



US Army Corps
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St. Paul District

Crosscurrents

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IONS US Army Corps
of Engineers

**St. Paul District
boosts hurricane
recovery missions**



Maintain civil works missions, support forward missions

by Col. Mike Pfenning
St. Paul District Commander

Happy 2006 to all!

It's great to be back home in St. Paul!

Thank you for all your efforts in continuing to meet our district's mission requirements while I was deployed to Baton Rouge, La., and then, to New Orleans for almost 50 days. The St. Paul District's disaster response team continued its exceptional mission execution record, in response to the largest natural disaster this country has ever experienced. Every commander in Task Force Hope sought me out to acknowledge your exceptional efforts in support of their mission – from Mississippi to Baton Rouge to New Orleans to

Lake Charles, La.

I thought it appropriate to share with you some of my observations of the TF Hope response and recovery efforts from the perspective of my assignment as its operations officer with the Mississippi Valley Division-Forward Emergency Operations Center. As many of you have, I came away from the experience changed personally and professionally.

Pictures don't always portray the scope of the devastation nor the positive impact your efforts are having on the more than 400,000 displaced Gulf Coast residents.

Throughout my deployment, I was struck by the commitment of every one of the volunteers to the success of the TF Hope mission – they made it their personal mission. Additionally, while every volunteer came as a technical expert in their field, the ever-changing mission set for the task force required each volunteer to adapt to emerging mission requirements. Often, this adaptability required the development of new skills, staffing procedures and reports, while working a 16-18 hour day, seven days a week. I observed a level of problem-solving and teamwork between uniformed military (one-third of the MVD-Forward EOC personnel) and Department of Army civilians that made me proud to be a member of our Corps of Engineers. No one ever backed away from a new challenge (and there were many). It was always "Let Us Try."

As your commander, I now understand the "call to serve" that so many of you have answered by

already deploying or volunteering to serve with TF HOPE, as well as past disaster response missions. Know that there will be many more opportunities for you to serve in Louisiana and Mississippi in the future, as I expect recovery missions to extend into 2007 and beyond.

All that being said, we must maintain the capability required to execute our fiscal year 2006 civil works program while providing appropriate support to the global war on terror and TF Hope. Our district goal for deployed personnel support is every MVD district's goal – to sustain 10 percent of our work force in support of both the GWOT and TF Hope throughout 2006. This will take a focused team-effort by each of you as leaders, especially the district's crisis management team. When conflicts arise in personnel support requirements between deployments and normal project execution – especially our low-density specialties like resource management, contracting, regulatory, electrical engineering, project management – the district leadership will determine which requirements we will meet and which will be deferred back to MVD.

We must sustain our ability to execute our CW program, even if it means not meeting our deployed personnel support goal of 10 percent. Each one of you will continue to play a supporting role – whether in being deployed or in shouldering the redistributed work load at home. Like our ongoing support to the global war on terror, this is a marathon, not a sprint.

Thanks for what you do for our region and our district every day.



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Crosscurrents

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Inside this issue

Maintain civil works missions, support forward missions.. 2

St. Paul District by the numbers for 2005 3

'Restoring and Remembering,' 2005 holiday awards 4

Corps rehires retirees to support hurricane recovery. 7

Tons of debris, tiny gnats fill Upward's days 9

St. Paul District restores native prairie to Lock and Dam 8 embankment 10

Disease-tolerant Elm trees take root on Eagle Island . 12

Corps and contractors adapt to climate, weather 14

News and Notes 15

Tonya Baker hurdles a hurricane of work for November Employee of the Month 16



Photo by Shannon Bauer

Vivian Wippler, resource management, served on Hurricane Katrina duty at Keesler Air Force Base, Biloxi, Miss. Behind her is a Corps' deployable tactical operations system (DTOS).

St. Paul District by the numbers for 2005

By Shannon Bauer

Engineers love numbers. The Army loves metrics. Here are some of the more interesting numbers compiled from 2005. All numbers are calendar year 2005, unless otherwise noted.

