hit, we looked for estimates to drive funding,” Dell’Orco explained. “The team looked at several factors: where is the

(see BlueRoof, next page)



-BlueRoof-

hurricane expected to make landfall, where are population centers, where will recovery efforts begin?"

The team worked quickly to formulate a plan to get buy-in and support. The plan outlined how recovery efforts would proceed for the roofing mission, where work would start and even what the exit strategy would be.

"If a hurricane happens early in the season, we want to get the mission done as quickly as possible and get redeployed. The team may have to go out again," Dell'Orco explained. "Plus, the state needs to be ready to assume responsibility. The cost is too high to taxpayers for us to be there until the very end. There needs to be an exit strategy that everyone agrees with early on."

Landfall

Following landfall, and already on alert, the remaining roofing team members deployed. Within four days, Jackie Arbeiter, database manager; Steele Beller, real estate; Vick James, resident engineer; Chris Rosenkranz, administrative specialist, and Karen Watwood, quality assurance supervisor, arrived in Vicksburg.

They jumped in and immediately started assisting. There was only a small window of opportunity to get prepared.

"The emergency response functions move out first," Dell'Orco explained. "Things such as ice and water that are critical for life support. Temporary roofing is considered a recovery effort and follows behind."

To prepare, the team identified the storage facilities for FEMA's temporary roofing materials, created

quality assurance packets, initiated contact with local emergency centers, determined where walk-in stations could be established for citizen contacts and reviewed reports of where damage had occurred.

On Sept. 8, the team departed for Keesler Air Force Base in Biloxi, Miss., where the Vicksburg District was establishing the Recovery Field Office. From there, Vick James, Karen Watwood and Steele Beller moved into Gulfport to open the resident office and start collecting rights of entry – legal authority for the Corps to enter private residences for roofing repairs.

While Vicksburg had sustained storm damage, it was nothing like the damage and conditions that would meet District employees further south. Gas and food were hard to obtain; showers were a luxury; vehicles had to serve as transportation and lodging, and negotiating an already unfamiliar area was further complicated by the absence of electricity and street signs.

Vick James, who deployed to New York City following the September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks, said Katrina's devastation was shocking. "I went to New York City following 9-11 and thought that was bad. This was horrible," he said. Chris Rosenkranz, who got an opportunity to view the devastation by helicopter about a month into recovery efforts, felt the same way, saying the area looked like a "war zone."

The initial weeks were hard. Not only was there stress and personal discomfort, the office was understaffed. James recalls having about eight people the first few days. "We collected 14 rights of entry the first day and then we did 700 the next day. We were spread really thin. People worked very hard," he said.

Fortunately, despite their own personal loss, many Gulfport residents volunteered to help in the collection centers. "We had a lot of volunteers," James said. "They helped make it a success." Assistance also came from the U.S. Air Force and Navy.

"The local people made a huge difference," James said. "They helped us help them."

Additionally, volunteer groups from around the country started to arrive and provide welcome assistance to people in more rural areas. The contractors, responsible for installing the temporary roofs, were able to move quicker in more densely populated areas.

Telephone Calls

The walk-in stations were packed and the phones rang constantly.

"Once our phone numbers were made public, it was crazy," James recalls. A lot of elderly people couldn't travel, so the resident office started to accept rights of entry over the phone.

Once contractors from around the country got Joan Brickey's phone number at Keesler, she was hopping too. Calls from companies interested in obtaining work flooded the office.

There were also reporting requirements. Everyone wanted to know statistics: numbers of rights of entries collected daily, roofs installed and the estimated completion date.

Greg Bertoglio needed numbers from the resident office and Lou Dell'Orco needed numbers from the field office.

(see [BlueRoof, next page](#))



-BlueRoof-

It was a multi-tiered reporting requirement that fed daily meetings and provided information ultimately feeding into reports reaching the highest echelons of the Pentagon and White House.

Adding an additional reporting requirement was the presence of auditors who were requesting and reviewing information as the recovery efforts were taking place. Representatives from Internal Review Office, the Defense Contract Audit Agency and the Criminal Investigation Division were on-hand throughout the response.

Quality Assurance

Eventually, more than 400 people worked on the roofing mission in Mississippi and getting to that number was no small feat. There was a massive requirement for quality assurance (QA) representatives. QAs monitor work to ensure that it is done correctly and to start the accountability chain for properly paying contractors.

In fact, the fight for QAs was fierce. Other missions such as debris removal and Louisiana’s recovery efforts vied for the same people.

As numbers of QAs grew to 200, new collection stations opened and the team was spread more thinly. James recalls daily coordination talks with Bertoglio ending with his request for more QAs.

Many of the QAs in Mississippi were new to the roofing mission. James estimates 98 percent of the people were new to QA work and had no prior experience with temporary roofing.

Before reaching the resident office, the QAs processed through the field office at Keesler AFB.



