



US Army Corps
of Engineers®
St. Paul District

Crosscurrents

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November 2004

Dredge Thompson to retire with 68 years of life on the Mississippi River



The Dredge Thompson and its flotilla of support barges pass by Winona, Minn., on their way up the Mississippi River to the boatyards in Fountain City, Wis., this October. Latch Island, to the east, is in the background. See "Dredge Thompson to retire with rich history," Page 5.

Photo by Dan Krumholz

Districts prepare for regional business model

Col. Mike Pfenning
District commander

As the Holiday Season approaches, there are three topics



I'd like to address in this month's editorial – our deployed teammates, the fiscal year 2005 appropriations

bill impacts and the outcomes from our semi-annual Mississippi Valley Senior Leader Conference in New Orleans.

As we enjoy our own families, we each pause in our own way to remember and thank those members of our district team who are not home with their loved ones

this year, but instead have answered the call to rebuild infrastructures either in Florida or in Iraq and Afghanistan as a vital part of the Corps' support to the Global War on Terror. This nationwide response in Florida and the Middle East would not be successful without the selfless support of their district teammates – each of you who remain at home, shouldering the remaining workload. Your commitment and passion in meeting our ongoing mission inspires me every day!

As I mentioned last month in my editorial, there was a distinct possibility that we would be operating under a continuing resolution authority throughout much of fiscal year 2005. There is good news to report from Capitol Hill – Congress is very close to passing an appropriations bill that will be sent to the president for signature. Given the president's signature, we will not have to operate under a CRA for all of fiscal year 2005. While we are still analyzing the details of the appropriations bill, here is an initial assessment.

Compared to the challenging year in 2004 for operations and maintenance, we are in a much better situation. Unfortunately, we are not as well funded in specifically authorized projects such as Grand Forks-East Grand Forks, and projects such as Crookston and Baldhall Dam that are winding down. There is very limited funding for new projects in the appropriations bill.

While the level of funding for studies is very similar to fiscal year 2004, those funds highlight the importance of working as a region as only those projects that

benefit a large area, such as the Upper Mississippi-Illinois Navigation Study and the Environmental Management Program, seem to be getting congressional priority for funding.


I've included the highlights of the appropriations bill in a separate e-mail to each of you. Looking to the future, our initial fiscal year 2006 budget for the district continues to decline in the area of specifically authorized projects as a reflection of the overall decline in the Corps' civil works budget due to the corresponding increase in priority support for the Global War on Terror.

Looking to the more immediate future, the senior leaders from the district recently joined the Mississippi Valley Division senior leaders in an annual planning conference in mid-November hosted by the New Orleans District. The primary objective of the conference was to determine an initial plan to begin implementing the regional business center across the Mississippi Valley no later than September 2005.

This plan would allow the division to begin operating as a RBC in fiscal year 2006. Our regional command council, composed of Brig. Gen. Robert Crear, division commander, and the six district commanders, agreed that it is time for us to stop talking about operating regionally and start figuring out how to do it.

There is now a regional planning effort underway to accomplish this RBC implementation in four major phases. All other strategic planning not associated with the regional business center

Regional, continued Page 11



US Army Corps of Engineers
St. Paul District

Crosscurrents

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“Call to arms” raises \$922 Loose change challenge pushes up contributions

By Peter Verstegen

Start with a food fight, sort of. Throw in a loose change challenge. Volunteer the deputy district engineer to a pushup competition for charity, but do it when he’s not there. Form competing teams on the fly. Whisper about a clash of arms between Army and Air Force. Offer a bagel breakfast as a prize.

Tommy “The Body” Crump acted as ring announcer and pushup master, when seven contestants lined up for a pushup competition, Nov. 22. Said Crump, “We have three objectives today: raise money for charity, establish bragging rights as the pushup champion of the Army’s St. Paul District and have fun.”

The team lineup formed: Mike “Muscle Man” McGarvey, flew in for team 1 and the Air Force. Joel “Inyur” Face drilled for team 2. Lt. Col. Tom “Ironman” O’Hara weighed in for Soldiers around the globe and for team 3. Mark “Muscles” Klika was tagged for team 4. John “Bonecrusher” Bailen pushed for team 5. Two free agents, Col. Mike “Leader” Pfenning and Tommy “The Mind” Raster muscled their way in.

The food fight began when the leadership development class baited five teams on three floors Nov. 15 with a bagel breakfast as a prize as part of the Combined Federal Campaign. The loose change from food sales was for Keystone Community Services, formerly Neighbor to Neighbor, St. Paul.