Project expenditures (construction general and operations and maintenance):	\$91,238,876
Contracts awarded to small business (FY05):	\$53,867,545
Visitor hours at recreation and lock and dam sites:	43,014,849
Acres dredged (square feet):	15,829,953
Visitors to recreation and lock and dam sites:	979,517
Dollars collected at recreation sites	\$733,936
Visits to our public web site:	249,508
Dollar value of volunteer hours donated to recreation sites:	\$240,677
District lockages:	77,014
Recreational vessels that traveled through a lock and dam: ..	60,647
Computer help desk tickets opened:	22,365
Dollar value of volunteer hours donated to natural resources:	\$17,550
Acres covered by survey crew:	17,721
Acres of forest inventory completed:	3,500
Travel vouchers filed by district personnel (FY05):	3,048
Persons reached through natural resources interpretive programs:	2,000
Trees planted:	1,350
Hours donated by 302 volunteers working for recreation sites: ..	1,324
People to tour Upper St. Anthony Falls Lock and Dam:	1,284
Hours donated by 81 volunteers working for natural resources: ..	1,000
Interpretive contact hours performed by natural resources staff: ..	600
Books checked out from the library:	534
Surveys completed between March 14 and Nov. 21:	324
Acres of prairie planted:	137
Freedom of Information Act, or FOIA, requests received:	92
Warnings issued at recreation sites:	69
Projects:	54
Retirements:	25
Government lost-time accidents:	11
Citations issued at recreation sites:	8
Equal opportunity complaints filed:	5
Peregrine falcons born at Lock and Dam 1 in Minneapolis:	4
Contractor lost-time accidents:	3
Vessels christened:	2
Government, public and contractor fatalities:	0

Loon at Gull Lake, photo by Mary Kay Larson

'Restoring and Remembering' unifies 2005 Holiday Awards

by Peter Verstegen

More than 150 current and retired district personnel and their families gathered under the banner of "Restoring and Remembering" for the 2005 St. Paul District Holiday Awards Ceremony in Oakdale, Minn., Dec. 16.

District Commander Col. Mike Pfenning presented three Commander's Awards for Civilian Service, four coins and certificates of appreciation for work at the Louisiana Recovery Field Office and three district coins to individuals who were retiring.

He recognized 19 sites for being mishap free for 2005. Seven volunteers received certificates of appreciation for their work with Habitat for Humanity; one received an Albuquerque District coin to recognize design work and a certificate of appreciation recognized teaching of a Corps-wide Prospect course.

Dave Christenson (top photo), operations and emergency management branch, was emcee for the ceremony.



Photo by Jon Lyman



Photos by Shannon Bauer

St. Paul District Commander Col. Michael Pfenning presented the Commander's Award for Civilian Service to Al Canfield (above), information management, to recognize his contributions to recovery from Hurricanes Katrina and Rita in Louisiana in 2005.

At right, Bonnie Greenleaf, project management, received the Commander's Award for Civilian Service to recognize her contributions to recovery efforts from hurricanes Charley and Ivan which devastated Florida in 2004.



January 2006

St. Paul District Commander Col. Michael Pfenning presented the Commander's Award for Civilian Service to Kari Layman, engineering and construction, to recognize her contributions to recovery efforts from hurricanes Charley and Ivan which devastated Florida in 2004.



Photo by Shannon Bauer

The Holiday Awards Ceremony Committee presented a skit to lampoon the Corps' Project Management Business Process software application, P2. Doctor Darrell B. Trouble (Dale Brintnall, operations division, left) was interviewed by Vic Timm (Joe Skupa, construction branch) regarding the impact of P2 on district projects and processes.



Photo by Anna Wetterling



Photo by Anna Wetterling

The 2006 Leadership Development Program team sang creative lyrics to traditional holiday carols. From left are Bart Spriggle, Dredge Goetz; Warren LaPlante (hidden, back row), safety and security; Aaron Buesing, EC; Natalie Siok (hidden, back row), engineering and construction; Annette Vogel, EC; Shannon Bauer, public affairs; Tom Novak, project management; and Becky Gruber, regulatory branch.

