

SOUTHWESTERN DIVISION

R E G I O N A L

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Execute, execute, execute!





Pacesetter

Southwestern Division Regional News Service

Serving the men and women of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Southwestern Division

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On the cover: Original graphic illustration by Andre` Mayeaux, Information Products Coordinator, Fort Worth District.





“Carpe diem” Sieve the day!!

Brig. Gen. Kendall P. Cox
Commander, Southwestern Division

During the recent Senior Leader Conference, Chief of Engineers Lt. Gen. Van Antwerp laid out the details for the Campaign Plan refresh and made it clear we had one primary focus for the future – execute!

In FY08 across the Corps, the Civil Works and Military Programs are at unprecedented levels, especially in the Southwestern Division, and it will take all of us in the SWD Family doing extraordinary things to ensure we deliver excellence to our customers.

The chief laid out a simple description of what “Great Looks Like.” It includes:

- Delivering superior performance in all missions.
- Setting the standards (for us that means excellence) for our profession.
- Having a unique, positive impact on our nation and other nations.
- Built to last!

We have a unique opportunity to be a part of something much bigger than ourselves and provide a service to the American people that will have a lasting impact today, tomorrow and many years still to come.

On the eve of my first year in command, I remain in awe of all that the SWD Family does every day. Each of you represents the Corps of Engineers and the Army, and all of you have a key part in showing America what right looks like. We have a commitment to “say what we will do and then do what we said we would do.” Our new Corps motto – “Building Strong” – is symbolic of all that we do as we join the “Army Strong” branding to deliver sustainable facilities and projects by professional Corps employees that will stand the test of time.

The SWD Family has the chance today to go from successful to significant if we all work together, stay the course, and show our teammates that The Corps Cares! Let’s all be the “Pacesetters” and “git er dun!!!”

Essays!

Border Brothers team wins national award

Katherine Shelton
Fort Worth District Contractor

The Operation Border Brothers Project Delivery Team has been awarded the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Project Delivery Team Excellence Award for 2008. The award was presented Aug. 4 at the Summer Leaders Conference in Pittsburgh, Pa., for the PDT’s work on the Pedestrian Fence 70 and Pedestrian Fence 225 programs in 2007.

The PDT is comprised of personnel from the Fort Worth, Galveston, Little Rock, Tulsa, Albuquerque, Los Angeles and Sacramento Districts, the South Pacific and Southwestern Divisions and multiple federal agencies, including the U.S. Department of Homeland Security, the Secure Border Initiative and U.S. Customs and Border Protection. The team’s work

includes PF 225, Vehicle Fence 300 and the completed PF 70 program – all of which will construct fencing along the nation’s southwestern border from Texas to California. Overall program management is the responsibility of the Engineering Construction and Support Office, located in the Fort Worth District Office.

Eric Verwers, ECSO director; Stephen Brooks, former PF 70 program manager; Eric Eldridge, Los Angeles program manager; and Loren Flossman, Secure Border Initiative Tactical Infrastructure program manager, accepted the award on behalf of the team. The plaque will be displayed in the ECSO.

Lt. Col. Orenstein is Fort Worth's deputy commander

Megan Murphey
Pacesetter Staff

The Fort Worth District is proud to welcome Lt. Col. Matthew S. Orenstein to the team. The new deputy commander assumed his duties July 14, 2008, after transferring from the Huntington District where he held the same position. Orenstein's exemplary military service shows that he is a dedicated leader who will be a great asset to the district. "These are absolutely exciting and historic times for the Southwestern Division and Fort Worth District," he said, "and I am grateful for the opportunity to serve with the team."

Orenstein has equally impressive civilian and military resumes. He received his undergraduate degree in civil engineering from Syracuse University and his master's degrees in industrial management engineering and business administration from the Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute. He is also a licensed professional engineer in the state of Virginia.

He has also served his country in an array of active duty assignments in the United States, East Asia, and the Gulf Region. He has held instrumental leadership positions during times of great national importance. During Operations Desert Storm and Desert Shield, Orenstein was the combat engineer platoon leader for the 24th Infantry Division. He later saw active duty in the Gulf Region as deputy area engineer and resident engineer during Operation Iraqi Freedom, for which he also served two combat tours. Following Hurricane Katrina in 2005, Orenstein spent two months in Saint Bernard Parish where he assisted in disaster relief and worked as a liaison officer to coordinate Corps of Engineers recovery efforts.

His previous assignments have taken him to duty stations as far away as South Korea, where he served as the director



Lt. Col. Matthew S. Orenstein
Deputy District Commander
Fort Worth District

of public works for Area IV, and as close as Fort Carson, Colo., where he was the platoon leader for the 299th Engineer Battalion. Orenstein has been awarded many honors for his military service including the Bronze Star Medal, the Army Commendation and Achievement Medals and the Humanitarian Service Medal. The Engineer Regiment also awarded him the Bronze Order of the de Fleury Medal.

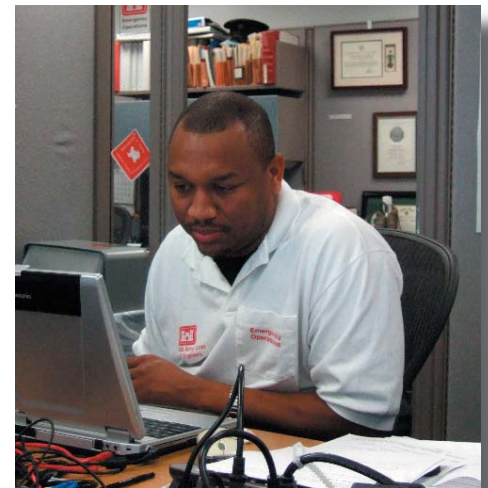
Orenstein is excited to be a part of the Fort Worth District team and to be new to the region. "I have learned that everything is bigger in Texas," he joked, adding that he is "amazed by the challenging pace and diversity of the district's program." The other members of the Fort Worth team share his enthusiasm and look forward to the great work they will be doing with him in the future. Orenstein says that it is always a privilege to work with the Corps, "a team of professionals devoted to high standards, public service, and Army values." He added that "the immense talent and commitment of the entire team makes it a joy to come to work each day."

Dolly called for CAT

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Galveston District Emergency Management Office activated its Crisis Action Team on July 21 in response to Hurricane Dolly moving into the Gulf of Mexico.

The CAT consisted of Gus Marinos, chief, Emergency Management Office; Gary Stangeland, catastrophic disaster response program manager, Emergency Management Office; Cindy Burke, project manager, Project Management Branch; Byron Williams, project manager, Project Management Branch; Alicia Rea, operations project manager, Navigation Branch; Kimberley Benavides, student, Public Affairs Office; and Alan McConnell, supervisory accounting officer, Resource Management Office.

The Crisis Action Team's mission is to provide centralized control and coordination of all elements and operations involved with the emergency response. The CAT is activated when the



Byron Williams checks out some information during Hurricane Dolly CAT operations

readiness condition is at a 3-WATCH. This means that hurricane conditions are likely to affect district operations or personnel, which is ideally 36 to 48 hours before a 39-mile-per-hour wind landfall.

Marinos serves as chief of the CAT, which required him to attend meetings and conference calls daily to keep

See **CAT** next page

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the district informed on the status of Hurricane Dolly. Also attending the meetings and conference calls with Marinos was Stangeland, who served as his deputy. Leading field operations for the first time was Burke who oversaw the FEMA mission assignments which included regional activation, power, debris, commodities, housing, roofing, navigation, and technical assistance for hydrological information. Williams served as the planning lead. As such, he was in charge of the overall mission planning, intelligence, upward reporting, liaison officers, Reconnaissance Assessment Team, and the Situation Assessment Team.

The Situation Assessment Team was in charge of establishing and maintaining a communications/message log, monitoring the district's operational status and weather situation, establishing and maintaining contact with state and local emergency authorities, and assembling the Situation Reports using district staff input. Rea, who has been the logistics lead since Hurricanes Katrina and Rita in 2005, stayed busy all day making reservations for air, lodging and transportation, tracking equipment, locating fuel for the navigation team's survey boats, and keeping track of the personnel that were on temporary duty. Benavides sent out news releases to the local media around the disaster area, answered media inquiries, and tracked the effects of Hurricane Dolly as it passed through southern Texas. Overseeing the finance and administration for the first time was McConnell who managed the Military Interdepartmental Purchase Requests, inputting of time and attendance into the Corps of Engineers Financial Management System, and composing tour of duty letters and lodging expense and bi-weekly pay cap waivers.

The Crisis Action Team was a great success. Its members came together and saw the mission through until the end. As one member, Alicia Rea said, "I enjoyed working on the CAT because it allowed me to face new challenges different from my daily routine. Helping others is very rewarding," she added.

Troy Collins joins Fort Worth team

Megan Murphey
Pacesetter Staff

The Fort Worth team is excited to welcome Troy Collins as the new deputy district engineer and chief, Programs and Project Management Division. Collins was formerly at the Fort Bliss Program Office where he served as director of Expansion Programs. He brings with him an impressive history of engineering experience and federal employment, and is now the district's highest ranking civilian. Collins says his focus as deputy district engineer will revolve around the three Cs: Communicate, Collaborate, Cooperate. He added that he is a firm believer in "putting safety first, because second is too late" and that he hopes to spread this motto to his colleagues. Collins added that his most rewarding part of working for the Corps of Engineers has been "lifelong friends I have met along the way."

Collins is a licensed professional engineer who received his bachelor of science in agricultural engineering at Rutgers University. As well as completing both basic and advanced AMEDD courses, Collins also studied at the U.S. Army Command and General Staff College. He has served Corps districts nationwide including those in Buffalo, N.Y., and Seattle, Wash., over the course of his 23 years with the Corps.

He began his federal career as a project engineer for the Fort Drum Project Office in New York, eventually working up the ladder to become the chief of the Program Management and Integration Division for the Gulf Region Division before assuming the duties of director for the Fort Bliss Expansion Program. In between, Collins held a variety of federal positions in both general engineering and project management. Prior to his employment



Troy Collins
Deputy District Engineer and Chief,
Programs and Project Management
Division, Fort Worth District

with the Corps, Collins was president of Haupt & Collins, Inc., a Florida design and construction company. As president, he was able to use his general contracting license and his special skills in both design and construction.

Collins also shows his dedication to engineering through his membership in a variety of prestigious professional organizations. These include the American Society of Civil Engineers, the Society of American Military Engineers, the National Society of Professional Engineers and the Texas Society of Professional Engineers. Collins is also a past president for the El Paso Post of SAME and continues to be active in the organization.

Pacesetters – Army Strong – Engineer Ready!

Changes to staff photo in Tulsa District

Mary Beth Hudson
Pacesetter Staff

There are two new chiefs in Tulsa District – one a very familiar face and the other very new. Shauna Martinez from Sacramento District now leads Contracting Division, and Earl Groves – whose entire federal career has been in Tulsa District – took over the reins in Operations Division.

Shauna Martinez

Martinez actually came to Tulsa District the end of June as chief of the Military/HTRW Branch in Contracting Division but was only in that job two and a half days before learning she had been chosen for the chief's position, a job she had applied for while deployed to Afghanistan.



Shauna Martinez

Martinez sees working in SWD as an opportunity to learn more about the Corps and how work is done differently from region to region. She also likes mentoring people and says she's looking forward to working with the folks in Contracting and doing what she can to help them in their careers. "I've had plenty of people help me in mine, and I just think that's my job – to do that for the people who work for me," she said.

Plans? Martinez says through the end of the fiscal year the plan is to hold the status quo and "just survive." After that, they'll be looking for ways to streamline and standardize processes throughout the region so contracts can be shared more easily.

Anything to add? "... We're here to help, and I'm excited about working with Tulsa and the region. I like these new regional concepts; they will allow us the flexibility we need to respond to customers by how the Corps is now organized and into the future."

Earl Groves

Groves has gone from mowing parks at Canton Lake to being responsible for the operations and maintenance of all the district's water resources projects. He was selected as chief after serving as the deputy for the past three and a half years. He has spent the majority of his career in Operations but has also served as emergency manager, public affairs officer, and did a six-month stint last year as action officer to Lt. Gen. Van Antwerp.



Earl Groves

Challenges? Out of 355 employees in Operations Division, 263 will be eligible to retire this year. "We have so many of the baby boomers retiring, more work than we've ever had before, and lots less people. The challenge is putting the right person in the right job in a timely manner so they can share the knowledge – sort of like a Star Trek mind meld -- so that we are successful. It's coupled with building the bench. . . Management's challenge and my challenge is getting them the experience, the training, the knowledge, so that they function as a high performance team."

Plans? Tulsa District's critical maintenance backlog increases about \$3 million per year. "The knowledge transfer on how we do maintenance and the funding to do maintenance is on the front burner. We must have that locked up quickly. The other part is getting the money out in the right places -- matching the money to where the critical need is."

Anything to add? "It's a great honor to serve as chief of Operations for Tulsa and work for such a great group of people."

**Don't forget Women's
Equality Day, August 26!**

Those managing Little Rock's water know its weight

Tammy L. Moody
Pacesetter Staff

Fighting floods in Little Rock District earlier this year fell heavily on the shoulders of many district team members, but Reservoir Control personnel who manage the district's water resource projects daily felt that weight more directly than most.

"Our water management decisions are far reaching," chief of Reservoir Control Section Jan Jones said. "You have people who make their living on the lakes, so your decisions about managing the water in their lake directly affect them. You have people who live downstream of the projects, so you are definitely affecting their lives as well. Public safety is the ultimate decision maker. We protect lives and property at all costs."

Jones, seven more engineers and two hydrologic technicians manage 25 water resources projects in Arkansas and southern Missouri by monitoring and directing the release of water from those projects, all while attempting to balance their efforts for multiple competing purposes.

"Our main purposes for lakes and dams like Greers Ferry, Table Rock, Millwood and the rest are flood damage reduction, hydropower and water supply," Jones explained. "On the Arkansas River our locks and dams provide a navigation channel, but we have to think about farmers' crops, too." Recreation and natural resources management are also considered.

The Reservoir Control team has help in the form of water control plans, each one custom designed and publicly vetted for that project alone.

"We use our engineering judgment to execute the water control plan, and every day, whether it's raining or not, we make an analysis of what the conditions are at the time and execute the water control plan according to those conditions," Jones said.

For example, Matt Moix is the primary hydraulic engineer responsible for Blue Mountain and Nimrod lakes. He also serves as a backup hydraulic engineer and



Little Rock District Hydrology Technician Darrel Campbell opens the door of the gauge house to make repairs and adjustments to Blue Mountain Dam's tailwater elevation gauging equipment. U.S. Army Corps of Engineers photo.

regulator for Clearwater Lake.

"Generally, I analyze all of the hydrologic and hydraulic conditions regarding the projects each day and determine or revise (according to the water control plan) what the releases should be for the next several days," Moix said. "I convey those releases to project personnel, and they actually execute them." Among factors considered are rainfall, stream flow, storage change in the lake and more.