Team 4, formed by design branch, technical services branch and construction, opened the challenge with a apple brownie cake with warm caramel sauce.

Team 3 and team 5 warmed up with chile and pizza competitions, Nov. 17 and 19. Project management, executive office, public affairs, office of counsel and the equal employment opportunity office formed team 3. Contracting, real estate and hydraulics formed team 5.

Marianne Price, equal employment opportunity office, threw down the donut Nov. 18. “I have a challenge that will top any out there,” said Price. “If Lt. Col. [Tom] O’Hara, deputy district engineer, can perform 10 pushups in the presence of any five Corps witnesses, I will give \$50 in ‘loose change’ to team 3’s bucket.”

Meanwhile, the deputy is out of state at a senior leaders’ meeting.

“I’ve heard a rumor that others think doing only 10 is too easy,” said Price. “I’ve opened the offer to anyone else with upping the

Pushups, continued Page 4



Photo by Shannon Bauer

Shelly Shafer, readiness branch, wearing her emergency medical technician uniform, stood ready with an emergency defibrillator during the competition. Shafer is a volunteer EMT in Spring Valley, Wis. Left to right are Dave Rydeen, Matt Bray, both from engineering and construction, and Marcia McCloskey, real estate.



Photo by Peter Verstegen

Mark Klika, engineering and construction, flexes his muscles at the start of the competition for Mike McGarvey, logistics management. McGarvey stood in for the U.S. Air Force.



Photo by Shannon Bauer

Tom Raster (right), project management, pushed himself to 60 pushups. Lt. Col. Tom O’Hara, left, rose to 100. Spectators, from left, are Linda Haberkorn, Theresa Thury, Marilyn Kruchten, all from project management, and Marianne Price, equal employment opportunity office. Many of the spectators contributed five cents per pushup O’Hara completed. Price muscled in by offering \$50 to spur fund-raising and participation.

Pushups, continued from Page 3
number by \$1 per pushup.”

From there, Paul “The Promoter” Kosterman, project management, volleyed for team 3 with a fist full of e-mails.

“The 19 folks on this [e-mail] distribution have pledged 5 cents per pushup that O’Hara can perform in one continuous session – a maximum of 100 pushups or \$5 per pledge.”

When O’Hara returned Nov. 18, he challenged team 3. “I’m in,” he said, but I’m worth a little more than a \$1.05 per pushup! If [Minnesota Timberwolves Latrell] Sprewell can’t even feed his family on \$14 million, I should be worth a little more.

“I accept the challenge but issue a return challenge to Marianne/team 3 to expand your donors and crank up the pot. It’s all for a good cause.”

Six, in addition to O’Hara, entered the competition: Klika, engineering and construction; McGarvey, logistics management; Face, engineering and construction; Bailen, chief of engineering and construction; Raster, project management, and Pfenning, district commander. Crump, executive assistant, kept score.

Overall, the seven challengers rose and fell 425 times.

Who won? Combined Federal Campaign, for one. Keystone Community Partners, for another. And not the least, the campaign demonstrates Army values of selfless service, honor, integrity and personal courage.

The competition generated \$922 for Keystone. Team 3 won with O’Hara’s 100 pushups and will shape up with bagels for breakfast. Finally, the Army (team 3) topped the Air Force, represented by “Muscle Man” McGarvey, in pushups.



Photo by Peter Verstegen

Mark Klika, engineering and construction (right front); Mike McGarvey, logistics management; and Col. Mike Pfenning, district commander (in a battle dress uniform), pushed their upper limits, generating record contributions for Combined Federal Campaign.



Photo by Peter Verstegen

Col. Mike Pfenning, district commander, congratulates Lt. Col. O’Hara, deputy district commander, for a record 100 push ups.

Dredge Thompson to retire with rich history

By Dan Krumholz

Chris Lennon, dredge inspector, contributed to this story.

For 68-years, the Thompson has been a stage for the stories of people working and living together on one of the world’s greatest rivers.

The crew’s response on two holidays, 64 years apart, shows how unpredictable life on the Mississippi River can be.

Armistice Day in November, 1940, began with blue sky and temperatures in the 50s.

Like it, Veterans Day 2004 began with clear sky and moderate temperatures, which continued through the following morning as the Thompson cleared the river channel for navigation.

But these two holidays ended much differently.

Sixty four years earlier, an abrupt change in the weather, later called the Armistice Day Storm, surprised residents in the region.

Response to this storm was a classic example of the Thompson crew and equipment rising to the occasion, working under adverse weather conditions and doing what it takes to get the job done.