January 2006



Photo by Anna Wetterling

Jeff Pfannes, safety office, played the role of Safety Clause, wondering who has been mishap free for 2005. He drew names for door prizes. Seated at right is Russ Arneson, internal review.



From left, Vivian Wippler, resource management; Julie Ritter, RM, Tom Crump, executive assistant, Brenda Miller, regulatory branch, Stephanie Dupey, project management, and Bee Xiong, student assistant, project management, worked the registration table and greeted those who attended the awards ceremony.

Sixteen retirees (below) gathered for a group photo at the close of the awards ceremony.

Photo by Jon Lyman



Photo by Shannon Bauer

Special Deployment Section INSIDE KATRINA

Corps rehires retirees to support hurricane recovery

by Mark Davidson

As January comes to a close, more than 150 current district employees have returned from hurricane recovery duty in Mississippi and Louisiana. More than 80 district employees are currently on duty. More district employees will deploy there in 2006.

Retired district employees are also helping in Mississippi and Louisiana—people like Arne Thomsen, Dave Loss, Jack Grossell and Tom Heyerman.

In July 2005, nearly 5,000 letters were sent to former employees who retired within the last five years, according to Julie Blanks, Corps' headquarters emergency management. This was done to create a cadre of reemployed annuitants to provide support during emergencies and natural disasters.

Then, after Hurricane Katrina hit the Gulf Coast, FEMA tasked the Corps to respond. Blanks and her fellow emergency managers started looking for annuitants who volunteered and passed a stringent medical screening to be prepared to live and work in extremely austere conditions.

Blanks said that the initial assignment will likely be a 30-day tour, with an arduous work schedule and much overtime. Sleeping arrangements may be limited to using a sleeping bag or in the vehicle used to move from location to location.

Jack Grossell volunteered with the Red Cross for three weeks in 2004 in Florida, so he knew about what a hurricane could do to an area. He worked for the Corps from 1966-2001 and his last job was the



Photo by Aaron Snyder

Dave Loss retired from the St. Paul District in 2004. He now works for Stanley Consultants as a Corps' contractor in New Orleans District.



Photo by Randy Urich

Bonnie Greenleaf, project management, Liz Nelsen and Janet Golubski, engineering and construction, and Stephanie Dupey, project management, served on recovery duty in Mississippi. All but Dupey worked the temporary structures mission. Dupey's area was debris.

Deployment, continued Page 8

Deployment, continued from Page 7

maintenance foreman at the Fountain City service base.

“I worked at the Louisiana Recovery Field Office in Baton Rouge as a public facilities quality assurance inspector,” said Grossell. “I drove down to New Orleans during my last week on duty, thinking I was going to the work there, but I soon changed my mind after seeing the devastation.”

Retiree Tom Heyerman was in Louisiana helping with project management from Oct. 3 to Nov. 9, 2005. He planned to go to Florida on Jan. 2, 2006 to help with ongoing Hurricane Wilma recovery.

“I’ll always remember the photos, before and after, of Holly Beach in Louisiana and the devastation there,” said Heyerman. He worked for the district from 1969-2002 where he was a value engineer and project manager.

Arne Thomsen worked for district from 1969 to 2004, with his last job as the chief of the maintenance and repair section, physical support branch in Fountain City, Wis. He was in Louisiana working on the temporary housing mission.

“I’ve seen Corps folks from all over the world working here,” said Thomsen. “I’ll remember the enormity of the disaster and the satisfaction of accomplishment in helping the people.”

Dave Loss worked in St. Paul from 1971-2004, with his last job as the Devils Lake project manager. Now, he works with Stanley Consultants, providing project management support to the New Orleans District. Loss’s task involves rebuilding the levees and floodwalls to pre-Katrina conditions by June 1, 2006.

