

SOUTHWESTERN DIVISION

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The Right People... The Right Time





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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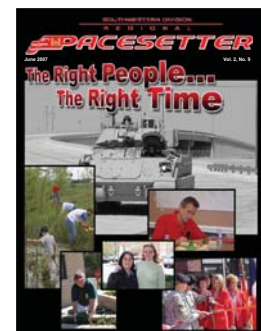
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On the cover: Original graphic illustration by Andre` Mayeaux, Visual Information Specialist, Fort Worth District. This month's submissions for the Pacesetter highlighted so many different activities it was difficult to select one area to feature on the cover. As mentioned in Brig. Gen. Dorko's column, the Southwestern Division demonstrates daily that is has the right people, in the right place, at the right time.





It's all about the right people, in the right place, at the right time

Brig. Gen. Jeffrey J. Dorko
Commander, Southwestern Division

Success is all about people. Our people at every rank and level make the Corps and the Southwestern Division better each day. No matter how complex the challenges, our world-class work force sets the conditions for success day-in and day-out.

We are indeed fortunate to have an abundance of the right people, those who have served our organization well and who are now entering retirement, or those who are taking on new assignments. For, just as the Corps bid farewell to Lt. Gen. Carl Strock and welcomed our new Commander and Chief of Engineers, Lt. Gen. Robert L. Van Antwerp, last month, our Southwestern Division will do the same this month during Change of Command ceremonies in two of our districts. There will be more on these transitions and others a little later in this column.

Also, in late May we welcomed Maj. Gen. Ronald L. Johnson, the Corps' Deputy Commanding General, and his headquarters Command Strategic Review team for our annual azimuth check. CSRs are no longer inspections but rather on-site reviews and dialogue. As I mentioned during my in-brief to the CSR team, I think that much of the benefit achieved from CSRs is through the preparatory work prior to the visit, allowing for open discussions with the team while they are on-site.

We spent two productive days reviewing our strategic management processes to execute Campaign Plan goals, objectives and enablers for the Regional Business Center and USACE 2012, Civil Works, and World-class Work Force.

While we did receive some take-aways, during the CSR out-brief Maj. Gen. Johnson stated that, "SWD is a national leader in regional Water Resources studies; leads the way in collaborative watershed planning; and has many deliberate initiatives to grow, shape and sustain the work force."

June 2007

As I mentioned, we'll experience some transitions in our regional team this month and next.

You've probably heard me say that change is the only constant. And, following his successful stint as Little Rock District's commander, Col. Wally Walters will relinquish command to Col. Ed Jackson, June 28. Col. Jackson comes to the division following his recent completion of the Army War College; Col. Walters' next assignment will be Deputy Director, Strategic Communication Directorate, Joint Staff, the Pentagon.

The next day, June 29, we will join in a

This is a challenging, and exciting time to be a member of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers!

ceremony at Tulsa District where Col. Miro Kurka will complete his dedicated service and Col. Tony Funkhouser will take the leadership reins. Col. Funkhouser also just finished the Army War College; Col. Kurka's next assignment will be as Commander, Afghanistan Engineer District.

I know you will join me in welcoming both of our newest Pacesetters and in extending appreciation to Col. Walters and Col. Kurka for the exceptional leadership they have provided our division.

Another transition, in July, Col. John Minahan, Southwestern Division deputy commander since August 2006, will retire after 26 years of distinguished service to our Army and our nation. As you know, he served as Fort Worth District commander for three years before making the move to division headquarters. His contributions are many and will be long remembered within the division and beyond.

During our first meeting with our new Chief, Lt. Gen. Van Antwerp, he engaged the Corps' senior leaders early on to talk through the Corps' priorities and tenets. As a result, we all know where the Corps is headed and each of us must do our part to make our priorities and tenets a reality.

Our Priorities include: Support for the Global War on Terrorism and expeditionary missions; Enhance quality of support to Soldiers, Civilians, Families, and the Public; Complete transformation of the Theater Engineer Commands; Effectively prepare for and respond to disasters; enable Gulf Coast recovery; and, deliver Military, Civil Works, and Research and Development programs and projects.

Our tenets: Communicate transparently; focus on your mission; team with industry.

You will be hearing and seeing more on these priorities and tenets ... and the Chief has stated that "delivering on them is our Vision!"

This is a challenging, and exciting time to be a member of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers!

And, while it's never easy to say goodbye to those departing our organization, I am confident that the Corps and our Pacesetter division will continue to have the right people, in the right place, at the right time.

Essayons! Army Strong! 🇺🇸

From the desk of Andrea:

Corps of Engineers unites pen pals

Dave Treadway
Nashville District

Eleven-year-old Allison was playing at the home of her grandmother's best friend in Hector, Ark., in 1987 when a balloon landed in the backyard. Attached to the balloon was the name Andrea Jill Ball with an address in Rock, Kan. Andrea had launched the balloon, along with 10 fifth-grade classmates under the direction of her teacher, Mrs. Burdette, hoping finders would contact the senders.

Allison sent a letter to Andrea, which initiated a lifelong diary to which the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers recently added another chapter.

The pair, only a year different in age, shared everything; pictures, school, families, friends, boyfriends, college, marriage, and the trials of growing up.

With birthdays only a month apart, the two developed a unique relationship. "We were each other's diary," asserted Allison, now a ranger at the Corps' Russellville, Ark, project in the Little Rock District. "We asked each other for advice about dating. When we were sick, we told each other what was going on in our lives. It was a written release."

They quickly became fast friends. Several times they planned to meet but schedule conflicts always prevented it. Andrea

went to college at Kansas State University and Allison studied at Arkansas Tech. Plans to attend each others' weddings and graduations didn't work out.

Then their big break finally came.

"I was appointed to the USACE Water Safety Products Development Team," revealed Allison. "Andrea was working in Washington and I was to help design a booth display and then help staff it at the

did I know (in 1987), my 'pen-pal' would become my very dear friend and nearly 20 years later we'd be sitting and having dinner in Washington, D.C.!"

Allison brought along her Mom and newborn daughter Brooke to meet her long-time friend.

"It was great," exclaimed Andrea. "She is already one of my best friends and finally getting to meet face-to-face was icing on the cake."

"When you meet someone for the first time," said Allison, "it might be awkward but Andrea and I weren't strangers. We had so much in common. We had been friends since we were small children. It was like we had always been together. It was a super feeling!"

The water safety team brought us together in 2005 and again this year for our annual meeting in April."

Allison told Andrea, "It was so good to finally hug your neck!"

"It's interesting really how some of the most special people in your lives come into your realm in the craziest ways," concluded Andrea, who is currently the Executive Director of the Convention and Visitors Bureau in Martinsburg, W.Va.

Friends since fifth grade, and nearly age 30 before they got to exchange hugs, they are now making plans for their husbands to meet and continue the odyssey which began by chance when a balloon traveled 400 miles across three states and delivered an invitation to a little girl in Arkansas. 🇺🇸



Photos courtesy of Nashville District

Allison Smedley (left) and Andrea Ball (right) unite in Washington, D.C., April 19 during a break from the USACE Water Safety Products Development Team meeting. Inset photos: Allison (left) and Andrea (right) from 1987, the year they began corresponding.

2005 USACE Engineer Day Picnic!"

The two quickly made plans to finally meet face-to-face after being long-distance friends for nearly 20 years.

"The bizarre thing," recalled Andrea, "is of all the times we wrote, spoke, emailed and chatted and became close friends...we never saw each other in person...until work brought her to Washington. Little

Raise your hand if you're sure ...



Photo courtesy of Fort Worth District

Keith Bond, Fort Worth District Safety Specialist, talks to students at the City of Fort Worth's Waterama event. Students visited different booths to learn about water safety, water conservation, and environmental impacts. Students visiting the Corps booths participated in activities like Build a Boat which teaches children how to properly load a boat. Students also watched the new Bobber the Water Safety Dog cartoon. 🇺🇸

How are we going to get over there ...

Project Delivery Team works to link Fort Bliss, airfield with new bridge

Ed Rivera
Pacesetter Staff

When Fort Bliss, Texas, is mentioned, the word “expansion” follows closely behind. With the expected growth on the fort during the next several years, an additional bridge was needed to link the main post to the major expansion areas of Biggs Army Airfield and East Biggs.

“This design-build project is a Tactical Vehicle Bridge which crosses over Airport Road, one of El Paso’s main roadways,” said Michael Bormann, project manager and leader of the Tactical Vehicle Bridge at Haan Road Project Delivery Team.

“The vehicle bridge creates a new arterial roadway between Fort Bliss and Biggs AAF which will accommodate two lanes of heavy military tactical vehicles on four lanes of civilian-type traffic as well as pedestrians.”

The bridge is expected to handle increased military traffic volume to and from training ranges and also allow for quick access to the commissary, food courts, shopping, and other Fort Bliss on-base activities for Soldiers and their families living in the Biggs AAF housing complexes.

A large PDT was formed in order to bring the project to fruition. To meet a July 21, 2006 award date, the project required Herculean efforts by the entire team consisting of members from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Fort Bliss, Texas Department of Transportation, and architectural and engineering teams.

By acknowledging several assumptions, constraints, and challenges early in project development, the PDT kept the project on track during construction and drove the project to successfully meet the Army’s needs.

Design and construction challenges included relocation and raising of overhead power lines, demolition of an operational tactical equipment shop hardstand with environmental protection features and sleeving of an active 20-inch water main that serviced a large portion of Fort Bliss without shutting down the main.

Additionally, coordination and traffic control with a large TxDOT road project located directly next to the bridge site had to be resolved and executed without road



Photo courtesy of Fort Worth District

Although completed, the Haan Bridge won’t be open to civilian traffic until adjacent road work by the Texas Department of Transportation is completed.

closures and with minimal cost and time impacts.

“Extraordinary efforts were made by the Fort Bliss Directorate of Public Works, Fort Bliss Department of Energy, El Paso Electric Company, Rio Grande Electric Cooperative, Fort Bliss Water Services, TxDOT, the contractor, J. D. Abrams, and USACE to complete the coordination, approvals, and actions required to quickly and successfully overcome these obstacles,” said Bormann.

The project was initiated concurrently with other Fort Bliss Expansion projects and several other TxDOT projects. Additional projects included a main intersection at the entrance to Biggs AAF and a new Inner Loop Freeway Project being built through the installation to accommodate the expansion.

According to Bormann, TxDot’s origin project was a two-lane bridge for civilian traffic. However, the two-lane Vehicle Bridge in TxDOT’s project would not meet the tactical needs of Army Transformation.

By teaming up with TxDOT, the Project Manager was able to develop an agreement whereas TxDOT would delay Notice to Proceed for its two-lane Haan Bridge until

the award date in July.

At that time, TxDOT would have to commit to the construction, or suffer penalties for the delay. If the Military Construction Tactical Bridge project was awarded, the agreement was for TxDOT to modify its contract, delete the civilian version of Haan Bridge, then utilize the TxDOT construction funds for additional roadway construction on Haan Road.