Steep roofs found on many Mississippi homes required contractor roofing specialists to adhere to stringent safety procedures as they worked feverishly. Their superior efforts staved off additional damage to homes and their contents, buying owners time to save belongings and make permanent repairs.

Greeting them was Chris Rosenkranz, whose first day with the roofing team was her first day on the ground, Sept. 2.

“I greeted probably 99 percent of all the QAs coming in,” she said.

“I met them, helped get their paper work filled out and got them where they needed to go. I gave my phone number to everyone. They knew they could call me if they needed anything.

(see BlueRoof, next page)



-BlueRoof-

“I did everything I could to make their lives easier so that they could do their jobs,” she explained.

Field Adjustments

While Florida had given the team good experience in 2004, they had to quickly adjust to unique aspects of Mississippi.

James explained some differences. “Homes are different in Mississippi,” he said. “There are a lot of tin roofs, steeper roofs and older roofs. In Florida, there were a lot more mobile homes.”

“Storms are different and so are states,” Bertoglio said, “We came out of Florida with a good foundation and hit the ground running in Mississippi. I am very proud of the team’s effort, and accomplishments.”

Giving the team a ‘turn-key’ perspective, many initial responders were backfilled by fellow St. Louis employees. Vick James was instrumental in establishing the resident office and fellow Construction Branch colleague Dennis Woodruff closed out the office.

Joan Brickey was backfilled by Kathy Souders for six weeks. Then she went back to close out the mission. Chris Rosenkranz deployed for 71 days, came home for a short break and returned for 11 days to help close out in Mississippi.

“We got to see the mission from start to finish,” Brickey said. Dell’Orco added, “We had a turn-key operation. We started and finished the roofing mission at all levels of responsibility. We have a lot of experience to draw from if someone needs us next season.”

Lessons Learned

The team has had a couple of months to reflect on lessons from last year and is taking steps to be even



Long shadows indicate the start of another lengthy day for the St. Louis District Blue Roof Team in Mississippi. Here Kelly and Greg Bertoglio (L), Col. Lewis Setliff, visiting from Task Force Guardian in New Orleans, and Mike Rodgers, depart Keesler AFB, Miss., to inspect progress on Blue Roof work.

more prepared for this year’s hurricane season. They have enjoyed their successes.

“This was a great team effort. Things went really well in Mississippi and there were phenomenal results in the field,” Dell’Orco said. “The state was as happy with the project as was I, but we’ve been busy taking steps to implement our lessons learned. If we are called again, we will be even better prepared.”

Changes the team made include expanding pre- and post-storm deployment teams to include a few more people. A team roster has been prepared to support a 60-day deployment as opposed to the earlier 30-day.

Team members are also updating training regulations and standard operating procedures, and a pocket-size QA reference is being created.

For example, to get ready for this and future hurricane seasons, Greg Bertoglio has a box pre-packed under his desk, with signs, operating procedures, a copy of the temporary roofing contract, Corps flags, software, and

office supplies. “It’s just enough to get the team established in the early days of the emergency response,” he explained.

A bag holding his Corps shirts, hard hat and other items is at home, ready to be grabbed at a moment’s notice.

“Katrina made me better for the roofing team,” Bertoglio said in reflection. “It presented a lot of challenges, giving me a greater appreciation for those I worked with and helping me to better understand the requirements of upper management.”

Veterans of Florida 2004 and Mississippi 2005, the St. Louis District’s Temporary Roofing Planning and Response Team is temporary in name only. They are permanently ready.

But team member Joan Brickey probably echoed the sentiments of many Gulf Coast residents. “I hope it’s a calm season,” she said. “I think the Gulf Coast has had it rough the last couple of years. But, we’ll be there if they need us.



Wings of Spring Confluence Birding Festival

The Wings of Spring Confluence Birding Festival saw more than 1,600 visitors come to the Rivers Migratory Bird Sanctuary in West Alton, Mo., Friday and Saturday, April 28 and 29.

More than 130 students from area schools came on Friday with their teachers and learned about the critical role the Confluence Region plays in support of the migratory bird populations throughout the Midwest.

On Saturday, over 1,500 people braved rain and high winds to share a similar experience. Visitors were thrilled to have the opportunity to visit one of America's most noted bird watching areas and to learn from numerous exhibitors and program presenters.

Two popular activities were provided for children of all ages. Children were able to make their own



At Wild Bird Sanctuary, Valley Park, Mo., naturalist Katrina Whitner presents Fred, a hood vulture from Africa, to Wings of Spring Festival attendees. Whitner was telling listeners about the bird and its role in the African ecosystem when it spread its six-foot wings to impress viewers with its size and power.

birds using a variety of craft items. Another favorite was a chance to build blue bird houses that could be taken home by the children. The staff used pre-cut and drilled materials for the

houses. The materials were donated by a local building supply firm.

