



US Army Corps  
of Engineers®  
St. Paul District

# Crosscurrents

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District helps  
Florida recover  
from hurricanes

US Army Corps  
of Engineers

The image shows a man in a red polo shirt with a US Army Corps of Engineers logo on the chest. He is wearing a headset with a microphone and is looking out of a window. The background is a bright, overcast sky.

## Generally speaking

By Brig. Gen. Robert Crear  
Commander  
Mississippi Valley Division

*Excerpted from Open Channels, the Mississippi Valley Division newsletter, September 2004 issue.*

I would like to start off my first *Open Channels* article by thanking each and every one of you who were involved in the recent Mississippi River Commission low-water inspection trip. The effort put in by all made it a most successful inspection trip.

In this column, I want to address some of those key issues that will confront us over the next months and years. I will follow up at the many town hall meetings and district visits starting next week.

I laid out my philosophy already

to the division staff, but let me tell you before I make my way up and down the river, what that philosophy is.

My philosophy is summed up in three words — do what’s right. We must reward people for great work, listen to our partners and stakeholders and empower our employees to “just do it.” I look forward to meeting and dialoguing with you at your job sites in the future.

### What does it mean to be a regional business center?

Why do we want to be a regional business center? We must do our work better, faster and cheaper – or as our friends in the Air Force told me, “Wal-Mart® prices, FedEx® speed and Kodak® quality.” It is clear that the people we serve want us to do so and that as public servants we have an obligation to do so. Operating as a regional business center is just one of the ways we are providing the nation and the people of the valley with better, less expensive and timelier projects and services.

Operating as a regional business center means the division acts like a single entity made up of interdependent offices rather than as six independent districts.

When we do this right, we improve quality and efficiency by bringing the best knowledge and talent to bear on all of our work. We improve time lines and reduce cost by avoiding duplicated work and by avoiding the time and cost of developing and maintaining capabilities that can’t be fully used by a single district. To not transform means we waste resources.

How will we make the regional

business center work? There are a number of key elements we are currently undertaking to move the division toward the goal of operating as an effective regional business center. These include regional support functions, regional work-force management and regional overhead rates.

### What are the regional support functions?

Under USACE 2012, there are five major support functions that we operate regionally. They are resource management, information management, contracting, logistics and public affairs. I’m sure you all recognize that each of these provides a number of different services that we all need to get our


*Generally speaking,  
continued Page 3*

## Cover photo



Photo by Bill Vennemann

**Ken Beck, real estate, in a helicopter in Florida, assesses damage from Hurricane Charley. He was part of a team from the district working on temporary housing sites – in this case in Lee and Charlotte counties.**

  
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**Crosscurrents**

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**Generally speaking,**  
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work done.

Operating regionally means the regional management board and division command council will determine the best way to perform each of these services. Because these services are different, there is no single approach that will give us the best results. In some cases, it may mean we centralize a specific service in one office. In others, it may mean we use a regional team to, for example, figure out how we are going to use new technology – taking the best qualified people, wherever they sit, and solving a problem only once rather than six or seven times. But rest assured – regionalization does not equate to consolidation!

### **What is regional work-force management?**

Work-force management, or sometimes known as work-force planning, is the process of ensuring the right people are in the right place at the right time to accomplish the mission. Specifically, it is a systematic process for identifying and addressing the gaps between the work-force of today and the human capital needs for tomorrow. There are four critical steps to work-force planning:

- Assess the current work-force. Determining what our current work force resources are and how they will evolve over time through turnover, etc.
- Analyze the future work-force. Developing the specifics for the kinds, numbers and location of team members and managers we will accomplish our mission, goals and objectives.

This type of analysis is developed very closely with our strategic plans and what we want to look like, i.e. types of work, in the future.

- Identify the gaps. Determine what gaps exist between our current and projected work-force needs.
- Develop strategies to address and resolve the gaps. Some of the strategies include recruiting, training/retraining, leadership development, technological enhancements, etc., along with developing performance measures to assess strategic progress.

Developing and implementing a regional work-force plan sets up the region for success by determining what the future work-force should look like. It enables us to bridge the knowledge gaps across the region.

