



US Army Corps
of Engineers®
St. Paul District

Crosscurrents

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District supports Neighbor-to- Neighbor program

—Pages 8-9



Six outcomes introduced at offsite planning meeting

By Sharonne N. Baylor

The St. Paul District introduced six outcomes at the strategic planning meeting at the Minnesota History Center in St. Paul, Dec. 16, 2002. Participants in the district's Leadership Development Program, the St. Paul District's senior leadership and other supervisors attended.

The outcomes are the end results that the district and its stakeholders seek to create. They are:

- The Mississippi River is a world-class commercial navigation system, premier recreation area and healthy ecosystem.
- Watershed communities are economically, recreationally, socially and environmentally successful.

- Aquatic and related terrestrial ecosystems are protected and enhanced.

- District projects are safe, timely, effective, environmentally sound and satisfy customer expectations.

- Losses caused by disasters are minimized.

- USACE is a world-class, public engineering organization.

During the meeting, the break-out groups talked about the outcomes and developed and presented possible indicators based on the outcomes.

The senior leadership collected the presentations, discussion information and comments from the meeting. With the assistance of the St. Paul District employees, stakeholders and customers, senior leaders will fine-tune the six outcomes and determine which outcome indicators to use.

With indicators in place, the district will have a tool to measure performance. Further development of indicators will be the subject of February's off site meeting.

Though they might look a little different the next time you see them, everyone in the St. Paul District is directly contributing to one or more of these outcomes or is supporting someone who is.

MVD pledges heads up on 'Third Wave'

Brig. Gen. Don Riley
Mississippi Valley Division

During the past few weeks, we have all heard news about "competitive sourcing" and the "Third Wave" from Washington and wonder how these two initiatives may affect us in our jobs


within the Mississippi Valley Division. I pledge to you that we will keep you informed with the latest news as we know it. I offer you this update at the close of 2002 and start of 2003.

In response to direction from the president, the Corps of Engineers has submitted a plan to the Office of Management and Budget that would open certain positions to competition with private industry and other federal agencies over the next five years to fiscal 2008. Even though these positions may be open for competition, in most cases the government will also be able to submit a bid for these positions through the means of a MEO – the most efficient organization submission. The president's agenda challenges the government to be market-based: "We should not be afraid of competition, innovation, and choice. I will open government to the discipline of competition."

The Corps has developed a project delivery team from the headquarters and division staff which will meet early in 2003 to work out the details and time-lines for this plan. Once the details are complete, MVD will work with the districts to begin implementing the plan within the division. In preparation for this, each district has examined its positions and coded them according to their functions. As noted, we have no firm time frames for this plan, other than the fiscal 2003-2008 guidelines.

The second effort is the "Third Wave" initiated by Secretary of the Army Thomas White. Secretary White wants to generate Army resources for the war on terrorism and has asked for a review and possible divestiture of Army non-

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Crosscurrents

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Address all inquiries to:

Editor Crosscurrents
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
Army Corps of Engineers Centre
190 Fifth Street East
St. Paul, MN 55101-1638

District Engineer	Col. Robert L. Ball
Public Affairs Chief	Mark Davidson
Media Specialist	Shannon Bauer
Editor	Peter Versteegen
Phone:	651-290-5202
E-mail:	cemvp-pa@usace.army.mil

Flood-control construction nearly complete at Portage

By Shannon Bauer

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, St. Paul District, began constructing the final phase of the Portage, Wis., flood-control project on the Wisconsin River late-October.

This phase completes the flood-reduction system for Portage, under construction since 1997, while maintaining inter-basin flow between the Fox and Wisconsin river basins.

Features of this phase include levee construction between a railroad main line and spur line owned by CP Rail, raising the spur line and lining it with an impervious membrane to impede seepage, and drainage features.

Canadian Pacific Railway raised the spur line in October. The Corps' contractor for this project, Arrow-Crete Construction, LLC, of Milwaukee, Wis., installed the



Photos by Terry Williams

Construction workers roll out an a portion of 3,500 feet of impervious blanket on the spur line at the flood control project in Portage, Wis. The fabric provides further protection from seepage through the rail line. Between 5-6 thousand tons of rock anchor the blanket.

impervious blanket on the spur line last month and is in the process of completing levee construction. Final topsoil and seeding of the site will take place this spring. Construction of the levee by the Corps was nearly complete around the end of

the calendar year.