The temperatures rapidly dropped to freezing, 70-mph winds raked the region and two feet of



St. Paul District photo

Scott Ressie, leverman, operates dredge from the pilot house atop the Dredge Thompson.

snow blanketed the ground by the time the storm ended the following day.

In 1940, the Dredge William A. Thompson had completed its fourth dredging season and was safely back in the Fountain City, Wis., boatyards when the deadly storm hit.

The sudden high winds, six-foot waves on the river, blizzard conditions and freshly forming ice stranded hundreds of duck hunters, with their small skiffs and outboard motors, on islands up and down the

river.

Members of the Thompson crew, including Clarence Thompson, the first captain of the dredge (no relation to William A. Thompson), and Allen Fiedler, the pilot of the dredge, and other Corps’ employees stationed at the boatyards, instinctively knew what had to be done as they fired up the dredge tenders the next day and set out to find their friends, neighbors and possibly co-workers. Search planes, circling overhead, guided the dredge’s steel support boats and their operators to the hunters. Trip after trip, they brought stranded hunters to shore.

The Thompson is unique – a boat, a dredge, a hotel and restaurant, power plant, repair shop and construction site, all rolled into one.

It is a combination that makes for fascinating human experiences. For the Thompson crew, it is more than a job, it is their home, it



St. Paul District photo

Controls in the pilot house of the Thompson are original brass.

Thompson, continued on Page 6



St. Paul District photo

The bow of the Dredge Thompson contains the cutterhead used to loosen the river bed and clear the navigation channel. The pilot house sits atop the dredge.

becomes their lifestyle.

That may account for the pride of ownership and sense of duty that is obvious as the crew goes about routine business or a rapid response to a channel closure.

Like Thanksgiving 1980, when crew members left deer stands and family dinners to fire up the Thompson from winter hibernation and mobilized the dredge in a snowstorm to a channel closure at Grand Encampment on the Mississippi River.

The channel clearing prevented the last tows of the year from spending the winter frozen in the Upper Mississippi River.

Over the years, dredge employees have worked away from family and friends during weekends, holidays, Fathers' Days, Mothers' Days, birthdays, anniversaries, graduations and many other special days.

But family is not always that far away as the work force has included brothers, father and son, grandfather and grandson, uncle

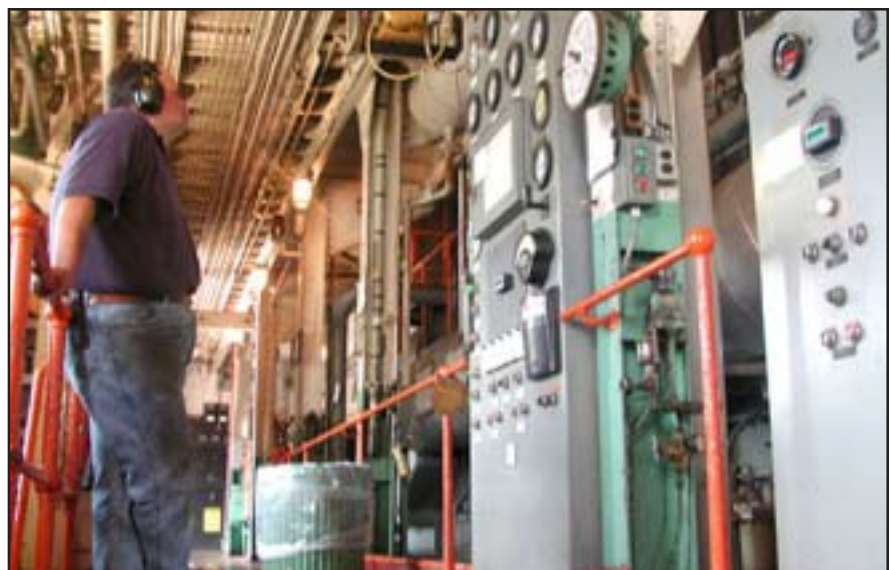
and nephew, cousins, mother and son and spouses.

Dredging jobs can be in a crew member's backyard or a thousand plus miles from their land based home.

The Thompson has worked the major navigable rivers of the upper Midwest; the Mississippi River from St. Paul to Memphis, the St. Croix, Illinois, Missouri, Kaskaskia and Ohio rivers.

Maintaining the channel means the crews have an ongoing relationship with the quirks of the river and a close attachment of the Corps' navigation mission.

The crew moves and shapes sand that only minutes earlier was a potential obstacle for safe movement of commercial barges. They disconnect the pipeline, moving it out of the path of an appreciative towboat that shares information on other locations of concern as it eases past the big dredge boat.