Educating the public is done daily by everyone in Reservoir Control, and Jones and White River System Engineer John Kielczewski have taken a Water Management 101 presentation on the road recently to places like Mountain Home and Rogers, Ark., and Branson, Mo.

Kielczewski said he tries to educate the public and officials about two

principles concerning the six White River Basin lakes. First, they are operated as a system, not independently. Next, they were built "primarily for flood damage reduction and hydropower, and the flood reduction mission has customers all the way down to Newport and Georgetown."

Jones said she saw and heard immediate feedback from the public during those meetings.

"Each meeting we did, I used the analogy that I could see a light bulb coming on out in the audience every now and then. Then we would get some very good questions," she said. "Once somebody explains it like John explains the system, people might not really like what they hear, but they do understand it better. You can tell by the good questions they ask."

See **Reservoir Control** next page

Reservoir Control

Continued from previous page

Communication is a big part of Arkansas River Engineer Steve Brewer's job, too.

"The most important part of my work is communicating with the public. I have many customers up and down the river who are farmers, residents, fishermen, local officials and concerned citizens," Brewer said. He talks with many of them daily during floods. "Farmers and residents depend on my flow forecasts and alerts to make decisions about planting, harvesting, or whether to stay or leave their homes," Brewer said.

Helping people know whether to leave their homes is just one part of managing a very high risk dam like Clearwater Dam in southern Missouri.

"Having a high risk dam has added a whole new level of work for Clearwater regulator Nathaniel Keen and Reservoir Control," Jones said. She explained that after the dam was classified very high risk, her office developed a water control action plan that describes a process for making water management decisions during high water.

"A technical action team evaluates current and forecast conditions, and then makes a recommendation to a management action team whether to request a deviation to the approved plan," she said.



Little Rock District Hydraulic Engineer Matt Moix hands Chief of Reservoir Control Section Jan Jones a report on Blue Mountain and Nimrod lakes, two of the water resource projects he manages. Photo by David Virden.

In addition, two new stream gauges were installed downstream of Clearwater to help operate the project. Jones said stream gauges are absolutely crucial to the water control mission.

"We have to have equipment that adequately measures and transmits field data to us," she said. "Our two hydro techs, Darrel Campbell and Timothy Crownover, install and maintain that equipment around our projects."

She said she was proud of the way the Reservoir Control crew pulled together,

working long, hard hours during the flooding, but she said the crew always works as a team, rain or shine.

"The sense of ownership of these projects and the pride they take in doing their work is, I feel, unequalled," she said. "It's not only during work hours; these guys take this stuff home. If we're not on 24-hour duty, weekends, holidays, whatever, they know what they are responsible for and they take care of it."

Site Visit to Jordan

Southwestern Division Commander Brig. Gen. Kendall P. Cox and Little Rock District Commander Col. Ed Jackson, with other Corps, city and congressional personnel, listen to Todd Wagner, City of Springfield's principal storm water engineer, as he briefs them about Jordan Creek in Springfield, Mo. The Corps officers saw the potential flood risk reduction project's complexities during a site visit in June. Springfield shares its passion for the project and its vision for environmental and economic development while it participates in a \$3 million, 50-50 cost-shared feasibility study. Photo by Julia Smethurst.





Recognizing Excellence

Col. Anthony C. Funkhouser
Commander, Tulsa District

The end of fiscal year 2007 is nearing and I commend the Tulsa District team for another outstanding year. We have rapidly reached the fourth quarter and are picking up momentum as the heat rises in the midwest. After nearly a year of severe rain, it appears the clouds are clearing, and lake levels and the navigation system are returning to normal. This could not have come at a better time as we close out the fiscal year for our region. Although we were successful in our metrics, the most important question as we reflect back this FY is, "Did we execute our projects to our customers' satisfaction?" I can say unequivocally, "Yes!"

I have tried to thank each and every one of the Tulsa District employees this year for your efforts in making us the standard in customer service and mission execution. As I have gone around the region, I have heard many incredible stories of our team. I want to highlight some of our significant accomplishments since our last issue.

First, I want to publicly congratulate Park Ranger Rob Mills for recently saving a young boy from drowning at Oologah Lake in 10 feet of water. Due to his efforts, the young man will recover. Mr. Mills is another example of the selfless and professional service within each of our Tulsa team members!

Since our last article, congress has approved a supplemental to fund repairs to our projects that were damaged during the record flooding of 2007. Repairs will go mostly toward eroded embankments and structure repairs. We are very appreciative of this assistance from our congressional representatives as it will raise many projects back to mission capable and ensure the safety of the projects.

In our civil works program, we had the opportunity to meet with Congresswoman Boyda and the Kansas Water Office to discuss the John Redmond Studies. The focus of discussion was on the logjam, the recent reallocation and the maintenance requirements. She was very complimentary of Eugene Goff and his team for their hospitality and professional briefings. We had a second Kansas meeting with Kansas State Representative Tom Sloan and Mr. Woodley, assistant secretary of the army for civil works, to discuss the way ahead in identifying how best to extend the life of our reservoirs. ASA Woodley committed to participating in a team with USACE representation from Kansas City, Tulsa, and Southwestern Division.

The Real Estate team has made significant strides in the last months with completing the Candy Lake deed transfers. Special thanks to Shekinah Bailey and Ida Lafayette for their tenacity. The Real Estate Team also provided great support to Tinker Air Force Base with their General Motors Plant project. Finally, I want to recognize Pam Kelly and Steve Nolen who are really making progress in the Denison Land Transfer project. This is a high visibility project monitored by the Secretary of the Army on down. They have been steadily overcoming obstacles and moved the project forward to the satisfaction of the Denison officials.

The Hydropower Safety Committee Team was selected as the recipient of the Team Excellent Award. As a result of this TEAM effort and close working relationship with the Safety Office, the overall efficiency of the organization and specifically, hydropower, has improved significantly, and employees have a much improved working environment. Team members were Steve Timmons,

Hank Farley, George Worsham, Brian Echols, Ray Andrews, Johnny Bray, Mike Jernigen, Ray Harrison, Dora Karnes, Dale Cole, Sam Patterson, Justin Boyle, Steve Mills, Mike Rhoads, Larry Lawless, Glenn Scarce, Shone Couch, Charlie Smith, Tonya Holt, Jeff Miller, James Bavido, Lance Perdue, Jamie Caudle, and Billy Fite. Awesome team!

Our military program has really executed well this last quarter and of note, completed the TRAP relocatables at Fort Sill in record time. The Fort Sill relocatable building team accomplished a "mission impossible" designing and constructing approximately 312,000 square feet of space in 25 relocatable buildings for the TRAP 08-05 training mission within a nine-month period. Challenges that were overcome prior to award included estimating costs for the volume of relocatable units in the short delivery timeframe; obtaining a revised project approval at this higher cost from the Department of Army, Assistant Chief of Staff for Installation Management; obtaining approval from the Small Business Administration for a non-competitive procurement for a \$50 million contract with a tribal 8(a) firm; ensuring correct funding was used for the correct feature of the project; and designing, negotiating and awarding a contract in a very short timeline. This accomplishment will ensure that Fort Sill will be able to accomplish their mission to train our newest Soldiers. Team members included: Brad Carter, Steve Harmon, Colleen Diven, Sandra Egan, Terry Rice, Daniel Foyil, Debbie Gibbs, Mary Blackburn, LeViene Hearn, Jane Noble, Laura Redemann, Patrick Beard, Dan Birnbaum, Rick West, Walt Garner, Pat Warner, Tommy Willcox, Brent Clark,

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Big Bang Theory

Mary Beth Hudson
Pacesetter Contributor

First, you see a flash and smoke. Next, the tower starts to tilt. Then, you hear the explosion. It's a strange chain of events and a lesson in the speed of sound experienced by people gathered to watch the old water tower at Fall River Lake be, according to the U.S. Army news release, "explosively reduced."

A former platoon leader of Col. Funkhouser's, Capt. John Miller, leads the 111th Engineer Company (Sapper), 1st Engineer Battalion, stationed at Fort Riley, Kan. Their connection led to a partnership that benefits both the Soldiers and Tulsa District. The engineer company, which returned from Iraq late last year, is



During -- Engineer Soldiers prepare "cuts."

The obsolete tower, erected in 1948, had a 25,000 gallon tank and sat on legs approximately 95 feet from the ground to the top of its cap. It was used for the Fall River Lake Office and Overlook

water supplies. Its final use, however, was to provide training for the young engineer Soldiers. A safe perimeter was established; blast barricades were built by inmate labor (another partnership established by the Fall River Office); the media was informed; charges were set; people gathered to watch; unmanned cameras were anchored by sand bags; and soon there was "fire in the hole!"

The tower was taken down by two planned explosions – the first causing it to lean and the second making it fall – right between two trees as predicted.

Lots of work went into the event, and Park Ranger Gary Simmons pulled it all together. Coordination was accomplished with Kansas State Parks, the highway department, nearby residents, and the utility company which temporarily removed transformers in the area of the blast. The Soldiers arrived the day before to prepare. On the morning of the demolition, Simmons said, "It was a lot of

See *Tower* on page 22



Before -- with blast barriers in place.

always looking for real-life engineering challenges to keep them trained for their military work. The old water tower which needed to be removed from Fall River Project provided just such an opportunity.



After -- Trained and ready for the cook out, the Soldiers pose before the felled tower.

No new damage at Ark-White Cutoff

Tammy L. Moody
Pacesetter Staff

With the worst of the flooding over in the Arkansas and White river basins, Little Rock District Project Manager Greg Yada met 17 district and other agency personnel on an overcast June day at the Arkansas-White River Cutoff containment structures to inspect for damage.

Yada and the others were concerned the structures had sustained damage from the high water but they were pleasantly surprised.

“We were happy to see there was not any new damage to these structures,” he said, as the group left the area. “We were concerned that the duration of flow over the structures might have caused more damage, considering the structures already had major damage.”

The Melinda, Owens Lake and Jim Smith Lake headcut control structures were constructed to reduce the risk of a cutoff channel forming between the Arkansas and White Rivers that would disrupt navigation and destroy wildlife habitat in what is known as the Big Island area of southeast Arkansas.

These had been damaged before from high water events and repaired several times since their completion in 1992. Should these structures fail and a cutoff channel reach across from one river to the other, it would prompt the need for significant dredging, create dangerous cross-flows and potentially cause loss of navigation between the Mississippi River and more than 400 miles of the McClellan-Kerr Arkansas River Navigation System.

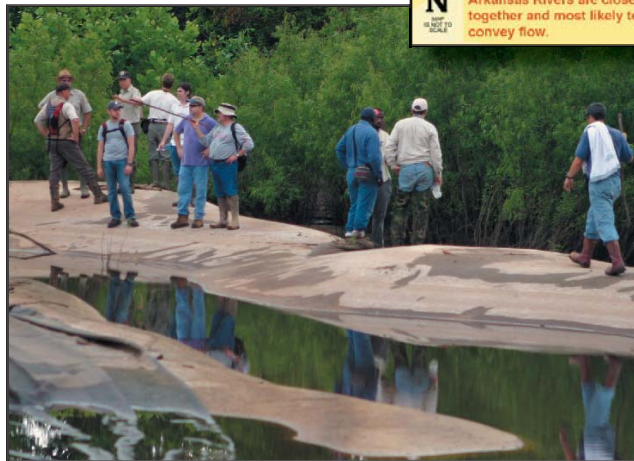
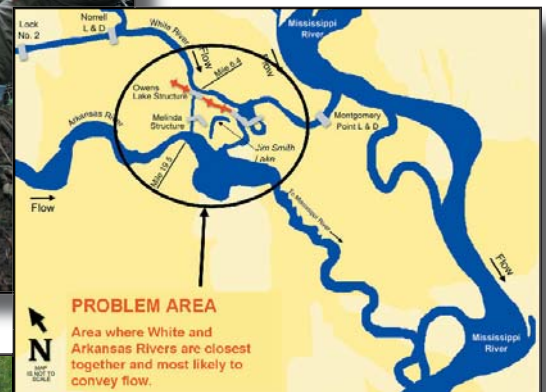
The development of more cutoffs was something else Yada and his teammates looked for while working their way from structure to structure.

“We also used this trip to check out new erosion paths that could develop where we don’t want them,” he said. “One path eroded more than it has during any previous flood event.”

In 1963 the Army Corps of Engineers closed a natural waterway called the Arkansas-White River Cutoff, or Ark-



Little Rock Hydraulic Engineer Nathaniel Keen checks the progress of an erosion path the White River is making in the shoreline as it tries to cut a channel through to the Arkansas River. Photo by Tammy L. Moody



Project manager Greg Yada walks toward members of the inspection crew as they look over the geotubes at Jim Smith Lake that were damaged by high water shortly after they were built in 2004. Photo by Tammy L. Moody

White Cutoff, that existed between the two rivers. For the past 40 years, however, the Arkansas and White Rivers have been trying to form a new cutoff channel in this area where they are only one and a half miles apart.

A new cutoff would not only threaten navigation, but it also would disrupt the fragile ecosystem of this remote, pristine area. Therefore the health and preservation of the area is the subject of controversy, study and debate. Because both rivers are significant players in the economic, navigational

and ecological aspects of the Arkansas Delta, any alteration, either natural or manmade, to either of the rivers would have significant impacts on the region. This has many agencies looking strongly at the area.

This year the district is finishing the Draft Environmental Impact Statement for the Arkansas-White Rivers Cutoff Study, which was conducted to present alternatives that would inhibit cutoff development and recommend a long-term solution.

Real Estate team sets unprecedented pace

Katherine Shelton
Fort Worth District Contractor

Building a fence is useless where there is no place to put it. Without the land, there can be no fence. So, when the Engineering and Construction Support Office, located in the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Fort Worth District office, was tapped to oversee the massive U.S. Department of Homeland Security border fence program in 2007, real estate acquisition became a priority. Although much of the land targeted between Texas and California was owned or managed by the federal government, the Corps was facing approximately 60 miles of land that would have to be obtained from private owners – from the State of Texas to local residents.

The process would not be easy. The highly-charged sensitive nature of the program was exposed daily in morning headlines, and an aggressive program deadline brought even more obstacles to the Corps Real Estate team.

Because the ECSO was directed to oversee the program, the real estate effort was led by Blake Bryant, a realty specialist with the ECSO. Joining him in the ECSO was Paula Johnson-Muic, a realty specialist from the Southwestern Division. Hyla Head, Real Estate chief in the Fort Worth District, headed up the largest district execution effort, with more than 250 acquisitions. Together, they have been part of a Real Estate team that includes four Corps districts and encompasses employees from 22 districts nationwide. The team has included not only Corps employees, but contractors and retired Corps Real Estate veterans as well.

“There wasn’t another Real Estate agency that could have done what we have,” said Head. “We have a natural base of resources to tap into through all our districts and retirees.”