The plan serves as a tool to achieve maximum organizational effectiveness and efficiency. Finally, it allows us to integrate the actions of the districts into a regional business approach with common objectives.

### **What are regional overhead rates?**

The division has started the process of implementing regional rates as a Corps' pilot (project).

Regional rates represent the way the RBC will provide funds for its required operating costs, meeting its customers,' partners' and stakeholders' needs, in a responsive/timely manner at the least cost for quality services.

The main purpose is to better support the delivery of our services and products through the districts.

### **How is this going to work?**

Regional rates will combine all

overhead cost into one of three rates: consolidated departmental overhead; general and administrative overhead; and consolidated regulatory, readiness and operations.

The CDO account will consolidate planning, programs and project management, engineering, construction, real estate and contracting. The G&A account will pool the traditional G&A organizations. The CRRO account will pool the overhead rates of the regulatory, readiness and operations overhead costs.

The division will transition to regional rates by managing the changes under the regional rate scenario successfully teaming the multiple communities of practice within the Mississippi Valley. The resource management community will orchestrate the needs of community of practice, or CoP, management and provide tools and guidance to manage the fiscal requirements through the regional management board. The process to manage regional rates will drive some cultural changes throughout the RBC. The CoP leaders will work within their CoP to address level of service decisions, both within their own CoP and with the other CoPs within their consolidated overhead pool (i.e. CDO and G&A).

As the only civil works division in the entire Corps, we face a unique and challenging time in our organization's and nation's history, but we also have more in common than any other division.

No one said the job was easy – because if it was, I believe they'd ask someone else to take it on. Take it on we shall. I'll be right there with you as we transform the Corps, starting here in MVD.

## Twister lands on a postage stamp

**North Dakota tornado photo featured in magazines and books**

By Tricia Liggett  
East Grand Forks Resident Office

The latest set of postage stamps to be issued by the U.S. Postal Service has a St. Paul District connection.

One of the photos in the postal service's *Cloudscapes* collection was taken by Edi Ann Otto, the mother of Ryan Otto, a project engineer with the Western Area Office, Grand Forks, N.D.

On Monday, Oct. 4, 2004, Edi Ann Otto will be one of just a few individuals honored by having her work displayed as a postage stamp.

She took her photograph of the tornado from the front step of their family home on a farm near Osabrock, N.D., July 25, 1978. The small community is about 1.5 hour-trip northwest of Grand Forks.

Gregory Gust, warning coordination meteorologist with the Grand Forks Office

of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, said, "The photographs taken by the Otto family that day are quite striking due to the brilliant contrast between the brightly sunlit western 'backside' of the storm and the dark, foreboding leading edge.

"Over the years, I have seen that particular photograph featured as a poster-print on the walls of various weather service offices scattered across the

country," said Gust.

Otto's image of this tornado will be one of 15 stamps included in the *Cloudscapes* collection. According to the postal service, there will be a first-day-of-issue ceremony held at the Blue Hill Observatory in Milton, Mass., with the stamps going on sale nationally the next day.

The inclusion of the photograph in a postage stamp collection is only the most recent honor this image has received. The photograph was first featured in *Farm Wife* magazine, which is now titled *Country Women*. The photograph has since appeared in *National Geographic*, *Time/Life Books*, in advertisements and in school textbooks.

The image went through an extensive selection process to become a stamp. Stamp proposals are submitted in writing to the Citizens' Stamp Advisory Committee at least three years before potential issuance. Potential subjects are reviewed and ranked. If a proposal is approved, a general announcement is made to the public and then design and production begins. Participating in the development of the *Cloudscapes* collection were The Weather Channel, the American Meteorological Society and the National Weather Service.

In addition to the set of self-adhesive stamps depicting the 15 different types of clouds, a booklet of 23-cent postcards and an educational kit-teaching students about weather will also be available.

"Growing up, the picture was always around" said Ryan Otto. "You tend to lose sense of how famous the picture has been. It's been a family trademark for as long as I can remember."