“I got here Oct. 10, 2005 and expect to stay until June 2006,” said Loss. “I’m with about 130 task force members and we’ve been relocated from the Corps’ district office to the Federal Reserve Bank building in downtown New Orleans. There are six of us with the Stanley group. I’ve been assigned to provide project management assistance for the St. Bernard Parish area, with nine construction projects and about \$50 million worth of construction work in progress,” said Loss.



Photo by Mark Davidson

Mike Seibel, St. Paul District, works on the Dredge Goetz as a master tender. He arrived for duty in Mississippi on Nov. 28, 2005 and will return to the district on Feb. 25, 2006. He has worked at the Emergency Field Office-Central in Gulfport Miss., as a debris removal quality assurance specialist. The primary area he has worked is in the city of Pass Christian, Harrison County. “I think I have helped make a difference here in Mississippi in getting debris off the streets and out of the yards of the people,” said Seibel. He has worked for the Corps for 18 years.



Photo by Mark Davidson

On Jan. 9, 2006, Ted Engelien, the lockmaster at Lock and Dam 8, was the Corps’ lead quality assurance specialist for the first demolition of a house in Pass Christian, Miss., Harrison Co.

Tons of debris, tiny gnats fill Upward's days

by Mark Davidson

Tiny gnats, a little mud, tons of debris and lots and lots of telephone calls were the daily highlights of Mark Upward's life in Mississippi for two months.

Upward works in Fountain City as the lead for the survey crew. He's been with the Corps of Engineers for nearly 28 years – 24 years with the Detroit District and nearly four years with the St. Paul District.

Diamondhead, Miss., specifically Hancock Co. on the Gulf Coast, was Upward's home from mid-November 2005 to mid-January 2006.

"I was a lead debris removal quality assurance inspector," said Upward. "I had 14 QA inspectors working for me, people from the Corps and also contract QAs hired by AshBritt. I signed up to do QA work but did not expect to be selected to be a supervisor." AshBritt Environmental, Pompano Beach, Fla., is a Corps of Engineers contractor.

Upward's day started at 5:30 a.m. every day in a large ballroom that acted as a meeting room for dozens and dozens of Corps' workers and contractors. After they met and received their debris assignments, Upward was out in the field to



Photo by Mark Davidson

Jim Wilhite (left), Louisville District, and Mark Upward, St. Paul District, worked debris removal in Mississippi.



Photo by Mark Davidson

Debris removal goes with the demolition mission in Harrison Co., Miss.

solve problems and help get debris picked up.

"My crew was picking up debris that people, or the hurricane, put in the public right of way which is between the road and either a power line or ditch on their lawns," said Upward.

The weather was good during Upward's tour, he said, not too hot and not too cool. "But the gnats were out every day," he said.

And his cell phone rang between 50-100 times daily with people asking him questions or seeking information.

"The reason my crew and I were so busy is that Hancock Co. was divided up into 90 areas for debris removal," said Upward. "We were assigned 22 areas, mostly areas south of the railroad tracks in the city of Waveland and then out west to the city of Pearlinton. These were some of the hardest hit areas along the Gulf Coast."

Upward's biggest daily challenges were safety issues and meeting the scheduling changes when the contractors would change their work locations and Upward would have to get his crew to the new location.

"The memory of my time in Mississippi is that it felt good to help people get their debris picked up and starting to get their lives back in order," said Upward.

St. Paul District restores native prairie to Lock and Dam 8 embankment

Native vegetation improves habitat, reduces erosion, determines project costs

by Kurt Brownell
Natural Resource Specialist

The first of a proposed series of environmental enhancements at the district's locks and dams was initiated last June. That's when the embankment at Lock and Dam 8, near Reno, Minn., was mulched and seeded with native prairie vegetation by a Corps' contractor.

To accomplish this, about six acres of existing vegetation on the downstream side of the embankment were treated with an herbicide. This eliminated the nonnative plants that had become established and reduced competition for water and nutrients as new seedlings grow.