In addition, the Corps has had to work closely with DHS, the U.S. Department of Justice and myriad federal agencies. “Our success has depended on the cooperation and rapport we’ve established

with all the agencies, especially Department of Justice,” said Johnson-Muic. “We couldn’t have gotten to where we are today without the expertise of our own team and the incredible federal agency partnerships.”

The Real Estate team was tasked with acquiring land for Pedestrian Fence 225 in March 2007. The goal of the program is to construct 225 miles of primary fence along the nation’s southern border by December 2008. In October 2007, the job expanded to include Vehicle Fence 300 – a program that will place 300 miles of vehicle fence adjacent to the pedestrian fencing. The land needed for both programs is divided essentially into three categories – land that is located in the Roosevelt Reservation, land that is managed by federal agencies, and land that is privately owned by residents, municipalities or state and state-run entities.

The Roosevelt Reservation was established in 1907 by President Theodore Roosevelt, said Bryant. The reservation set aside a 60-foot “federal zone” to be used for border protection across lands not already owned along the nation’s southern border. The proclamation affected approximately 600 of the 675 miles of border stretching from the Rio Grande in El Paso west to the Pacific Ocean.

The second category is land owned by the federal government and managed by one of several agencies, including the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, the Bureau of Land Management, the National Park Service, the Bureau of Reclamation and the International Boundary and Water Commission.

“Normally, we would have had to get permits for federally-managed land,” said Johnson-Muic. “But the waivers by the Secretary of Homeland Security set aside implementation of the permits and cleared the way for construction on this land.”

See **Team** next page



Bruce Hardie, left, retiree from the Southwestern Division who returned to serve as a real estate negotiator, inspects property in Hidalgo County with Juan Escanuela, retired border patrol agent and interpreter.

Photos by Randy Roberts, Fort Worth District

Team

Continued from previous page

Thus, the challenge for the Real Estate team lay with the privately-owned land - approximately 60 miles, mostly in Texas, owned by citizens, cities and the state. Not only did the politics of the program prove to be one of the team's biggest challenges - cities such as Eagle Pass, Texas, have taken the border fence construction issue to court - but the state's archaic and unorganized public land record system required condemnation of land even in cases where the owners agreed to the price offered by the government for their property. So, in a matter of months, the Real Estate team had to identify the owners of areas designated for the fence, acquire Rights-of-Entry to the land from the owners to allow for environmental studies and engineering surveys, obtain appraisals, then approach the landowners with a price for part or all of their property. Project-wide, approximately 12 percent of the property will be acquired by purchase and 88 percent requires condemnation for either title or price or both.

And, the deadline of December 2008 loomed.

"We had to revise the majority of our processes," Johnson-Muic said. "We had to develop new expedited procedures just for this program, in order to meet the deadline."

Early in the Texas program, the Corps set up a project office in McAllen to interface with border agents, said Head. Over time, the team developed procedures that included innovative programmatic approaches for land valuation for properties below \$50,000, and expedited acquisition and condemnation processes that will allow execution within unprecedented timeframes. A web-based project site was developed on Engineering Knowledge Online to process electronically all condemnation assemblies, including the ability to transfer documents between agencies for review and obtain an agency signature on a Declaration of Taking in a matter of days from start to finish. And, the Real Estate team drafted landowner correspondence letters that were staffed through the Office of the Secretary of Homeland Security and the White House staff, thus standardizing Right of Entry requests, Declaration of Taking Notification and Value Offer letters.

The results, six months from the program's deadline, speak for themselves.

"Acquisition of 100 ownerships would be a good year's workload," said Head. "We have done two and a half times that many in half a year. We expect to be done with the acquisition part next month, but it will take us the next two years to finish up on this project."

"This was like disaster relief," added Johnson-Muic. "We had people who take pride in their work commit to the mission, come together, and get the job done."



In land negotiations at the home of John Shuford in Rio Grande City are George Triggs (left), a real estate negotiator from Louisville District, and Project Manager Enrique Villagomez (right) from Galveston District.

Photos by Randy Roberts, Fort Worth

Real Estate community honors Johnson-Muic



Paula Johnson-Muic, realty specialist for the Southwestern Division, received the Real Estate Community of Practice Professional of the Year Award at the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Senior Leaders Conference Aug. 4 in Pittsburgh, Pa. Johnson-Muic was nominated for her work on the U.S. Department of Homeland Security border fence program.

In her nomination, Johnson-Muic was praised for having "... continually met or exceeded challenging customer expectations for quality and timely real estate product delivery and information including congressional inquiries and daily data calls in response to the political environment surrounding this program. She is a pleasure to work with and her leadership, passion, dedication, technical expertise and customer focus has been invaluable to the Corps' ability to execute this challenging mission. She is an inspirational leader for all."

IN THE BELLY OF THE BEAST



Photo courtesy of Sam Masters

Dateline 26 JUL 08 Kuwait

0630--Ali Al Salem Air Base. It's another Middle Eastern dawn with a not-yet unpleasant breeze lightly waltzing across a vast plain of sand and tarmac.

I and about 45 other souls are waiting with eyes fixed on a grey-green C-130 military cargo plane nearby. It is the instrument that will ferry us over a sea of sand and into the very heart of Iraq.

As passengers, we are mixed lot of Soldiers, contractors and government Civilians with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers prominently represented. Small talk is made amongst ourselves about past deployments, mutual acquaintances, family and what else – the weather. An orange tinged yellow sphere has just emerged from the eastern horizon and begins its timeless climb above a part of the world with an ancient, rich and troubled past.

Eventually the pieces come together - palletized baggage arrives along with the flight crew and things begin to happen. The back end of our transport has an inclined plane which serves as our passageway up into the belly of the beast. The interior of this four-prop aircraft has no comparison to commercial passenger planes. Inside is a Rube Goldberg landscape of exposed hydraulic lines, ductwork, wiring, pulleys, cables and various kinds of strange tools anchored to the monster's ribs.

Single file we trudge down a corridor not much wider than a backpack. We take our seats. No armrests, let alone a reclining seat back here. Instead is a long, low metal framework with seat and back fashioned out of bright red nylon strap webbing. No movie on this voyage either – we are the movie.

Once we are seated, a winch hauls our baggage up the same ramp we had just ascended. A crew member scurries over our bags compressed into a single mass. It's as if a giant spider had spun a nylon web around a small mountain of duffel bags.

An astute Corps project manager asks a fellow traveler if she is all right. She appears to be showing mild difficulty coping with a taxing environment. She replies that she is fine. We will help to lighten her burden to ensure she remains so. A sense of obligation has been instilled within us to monitor our co-workers well being.

This is an important part of our pre-deployment training provided by the Trans Atlantic Deployment Center in Winchester, Va.

Even before the plane's exit is sealed, the beast begins to move. For a prolonged period, the craft whines and groans as speed increases. At some undetermined time, we become airborne. My only clue was the welcomed drop in air temperature as the plane gained altitude.

The required ear plugs have been inserted. Even if one could hear conversation above the hypnotic din of the engines, there is no desire to engage in it here. We are all weary from a lengthy sojourn over the past two days. The harmonic vibration of the craft lulls us all into the arms of Morpheus during the hour plus journey to Iraq's capital city, Baghdad.

Jolted to attention by the beast's unexpected buck, my eyes scale the interior wall of this Road-Warrior-like transport. About 18 feet up, I see something which makes a Texan proud. It's a full size Lone Star flag placed there by a crew member with whom I share the bond of statehood.

Our Texas crew member fashions a makeshift seat supported by slings. He then positions himself in front of an elevated portal. From this vantage point, like a deer hunter in a tree stand, he intently watches for any movement below.

Sunlight alternately illuminates and then retreats as the plane changes directions and angles. The few round port holes in the beast's cavity are small and placed far too high for viewing. With the distractions of an airplane window banished, I steal the opportunity for reflection. My thoughts focus on why I am here, the historical and personal events that aligned the planets to bring me and my comrades to this place at this time.

As with any new undertaking, the uncertainty can cause apprehension, but with challenges come growth, come experience, comes the opportunity to forge new friendships that would never have been possible otherwise. It is a chance to experience, first hand, a different way of life, another culture and in doing so perhaps finds an even deeper appreciation for the American way of life. Through mutual interactions come understanding, acceptance and respect for others. To make this happen is up me. The Corps has laid opportunity at my feet. It is now up to me and my fellow travelers to make of it what we will.

Sam Masters
Construction Representative
Gulf Central Division
Iraq

Sam Masters is a park ranger at Fort Worth District's Whitney Lake



Strategic Plan helps us ‘row together’ for success

**Col. Donald E. Jackson
Commander, Little Rock District**

My thanks go out to everyone for their continued great efforts in supporting Little Rock District. Regardless of the oar you hold in the SWL ship, if we don’t row together we will find our organization spinning aimlessly in mid-channel. One recent initiative to help ensure we stay on course and build a better tomorrow is the new district Strategic Plan. Details are forthcoming, but for now, let me tell you why and how the plan was developed, how we are using it, and how we will use it in the future.

Why develop a Strategic Plan?

For Little Rock District, our Strategic Plan ensures we focus on the direction mandated by higher headquarters and that we capture all the components required for taking care of people, following established processes, and executing projects and programs. Our business is complex. We operate across a broad front, frequently with inadequate staffing and inconsistent funding. We must have a game plan to ensure we make good management decisions that move the organization forward.

How was the Strategic Plan developed?

Trish Anslow, chief of the SWL Planning and Environmental Office organized the effort. Initial planning guidance was given to senior staff members in October 2007. Select staff members participated in the Southwestern Division Strategic Planning Conference in December 2007. The district staff began plan formulation in February 2008 to develop goals and objectives that supported SWD imperatives. Every district staff office was represented, to include members from our field project and resident engineer offices. The effort was orchestrated by the SWL civilian leadership, which is essential to any plan that is “built to last.” Another meeting was held in July, and implementation teams have been formed to execute each goal and objective and to measure success.

Already the plan is in action.

The district has taken steps to refine our organizational Individual Manning Document. This reflects the need to realign

the district based on current and future workload projections that include regional and national efforts. In effect we are defining what seats are on the bus we will drive to the future.

In addition to refining the district’s structure, we worked to refine recruiting and hiring processes. We have begun efforts to address leader training using existing Army programs and the Dale Carnegie Corporate Leadership program to jumpstart a critical need after years of neglect.

How else will we use the Strategic Plan?

The Strategic Plan will also help us synchronize such initiatives as the Family Action Plan and Human Capital Plan under development at regional and national levels.

We will incorporate several other district initiatives to support various objectives. We have also attempted to capture the multitude of annual requirements, routine and otherwise, such as synchronizing stakeholder, customer and congressional engagement strategies.

The Strategic Plan is a living/working document. Execution

Plans will be reviewed monthly by senior leaders with the entire plan subject to periodic review as guidance from higher headquarters and mission requirements change.

Strategic Plan addresses employee concerns.

I spent much of the past year meeting with district employees and listening to your concerns. The Strategic Plan addresses many of the issues discussed during these candid sessions. I will spend the next year in my travels across the district discussing and promoting the Strategic Plan to help employees understand its intent and purpose.

Again one of the most essential elements of the Strategic Plan is that it was developed by and will be administered by the civilian leaders of the district. It is our plan, not my plan. Support from all of us is critical to making it successful. Help us ensure Little Rock District is “built to last.” Our Strategic Plan is an important first step in taking Little Rock District from “good to great.”

Corps, Texas City sign Project Partnership Agreement



Col. David C. Weston, Galveston district commander, Sharon Tirpak, project manager, and Matthew Doyle, mayor of Texas City

Officials of the City of Texas City and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Galveston District signed a Project Partnership Agreement in a ceremony in Texas City on July 28.

Taking part were Col. David C. Weston, Galveston District commander, and Texas City Mayor Matthew T. Doyle. The agreement is for the deepening of the Texas City Ship Channel from 40 to 45 feet, which will improve the navigational efficiency and safety of the existing channel for movement of commerce and national security needs, according to Weston.

“The Project Partnership Agreement helps us achieve our mission of keeping the Texas Coastal waterways open for navigation,” said Weston, “contributing to both the economic wellbeing of local communities and the security of our nation. This is an important milestone in the history of this project.”

A Project Partnership Agreement is the legally binding document between the federal government and a project sponsor to outline the cost sharing dollar amounts as well as the responsibilities of both the Corps of Engineers and the sponsor throughout the construction of the project

The Texas City Channel, which was first authorized by Congress in 1913, is a federal deep draft navigation project serving the Port of Texas City in Galveston County, according to Sharon Tirpak, Corps of Engineers project manager.

“This project consists of a main channel connecting a turning basin at the port to the Gulf of Mexico through Bolivar roads, a part of the Houston Ship Channel,” she said. “The main channel is 40 feet deep, 400 feet wide, and about 6.8 miles long. This 40-foot channel was completed in June 1967.”

In addition to deepening the channel, the project will involve incidental widening. This deepening and widening is expected to generate annual benefits of \$28,058,000 with an annual cost of \$3,309,000, producing a benefit-cost ratio of 8.5.

An added benefit will be the opportunity for the dredged

Having a feast with FEST

Clay Church
Pacesetter Staff

Although the Forward Engineering Support Teams have been around for years, there is soon to be a golden opportunity for full-time involvement. Ever been approached by a multi-level marketing entrepreneur and been told “this is your opportunity to get in on the ground floor?” For the 273rd Engineer Detachment, it is really true.

By direction of the Army, the Corps of Engineers is creating and transforming current FEST-A teams to support each of the brigade combat teams being formed. This transformation increases the number of volunteer FEST teams from nine to 77 throughout the Army, with the teams being staffed with active-duty Soldiers and full-time Civilian team members.

The mission of the FEST-A is to provide additional planning capability to combatant commands and Army service component commands to support a joint task force. Essential FEST-A tasks include multiple engineer planning and design, real estate acquisition and disposal support, contract execution, infrastructure assessment, and technical engineer assistance.

One of the first eight active component teams is the 273rd Engineer Detachment assigned to Fort Worth District. The first team member assigned is Sgt. 1st Class Josephine Matthews who reported for duty earlier this year. She is a senior construction supervisor and will serve as the non-commissioned officer-in-charge of the detachment pending the assignment of the

commander.

“I had my choice of any of the other locations and wanted to come to Texas, so it is great to be here in Fort Worth,” Matthews said. A normal deployable FEST detachment will be made up of one commissioned officer as the detachment commander, one non-commissioned officer, and seven civilians. The civilians will consist of civil, electrical, mechanical and structural engineers along with specialists in environmental, contracting and geographic information system.