The project construction commenced in August 2006 and was completed in May 2007, two months ahead of the TxDOT Intersection Project. J.D. Abrams submitted a proposal with a 300 calendar-day duration, which was accepted at time of contract award, reducing the planned duration of the project by more than two months.

Bormann said that weather led to a nine-day extension but remarkably there was no cost growth.

“For the PDT to endure the initial planning and execution phase challenges makes this zero-dollar cost growth an outstanding and a remarkable milestone met by the team,” he said. 🇺🇸

Vacations take on new meaning for West

Little Rock employee helps with disaster relief during downtime

Tammy Reed
Pacesetter Staff

Since 2005, a significant percentage of Southwestern Division employees have served on Corps recovery missions along the Gulf Coast. They have witnessed first hand how many still struggle to rebuild their lives and homes. One Little Rock employee has found a different way to “get his hands dirty” and help storm victims put their homes and neighborhoods back in order.

Royce West, a civil engineer and Computer Aided Design and Drafting system manager in Engineering and Construction Division, using his own vacation time, has made four trips to the region so far to help clear fallen trees, rebuild homes and restore a neighborhood school playground.

He explained that it started when he and his family helped prepare and serve food to evacuees who ended up in North Little Rock. He talked to them about their experiences and decided to do more.

“Meeting those people and listening to their stories was what moved me to seek out some other way I could help,” West said. “I have been involved in service type projects throughout my life, but my only prior involvement with disasters had been to write a check, make a donation and let someone else get their hands dirty.” It was time to get his own hands dirty.

“That first trip I made in September 2005, I went for six days with a group of men from my church, and we worked with the Arkansas Baptist Disaster Relief, cutting trees that had fallen on homes in Laurel, Miss.”

West made another trip later that year during Thanksgiving for three days.

“It was interesting because there was not a lot of planning. My wife and I discussed it, then got in the car with my daughter and headed to the coast. The next day we had a pass to get through the police lines, and we were gutting a house in Long Beach, Miss.”

During March 2006, he took a young man, who was a senior in high school at the time, to Gulfport, Miss., for six days to work with the North Carolina Baptist Men Disaster Relief coordinating and delivering building materials to homes needing repair.

“I was extremely impressed not only at the magnitude of the work they were doing but how well they coordinated such a massive effort. You did not have to worry about anything but getting your assigned work done,” he said. “Their organization took care of everything else. I have to say it was incredible, as they did not have a massive staff of people running the project.”

He went back to Gulfport in March of this year and worked again for six days with the North Carolina Baptist organization. This time though, he convinced students from his church to invest their spring break helping others.

“The students typically go to Colorado and ski during their spring break. I told them of my experiences and that I planned to return, and I asked them to prayerfully consider this opportunity,” he said. “I received a phone call within a few hours after our meeting, and they informed me that they wanted to go to the coast and work.”

One of the high points of the trip was a playground project at Pass Road Elementary that he and the students worked together. “Our young folks worked hard to get that job done. They did an awesome job, and they had a really great time working on that project.

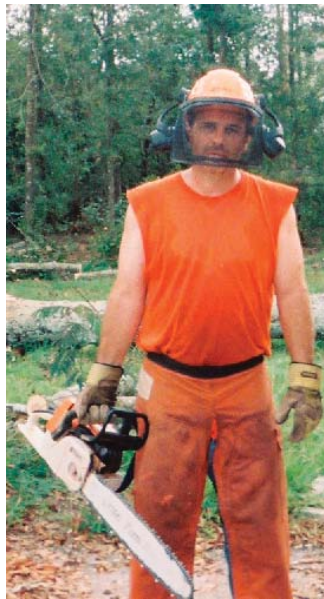
“The playground had been destroyed during the storm 18 months prior to our visit. We worked at the school for two days, and the teachers would bring the children out to watch the progress and encourage us. They would wave and sing songs to us while we worked. It was really great to see the smiles on their faces.” He and the students also repaired houses and other property damaged by the storm.

“When it was over they actually said they had fun, and they want to do something similar in the future.”

The low points came when West and groups he worked with encountered jobs that

were just too big.

“The homeowners were always excited and anxious for us to get started,” West said. “But, the first thing we had to do was a safety inspection. In Laurel, Miss., some of the tree removal



Photos courtesy of Little Rock District

(Upper photo) Royce West with his trusty chainsaw in Laurel, Miss. Students from West's church work with him on a playground for Pass Road Elementary in Gulfport, Miss., which had been destroyed by Hurricane Katrina.

See **Vacation** on page 7

Expeditionary Mind Set, Expeditionary Work Force ... *the New Wave*

Ross Adkins
Pacesetter Staff

There are vast amounts of experience and technical expertise available within the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. But with much of the work force nearing retirement age, there is increasing concern for how we develop, retain, and keep the staff trained in the agency's technical core competencies.

The Tulsa District commander, Col. Miroslav Kurka, has attempted to meet that challenge head-on. Since early in his tenure at Tulsa, he has urged district employees to get involved in projects that are not necessarily the eight-hour, five-day week, in-your-back-yard variety. He refers to this challenge as changing to an expeditionary mind set by developing an expeditionary work force.

"Originally the Corps districts were formed to build specific projects in their districts. Now those projects are built," Kurka said. He pointed out that, "Back before interstate highways, before fast, convenient air travel, before the internet, you had to have engineers close to the projects being built.

Now, with the tools of today's civilization, we can do a lot more work virtually even though some work will still require travel and temporary duty."

He said today we have to go where the work is. "We can do that two ways," Kurka added. "We can hire up in those places with the big projects and draw down in other places or we can get our folks to go where the work is, virtually!"

Vacation

Continued from page 6

jobs were too dangerous for our crew, and we had to tell the homeowner we could not get the trees off their houses. They would go from excitement to disappointment in a matter of minutes."

Those disappointments though, were few and far between for West and those he worked with. More often they encountered tears of joy and happy smiles. He added that the disaster victims all told the workers how thankful they were that church groups were working in their communities.

"That was because we would come down and get right to work since church groups did not have paperwork that must be done

Today, we are not able to hire off the street the kinds of competencies needed, but they are available somewhere in the Corps.

Ralph Hight, Tulsa District's chief of Engineering and Construction Division, feels that his recent Sacramento District assignment was a great example of what Kurka has been talking about.

Hight spent several months either actually in California or working virtually from Tulsa on a joint federal effort with the U. S. Bureau of Reclamation for the design of major modifications to Folsom Dam, located on the American River just upstream of Sacramento, and the engineering and rebuilding of the levees on the American and Sacramento Rivers. These levees help protect lives and property in the highly developed Sacramento Delta region of California. He still spends about a half of his time helping the Sacramento District.

"I have walked my talk and have gone where the Corps has needed me. And I am not alone; a lot of people are doing it. But more are needed," Hight said.

Kurka said in a recent regional newsletter, "A key component of our strategy was to use our blossoming Tulsa/Little Rock partnership to develop the tactics, tech-



Photo courtesy of Tulsa District

Ralph Hight received the Army Engineer Associations' Bronze De Fleury award for his work in the Sacramento District, which required both on-site and virtual time in his home office.

niques and procedures for sharing work with other districts, thereby enhancing interdependence, affordability, workforce opportunities, and technical expertise. We've been very successful with this strategy – far beyond even my expectations."

Kurka and Hight both agree that there are lots of opportunities available throughout the Corps, both in the United States and overseas to, "Serve the Army, Serve the Nation!" 🇺🇸

before getting the work started."

According to its website, the North Carolina Baptist Men are still working on projects in Gulfport, Miss., and they still need people to work. West suggests that if you want to help, volunteer.

"There are many volunteers who were down there to cook and serve food at kitchens for displaced people. There is a need for any skill or level of ability," he said.

"You can't help but feel good about the work you are doing, and you leave wishing you could have done more. That's one reason I have made so many trips, as there will be plenty to do for quite a long time." 🇺🇸

Post-War projects create boom in Ozarks

Judy Bullwinkle
Pacesetter Staff

The Ozark Mountain region of north Arkansas was impoverished after a decade of economic depression in the 1930s. The town of Mountain Home in the midst of the region fared no better. It was surrounded by a poor agricultural community of small farms. But something was in the works that would change the area dramatically.

Hope was sparked when construction of Norfolk Dam began near Mountain Home in 1941. It was to be the first in a system of lakes on the White River to reduce devastating flood damages like those experienced in 1927 and again in the mid-1930s. The dams would also provide much-needed hydroelectricity.

Just as things were looking up, the nation entered World War II. Many Army Corps of Engineers' civil works construction projects were halted for the duration while the agency focused on military construction work. Construction continued on Norfolk Dam, as it was considered essential to the war effort, but completion of the powerhouse would be years away. No other dam projects were started in the White River basin.

Meanwhile in north central Arkansas, poverty spread as more than 600 farms vanished in the 1940s. Abandoned storefronts in Mountain Home were said to outnumber occupied ones.

In 1946, the Corps' Little Rock District resumed its work on the White River dams and started construction on Bull Shoals Dam. As projects began to roll again, people and money flowed into the region. This was welcome relief to an area with wages as low as 30 cents an hour, and the per capita income hovering between \$100 and \$200 a year. Unprecedented growth and prosperity came to northern Arkansas.

These projects brought hundreds of new employees to the region. In addition to the district staff, some 1,500 contract employees migrated into the area around Mountain Home.

Getting to that area posed a challenge. The closest paved road was

35 miles away in Marshall. The way to Mountain Home from there consisted of a gravel road and a ferry across the Buffalo River. The route from Harrison, the largest town in the area, was blocked by a stream. The bridge over the stream had been out since World War II because of steel shortages caused by the war.

The Corps not only built roads and increased services, but also constructed a "government village" to house workers on the project. Businesses proliferated as merchants arrived to meet the needs of the growing population.

Final work on Norfolk was completed in 1949, and Bull Shoals was completed in 1953. Power generation by the two dams was essential for economic expansion, and flood damage reduction provided a stable environment. As important as these benefits were, the creation of the lakes also had a huge tourism impact on the area.

With Bull Shoals at 45,440 surface acres and Norfolk at 22,000 acres, and a combined totaled of more than 1,100 miles of shoreline, the lakes became a recreation and tourism attraction.

The surprise development of a tourist industry in northern Arkansas accelerated growth. Because Bull Shoals and Norfolk were such large construction projects, media coverage attracted attention to the region.

As the lakes were filled, recreation opportunities abounded for camping, boating and fishing. People arrived eager to build resorts and vacation homes.

The area also attracted many retirees, many from the upper mid-west section of the country. The influx of this "northern" population dramatically changed the local profile. With the addition of increasingly older citizens, local areas upgraded their hospitals and more physicians moved to the area.

Norfolk and Bull Shoals dams dramatically changed the face of the Ozark region of northern Arkansas, and the area became vibrant and thriving.

To read more about this event, see *"Castle on the Rock; the History of the Little Rock District, US Army Corps of Engineers, 1881-1985,"* by Mary Rathbun, 1987. 🇺🇸



Photo courtesy of Little Rock District

Bull Shoals Dam

Heroes among us



Photo courtesy of Fort Worth District

Perry Camp, Bobby Camp, and JW Camp celebrate Bobby's retirement June 1.