St. Paul District photo

Ron Zeches, first assistant engineer, monitors gauges in the engine room of the Dredge Thompson.

November 2004

From the still heat and humidity of a July evening to the freezing ice-covered decks on a November day, the Thompson works on.

When not actively dredging, the crew sets up the job, adds floating line, moves anchors, extends shore-pipe, prepares a placement site, cleans the pump or assembles the tow so that 5,000-tons of dredge and floating equipment can safely move to the next job.

The Thompson has survived years past its projected life-span largely due to the maintenance and care it has received.

The crew has adapted the Thompson to changing times, especially environmental responsiveness.

In the mid-1970s, the pumping distance of the Thompson was extended from 1,700 feet to more than 7,000 feet with additional pipeline and two booster pumps. This allows targeted placement of the dredged material at environmentally approved sites.

Sixty-eight dredging seasons and 125,000,000 cubic yards later, modern technology and supplemental heavy equipment are now a routine part of the operation, as the dredge completes the final job just 25 miles upstream from its very first job site.

Large bulldozers, a backhoe, plastic pipeline and drop structures are all used to contain material on land and prevent the sand from entering valuable backwaters. A drop structure contains dredged material on land while allowing for



Crosscurrents

St. Paul District photo

Crew members connect pipes that carry dredge slurry to a containment location. Working below are Adrian Loewenhagen, deckhand, and Chris Stai, deckhand. Jeremy Loesel, deckhand, is working on top of the slurry pipeline.

water to drain back to the river. Lighting allows round-the-clock operations and proper placement of dredged material.

The Thompson now uses equipment, such as satellite positioning and electronic maps, likely never imagined during its first job down-river of Lansing, Iowa, in June 1937.

Clearing the navigation channel on the Mississippi River on Veterans Day 2004 is not the last job of the season. It's the last job for the dredge – ever.

With the arrival of the Dredge Goetz in 2005, the Thompson's role will be reduced to providing a home for the crew until the Quartersbarge Taggatz is funded and delivered.

William D. Krutz, temporary deckhand, stands on a support barge with a swing anchor as a tow prepares to move the barge.

Photo by Dan Krumholz

In the unpredictable world of channel maintenance, the work near Brownsville, Minn., Head of Raft Channel to be specific, is already the Thompson's second final job.

The next to last job was completed earlier in the week, 75 miles upstream at Reads Landing, Minn., that is until a towboat grounding prompted yet another "final" job. This is a familiar scenario that the Thompson and its able crew respond to in routine fashion.

Clearing Raft Channel is only the final dredging job for the Thompson, but not its final call.

The 270-foot dredge boat will be transformed into a museum exhibit at Winona, Minn., seven river miles from the Fountain City boatyards. The exhibit will serve to educate the public and future generations about the river and the important role the Thompson has played in river lore.



Ehnstrom summers in Baghdad

'Who needs a bottle of water?'

By Mark Davidson

No days off, meeting great Corps' people from other districts, flying on a C-130 cargo plane in a flak jacket and helmet, using bad toilets, feeling good about doing her part for the people of Iraq – these were some of the highs and lows that Stephanie Ehnstrom, resource management, experienced in her deployment to Iraq.

Ehnstrom, a management analyst with the resource management office, was in Baghdad from May 31 to July 28, 2004. She had no days off and worked 12-hour days.

The 26-year federal employee, four spent with the Corps of Engineers, worked as an administrative assistant in the CEGRD – DPM (director program management) office. She mostly updated the resident managements system with project data, timekeeping, filing, shredding of confidential office material and other regular administrative duties. Her office was in a palace in the Green Zone.

"I did stand guard duty for one shift of 12 hours," said Ehnstrom, "after working my regular 12-hour schedule. My guard duty time was spent checking the grounds, answer phones and shredding classified documents."

Before deploying to Iraq,



U.S. Army photo

Stephanie Ehnstrom, who works as a management analyst in resource management in the district, was featured on a "Postcard from Iraq."

Ehnstrom received basic training provided by the civilian receiving center, or CRC, at Ft. Bliss, Texas. Her training consisted of the following: proper use of a gas mask, target practice at a shooting range, how to provide medical assistance to stop a person from bleeding too much and to take steps to prevent a person from going into shock, and what to look for and how to identify explosive materials. She also learned to identify military ranks and the proper way to roll up the sleeves of her desert BDUs.

After traveling from the United States to Kuwait, she flew on a C-130 cargo aircraft from Camp Doha in Kuwait to Iraq. She wore a flak jacket and helmet in the C-130.