Matthews recently completed training at the Readiness Support Center in Mobile, Ala., and has been working with logistics specialists to implement a support agreement with Fort Hood for the procurement and storage of FEST equipment needed for deployment. According to Matthews, “We are just now drafting the agreements for our logistical needs and finding storage locations. It will be some time in the future before we start trying to fill the civilian positions, but watch for the opportunity to join. Brig. Gen. Cox recently signed a letter announcing new incentives for FEST volunteers, so we are still recruiting members for our volunteer FEST until funding is approved for hiring full-time team members. Please call me at 817-886-1443 if you are interested in volunteering for this exciting duty.”

As new members join, the old adage of “it’s going to be a ground floor opportunity” will ring true for the newly established 273rd Engineer Detachment.

See *Texas City* page 32

Cleanup efforts district wide

Little Rock mopping up after flood fight

Cheri Dragos-Pritchard
Pacesetter Staff

(Note: This is the final installment in the Little Rock District flood story. Part 1 focused on levees and district actions to help affected communities. Part 2 described what occurred after most district lakes filled and the flood fight shifted. Now the floods appear to be over, though there is still some risk because lakes and rivers remain unseasonably full.)

With what is hopefully the worst of the flooding behind them, Little Rock District flood fighters have been at it since March and are now cleaning up and repairing the arena, with an eye on stepping back into the ring should the need arise.

And while work crews are doing what they can, it is uncertain when enough funds will be available to repair all the damage and restore all facilities to service.

For now, the district's focus is cleaning up parks that are surfacing from the flood waters, assisting others with repairs to their damaged levees and dredging silted navigation channels. The district is trying to get back to business as usual, even though the White River lakes remain higher than normal and the Arkansas River is flowing faster than usual.

Cleanup crews have been dealing with trash, timber and debris problems, as well as damaged facilities. Before the water began to noticeably recede, more than 60 percent of the district's park facilities were flooded.

"We have been working on park cleanup for more than a month," Park Ranger Joseph Harper of Greers Ferry Lake said. "We still have several areas that need work. We've been working on things such as removing debris, replacing signs, lantern hangers and gravel screening, replacing or repairing picnic tables and electrical pedestals and adding gravel to roadways."

Many park rangers had help with the cleanup, some from unexpected places.

"Beaver Lake Project staff worked in conjunction with six inmates from Benton County Jail and volunteer park attendants," Beaver Lake Chief Ranger Michael Richards said. "They cut, hauled off and piled tons of driftwood. They also cleaned all kinds of trash from the shoreline and campsites within the parks."

Some help had to be contracted out.

"The team effort between our permanent employees, summer hires and volunteers has been outstanding," Harper said. "In some areas though we've had to issue contracts for things such as electrical repairs and large debris removal. Ultimately, we're making progress toward getting the parks back to normal."

The majority of the swim beaches and boat ramps are still unusable at this point and are projected to stay that way on some of the lakes until the end of August or even months later.



Civil Engineer Technician Russell Cooper (in orange), Park Ranger Jared Trammell (with log), and Natural Resources Specialists Michael Hurley (back to camera) and Rick Hightower clean up debris after the flooding recedes at Hickory Creek Park on Beaver Lake.

Photo courtesy of Beaver Project Office.



Local volunteers clean up flood debris at Viola Campground at Table Rock Lake. Photo courtesy of Table Rock Project Office.

See **Flood Cleanup** on next page

Flood Cleanup

Continued from previous page



Natural Resources Specialist Rick Hightower cleans up tree limbs and other debris from Hickory Creek Park on Little Rock District's Beaver Lake. Photo courtesy of Beaver Project Office.



The erosion at this camp site in a Blue Mountain Lake park surfaced as flood waters receded. This type of damage will have to be repaired when funds become available. Photo courtesy of Blue Mountain Project Office.

At most of the lakes, swim beach restrooms were flooded causing some concern in surrounding communities about the safety of the water. The district has tested the water in all of the lakes, and it is safe for swimming.

Taking a proactive approach to getting information out, some of the project offices met with local, state and federal officials, public groups and the media.

“We’ve kept them informed about flooding concerns and warnings. These meetings also explained the flood reduction system, its process and why we do what we do,” Table Rock Park Ranger Larry Hurley said.

District team members are also still working levees. During the flood, personnel spent long hours assisting communities and levee boards along the Black and White Rivers with levee problems. They provided pumps, sandbags and other flood fighting materials. Mostly they offered expertise levee owners could tap to keep their levees from failing. Now efforts have shifted to after-action inspections and repairs.

“We have conducted many inspections on the levees originally affected by the flooding,” Levee Inspector Elmo Webb said. “We have also received requests for assistance with repairs. Then there are some of the levees we’ve inspected that have received money from Natural Resources Conservation Service and have already been repaired.”

Little Rock is also trying to repair damage Mother Nature did along the 308 miles of Arkansas River navigation channel entrusted to the district to maintain.

“There was a lot of silting in the channels,” Chief of Navigation Branch Glenn Proffitt said. “We couldn’t dredge or clam while the flows were so high, but now that the flows are starting to drop, the dredge was notified to mobilize July 15.”

Deputy of Operations Andrea Lewis said damage to Little Rock District facilities is estimated at about \$50 million. This includes parks, bank stabilization, navigation channels and other flood-related damage.

An emergency supplemental bill was signed by the president, though only about \$16 million was slated for Little Rock. Lewis attributed this to the time lag in what is reported to Congress and the recurring flood events.

“We’ve sent an additional request for consideration under a second emergency supplemental bill for \$22 million,” Lewis said. “It is our understanding, because of the flooding in the midwest, Congress may pass another bill.”

During this event, Little Rock’s people supported their communities and other districts with flood fighting in many different capacities. They continue to do so today as the water recedes and the damage assessments come in.

Little Rock's FEST-A returns from deployment

Tammy L. Moody
Pacesetter Staff

Little Rock's Forward Engineer Support Team-Advance returned recently from working in the Dominican Republic where team members supported joint service military exercise *Beyond the Horizons*.

Sponsored by the U.S. Southern Command, the annual *Beyond the Horizons* mission includes humanitarian and civic assistance projects to foster goodwill and improve relationships between the U.S. and Caribbean nations as part of the command's Partnership for the Americas program.

Chief of Emergency Management Charlie Tobin said Little Rock responded to the Global War on Terror by joining a handful of Corps districts to create a FEST-A in late 2001 to support the military and the nation with engineering capabilities during contingencies and emergencies.

"We have trained and maintained a force ready to assist since October 2001," he said. "Since then our team has deployed overseas to four locations (Iraq, Thailand, Japan, and the Dominican Republic) along with supporting exercises and training with the active Army in several locations."

Tobin went on to explain how the district receives missions for the team.

"Southwestern Division is aligned with Central Command for support. Typically the active component makes a request to the Army for forces, and it filters down through the aligned division," he said. "This is not always the case since until recently there have only been eight FEST-As and nine Base Development Teams throughout the Corps. So we have also supported Pacific Command and Southern Command in deployments."

Little Rock Electrical Engineer Tuan Dang, Pine Bluff Resource Manager Steven Shaw and Ozark Powerhouse Construction Representative Joe Jackson worked with Southern Command and Dominican Republic Soldiers from June 30 through July 11 as they inspected infrastructure that needed rehabilitation around the country.

"We were there to assess the work the sites needed," Dang said. "We went to San Francisco (de Macoris) first, where we worked our way through a hospital clinic, a school, a community center and a sports complex. We looked at plumbing and drainage issues and electrical problems and wrote up a scope of work, cost estimate and building material list for each site.

"Then we went to Santo Domingo and did three more sites there during the rest of our time in the Dominican Republic."

Shaw added that after Dang, Jackson and he did their initial assessments of the sites they were assigned, they then came up with two to three plans and presented them to the host nation.

"We weren't shooting in the dark, as SouthCom had already talked to the host nation to find out what their goals were for these sites, so we knew generally what to look for and where to go with our plans," he said. "It was good to be the eyes on the ground though, as we could see what their capabilities are and



Little Rock Electrical Engineer Tuan Dang takes photos as he and Ozark Powerhouse Construction Representative Joe Jackson inspect the roof of a building in the Dominican Republic during their recent FEST-A deployment to support joint military exercise *Beyond the Horizons*. Photo courtesy of the FEST-A.

what kind of materials are there, as it's not good to give them a fancy electrical system if they can't maintain it. We were there to design something that is good for them with the materials available there."

He further explained that some of the work could be done by local contractors, some by U.S. Army engineer units and some done by National Guard and Reserve units.

"The best thing about this deployment is the opportunity to see other places, do other things and develop almost immediate corrections for problems for other people," he said. "As a project manager, you kind of have a vision for how you want things to turn out, and you have the power to get it done. Here it's all accelerated and it is very rewarding to know those units will be coming in to do what we've laid out."

Jackson echoed Shaw's sentiments in what he thought the best thing about this deployment was. "I've been telling this guy at the powerhouse about what we do," Jackson said. "I've told him that it's a great chance to travel, meet people and do some rewarding work for other people."

(Editor's note: For more information about becoming part of the Corps' Field Force Engineering program, you can contact your Emergency Management office. Slots are available on both FEST-A and the stay-behind Base Developmental Team that provides engineering support through 'reachback.' James Fields, the Southwestern Division military contingency planner who contributed information to this article can also be contacted at (469) 487-7021 for more information.)

Site manager becomes a hero

Megan Murphey
Pacesetter Staff

Marcus Schimank is the Site Manager for Granger Lake, but on July 16, he became a hero when he saved a young boy's life. The child, 23-month-old Diego Coerre-Bonites, was at the lake when he went into respiratory arrest. Schimank performed cardiopulmonary resuscitation on the toddler and got him to regain consciousness and breathe on his own. He also helped care for Diego until the paramedics arrived to take him to the Seton Medical Center for further evaluation.

Schimank said it was about 12:45 p.m. when the incident occurred. He and Park Ranger Brandon Randig were installing a park sign when they saw a panicked man running toward them with a limp toddler in his arms. "He couldn't speak English, but it was obvious that the child he was holding wasn't doing well," said Schimank. He added that he could tell by the child's color and non-responsiveness

that he was not breathing. Park Ranger Randig used his radio to call the Emergency Medical Service while Schimank began to perform CPR. He laid the child down and gave him two rescue breaths. "After the second breath went in with a good chest rise, he started breathing on his own and had a strong pulse, so chest compressions weren't necessary," Schimank recounted. The boy quickly became alert enough to call out for his mother, and Schimank took him to an air-conditioned car to cool off until paramedics arrived about 20 minutes later. They took the child's vital signs, which appeared to be normal. The boy was then taken to the local medical center in Round Rock for recovery.

Schimank said that the following day, he called a member of Diego's family to check on his progress. He was pleased to hear that the boy was doing well and had already been sent home from the hospital. The EMTs and medical staff at Seton deduced that Diego most likely went into respiratory arrest from a combination of the heat, dehydration, and a fever stemming from a pre-existing throat infection. Schimank added that one nurse told him that children often go into respiratory distress before cardiac arrest. If Diego had gone into cardiac arrest, serious damage or death may have resulted. Luckily, Schimank and Ranger Randig were present at the scene to render assistance.

Granger Lake is located about 40 miles northeast of Austin and is one of a cluster of lakes under the jurisdiction of the Fort Worth District's Capital Regional Office. As site manager, Schimank is responsible for employee supervision and partnership relations. He also deals with issues concerning environmental stewardship, flood-risk management, and water supply. Schimank began his career as a park ranger at the nearby Belton and Stillhouse Hollow Lakes before transferring to become site manager at Granger.



Marcus Schimank

"This incident was another example of why we need to have good situational awareness and to always be responsive and ready," said Schimank. He added that he believes the Corps does a great job of developing responsible and capable employees who are prepared for emergency situations. "I'm confident that two other people in a similar situation would have responded in the same way to get the same outcome," said Schimank.

Quick reaction saves life

Based on an article by Chris Edens of the *Oologah Lake Leader*

Tulsa District Park Ranger Rob Mills feels that a wet uniform, cell phone, and wallet are a small price to pay for saving a life.

While on what had been a routine patrol at Oologah Lake in Oklahoma, rangers Rob Mills and Jason Person parked in a lot overlooking Hawthorn Bluff Beach. About 60 yards away, in 10 feet of water, 14-year-old Antonio Ramos was swimming with his sister. Mills spotted Ramos showing classic symptoms of someone struggling to stay afloat.

Mills said, "He was in the same spot, coming up and gulping for air and going back down, then back up gasping again."

"We could tell by the look on his face it was serious," Person said.

It was then Mills and Person realized no one close to the swimmer was aware of the situation. Both Mills and Person began running to the water as Ramos tried to grab on to his sister. Seeing him almost pull her under, Mills dove into the water. "He was about six inches under water when I got to him," Mills said, "but I saw him and grabbed him."

Persons said, "I really believe he would have drowned right there if Rob hadn't grabbed him." Lead ranger Paul Shockley said they called a few days after the accident and the boy's parents said he was doing fine. They had taken him to the hospital immediately after the incident for a checkup.

According to Shockley, everyone should learn to swim. "Even adults can find themselves in this situation," he said. Visitors to Hawthorn Bluff can pick up loaner life jackets at the gate. The loaner program is available at a number of Corps lakes thanks to local Safe Kids Coalition sponsorship. There is no charge to check a life jacket out, just a reminder to return it so that the next visitor will have one to borrow.



Rob Mills



Galveston District ... on the stormy road to great

**Col. David C. Weston
Commander, Galveston District**

There's an old sailor's saying about hurricane season: "June—too soon; July—stand by; August—come it must; September—remember." Though the meteorological forecasts vary, the Galveston District certainly has learned the truth in that adage this year, with Hurricane Dolly in July and Tropical Storm Edouard in August, both impacting our district. The Galveston area itself has every reason to be wary of hurricane season: of the 10 deadliest hurricanes in U.S. history, numbers one and ten occurred at Galveston.

But with the entire Texas coastline and a segment of Louisiana outlining our district boundaries, the odds of a hurricane

affecting some part of the Galveston District are very high. So when Hurricane Dolly made landfall at South Padre Island

and impacted the Brownsville area, the Galveston District responded (along with Primary Response Teams and liaison officers from our teammates in Fort Worth, Tulsa, Little Rock, New York, Nashville and Norfolk districts).

And when Tropical Storm Edouard went through the Beaumont/High Island/Rollover Pass area, well, that's us too. Potential flooding from TS Edouard in Houston, one of the largest metropolitan areas in the country? We're involved in that too. And, we have to somehow

keep executing our normal mission requirements at the same time. As you can see, these storms and our response to them crosses over several geographic and mission areas. People immediately think of Emergency Management and Flood Risk Management, of course. But other mission areas are just as much in play: navigation—surveying the waterways to ensure they can be re-opened for navigation; regulatory, to ensure that proper permits are issued for repair of damages; shoreline protection—what damage has the storm done that we may need to undo down the road? Will more

"Our district work force is involved across the full spectrum of operations and has responded admirably to these storms."

beach nourishment projects be needed? Support for others—support to the Federal Emergency Management Agency? Impacts on the border fence? Even military construction—were there damages to Ellington Field?