Bobby Camp, assistant chief, Real Estate Division, Fort Worth District, retired June 1. During his ceremony, he talked about his experiences and opportunities with the Corps. Family and friends joined him to reminisce about hurricanes, Global War on Terrorism, and everyday life with the Corps. Bobby took the opportunity to reflect on his deployment and talked about being called a hero during his deployments. "There are two gentlemen in this room that are real heroes," he said. He then introduced his father, Perry Camp, also known as Gunners Mate Third Class Camp, who was aboard the USS Hugh W. Hadley and earned the title of "Champion Kamikaze Killer" for shooting down 25 enemy planes on May 11, 1945 near Okinawa, and his uncle, JW Camp, or Staff Sgt. Camp, who landed on Normandy in 1944 with Old Hickory's 40th Infantry Division. He fought across France, Belgium to the Rhine River, was surrounded by the German forces at Mortain, France for over 10 days while defending strategic Hill 314 and being attacked by four Panzer divisions. He survived heavy American casualties, but held until Allied forces broke through the German lines. "These are the real heroes," Bobby said.

"We need to celebrate and thank them," he said. 🇺🇸

Corps names Sims Bayou Flood Damage Reduction its Project of the Month

Rick Villagomez
Galveston District

The Sims Bayou Project is the Southwestern Division's Project of the Month for June and will be featured on the Corps headquarters website according to a notice received by Project Manager Rick Villagomez. The website will show a different division's project each month. The idea was generated from a desire to show the diversity of Corps projects/studies across the nation.

The Sims Bayou watershed comprises more than 60,000 acres in the southern portion of Houston, Texas. The basin is an integral part of the rapidly growing Houston metropolitan area. Over 90 percent of the basin is within the city limits of Houston with the stream lying about four to six miles south of the Houston downtown business district. The bayou flows generally from west to east and outfalls into the Houston Ship Channel. The bayou extends approximately 25 miles through short reaches of bottomland forest, urbanized woodlands, and upland prairie. The upper 15-mile reach of the watershed is predominantly upland prairie, generally void of major vegetative cover. Several major lateral drainage channels and numerous storm sewer systems provide drainage to the bayou from adjacent areas.

The headwaters of Sims Bayou provide drainage to portions of Missouri City and rural areas in Fort Bend County. Hobby Airport is located in the southeastern portion of the basin, just west of the Gulf Freeway, Interstate 45. The basin is approximately 48 percent urbanized. Nearly 60 percent of the urbanization in the basin is in the form of housing developments of which two-thirds are single family owner occupied. Heavy industrial and commercial development is located in the lower reach of the basin near the Houston Ship Channel. Other commercial and retail facilities are located throughout the basin along the major thoroughfares. Some vacant lands exist in the midsection of the basin. However, most of this vacant land is in relatively small tracts and earmarked for future development.

The region is subject to intense local thunderstorms of short duration, general storms which extend over a period of several days and torrential rainfall associated with



Photos courtesy of Galveston District

A completed reach of the Sims Bayou Project at Mykawa Road in 2004. Inset: Project under construction downstream of State Highway 288 at Cullen Boulevard in 2006.

hurricanes and other tropical disturbances which periodically cause flooding. Flooding along Sims Bayou is attributable to over bank flows primarily caused by the very flat topography, increased rainfall runoff resulting from urbanization, and by the inadequate channel capacity of the unimproved channel.

The Sims Bayou, Houston, Texas project was authorized by Section 401(a) of the Water Resources Development Act of 1986 (Public Law 99-662). The authorized plan of improvements consisted of 19.3 miles of channel enlargement and rectification to contain a 25-year frequency flood, environmental quality measures and riparian habitat replacement along the entire alignment, and recreational features on project rights-of-way along the bayou. The authorized plan was revised by the Corps of Engineers due to changes in policy and changed conditions as documented in the 1989 Sims Bayou General Design Memorandum which was subsequently approved by higher authority.

In early 1991, public opposition to the approved plan led to a new initiative called the modified channel plan, that significantly

reduced the amount of concrete lining of the channel to provide a more environmentally sound, aesthetically pleasing, and publicly acceptable flood damage reduction project.

The modified channel plan encompassed the same 19.3 miles of channel enlargement and rectification, environmental quality measures and riparian habitat replacements as the approved project. The plan includes an in-channel flood bench berm on each side of the channel where sufficient rights-of-way exist. The flood bench berm is at an elevation which is not subject to frequent inundation, therefore, the area can be used as a linear park and for recreational purposes as hike and bike trails. The plan also includes planting of native trees along the flood bench berm and the upper channel slopes and at selected locations, the channel bottom will be enlarged to provide a more aesthetic view of open water.

A great many individuals and organizations provided ideas, energy and time to produce a more environmentally sensitive and aesthetically pleasing design for Sims Bayou. The effort was radical, both in

See **Sims** on page 11

Corps reaches out to contractors in Little Rock



Photo courtesy of Little Rock District

During the first day of the symposium, Tulsa District Commander, Col. Miroslav P. Kurka (left) and Little Rock District Commander, Col. Wally Z. Walters, provided presentations on the "War on Iraq/Afghanistan," and the "Corporate Overview of the U. S. Army Corps of Engineers," respectively.



Photo courtesy of Little Rock District

Tony Bell (right), the newly selected director of the USACE Small Business Office, met one-on-one with small business contractors during the final day of the symposium after making a presentation earlier about his plan of action for fiscal year 2007.

Little Rock, Tulsa Society of American Military Engineers Posts host Future Work and Partnering Symposium

The Little Rock and Tulsa Posts of the Society of American Military Engineers held a Future Work and Partnering Symposium April 3-5 at the Peabody Hotel in Little Rock, Ark. The symposium provided guest speakers on upcoming military


projects, partnering sessions for small and large businesses, and contracting opportunities. Among the speakers were seven district commanders and two division commanders. Business people from throughout Arkansas and elsewhere attended. 



Photo courtesy of Little Rock District

James McKinnie, chief of Engineering at Little Rock Air Force Base, leads a panel discussion on "Design-Build" from a construction and design perspective during the symposium's second day of presentations.



Photo courtesy of Little Rock District

On the event's final day, Brig. Gen. Jeffrey J. Dorko, Southwestern Division commander, presents a regional Corps update.

New Contracting office opens in Dallas



Photo courtesy of Southwestern Division

Maureen Weller (left), Principal Assistant Responsible for Contracting – Dallas, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Maj. Gen. Ronald L. Johnson, Deputy Commanding General, USACE, and Sandra Riley, Director of Contracting, USACE, cut the ribbon during a ceremony to officially open the new PARC office suite in Dallas, May 30. 🇺🇸

Sims

Continued from page 9

its guiding vision and approach. Their vision was one of genuine commitment to environmental issues and to the sustainable future of the community, through which Sims Bayou flows. The approach was one of partnering which has produced a new level of trust, openness, and teamwork.

The result is a decidedly distinct and immensely improved project which substantially maintains all economic benefits, while not sacrificing project function. The Houston metropolitan area is one of the nation's principal petroleum and petrochemical centers with a strong base in these industries. Because of its proximity to the Houston Ship Channel and the downtown business district, the 94-square mile Sims Bayou watershed benefits from and contributes to the healthy economy of Houston.

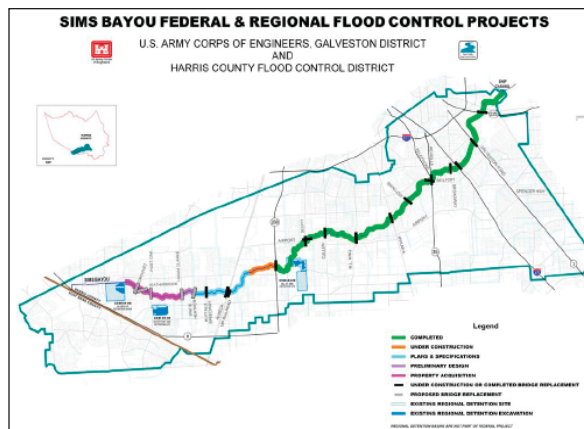
In January of 1994, the Corps in

partnership with its non-federal partner, Harris County Flood Control District, embarked on the journey to construct the modified channel plan. The current project cost is estimated to be \$374,860,000; \$250,450,000 Federal and \$124,410,000

non-Federal. The Sims Bayou project will provide annual benefits of \$220,300,000; \$219,355,000 for flood damage reduction and \$945,000 for recreation resulting in a benefits-to-costs ratio of 6.83 for the overall Sims Bayou project.

Construction of the flood damage reduction improvements is complete from the mouth of Sims Bayou at the Houston Ship Channel to State Highway 288, which puts the project at 75 percent complete. Construction along project Reach 7a from Robin Boulevard to State Highway 288 is ongoing. The remaining project improvements from Robin Boulevard upstream to Croquet are under design.

The Limited Reevaluation Report for the Sims Bayou Recreation Plan is being finalized by the Galveston District for submittal to SWD for final review and approval this summer. 🇺🇸



Map courtesy of Galveston District



Projects and events point to a bright future for Galveston and the Corps

Col. David C. Weston
Commander, Galveston District

There is a lot going on in Galveston District, and we are accomplishing great things for our Corps and our Nation!

I want to highlight and congratulate our 2007 Administrative Professional of the Year, Sandra L. Morrison-O'Donohoe, and our recent Leadership Development Program-3 graduates Kristine Brown, Robert George, and John Machol. Great Job! Thanks also to our great employees supporting the Global War on Terrorism and New Orleans Hurricane Recovery missions. I continue to encourage each of you to look for ways to contribute to these vital missions, and volunteer your knowledge, expertise, and time to serve in this capacity.

Completing the studies we have scheduled over the next six months will propel our Planning, Engineering, and Design and Construction General workload for the next five to ten years. These studies include deepening and widening projects at Texas City, Matagorda Ship Channel, Sabine Neches Waterway, and Brazos Island Harbor, along with the Clear Creek flood damage reduction project. These important projects will shape the future growth of ports and waterways along the Texas Coast, and improve flood protection to the region. We need a combined team effort by the entire district, working closely with our sponsors, fellow districts, Southwestern Division and Corps headquarters to get this work done.

We have committed to project engineering, construction and contract management, and engineering services to Louisville District's Reserve Center Program, and Fort Worth District's Military Construction Program and Secure Borders Initiative programs, including projects at Fort Bliss, and Customs and Border Patrol Service projects in South Texas. Strategically important to the Nation, the work at Fort Bliss and Ellington Field support to Base Realignment and Closure, and the Army's strategic repositioning of forces to address global threats.

We gain great benefits by doing this work, outside our normal Civil Works Program, as it provides our engineers and technicians

an opportunity to acquire and develop skill sets within their technical disciplines that will broaden their career opportunities in the future. Their growth in turn broadens our district competencies, enabling us to respond to changing dynamics in district workload. These projects will provide us substantial vertical construction workload through FY 2011. It is critical that we manage this work effectively and efficiently to deliver quality products on time and within budget, as we have made commitments to our fellow districts that we must keep.