"While I was off-duty, I lived in a trailer with air conditioning and had a female Corps' worker as a roommate and shared one shower," said Ehnstrom. "I talked to my husband by phone and my friends and co-workers by e-mail. I ran into some St. Paul District field site people and met a couple

of soldiers from Minnesota. I met so many wonderful people from different districts."

Ehnstrom also said the phrases she heard the most were "put on our battle rattle gear," "check your vehicle," and "who needs a bottle of water?"

One sad event that hit Ehnstrom hard was the tragic death of a young Iraqi woman who worked in her office with her. "The young women was learning how to drive and went over an embankment with the car and got caught in the barbwire around the compound," said Ehnstrom. "When she tried to get out of the car, she got caught in the barbwire and died."

Ehnstrom's family, friends and fellow workers were very happy and excited that she made it home safely. Ehnstrom said her father especially was glad she was able to return home earlier than her original end date. Ehnstrom said her family is proud of her for making such a contribution for her work and country.

"I'm grateful for the Corps of Engineers for giving me the opportunity to work in Iraq," said Ehnstrom. "I think my time in Iraq will probably be the only time in my life to be of some kind of service in a war torn country."

Retrieving retiree personnel file

Q. How can a retired employee get information from his or her official personnel file?

A. Write to:

National Personnel Records Center
Civilian Personnel Records
111 Winnebago Street
St. Louis, MO 63118-4126
FAX: 314-801-9270

Crossroads at Cross Lake for Paul Bunyan Byway

By Mark Davidson

The district signed its first cooperative agreement in the state of Minnesota on Nov. 4 with the Paul Bunyan Scenic Byway at the district's Cross Lake facility. The agreement allows the Paul Bunyan Scenic Byway Association to use a portion of the district's facility there as an office.

"By sharing space and partnering our ideas, the Corps of Engineers and the Paul Bunyan Scenic Byway organization will both be able to broaden and enhance visitor's experiences with programs, activities, interpretative products and facilities that clearly tell our shared stories," said Ray Nelson, the Corps' Cross Lake manager.

The Paul Bunyan Scenic Byway is a 54-mile road looping around the Whitefish Chain of Lakes and along the north side of Pelican Lake in the Brainerd, Minn. area. The loop is circular and includes the Corps' Cross Lake site.

"This partnership will be an opportunity for both organizations to tell the stories of the people, places and events along the scenic byway and within the Whitefish Area, said Lynn Scharenbroich, the Paul Bunyan Scenic Byway president.

"Drawing from each other's strengths, together we'll set some new shared goals and develop intriguing ways to open the eyes of residents and visitors to the compelling, poignant, quirky and



Photo by Mark Davidson

Lynn Scharenbroich (left), the Paul Bunyan Scenic Byway president, and Col. Mike Pfenning, St. Paul District commander, signed the cooperative agreement with the Paul Bunyan Scenic Byway at the district's Cross Lake facility, Nov. 4, 2004.

delightful aspects of the area and the central role played by the Corps of Engineers and the route that is now the scenic byway in the unfolding of those historical moments, as well as the birth of new memories," said Scharenbroich.

The Corps of Engineers has been authorizing cooperative agreements since 1991 and now has more than 30 such agreements at projects like Cross Lake nationwide.

"By signing this cooperative agreement, we are providing the public with additional opportunities to become involved in and support the Mississippi River Headwaters and Paul Bunyan Byway areas through wise stewardship of our public land, water, natural environment and historic cultural resources," said Col. Michael Pfenning, district commander.

The Crosslake area and the Corps of Engineers have a

mutually beneficial relationship. More than 370,000 visited this camp site last year and spent more than \$6 million in the local while visiting.



Photo by Mark Davidson

Deb Griffith, a ranger at Cross Lake, hosted about 25 people who attended the Paul Bunyan Scenic Byway signing ceremony. At right is Chuck Pelzl.

News and Notes

Headwaters rangers teach hunter safety



St. Paul District photo

The St. Paul District, Remer Elementary School, Minnesota Department of Natural Resources, local businesses and civic organizations cooperated to provide hunter safety training and education for nearly 60 students in the Mississippi River Headwaters area, Sept. 20-23 and Sept. 30.

The purpose of the training was to educate the youth of the many components of hunting, such as firearms safety, survival, water safety, wildlife conservation, ethics, laws, management and responsibility. People born after Dec. 31, 1979, must pass one of these courses to purchase hunting licenses in many states.