**Edi Ann Otto, the mother of Ryan Otto, a project engineer with the Western Area Office, Grand Forks, N.D., took the photo of the tornado from the front step of their farm house in North Dakota, July 25, 1978.**

# District supports hurricane recovery in Florida

By Peter Verstegen

“It was so hot and humid outside, it was like walking in soup,” said Lori Taylor, design branch, who worked hurricane recovery in Bonita Springs, Fla., Aug 20 - Sept. 3. She worked on the temporary housing mission and was among 47 people from the St. Paul District to work with the Federal Emergency Management Agency to support recovery from four hurricanes that drenched the state – Charley, Frances and Ivan – through Sept. 24, followed by Hurricane Jeanne.

The district deployed two temporary housing planning and response teams and additional personnel to support a temporary roofing mission for residents of

*Hurricanes, continued Page 6*



Photo by Bill Vennemann

**Dave Reynolds, construction-operations division; Terry Zien, engineering division; and Ken Beck, real estate division, wearing red Corps of Engineers emergency operations shirts, were among more than 26 from the district supporting recovery missions for FEMA in the aftermath of hurricanes Charley and Frances in Florida.**



Photo by Lori Taylor

**Aaron Dunlop (left) and Eric Wittine, engineering division, worked as quality assurance inspectors. Their initial mission was the temporary housing; they also supported the temporary roofing mission and worked out of Bonita Springs, Fla.**



Photo by Bill Vennemann

**Jim Mosner, engineering, in the emergency operations center in Bonita Springs, Fla.**



Photo by Lisa Brantner

**Jay Bushy (left), who normally works at the Western Area Office in Grand Forks, N.D., is doing quality assurance in Fort Myers, Fla. Above, he measures a truck with the contractor to verify the capacity and load.**



Photo by Bob Dempsey

**Bonnie Greenleaf (left), project management, and Lisa Brantner, construction-operations, review documents on the temporary housing mission. Brantner began her tour Aug. 17 and worked out of Bonita Springs, Fla.**

*Hurricanes, continued from Page 5*

hurricane-ravaged Florida.

District personnel joined nearly 1,400 others throughout the Corps to support recovery operations. Working with FEMA, the St. Paul employees fanned out to disaster sites around the state of Florida, depending on the kind of job specialty they had.

District employees worked to replace residents' roofs, destroyed by the hurricane, with temporary roofing. Corps employees also worked to set up mobile home parks as temporary housing for residents who lost their homes.

"The Hurricane Charley PRT worked on several missions simultaneously," said Bob Silvagni, readiness branch. "These missions included site assessments for approximately 200 mobile home parks, the restoration of 40 mobile home pads, debris cleanup from 20 mobile home sites, identification of 400 pads for FEMA mobile home placement, coordination of the design and construction of two mobile-home group sites – 350 and 200 trailers respectfully and provided technical assistance to Frances and Ivan temporary housing teams," said Silvagni. "The Charley PRT accomplished their duties under long hours while dodging two other hurricanes. We all should be proud of the work and dedication of our colleagues."

Col. Bob Carpenter, commander of Jacksonville District and leader of the recovery effort for the Corps, said, "I see one Corps here. I don't know where anybody is from."

Corps personnel coordinated with other federal, state, local government and volunteer organizations to assist recovery.

# Geisen inducted into Hall of Fame at retirees' reunion

The St. Paul District inducted Allen L. Geisen, retired chief of design branch, into its Hall of Fame during the 29th annual retirees reunion held in Eagan, Minn., Sept. 9. More than 55 retirees, spouses and current employees attended the event.

Geisen retired Aug. 3, 2003, after more than 32 years of federal service. He worked as chief of design branch from 1971 - 2003.

He served in many offices, including both construction and engineering positions in Omaha, Alaska and St. Paul districts. He also served on national-level teams, including the specification steering committee for civil works. Those who nominated him said he made a lasting contribution by his leadership development serving as a mentor for many young professionals at all levels of experience as well as set a new standard for team building and establishing trusting, cooperative relationships, both for individuals and organizations.

Geisen received numerous awards, including the Civil Servant of the Year award in 1993 and the de Fleury Medal.



Photo by Peter Verstegen

**Col. Mike Pfenning, district commander, inducted Al Geisen into the St. Paul District Hall of Fame. Geisen is the retired chief of design branch.**



Photo by Peter Verstegen

**From left (above), retirees Ann Allen, Mary Jane Trcka and Dave Loss pause at the registration table. Allen and Trcka worked in resource management, and Loss was in project management.**

*Reunion photos, Pages 8-9*



Photos by Peter Verstegen

Retiree Wayne Knott, emcee for the 29th annual retirees reunion, displayed a current organization chart. The reunion was held for the first time in Eagan, Minn., Sept. 9.