We have transitioned fully to P2 for scheduling all aspects of our district workload, consistently leading the way in achieving high ratings for our data quality metrics. This month we will validate our work schedules through a detailed resource analysis, looking out over the next 24 months to ensure that we have the resources necessary, either in-house – through another district – or through a contracted service, to meet the project schedules we have committed to. Our Regulatory Branch led the effort to establish implementation policy for SWD on the new Nationwide Permits, and continues to provide outstanding regulatory support to the district's many customers. We are working to fill the many vacancies in that branch to help alleviate the stress of a growing workload.

Lastly, hurricane season is upon us. The district leadership is participating in SWD exercises, and reviewing district procedures to ensure our readiness. We must do everything necessary, both as individuals, and as an organization to ensure we are prepared to meet the challenges that may lie ahead. You must make sure you and your families are prepared with sheltering and evacuation plans that match your individual situation, and you must make sure your part of our organization is prepared to meet the district's responsibility to our region and the nation. To do less is unacceptable.

Yes, there is a lot going on in Galveston District, and we are doing it well. Thanks for all you do and I'll see you around the district! 🌍

There is a lot going on in Galveston District, and we are accomplishing great things for our Corps and our nation!

And the winner is ...

Melanie Ellis
Pacesetter Staff

Fort Worth District employees gathered at the Petroleum Club in downtown Fort Worth for the annual Administrative Professionals Luncheon to learn who would take the title of Administrative Professional of the Year 2006.

Guest speaker Terri Freer, a member of the Business and Professional Women's group, spoke on the importance and history of Administrative Professionals Day.

"What we know as Administrative Professionals Day was started in 1952 by the National Secretaries Association," said Freer. "It's important to celebrate this day because it is an opportunity to recognize the administrative support professionals and their contributions in the work place."

Col. Christopher Martin, commander, Fort Worth District, thanked all of the administrative professionals for their dedicated support to the district.

"Thank you for your hard work," said Martin. "It is important to recognize the hard work that each of you put into the district." Before announcing this year's winner, Martin recognized all of the nominees and presented them with a commander's coin.

Martin then announced Christy Smith as the Administrative Professional of the Year 2006 and read a small description of her daily duties.

"Christy works in the Engineering and Construction Division, Design Branch, Geotechnical Section and she directly supports the Core Drill Unit, which is the only in-house capable field drilling and sampling work unit within the entire Southwestern Division," said Martin. "The crew is constantly on

temporary duty assignments and Christy helps ensure that their needs are met so that they can get their work done."

Christy also took action when three different business processes came together last year that impacted Dam Safety funding management. "She took the time to solve the issue and worked closely with the Operations Division to create management tools for the Dam Safety Program Manager to identify and prioritize funding levels," said Martin.

"Christy took initiative to volunteer for deployments during the Hurricane Rita Mission, and also volunteers for the pen pal program," continued Martin.

Martin then read a portion of the nomination packet that was submitted for Christy. "Ms. Smith exudes the Army's values and serves as a true role model for all. Her dedication and loyalty to the Corps, unselfishness and "team" approach in the performance of her duties, and her continuing efforts to increase her contributions to the Corps of Engineers is truly deserving of the commendation of the Fort Worth District as Administrative Support Employee of the Year."

"I was surprised that I was selected," Christy said. "I felt very honored and humbled, especially when there were a lot of great administrative professionals that deserved it as well. It is a privilege to work with such a great group of people."

Martin concluded the ceremony by thanking everyone for their efforts and dedication to helping Fort Worth keep its great reputation. "I've said it before and

I'll continue to say it, we have the best district because we have the best people. Thanks for all that you do." 🌟



Photo courtesy of Fort Worth District
Christy Smith



Photos courtesy of Fort Worth District

Hook, line, and sinker

Bob Morris gets reeled in during a personal flotation device toss demonstration while Eric Pedersen (inset) talks to boaters about the use of the kill switch on a boat. Morris and Pedersen attended the North Texas Water Safety Fair at Joe Pool Lake, June 2. The North Texas Water Safety Coalition hosted the fair to educate boaters and swimmers about water safety. They were able to provide 138 life jackets to children under the age of 13 who completed at least 80 percent of the booths at the fair. After being fitted with a new life jacket, participants were given free boat rides around the lake by the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department Game Wardens. The event is held annually in conjunction with "Free Sportfishing Day," held during National Fishing and Boating Week. The free fishing day allows anglers to fish any public waters in Texas without a fishing license. 🌟

New Dog Park opens in Houston

Kristine Brown
Addicks and Barker Reservoirs

Dogs in Houston are wagging their tails for their owners to take them to the “trendiest new hot spot in town,” the 35-acre Dog Park at Addicks Reservoir, located within the 926-acre Congressman Bill Archer Park.

A grand-opening ceremony took place May 2, hosted by Steve Dorman, Harris County Parks Superintendent, Precinct 3, with a dedication provided by Steve Radack, Commissioner, Precinct 3. Also speaking during the ceremony were Dr. Dawn Blackmar, director of Veterinary Public Health, Harris County Public Health and Environmental Services, and Richard Long, Park Manager of Galveston District’s Houston Project Office.

“The development of this park is a result of many hours of team work and partnering between Harris County and the Corps to ensure the primary mission of flood damage reduction was not impacted while creating a quality space to meet public need,” Long said.

The dog park includes 17 acres of open space for off-leash activities, a 3-acre area for small dogs and 14 acres for large ones, 2 lakes shaped like dog biscuits, playground equipment, and water fountains for both dogs and their owners. Also included is more than a mile of walking trails with abundant shade trees, canopies, and park benches.

This is the second dog park within the district’s Addicks and Barker project area, a 26,000-acre complex begun in 1938, which has since provided nearly \$4 billion in flood damage reduction. 🌍



Photo courtesy of Galveston District

Steve Dorman (left), Harris County Parks Superintendent, Precinct 3, Capt. Paul Cordova, Harris County Sheriff’s Department, and Precinct 3 Commissioner Steve Radack and his dog, Sarah, enjoy the ceremony.

IT changes for Galveston District

Through the announcement of the results of the A-76 IM/IT competition, Galveston District now has an idea of how the new organization of Information Technology Support will look. Based on the “most efficient organization,” there will be four full-time government and three full-time contractor positions in Galveston. The contractor positions are apportioned into two “help desk” positions and one “network” position.

The four Corps employees are IT specialist for Customer Relations, Information Product Coordinator for Visual Information, a Records Manager and a Mail Clerk. Additionally, according to Marney Mason, chief of Information Management, we will have a Project Manager who works for the “Continuing Government Organization.” There are also four positions working for Southwestern Division, which are described by Mason as “location to be determined.” This means that they can be filled at any office in SWD. Mason added that Corps-wide there are also 169 “virtual positions” which can be filled by anyone who qualifies. These also can be located anywhere. 🌍

Taking a different approach to maintenance helps keep our lakes beautiful

Melanie Ellis
Pacesetter Staff

Summer is off to a busy start in the Fort Worth District and lake staffs have been working yearround to prepare for the millions of recreators that visit Corps lakes, parks, and camp areas. Park rangers work all year to improve and maintain the areas around the lakes and frequently utilize community service days to do so.

“Park rangers have always been an important bridge for the Corps,” said Tim Gibson, Operations Division. “Not only do they connect the agency with the public which it serves, but rangers are the educators and interpreters who connect people with the natural and recreational resources available for their enjoyment at Corps lakes.”

Community outreach projects, such as Earth Day, National Public Lands Day, and other community service days, help educate the public on the role of the Corps and how the lakes function. Some park rangers are going beyond the typical community service days to educate the public and generate community interest and involvement.



Photo courtesy of Fort Worth District

Park Host Jaudell Monzingo plants flowers at a gate house at Bardwell Lake.



Photo courtesy of Fort Worth District

Park Host Marty Schrott repaints a restroom facility at Bardwell Lake.

Emily Tennill, park ranger, Elm Fork Project, was approached by the City of Oak Point to provide regular articles to the local paper. “The town solicited us to write a column for their newsletter which gave us a good way to communicate the Corps’ role and rules to the public,” she said.

Tennill also commented on the proactive approach that the community takes in maintaining the area around the lakes. “We have seven local cities involved in a Challenge Agreement to develop the trails around Lewisville Lake for the public,” said Tennill. “Most of the cities use volunteer support from their communities and we work with them to build and maintain the trails.”

Dorie Murphy, park ranger, Bardwell Lake, utilizes the Volunteer Park Host Program to help maintain the areas around Bardwell Lake. “These individuals live in our parks and volunteer to take on mission essential tasks to reduce the load on the lake staff,” she said. “With reduced budgets we can not afford to hire staff or contractors to

accomplish all the tasks needed to meet the demands of our customers. So far this fiscal year our Park Hosts have put in over 4,000 hours of work.”

With millions of visitors to Corps lakes each year, the lake staffs are finding community support a great resource in keeping the recreation areas maintained. Murphy commented on the new outreach efforts. “All of these positions help us reach out to our neighbors in the community,” she said. “It is helping us to spread a positive message about our work and improving the facilities and programs we offer.”

Gibson agreed that the community outreach efforts help build a great relationship between the Corps and the community and can aid in maintaining the areas around the lakes.

“A person who participates in constructing or maintaining a portion of a hiking trail has an immediate connection with the lake,” he said. “They are more likely to set an example of positive use.” 🌟

When fire is good

A look at prescribed burns

Tammy Reed
Pacesetter Staff

This year alone, more than 8,000 acres of Corps forests and glades burned throughout the Little Rock District. And it was a good thing.

Trained fire crews from around the district started and controlled those fires to benefit Corps land and wildlife on it.

“Over time, forest managers learned that total protection from fire is not healthy for a forest’s ecosystem,” said Bruce Caldwell, a Mountain Home Project Office wildlife biologist and fire crew supervisor.

“They now agree that periodic controlled burns help maintain healthy forests and reduce the chances of severe wildfires,” Caldwell explained.

Little Rock District Forester Randall Becker echoed Caldwell on the benefits.

“The old school Smokey the Bear principles of preventing forest fires and suppressing every fire led to huge buildups of forest fuels such as needles, leaves and branches,” Becker said.

“This was obviously a liability during the drought of the late 1990s when massive wildfires began to burn over large areas. Controlled burning, or prescribed fire, helps to reduce those fuels, so when wild fires do occur they do not necessarily result in large destructive fires going through the tree tops.”

Becker explained that advances in research have also proven that many ecosystems need fire. He cited statistics from the Nature Conservancy stating that rare and declining species are the most dependent on fire management.

“The Nature Conservancy maintains that approximately 42 percent of North American plant species are fire dependent or need fire to sustain them and will decrease without it,” he said. “Approximately 42 percent are fire independent, so they do not benefit or become impacted as a result of fire but are fire tolerant, and the remaining 16 percent are fire sensitive and will decrease with fire.”

“The Corps generally conducts cool season burns in the late fall and through



Photo courtesy of Little Rock District

Wildlife Biologist Bruce Caldwell (left) and Natural Resources Specialist Michael Cannon conduct a controlled burn on Bull Shoals Lake.

the winter,” he said. “These are scheduled to reduce fuels buildup and for wildlife and open land management. Some projects like Mountain Home conduct ‘green up’ fires in early spring, and late summer or early fall burns for glade management.”

