



US Army Corps  
of Engineers®  
St. Paul District

# Crosscurrents

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## District dewateres Lower St. Anthony Falls

Pages 4-5



## Develop, grow, improve with mentoring

By Jim Peak

“Do you have a mentor? If not, it’s time to get one!” The matter-of-fact bluntness of those opening words from a magazine article recently grabbed my attention. In another magazine, a full-page ad proclaimed, “Reason #12 to work at IBM: ‘You’ll have mentors. Career planners. Coaches. Come to IBM, and you won’t be the only one who wants to see you succeed.’”

What is mentoring? And why are companies and organizations suddenly touting its benefits?

To answer the first question, I asked a very diverse group of St. Paul District employees at a recent special emphasis program committee meeting to write down



Photo by Jon Lyman

**Col. Robert Ball, district engineer, used the above billboard to emphasize the importance of mentoring. The billboard is in downtown St. Paul and promotes a state-wide program for mentoring youth.**

quickly their first thoughts that came to mind when I mentioned the word “mentor.” When I collected the note cards, I found a uniquely individual spectrum of words, phrases and sentences that captured the essence of mentoring. Even with the group’s diverse perspective, I saw commonality as many words were repeated. The most recurring were some form of the words *guide, help, teach, advise, share, learn and listen.*

Let’s take those same words and make a sentence that will define the roles of a mentor. You can make you own, but here is one possible combination: “A mentor is a *guide, helper* and *teacher* who is willing to *listen* to individual concerns and freely *share* their wisdom and *advice*, so that we can mutually *learn* a more excellent way.”

The district will soon kickoff a mentoring program. That word

“program” should be written in lowercase letters. The goal will be to create a two-way opportunity for true mentoring and learning to occur, shaped equally by individual and corporate needs. This could be a great opportunity for you to develop your talents, grow in knowledge and improve skills – all things that can make you more successful.

In the Corps’ team-driven project management business process environment, you have probably noticed that team members are encouraged to take more individual responsibility for team success.

The key is, for the team to be successful, you must be successful. Mentoring is a great catalyst that can make that happen.

To borrow words from IBM and apply them to the Corps: “You won’t be the only one who wants to see you succeed.”

We are in this together.



US Army Corps of Engineers  
St. Paul District

**Crosscurrents**

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# 'Tree man' landscapes projects to please residents and users

By Virginia Regorrah

"We need the tree man out here, right away!" This call was almost constant from September to November from the contractors on the Grand Forks, N.D., and East Grand Forks, Minn., levee projects.

Kevin Holden, landscape architect from the Rock Island District, was the tree man, and more, for the levee projects.

Rain, shine or snow, he was on site with the landscaping subcontractor, approving tree selection, placing and planting.

Holden responded to a division-wide request for a landscape architect to work on temporary duty in Grand Forks. His participation illustrated the project management business process tenet of developing a product delivery team with specialists from multiple districts to assist in the cost-effective and quality delivery of projects.

Eighteen years of education and a master's degree from Harvard University in landscape architecture. And, for three months "tree man" was his nickname.

The project design called for trees to replace those removed as part of the construction and to add to the recreational and aesthetic qualities of the project. Two to three trees were to go in for every tree removed.

With more than 2,000 trees and shrubs scheduled for planting on the two projects, the St. Paul District construction branch required a landscape professional at the project sites to assist the engineers with the

review of submittals pertaining to the landscaping. A submittal documents that work meets the contract requirements.

But Holden's temporary duty became much more complicated than just reviewing submittals.

He was asked to redesign the recreational area on the East Grand Forks project in Sherlock Park, when a community group identified the exact same area of the park for their volunteer-funded playground as was scheduled for a Corps-installed playground.

"Having Kevin [Holden] here with us really helped to refine the types of trees and the locations of plantings," said Francis Schanilec, construction representative on the East Grand Forks levees project.

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## Holden placed the trees to either accentuate or to hide project features.

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"He was able to help the contractors ensure the species were suited to the environment and conditions here," said Schanilec. "And, he was able to adjust the tree locations based on the sites. Sometimes there's an electrical line in the way, or we didn't remove as many trees as we could have. He adjusted for these conditions."

Holden redesigned trails and sidewalks, re-oriented picnic shelters, moved the Corps playground and designed a handicap ramp for accessibility.