Test plots were then prepared to evaluate potential methods to enrich the soil for enhancing plant growth. The plots were divided into areas where three or six inches of topsoil were incorporated into the existing substrate.

Additional test plots were created where biosolids from the La Crescent, Minn., wastewater treatment plant were mixed into the soil. (The test plots comprised .71, .80, and 1.27 acres respectively.)

Biosolids are the solids that remain after municipal wastewater

has been treated. They are relatively odor-free. Disease-causing organisms have mostly been eliminated. They are high in organic matter and basic plant nutrients. These nutrients are in a form that acts as a slow release over several growing seasons.

The remaining 3.24 acres of the site were left untreated and consisted of the existing coarse-grained dredged sands from which the embankments were originally constructed. The site was then seeded with 28 species of native prairie forbs and grasses and mulched with straw.

The enhancements serve three purposes:

- Planting a diverse mix of native vegetation improves wildlife habitat and aesthetics;
- Deep-rooted native species provide better erosion protection than existing vegetation; and
- Dividing the project into test areas and monitoring these areas

helps determine the most cost-effective method of establishing native vegetation for future embankment projects, islands in the Environmental Management Program and dredged material disposal sites.

This initiative is similar to two other prairie restoration projects initiated by Brownell while managing the biosolids program at Fort McCoy, Wis. Both resulted in good cover of native species.

The biosolids cost the Corps nothing. However, hauling costs and erosion protection measures established in areas where the topsoil or biosolids were added were borne by the Corps. Minnesota Pollution Control Agency regulations also dictate that the biosolids be incorporated into the soil within 48 hours of application and areas receiving biosolids be posted to restrict access for one year following

Restore, continued Page 11



Photo by Kurt Brownell

A Corps of Engineers' contractor applies biosolids to a native prairie plot downstream of Lock and Dam 8, near Reno, Minn. The mixture helps fresh plantings survive a hot and dry summer. A biosolid is solid or semisolid material obtained from treated wastewater and is often used as fertilizer.

Restore, continued from Page 10 application as added safety measures.

The biosolids were applied above the 25-year flood elevation, roughly halfway up the embankment.

One month after being planted, the site had received very little rainfall and endured many consecutive days in the 90s. In spite of this, the site had fairly good cover of vegetation on all plots except for the untreated sand. The areas receiving biosolids had the lushest vegetation.

Many native species remained dormant in the hot and dry summer, waiting for better conditions to germinate.

Following a period of lower temperatures and more precipitation, Brownell visited the site in October. This inspection revealed good growth of native plants, especially in the topsoil plots. Some of these plants were even blooming. Given adequate moisture, additional seeds should sprout next spring. The site has



Photo by Kurt Brownell

The lush vegetation on the left embankment in the above photo demonstrates the effectiveness of biosolids to start native prairie grasses. The right side, showing signs of stress, is untreated dredged material

been mowed once in order to control weeds. Weed control will be an important management concern during next year’s growing season.

This project has been coordinated with the U.S. Fish and

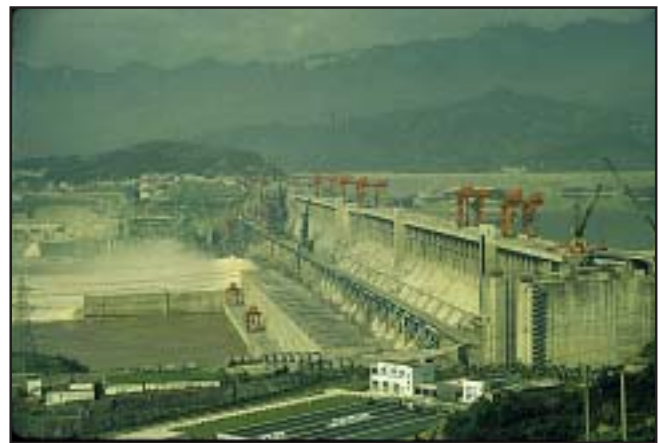
Wildlife Service; the Minnesota, Wisconsin and Iowa Departments of Natural Resources; and the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency.