Caldwell said the Mountain Home Wildland Fire team burns between 1,200 and 2,000 acres of woodland each year, so they see firsthand some of the benefits of these burns.

“Controlled burns expose bare soil to sunlight and recycle important nutrients enhancing re-growth of forest plants,” Caldwell said. “It also reduces competing vegetation and perpetuates fire-dependent species.”

For example, some species of pines need the heat from fire to open their cones or else their seeds will not be released, and the stand will not be renewed. If enough time passes between fires, other species may invade and eventually eliminate those pines from the landscape.

“Pine plantations require a fire regimen to reduce the oak and hardwood regeneration that competes with those pines,” he said. “The red oak, white oak and hickory forests need a fire regimen for optimum production and health.”

Caldwell added that there are also many types of herbaceous annuals and perennials that like fire. Among the perennials are native grasses like Big Blue Stem, Little Blue Stem and Indian Grass.

The annuals that love fire include such wild flowers as Pale Purple Cone Flower, Butterfly Weed, Chicory, Prairie Dock and the endangered Missouri Bladderpod.

He explained that these plants begin to grow within days after a fire, and the area is usually re-foliated within two months.

He also said enhancing the growth of grasses and plants improves wildlife habitat by improving food sources.

One might think there would not be any wildlife left after the fire, but Caldwell explained that controlled burns are just that, controlled.

“Controlled fires are not the severe and damaging crown fires that are shown on news reports,” he said. “Instead, they are low level fires that burn only the ground fuel and small saplings and shrubs a few feet above the ground.


“We tend to burn smaller tracts, 100-300 acres, and in a mosaic fashion allowing most animals with good mobility

See *Fire* on page 17

Little Rock teaches water safety at Zoo



Photo courtesy of Little Rock District

Little Rock Park Rangers Tiffany Smith, and Trey Shelton, both from Dierks Lake, and Sheila Ellis - in white - from the district's Navigation Branch, invested May 5 into teaching children water safety at Little Rock Zoo's annual Kid Safety Day. All three, with Tammy Reed, a district public affairs specialist, and three members of the U.S. Coast Guard Auxillary, showed "Bobber the Water Safety Dog" cartoons to more than 300 children. They also gave the children and their parents water safety coloring books and other information to help them all have a safe summer around the district's many rivers and lakes. 

Fire

Continued from previous page

to escape. We burn in winter when most smaller animals are hibernating or underground away from the heat of the fire. The burns are conducted before the spring hatches, nesting and young are present."

He added that each team member is well trained in wild land fire suppression, fire safety, and controlled burning techniques in extensive classes provided in association with the National Wildfire Coordinating Group. Team members must follow strict guidelines for personal safety and proper burning techniques.

"Fire Bosses – supervisors – require even more intense training in fire weather calculations, wildfire behavior, smoke management and developing proper prescribed burn plans," Caldwell said.

Becker added that Little Rock District's training program was developed through association with an interagency organization called the Arkansas Prescribed Fire Committee. For more information about that training, the official web site for the Arkansas River Valley Wildland Fire Academy is <http://commed2.atu.edu/awa/>.

"The district office also tracks prescribed burns and wildfires, and it is responsible for prescribed burn policy development and our training, guidance and safety considerations," Becker said.

"I believe we have a fire management program in Little Rock District that is as good as any Corps district in the country." 



Photo courtesy of Little Rock District

*Wildflowers such as Rose Verbena (*Glandularia canadensis*) grow just days after a glade burn on Norfolk Lake.*

Grand Opening held for West Lawton Recruiting Station

Mary Beth Hudson
Pacesetter Staff

Tulsa District Real Estate Division facilitated the lease and expedited build of the Lawton Army West Recruiting Station which officially opened May 3. Brig. Gen. Joseph Orr, deputy assistant commanding general, U.S. Army Recruiting Command West and Lawton native, was the guest of honor.

Orr is a graduate of Eisenhower High School and Cameron University in Lawton. Orr, along with the Recruiting Station Commander, Staff Sgt. Lively, and a representative of Lawton Chamber of Commerce cut the ceremonial ribbon officially opening the new station.

Maj. Michael Sterrett represented Tulsa District. The Lawton recruiters provided much praise and appreciation for the Tulsa District Real Estate Division and the expedience at which the station was ready for mission. They said the West Lawton station was the nicest recruiting facility they had seen and that they look forward to coming to work each day. 🇺🇸



Photo courtesy of Tulsa District

Recruiting Command and Lawton Chamber of Commerce representatives cut the ribbon officially opening the Lawton Army West Recruiting Station.

Say cheese ...

Ribbon cutting at Sheppard Air Force Base



Photo courtesy of Tulsa District

Officials pose with the oversized scissors as a photographer records the official opening of Cunningham Hall at Sheppard Air Force Base.

The 82nd Air Force Training Wing held a ribbon cutting ceremony at the FY05 Student Dormitory on May 24. The new Student Dorm has been named Cunningham Hall and will house the Air Force's Engineer Specialty students. Tulsa District was represented by the project manager, Maj. Michael Sterrett, and the technical manager, Mia Stevens. 🇺🇸



Team Tulsa, great contributors

**Col. Miroslav Kurka
Commander, Tulsa District**

It's hard to believe that it's been almost three years since my family and I moved to Tulsa; wow, the time has just flown by! As you probably know by now, although I love history, I am generally a person who looks ahead, not back. Therefore, I have been and am focused on the future of Tulsa District – which is very bright - and on my own future with the Afghanistan Engineer District. Nevertheless, it is useful to periodically take stock of where we are and to measure ourselves against our goals, and I'd like to take a few paragraphs here to do just that.

Three years ago, we initiated a strategic planning process to prepare the district for the future. We correctly foresaw a volatile, uncertain, complex and ambiguous environment in which most work was regional and outside the district's boundaries, where we faced limited budgets, and where the Corps faced increasing pressure to deliver facilities and services better, faster, less expensively, and greener.

To cope with this environment, we envisioned a district that leverages the resources of its superb work force, the regional business team and private industry to deliver excellence in construction and services. We also predicted that our future success would rely on *interdependence* with other districts to execute projects and studies better, faster, less expensively, greener and safer, and on fostering an *expeditionary mindset* among our *world-class work force*. A key component of our strategy was to use our blossoming Tulsa/Little Rock partnership to develop the tactics, techniques and procedures for sharing work with other districts, thereby enhancing interdependence, affordability, work force opportunities, and technical expertise. We've been very successful with this strategy – far beyond even my expectations.

In June 2004 when I took command, Tulsa District had approximately 750 employees and our annual program was approximately \$290 million. As I write this, we have 624 people executing a program of \$350 million. This significant increase in productivity is a result of our leveraging our own superb work force, the regional business team and private industry. More significant than even this productivity increase is the change in the nature of the work we are doing. Whereas in 2004, with the exception of environmental work, our program was generally confined to our geographical boundaries, we now routinely do engineering, real estate, planning, and contracting as well as environmental work throughout the region and nation. We are truly becoming an expeditionary work force whose services are routinely solicited by many.

What is truly remarkable is the fact that we achieved this success despite a very difficult environment. Over the past three years, we have weathered a fiscally austere period caused by extended continuing resolutions, budget uncertainties, and anemic Operations and Maintenance budgets. We also faced many other challenges including a drought; extended hurricane relief missions; numerous questions from the public and stakeholders about our actions; the Chief Financial Officer audit; two Southwestern Division command staff visits; rapidly escalating construction costs; and uncertainty caused by numerous changes to contracting, Army Military Construction, and the personnel, logistics, and information management systems. We completed the last

three years without a reduction in force, without a cut in services to the public, all the while maintaining excellent affordability. Not only that, we excelled in most areas, and our excellent performance, lean organization, and high quality/low cost reputation have set the district up for outstanding future success.

This enviable position is totally due to you - our hard working, dedicated, tenacious, innovative, and exceptionally competent work

**Lean forward and continue
to strive and thrive in this
VUCA environment, Tulsa!
You are daily making great
contributions to our Army
and our country.**

force.

You've demonstrated an *expeditionary mindset* time and again through support to the War on Terrorism, disaster response, and support to numerous civil works and military missions outside the district. Your "can do, never quit" attitude has allowed the district to thrive in a VUCA environment. You are a *world-class work force* that is fully capable and maintains excellent efficiency and effectiveness through *interdependence* with our sister districts and by maximizing all sources of expertise including the private-sector Architect/Engineer community. Your efforts in military and environmental programs have made us second in the Corps in overall customer satisfaction for many years in a row. You've done this by routinely meeting metrics and providing great quality, cost efficient facilities and services on time. In the civil works arena, you have excelled on unique projects, maintained excellent congressional and stakeholder relationships, and completed an impressive number of projects. Additionally, you have served more than 25 million visitors and kept them safe at our 38 projects. You are fantastic!

As I depart, I am thrilled that you are getting a great new commander. Col. Tony Funkhouser is a wonderful leader and a true professional who epitomizes the U.S. Army Soldier's Creed. He is also a heck of a nice person and a very quick study. Please give your full support to

See **Team** on page 20

Steve Peterson chosen for regional position

Mary Beth Hudson
Pacesetter Staff

The acronym RIO has a new meaning in Tulsa District now. Since 2003, it has been shorthand for Restore Iraqi Oil, but now it stands for Regional Information Officer – or Steve Peterson. The announcement of Peterson’s selection was made during the May 4 Corporate Board meeting by Lt. Col. Bernie Thomson, and Peterson was congratulated by all present. The selection was made by Sam Bradley, senior RIO for Central Region.

RIO is the sole position in Tulsa District within the Continuing Government Organization. Following A-76 competition, the Most Efficient Organization, a combination of the government along with its valued partner, Lockheed Martin, was selected to provide the Corps IM/IT services. The Most Efficient Organization, Army Corps of Engineers Information Technology or ACE-IT, will have a one-year phase-in period, a five-year performance period, and three years optional, based on performance.

ACE-IT will be headquartered in Vicksburg, Miss., with 55 local offices at Corps offices throughout the United States. IMO employees will compete for positions in ACE-IT. 🌐



Photo courtesy of Tulsa District

Team

Continued from previous page

him; I know you will.

As I prepare to turn over command of this great district, I am thankful to all of you for the terrific hospitality and support you have given to me and my family during the past three years. Any success I have had has been the direct result of God’s help – and I thank Him for that - and your stupendous efforts. I am especially thankful to my senior leadership team of Billy Banks, Diane Fortelka, Sue Haslett, Rick Hedrick, Ralph Hight, David Manning, John Roberts, John Roselle, Lt. Col. Bernie Thomson, and Steve Zeltner. You are a great group of professionals who have made my job a pure joy! Not to be forgotten is my Executive Office team of Kristi Helterbrand, Ruth Norris and Mary Higgs. You ladies have kept

me organized and on-track for the last three years – not an easy task in this VUCA environment. Last but not least, I want to publicly thank my wife, Bonnie, and my children for their love and support; God makes all things possible, you in the district have made things happen, and for me, Bonnie has made it all worthwhile.