Participating from the Corps were **Timm Rennecke**, Zeb **Hemsworth**, Leech Lake; **Jeff Kleinert**, Pokegama; **Jeff Steere**, Sandy Lake; and **Ray Nelson**, Cross Lake. Larry Frances represented the Minnesota DNR and Denny Ganz represented the Remer Lions Club. Kraig Kiger was there for the Minnesota Shooting Sports Education Center.

Sponsors included the Remer

Elementary School, Remer, Minn., and the Minnesota Shooting Sports Education Center, Grand Rapids, Minn.

Awards

Gull Lake staff recognized by Minnesota Pollution Control Agency



Gregg Struss

agency keep track of the water quality of Minnesota's lakes. **Gregg Struss**, **Bob Espenson** and **Mary Kay Larson**, all of the district's Gull Lake Recreation Area in Gull Lake, Minn., were presented with Volunteer Appreciation Awards for long-term service in the MPCA's Citizen Lake-Monitoring Program.

Around the state, Citizen Lake-Monitoring Program volunteers take regular readings of water clarity in selected lakes by lowering a white metal disk into the water until it is no longer visible and then noting the depth. The Gull Lake volunteers have been taking clarity readings on Gull Lake in Cass County for more than 15 years.

The Minnesota Pollution Control Agency recognized local volunteers this month for their efforts to help the

The volunteers track their data through open-water months and submit them annually to the MPCA. Jennifer Lang, program coordinator for the MPCA, said, this helps the agency track long-term trends in water quality and understand overall water quality in Minnesota. For more information on becoming a Citizen Lake-Monitoring Program volunteer, call 651-282-2618 or 800-657-3864.

Announcements

Engineering division and construction-operations division were reorganized and renamed to engineering and construction division and operations division on Nov. 1. **John Bailen** will serve as the chief, engineering and construction division. **Ben Wopat** has been selected to fill the chief, operations division, until the permanent chief is selected.

The district's **Combined Federal Campaign** bake sale raised \$156.35 for the Keystone Community Services program, the new name for the Neighbor-To-Neighbor program that the district has donated to for the past three years. Keystone Community Services is located next door to Washington Middle School, the district's adopt-a-school, in St. Paul, Minn. (See related story on additional fund-raising activities, Page 3.)

Newcomers

Charles Kunesh started on the Dredge Thompson Oct. 4.

Stephen Muyskens, of

Newport, Minn., started in contracting on Oct. 3. Previously, he worked as a contract specialist at the U.S. Department of Agriculture’s Natural Resources Conservation Service.

John Quellhorst started at Lock and Dam 10 Oct. 4.

Retirements

Lynn Pedersen, real estate, retired Sept. 30, after more than 36 years government service.

Richard Rothbauer, program analyst, retired Oct. 1, after more than 32 years government service.

James Mueller, engineering and design, retired Sept. 30, after more than 21 years government service.



Army Civilian Corps Creed

I am an Army civilian – a member of the Army team;
 I am dedicated to the Army, its Soldiers and civilians;
 I will always support the mission;
 I provide stability and continuity during war and peace;
 I support and defend the Constitution of the United States and consider it an honor to serve the nation and its Army;
 I live the Army values of loyalty, duty, respect, selfless service, honor, integrity and personal courage;
 I am an Army civilian.

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 implementation has stopped for now, so we can focus our collective efforts.

The four major phases within this regional planning effort and the responsible planning agencies include:

Phase 1:

Execution of consistent income-based workforce planning across the Mississippi Valley region no later than Jan. 10, 2005, resulting in the numbers and types of personnel needed in each of our major functional areas such as engineering and construction, project management, operations and maintenance, support staff, etc.

Responsibility: *Regional management board and communities of practice.*

Phase 2:

Development of the recommended regional business center model for the Mississippi Valley no later than Feb 28, 2005.

Responsibility: *Directors of project and program management and regional directors.*

The regional model will describe how we work together and share resources as a region. It could include such ideas as six “full-service” districts with shared functional leaders; six districts with no regional headquarters; three “full-service” districts and three “half-service” districts; six “three-quarters-service” districts; or other ideas still to be developed.

Phase 3:

Development of an implementation plan no later than March 31, 2005, that takes the

region from where we are now in terms of excess capacity in some districts and shortfalls in capacity in other districts to a regionally balanced workforce in the recommended regional model.

Responsibility: *Regional management board.*

This implementation plan is intended to be a multi-year program for the regional workforce that will make use of employee friendly options, such as allowing employees to live where they are now while they may be assigned to a branch or office in another district within the region.

Phase 4:

Creation of processes for operating as a RBC in accordance with the selected model no later than May 31, 2005, e.g. improving the regional governance model, updating district standard operating procedures with a regional focus and the establishment of regional standardized levels of service for our day-to-day operations and for our customers.