Previously completed portions of the flood-control project in Portage include three miles of upgraded levee, a railroad closure, utility modifications, aesthetic and recreational features, cultural resource mitigation and modifications to the existing flood-warning system. Construction costs for the whole project is around \$12 million. The Corps will pay for around \$9 million, with the city of Portage and state of Wisconsin paying for the rest.

Portage's previous levees were built in the late 1800s and early 1900s and did not meet current federal or state safety standards. A serious flood potential existed; and during flood events, large amounts of seepage and extensive emergency efforts put forth by the local citizens demonstrated the need for new levee construction.



A worker from Arrow-Crete Construction, LLC, of Milwaukee, Wis., grinds seams on the spur-line to prepare for welding them.



Photo by Mark Valentino, CJTF180

O'Hara helps Army with mine clearing

By Mark Davidson

The Army Corps of Engineers makes a difference in Afghanistan with its people and expertise, according to a person who has actually served there, Lt. Col. Thomas O'Hara, the district deputy commander.

O'Hara was deployed out of the district from April 29 to Nov. 27, serving on Bagram Air Base, a former Soviet Union base located in central Afghanistan.

The mission in Afghanistan has two parts. The first part is to find and destroy the Al Qaeda forces, and the second part is to set up conditions for the long-term development of Afghanistan.

O'Hara's initial job there was to help set up the engineer staff for Combined Joint Task Force 180 (CJTF180). CJTF 180 was given the mission to control all military operations in Afghanistan and neighboring countries. CJTF 180 is a subordinate command of Central Command, or CENTCOM, out of Florida.

The XVIII Airborne Corps out of Fort Bragg, N.C., formed the nucleus of the CJTF180 staff.

O'Hara, and CJTF engineers, worked for Lt. Gen. Dan McNeil, normally the commander of the XVIII Airborne Corps, who assumed command of CJTF180.

CJTF180 was made up of service members from all of the other Department of Defense

components from the active duty, guard and reserve, plus service personnel from 19 other countries.

After the CJTF staff was in place, O'Hara's job was to serve as the deputy director of engineering, or CJ7. "There were 37 people

O'Hara details daily life in Afghanistan

- **Time difference:** There is a unique time difference between Afghanistan and Minnesota, said O'Hara. "I usually worked from 5:30 a.m. to 9:30 p.m., which was 10.5 hours ahead of Minnesota time."

- **Weather:** It was hot when O'Hara got there in May and even hotter during the summer. Highs averaged in the upper 90s and lower 100s, with lows only dropping to the lower 90s at night. It finally started getting cooler just before he left in November. Most memorable weather feature was the 120-plus days of high winds that stretched from May into September.

- **Food:** "Breakfast and dinner were hot meals cooked by Army cooks. The majority of meals were t-rations, which is food in a big tin container that you submerge in hot water to heat prior to eating," said O'Hara. "Lunch was an MRE [meal-ready-to-eat]."

- **Living conditions:** Upon arrival at Bagram, O'Hara said they had to put up their own tents. The troops eventually had tents with a wooden floor and frame with a tent over the top. "We did have to walk 100 yards to take an often-cold shower in a tent, which really wasn't that bad considering where we were," he said.

- **Being in a war zone:** "There was some indirect fire that went over the base from time to time, that included one time while I was out running," said O'Hara. "I carried a 9 mm weapon at all times on base. When I went off base, I wore a bulletproof vest, ballistic helmet, and we had soldiers with M-16/M-4s in the convoy. I went off-base two to three times a month."

- **Celebrities:** There were a number of U.S. and coalition generals who visited Bagram, according to O'Hara. U.S. senators and representatives visited, plus celebrities such as the singer Joan Jett, the comedian Robin Williams and the Washington Redskins cheerleaders. "The troops greatly appreciated their visits," O'Hara said.

- **Off-duty time:** "I slept, said O'Hara. "We worked six days a week and only had one day a week to wash clothes and do other chores."