Left to right, Jim Kursu, Dave Raasch, Roger Just and Dave Rydeen. Just worked in project management and geotech. Kursu worked in project management. Raasch still does. Rydeen works in design branch, engineering division.



Peggy Peterson registered participants at the reunion and acted as point of contact for questions.



From left, Chuck Spitzack, Bruce Bolden and Marsha Mose participated in a panel discussion with the retirees. Topics discussed included the Upper Mississippi-Illinois River navigation study, current and projected employment levels and the development of prospective projects under regional integration. Spitzack manages the navigation study. Bolden is chief of construction and Mose is chief of design.





Photo by Mark Davidson

Members of the Hall of Fame gather with Col. Mike Pfenning, district commander. From left, next to Pfenning, are Chuck Crist, Peter Fischer, David Haumersen, Al Geisen, Bill Spychalla, Jim Kursu, Lou Kowalski and Robert Fletcher.



Photo by Peter Versteegen

Kathy Haumersen and LaVerne Knott sat at a table in front, close to the presentations.



Photo by Mark Davidson

Many of the retirees who attended the 29th annual retirees' reunion held in Eagan, Minn., assembled outside afterward to commemorate the reunion.

# Pottery shards from 500 B.C. to A.D. 500 District recovers artifacts at Mille Lacs



Photos by Shannon Bauer

**Brad Johnson, St. Paul District archeologist, participated in an excavation at the Mille Lacs Reservation, Minn.**

By Shannon Bauer

Brad Johnson, St. Paul District archeologist, inspected a pottery shard from an excavation unit. He is the first person to touch the object in more than 1,000 years.

Johnson is overseeing the investigation of significant archeological deposits at a site designated for a sewer line lift station on the Mille Lacs Reservation, Minn., this summer. More than 20,000 artifacts have been found at this location since the beginning of the investigation in the fall of 2003. Most of the artifacts date to the Middle Woodland Period, 500 B.C. to A.D. 500, a poorly understood period of Minnesota prehistory.

“What is unusual and significant about this site is that it is relatively undisturbed, and we have a large number of artifacts compacted into a small space,” said Johnson. “The

collection of artifacts and cultural features as a whole can tell a larger story of life in the Mille Lacs area some 1,000 to 2,000 years ago.”

The archaeological investigation is part of the Garrison/Kathio sewer line project, which is being funded, in part, through the Corps’ Northeastern Minnesota Environmental Infrastructure Assistance Program, or Section 569 of the Water Resource Development Act. The district is working in partnership with the Mille Lacs Band of Ojibwe, Minnesota Indian Affairs, several bands of Dakota and the Garrison/Kathio sewer district, which is the local sponsor. The project is a portion of a larger,

local plan to construct a regional wastewater collection and treatment system for Crow Wing and Mille Lacs counties.

The line will pass through an area where American Indian burial mounds once stood. An early Minnesota archaeologist, Jacob Brower, recorded the mounds in the late 1890s. Brower’s maps and field notes provide the only documentation for many sites in Minnesota. Informants report the mounds and graves were bulldozed during the building of Highway 169 in the 1930s. According to Johnson, this is supported by the recent archaeological investigations.

The Ojibwe and Dakota still

*Artifacts, continued Page 11*



**Brad Johnson, St. Paul District archaeologist, David Mather, contract archaeologist, and Matt Percy, district historian, discuss an artifact uncovered at the site.**

*Artifacts, continued from Page 10*

consider Wigwam Bay, where the project is being built, to be a cemetery site. “The tribes agreed to the lands being disturbed now, because of their desire to keep the lake from being polluted,” said project manager Roland Hamborg. “Their ancestral burial area is very important to them, but the water is sacred as well, and protecting the water is a priority for both tribes.”

Federal law requires the Corps consider historic properties during its planning process and allow the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation an opportunity to comment on undertakings that may cause effects on historic properties. The council’s regulations lay out a process of review and consultation. When properties are identified and considered eligible for the National Register of Historic Places and it is not possible to avoid adverse effects to the property, mitigation must take place.