Lean forward and continue to strive and thrive in this VUCA environment, Tulsa! You are daily making great contributions to our Army and our country. If any of you feel the call of service overseas, I would be proud to have you serve with me in Afghanistan. God bless all of you, God bless our Army and God Bless the United States of America.

HOOAH!!! 🌐

When duty calls ...

Park Ranger's quick response saves a life

Melanie Ellis
Pacesetter Staff

Canyon Lake Park Ranger James Chambers says he was just doing his job. Thanks to his quick actions and quick use of resources a Canyon Lake visitor will be around for a while longer.

"We were evacuating campers in Potter's Creek Park Sunday, May 27," said Chambers. "The lake was going to come up that night and effect the power to several campsites."

The boat ramp in the park had been closed a few days earlier due to high water but several of the campers had stayed in the park and left their boats anchored. "I opened the ramp so that the campers could get their boats loaded onto their trailers," said Chambers. "I was standing outside my truck when I heard a woman say that someone in the water is yelling for help."

Chambers scanned the water looking for the person in distress. "I saw him out in the water yelling for help," he said. "There was a man in a boat waiting for his wife to back their boat trailer down so I told the man to go help."

The man in the boat wasn't able to see the distressed swimmer. Realizing time was critical, Chambers ran down the boat ramp and jumped in the man's boat and said "Come on let's go!"

"I kept thinking come on man, stay up just a little longer," said Chambers. "We finally got close enough so I could throw a seat cushion and he was able to grab it. Once he had a good hold on the seat



Photo courtesy of Fort Worth District

Col. Christopher Martin presents Canyon Lake Park Ranger James Chambers a Commander's Award for Civilian Service for his life-saving efforts.

cushion, I tossed a ski rope to him and pulled him aboard the boat."

Once aboard the boat, Chambers asked him what happened. "He said that his boat had come unanchored so he swam after it but it kept drifting and he couldn't catch it and he began to go down."

Chambers and the camper got the distressed swimmer back to his boat just as it started raining. The boat that Chambers was on stalled and began drifting to the opposite bank. "By the time that we made it back to the boat ramp, I lost sight of the victim and his boat," said

Chambers. "I'm not sure where he went. I didn't even get his name."

Like many other park rangers, Chambers had been properly trained and reacted. "I just happened to be in the right place at the right time," he said. "It's like Col. Martin said, the training just took over and I just acted on it. Thankfully we were able to get to him before he went under."

Chambers received a Commander's Award for Civilian Service at the Engineer Day Awards Ceremony, June 11. 🇺🇸

Take cover

The Atlantic Hurricane season began June 1 and lasts until Nov. 30. This year's season is forecasted to be an above average season. The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's forecast calls for 13 to 17 named storms, seven to ten hurricanes, of which three to six will be major, category three to five. Regardless of how accurate the forecasters are, we must be prepared to execute our hurricane response plans. Ensure your personnel data sheet and medical screening is current in ENGLink. And, complete any needed mission-specific Quality Assurance training, as well as the Defensive Driving Course.

Park Hosts, making a difference

Dorie Murphy
Bardwell Lake

Bardwell Lake has a new Park Host Program called “Making a Difference.” This program, which encourages volunteers to assist the park rangers in maintaining the lake and its parks, is working.

Last winter volunteers living in the parks, known as Park Hosts, worked to update the park areas by repainting all the bathhouses, refinishing the wood on the pavilions and assisted the Corps in repairing many of the park facilities that previously could not be repaired due to lack of funding. From October through April, there were eight to 14 volunteers working every week alongside the Bardwell staff. These dedicated individuals put in over 3,000 hours of work to upgrade and maintain park facilities, assist in the conservation of natural resources, and repair erosion and other problems along the project’s 13 miles of multi-use trails that are used for mountain biking, horseback riding and hiking.

During the recent spring flood at the lake, Park Hosts assisted rangers in providing potential park visitors with current information on park closures and water safety concerns as high waters came through the area. As the flood waters receded, volunteers worked to clean up driftwood, trash and mud left behind at the high-water line.

In May, Boy Scouts from Waxahachie, Pack 234 Den 8 Wolves, cleaned up flood debris from a camping area so it could quickly and safely be reopened. Red Oak, Scout Pack 228, and other volunteers from surrounding communities have repaired and cleaned up debris on multi-use trails so that visitors could enjoy the natural areas. Without the volunteers and their valuable contributions, lake staff could not have as quickly cleaned and reopened the park facilities.



Photo courtesy of Fort Worth District
Park Hosts Jaudell Monzingo and Jane Landis plant flowers in front of Mott Parks gate house at Bardwell Lake.

The Bardwell Lake team this summer includes Park Hosts helping new visitors understand the rules and remind visitors to play safely while keeping the area clean and in good condition. They provide information on the surrounding areas, as well as, information on what you might see or do while at the lake. So, when you visit a lake this summer and a friendly Park Host in their green Volunteer shirt stops by to visit, be sure to thank them for all the work they do keeping the parks looking good and safe for all of our community and our out-of-town visitors. 🌻

Volunteers clean wetlands at Jadwin Building



Photo courtesy of Galveston District

Corps volunteers met April 27 to clean wetlands guarding the entrance to Galveston District’s Jadwin Building compound. Their goal was to clean the area and apply herbicides to unwanted plants such as willows and rattlebox. In 2005, the wetlands project won Homeland Security’s “Closing the Circle Award” for its innovative design and for being a catalyst for community environmental education and outreach. A handful of volunteers have worked on keeping the area clean since its construction. Pictured left are Justin Tirpak, son of Sharon Tirpak, Dwayne Johnson, Paula Wise, and retired Corps auditor, Charley Stimmel. Others working at the project were Sharon Tirpak, Travers Powell, Glenn Weitknecht, and Kenny Jaynes. 🌻



Desire to achieve leads to district excellence

Col. Christopher W. Martin
Commander, Fort Worth District

I have always said, the success of the Fort Worth District is directly related to the quality and professionalism of our people. Within the past few weeks, we celebrated the history of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and recognized several of our team members.

I am honored every time I get the opportunity to recognize individuals and our Project Delivery Teams. The annual awards recipients are just a select cross section of the type of employees that make up the Fort Worth District.

Team members like our Engineer of the Year and Employee of the Year set the standard for the rest of us. Also, our Equal Employment Opportunity Supervisor and Employee of the Year keep us balanced and diverse. It is our professionalism and desire to achieve excellence that makes us one of the best districts in the Corps.

We also recognized our Length of Service Award recipients whose total service time added up to 2,820 years of dedicated service to our nation.

It is our professionalism and desire to achieve excellence that makes us one of the best districts in the Corps.

In addition, we also recognized the PDT of the Year, the Fort Bliss Expansion PDT, which has led the way in military construction for the Army's transformation.

This time of the year also means that we must take extra care to become more diligent at our lake projects in order to protect our recreation visitors. Park rangers like James Chambers of Canyon Lake continue to step above and beyond to ensure the safety of our visitors.

As we take part in our annual celebrations and pat our awardees on their backs, let's keep our team members who are deployed in our hearts and minds. As we continue

to provide a veil of safety for our visitors, we need to continue to take care of ourselves and our families this recreation season.

We take the lead on many fronts for the Corps of Engineers, and we continue to be one of the best in the Corps because we have some of the best people in the Corps.

HOOAH! 🇺🇸

It's raining, it's pouring ...

Fort Worth District employees waded out to the Lockheed Martin Recreation Center to celebrate Engineer Day, June 15. Gathered under a pavilion, attendees engaged in games and won prizes. Several children braved the rain to visit Miss Cookie the Clown to have their faces painted. The annual Engineer Day Picnic is hosted by the Morale, Welfare, and Recreation Association. Over the course of the year they host fund raisers to offset the cost of the picnic. 🇺🇸



Photos courtesy of Fort Worth District

Can you feel the love ...

Melanie Ellis
Pacesetter Staff

School may be out for summer but more than 900 students and over 150 volunteers made their way out to Brockdale and Highland Parks at Lavon Lake for one last community service day April 27.

Eric Pedersen, park ranger, Lavon Lake, was instrumental in organizing the event. Pedersen began working with the school in January to develop the large scale community service effort that would help prepare the parks for the busy summer recreation season and allow the students to learn the role of the Corps.

“We talked to the students about the history of Lavon Lake and guided them on an interpretive nature walk,” said Pedersen. “They sampled soil and water, and members of the Blackland Prairie Raptor Center talked to them about animals that they might see around the lake,” said Pedersen.

Lovejoy Independent School District has made community service a priority by incorporating it into their graduate profile pillar. Students are given the opportunity to



Photo courtesy of Fort Worth District

Park Ranger Eric Pedersen talks to students from Lovejoy Middle School about the history of Lavon Lake.

perform community service during school hours with their peers.

Gavin Goodrich, principle, Lovejoy Middle School, commented about the value of raising the students awareness of the lake and park area. “It’s important to educate our young people on the importance of environmental stewardship,” said Goodrich.

“This event allowed a large group of

children and many adults to increase their awareness of their local water resources, wildlife, and organizations in their community that provide unique services and educational opportunities,” said Pedersen. “It also showed that the Corps is interested and willing to foster partnerships for the betterment of Lavon Lake.” 🌟

Fishing is Fun..

Special needs children and adults fish in Barker Reservoir

Kristine Brown
Addicks and Barker Reservoirs

For the past seven springs, kids and adults have participated in a “Fishing is Fun” event hosted by the Galveston District at its Addicks Project Office. From the beginning in 2000, more than 500 kids, adults, and volunteers have participated in this opportunity for a day of fishing and fun.

This hands-on, outdoor experience provides special needs children and adults with an opportunity to catch and release fish. The event is sponsored by the Sam Houston Area Council Boy Scouts under the Special Needs Scouting Division. Special Needs Scouting provides various programs, projects, and events to Special Education youth and adults. Scout leaders, teachers, parents, and volunteers are utilized to organize, plan, supervise, and monitor event activities.

Each year, the event is held around a small lake located within Barker Reservoir. On April 12, more than 100 children and adults participated in the activities.

Children from Aldine Independent School District, Galena Park ISD, Houston ISD, Klein ISD, Magnolia ISD, North Forest ISD, Pasadena ISD, Spring ISD, Spring Branch ISD, and Tomball ISD participated, as well as adults from the Bridgewood Farm, St. Giles Living Center, and the Garden Oaks Adult Activity Center.

Festivities began at 10 a.m. with busses arriving and unloading at the lake. The weather was clear and cool. Teams set up along the lake to fish.

The event lasted for three hours with participants catching and releasing fish, and snacking and playing around the lake. At the end of the day, everyone was handed a Bobber goodie bag before loading up the buses. The



Photo courtesy of Galveston District

A participant in the Fishing is Fun event shows off his catch of the day.

bags contained Corps Water Safety information and materials such as coloring books, crayons, stickers, and pins. 🌟

Siders, Poole honored for public service

Mary Beth Hudson
Pacesetter Staff

Tammy Siders and Edwina Poole were recently honored by the Oklahoma Federal Executive Board as nominees for a 2007 Public Service Recognition Award. Plaques were presented to nominees at the annual FEB banquet on May 7 at the Clarion Hotel and Conference Center in Oklahoma City.