- **Communicating with his family:** O'Hara communicated with his family daily by e-mail and once a week by telephone. "This was a big change from Operation Desert Storm when I only talked to my family two-three times total," he said.

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Middle school students donate supplies to Afghan girls' school

By Peter Verstegen

Children in a Minnesota middle school and an Afghan girls' school engaged in hand-to-hand learning last November. That was when leftover school supplies, crayons, pencils, paper, folders, rulers and other leftovers from the middle school in North Branch, Minn., made their way into the hands of students at a girls' school in Bagram, Afghanistan.

A grandmother, her granddaughter, a lieutenant colonel in the Army Corps of Engineers and a teacher whose father fought in Desert Storm made the hands-on learning a success.

"I had wanted to do some teaching in Afghanistan, but security concerns overrode this," said Lt. Col. Tom O'Hara, deputy district engineer at the Corps' St. Paul District. O'Hara visited a nearby school in Bagram in May 2002, where he saw three children sharing one pencil. The following November, his tour complete, the leftover supplies from the desktops of the North Branch middle school were in the hands of students on the other side of the globe.

"It was the end of the school year in North Branch, and students there were cleaning out their desks," said Mary Kay Linder, the executive assistant at the Army Corps' St. Paul District. She maintained frequent contact with O'Hara during his tour of duty. She is also grandmother to Allison Fairbanks, a shy 10-year-old.



Photo by Master Sgt. Jack Lee

Lt. Col. Tom O'Hara unpacks school supplies in Afghanistan. The donations came from the students in the middle school in North Branch, Minn.

"I sent an e-mail message to my granddaughter's fifth-grade teacher in May asking whether she would be willing to collect any unwanted supplies that we could send to the

children in Afghanistan," said Linder.

Melissa Lamwers, their teacher, whose father fought in Desert Storm said, "I thought it was a great idea to send school supplies over."

Lamwers promptly forwarded Linder's e-mail to nearly 50 teachers throughout the school and the collection became a school project. "The kids were pretty gung-ho on putting supplies into boxes," she said.

After Linder and her granddaughter separated the supplies, they filled three boxes and mailed the supplies to Afghanistan. "She, and many of the other fifth grade teachers, were more than willing to give the kids the opportunity to participate in this lesson of giving," said Linder.

"I delivered the supplies to a small, all-girls school in the village of Bagram," said O'Hara. "By the looks on the kids' faces, they were all very appreciative," he said. "The supplies were a big hit."



Photo by Sgt. Angel Harris

"By the looks on the kids' faces, they were all very appreciative," said Lt. Col. Tom O'Hara. "The supplies were a big hit."

District gathers for holiday awards ceremony

Lt. Col. Thomas O'Hara, Jr. (left), deputy district engineer, received the Bronze Star Medal at the holiday awards ceremony in St. Paul, Dec. 13, 2002. St. Paul District Engineer Col. Robert Ball (right) said the award recognized his exceptionally meritorious achievements in direct support of Operation Enduring Freedom in Afghanistan from May to November 2002. His expertise in engineer operations and assistance to combat forces supported development of counter-terrorism operations and life-support in the operations area.



Photo by Anna Wetterling



Photo by Jon Lyman

Leon Mucha (left) of the locks and dams project office and Steve Lenhart, Upper St. Anthony Falls.



Photo by Anna Wetterling

Kevin Baumgard, operations branch chief, and Stephanie Dupey, secretary, handed out 32 door-prizes. More than 260 attended.



Photo by Jon Lyman

From left are Bob Engelstad, water control section, and Janet Golubski and Pat Bercyzk, administrative assistants in engineering.

For more awards, see "Birstengel, Edlund receive suggestion honors," page 12.



Photo by Shannon Bauer

Members of the executive office, joined by Linda Wiley, equal employment, sang 'When Tommy Comes Marching Home' to commemorate the safe return of O'Hara from Afghanistan. From left are: Wiley, Mary Kay Linder, Judy Des Harnais, Marsha Mose, Ball, Angie Peterson and Mark Nelson. Nelson was acting district deputy during O'Hara's tour of duty.