Responsibility: *Regional management board.*

In the months ahead, each of you will have opportunities to share ideas and information to improve the entire Mississippi Valley region, not just the St. Paul District. This trust in each other and willingness to share best business practices, as well as work, are critical parts of the new culture that we must adopt in order make the new regional model and USACE 2012 part of our day-to-day district-level operations. I challenge each of you to join me in this continuing journey.

Happy holidays and *Essayons!*

District supports temporary housing mission for Hurricane Ivan

By Liz Nelsen

St. Paul District supported Hurricane Ivan recovery efforts by sending a temporary housing planning and response team in late September.

This followed the district sending a temporary housing PRT to support Hurricane Charley earlier that same month.

Hurricane Ivan came ashore at the boundary between Florida and Alabama, hitting Escambia County in Florida the hardest. The housing mission focused on five Panhandle counties, including Escambia, Santa Rosa, Okaloosa, Walton and Bay.

Five district employees deployed Sept. 18, two days after Ivan hit, and were soon followed by many more. Originally, for the first couple of weeks, the PRT was stationed at Eglin Air Force Base, Fla., in Okaloosa County, south of Crestview, Fla.

While there, the team received three missions from the Federal Emergency Management Agency, which included constructing a temporary housing park, emergency group housing sites and temporary schools.

Constructing the temporary housing park consisted of initially identifying existing mobile home parks and travel trailers parks for any available pads. Pads were classified as either occupied, empty, empty but needs debris removal or empty but needs utility



St. Paul District photo

Liz Nelsen, right, went to Florida as part of the temporary housing mission on Hurricane Ivan. With her is Sue Volkmer, who worked for a private consulting firm on contract with FEMA.

repair/debris removal. The numbers of pads identified were given to FEMA, and then FEMA decided whether it wanted to lease the pads.

For some of the leased pads, FEMA requested the PRT install the trailers on the sites. Next, if the pads required work, FEMA tasked the PRT with site restoration. The PRT would then hire a contractor and oversee the restoration. Once the trailers were ready for occupancy, FEMA leased them to individuals.

Additionally, the PRT recommended to FEMA good sites for building new mobile home parks. If FEMA decided to utilize these sites, the PRT would do an environmental assessment on the land, lease the land for about two years, obtain Right of Entry, either design the park or hire someone to design it and then hire someone to build the site, as well as monitor its

construction.

Emergency group sites were a new concept during this disaster. The big concern with many federal officials was not to recreate a tent city similar to that built for Hurricane Andrew in 1995. Basically, this entailed a big camp of tents with separate shower/bathroom facilities and a dining tent for meals.

For Hurricane Ivan, it was decided instead to swiftly build parks where every family had an individual bathroom and kitchen. Hence, the concept of an emergency group site, also known as an EGS (pronounced egg) site, was initiated. EGSs, so far, have been built on pavement.

The first one, called Saufley and consisting of 200 travel trailers, was identified two days after Hurricane Ivan made landfall. The first trailers were ready for occupancy nine days after landfall, since FEMA had already purchased the trailers and

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the equipment needed. Electricity was run from generators to each trailer. Water was run to each trailer from trucks. Each trailer had a holding tank, which has to be pumped daily. All pipes and wires were laid on the ground instead of under it.

While Saufley was built, the power company decided they could install permanent power. The Corps' contractor was tasked with operating and maintaining the park for 60-90 days. At that point, the families could move into group sites. The group sites were mobile homes, not travel trailers, and are larger and more comfortable to live in. They were expected to house people for up to 18 months.

The second site, called Builders Square, also consisted of 200 trailers (photo at left). For this site, it was decided to install all permanent utilities. This was accomplished for power and water, but a few of the trailers had to have holding tanks instead of sewer.

Building temporary schools for a few of the schools in Escambia County was a new mission for the PRT. The General Services Administration purchased modules to serve as classrooms, and the PRT oversaw their assembly and utility hookup in a little more than a week.

About two-and-a-half weeks after arriving, the PRT moved a new office in Pensacola.

While deployed, the PRT received visits from two generals, including Maj. Gen. Don Riley, Corps of Engineers' director of civil works, and Lt. Gen. Carl Strock, chief of engineers.

Work continued on the first two missions after Nelsen returned home.



Photo by Darrell Morey

Jon Sobiech (left) and Grant Riddick, review placement plan at an expedient group site using 32 foot travel trailers. "Basically we put together a neighborhood of 200 32-foot travel trailers, equipped with plumbing, electricity and sewer," said Sobiech. The photo was taken at the Builders Square location during construction in Pensacola, Fla.