So you can see that a hurricane or tropical storm affects us far beyond what may be reported in the news. Our district work force is involved across the full spectrum of operations and has responded

admirably to these storms. With teams going to the areas to check for damage, survey crews checking out the waterways, the Crisis Action Team deployed, and employees helping in a multitude of ways to keep people safe and sound—it has been inspiring to see.

I thank all district employees who have contributed so much during the last two storms—and will continue their brave endeavors throughout hurricane season.

It is the action of each individual team member that leads to our success. We must continue to do everything necessary, both as individuals and as an organization, to ensure that we are prepared to meet the challenges that may come our way and that we do our part to take care of our responsibilities to our district and to our nation.

From good to great—the chief has set the markers to show us the way. Each and every time we execute our mission in the face of these storms, we are on that road to "great"—by delivering superior performance in all missions; setting the standards for our profession; having a unique, positive impact on our Nation; and building to last.

Next on the radar (unless they've already graced us with their presence): Fay and Gustav!

Got an idea for the Pacesetter?

Do you have an interesting story or picture? Share it with your fellow Corps team members. Simply submit your story idea, written article, or photo with caption to your local Public Affairs Office by the first day of each month.

Thomasson receives first-ever Golden Mic Award

Melanie Ellis
Pacesetter Contributor

Dan Thomasson, lake manager, Stillhouse Hollow and Belton Lakes, was recognized at the Fort Worth District's Engineer Day ceremony as the first-ever Golden Mic Award winner. The award originated in the Public Affairs Office after the 2007 flood event and is designed to recognize the Fort Worth District team member who has made the most noteworthy contributions in the area of media relations.

Stillhouse Hollow and Belton Lakes were inundated with floodwaters for most of the 2007 summer, and Thomasson was put on the hot seat more than once. He took multiple opportunities to tell the public about the Corps' missions. "I tried to keep the message simple and uncomplicated," he said. "Luckily, that works well with short, televised interviews."

During the 2007 flood event, offices were flooded with calls and faced with rumors about infrastructure failure. Landowners were upset about release rates, and there were many other issues as well. Thomasson quickly found himself on a first-name basis with many members of the local media.

"I tried to be prompt in responding to



Dan Thomasson

their inquiries because I realized they were usually up against a short deadline. I also made a point to not appear to be avoiding their questions," he said.

Thomasson has taken training through the Public Affairs Office and found it helpful. "I have had the media training, actually a couple of times now," he said. "I do use the things I learned there, particularly the part about trying to develop your key talking points before the interview. I also try and anticipate the tough questions and develop a non-

controversial response. One thing I would add to the training is to know when to stop talking."

Thomasson's recognition as the Golden Mic Award winner was a surprise to him. Engineer Day award winners are usually notified prior to the ceremony, but the PAO wanted to keep it a surprise. With the help of Thomasson's co-workers, he was in the district office and did not know of the award until shortly before the ceremony.

Thomasson continues to provide immediate response to any and all media inquiries. He does so in a manner that reflects the criteria of the Golden Mic Award. He demonstrates tact, diplomacy and professionalism while telling the Corps story.

Tower

Continued from page 10

work – lots and lots of manhours – but it was all worth it to spend last night camped with those young Soldiers and hear their stories and look at their pictures. I think getting to know them on a personal level was the definitive highpoint for the entire staff."

Following the tower's fall, nearly 100 Soldiers and family members were guests at a cookout provided by the Fall River Project Office. "Everyone worked real hard," according to Susan Couch, manager of Fall River, Big Hill, and Toronto projects. She noted that all the extra work and preparation for both the blast and the barbeque was accomplished during a flood watch. Fall River was teetering on the edge of requiring 24-hour surveillance. Fortunately, sunny skies greeted the Soldiers and onlookers that day, and the weather stayed clear through the meal and family time.

The day that started with a bang ended with the feeling of a job well done – and appreciated.

Person wins award

Jason Person, natural resource specialist, Oologah Lake Office is Tulsa District's Customer Care Employee for the second quarter of 2008. When there was an unexpected, last-minute turnover of some gate attendant contractors, Person worked diligently to secure the services of replacement contractors. He managed to get new ones on board in time for the opening of the recreation season.

He spent many hours of his own time to ensure the needs of the visiting public were met.

Additionally, changes he instituted in phone service billings are expected to yield almost \$1,650 per year for the lake office.



Jason Person working disaster response in Austin, Texas, following Hurricane Rita.

District, University to provide sites for patients

Little Rock District and the University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences entered an agreement July 29 to provide at least six new campsites in Maumelle Park to accommodate patients undergoing extended medical treatment in the Little Rock area.

The Challenge-Cost Share Agreement outlines how the Corps and UAMS will share in constructing and operating the new campsites. Maumelle Park has historically been an economical source of lodging for out-of-town patients who come to Little Rock for medical treatment.

“Throughout the past year, more than 81 people were documented in Maumelle Park as seeking long-term stays related to medical treatment,” said Miles Johnson, the acting project operations manager of the Corps’ Russellville Project Office. “The funding provided by UAMS will meet a definite need.”

UAMS is providing \$90,000 for the

partnership to be led by its hospital, UAMS Medical Center, its Winthrop P. Rockefeller Cancer Institute, and the UAMS Myeloma Institute for Research and Therapy.

“We see patients from around the world, many of whom must stay in Little Rock for weeks or months while undergoing treatment,” said Peter Emanuel, M.D., director of the Cancer Institute at UAMS.

“Having these campsites available for extended periods of time will provide patients and their loved ones with an affordable option for lodging in a beautiful setting and at the same time help ease financial burdens.”

“UAMS is very pleased to partner with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to make these campsites available for patients,” said UAMS Chancellor I. Dodd Wilson, M.D. “We are very appreciative of the support and compassion the Corps has shown in helping make this possible.”

Current regulations limit the time individuals may stay in federal parks. UAMS funding will enable patients to enjoy extended, uninterrupted stays in the park, contributing to their recovery in a restive setting.

The Corps obtained seed money to be used for construction management, septic needs and daily utilities and maintenance. UAMS funds will provide for the remaining campsite building needs. The extended stay campsites will be reserved specifically for medical care patients as recommended through Patient Advocates Services of Little Rock Hospitals.

Maumelle Park is on the bank of the Arkansas River west of Little Rock. The park’s unique environment provides an excellent setting for camping, boating, fishing or getting away from it all. The park offers eight group picnic shelters and 129 campsites with electricity and water hook ups. Other amenities include a boat launch ramp, playground, hot showers, public telephones and a dump station.



Maumelle Park on the Arkansas River

Little Rock Chief of Operations Lee Bass and UAMS Chancellor I. Dodd Wilson, M.D., sign the Challenge Cost-Sharing Agreement between the Corps and the University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences to provide extended-stay campsites at Maumelle Park for long-term-care patients. (Photo by J.P. Jones, UAMS.)

Worth Remembering ...

Protecting North Texas from Flood and Drought

Judy Bullwinkle
Pacesetter Staff

In the 1950s, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Fort Worth District, built a series of flood damage reduction structures and reservoirs in response to the extreme weather conditions along the Texas plain.

The Trinity River had long been a problem to both Dallas and Fort Worth, with the disastrous Fort Worth flood of 1949 hastening the commitment of funds from Congress for these structures.

They proved their worth during their first decade of operation.

Construction of four reservoirs (Benbrook, Lewisville, Grapevine and Lavon) on the Upper Trinity began under Galveston's watch. Although they supported the navigation desires of local sponsors, the projects' main purpose was flood damage reduction. Designed to reduce the damage from floodwaters from torrential rains, all the projects were completed by 1955.

Reservoirs were not the only guns in the arsenal against raging floods. Building levees along the stream banks and deepening the channel produced floodways along the Trinity in both Dallas and Fort Worth that also proved effective flood-fighting weapons.

In Fort Worth, the district faced the challenge of repairing levees damaged in 1949. Not only did workers need to remove brush, trees and garbage from the river, they also had to deal with a crooked waterway. Using draglines to dig a smooth, curving channel with a wide, smooth floor, workers removed multiple kinks, bends and bottlenecks from the river, making it a mile shorter when the work ended. The new levees were much wider than those they replaced, but they were no higher and, in some instances, actually lower, as the deeper channel protected the landowners from overflow.

Not everyone was pleased with the project, however. In September 1954 a group of women, concerned about the removal of large trees shading their

homes, stood in front of the bulldozers working on the levees. They wanted the levee relocated away from the old growth trees, and, at one point, several linked hands around a tree trunk to stop work. Other residents protested that they had had to "run from four floods" and wanted the work to continue.

Fort Worth District negotiated this conflict by leaving some of the trees uncut; however, Lt. Col. W. G. Trainer remarked that this was not normally done "because it's not good hydraulics."

The Dallas Floodway faced a different



Women concerned about the removal of large trees shading their homes stand in front of the bulldozers working on the levees in Fort Worth District. Historical photo courtesy of Fort Worth.

challenge. The old 1928 levees had deteriorated, and the city needed a new, comprehensive levee and channelization system. Authorized in 1945, the project received no funding. A cost-conscious Budget Office and a fiscally conservative Congress funded other projects. It took eight years and a trip to visit President Harry Truman to find congressional support. Completed in 1959, the floodway

included 23 miles of levee improvement plus a deeper channel.

This flood damage reduction activity seemed odd at the time since Texas was experiencing a tremendous drought. From 1950-1956, the state endured the longest dry spell in 300 years, which helped people forget the historically wettest five years immediately preceding the drought. Scant rainfall failed to fill the reservoirs and by 1956 farmers and ranchers were forced from their land and 46 Texas counties received federal food aid.

The dry conditions emphasized the benefits of reservoirs and water impoundment. On the Trinity River, within the four reservoirs, more than 672,000 acre-feet of water was impounded to supply water to the Dallas-Fort Worth area during the early and mid 1950s.

In true Texas fashion, huge rains fell in 1957. The onslaught, for some areas the worst of the century, tested the new flood damage reduction measures in the Dallas-Fort Worth area. The reservoirs and floodways kept the towns safe as the water flowed smoothly through the area.

With a discharge of 1.5 times the 1908 flood, district engineers stated that without the flood damage reduction structures, the water would have reached the Adolphus Hotel in downtown Dallas. The event was nicknamed "the flood that didn't happen" because an estimated \$84,000,000 in flood damage was prevented, and more than 600 businesses and industrial establishments were protected.

Throughout the 1950s, the Fort Worth District projects protected the citizens in drought and flood. Given the unpredictability and intensity of the Texas weather, this was a significant accomplishment.

(For more information and discussion of all the facilities in the Johnson Space Center; see Rivers, Rockets and Readiness: Army Engineers in the Sunbelt; a History of the Fort Worth District, Army Corps of Engineers 1950-1975 by D. Clayton Brown.)

FUDS is not a dud

Clay Church
Pacesetter Contributor

It is not that you want them in your yard or on your street but the potential is there. As urban sprawl, drilling operations and even wind-generating farms being brought online have



Andy Schwartz (L) from Huntsville and Dwayne Ford, Fort Worth District, hold a map of the former World War II Camp Maxey impact areas about ten miles north of Paris, Texas, while Grady Dobbs from the Tulsa District describes areas of concern where the contractors will be working.

discovered - they are there. The “they” in this case are munitions and other hazards left over from former military operations. Except for California, there are more Formerly Used Defense Sites or FUDS in Texas than in any other state.

FUDS are properties that were formerly owned, leased, possessed by, or otherwise under the jurisdiction of the Department of Defense or military prior to 1986. There are almost 10,000 FUDS in the United States with about 900 locations in which the Fort Worth District is currently involved. The goal of the FUDS program is to reduce the risk to human health and the environment through implementation of effective, legally compliant, and cost-effective response actions.

For the Fort Worth team, the work seems to never end. Debra Castens, Fort Worth

District FUDS program manager, explains, “We bring in geologists, cultural experts, explosive safety professionals, public affairs and many other disciplines of experts to work any particular FUDS site. Each site seems to bring its own unique situation to the table. We have encountered bombs and missiles in people’s yards and other hazards over the years. We are now in the process of site investigations at 80 locations which are keeping us pretty busy.”

The process first starts with identification of a site along with any history that can be obtained. The history is accomplished through an archival search of records, public meetings and interviews. Once a site is identified then removal, clearance and disposal operations can be conducted. If any remediation is needed, it has to be accomplished before the site can be certified for reuse. Seems like a simple task, but funding and other issues impact the process.

An increasing issue is when development occurs prior to the FUDS process taking place. A site in Arlington, Texas, known as Five Points, illustrates this. The former out-laying bombing range was used during World War II by the Dallas Naval Air Station. Although only training munitions were used, the area now is a housing development with almost 800 homes. Spring rains in 2001 and 2002 started pushing the miniature practice bombs close to the surface and home owners were increasingly discovering the bombs. With this increased attention and concern for public safety, the site was moved up in priority. Funding was appropriated and removal operations were conducted in 2006.

Even with hundreds of sites being worked, the Fort Worth FUDS staff continues to assess and mediate sites formerly used by the military.



Contract personnel use a towed array at the former World War II Camp Howze near Gainesville, Texas, to help locate munitions and explosives of concern.



With fiscal year end in sight, district goes full speed ahead

**Col. Christopher W. Martin
Commander, Fort Worth District**

As we prepare to tackle the last two months of the fiscal year, I want us to look back at what an amazing year we've had and let that momentum carry us through to the beginning of another year of success and challenges.

As the year draws to a close, the National Security Personnel System is on everyone's mind. To date, all Fort Worth District team members, except wage grade employees and those represented by bargaining units, have transitioned to NSPS. The mock pay pools paneling for non-supervisors was completed and, at the moment, the mid-year assessments are in the process of being completed.

Keep in mind, the NSPS annual appraisal cycle for the period is Sept. 30, and it is fast approaching. Team members should be preparing for submissions now by getting ahead of the pack and compiling their lists of accomplishments.

Speaking of accomplishments, our military construction projects continue to move forward and meet goals and milestones. As the Fort Bliss Program Office and the Land Development Engineer continue their steadfast relationship with another contract, the program office along with the rest of Team Bliss delivered four barracks, two company operations facilities, two tactical equipment maintenance facilities and two deployment storage buildings to Soldiers from 1st Brigade, 1st Armored Division, June 20, and on July 15 to the Brigade Support Battalion at East Fort Bliss ahead of schedule.

At Fort Polk, we are receiving proposals for a \$150 to \$175 million project to study and resolve mold growth issues and construct 15 barracks and four central energy plant facilities to provide healthy apartment style dormitories free of mold following the best practices available in the industry and to reconstruct the remodeled, redesigned barracks to the Army's 1+1 barracks requirements.