Planning credits

Kevin Baumgard, holiday program chair
 Stephanie Dupey: door prizes, ticket sales
 Maurice Geiken: audio-visual
 Terry Jorgenson: ticket sales coordinator
 Jon Lyman: visual information
 Marsha Mose: programs
 Wayne Scheffel: finance
 Bob Silvagni: facilities and food
 Brian Sipos: audio-visual
 Anna Wetterling: publicity

Ticket sales:
 Lorraine Blake
 Marilyn Caturia
 Stephanie Ehnstrom
 Linda Haberkorn
 Vicki Johnson
 Jan Pream
 Julie Ritter
 Marge Thompson



All photos by Mark Davidson

Denise Blackwell-Kraft (left), regulatory, and Mary Kay Linder, executive office, retrieve toys to bag for distribution.



Bob LeMonds, construction-operations, bagged food for distribution and helped with carry out.



Carol Olson, contracting, sorted toys.

District shares generously for holiday season with time, food, toys, clothes

By Peter Verstegen

District office personnel supported families and individuals in two social service programs with holiday giving in December 2002.

Thirty employees throughout the St. Paul District distributed roughly 160 bags of food and gifts for the Neighbor-to-Neighbor program. Holiday season donations from the district office included 113 toys and \$168 cash.

In addition, personnel from construction-operations supported a family in the 2002 Family Sponsorship program, managed by Ramsey County. “We had a family of six – mother, father and children, ages 1 to 11,” said Denise Blackwell-Kraft, regulatory.

Construction-operations donated clothes, toys and a gift certificate for the family. “We’ve participated in the program since 1987,” she said..

District personnel left their office cubes for the neighborhood center to distribute gifts Dec. 19.

“We handed out the last bag of food on the Corps’ shift for Neighbor-to-Neighbor at 3:10 p.m., Dec. 19,” said Kenton Spading, engineering division. “In the roughly three hours that the Corps was on duty, district volunteers handed out approximately 160 bags of food.”

Spading estimated the bags of food each weighed about 35 pounds each. “Therefore, we handed out roughly 5,600 pounds of food.”

Each family receiving food also received gifts for their children. Each child, aged 18 and younger,



Jan Pream, construction operations, sorted toys at Neighbor-to-Neighbor, Dec. 19. "It was fun," she said. "I had a great time helping out."

received at least one gift plus a stuffed animal or stocking stuffer.

"It doesn't take a great deal for one person to make an impact," said Gale Ribar, director of community relations for the program. "The cost of a single can of soda purchased at a vending machine for \$1 could be used by a food shelf to purchase as much as 25 pounds of hamburger. That's enough to feed four to seven families."

The program is a Ramsey County based nonprofit organization that provides resources for independent living to people of all ages through programs and services. Its programs provide social work and supportive services for individuals and families, and health and wellness support services for seniors and their caregivers.



Matt Percy, historian, carries a bag of food for one of the recipients.

This is the district's third year supporting the program.

Participants were:

- Christine Afdahl
- Delores Aldinger
- Patricia Berczyk
- Denise Blackwell-Kraft
- Christina Carballal
- Karen Cassidy
- Mark Davidson
- Kristen Fairbanks,
- Timothy Fell
- Marsha Gilliland
- Therese Jaszczak
- Jodell Kormanik
- Al Kraft (retired)
- Dawn Linder
- Robert LeMonds
- Kari Layman
- Mary Kay Linder
- Darrell Morey
- Marsha Mose
- Carol Olson
- Michael Osterby
- Jan Pream
- Matthew Percy
- Joseph Skupa



Kristen Fairbanks (left), design branch, sorted toys. Mike Osterby, design branch, sorted toys and helped with carry out.

In the cover photo are (from left) Lori Taylor, Karen Cassidy and Chris Afdahl at the Neighbor-to-Neighbor program site.

- Kenton Spading
- Lori Taylor
- William Vennemann
- See Xiong,
- Mee Yang,
- Patricia Wright

O'Hara, continued from page 4

working in the CJ7," said O'Hara. "I worked with Army Corps of Engineers soldiers and civilians from the Southwest Division in Fort Worth, as well as Air Force and Marine Corps engineers and engineers from our coalition partners."