Brownell traverses five locks at 3 Gorges Dam on Yangzi River



Photos courtesy of Kurt Brownell

Kurt Brownell, natural resource specialist, was in China from late June to early July. He toured down the Yangzi River and locked through the



Three Gorges Dam. “There were five locks for one dam,” he said. “It’s a \$24 billion project and the largest hydropower dam in the world.”

Disease-tolerant Elm trees take root on Eagle Island

by Jonathan Sobiech
Forester

Jonathan Sobiech, forester, Kurt Brownell, natural resource specialist, Randy Urich, forester, Jon Schultz and Ryan Siebold, forestry technicians, all from the Natural Resources office in La Crescent, Minn., participated in the U.S. Forest Service’s American Elm Restoration Project by planting 21 Dutch elm disease (DED) tolerant American elm trees on Eagle Island in Pool 8 of the Upper Mississippi River last June.

This restoration project is intended to introduce a heartier American elm to Midwest forests. After Dutch elm disease invaded the United States in the 1930s, it devastated the American elm population.

Eagle Island was one of three sites chosen for this project. The



Photo by Jon Sobiech

Randy Urich (left), forester, and Ryan Siebold, forestry technician, plant a disease-tolerant Elm tree on Eagle Island in the Mississippi River.

other sites included Carpenter St. Croix Valley Nature Center in Hastings, Minn., and Luther College in Decorah, Iowa.

Eagle Island, located near Stoddard, Wis., was constructed by the Corps seven years ago to improve habitat for fish and wildlife.

The island was selected for multiple reasons:

- it is a good site for growing American elm;
- there will be widespread seed distribution using the water as transport, and
- it is relatively close to the La Crescent project office for periodic monitoring and care.

Once a major component of the floodplain forest, elms today seldom exceed five inches in diameter before succumbing to disease. Some estimates project as many as 100 million elm trees were lost to disease. The

Elm, continued Page 13



Carpenter St. Croix Valley Nature Center, Hastings, Minn.

U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Natural Resource Project, Eagle Island, Wis.

Luther College, Decorah, Iowa

January 2006

Elm, continued from Page 12

American elm was once a major component of the floodplain forests along the Upper Mississippi River, providing important habitat for migratory songbirds and other wildlife.

From the 1970s to the present, more than 100,000 American elm trees were tested for resistance to Dutch elm disease. Although no trees were found to be completely resistant, five exhibited a high tolerance to this disease. These five selections are now being used for the restoration project, which began in 2003.

The trees were planted on the higher elevations of the island using 25-foot spacing. Weed barriers were placed around each tree to kill back vegetation that would otherwise compete with the tree for moisture and nutrients. Each tree was measured and recorded and monitoring of height and diameter of the trees will continue for several years. Potentially, these trees could go to seed within six years and the disease-tolerant offspring will flourish in the bottomlands.

“It is very exciting to take a step forward in introducing these DED tolerant species back into the bottomlands to help increase diversity,” said Randy Urich, forester. “The progeny of the 21 trees planted will also be DED tolerant as long as other naturally regenerated American elms don’t cross pollinate with them, which will be monitored as well.”

Coulee Region Community Action Program volunteers, at right, watered Elm trees as one of many projects they have with the Corps. The CAP is a private nonprofit agency in La Crosse, Wis.



Photo by Jon Schultz

Above, Jon Sobiech (left), forester, and Kurt Brownell, natural resource specialist, are matting a disease-tolerant Elm tree on Eagle Island on the Mississippi River.



Photo by Jon Sobiech

Crosscurrents

Corps and contractors adapt to climate, weather

By Virginia Regorrah
East Grand Forks Resident Office

Winters in Minnesota and North Dakota are brutal. Everyone knows the standard joke in this part of the country: “there are only two seasons up here, winter and construction.”