Several presenters gave talks throughout the day in the speakers' tent. Brian "Fox" Ellis from Peoria, Ill., gave an excellent reenactment of the life of John James Audubon. Always a crowd favorite, the World Bird Sanctuary from Valley Park, Mo., brought several birds from their rehab program to delight visitors. Also giving presentations were Creve Coeur Camera on Nature Photography Basics and Ken Schall gave a presentation on Gardening for Wildlife.

Several vendors selling delicious sandwiches added to the day at the Riverlands Migratory Bird Sanctuary.

Shuttle buses provided transportation to off site parking areas as well as the Jones Confluence Point State Park.



Benjamin Hopkins (6 ½) of Mascoutah, Ill., discovers the great horned owl is not so formidable without its bulky feathers and sharp beak. Benjamin was one of many young people who learned many fun-filled facts about the birds that frequent the region during his visit to the Wings of Spring Confluence Birding Festival at the Rivers Migratory Bird Sanctuary in West Alton, Mo.

(see Wings, next page)



-Wings-



Creating fanciful birds from toilet tissue tubes and an assortment of richly-colored feathers, beads and other craft materials caught the attention of many of the younger visitors. Here, Emily, 4 (L) and Josie (5) Manar are assisted by their grandmother, Paula Manar. Yes, there's a St. Louis District connection: Paula Manar is our own Katy Manar's mother.

The shuttle provided a secondary service by allowing visitors to experience the Riverlands Migratory Bird Sanctuary, where numerous birds and plant species – many endangered or threatened – abound.

The Riverlands Migratory Bird Sanctuary is in the middle of a 200-square-mile regional park and trail system that blends urban and rural environments in a public-private collaboration, known as the Confluence Greenway.

The Confluence lies at the heart of the Mississippi Flyway, a nationally renowned, important migratory path for birds during their seasonal north-south flights.

It hosts a sequence of species each spring and fall as they fly north for the summer and then back south to escape winter weather and food shortages. The area provides rest and food for both water fowl and species that inhabit prairies and woods.

In addition to those which only pass through, other species spend the summer, or even most of the year there. More than 326 species have been observed in the bird sanctuary enabling bi-state residents to observe numerous birds year round. In fact, bird species seldom, if ever seen in North America, such as the Ross's Gull, which calls Siberia home, and the Smew, from Scandinavia and western Russia, have been sighted on Corps property in West Alton, Mo.

The Rivers Project Office is open to the public throughout the year and even offers indoor observation vantage points to view wintering species such as Bald Eagles on the nearby Mississippi River. Visitors are able to see the wonders of the riverside wonderland from the warmth of a glassed-in viewing room. The project office also offers an education library and an environmental learning center where teachers can bring nature to life for students.

This year's Wings of Spring Festival was a first ever effort of this magnitude, combining efforts of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and other Federal environmental agencies; state agencies and non-governmental organizations, but it won't be the last. The festival has positioned stakeholders throughout the confluence region to partner together, and it has created a synergy around birding education and nature tourism. Many high-profile sponsors were on board as well, aiding in the success of the festival's first year. "We want to keep this energy going by making the event an annual occurrence," said Ken Buchholz, festival chairman and development director for Audubon Missouri. "We think the festival can play a key role in developing the confluence area into a premier regional and national outdoor destination that will benefit people and wildlife."

According to Buchholz, "In our first year, we feel the Wings of Spring Birding Festival was very much a success." He reported that planning for the 2007 festival has already started. "Both vendors and attendees alike were very pleased with the variety of activities taking place." So, mark your calendars now for the Second Annual Wings of Spring Confluence Birding Festival for May 4th & 5th, 2007.



Brian "Fox" Ellis from Peoria, Ill., reenacted the life and times of John James Audubon for visitors in a tent classroom at the festival. His interactive descriptions of the wildlife that Audubon observed in the early years of the United States brought to life the wildlife that people observed as the country's population spread westward.



Saylorville Lake Wins National Award

By Mark Kane

Saylorville Lake was notified on July 12 that they won the Corps' Natural Resource Management Project of the Year Award. Saylorville competed with dozens of other projects nationwide to win this award, which underscores the huge success of this achievement.

"This Award recognizes a project for their accomplishments in management efficiency, public involvement, public safety, management effectiveness, and partnerships as related to all elements of the Natural Resources Management Program," said Steve Fairbanks, operations manager, Saylorville Lake. "The evaluation focuses on management efforts that contribute to greater efficiency and effectiveness in use of personnel and funds, while sustaining or improving good customer service and stewardship of project resources."

Saylorville won the award because their employees excel in managing federal lands and water, while still addressing the public's needs and desires. The staff balances the lake's many uses with environmental stewardship principles to provide quality recreation opportunities, while still protecting the environment.