After the CJ7 staff was organized and receiving the needed equipment into Afghanistan, O'Hara and his staff worked to move equipment to more than 1,000 engineers throughout the country. "We also had to fulfill their training needs to get them up-to-speed on using equipment or performing work they weren't familiar with," said O'Hara. "We also had to track on a daily basis the status of all work being performed, the supply and equipment status and where all the personnel were in the country."



Photo by George Heib, CJTF180

Lt. Col. Tom O'Hara had 37 people working with him in Afghanistan, including Army Corps of Engineers soldiers and civilians from the Southwest Division in Fort Worth, Texas.

The biggest challenge O'Hara and the CJ7 staff faced was hundreds of thousands of mines on

the ground in Afghanistan. "We couldn't put troops on the ground due to mines," said O'Hara. "We initially had a critical shortage of mine-sweeping equipment."

O'Hara and the CJ7 staff brainstormed and put their collective experiences, training and know how together to craft solutions. He said "We turned to the training teams and expertise from Fort Leonard Wood, Mo., used equipment left behind by a Norwegian mine clearance unit that had redeployed to Norway and relieved heavily upon our Australian officer who had conducted mine clearance in Cambodia to develop tactics, techniques and procedures for mine-clearance operations," said O'Hara.

Air Force personnel on his staff worked the aircraft flow system and the prioritization of getting supplies into the country. "It took about 60 days to marshal the

'Field force' teams focus expertise

The Army Corps of Engineers contributed to CJTF180's success by giving the combat commanders additional capabilities. O'Hara cited the design capability and real estate expertise provided by the FEST-A (Forward Engineer Support Team – Augmentation) and CREST (Contingency Real Estate Support Team) as one such example.

The FEST-A and CREST performance in Afghanistan is a major success story for the Corps' Field Force Engineering (FFE) concept, said O'Hara. "FFE is designed to push small teams of Corps subject matter experts forward to field commanders in order to provide the field army with technical expertise they normally don't have. In Afghanistan, this expertise was mainly in the area of engineer design and real estate support," said O'Hara.

The FEST-A provided design support and master-planning expertise to projects ranging from a plan to safely remove nuclear materials left behind by the Soviet Union to developing master plans for Bagram Air Base and for the training compound for the Afghan National Army. The CREST members were also responsible for negotiating leases throughout Afghanistan.

"These dedicated Corps employees provided exceptional service during their time in country," he said.

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O'Hara, continued from Page 10

equipment we needed into the country," said O'Hara.

Mine clearance and the building of bases began in July with clearing operations getting priority. "At the end of my tour there, engineers had cleared more than five million square meters of ground with no incidents, which at that time made it the largest mine clearing operation in U.S. history," he said.

The Bagram staff also supported the engineers in-country in the areas of base support functions; traditional combat engineering; topographic engineering support, such as map making; and infrastructure work, such as building dirt airfields, roads, bridges and tunnels.

"We also assisted the engineers in the field who were destroying caches of weapons and ammunition found in the caves left behind by the Al Queda," said O'Hara. "The engineers would use explosives to either destroy the caves entirely or 'drop' the entrances so the caves couldn't be used again."

In August, O'Hara said, some more badly needed engineer personnel and equipment arrived in country in the form of a construction battalion from the Louisiana Army National Guard. By September, the mine clearance operation was under control, so the engineering staff and engineers started to focus on winterizing base facilities by installing heating equipment and further enhancing the electrical capabilities in Afghanistan.

"Also, during the summer, CJTF180's civil-military task force worked with the local communities to get Afghanistan contractors to rebuild schools and health clinics," said O'Hara. "We couldn't use

District recognizes Regorrah as Employee of the Month for November

Virginia Regorrah goes beyond her regular duties as a resident engineer for the East Grand Forks, Minn., resident office.



Photo by Ryan J. Otto

Virginia Regorrah accepts Employee of the Month honors from Tom Eidson.

She presented him with a certificate of appreciation signed by Col. Robert Ball, district engineer, for the outstanding work he accomplished as part of the Corps' flood control project.