The impact on construction gets more pronounced the farther north you go. In Grand Forks, N.D., for example, contractors don’t count on being able to begin construction before mid-May, and they consider themselves lucky to be working in mid-October. Contractors hope for four good months and pray they can stretch it to five.

As part of construction management, a contractor has to coordinate the construction schedule with the calendar. Once the frost begins to permeate the ground, earth-moving work is out of the question – it isn’t possible to compact the material.

A contractor must consider both the season and the anticipated weather.

In Grand Forks, April is typically the month that spring thaw begins. The ground is muddy and saturated, and the river is high. Not much construction involving heavy equipment takes place in April.

Corps contracts are issued with a clause entitled “Time Extensions,” for unusually severe weather. It informs the contractor how many days each month are expected to have weather to adverse for construction. The definition of adverse weather is



Photo by Virginia Regorrah

The Corps and its contractors adapt to floods on the Red River of the North to complete projects. Above is a pedestrian bridge between the Grand Forks, N.D. and East Grand Forks, Minn.

left to the contractor and the Corps’ field staff. It could be rain, snow, high winds or flooding, depending on the type of work.

For a hint of the severity of winter weather in the northern Red River Valley, the months of December and January usually have 17 days and 20 days, respectively, of adverse weather. February isn’t far behind with 14 days.

Most months have 21 or 22 possible work days, weekends excluded. In other words, during three wintertime months in North Dakota, the Corps only expects the contractors to be able to work 12 days – eight if you exclude holidays.

This past year, a wet spring and summer and a mild winter through January 2005 have hampered construction. The Red River and its tributaries flooded in the spring and breached their banks twice over the summer, for a total of three flood events. Contractors received more inclement weather days in May and June than they did during the entire winter last year.

The unseasonably warm winter weather has made outdoor construction wet, slippery and

sloppy in December and January.

Regardless of whether the temperature is 30 above zero or 30 below, forms, rebar, water and aggregate for winter concrete pours must be heated. The good news is heating costs are less when the weather is warmer. However, the muddy and slippery conditions require a keener eye on safety.

Francis Schanilec, Corps construction representative said, “This mild weather has helped push the project along due to less heating costs and making it easier for the workers to move around. We can wear fewer layers of clothes.”

Kip Langei, project manager for Industrial Contract Services, Inc., said, “I don’t miss the minus 30 degree temperatures, but these 30 degree [above zero] temperatures are a little too warm. It makes safety a bigger issue, even for the ordinary person driving around town on these slippery roads. Something around 20 degrees would be about perfect.”

ICS is the prime contractor on East Grand Forks phase three and a subcontractor on phase four. On both projects, ICS is currently placing concrete floodwall.

News and Notes

Announcements

Michael Bart, Walla Walla District chief of engineering and construction division, was selected as the next St. Paul District chief of engineering and construction division in late December. Bart was born in Omaha, Neb., and received his bachelor's degree in civil engineering in 1984 from the University of Nebraska-Lincoln and is a registered professional engineer in the State of Kansas. His previous assignments include: dual chief of planning and hydrologic engineering branches in Kansas City District, the acting deputy division engineer for Northwestern Division and assistant chief of engineering for the Missouri River Division.

Brittany Berner, daughter of **Yvonne Berner** from regulatory, competed in the Minnesota State High School Gymnastics Competition at North St. Paul High School, in Maplewood, Minn., Dec. 11. She placed tenth overall for age category 14 plus, as well as placed eighth on the uneven bars and ninth on the balance beam.

Liz Dvorak, personnel, received the Commander's Award for Civilian Service, Oct. 21, for her exceptional performance of duty while assigned to the Louisiana Recovery Field Office, Baton Rouge, in support of Hurricane Katrina recovery operations.

Kari Layman, engineering, and **Bonnie Greenleaf**, project management, received the Commanders Award for Civilian Service, June 6, for exceptional performance of duty while assigned to the emergency response and recovery office for Hurricanes Charley and Ivan in the fall of 2004.