"Jeff Rose and Leah Deeds deserve much of the credit; their efforts putting together the project



U.S. Army Corps of Engineers 2006 Natural Resource Management Project of the Year

The Saylorville Lake Project Office, Rock Island District, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, has been named the 2006 Natural Resource Management Project of the Year. The award was presented to the Saylorville Project for:

- The highest level of dedication to accomplishing the missions of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and Saylorville Lake Project
- Their use of teams, volunteers, and partners to create innovative solutions
- Their commitment to customer service and public safety
- And for superior environmental stewardship in natural resource management and restoration

submission were critical to the success of our nomination," said Fairbanks. "All of our employees should be proud of Saylorville Lake, for our selection for this honor is due to the team effort involved in the daily management of this project to serve our customers and protect the natural resource base entrusted to us."

The Natural Resource Management Project of the Year Award recognizes a project for its accomplishments in management efficiency, public involvement, public safety, management effectiveness, and partnerships as related to all elements of the Natural Resources Management Program. The evaluation focuses on management efforts that contribute to greater efficiency and effectiveness in use of personnel and funds, while sustaining or improving good customer service and stewardship of project resources.

Saylorville Lake received the award at the Corps' Senior Leaders Conference in San Diego, Calif. Aug. 7.

Saylorville Lake is a multi-purpose flood control project located 10 miles north of Des Moines, Iowa. The project encompasses 26,000 acres of public land and water that is being quickly surrounded by urban growth.



Col. Robert Sinkler Assumes Command

By Public Affairs Office



Col. Robert A. Sinkler assumed command of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Rock Island District, in a change of command ceremony, July 21, at the Davenport River Center Concourse in Davenport, Iowa.

Col. Sinkler replaced Col. Duane P. Gapinski, former commander, who completed his three-year term as district engineer from July 11, 2003, through July 21. Col. Gapinski will retire on Dec. 31, after serving 24 years in a rewarding military career with the U.S. Army.

The Rock Island District is one of six districts in the Mississippi Valley Division and covers 78,318 square miles, which includes most of Iowa and Illinois, and portions of Minnesota, Wisconsin and Missouri. As district engineer, Sinkler is responsible for planning, engineering and constructing water resource projects in this five state area and

administering laws for the protection of navigable waterways and regulatory actions for Illinois and Iowa. He oversees approximately 950 employees in the operation and maintenance of 20 lock and dam sites on the Mississippi and Illinois rivers and three flood protection and recreation reservoirs in Iowa.

Sinkler began his military career in the Illinois National Guard where he served with the 682nd Engineer Battalion. Since receiving a commission in the Corps in 1983 from the Eastern Illinois University Reserve Officer Training Corps program, he has served in a variety of engineer positions with the 1st, 3rd and 4th Infantry Divisions, the 1st Armored Division, and V Corps. Sinkler was the assistant division engineer for Multi-National Division North in Bosnia-Herzegovina during Operation Joint Guard. He commanded the 5th Engineer Battalion during Operation Iraqi Freedom, and his most recent assignment was in the Operations Directorate of the U.S. Central Command Headquarters at MacDill Air Force Base, Fla.

He has served on the faculty and staff of the U.S. Army Engineer School and his military education includes the Engineer Officer Basic and Advanced Courses, the U.S. Army Command and General Staff Course, the Advanced Military Studies Program, the Joint Warfighting Course and the U.S. Army War College.



Col. Robert Sinkler (right), receives the Corps flag and command of the Rock Island District from Brig. Gen. Robert Crear, commanding officer, Mississippi Valley Division, shortly after Col. Duane Gapinski had relinquished command of the District at the Change of Command ceremony July 21.

Sinkler holds a bachelor's degree in geology from Eastern Illinois University, a master's degree in geographic information systems from Kansas State University, a master's degree in administration from Central Michigan University, a master's degree in military art and science from the U.S. Army Command and General Staff College, and a master's degree in strategic studies from the U.S. Army War College.

He is a member of the Society of American Military Engineers and the Army Engineer Association.



District Employee Selected as Corps' Landscape Architect of the Year

By Mark Kane

Once a year, the Corps selects three outstanding individuals in the fields of landscape architecture, architecture, or interior design and recognizes the nominees' contributions to his or her profession and community. Kevin Holden, Engineering and Construction, stood out from the rest in his field of landscape architecture and was selected as the Corps' Landscape Architect of the Year for 2005.

The award is bestowed upon one project manager per year. There are hundreds of Corps employees in the field worldwide. Each year's winner must have distinguished themselves by developing new or innovative ways of planning projects.

Holden, a project landscape architect at the District and for more than 14 years, was nominated for his master planning and site design-to-grading, construction detailing, and planting plans. He played a crucial role in the design of the following projects in the last eight years: reconfiguring the entrance at Davenport Gate, Rock Island Arsenal, Rock Island, Ill.; Yazoo Backwater Pumping Plant, Vicksburg, Miss.; Devonian Fossil Gorge Visitor Facility, Coralville, Iowa; and the Simon Estes Riverfront Amphitheater and Plaza, Des Moines, Iowa.