Siders was nominated in the Department of Defense clerical/administrative assistant category while Poole contended in the DoD technical, professional, administrative, GS-9 and above pool. Lt. Col. Bernie Thomson attended the banquet with the pair as did Larry Dearing, Clif Warren, and Steve Harmon.

The nominations stated:

“Siders came to the Tulsa District at the beginning of 2006 and assumed the duties of administrative support assistant to the Construction Branch, Engineering and Construction Division. The position she filled had been without a permanent employee for more than four months. Using well-developed communication, technical, and organizational skills, she quickly organized the workload, established priorities, and went to work

winning the confidence and appreciation of her co-workers. Within a few months, a co-worker in another branch was deployed overseas. Siders agreed to accept his additional duties, and has essentially supported two branches for more than half

of the year. She has dutifully performed this additional workload by improving efficiency, expending a great work effort, and making personal sacrifice. During this time, she has remained genuinely helpful to those requesting assistance and displayed an exceptional attitude which has improved the work atmosphere and organizational morale of both branches.

“Poole is a cartographer who has brought state-of-the-art GIS technology to our military customers. Her diversified talents have also contributed greatly to the success of the Fort Sill BRAC program as a primary Project Delivery Team member. Her outstanding performance in the management of six construction phase services contracts concurrent with her other duties have proved her devotion and selfless contribution. Through her dedication and sacrifice, she has gained the respect of her peers and customers by displaying both leadership and technical skills. She is truly a model employee with her outstanding achievements having a positive impact upon herself, the Tulsa District, and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers.”



Photo courtesy of Tulsa District

Tammy Siders and Edwina Poole accept their 2007 Public Service and Recognition Award plaques at a ceremony held May 7.

From across the region



Photo courtesy of Fort Worth District

Members of the Regional Leadership Development group joined the Southwestern Divisions senior leadership at the Regional Management Board conference at the Botanical Gardens in Fort Worth, Texas, April 25.

The conference provided an opportunity for the RLD members to shadow the senior leadership and sit in on briefings on the current status of the districts. The conference provided a regional picture of the division and showed how the different districts located in SWD were implementing new processes and procedures and adapting to them.

The RLD consists of folks who are currently enrolled in the Leadership Development Program. The group is made of current Emerging Leaders and several past Emerging Leaders who are still working to better their individual districts and learn more about themselves and how they contribute to the Corps.

30 years later Little Rock remembers James

June 29, 1977, Park Ranger Opal James was murdered while on duty

Tammy Reed
Pacesetter Staff

He is buried by Cynthia Blansett's father and she is reminded of his life, and death, every time she visits her father's grave. He is Opal James, and he has the tragic distinction of being the only Army Corps of Engineers park ranger murdered while on duty. June 29 marks the 30th anniversary of the day he died.

James, a park ranger at Little Rock's Blue Mountain Lake; David Small, a summer hire park ranger; and Magazine City Marshal Marvin Richie were shot by two escaped convicts. Only Small survived.

Sometimes we would like to forget such a tragedy struck one of our own, but we never want to forget the ranger it happened to. That's why Blansett, of Little Rock's Regulatory Office, took a moment to share some memories of James.

"I knew him, and he was a good, hard-working man," she said. "I spent my teen-age years in the community of Havana, Ark., where Opal raised his family, and I went to high school with one of his daughters, Anne. I knew his wife, and they seemed to be a good rural Arkansas family, as well as an asset to the community.

"Opal did the everyday grind, like all of the rest of us did. You know, go to work to make a living to support your family. He was a maintenance worker at the time, very quiet and business like. Every now and then you could get a smile or a chuckle. In the mid 70s, he was changed to the park ranger position, where he worked the 4 p.m. to midnight shift a couple of summers during high visitation. He said he did not like that shift as much because it took him away from his family."

Blansett explained there was one day a week he seemed to look forward to because he worked 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. That day was Wednesday.

"How ironic that June 29 would be on a Wednesday," she said. David Small, who barely survived that nightmarish day with

James, shared some memories of his partner.

"I only worked with Opal one day a week for about three summers, but when I did work with him, he talked a lot about his family and his concerns for them, as he was a good family man," Small said. "He also was really proud of an old 1952 International truck he had, as he talked about it quite a bit."

Hoover Willard, a supervisory natural resources specialist at Blue Mountain, was working at Blue Mountain those 30 years ago, and he remembers that day and James quite well.

"You know what was strange? Strange was looking at Opal's truck sitting in the parking lot and not knowing where he was and worrying about him.

"He would have been 88 years old this year. He was a dandy, very serious, but he had a good sense of humor. He was a great guy."

***"He was a dandy, very serious,
but he had a good sense of humor.
He was a great guy."***

Remembering the tragedy of murder is difficult. But with the passage of time, remembering the hard-working family man and honoring his life is what we really want to do.

Opal James Memorial Scholarship (Arkansas Technical University) — The family and friends of Opal James established an endowed scholarship in his memory. The \$350 scholarship is awarded annually to a student in Recreation and Park Administration or Fisheries and Wildlife Biology. Scholarship and future potential for service will be considered by the Student Aid Committee in making the award. Academic scholarships will be awarded as applications are received; therefore, students should apply early since only a limited number of these scholarships are available. 🇺🇸

Fish out of water



Photo courtesy of Fort Worth District

The Corps of Engineers and Texas Parks and Wildlife Department teamed up to bring the "Nobody's Waterproof" campaign to Lake Texoma. The outreach campaign is targeted toward boaters and swimmers between the ages of 18 and 35. It is a new approach to water safety education. Approximately 200 people were reached. The campaign will be coming to Joe Pool Lake in July. 🇺🇸

Ham Creek Park at Whitney Lake reopens with the help of locals

Melanie Ellis
Pacesetter Staff

Dozens of local citizens joined Congressman Chet Edwards, Col. Christopher Martin, and local county commissioners to officially reopen Ham Creek Park at Whitney Lake.

"This is the first project that I've ever worked on where everyone is on board," said Commissioner RC McFall. "That was in large part due to George Woods."

Ham Creek Park, located in the upper reaches of the Whitney Lake Project, is the closest lake and river access point for visitors from the Dallas and Fort Worth areas. The park has been closed since the early 1990s when a lease agreement was terminated due to lack of interest and use. In 2002, Woods, a resident of the area, gathered a group of citizens and formed a committee that would work to get project buy in from every city in Johnson County and take their request to reopen the park to the Corps.

"I'm proud that we have this park," said McFall. "This was done with local input and not handed to us from someone two thousand miles away sitting behind a desk."



Photo courtesy of Fort Worth District
Congressman Chet Edwards and Col. Christopher Martin joined county commissioners and local citizens to reopen Ham Creek Park.

In March 2005, the Corps and Johnson County agreed to a cost-sharing partnership in which the Corps would develop and construct the facilities and the county would take over the operation and maintenance costs upon project completion.

"This was a community project," said Ronnie Bruggman, lake manager, Whitney Lake. "It was successful because of the amount of communication and dedication from the citizens."

In June 2005, Edwards secured \$900,000 for Phase I construction, which includes an entrance road, boat launch, pier, and parking lot.

"The reopening of this park is a great example of good people working in good faith to accomplish something," said Edwards. "Thank you for letting me be a small part of something that will be used for years to come."

Col. Martin also commented on the commitment from the Congressman and citizens to bring Phase I to completion and prepare for Phase II. "This is a great lake and it has great tradition in our district," he said. "Great job. I appreciate all of your hard work and dedication."

Edwards has secured an additional \$1.2 million to construct restrooms, an entrance station, pavilions, picnic tables, and water and electrical systems to be completed in 2008. 🇺🇸



Photo courtesy of Fort Worth District

The river bank in Ham Creek Park is the closest lake and river access point for visitors from the Dallas and Fort Worth areas.

Students learn about wetlands at Arkansas event

Tammy Reed
Pacesetter Staff

On April 12, Tim Scott of the Little Rock District Regulatory Office, assisted by Sarah Usdrowski and Elaine Edwards (not shown), presented a program on Backyard Wetlands to students during Water Fest 2007.

This annual event was held this year at Lakewood Middle School in North Little Rock, Ark.

The district team members set up the Regulatory Office area with displays of aerial photography and a wading pool that represented a wetland.

This included live hydrophytic vegetation and live small creatures such as dragonflies and freshwater shrimp.

Holly Anderson of the Natural Resources Conservation Service,



Photo courtesy of Little Rock District

who was in charge of organizing Water Fest this year, praised their efforts in an e-mail:

“This year, we significantly increased the size of Water Fest, going from about 16 presenters and 350 students in 2006, to

more than 35 presenters and 700 students in 2007.

We doubled the number of students we reached this year, and we could not have done it without your willingness to participate.” 🌱

Little Rock Park Rangers promote Earth Day

On April 17, Russellville Project Office Park Ranger Rick Bradford demonstrated the groundwater impacts of percolation and soil conservation to two classes of high school students at Ozark High School in Ozark, Ark.

This was one of several events promoting Earth Day that Bradford and fellow Park Ranger Allison Smedley provided around their project area at different high schools, and at safety and environmental fairs. 🌱



Photo courtesy of Little Rock District

Galveston District receives new survey boat

Ronny Beesley
Galveston District

The newest addition to Galveston District's survey boat fleet, the Motor Vessel Vannoy, was delivered to Galveston, Texas, May 10, by truck from SeaArk Marine, Monticello, Ark. The Vannoy will replace the M/V King, which was placed in service for the district in 1974. The new all-aluminum boat has an overall length of 38 feet, a 12-foot beam, and draws approximately three feet of water. It is powered by two Cummins Q5B.9 diesel engines, rated at 380 HP, and has a cruising speed of 25 knots. The Vannoy has been outfitted with single beam surveying equipment, and it will be assigned to the Southern Area Office in Corpus Christi, Texas. The survey boat will perform hydrographic surveys of deep- and shallow-draft projects along the mid-to-lower Texas coast, including Corpus Christi Ship Channel, Matagorda Ship Channel, Gulf Intracoastal Waterway, Brazos Island Harbor and Brownsville Ship Channel, Channel to Port Mansfield, and other contributory shallow-draft channels that are within the office's geographical area of responsibility. The Vannoy also may be used to survey other ports and channels of the Texas coast immediately after hurricane passage as part of district recovery operations.



Photo courtesy of Galveston District

Out with the old and in with the new: The Motor Vessel soon to be christened, the Vannoy, sits at the Galveston District dock as equipment is transferred from the M/V King.

The M/V Vannoy was named for Mr. Leslie L. Vannoy, deceased, who began his U.S. Army Corps of Engineers career in the Galveston District in 1938, performing flood control surveys. Mr. Vannoy transferred to the Corpus Christi Area Office in 1954, and retired in 1977 as a Supervisory Civil Engineer. 🇺🇸

Earth Day-Bay Day at Corpus Christi, Texas



Photo courtesy of Galveston District

Bert Troche and his daughter Jessika help out at the Corps booth.