To mitigate the effects of the Garrison/Kathio project, the district contracted with Mather Heritage Group, LLC, of Minneapolis, to conduct archaeological data recovery at one of the lift station



**Above are samples of more than 20,000 artifacts excavated from the sewer line lift station on the Mille Lacs Reservation, Minn., this summer. The field report of the archaeological investigation provides a context for comparison.**

locations.

This activity uncovered the remains of possible roasting pits and fire hearths, collapsed pottery vessels encrusted with charred food remains and other artifacts associated with the activities that once took place on site.

Mather Heritage and Johnson used shovels to dig out several excavation units, or small rectangular holes, in an area about 25 feet by 25 feet. Then, they traded shovels for hand tools and brushes to carefully uncover and remove artifacts without damaging them. Each bucket of dirt removed was sifted to ensure nothing was missed.

Some of the artifacts will be sent to a lab for radiocarbon testing, and they will all be cataloged and sent to the Minnesota Historical Society. David Mather, of Mather Heritage, said the archeologists would then try and piece together

**Joe McFarlane (left), contractor, sifted each bucket of dirt to ensure no artifacts were overlooked.**

what is found to learn more about the history of the area. He said he hopes to eventually work with the tribes and the Corps to publish their findings.

“The items we’re uncovering are from an interesting time period,” he explained. “It was when native people were beginning to create pottery, grow corn, hunt with bow and arrows instead of spears and bury their dead in mounds.

“It was a time when lots of religious and cultural change was taking place,” he continued. “Trade was going on with tribes in other parts of the country, some as far away as the Rocky Mountains and the Gulf of Mexico.”

Mather Heritage archeologist Jim Cummings commented, “We’re finding things where the people used them, and that’s exciting. To be a part of people’s lives a thousand years ago — you would think that would be common; but in this part of Minnesota, it’s not.”

The archeologists realize they will not be able to dig up everything significant but believe they will get a representative sample.

Construction of the lift station will not take place until the archeological investigation is complete, which is expected to be in the beginning of September.

The pipeline will extend about 4,800 feet, along Wigwam Bay from Timber Trail Road to Earl Brown Drive, and take several months to complete.

The cost for this portion of the sewer project is estimated at \$1 million, with the Corps funding 75 percent. The cultural resources work cost around \$100,000.



# Hlady constructs Iraqi power

By Mark Davidson

Mike Hlady's job was a big one in Iraq – construction of one new power plant and the rehabilitation of six existing power plants in Iraq. This is a huge mission but Hlady thinks it's the right thing to do for the people of Iraq.

Hlady, a construction representative, with the Western Area Office, Grand Forks, N.D., was in Baghdad, Iraq Jan. 25 – May 26. He has been with the district for two-and-half years as a term employee. But Hlady has been around the Corps of Engineers before.

"I was in the military for 30 years, 15 years in the Guard and Reserve and 15 years active duty as an infantry, armor and engineer officer," said Hlady. "Prior to working with the Corps of Engineers as a civilian, my last active duty assignment was at Ft. McPherson, Ga., as the chief of Environmental Division for the U.S. Army Reserve Command. As an engineer officer, I had many opportunities to work with the Corps of Engineers in regards to military construction and environmental restoration projects."

Hlady was assigned as a project/construction manager for the Gulf Region Central District. He was responsible for power generation rehabilitation or new construction of seven power plants located in the Central District. They were the Haditha Hydroelectric Dam and the Qudas, Taiji, Najaf, Hilla, Zaferina and Dora power plants.



St. Paul District photo

**Mike Hlady (above), a construction representative, with the Western Area Office, Grand Forks, N.D., was in Baghdad, Iraq, from Jan. 25 to May 26.**

According to Hlady, the projects would result in the addition of 1,100 megawatts to the Iraqi power grid. All of the contracts were cost reimbursable contracts with a total value of \$320 million.

"My work load consisted of writing project management plans, modification change orders to contracts, negotiating costs, supervising construction schedules and doing quality assurance for the project," said Hlady. "I also provided any assistance to the contractor in the area of security in order to expedite materials and personnel to the projects. I also provided support to the Corps' quality assurance representatives on the project sites."