Beyond his accomplishments, Holden has endeavored to promote a broader understanding of the profession of landscape architecture, and its potential for improving Corps projects. His supervisor, Jim Bartek, chief of the General Engineering Section, believes that Holden's

selection was due to more than his work on recent projects.

"He not only promotes the profession, but is a noted Corps-wide expert working also with the other services, Navy and Air Force, and the American Society of Landscape Architects," said Bartek.

Having that kind of impact hasn't happened by mistake; Holden has practically made it his mission.

"I have been with the Corps, here at Rock Island, for almost 15 years now, and I have always had to market my services," said Holden. "Engineers tend to focus on the primary purpose of a project, and they do that so well that they may overlook opportunities to make that project function in other ways. So I look for opportunities to take what might otherwise have been arbitrary design decisions and give them a purpose that will make the project work harder for the customer."

For example, Holden said his efforts in making a flood protection project would attempt to "do double duty" as a public amenity or explore using it to obscure an undesirable view.

"So, yes, I have been working the functional and aesthetic issue here in Rock Island, and I think I am making progress, especially with project engineers and project managers who are committed to a high level of customer service," said Holden. "Also, talking to landscape architects and engineers from other districts, from headquarters, and from other services, there is general agreement that the DoD attitude is



evolving, that there is an increasing recognition of the value that the architectural disciplines bring to DoD projects."

For Holden, being selected as the Corps' Landscape Architect of the Year for 2005 gives that recognition and underscores the value of landscape architecture. He's very happy about being selected for the award.

"I couldn't be more pleased," said Holden. "In order to be selected, you must achieve; in order to achieve, you must have meaningful opportunities; and meaningful opportunities come only when your superiors believe in the value of what you bring to the table. So, my selection is a reflection of the recent confidence that has been placed in me — and that is what is most important to me at this point in my career with the Corps — to be invited to participate, in a meaningful way.

"Until recently, the prevailing assumption, here in the District, seemed to be that landscape architecture is all about plants and frills; that's not the case, but it is a common misconception," said Holden.

(see Holden, next page)



-Holden-

“Actually, though focus varies somewhat from individual to individual, landscape architectural practice is at least as closely related to civil engineering practice as it is to the art of landscaping. What I do is also known as site planning and design, and it is as much about functionality as it is about aesthetics.”

For a more specific definition, Holden said good landscape architecture is “appropriate, forward-thinking, big-picture site design, which promotes safety and security, and is highly functional and attractive.”

Holden’s professional and educational credentials include a bachelor’s degree in landscape architecture from Iowa State University, a master’s degree in

landscape architecture from Harvard University’s Graduate School of Design, and an American Society of Landscape Architects’ Certificate of Merit in the Study of Landscape Architecture. He is a registered landscape architect in the State of Illinois, a member of the American Society of Landscape Architects, and a past member of the Society of American Military Engineers.

District Veterans Display Patriotism, Respect

By Mark Kane

In October, the Census Bureau’s demographers say the population will surpass 300 million. A small percentage of that number can say they have worn the uniform, served in the military, and are now veterans. But, when it comes to the employee ranks in the Rock Island District, there’s no lack of veterans, especially where the rubber meets the road ... at many of our field sites. There anyone can find proud veterans who continue to work for Uncle Sam in a little bit different capacity, but the mark of their military years continues to have an impact on their lives.

Many of the veterans across the District continue to stay in touch with the military facet of their lives through membership in organizations like the American Legion and Veterans of Foreign Wars. Some members of these organizations can be seen making great contributions to their communities and can times often be seen in parades proudly displaying their membership, patriotism, and respect to those Soldiers who, like them, have supported and sacrificed so much for our country.

Bellevue, Iowa, like numerous towns and cities in America, hosts such a parade close to the 4th of July each year. And, in recent years, District veterans have proudly participated as members of

the Bellevue American Legion Post 273 color guard.

This year, Leonard Ernst, lockmaster, Lock and Dam 12, was joined by three of his employees; Jim Kilburg, Dale Ernst, and Gary Kilburg. Ernst has since been promoted and now works at Lock and Dam 13 and is still active in the Reserves. Of the four employees, two served in the Marines, one in the Army, and one in the Navy.

All four men share their service’s core values. The Army’s values of loyalty, duty, respect, selfless-service, honor, integrity, and personal courage; and the Navy and Marine Corps values of honor, courage and commitment.

Leonard Ernst said he’s always proud to participate in the parade.

“I saw my fellow Marines do a lot of great things when I was active duty, and I continue to see great things from the veterans and non-veterans here at Lock and Dam 12,” he said . “I see the same kind of pride and dedication right here on the job that I saw in the Marines. Words can’t describe the feeling of being able to stand next to these guys and celebrate the 4th of July in a color guard made up veterans, co-workers from our site. I think it represents the Corps of Engineers well and is kind of a



Photo by Lowell Carlson, Bellevue Herald-Leader

Last year, the Bellevue 4th of July parade also featured an American Legion Post 273 color guard made up of Lock and Dam 12 employees. From left to right are John Kilburg, Leonard Ernst, Mitchell Hoffmann, and Jim Kilburg.

snapshot and visual representation of the dedication, pride, patriotism, support, and sacrifice that so many veterans in our District have so deeply engrained in them. We’re always proud to do it.”