In addition, the construction phase of the biggest and most complex individual project of the San Antonio Base Realignment and Closure Program has formally begun with the award of a \$556 million contract for additions and renovations to Brooke Army Medical Center on Fort Sam Houston. Throughout the construction and renovation work, all medical services are expected to be fully maintained. This effort will bring more than 760,000 square feet of new space to the BAMC complex.

A multi-story addition will house a Level 1 trauma center, operating rooms, clinical and administrative space, and an extension of BAMC's internationally acclaimed burn center. A 5,000 space

“... the construction phase of the biggest and most complex individual project of the San Antonio Base Realignment and Closure Program has formally begun ...”

parking garage will also be built, as well as a central energy plant. Approximately 288,000 square feet of the existing BAMC facilities will be renovated.

With our military programs heading to maximum production, our border fence projects are continuing to gain momentum. With less than six months left until the completion deadline, both the Pedestrian Fence 225 and Vehicle Fence 300 programs are continuing to move forward with real estate acquisitions, Request for Proposal development, task order awards and fence construction. To date, 338 miles of fence have been constructed for both programs. In the PF 225 program, 29 task orders have been awarded and 16 RFPs are currently out for bid. In the VF 300 program, two task orders have been

awarded and 10 RFPs are currently out for bid.

In the civil works and operations arena, we are diligently trying to ensure the minimal amount of carry over from one year to another by executing our scheduled work plan. And we continue to award contracts to repair flood damages.

The district received \$15.6 million in supplemental funding to be divided among eight lakes for repairs to recreation facilities, slide repair, and outlet works and channel repair after the floods of 2007 when many of the lakes sustained damages. Belton Lake received \$5 million and Stillhouse Lake received \$4 million since they sustained some of the heaviest damage to recreation facilities.

On Aug. 7, Operations Project Manager Greg Pope and Lake Manager Dan Thomasson from the Capital Region Office met with Congressman John Carter and staff at Dana Peak Park on Stillhouse Hollow Lake for a media release concerning the flood damage to the park and recreation facilities. Acting Chief of Operations Charlie Burger also attended.

On the national level, Fort Worth District is working on the Recreation Strategy Plan which involves strategizing for the predicted downward changes in funding for the recreation program. All lakes will be conducting a self assessment to determine efficiency levels for their parks which will include basic O&M cost, visitation, revenue and other criteria.

As we move forward from last year's flood events, let's keep in mind that although we have not been affected too much by Hurricane Dolly and Tropical Storm Eduard, hurricane season is far from over. Let's ensure that we are ready both at home and in our positions to be able to take care of our families and fellow citizens if we are called upon to conduct or support contingency operations.

As we steam ahead to the end of the

See *Full Speed* on next page

Program helps us help our own during time of tragedy

Kristine N. Brown

Park Ranger, Galveston District
and CISM Team Member

No organization is immune to tragedy, and when our own Corps employees are involved, the emotional toll can be high. Imagine leaving the office for a long 4th of July holiday weekend and relaxing at home when a call comes in that a fatal accident has taken the life of your friend and colleague. It's like a tragic scene out of a movie, not something in real life.

On July 4th, tragedy hit hard at the Galveston District. Ben Boren, an Operations Division navigation program manager, was killed in a motorcycle accident. A quick yet compassionate call went out from the chief of the Operations Division to the Galveston Critical Incident Stress Management team coordinator to activate assistance.

Early the following Monday morning, local volunteer peer support was made available to all Galveston District employees.

So, what is CISM and how did it work in Galveston? The Corps CISM program is a nationwide, voluntary, comprehensive system of services, including education and outreach, designed to achieve several objectives such as preventing and alleviating the symptoms of traumatic stress disorder. CISM exists for Corps employees who encounter significant stressful events that generate unusually strong emotions.

The SWD CISM team, managed under Chris Smith of Little Rock District, coordinated both professional mental health provider services (grief counseling) under the district's Employee Assistance Program and peer support assistance. The team offered one-on-one or group debriefing sessions to manage employees' initial grief, lessen the impact, and facilitate recovery.

A major component of the program

is that all information shared during one-on-one sessions and debriefings is kept confidential; no notes are taken so employees may feel comfortable relating their experiences.

What happens in a debriefing session? CISM peer supporters and health care professionals help Corps employees deal with their emotional responses to traumatic incidents, such as the death of an employee. A well-trained team conducts a session that lasts no longer than one hour. Attendees might include doctors, nurses, social workers, chaplains, and any others involved in the event. "A lot of tissues get passed around at these sessions" says Chris Smith. This is not a finger-pointing process but rather a forum where people talk about what they think and feel. It's a simple way to start to work through feelings, to look for ways to deal with them and then come to closure.

What the Galveston leadership did was to take a proactive step to help employees deal with their grief. They opted to provide early intervention, and it made a big difference. Employees were thankful and commented that "management cared." CISM is a natural extension of the Corps mission to help others. Galveston clearly provides evidence that leaders want to take care of their people, and CISM is a tool to help them do that.

The Corps CISM program was officially instituted on May 15, 2006. Today it consists of 56 trained volunteer peer supporters ready to respond at any time if called. It is important for Corps employees to know about this confidential program and to know that help is available.

As we all know, stuff happens -- sometimes terrible stuff. It is normal to have a stress reaction, and it helps to talk about it. CISM can help you get over it.

If you are ever in need of a CISM specialist, call one of the Corps National

Operations Center civilian contacts, Mark Roderick at 618-724-2493 or Larry Bogue at 469-487-7062.

In a major disaster like Hurricane Katrina or Rita, the CISM specialists are assigned to the Emergency Management as "first responders."

You can find more information about CISM at <http://corpslakes.usace.army.mil/employees/cism/cism.html>



Full Speed

continued from previous page

fiscal year, for many of us, it marks the beginning of a new school year as well. Remember, as drivers we need to use extra caution in and around schools. Obey the school zone speed limits, use extra caution at school crosswalks and obey crossing guards. Watch for school buses loading and unloading students. Stop when you see the red lights flashing. Keep an eye out for children darting out between cars and into intersections, and don't use cell phones while in school zones.

Also, remind your children to look both ways before crossing the street, obey all traffic signals and crossing guards and to walk with friends. If they ride a bike to school, ensure they learn and obey bike safety rules, their bikes are in proper working condition and to always wear a helmet.

Let's continue to keep our deployed members and their families in our thoughts and bring this year to a close together, and take time to enjoy our accomplishments with our team members as well as our families.

Bernier and Morris receive honors from Society of American Military Engineers

Megan Murphey
Pacesetter Contributor

Alain Bernier and Bob Morris were recently honored for their dedication to the engineering profession when they joined The Society of American Military Engineer's Academy of Fellows. The association reserves the title of "Fellow" for highly esteemed members of the organization who have been chosen due to their outstanding service to SAME and to their profession as a whole. Both men were inducted to their new ranks at the society's 2008 Investiture Ceremony in Minneapolis, Minn. The event was held on May 20 in the Great Hall of The Depot, a historic hotel and banquet facility in downtown Minneapolis. Bernier and Morris took the Fellow's pledge to support the organization's mission and to be models and mentors for other engineers. The Academy of Fellows is composed of over 600 outstanding SAME members, 27 of which were inducted at this year's ceremony.

SAME is a professional organization that was established following World War I to provide architects, engineers and builders with the opportunity to develop business contacts and to unite these groups in order to improve individual and collective capabilities for national security.

SAME is broken down into a worldwide network of regional divisions, called "posts," in order to facilitate closer community relationships across the large organization. Morris is a member of the Fort Worth Post, and Bernier is a member of the post in Dallas. In order to become a Fellow, an SAME member must be nominated by colleagues from his or her post who prepare an application packet. Nominees must have been SAME members for a minimum of ten years and have exemplary service to the organization and to their fields. A national committee then selects the members who will be invited to join the Academy.

Morris joined SAME in 1979 and has held many important positions for the Fort Worth Post, including president and president-elect. He currently serves as chairperson of the Past Presidents and Fellows Council. Morris dedicated 25 years to

active duty as a topographic and combat engineer for the military. He is the Base Realignment and Closure program manager for Fort Worth District, where he works on joint service agreements for San Antonio area construction programs.

Alain Bernier has served the Dallas Post of SAME as an officer and as treasurer since joining in 1995. He has also helped the post with financial matters and with the Scholarship Foundation. Bernier currently works for Facilities Branch as the national programming manager for the Department of Homeland Security's Engineering Construction Support Office. His contributions to the field of engineering include several published articles and professional development presentations.

In reaching this new height of professionalism in their engineering careers, Bernier and Morris will be expected to uphold the SAME values of integrity, patriotism and public service.



Alain Bernier



Bob Morris



The work of the Regulatory Community of Practice Corpswide was recently applauded by Assistant Secretary of the Army for Civil Works John Paul Woodley, Jr., and Director of Civil Works Steven Stockton. In this photo, much of Tulsa District's Regulatory Office is pictured shortly after receiving their recognition. From left, Col. Anthony Funkhouser, David Manning, Shane Charlson, Dale Davidson, Bryan Taylor, Helen Williams, Marcus Ware, Ed Parisotto, Michael Ware, Timothy Hartsfield, and Jamie Hyslop.

Interior secretary takes pride in Murphy for taking pride in America

Melanie Ellis
Pacesetter Staff

Dorie Murphy, volunteer coordinator, Trinity Regional Project, was recognized as a 2008 Take Pride in America National Award recipient at a ceremony July 18 in Washington, D.C. One of 15 recipients, Murphy was recognized for her public lands appreciation and stewardship efforts while working as a park ranger at Bardwell Lake. Take Pride in America is a national service initiative that promotes the appreciation and stewardship of public lands and is active in all 50 states.

Secretary of the Interior Dirk Kempthorne presented



recipients with their awards at the ceremony. He stated in a news release that, "This is a remarkable group of volunteers. These men and women have left lasting legacies of service to our

public lands and truly show the impact that a committed group of volunteers can make on the environment and lands around them."

Murphy developed and organized volunteer

opportunities in and around Bardwell Lake that were specifically targeted toward the project's missions and goals. Volunteers, working under her leadership and supervision, cleared a backlog of maintenance, implemented preventative maintenance for park facilities and equipment, and upgraded facilities around the lake.

Murphy came to work for the Corps from the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department and is now working for the Trinity Regional Office as the volunteer coordinator.

The Fort Worth District uses volunteers at most lakes to help maintain park facilities and educate the public on water safety and the missions of the Corps.

Gerich reaches career milestone

Megan Murphey
Pacesetter Contributor

Fort Worth District's Engineering and Construction Division is proud to welcome Zach Gerich as its newest professional engineer. Gerich has been with the Corps since the summer of 2003.

He obtained his professional registration on June 10 and is now formally able to refer to himself as an "engineer." Becoming licensed is an important step in the career of any engineer and shows dedication to the field. "Having your professional title gives you more responsibility when designing," Gerich said.

He went on to explain that professional registration is a long and difficult process. In order for an engineer to become a PE, he or she must pass a series of tests. The first is taken as an undergraduate and called the Engineer in Training. Once the individual has passed the EIT and obtained a bachelor's degree, the candidate must spend four years working under the supervision of a licensed engineer. After this time period has passed, the person is eligible to apply for the PE exam. A board reviews the application and decides if the candidate is eligible to take the test based on work

history and design portfolio. The professional registration exam is composed of civil engineering and structural design sections. This day-long test is one of the most important events in the life of an up-and-coming engineer.

"Obtaining my PE is a major milestone in my career," said Gerich. "It was a huge relief to know that I passed the test!" Gerich currently works with John VanLeeuwen and his team in the Structural Design Section. He is pursuing his master's degree in structural engineering at the University of Texas at Arlington.



Zach Gerich
Professional Engineer

Family Readiness -- Report on Recommendations

Anna Marie Cox
Special to the Pacesetter

In a recent email to all employees from Lt. Gen. Van Antwerp concerning the Army Family Action Plan, he wrote:

"AFAP is a forum to raise unresolved issues of concern and make recommendations to improve the total Army Family quality of life. Anyone can submit an issue to AFAP. Whether you are a Soldier, Civilian, or Family member, you may provide your thoughts about where improvements should be made in Army programs.

"The process really does work - in fact, in the past 24 years, 633 issues identified in the AFAP process have driven 101 legislative changes, 147 Department of Defense Army policy and regulatory changes and 165 improved programs and services.

"We are revitalizing our participation. We want to build a robust AFAP capacity within USACE over the coming months, and will keep you informed of progress.

"As a first step to increased USACE participation, we plan to submit issues of concern for an upcoming Army-wide AFAP conference to be held early next year. We are interested in hearing from you with

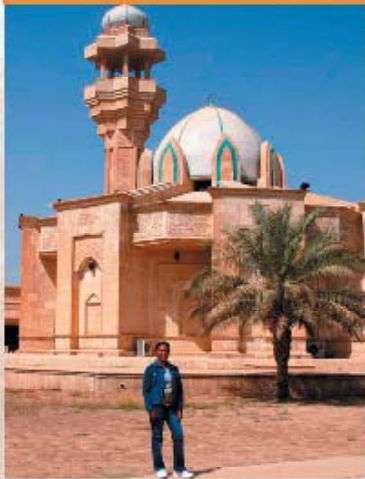
issues that you believe would be valuable for the Army to consider. Remember, the focus should be on making things work better for everyone, Soldiers, Civilians, or Families."

He also included a website link that could be used for submitting issues. There was only a short span of time – about 2 weeks – but over 300 issues were submitted!!! Those were narrowed down initially to 75 and then further narrowed down by USACE HQ to 13 which were presented to the Executive Steering Committee (comprised of the division commanders' spouses, Senior Executive

See **Family Planning** page 38



Sandy Nixon tries the MNC-I Chief of Staff's chair in Baghdad's Al Faw Palace HQ and visits the mosque on Victory Base.



Postcards from Iraq

Witness to incredible projects

Sandy Nixon, Procurement Technician,
Gulf Region Division Central District HQ,
U.S. Army Corp of Engineers (USACE), Baghdad, Iraq



My tour here in Baghdad has been for six months. There are not enough words to explain the incredible experience of witnessing the numerous USACE projects that are being constructed here in Iraq. I did not get an opportunity to go "outside the wire" (outside of the Victory Base Complex where I work and live) to actually see the rebuilding and the construction of the Iraqi communities. But working in the Gulf Region Division Central District (GRC) Contracting Division, I was constantly aware of the many projects that were going on like the building of schools, improvement of water treatment plants and electrical projects.

The many people who volunteer to help in the rebuilding of Iraq are amazing; the time and sacrifices they make each and every day to complete projects and to ensure Iraqis have a better quality of life is incredible. In addition to what is going on outside the wire, the GRC Contracting Division where I work has a Contracting Team that is dedicated to making sure that these projects are solicited and awarded on short timelines.

In addition to all the long hours and the hard work, the GRC Team Morale Welfare and Recreation Committee (of which I am a member) is continually planning and coordinating events to help keep morale at a high level, creating a positive and less stressful atmosphere. The events are always great and well planned. I will miss the GRC Team.