Photo by Francis Schanilec

**Kevin Holden (left) at the East Grand Forks, Minn., project. He is working with the contractor to correctly site the trees.**

He re-directed a trail to ensure the grade was less than five percent and moved several picnic shelters to overlook a playground, so parents could watch their kids. The move placed the shelters away from a road.

He also coordinated extensively with the designer for the community's playground, to determine how their playground could be integrated into the Corps design.

Holden placed the trees to either accentuate or to hide project features. For example, trees were planted to break up the levee profile and to screen the levees from the residential areas.

He recommended trees that grow well in the local soil conditions, which consist mainly of poorly drained clays and heavily alkaline soils. Bur Oaks, Manitoba Maples, Eastern White Pine, Linden, Ash,

*Tree man, continued page 6*

# District drains lock for scheduled maintenance

The St. Paul District emptied 4.2 million gallons of water from Lower St. Anthony Falls lock and dam in December 2002. This downtown Minneapolis lock and dam on the Mississippi River will remain empty until March for major maintenance, while the navigation season is on hold for the winter. The nearness of the work provided a first-hand opportunity to inform and educate personnel from the district office.

The Page 1 photo by Shannon Bauer shows Richard Princko (left) and Joe Kupietz, tender-boat operators at the maintenance and repair unit in Fountain City, Wis., remove a clamp bar and bottom seal for replacement on the lock.

Page 4 top left: Mark Schultz (left) and Don Schroeder, both lock operators at Lower St. Anthony Falls in Minneapolis, stand on a scaffolding in the lock chamber to tighten a bolt on a seal.

The district's maintenance and repair unit worked to repair or replace parts of the miter gates, tainter valve guides, bubbler system and staff gages, as well as repairs of the lock chamber floor. In bottom left photo, Keith Traynor, maintenance and repair unit (left), and Bill Chelmowski guide a front-end loader off the floor of the lock chamber. The loader removed 700 cubic yards of debris and logs.

Contracting staff (bottom center) saw work in progress at the lock Jan. 8. From left: Suellen Buelow, Laird Draves, Carol Olson, Fred Mitchell, Gary Miller, Kevin Henricks, Bill Hurley, Delores Aldinger, Chiquita Porter and Dean Peterson. Contracting officials awarded a nearly \$290,000 contract to Norcon Corporation of Schofield, Wis., for concrete work on the walls of the lock chamber. The cost of the work is \$1.1 million. Major maintenance happens every 15 to 20 years on each Mississippi River lock and dam.



Photo by Tim M



Photo by Bob Dempsey





Photo by Mark Davidson



In the center photo, a scissors platform reaches the nearly 43 feet from the bottom of the laterals to the top of the guide-wall.

At left, Robert "Rick" Roffler, maintenance and repair unit, breaks ice at bottom of a lateral using an eight-pound maul. Observing (from left) are: Arne Thomsen, Mark Koenig, Col. Robert Ball and Joe Dvorak.

Leadership development program participants observed the dewatering Jan. 7. Below right, from left, are Lupe Santos-Jensen, Tim Paulus, Deb Griffith, Mike DeRusha, Tammy Moore, Sharonne Baylor and Kevin Sommerland.

Photo by Tim Meers



Photo by Tim Meers



Photo by Bob Dempsey

## Bits and Pieces

### District wins two "7 Wonders" awards

The Minnesota Society of Professional Engineers presented the Corps' St. Paul District two Seven Wonders of Engineering awards at a banquet in St. Paul Feb. 21, 2003.

One award recognized designing and implementing emergency repair work to Rapidan Dam near Mankato, Minn.; the other honored the renovation of the Pine River Dam in Cross Lake, Minn.

MSPE holds the competition annually to recognize outstanding achievements in the field of engineering.

This is the third year in a row that the district received two of the seven awards.

### District commends contractors

Col. Robert Ball, district engineer, recognized Industrial Contracting Services, Inc., and Park Construction Company at an Associated General Contractors conference Feb. 7, 2003, for their work on district projects in Grand Forks, N.D., and East Grand Forks, Minn.

Ball presented ICS "Contractor of the Year" and "Excellence in Partnering" awards. He recognized Park with the "Superior Safety Performance Award."