Last year, the District employees included Leonard Ernst and Jim Kilburg, as well as Mitchell Hoffmann and John Kilburg. John Kilburg works at LeClaire Base, while Hoffmann has since been promoted and now works at Lock and Dam 11. In addition, Hoffmann continues to serve the nation as an active member of the Iowa Army National Guard, and is currently serving on active duty deployed in the Middle East.



Grand Prairie irrigation project faces new challenges

Story by Jim Pogue

Photos by Larry Donald

The Grand Prairie Irrigation Project in eastern Arkansas is one of the most ambitious jobs the Memphis District has taken on in decades. It is critical to the future of Eastern Arkansas rice and other irrigated crops because it will help protect the underground aquifers for future generations, while also allowing for continued farm production.

One bump in the road in our efforts to complete the project occurred on July 20 when U.S. District Judge William R. Wilson, Jr. granted a temporary injunction halting work on the project. Environmentalists have asked for more studies on the project's potential effect on the rediscovered Ivory-Billed woodpecker, believed by many to inhabit an area near the pumping station site.

In March 2006, the Memphis District, following criteria developed by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS), surveyed some forested areas adjacent to project features. The surveyors (biologists representing the USFWS, Arkansas Game and Fish Commission, Arkansas Natural Resources Commission, Arkansas Natural Heritage Commission and the local sponsor) looked for signs of nesting, roosting and foraging.

"We feel that the survey criteria that the USFWS developed and we worked under were very conservative, and all agencies involved seemed to agree that we wouldn't be disturbing or impacting the habitat utilized by the Ivory-Billed Woodpecker," said Memphis District biologist Mark Smith.



The Grand Prairie Pumping station near DeValls Bluff, Ark., with the White River in the background and U.S. Highway 70 on the right.

An expert from Cornell University, the institution heading up the search for the woodpecker, further analyzed any potential signs of it uncovered during the surveys. The surveys did not turn up any positive findings of the bird's presence.

The \$319 million Grand Prairie irrigation project is a joint venture between the Corps of Engineers, Natural Resources Conservation Service, Arkansas Natural Resources Commission and the White River Irrigation District.

The project is aimed at bringing relief to area farmers whose livelihoods are threatened by an ever-diminishing supply of irrigation water from underground aquifers. The Corps-designed project will use a

combination of on-farm storage reservoirs and water pumped from the White River to aid more than 1,000 farmers in the Grand Prairie region.

"We are reviewing the judge's decision and determining how best to proceed at this time," said District Counsel Dave Sirmans. "It is important to scrutinize anything like this very carefully."

Prior to the injunction, however, the District was also facing other problems delaying pumping station construction.

(see Grand, next page)



-Grand-

A key component of the project is a \$35 million pumping station near DeValls Bluff, Ark. Pumping would only take place when it would not negatively impact the environment or commercial navigation on the river.

“Recent changes in federal contracting laws made it necessary for us to renegotiate the contract with the pumping station prime contractor, Granite Construction,” said Project Manager Paul Hamm. “We were unable to successfully do this so we were already in the process of terminating the contract.”

Work on the pumping station has been halted, although the contract has not been terminated as of this writing.

Hamm said that once the District clears the legal hurdle imposed by the temporary injunction, plans were to open bids on a new contract next fiscal year.

“The work could go to Granite or to another contractor based on the bid process,” Hamm said.

Latest Developments

The U.S. Department of Justice, on behalf of the Memphis District, filed a Notice for Reconsideration of Judge Wilson’s ruling on the Grand Prairie Irrigation Project on Aug. 4. District leaders are waiting to hear the results.

American Indian group visits Memphis District, signs Memorandum of Understanding

story by Jim Pogue
photos by Brenda Beasley

Representatives from the Thlopthlocco Tribal Town in Okemah, Okla., visited the Memphis District July 25, to sign a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) aimed at establishing an improved working relationship between the two organizations.

“This is an important step toward our continuing efforts to reach out to American Indian tribes that are associated with the Memphis District, and to improve understanding with them on cultural resources studies associated with our projects,” said Memphis District archeologist J.D. McNeil.



Warrior Charles Coleman (left) and Col. Charles Smithers (right) sign the Memorandum of Understanding between the Thlopthlocco Tribal Town and Memphis District.

(see MOU, next page)



Dorothy Burdan and Warrior Charles Coleman represented the Thlopthlocco Tribal Town at the recent MOU signing ceremony.