Photo courtesy Kurt Brownell

The above photo of **Kurt Brownell**, natural resource specialist, was taken at the **Chengdu Panda Breeding and Research Center, Sichuan Province, China** He visited China between the end of June and the first week of July. **Brownell was a Panda keeper for a day. "I toured where the pandas live and are kept in a protected environment because they are such a highly endangered species," he said.**

Steve Lenhart, Upper Saint Anthony Falls Lock and Dam, was selected as the eastern area lockmaster, effective Jan. 8. In this new position, Lenhart will also serve as the lockmaster at Lock and Dam 2.

Tim Yager, former St. Paul District biologist, was selected as the new U.S. Fish and Wildlife district manager for the Upper Mississippi River National Fish and Wildlife Refuge in Pools 9 through 11 in December.

Peter Verstegen, public affairs, received the U.S. Army Achievement Medal, Dec. 14, for his exceptional performance of duty while assigned to the Louisiana Recovery Field Office in Baton Rouge, La., in support of Hurricane Katrina recovery operations.

St. Paul District employees collected 285 pounds of food and \$115 at the annual Holiday Awards Ceremony held in Woodbury, Minn., Dec. 16. The district donated the food and funds to Keystone Community Services in St. Paul, Minn.

Newcomers

Gregory Sherwood, resource management, Dec. 11.

Retirements

Denise Blackwell-Kraft, regulatory, with 33 years federal service, Jan. 3.

News and Notes, continued

Joe Dvorak, upper area lockmaster, with 35 years federal service, Jan. 3.

Maurice Geiken, electronic service center, with 31 years federal service, Jan. 3.

Larry R. Joachim, real estate, with 20 years federal service, Dec. 31.

Lon Meixner, Lock and Dam 4, with 31 years federal service, Jan. 3.

William Mountin, Lock and Dam 4, with 30 years federal service, Jan. 3.

Gary Palesh, project management, retired again on Oct. 25.

Robert Stone, Lock and Dam 3, with 32 years federal service, Jan. 2.

Births

Delene (DJ) Moser, Lock and Dam 7 and currently serving in Iraq, celebrated the birth of a new granddaughter, Amanda Daun Moser, on Jan. 2. Amanda weighed 8 pounds, 4 ounces and was 20½ inches long.

Taps

Dale Lynch, 78, Bloomington, died Dec. 18 in Chicago. He retired from the district in August 1991.

Robert (Bob) Voshart, 81, former assistant lockmaster at Lock and Dam 7, La Crescent, Minn., passed away Jan. 19, 2006. He retired from the district in 1984.

Catherine Gillespie, 92, St. Paul, formerly in resource management, passed away Jan. 19, 2006. She retired from the district in 1976.

Tonya Baker hurdles a hurricane of work for November Employee of the Month

Dave Christenson, operations and emergency management branch, nominated Tonya Baker, operations division, as November Employee of the Month for exceptional administrative support to personnel working Hurricane Katrina duty and doing double duty in her normal work.

Baker coordinated receipt, quality control and distribution of time-sheets for more than 80 district personnel during the past four pay periods.

“This effort was especially noteworthy due to the various transmission problems from the field emergency operations centers, the lack of timeliness of submittals and the complexity of managing distribution to just about all district timekeepers,” said Christenson. “She performed this emergency operations support work in addition to her normal duties in support of operations division.



Photo by Jon Lyman

St. Paul District Commander Col. Mike Pfenning, left, recognizes Tonya Baker as November Employee of the Month.

Her normal duties became more complicated and stressful by the deployment of her immediate co-worker.

She successfully overcame the challenges of year-end close out and maintained a positive can-do attitude, a cordial demeanor and helpful customer response to each request for assistance.

Her attitude and dedication helped other district personnel exceed expectations during a critical time.

“Her performance and calm-in-the-middle-of-the-storm attitude deserve this recognition,” said Christenson.