I would not trade this experience in for anything and can't wait to share what I have learned and experienced with family, friends, and coworkers back at home.

To my family, friends, and coworkers I would like to say THANK YOU. Your love, support, prayers, emails and care packages meant a lot, again, thank you.

Sandy

For more information on challenging GRC jobs in Iraq visit: <http://epnlwapp.belvoir.army.mil/cse-gwot/>

At Baghdad's "Flintstone Village," built for Saddam's grandchildren, Sandy looks over the nearby lake.



Occupant Emergency Plan has answers

Tammy L. Moody
Pacesetter Staff

What would you do if disaster struck while you were at work? Little Rock District has an Occupant Emergency Plan that provides information and procedures for emergencies such as fire, severe weather and earthquakes. The plan is geared toward personnel in the Federal Building, although many steps can be used in any work setting throughout the district.

If you discover a fire:

Immediately pull a fire alarm and notify your building manager or coordinator and give the exact location of the fire.

When you hear the fire alarm:

- (1) Obey the instructions of your office safety monitor or supervisor.
- (2) Leave office doors closed but unlocked (Except critical areas that must be kept locked).
- (3) If your building has stairs, descend them in an orderly manner.
- (4) Avoid crowding and undue haste.
- (5) Stay in formation until you exit the building.
- (6) Go immediately to your designated assembly point. Once there, report to your supervisor to ensure accountability.
- (7) Keep the immediate area around the building clear for emergency vehicles. If you have security guards for your building they will control re-entry.

Severe Weather and Tornado Alert:

- (1) A warning alarm will sound. When this warning is given, take immediate cover.
- (2) People in exterior rooms should immediately move to interior rooms or to middle hallways, closing doors securely behind them to protect from flying glass and debris.
- (3) People on the first floor should immediately move to the basement through the stairways. People in high-rises should go to the elevator lobbies to get away from windows.
- (4) Wait until the all clear signal is given.

Earthquakes:

The New Madrid Fault Zone lies along a zigzag seismic zone from Cairo, Ill., southwest to New Madrid, Mo., then southeast to Ridgely, Tenn., and from Caruthersville, Mo., southwest to Marked Tree, Ark. A strong possibility exists for a future major to great earthquake.

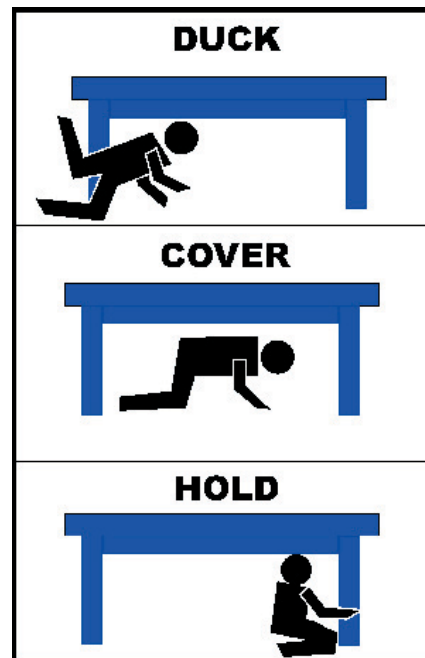
On a hypothetical Mercalli Intensity Scale Map included in the Occupant Emergency Plan, Little Rock could feel an intensity VI, which is defined as felt by all with many frightened as well as some heavy furniture moved with a few instances of falling plaster and slight structural damage.

Poplar Bluff, Mo., on the other hand could experience an VIII, which is defined as having slight damage to specially designed structures, considerable damage in ordinary substantial

buildings with partial collapse, and great damage to poorly built structures.

To keep as safe as possible during an earthquake:

- (1) The greatest danger is falling objects. Stay calm. If you are inside stay inside, do not run outside. (Hazards outside could be vehicles out of control, falling electrical lines and building trim or decorative brick/stone work falling.)
- (2) Stand or crouch in a strong supported doorway, or get under



- a sturdy table or desk and hold on to it. If it moves, you move with it. You can also brace yourself in an inside corner of the house or office.
- (3) Stay away from windows or glass that could shatter, cabinets that could open and release their contents, or objects that could fall on you such as pictures hanging on walls, filing cabinets and bookcases.
- (4) If in a high-rise building stay in the building on the same floor, and do

not use the elevators. Do not be surprised if the electricity goes out, or if the sprinkler systems go on, and remember the shaking varies from building to building and from floor to floor. Lower floors will shake rapidly, much like smaller buildings, while on the upper floors, movement will be slower, but the building will move farther from side to side. You might feel dizzy and be unable to walk.

- (5) If driving, pull over to the side of the road and stop. Avoid overpasses and power lines and stay inside your vehicle until the shaking stops.
 - (6) If outdoors, move to a clear area away from trees, signs, buildings, or downed electrical wires and poles.
 - (7) Wait until the earthquake and possible building and object movement is over before you leave your cover.
- These tips are to get you thinking about what to do during these types of emergencies. If you are unsure of your office's procedures, ask your safety officer or your emergency management team member for a refresher or a safety drill.

Fort Worth names Administrative Employee of the Year

Megan Murphey
Pacesetter Staff

Each year, the Fort Worth District recognizes an administrative professional who has demonstrated exemplary service to the Corps and to the profession as a whole. This year's recipient is Kelly Beck, an Operations Division team member who has been a shining example



Kelly Beck

to the Corps of Engineers for more than 24 years.

The award is given each spring when the district celebrates Administrative Professionals Day. Every year, the district marks the occasion by hosting a luncheon for

the local administrative support team members and their colleagues. This year's event was held May 25 at the Hilton in downtown Fort Worth. Guests dined on chicken and looked on as Col. Martin presented Beck with a glass plaque depicting the Commander's Coin for her achievements.

"It was a great honor to be nominated," she said, "and an even greater honor to actually be selected."

When asked how to best describe her profession, Beck summed it up by saying that administrative professionals are the glue that holds their divisions and offices together. They are assistants to their supervisors in all aspects of office functions including timekeeping, budget, and human resources. Beck is appreciative of her award and thankful that there are so many outstanding administrative professionals in the Corps.

"It is always a pleasure to work with the other administrative support personnel throughout the district," said Beck.

Texas City

Continued from page 16

material from deepening the channel, as well as maintenance material from the channel, to be used beneficially. About 1,000 acres of emergent marsh will be created as part of the project, according to Weston.

"Using dredged material beneficially adds another positive element to this critical project," Weston said, "expanding the advantages to the local community. It is a winning situation from every aspect."



Col. Funkhouser looks on as Tenkiller Lead Ranger Don Dixon visits with one of the young visitors to the Oklahoma State Capitol for Water Appreciation Day.

Appreciating water

In May, the Oklahoma Water Resources Board hosted Water Appreciation Day at the state capitol. The event presented a unique opportunity for groups to demonstrate the importance of Oklahoma's water resources and provide information on their water management, conservation, and educational programs for state legislators and other government officials.

Don Dixon of Operations Division and Maria Wegner-Johnson of Planning Division manned an information booth and display where water safety, Corps projects, and telling the Corps story were the focus. Safety items were distributed to many students and visitors.



The mayor of Yukon, Okla., Ward Larson, visited Tulsa District July 29 to sign the Project Cooperation Agreement which formally signifies commitment by the Corps and the City to participate in cost sharing on the construction project which will upgrade Yukon's domestic water supply system.

Little Rock, Wal-Mart team for water safety

Little Rock District has partnered with the Wal-Mart Supercenter in Dardanelle, Ark., to implement a life jacket loaner program that will help improve visitor safety at two swim beaches at Nimrod Lake in time for the busy Labor Day weekend.

Wal-Mart donated \$100 worth of life jackets, and the Corps purchased \$200 worth of life jackets. The life jackets range in size from infant to adult X-large, and they are outfitting the life jacket loaner stations at the swim beaches at Carden Point and County Line parks.

They can be used free of charge by going to the loaner station and picking out a properly-fitting life jacket for use while at the beach and returning it to the station before leaving for the day.

“The goal of these stations is drowning prevention,” Nimrod Lake Park Ranger Lisa Owens said. “We hope by making these life jackets readily available, people will use them to keep themselves and their children safe. If one drowning can be prevented by making these life jackets available, they have done their job.”



Willie Davie, a park ranger at Nimrod Lake, displays the life jacket loaner station at the Carden Point Swim Beach. (U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Photo)

Excellence

Continued from page 9

Rhonda Fields, Paul Webb, Helen Landry, Jim Snyder, Brandon Westcott, Dale Allen, Chuck Morse, Will Corley, and Helen Smith. LTG Wilson and BG Cox visited the site and were impressed with how well the ADA School has progressed. Bob Owens did a great job briefing the many visitors and showing how they have been able to keep the project ahead of schedule. Thanks for everyone's tremendous efforts!

We have a few moves to announce. Earl Groves is our new chief of Operations Division and Shauna Martinez was recently selected to lead our Contracting Division. Mona Willig was selected as our new deputy for Engineering and Construction Division, and Mike Abate has taken a six-month developmental position as the deputy for operations. With the movements of Mona and Mike,

we want to congratulate our two newest acting chiefs of our civil and military programs John Marnell and Steve Harmon, respectively. I also want to recognize our two latest DA interns from E&C, Michael McGill and John Prince. Welcome to the Tulsa Team.

We also have several employees who were nominated or received various honors and achievements. Eddie Mattioda passed the PMP test and officially received Level 2 Certification. Dan Brueggenjohann was Tulsa District's nominee for the USACE Lt. Gen. John W. Morris Civilian of the Year Award. Lisa Lawson was selected as our Native American project manager. Debbie Overstreet received the 2008 Affiliates Award for outstanding contribution and dedication to the advancement of the legal assistant

profession through volunteer service to NALA affiliated associations. She also completed the Leadership Enhancement and Preparation program, a 12-month course of education and training to prepare paralegal leaders of the future.

Finally, Tulsa District continues to lead the way in support to GWOT. To all our deployed employees and their families, we look forward to your safe return home. If you get a chance, read the articles in this issue of the *Pacesetter* on the Family Readiness PDT that recently met. Thanks for all you do.

You can always count on Tulsa Teamwork!

Camp Cavett, kids' favorite -- rangers too

Grady Dobbs
Park Ranger

Camp Cavett, located on Lake Texoma, caters to special needs youngsters. It's a camp where these children "fit in" because the others around them understand what adversity really is. Many are survivors of cancer or major operations.

It is heart warming to be able to put a smile on faces of these campers. Rangers Tommy Holder, Isaac Martin, and Grady Dobbs took five youngsters fishing on July 11. Two days later, rangers Dwaine Mcbee, Sarah Noel, and Lindsey Tatum took four more.

Texoma Rangers have assisted with Camp Cavett for several years. Everyone involved this year said they would like the

Photos by Grady Dobbs



"Gearhead," a fishing guide who donated his time for the day helps a camper remove a fish.



Day's Catch -- the people who fished with Rangers Mcbee, Noel, and Tatum stop on the bank to show their results.

In July, Col. Funkhouser, U.S. Representative Nancy Boyda (KS-2), and Kansas Water Office Director Tracy Streeter met to discuss John Redmond Reservoir maintenance issues and the Jacobs Creek logjam. The group then toured the area by helicopter to get a better understanding of the ongoing problem. Shown from left, Tracy Streeter, Rep. Boyda, Col. Funkhouser, and John Roberts.



Committee addresses safety

The purpose of the Hydropower committee is to initiate and maintain a safety and health program that provides systematic policies, procedures, and practices to recognize and protect employees from occupational and health hazards. The program includes four major elements: management commitment and employee involvement, worksite analysis, hazard prevention and control, and safety and health training.

In coordination with the Tulsa District Safety Office, this team uses the Operations Division SAFE Program Inspection to conduct annual inspections of each Tulsa District hydroelectric powerplant.

In the first year alone, 80 deficiencies were found and corrected utilizing the SAFE Inspection Program. The team is comprised of representatives from nine different offices. All facets of disciplines have made this team very effective. It is the goal of each member to promote safety awareness during normal day-to-day operations at each facility by working closely with the Tulsa District Safety Office to ensure that all safety requirements are met.

As a result of this team effort, the overall efficiency of the organization and specifically hydropower has improved significantly. Employees have benefited and have a safer working environment.



Hydropower Safety Committee Members

Broken Bow Powerhouse: Steve Timmons, Hank Farley, George Worsham

Denison Powerhouse: Brian Echols, Ray Andrews

Eufaula Powerhouse: Johnny Bray, Mike Jernigen

Fort Gibson Powerhouse: Ray Harrison, Dora Karnes, Dale Cole

Keystone Powerhouse: Sam Patterson, Justin Boyle

Robert S. Kerr Powerhouse: Steve Mills, Mike Rhoads, Larry Lawless

Tenkiller Powerhouse: Glenn Scarce, Shone Couch, Charlie Smith

Tulsa District Office: Tonya Holt, Jeff Miller, James Bavido, Lance Perdue

Webbers Falls Powerhouse: Jamie Caudle, Billy Fite

Partee graduates, moves from “good to great”

Cheryl Partee, budget officer, Southwestern Division headquarters, recently graduated from Syracuse University with a dual master’s and a Department of Defense Financial Management professional certification.

Her graduation culminates her 14-month participation in the Defense Comptrollership Program.

“Cheryl’s success in the DCP certainly makes her a star in by book,” said Wesley Miller, the Corps’ director, Resource Management. “Fourteen months is quite a commitment of time and effort, both on the part of the attendees and those who sacrificed to make the attendance possible.”

Partee has served as SWD’s budget officer since April 2006.

Code talkers’ legacy lives on

Sue Morris of Tulsa District’s Executive Office has been quietly gaining a reputation as an authority on the Comanche Code Talkers. She is a direct descendent of several Comanche Code Talkers. Thirteen code talkers went overseas in World War II; Morris is related to five or six of them.

Earlier this year, Morris was the featured speaker at the Defense Contract Management Agency’s National American Indian Heritage Month program in Boston, Mass., where she spoke on the Comanche Code Talkers. And, this summer while at the Society of American Indian Government Workers Conference, she was filmed by the Veterans Administration to get her reflections on the same topic.

Morris has often graced the district’s official ceremonies with her heartfelt rendering of the Lord’s Prayer in Comanche sign language. She is a full-blood member of the Comanche Nation of Oklahoma and is Tulsa District’s American Indian Special Emphasis Program Manager. She is a member of the Comanche Nation Fair Board and serves as secretary of the Cameron University American Indian Alumni Association.



Sue Morris

Family Readiness Group, Installment Two

Col. Anthony Funkhouser
Special to the Pacesetter

Welcome back to the Southwestern Division Family Readiness Forum. Many members of our team continue to deploy in support of the Global War on Terror and other CONUS requirements. Our thoughts and prayers continue to go out to them and their families as we await their safe return. I have been fortunate to receive a number of emails from our deployed employees recently and they report they continue to appreciate the developmental opportunities their mission provides and the people they are supporting.