Many of the tribes that the District works with crossed what is now the Memphis District when they were forcibly evicted from their traditional homelands during the Trail of Tear removals of the 1840s. The Thlopthlocco is one of these tribes.

Representing the Thlopthlocco last week was Warrior Charles Coleman, presently leader of the Tribal Town. He also acts as the tribal liaison to the Memphis District.

Col. Charles Smithers signed the MOU on behalf of the Memphis District.

Joining Coleman was his sister Dorothy Burdan, chair of the Thlopthlocco Tribal Membership Committee. Both Coleman and Burdan also serve on the Tribal Council.

Speaking at the signing ceremony, held in the Clifford Davis Federal Building, Coleman cited many of the positive

interactions he has already seen between his and other tribes, and the Corps of Engineers.

“This is the first step in what I hope are more agreements like this,” he said. “Next, we can work toward a Programmatic Agreement.”

Coleman reminded those attending that his and other federally recognized tribes are sovereign nations and cited the importance of agreements like this in honoring that fact.

Memorandums of Understandings are already in effect with the Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma, the Osage Nation of Oklahoma, the Otoe-Missouria Tribe of Oklahoma, and the Quapaw Tribe of Oklahoma. Draft documents are also being worked with approximately 20 other federally recognized tribes.

Agreements of this nature between the District and Tribes are becoming more important each day. They allow the Corps to work with American Indians and help preserve their heritage while continuing to develop and construct the projects that are important to the Memphis District and its sponsors. We are striving to work together as partners and not as adversaries.



Kartina survivor adopted into new family

By Shirley Smith
Task Force Hope

Since Hurricane Katrina wreaked havoc along the Gulf Coast, posters of lost pets are not an unusual sight. Most will never be reunited with their former owners, and many of the forgotten are now occupants of animal shelters...until a new owner comes along.

One such lucky pet is a straggly-cute, bright-eyed, energetic female pup named Raggs.

"Raggs looked a lot like one of my dogs from the past, and that is all that it took for me to choose her," said Don Simpson, resident engineer at the Emergency Field Office in Diamondhead (EFO-Diamondhead), about the six-month old terrier mix that he adopted recently from the Hancock Animal Shelter.

"After seeing Raggs, I knew that I wanted to adopt her," said Simpson. "I've owned a total of three dogs, and all have passed away."

Meeting Raggs and seeing her condition, a skin disorder, really inspired this Mobile District employee to adopt her.

Simpson heard about the animal shelter and its pets through Denise Cuevas, another employee who also adopted a dog. Cuevas, a native of Mississippi and a mission manager at EFO-Diamondhead, drove Simpson to the shelters, and the rest is history.

"I have three dogs, one is a four-week old male puppy that was abandoned on a road in Pass Christian," said Cuevas. "After Hurricane Katrina many animals were stranded. One day I saw three abandoned puppies that I picked up and took home with me. I cared for them until two of were adopted. I kept one for myself and appropriately named him Surge.

"I knew Don wanted a dog so I encouraged him to visit the local animal shelters, and after doing so he decided on a terrier mix female pup at the Hancock Animal Shelter," Cuevas said. "After seeing this particular dog, he made up his mind that she was the one. After walking through this shelter and looking at and observing the animals, minutes later he was signing adoption papers for Raggs."

According to Renee Lick, director of the Hancock Animal Shelter, hundreds of animals have been brought into the shelter since Hurricane Katrina. Some of animals have been shipped out to animal shelters in several states.

"Presently here at the shelter we have about 60 dogs and about 45 cats," Lick said. "We might get two adopted and get in six more. A lot of these animals are strays left behind because of the hurricane, or a litter of puppies that were just dropped off."

The Hancock Animal Shelter, has been in operation for more than 30 years, but it was almost destroyed



Don Simpson with his newest family member, Raggs.

by Katrina. "The building sustained five feet of water, half the roof was gone, and fences were down," Lick said.

Now the shelter is back in full swing, and animals are being adopted every day. One lady came in to adopt a cat, but the cat had been adopted that morning. Alicia Embrey, lead Public Affairs Office mission manager for Task Force Hope – Mississippi, saw two pomeranians that she wanted to adopt. When she returned to the shelter the next day, she left heartbroken because both dogs had been adopted.

Deployments can hold surprises — some nice, and some not-so-nice. Deployments can also create everlasting memories. All of the above is true for Simpson, who has been deployed since February. He has met a best friend, and Raggs has a new home.



-Katrina-

One of Col. Gapinski’s top priorities became repairing the city’s pumps. Although more than 100 temporary pumps were working around the clock, their pumping capacity couldn’t compare to the amount of water New Orleans’ permanent pumps could move. For example, the largest temporary pump in use could move water at a rate of 100 cubic feet per second, whereas many of the permanent pump stations could move water at a rate of 1,000 cubic feet per second.

The unwatering team worked with local levee districts, state and federal environmental protection agencies, sewerage and water boards and private contractors to get the job done.

