



US Army Corps
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St. Paul District

Crosscurrents

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Survey crew measures ice on Mississippi River

Page 4



EEO honor, Congressional kudos for district invigorate district commander

By Col. Robert Ball
District Engineer

I travel a lot in this job. I don't like to travel that much, especially when it takes me away from my family. In



fact, it is probably the part of the job that I like the least and last week I ended up on a particularly grueling two-

week trip to Washington, D.C. I was physically and emotionally whipped and was not mustering up much enthusiasm for anything but getting home and going to bed. Fortunately, I was able to take some

time to attend a ceremony that stopped me from feeling sorry for myself and made me realize (again) what a wonderful group of people I get to work with.

After a week filled with 19 congressional visits, the last event before departing on the plane home was to go to an awards ceremony at the Pentagon. Any ceremony at the Pentagon is special, but this one was particularly impressive because it featured the Army Band, a galaxy

“ ... members of congress ... are delighted with the work you are doing for their constituents.”

of general officers, members of the senior executive service and all the flags, frills and fanfare of a military ceremony.

Since Jim Stadelman and I were sitting in the row in front of the trumpet section, I was especially mindful of the music – steeped in tradition, stirring and loud. Several hundred people were there, many of them the movers and shakers of the Army, and they had all come to honor a group of eight individuals who had been singled out by the Secretary of the Army for excellence in what they do.

By the time the ceremony started, I was feeling a little better about life and was realizing I had been concentrating on budget woes during the week and not paying attention to the messages that the members of congress were also giving me about how in most cases they are delighted with the work you are doing for their constituents. The week before I had been told several times by Army Corps' headquarters staff how our regulatory program

was viewed as being among the best in the Corps.

And then, just as I began to realize that I needed to stop dwelling on my problems and appreciate the true strength of our organization, you – our own Marianne Price, equal employment opportunity officer, was called up to the stage and presented the U.S Army Award for Outstanding Achievement in Equal Employment Opportunity. She represented you well there, was gracious in receiving such a unique honor and sent me back to St Paul with the enthusiasm to serve that I had been lacking just an hour before.

My message to you is twofold. First, I am proud of what you are doing and how you are doing it. What you do matters to people and is of importance to this region and the nation.

Second, if you find yourself beaten up by the grind of trying to meet competing needs as we are called to do, just look around you. You are bound to be fired up by a co-worker who is doing something selfless, superb and/or stupendous.

Improve skills through mentoring

Excerpted from a memo by
Lt. Gen. Bob Flowers
Chief of Engineers

An on-line USACE *Coaching, Counseling and Mentoring Guide* is now available.

The guide provides an overview of each of these processes and gives practical 'how to' tips.

I urge everyone to access the guide at <http://USACE-CCM-Guide.com> and to commit to improving their skills by employing the techniques described.



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Photo by Marsha Mose

Marianne Price, St. Paul District equal employment opportunity officer, accepts the U.S. Army Award for Outstanding Achievement in Equal Employment Opportunity from Assistant Secretary of the Army Reginald J. Brown, March 14, 2003.

Army recognizes Price for outstanding achievement in EEO

By Shannon Bauer

Headquarters U.S. Army recently honored Marianne Price, the St. Paul District equal employment opportunity officer, as recipient of the 2002 U.S Army Award for Outstanding Achievement in Equal Employment Opportunity. Price received her recognition at an awards ceremony at the Pentagon from Reginald J. Brown, assistant secretary of the Army for manpower and reserve affairs March 14.

This award follows her selection for the outstanding achievement in EEO for U.S. Army Corps of Engineers last July. She received this award for managing an outstanding EEO program and providing expert leadership to build a workplace of excellence for a diverse workforce. Some of her accomplishments include implementing a pilot telecommuting program, recruitment open houses and committees that work on diversity initiatives.

Price has been a federal employee for 32 years, working at the district for 18 years. Previously, she has worked for the U.S. Air Force, the U.S. Navy and the Department of Justice.

Project engineers volunteer for 'Mathcounts' competition

Two St. Paul District project engineers volunteered in the junior high math competition in Rochester, Minn., Feb. 1.

Sharonne Baylor from the Winona, Minn., resident office and Lisa Brantner, from the LaCrosse, Wis., resident office, were scorers in the Mathcounts competition in Rochester.

More than 90 students from 13 schools in southeastern Minnesota participated. Rochester Community Technical College hosted and sponsored the competition. The Minnesota Society of Professional Engineers, in which Baylor and Brantner are members, coordinated the competition.

Mathcounts is a national math coaching and competition program that promotes math achievement by 6th, 7th and 8th grade students. The program stimulates student interest by making math achievement as challenging, exciting and prestigious as school sports.

Students compete in local meets in February, either as members of a four-student team or as individuals. Winners then progress to the state contest in March. The top four scorers in the state competition earn an all-expense-paid trip to Chicago, Ill., to represent Minnesota in the national finals in mid-June.

Lisa Brantner supplied the information for this article.



Photo courtesy Jill Mickelson

Sharonne Baylor (left) from the Winona, Minn., resident office, and Lisa Brantner from the LaCrosse, Wis., resident office, scored students in a math competition in Rochester, Minn., Feb. 1.



Page 1 and 4 photos by Mark Upward

Lake Pepin ice thickness sets spring shipping season on river

By Shannon Bauer

The St. Paul District’s survey crew in Fountain City, Wis., began measuring Lake Pepin ice Feb. 10.

Lake Pepin is located on the Mississippi River between Red Wing and Wabasha, Minn. The Corps takes ice measurements at this location each year to predict the navigational outlook on the Upper Mississippi River. It is the location of choice for these measurements, because the lake is the last part of the river to break up, and the current is slower on Lake Pepin than it is on the rest of the river.

Each year, the survey crew uses an airboat and a portable global positioning system to measure ice thickness. In addition to measuring the ice thickness,

they record the general condition of the ice. This data is used by the towing industry to predict whether or not it will be difficult for towboats to break through the ice and determine when it’s safe to begin towing to St. Paul, Minn.

Last year, the first tow to make it all the way to Saint Paul, Minn., was the REGGIE G, a tow operated by Alter Barge Line of Bettendorf, Iowa, on March 16. The average opening date of the navigation season in St. Paul for the last 10 years is March 17.

Page 1 photo shows Kevin Ressie, auger in hand, and James Marquardt, holding a measuring stick, on the Mississippi River to test the ice thickness on Lake Pepin March 24. In the above photo, Ressie, a small-draft operator, and Marquardt, surveying technician, prepare to go out in an airboat equipped with a global positioning system on March 24. They are based in Fountain City, Wis.

Shafer honored as January Employee of the Month

Michelle M. Shafer, readiness branch, applied her first responder training when a district employee lost consciousness and fell to the floor at an off-site meeting in December. Her professional response impressed Linda Krueger, civilian personnel chief, to nominate her for Employee of the Month for January.

“Shelly [Shafer] immediately went to the employee’s side and displayed excellent ‘first responder’ skills by calmly determining if the employee had been hurt in the fall, helping her get as comfortable as possible, and, after a few minutes, helping her into a chair,” said Krueger.

Shafer later used her own vehicle to drive the employee to a medical clinic, where she waited on stand by until a family

member arrived.

“Her calm and competent demeanor throughout the entire incident is representative of how I’ve seen her handle other serious situations,” Krueger said. “She displayed a rare combination of skill, sensitivity and kindness in this incident. I believe she should be recognized as employee of the month.”



Photo by Mark Davidson

Shelly Shafer, left, receives employee of the month honors from Lt. Col. Tom O’Hara, deputy district engineer.