We have plenty to report in this issue as the Family Readiness Group and the Army Family Action Plan Project Development Teams recently met at this year's Senior Leader Conference in Pittsburg, Pa. The PDTs jumped right into their groups and continued to make progress in supporting our Civilian employees and their families. Lt. Gen. VanAntwerp addressed the group and reinforced why this subject is so important to our leadership. He highlighted that it is a matter of necessity and opportunity. Necessity because we have over 800 employees deployed, each with their own challenges and needs for them and their families. It is opportunity because our USACE program is the largest in our history and we may not have the influence or the budget to accomplish what we need to improve our organization. The Corps is taking the initiative to lead the effort to address our Civilian challenges within USACE but more importantly to the Army leadership. Lt. Gen. VanAntwerp also highlighted the fact that Army Strong commercials are about Soldiers and their families but we don't see our Army Civilians represented. His objective is for the Army to provide attention to our Army Civilians and their families as they equally support our Army and our GWOT mission. It is our job in the PDTs to address our employee

and family needs until they are resolved and become institutionalized. We share the same conditions and challenges of any Soldier in our deployed areas so we are looking at the best way to be good stewards for our employees and their families.

USACE provided each of the PDTs with goals prior to the conference and each of the PDTs in turn provided results that will be made available in the after action report. I would like to provide a quick synopsis of what each of the PDTs briefed back to the division commanders.

The Pre-deployment PDT developed a draft deployment handbook for employees and families that will address many frequently asked questions with the most current policies and procedures. Once approved and posted to the Corps website, it will be the basis for divisions and districts to add their annexes as needed. They also plan to make the USACE website the consolidated site with all links and information posted there to



reduce multiple websites with outdated information.

The Deployment/Post Deployment PDT looked at the need for sensitivity training for homestation employees. They also looked at standardizing a return leave and recognition policy. They expanded their view to non-Corps hires (Schedule A) and how we can expedite the hiring process for those that are interested in converting to the Corps after their deployments. Finally, they provided a status on the hiring of the family support coordinators at the division. They anticipate bringing on board ten personnel to fill the eight

divisions, HQ USACE and TAC by this fall. They will initially be contract positions for a couple of years until they are added to our TDA. USACE will also look to distribute a 1-800 number for employees and families to access for resource related questions.

The Casualty Assistance PDT completed three sections of the deployment handbook: Casualty Reporting, Notification Process, and the Medical Treatment Plan. These were significant in standardizing and ensuring everyone understands the processes and their role to best support our employees and their families. They have also committed to having a dedicated liaison officer at Walter Reed Army Medical Center and to create a family support representative position to assist employee families for injured/wounded employees who transit through the medical system.

The Army Family Action Plan PDT worked with the Executive Steering Committee to review all the submissions sent in by Corps employees and recommended the Army and higher level issues for submission and resolution. We had a short window of time this year for AFAP issue submission, but with everyone's involvement, we still had over 300 issues submitted. The group was able to identify 75 that were DA-level or above issues. The USACE-, division-, and district-level issues will be distributed and dealt with at the appropriate level of command. Of the 75 major issues, the group was able to pare them down to 13 major areas. After reviewing the 13, we identified some that were already being addressed, some that needed additional study and 5 that we could submit on behalf of all employees to the national AFAP steering committee. The USACE AFAP team will develop information papers and submit the five issues. The first issue was that DOD Civilians and their family members are

See ***Family Forum*** next page

Family Forum

Continued from previous page

not afforded the same resources available to the military and their families. For instance, employee spouses cannot gain access to available resources such as ArmyOneSource Website or facilities on military installations that may be near them. The second is getting tax exempt status for employees deployed to GWOT similar to contractors. The third is getting Armed Forces Network television closed captioned in theater. Many military and civilian employees have hearing loss and closed captioning would be beneficial. The fourth is developing a policy to deconflict assignments for cross-component military families where one member may be active component while the spouse is a reservist or national guard. The last issue is the death gratuity for deployed employees. Current policy for next of kin is 100 percent in the death gratuity but when the beneficiary is a non-family member the death gratuity is

a maximum of 50 percent. These issues will be submitted to the Department of the Army this winter and we will report progress in this *Pacesetter* forum.

Thanks again to all who submitted issues this year. Special thanks to our employees that are currently deployed, our thoughts are with you and your families.



Safety tips to remember

- * Learn to swim.
- * Watch your children closely.
- * Always swim with a buddy.
- * Swim only in designated swim areas.
- * Don't overestimate your swimming abilities.
- * Alcohol does not mix with swimming or boating.
- * Don't rely on water toys such as tubes and air mattresses to keep you afloat.
- * Never jump or dive into water when you do not know whether an obstruction might be under the surface.

For more information about water safety, visit the Little Rock District Water Safety web page at www.swl.usace.army.mil/watersafety/index.html. At this web site, you will find many safety suggestions.

Of interest to children, Bobber the Water Safety Dog is a national character for the Corps similar to Smokey Bear for the Forest Service.

At www.bobber.info, you can find entertaining cartoons featuring Bobber the Water Safety Dog for your children to watch. While you are at the site, your children can download coloring sheets and play a game that simulates locking a boat through one of the locks on the Arkansas River.

Be safe and wear your life jacket when you are in or around the water.

Family Planning

Continued from page 30

Service spouses, and the Corps' command sergeant major's spouse, among others) for discussion and rewording. From this group, the following issues and recommendations were sent to Department of the Army for inclusion in the next Army AFAP Convention.

ISSUE: Civilian Deployment Process

Scope: During all phases of deployment, DOD civilians and their family members are not afforded the same resources available to the military and their families. These beneficial resources, developed and implemented by the military, are not available to civilian family members. Lack of access to these resources hinders informed decision making regarding deployment and family preparedness.

Recommendation:

- o Educate and ensure that family members may access (and/or be made aware of) the Military One Source, Army Community Service, and other services.
- o Provide temporary ID to families during deployment of sponsor that authorizes access to resources.

ISSUE: Dual Military Families

Scope: There is no formal system to ensure consideration of dual military assignments when crossing component lines between Active Component/Army Reserve/Active Guard and Reserve. Cross talk between components does not occur during the assignment process. This impacts retention and family stability

Recommendation:

- o Require that Soldiers note on their Enlisted Record Brief/Officer Record Brief that they are married to a Soldier in another component.
- o Develop a joint database of Dual Military Spouses across all components to be considered in the assignment and deployment process.

ISSUE: Death Gratuity for Civilians Killed in a Military Contingency Operation

Scope: Deployed DOD civilians who

have no immediate family members may designate a non-related beneficiary; however, only up to 50 percent of the gratuity can be paid to said beneficiary. In accordance with title 5 USC Section 8102a(d)(E)(4), the balance of the gratuity remains with the Department of Labor. Unless there is an amendment to the law, no more than 50 percent of the amount payable as a death gratuity will ever be payable on behalf of the deceased.

Recommendation: Amend above section to allow 100 percent of the death gratuity to go to the designated person(s) if there are no immediate surviving family members.

ISSUE: Armed Forces Network Television – Lack of Closed Caption Programs

Scope: Not all programs on Armed Forces Network are closed captioned. Hearing loss due to combat and other injuries in military and civilian employees creates an increasing need for closed captioned programming on AFN. Hearing impaired viewers are unable to take full advantage of AFN programming.

Recommendation: Provide closed captioning for AFN television broadcasts.

ISSUE: Taxes During Deployment

Scope: Deployed civilians pay taxes on all earned income, while Soldiers and contractors receive tax relief on a portion of their income. This results in disparity between contractors

and DOD civilians who serve together as members of the same team. This has a financial impact and is a disincentive to civilian deployments and retention of civilians.

Recommendation: Provide DOD civilians the same tax exemptions as contractors.

So you may be asking yourself, "What happened to the other 295 issues?" Here's the answer: if an issue can be solved at the district, division or headquarters level within the Corps, it is forwarded to the appropriate command for action. If there is already legislation making its way through the system, then that issue is set aside. Also, an AFAP issue cannot be sent to DA twice within a three-year period. Only those issues that cannot be

answered within the Corps and those that meet the AFAP requirements of scope and recommendation are submitted to Department of the Army.

Next year, you will be given another chance to submit issues in the AFAP process. There will be a larger window of opportunity and, judging from the response this year, should prove to be a success.

Pacesetter Points

Congratulations

Little Rock's **Winn Hargis** began working in June as the new project operations manager at Greers Ferry Lake.

Natural Resources Management Team Leader **Dale Leggett**, was the Little Rock District and Southwestern Division nominee for the American Recreation Coalition Legends Award. The ARC presents its Legends Awards to seven federal managers in recognition of their outstanding work to improve outdoor recreation experiences and opportunities for the American people.

John Marnell, operations project manager for Tulsa District's northern area, has been elected to serve as an at-large director on the board of directors for the National Society for Park Resources.

Shirley Boldon-Bruce of Little Rock District was appointed by Governor Mike Beebe to serve as a member of the State Board of Architects.

Daniel Ring, son of **Stephen Ring** of Little Rock's Air Force Base Resident Office, graduated with honors from Cabot High School May 16.

Bob Stubbs, logistics liaison officer, joined SWD in July. Stubbs works for the Corps Logistics Agency, Millington, Tenn., with a duty station in Dallas. He previously served in Tulsa District.

Esta Allen was selected as a program analyst, Military Integration Division, Programs Directorate, SWD headquarters in July. Allen previously served SWD in the Business Resources Division, Regional Business Directorate.

See **Points** next page



Points

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Danny Price, son of **Jerri Keith** of Little Rock's Central Arkansas Area Office, made the dean's list at Arkansas State University at Jonesboro.

Manuel Fano, senior regional construction engineer, Regional Business Directorate, is departing SWD headquarters for a new position as chief, Construction Branch, Galveston District. Fano assumes his new duties Aug. 18.

Lindsey Specht, daughter of **Elizabeth Whitmore** of Little Rock's Programs and Project Management Office, made cheerleader at Oak Grove High School.

Hayden Balgavy, son of **John Balgavy** of Little Rock's Design Branch and wife Jane, was elected to attend Boys Nation during the recent Arkansas session of the American Legion's Boys State. He will spend a week in Washington D.C. attending a citizenship and government program designed to instill in each participant a deep loyalty to America while providing practical insight into the operation of the federal government. Participants are high school students who have completed their junior year. Each delegate represents his state as a senator in the structure of a mock senate.

Felicia Fisher's daughter, Candace Brown, graduated from Oklahoma State University this past spring. She just accepted an offer to be a kindergarten teacher (her dream job) at Pawnee Elementary School. Fisher works in Tulsa District's Resource Management Office.

Ted Kerr, Operations and Maintenance account manager, recently joined the Civil Works Integration Division, Programs Directorate, SWD headquarters. Kerr comes to the division from a previous assignment as a project engineer in Rock Island District.

Congratulations to **Bruce Barrett**, chief, Safety and Occupational Health, SWD, and member, Dallas-Fort Worth Field Federal Safety and Health Council, for the Notable Recognition Award the council received from the U.S. Department of Labor for its activities in 2007 to support the Occupational Safety and Health Administration's federal agency program.

Charlotte Waldron assumed a new position as program analyst, Civil Works Integration Division, Programs Directorate, SWD headquarters, in July.

She previously served as the division's administrative and training officer.

Sara Beard, daughter to **James Beard** of Little Rock's Clearwater Lake Project Office, graduated from the College of the Ozarks in Branson and received an award for academic excellence.

Teresa King, deputy FUDS program manager, Military Integration Division, Programs Directorate, joined SWD headquarters in July. King comes to the division from New Orleans District, where she served as a physical scientist. Prior to that, she worked as an environmental scientist and project manager for the Alaska District for more than five years.

The American Red Cross recently presented **John Marnell** of Tulsa District his eight-gallon donor pin. Congratulations and thank you!



Retirements

Larry Hill retired June 3 from Galveston District.

Gerald Voelkel retired July 2 from Galveston District.

Jack Johnson of Little Rock's Natural Resource Management team retired July 31 after more than 38 years of service to the district and the Corps.

Baldev Mann retired July 31 from Galveston District.

Births

Patricia Lutz' son and his wife, Bryan and Trisha, are parents of twins born June 3. Babies: Noah (8lbs 2oz) and Sarah (7lbs 4 oz) Carpenter. Lutz is Tulsa District security officer.

Brenda Kinion's daughter gave birth to a beautiful baby girl June 18 at about 1:15 p.m. Vivian Nola D. arrived at a birthweight of 6 lb, 14 oz, one week ahead of schedule, surprising the proud parents, Erik and Melanie. Kinion works in Tulsa District's Regulatory Division.

Allysa Faith Farley arrived Friday, July 25, at 11:30 a.m. (just in time for lunch), weighing 7 pounds, 11 ounces. Her parents

are Crystal and **Hank Farley** of Broken Bow, Okla., and she has a big sister, Emily. Her daddy is the senior electrician at the Broken Bow Powerhouse.

Congratulations to Debbie and **Brett Cowan!** Their first child, Braden Ray, was born at approximately 4:00 p.m. July 28. Stats: 8 lbs 2 oz., 19-inches long. Cowan is a civil engineer in Tulsa District's Civil Design Section.

Condolences

Kent Dunlap's mother, Robbie J. Dunlap, passed away in early June. Dunlap is manager at Keystone Project Office in Tulsa District.

Kenneth Gaines, brother of Rod Gaines of Little Rock's Design Branch, passed away June 18.

Marilyn Neeley, mother of Little Rock's **Raven Neeley** of the Pine Bluff Project Office, passed away June 19.

Agnes Scott, mother to **Tim Scott** of Little Rock's Regulatory Office, passed away June 22.

Tulsa District retiree **Ernie Howze** passed away June 18.

Billy Warren Jones, father to **George Jones** of Little Rock's Lake Dardanelle Powerhouse, passed away June 25.

Robert "Ben" Boren, an Operations Project Manager, Galveston District, passed away July 4. He began his Corps career in August 2000 as a regulatory specialist in the Regulatory Branch.

Izishill "Ike" Boldon Sr., father to **Shirley Boldon-Bruce** of Little Rock's Programs and Project Management Office, passed away July 6.

Pauline Whitlow, mother-in-law to **Elaine Whitlow** of Little Rock's Hydraulics and Technical Services Branch, passed July 15.

Shirley Ann Bray, mother-in-law to **Lola Holt** of Little Rock's Contracting Division, passed July 22.

Tulsa District retiree **Ruby Been**, 96, died July 24 in Joplin, Mo.

Kathy E. Moore, a program analyst in Programs Management Branch, passed away on July 28. She was the wife of Randy Moore, a project assistant in the Project Management Branch, and had 31 years of federal service. She had been a Galveston District employee since 1996.