"Many times," said Hlady, "the Corps and the contractors did not know exactly what we would run into when it came to the rehabilitation of some of these existing generating units. Many of the units were 25 years old or older and parts were just not available or the units were in such bad shape that

it was not reasonable to repair them.

"Because of this, sometimes it was better just to bring in whole new turbines or new generators and even in some cases just junk the whole unit and bring in new units," he continued. "Or, in some cases, like the Haditha Dam, we found additional broken turbine blades that were not spotted in the initial assessments, so modifications and changes to the contracts had to be done in a matter of hours or days and not months."

Hlady gives lots of credit to the professional Corps' personnel working there, which included actually living out at the job sites. "It was an honor to be apart of their team, a 'Band of Brothers' dedicated to do what ever it took to get the job done," he said.

"The contractors performed in a manner and environment with one goal in mind and that is to complete the job," said Hlady. "Many of them risking their lives, and some lost their lives, as we have seen in the news."

Hlady was given a big party in honor of his return.

"Everyone thanked me for the service to the country," he said. "They were all full of questions about what I did and how it was. Things have kind of gotten back to normal now. They ask if I would go back and I say that I wouldn't mind, but my wife says only when there is peace in Iraq or hell freezes over."

Hlady said he believed in the mission before he went over and felt that he could help in making a positive change for the people of Iraq. "I believed it was the right thing to do when I was there, and after returning, I still believe it is the right thing to do."



Photo by Peter Versteegen

**The St. Paul District headquarters will stay in the Sibley Square building, with its connections to the downtown skyway system, until September 2008.**

## District office remains downtown until 2008

By Mark Davidson

The district headquarters will remain in its present location, the Sibley Square on Mears Park building, through Sep. 30, 2008.

Lease renewal negotiations with the General Services Administration, or GSA, and the building owners are now complete, said Mark Nelson, chief of real estate. "The lease term and most of the lease conditions were finalized last October," he said. "Outstanding issues related to security upgrades in the building were brought to conclusion last month.

"The security upgrades were pursued to enhance our ability to protect our most valuable asset, our employees," he continued. "Upgrades include the installation of exterior cameras and an increase of contract security professionals."

District senior leadership, supported by a project team of district employees, will now plan and prepare for four years from now, when this lease expires, said Lt. Col. Tom O'Hara, deputy district commander.

Warren LaPlante, the district security officer, said, "There are many things to consider in this initial planning process, not the least of which are some new and much more stringent Department of Defense anti-terrorism construction standards. If left unchanged, these anti-terrorism construction standards will force our move to another location."

O'Hara said full-time employee allocations will dictate the overall district office footprint. "It's incumbent upon us to consider future work-load projections for fiscal year 2009 and beyond so we can size our office space needs accordingly," he said.

The following are critical questions that must be answered, said O'Hara:

- What will the district look like when all the components of USACE 2012 are implemented? (USACE 2012 is the vehicle for the Corps to enhance readiness and to improve organizational responsiveness.)
- How will tele-work influence our future work-force?
- What will be the impacts of public-private competitions, such as the FAIR Act, (Federal Activities Inventory Reform Act), the Army's "Third Wave" and possible A-76 out-sourcing?

The Federal Property Act of 1949 establishes GSA as the overall leasing agent for the federal government. The district is required to work through GSA to procure necessary office space. After the district identifies its requirements, GSA will first look to place the district in available existing federal space. If none exists within the district's designated geographic area, GSA will prepare a request for proposals and solicit proposals from facilities that appear to meet the district's criteria. Once proposals are received, a selection panel will evaluate and rank the proposals followed by a final selection.

The district will provide GSA with its requirements not later than the spring of 2005. "Our expectation is that the solicitation can be prepared in fiscal year 2006 and negotiations completed in fiscal year 2007," Nelson said.

Said O'Hara, "We will be launching the planning effort in the near future to evaluate needs and develop criteria for our future home. A project team will be comprised of a cross-section of district office representatives."

# News and Notes

## Four elected to Employee Benefit Fund

**Rick Hauck** and **Kari Layman**, engineering, and **Nan Bischoff** and **Tom Sully**, project management, are the newly elected Employee Benefit Fund members for 2004-2005.