Hurricane facts: 134,199 temporary roofs

By Shannon Bauer

Since four hurricanes struck Florida and other Southeastern states in August and September, Corps of Engineers' emergency operations centers have continued to support a high level of activity.

Six-hundred-and-forty-two Corps' personnel are still supporting recovery efforts, including 30 St. Paul District employees, as of Nov. 18. More than 1,500 Corps' personnel worldwide have deployed and returned, including 67 from the district.

According to early estimates released by the Federal Emergency Management Agency early in November, the four hurricanes, Frances, Charley, Ivan and Jean, caused more than \$42 billion in damage. More than 25,000 homes were destroyed and an additional 40,000 received major damage. Only 41 percent of the damage is estimated to have been insured.

To date, the federal and state governments have spent \$2.5 billion to help businesses and homeowners recover. The Corps of Engineers received \$717 million from FEMA to assist in debris removal, construct temporary housing, and provide temporary roofing, water, ice and generators.

As of Nov. 18, Corps' employees have provided 134,199 temporary roofs and completed 608 of 991 temporary housing units. They have delivered 31.2 million liters of water and 163 million pounds of ice, as well as removed 2.3 of a projected 2.5 million cubic yards of debris.

St. Paul District personnel have supported all of these recovery missions but have mostly helped with Hurricanes Charley and Ivan. A district temporary housing planning and response team was sent to support both of these hurricanes. The district expects to continue deploying people into January.

Corps, Fish and Wildlife Service joined at the roots

By Kurt Brownell
Natural Resource Specialist

The Corps' St. Paul District, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and volunteers were joined at the roots to plant trees along the Mississippi River, October 26-27.

That's when personnel from the district's Natural Resources Project Office in La Crescent, Minn., partnered with personnel from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's Winona District and Trempealeau National Wildlife Refuge, plus seven volunteers from Living Lands and Waters and local residents, to plant 614 swamp

white oaks.

Living Lands and Waters, East Moline, Ill., is a non-profit environmental organization.

The planting took place on Corps-owned lands on the Minnesota side just north of Lock and Dam 6, Trempealeau, Wis., as well as within the Trempealeau National Wildlife Refuge on the Mississippi River.

Kurt Brownell, Jerry Lee and Randy Urich, from La Crescent, participated for the Corps.

One-half of the trees were planted on Corps' land, a former staging site for dredging; and the other half were planted on USFWS land, a former agricultural site.

Personnel used special root production method trees that grew up to seven feet tall after only two summers.

"RPM trees are an advancement in reforestation technique," said Randy Urich, forester. "These seedlings are taller and have more robust root systems than the traditional one- to two-foot bare root tree seedlings we typically use. They are more work to plant, but we can expect better survival and faster growth."

The joint project came together by chance. When Bob Drieslein, USFWS refuge manager in Winona, Minn., needed trees for a planting project, he phoned Brownell for some leads. It was a timely call. Brownell had just finished working out delivery details with a nursery for trees at the Corps' project. Extra trees were available from that same stock. Drieslein immediately called the nursery to order a like amount of trees and have them shipped with Corps' order.

"It was a great opportunity to partner with the USFWS, as well as volunteers, to enhance wildlife habitat within the river valley," said Urich.

Positive attitude, mountain of little things make Harding Employee of the Month

The awards committee selected Patrick Harding, logistics management, as the September 2004 Employee of the Month.

His nominator, who chose to remain anonymous, wrote Harding has maintained a positive attitude in providing his St. Paul District office and field customers needed supplies and other services throughout his years of employment. "He has never spoken a negative word, nor performed a negative act, in his dealing with the district customers," said his nominator. Harding has always given of himself in the performance of his duties, putting the customer first.



Photo by Jon Lyman

Patrick Harding, right, receives his award plaque from Lt. Col. Tom O'Hara.

Harding is the man backstage, providing the supplies and service to others that they meet the district mission. What he does are little things, which are too numerous to list.

Taps

Russell Edwin Hedberg died Nov. 16 at his home in Pepin, Wis. Hedberg was a retired Dredge Thompson employee.

Leo Anthony Hentges, head lock operator Lock and Dam 5A, died Nov. 4 in Winona, Minn., after a courageous battle with cancer. Hentges first worked on the Dredge Thompson for a year in 1959. In 1967, he returned to the Corps of Engineers, working the upper and lower locks at St. Anthony; from there he was transferred to Lock and Dam 2, then Lock 5, and in 1973 he came to Lock 5A.