ICS coordinated closely with the Corps, the city, the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources, local utility companies and other

contractors working in the project area. The coordination kept the project ahead of schedule and on budget on the \$21 million contract for work in East Grand Forks. It is part of the \$350 million Grand Forks flood control project.

Park received the safety award for work on the Homme Dam safety improvements contract for work without a lost-time accident. Home Dam is located in Walsh County in northeastern North Dakota.

The Homme Dam project consists of the rehabilitation of a high hazard dam and spillway, due to significant seepage under the old structure.

The work has taken three construction seasons in an area known for adverse weather conditions.

### FSA lowers taxes

OPM will be offering flexible spending accounts, administered by a contractor, throughout the federal system this spring.

An FSA can lower an employee's tax liability by allowing employees to set aside money in a paycheck before taxes are taken out.

Employees will be able to put up to \$3,000 for medical expenses and up to \$5,000 for child and dependent care, into the FSA. Employees will be able to use the funds to pay for such things as eyeglasses, contact lenses, dental work, laser eye surgery, Braille books and magazines, hearing aids, co-payments and deductibles for insurance-covered care, etc. The

money may also be used to pay for the same services for their dependents.

FSA's reimburse employees for expenses through receipts submitted to their employer, which releases reimbursements.

OPM is hiring a contractor this spring to administer the program. OPM also plans an open season this May to educate employees and allow enrollment. Accounts will not be activated until July 2003.

The contractor is also responsible for setting up arrangements with payroll offices to receive the allotments from the employee's pay.

Look for updates and specific guidance on the OPM web site at <http://www.opm.gov/>.

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*Tree man, continued from page 3*

Douglas Fir, and Basswood do well in the Red River Valley.

Species to avoid were Swamp White Oak, Sugar Maple, Northern Red Oak and Austrian Pine.

"I didn't realize there were so many criteria for tree locations," said Schanilec.

The prime contractor, Industrial Contracting Services, retained small businesses for the landscaping, such as installation of the trees and shrubs. The cost for trees and shrubs on East Grand Forks phase one is nearly \$219,000. Lee Nursery, Inc., a nursery from Fertile, Minn., supplied trees. Jackson Landscape Supply, Inc., from the Twin Cities, worked as the landscaping subcontractor.

As late as the contractors worked, Holden would be at the project sites to approve locations and planting.

"He sure knows his trees," said John Zavoral, RJ Zavoral and Sons, the subcontractor on the East Grand Forks levees project.



Photo by Mary DeFlorian

"DJ" Moser

## Moser promoted to lockmaster

### One of three women in Corps

By Shannon L. Bauer

The Corps' St. Paul District hired its first female lockmaster last month.

Delene, or DJ as she prefers to be called, Moser of Genoa, Wis., started her new job as lockmaster of Lock and Dam 7 on the Mississippi River Jan. 27. Moser is one of three female lockmasters, out of 136, Corps-wide.

As a lockmaster, Moser supervises 14 people and manages all operations at Lock and Dam 7, which is located near La Crescent, Minn.

Her duties include locking through all vessels, monitoring the pool levels on the river, ensuring the lock and dam is operational and providing for security. She also manages the

reports, payroll and other paperwork necessary to run a lock and dam.

"I selected DJ [Moser] because of her ability to lead and the experience and knowledge that she possesses from spending years as a Corps' employee," said Darrel Oldenburg, lower-area lockmaster. "She has been the lock leader at Lock and Dam 6, which has many of the same duties as the lockmaster, and she performed those duties at a high level. DJ [Moser] has also taken the initiative to gain the necessary supervisory training needed for the job."

Moser has been working on the river for 17 years. She started with the district as a clerk at Lock and Dam 10 in Guttenberg, Iowa, in 1986. While there, she said she got a birds-eye view of what it took to operate a lock and dam and the work appealed to her, saying, "I like working outside, and I like getting to meet new people."

In 1988, she applied for additional training the district then offered called the Upward Mobility Program, where employees could train to be lock and dam operators. Moser was one of four women to complete it. At the time, she added, there was only one female working as a lock and dam operator in the district.

The program provided training in skills like welding and boat operations. "The Upward Mobility Program worked," she said. "Back then, you started on the locks and dams as a laborer and worked your way up to becoming an operator."