“First we want to thank everyone who put their name on the ballot, said **Chris Afdahl**, EBF chairperson. “We would also like to thank **Holly Zillmer** [district webmaster] for the great work on the website and for setting up the ballot so that it was an anonymous vote. We would also like to thank all you who voted.”

EBF encourages and support activities and establish and maintain facilities, which contribute to the comfort, pleasure and mental or physical well being of employees.

## Open house attracts 1,000 at Lock 1

About 1,000 visitors toured Lock and Dam 1 in Minneapolis for an open house, held in conjunction with Highland Fest, Aug. 14. The St. Paul community of Highland Park sponsors the neighborhood celebration annually.

Lock personnel set up the St. Paul District display, offered brochures on Corps of Engineers' missions and opened the central control station for tours.



Photo by Mary DeFlorian

**Mary DeFlorian**, a lock and dam clerk at Lock and Dam 7, near LaCrosse, Wis., took this photo of pelicans near the roller gates Sep. 23. “These birds usually pass through, only staying around a few days until this year,” she said. “They are after the fish in this area – the fast water by the dam attracts certain fish, thus attracting the pelicans.”

## Newcomers

**Ann Morrison** was hired as a temporary ranger at Blackhawk Park, near De Soto, Wis., starting in July. Prior to being employed by the Corps, she owned a landscape design and construction business in Viroqua, Wis., where she lives. She went to college at the University of Greenwich in London, England, where she received a bachelor's degree in landscape architecture. She also has a degree from the University of Wisconsin, Madison, in bacteriology.

## Retirements

**Lee M. Blank**, Dredge Thompson, retired Aug. 3 after

more than 29 years of federal service.

**James J. Gallup, Jr.**, Dredge Thompson, retired July 2 after more than 30 years of federal service.

**Rick Rothbauer**, project management, retired Oct. 1 after more than 33 years of federal service.

**Jim Mueller**, engineering, retired Sep. 30 after more than 21 years of federal service.

**Lynn Pederson**, real estate, retired Sept. 30 after more than 36 years of federal service.

## Announcements

**Chris Beaman**, safety, who was selected to serve as the acting safety and security manager, until July 2005, has taken a safety officer position in Huntsville, Ala. His release date is Oct. 31 2004.

He said, “I’ve been hired as a GS-12 safety specialist by the Huntsville District, but I’ll be working at Blue Grass Army Depot in Kentucky – located just outside of Richmond, Ky. During the next three to five years, a chemical demilitarization facility designed to destroy chemical weapons will be under construction at the depot, and my job will be to consult with the contractor on all aspects of safety to include working closely with his safety staff.”

## Weddings

**Corby Lewis**, hydraulics and hydrology branch, married Kari Forsberg, of St. Paul, Minn., in

Minneapolis on Sept. 25.

**Jonathan Petersen**, hydraulics and hydrology branch, will marry Andrea Hinrichs of Devils Lake, N.D., in Devils Lake on Nov. 27.

## Nelson honored for real estate service



**Lt. Col. Tom O'Hara**, deputy district commander, recognized **Mark Nelson**, chief of real estate division (above left), for "bringing the real estate community of practice national mission essential task list to reality." Nelson's commendation came from Linda Garvin, chief of the real estate community of practice for the directorate of military programs.

Mississippi Valley Division real estate also nominated Nelson for Real Estate Professional of the Year last month.

Nelson has worked as chief of the district's real estate division for more than nine years. He previously worked in the Omaha District, Omaha, Neb.

The district real estate division is responsible for all lands and land interests to include acquisition of lands, disposals, facility leasing and working with local sponsors. Real estate supports local sponsors with their land acquisition responsibilities for cost-share projects.

## District seeks ideas on retiree committee

The St. Paul District wants to reach out more to retired Corps' employees in fiscal year 2005. One of the ideas under consideration is the formation of a retirees advisory committee, or RAC.

"The RAC would be made up of some retired and current Corps employees, both from the district headquarters and field sites," said Mark Davidson, public affairs chief. "The RAC would develop ideas and plan events that would get the retirees more involved with district employees today."