"She and her husband, who also works in the western area office, are among the first to purchase flowers and a card for individuals to recognize their accomplishments or acknowledge a significant personal loss," said Thomas Stiel, East Grand Forks resident office. "These are just a few instances where she improves morale and the district's public image."

"She is passionate, caring, and thoughtful in her actions and words," said Tricia Liggett, one of her nominators. "She works hard at strengthening the public image of the Corps through events, such as the dedication of a pump station, a community fish fry and various award ceremonies."

She recently attended an East Grand Forks city council meeting at which the city's light and water department superintendent was recognized upon his retirement.

American forces to do the construction, but we were successful in coordinating with the local contractors to get the work done and also to help put money into the local economy."

"We started out in Afghanistan with very limited infrastructure in the county. The engineers have done great work improving the theater. This was a regiment-wide effort involving active duty and reserve component soldiers, as well as dedicated civilian USACE employees," he said.

Lock personnel support mayday call

Head lock operator Randall Piel and operator Michael Emmons, Lock and Dam 5A, Fountain City, Wis., supported emergency responders in Winona, Minn., July 7, 2002, when a mayday call came over marine channel 16. They launched a rescue boat to recover a woman with chest pains out on the Mississippi River and transported her to an awaiting ambulance at the Winona levee.

Bits and Pieces

Birnstengel, Edlund receive suggestion honors

Dean Birnstengel, lock operator, was honored as



Suggester of Year at the holiday awards ceremony in December. He suggested an innovative float that trips an electrical circuit

when water in the lock chamber reaches a prescribed level. The device improves lock safety by preventing premature opening of the lock.

Members of the Army community, and others concerned with the welfare of both the Army and the nation, may submit their ideas. Program details are on the district's intranet under the resource management link. Look for the Army Suggestion Program under "Browse RM... ."

Mark Edlund, lock and dam operations, was named as Evaluator



of the Year at the holiday awards ceremony in December. He began evaluating suggestions in the early 90s and evaluates up to a

dozen

suggestions annually. The suggestion program is intended to encourage employees to improve present policy, practices and regulatory constraints that do not facilitate or hamper good management practices. It is also designed to improve morale by providing an opportunity for employees to take part voluntarily in the improvement of management within the government.

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core functions. The Corps has provided its proposal, and the Department of the Army is to analyze the comments and respond early in 2003. The secretary wants to implement this plan during fiscal 2003.

With both of these initiatives, we are awaiting guidance. If you are interested in knowing more about these initiatives, I encourage you to visit the Corps' website at <http://www.hq.usace.army.mil/cepa/compsource/compsource.htm>. You will find the information on the website good background material. As more information becomes available after the new year, we will pass it on to keep you informed.

Wanted: Your news!

PAO seeks information about special events in you life (e.g., births, deaths, marriages, engagements). If you would like to share these items, please contact Public Affairs at 651-290-5202, -5108 or -5201 or send an e-mail to: cemvp-pa@mvp02.usace.army.mil.

Moser selected lockmaster

Delene (D.J.) Moser has been selected as the new lockmaster at Lock and Dam 7, La Crescent, Minn., effective Jan. 26, 2003. She is the first woman lockmaster in the St. Paul District.

CFC tops \$30,700

More than 100 employees pledged \$30,738.60 for the 2002 Combined Federal Campaign which ended Oct. 29, 2002. The CFC bake sale produced \$131 of sales, which were donated to St. Paul's Neighbor-to-Neighbor program.

"Once again, thank you for your contributions, said Mark Davidson, public affairs chief. "They will help people that need it who are less fortunate than we."

Long-timers retire

Terry Engel, project management, retired Dec. 2002 with 31 years of federal service, 28 with the Army Corps of Engineers. District Commander Col. Robert Ball presented Engel the Commanders Award for Civilian Service in December.

Richard Trussoni, an operator at Lock and Dam 8, Genoa, Wis., retired September 2002 after 20 years of service.

Ed Strand, a lock operator and member of the diving crew, retired from Lock and Dam 9, Lynxville, Wis., September 2002. He started with the Corps in March 1980.

Alvin Richard Vogt, 85, of Pepin, Wis., died January 8, 2003. He worked on the Dredge Thompson and retired in 1983.