Temporary Roofing Missions - complete

Operation Blue Roof is a priority mission managed by the Corps for FEMA. The program provides assistance to storm victims in disaster areas through the installation of rolled plastic sheeting on damaged roofs, thereby helping to protect property and allowing residents to remain in their homes.

In less than six months, 81,318 temporary blue roofs were installed in Louisiana, with the last blue roof installed on March 6, 2006. In Mississippi, 49,892 roofs were installed

in less than 4 months. Mississippi roofing teams established an outstanding benchmark by installing 1,750 blue roofs in a single day.

Temporary Public Structures - complete

The Louisiana RFO completed installation of 310 temporary public structures on August 18, 2006, including 216 classrooms, several police stations, fire stations and pumping station facilities.

In Mississippi, the hardest hit towns lost most of their public infrastructure. Corps teams had completed 726 temporary structures, enabling communities to get moving again. The RFO was able to set up and complete a single classroom, ready for use, in as little as 8 days from delivery. On average, a 50 to 80 classroom school, on a vacant site where utilities had to be established,



photo by Alice Welch, USDA

The double-wide structures and covered walkways at the Ecole Bilingue de la Nouvelle-Orléans school in New Orleans are typical of the temporary construction that has reopened schools along the Gulf Coast.

would take about 80 days to complete - from delivery to ready for occupancy.



photo by Alice Welch, USDA

A group of children pose outside of a classroom at the Ecole Bilingue de la Nouvelle-Orléans school in New Orleans.

Debris Mission

The Louisiana RFO removed almost 24 million cubic yards of an estimated 26.5 million cubic yards of what the Corps calls “traditional” hurricane debris. We all know that sometimes work stinks. Well, it was stinky *every* day for those involved in the Corps meat removal mission. In addition to removing the traditional type debris, the Louisiana RFO was also tasked by FEMA with removing massive amounts of spoiled meat from warehouses in New Orleans – more than 36 million pounds.

The RFO also hauled nearly 120 million pounds of trash from the city of New Orleans and cleaned mile after mile of drainage ditches across the state.

(see Katrina, next page)



-Katrina-

Additionally, the RFO has been tasked to remove 6.5 million cubic yards of demolition debris from an estimated 18,000 structures in Louisiana. This adds up to near four and one-half times the debris from Hurricane Andrew. Picture if you can, 40+ million washing machines at 1 cubic yard each.

The debris mission in Mississippi included about 80 miles of the Mississippi coast from Waveland, Pass Christian, Gulfport, Biloxi and Pascagoula. Nearly 45 million cubic yards of debris has been removed from public and private property in Mississippi by the Corps and locally hired contractors.

While flying over the Mississippi Gulf Coast to survey the damage, Col. Vesay thought to himself, “Less the shooting, downtown Baghdad was in much better shape than the Mississippi Gulf Coast.”

The Corps has not been alone in the FEMA-assigned debris mission. Disposal efforts associated with this cleanup will continue to be done in close coordination with the local community, the Louisiana and Mississippi Departments of Environmental Quality, the Environmental Protection Agency and the U.S. Coast Guard, among others.

Task Force Guardian

Colonel Lewis Setliff, the Corps’ St. Louis District Commander, was tasked to head up Task Force Guardian. This special task force was responsible for repairing damages to the Greater New Orleans federal hurricane and flood protection system, and restoring the system to pre-storm levels of protection by June 1, 2006, the start of hurricane season.

Some 169 miles of levees and floodwalls, 66 of 71 pump stations and 4 gated structures sustained damage or were destroyed.

“It was an unprecedented effort,” said Col. Setliff. “There were a lot of folks who didn’t believe it could be done.” But TF Guardian accomplished the task by utilizing a team of national and local contractors, the Corps, local experts, and citizens of Southeast Louisiana. Most worked seven days a week, usually 12 hours a day, for more than eight months.

The cost of the work totaled more than \$801 million; construction included 59 projects using 26 contractors. Excavation work in rebuilding the levees took nearly 5.5 million cubic yards of soil. Several times that amount was dug, however, in order to find enough soil that qualified as upgrade material. 155

vessels had to be removed from the levees.

“It’s not about statistics,” Gen. Crear said. “In the final analysis, as I look back on this disaster, what I am most impressed with is the people. It was a team of teams. They delivered an unheard-of performance in just eight months.

“The locals who participated in this – and that includes New Orleans District (Corps) people – did an amazing job. These people lived behind the levees, too,” stated Crear. Their families were impacted, but they put their lives on hold to help get this work done.”

In Mississippi, by the end of August, the Corps will have completed all tasks assigned by FEMA and local partners. On August 29th, the Corps will no longer have contractors, personnel, or authority in place to provide additional support. Debris removal operations after August 28 will be coordinated directly by local authorities with direct support from FEMA.

In Louisiana, the Corps continues to upgrade the hurricane protection system in order to better defend New Orleans against another massive storm.