District employees and retired employees can contact Mark Davidson at Ext. 5201 to be part of the initial advisory committee.

## P2 deployment coming to an end

Four months after P2 was deployed, project managers are almost finished entering their projects and related data into the project management system, P2.

"More than 150 projects have been entered into P2 – every project that our district will be working on in fiscal 2005" said Bill Csajko, project management. "The deadline for finishing this huge job was Sept. 30, and it looks like we will just make it."

Csajko said this has been a team effort, with many people involved in preparing, entering and reviewing the data; several people have devoted a lot of time and energy.

Each of the local configuration managers helped enter the initial

project data, which provided for a relatively smooth transition in CEFMS.

"These people, **Judy Marshall**, **Barb Reckinger**, **Theresa Thury** and **Diana Tschida**, will continue to be involved as the district begins using P2 to manage projects, said Csajko. "**Aaron Snyder** has really stood out as being instrumental in our district being in the lead in entering projects."

"Although we now have our projects initially loaded into P2, we still have much work to make the system reach its full potential," he said. "Over the next two months, we will eliminate all the CEFMS work items created before P2, and all work will be managed from P2." Users will learn how to employ the reports in P2 to replace the district's work plan system to manage labor and to access P2 for electronic project management plans.

Csajko said long-term plans are to use P2 for forecasting manpower Corps-wide, and to prepare the annual Civil Works budget.

## Students tour Lock and Dam 2



Photo by Heather Cheney

**Al Nelson**, lock leader for Lock and Dam 2, Hastings, Minn., gave the tour to 15 children and four parents Sept. 30. The students are home-schooled.

## July Employee of the month

### Larson's smile, positive attitude set tone for campers

Her nominators said Mary Kay Larson, a ranger at the Gull Lake Recreation Area in Brainerd, Minn., has always gone out of her way to help campers have as pleasant a vacation as possible at the Gull Lake Recreation Area.

Larson helps set the tone of the visit by greeting the visiting public with a smile and a happy can do attitude. "It definitely falls within the Permission Slip from the chief of engineers with 'Just do it,'" said Gregg Struss, one of her nominators. "She is so good at public relations that when she is required to enforce Title 36 regulations, which can at times be a negative experience for the camper/visitor, the camper/visitor may not like the rule, but invariably will leave with a smile on their face after talking to Mary Kay," he said.

Surveys and comments of campers/visitors at the recreation area and a few of the comments on the cards read as follows: "Staff excellent, especially Mary Kay." "Ranger Mary Kay Larson is an excellent public relations person for this campground." And, last but not least, "Mary's great."

With Gull Lake is one the busiest recreation and camping sites in the St. Paul District, Larson sees and interacts with thousands of customers every summer. Many of those folks fill out comment cards about the quality of service they have received and invariably they mention Larson. "They go out of their way to compliment a specific act or gesture she did to make them feel welcome or to solve a problem – large or small," said John O'Leary, headwaters project manager. "Her rapport with campers of all ages is amazing.

"In addition to customer relations, she sets a great example for co-workers with her dedication and hard work," continued O'Leary. "She is



Photo by Le Hartness

**John O'Leary (left) and Gregg Struss (right) nominated Mary Kay Larson, a ranger at the Gull Lake Recreation Area in Brainerd, Minn., for employee of the month.**

always coming up with clever ideas about how to offer a better interpretive program or to save money. Her creativity is reflected in everything she does. She is an employee who really cares about her job, the customer and the Corps of Engineers."

Larson makes presentations to local grade schools and works with her peers from other recreation agencies. She approaches her work with optimism and enthusiasm. Her personality and attitude make the work environment fun and productive. "In the years I have known her, she has never made a disparaging remark about a customer or a co-worker," said O'Leary. "She is the first with helpful advice or encouraging words. Her gentle and kind spirit sets a great example for us all."

## 2005 federal employees health benefits program

Compare 2005 federal employee fee-for-service health plan premium rates and increases at [http://apps.opm.gov/rates/non\\_postal.cfm?state=ffs](http://apps.opm.gov/rates/non_postal.cfm?state=ffs). The Office of Personnel Management holds an open season beginning early November to allow federal employees to change their coverage. The district's civilian personnel advisory office will notify all employees by e-mail.