Moser said because of this training, she was able to become an operator by 1990.

Working in a male-dominated occupation didn't faze her. "It was new, but people got used to it and adjusted to it," she said. "I think it was the trend at the time – women entering jobs that were predominantly male. It wasn't just in the Corps but in society as well, so it wasn't earth shattering."

In 1995, Moser went to Lock and Dam 6, near Trempealeau, Wis., to take on a lead operator, or supervisory, position. "People told me in the beginning that if you want to move up, you have to go where the jobs are," she said. "Your best chance, if you want a career, is to be flexible and be willing to move."

To further advance, Moser also applied for and graduated from the district's lockmaster and leadership development programs. She said these programs really help those interested in taking on a more leadership role, as they provide district employees the opportunity to learn skills they might not otherwise obtain while doing their day-to-day jobs.

When asked what she thought about being the district's first female lockmaster, Moser didn't have much to say. "I haven't thought too much about it," she said. "There's just too much work to do to think about it unless people ask me.

"However," she added, "there's a whole lot of women out there behind me, and I want to make sure I do well for them."

### 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](mailto:cemvp-pa@mvp02.usace.army.mil).

## Brantner named December Employee of the Month



Photo by Marsha Mose

**District Engineer Col. Robert Ball and Connie Brantner.**

**Connie Brantner**, automation clerk at locks and dams 4 and 5, added goodwill ambassador and travel agent to her list of duties last summer. Her extra effort translated to the Employee of the Month for December 2002.

Lock and Dam 4 is on Mississippi River at Alma, Wis.; Lock and Dam 5 is on the river upstream of Winona, Minn.

Managers in operations branch nominated her for her outstanding customer care and the extra effort taken to help a resident of Alma achieve his dream of once more riding a tow down the river, more than 50 years after he had worked in the engine room of a tow.

“I believe that her actions ... represent an excellent example of going the extra mile to provide service to a member of the public,” said Ben Wopat, assistant chief of construction-operations. “Her dedication is especially noteworthy in that she obtained no benefit from it other than personal satisfaction.”

Lon Meixner, the lockmaster at Alma, said, “During a conversation one day, Brian Roback, a resident of Alma, mentioned to Connie that he had been writing to Ingram Company for three years, asking if he might be able to ride a tow once more.

“He used to work in an engine room in the 1950s, and his dream was to ride on the river once more,” said Meixner.

Roback used to stand on the observation deck at lock 4 and holler at the tow captains for permission allow him on board. He told Brantner he was not able to get permission that way.

She listened to Roback, took notes and searched the internet for an Ingram Company connection. She sent Ingram an e-mail outlining Roback’s wish.

Weeks went by without a response. She wrote again.

Brantner finally received a response from an Ingram representative who assured her that the e-mail was sent forward to the president of the company and that

the request would get attention. Weeks passed before Brantner received an e-mail from a vice president of barge line, saying that Roback was welcome to make the trip and cover the ride in a documentary or their newsletter.

Mark Stevens, from Ingram, contacted Brantner by phone a couple weeks before the trip was scheduled and faxed a waiver form for Roback’s signature. Brantner presented the form to Roback for signature, and he faxed it back to Ingram

Roback boarded a tow at approximately 2 a.m., Nov 15. She had the staff phone her to let her know when the boat was arriving and went to the lock to provide well wishes for his trip.

In a conversation with Roback after the trip, she learned that the Ingram Company had him compare modern river operations with 52 years ago. Roback said when he worked for Ingram, they owned four boats.

The Ingram web site reported the company has more than 1,800 barges and 62 vessels. The company transports coal, grain, aggregates, fertilizer, ores, alloys, steel products and chemicals.

“Brian spent 13-15 hours a day in the pilot house and told Connie that he enjoyed every minute of his trip,” said Meixner.

## Coming events

June 19	Summer awards ceremony and picnic at Eau Galle recreation site, Spring Valley, Wis.;
Aug. 17	Mississippi River Commission visit officially starts; the M/V Mississippi arrives in the district for community relations and employee events;
Sep. 11	Retiree luncheon in St. Paul;
Sep. 21	Upper St. Anthony Falls lock and dam at Minneapolis, Minn., 40 years old;
Dec. 12	Holiday awards ceremony and luncheon.