The 2007 Earth Day-Bay Day celebration was held April 21 at Cole Park in Corpus Christi, Texas. Coastal Bend Bay Foundation in partnership with the Coastal Bend Bays & Estuaries Program hosted the celebration for the ninth consecutive year. Earth Day Bay Day is an important education and outreach festival free for all who attend. The event provides citizens with an opportunity to learn about the bays and estuaries, wetlands, native plants and animals, recycling, conservation and other environmental issues. In 1999, the programs first year, there were only 200 visitors with just three exhibitors. This year the Corpus Christi Police Department estimated there were 15,000 people who attended, and Galveston District participants estimated over 1,000 stopped by the Corps' booth to pick up pamphlets or get additional information. 🇺🇸

YEEHAW! Cinco de Mayo Galveston District style...

All photos courtesy of Galveston District



Lt. Col. Richard Hansen poses on a wooden horse complete with saddle after winning the barrel race.

On May 4, the Hispanic Employment Program held its annual Cinco de Mayo celebration, this year making it a tribute to the “vaqueros” because of their transition to the American cowboy. The celebration consisted of a carne guisada dinner, a story circle, an exciting barrel race won by Lt. Col. Richard Hansen, deputy district commander, a cake walk that raised \$91 for the Recreation Committee, and a troop of square dancers from the Houston Association of Square Dancers, who came to entertain and teach their dance moves. Enrique “Rick” Villagomez, Project Manager, won the 2007 Outstanding Hispanic of the Year award.



The troop of square dancers and their Galveston District students.



Rick Villagomez was named Outstanding Hispanic of the Year.

Administrative Professional's Week



Administrative Professional nominees from left to right are: Pat Agee, Wanda Hollman, Lisa Johnson, Sandra Morrison, and Pat Salinas. Not pictured are Deborah Clark and Benito Posas.



The group at the shooting range.

Galveston District celebrated the annual Administrative Professionals Week during April 24 and May 2, holding events throughout the week.

On May 1, a group of administrative professionals went to Addicks and Barker Reservoirs, Houston Project Office.

The group toured the facility, shot skeet at “The American Shooting Center” located in George Bush Park, and then headed to Katy Mills Mall for lunch and shopping time.

On May 2, a luncheon was held at the Jadwin Building which was followed by the announcement of the 2007 Administrative Professional of the Year. The winner this year was Sandra Morrison who works in the Project Operations Branch in Operations Division. She also won the award in 2001, to make her the only person to win twice. 🏆

North Goat Island Tree Planting



Photos courtesy of Galveston District

Volunteers work May 3 planting trees on Goat Island. The island is one of the environmental aspects of the Houston Ship Channel Project.

Environmental benefits were gained on North Goat Island as volunteers met there March 3 to plant trees that were appropriate for the salt water atmosphere.

The event was sponsored by the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department. There were 40 volunteers who planted 2,000 pines, 50 oaks, and 50 cypress trees on the 75-acre tract. The trees will help provide a habitat for waterfowl and will stem erosion on the island.

Volunteers came from TPWD, The Port of Houston Authority, Shell Oil Company, Gahagan and Bryant, the J. Simmons Group, San Jancinto College, and The Natural Resource Conservation Service.

Goat Island, close to Baytown, Texas, was rebuilt through the use of dredged material from the Houston Ship Channel Project. 🌍

“Your safety, our concern”

Mary Beth Hudson
Pacesetter Staff

“Your safety, our concern” was a motto set to action throughout Tulsa District heading into the Memorial Day weekend. From Council Grove to Pat Mayse, employees and partners worked hard to highlight the importance of water safety and to educate children and their parents.

From one-on-one interactions between a ranger and a child to joint press conferences in Tulsa and Oklahoma City, the district was continuously blanketed in the days leading up to the traditional start of the recreation season. “Corps personnel and our partners teamed together proactively to get the water safety message to the public,” said Billy Banks, chief of Operations Division. Partners included Safe Kids Coalition, Oklahoma Highway Patrol, U.S. Coast Guard Auxiliary, Bass Pro Shops, Life Flight, local first responders, and many media outlets. “We had a very successful Memorial Day weekend with thousands of people visiting our lakes and no reported drownings,” Banks reported.

The focus now shifts to the fourth of July. The subject remains the same: Your safety, our concern. 🌍



Photos courtesy of Tulsa District

Inset: Rangers Aimee Jordan and Randy Shannon of the Eufaula Lake Office teach youngsters at the Spirit of Spring Kids Fishing Fling in McAlester to “Throw, Don’t Go!” Park Ranger Travis Miller, Keystone Lake, visits with children at Frost Head Start in Tulsa. Most of the four and five year-old children in the class did not know what a life vest was before rangers visited that day.

Division commander visits Galveston District ports

On April 12 and 13, Brig. Gen. Jeffrey J. Dorko, Southwestern Division commander, visited several ports in the Galveston District, talking with port directors and the governing boards. Tony Rigdon, Port of Palacios, was first to provide him with a briefing. From there he continued to Port Lavaca-Port Comfort for a briefing with Robert Van Borssum and his board of directors, then on to the Port of Victoria to meet with Howard Hawthorne, port director, and the navigation district. The second day, he took in ports at the southern part of the state, from Corpus Christi to Brownsville. Among those traveling with Brig. Gen. Dorko were Art Janecka and Col. David Weston, Ralph Rubalcaba and Ronnie Barcak. 🌎



Brig. Gen. Dorko (center) along with Col. Weston and Art Janecka discussed navigation issues at the Port of Victoria.

Photo courtesy of Galveston District

May reserved for Asian/Pacific American Heritage month



Photos courtesy of Galveston District

Inset: Lt. Col. Hansen presents Geraldine Forbes with a memento from the Corps. Employees listen to a presentation about Asian Pacific American Heritage.

During the month of May, Galveston District held its annual Asian Pacific American Heritage Program. On May 18, renowned author and distinguished professor, Geraldine Forbes, retold age-old stories from India depicted by ancient scrolls and music. On May 23, Ph.D. Judith Jeevarajan, came to address the issue of “Pursuing Excellence through Leadership, Diversity, and Unity.” Next on the agenda was a group of Anjali Performers from the Anjali Performing Arts Company from Young Audiences of Houston, who danced to “A Taste of India” fairy tales. The day ended with serving a variety of dishes from the East. The festivities ended June 1 with a field trip to the Forbidden Gardens in Katy, Texas. The outdoor museum replicates some of China’s major historic scenes. 🌎

Pacesetter Points

Condolences

Charlotte Flesher, 84, Galveston District retiree, passed away April 2. Charlotte retired in the late 80s from the Management and Disposal Branch of Real Estate, where she served as a realty specialist.

Sidney Kealer, wife of retired Little Rock District Real Estate employee **Louis Kealer, Jr.**, died May 13.

Diana Laird’s mother, Shirley Jorgensen, 69, of Jefferson, S.D., passed away May 6 following a long and courageous battle with cancer. Diana serves the Galveston District as Chief, Planning Section.

The mother of **Sharon Lamkins**, Galveston District, Contracting Division, passed away in late May as the result of a serious car accident.

BM3 Nathan J. Martin, 22, passed away April 15 in Norfolk, Va. Nathan was a third generation Sailor and decorated veteran who served honorably in the U.S. Navy. He was stationed aboard the USS Cape St. George and recently completed a tour of duty in Iraq and the Persian Gulf. Nathan is the son of Galveston District employee **Art Martin**. Art serves as a survey coordinator in the Real Estate Division.

Galveston District retiree **Erben Schuldt** passed away May 19. Erben spent most of his career in the Foundations and Materials Branch and retired as its Chief in 1981. Services were held May 22 at the Bethlehem Lutheran Church in Beaumont.

Little Rock District Finance and Accounting’s **Miriam Thomas** lost her brother, Reverend Earl L. Thomas, April 30.

Congratulations

On May 11, **Sissy Aldridge** of Little Rock’s Pine Bluff Office, welcomed her first grandbaby when her daughter gave birth to 7-pound, 11-ounce Cooper Evan Cody.

Congratulations to **Carl Anderson** on his promotion to Chief, Project Engineering Section, Engineering Branch, Galveston District. Carl previously served as project manager in the Project Management Branch.

On March 23 in Iraq, **Lt. Col. Patricia Anslow**, commander of the Arkansas Army National Guard’s 875th Engineer Battalion, was promoted to the rank of colonel. In her civilian life, Anslow is the Chief of Planning and Environmental Office for Little Rock District.

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Points

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On April 6, **Capt. David Bryant**, Galveston District, and his wife Melissa welcomed their second child Jackson Woods. Jackson has an older sister, Hannah Grace, 21 months.

Christopher Brewer, grandson of **Dee Corren** of Little Rock District's Operations Division, completed U.S. Navy basic training May 10 at Great Lakes, Ill. Her twin grandsons, Adam and Kyle Jackson, graduated May 22 from North Little Rock High School.

Mark Emmerling was selected April 11 for Little Rock's Electrical Engineering Technical Expert position. Emmerling has consistently demonstrated his technical expertise and hard work and is a valued member of the district team.

Karen Felker, Program Analyst, Fort Worth District, was selected for a four-year temporary assignment as a Data Integration Specialist, Military Integration Division, Regional Business Directorate, Southwestern Division headquarters, June 4.

Congratulations to **Jason Foltyn**, project manager, Project Operations Branch, on his recent selection to a 120-day developmental assignment in Project Management Branch, Galveston District. Jason started his assignment May 28.

Little Rock's **Rose Garrett** was selected May 30 for a GS-13 Mechanical Engineering Technical Expert position in the district's Engineering and Construction Division.

Eric Gillespie, a river and harbor maintenance worker for Little Rock's Dardanelle Marine Terminal, was accepted April 29 into the Lock and Dam Operator Trainee Program.

Little Rock's **Gordon Hamblin** was promoted May 27 to lock and dam equipment mechanic supervisor at the Russellville Project Office.

On May 31, **Sean Harper** was selected as the operations project manager for the Beaver Lake Project Office.

Little Rock's Chief of Engineering and Construction Division, **Dr. Randy Hathaway**, was inducted April 13 into the Arkansas Academy of Civil Engineering. The Academy recognizes accomplishments in the Civil Engineering profession and works to continually improve the quality and education of graduates.

On May 30, **Toby Isbell**, a project specialist in Little Rock's Programs and Project Management Division, earned the Arkansas Federal Employee of the Year Award in the Professional, Administrative, Technical and Legal category for his work on the "Bobber the Water Safety Dog" program.

Melissa Jackson of Little Rock's Resource Management gave birth April 18 to 7-pound, 5-ounce Hannah Nicole Jackson.

Mandy Nicole Jarman, daughter of **Lonnie Jarman** of Little Rock's Greers Ferry Power Plant, graduated May 18 from Greenbrier High School. She will be attending college at the University of Arkansas, Morrilton in the fall.

Jackie Jernigan, Program Analyst, Regional Business Management Division, was selected for promotion to Budget Analyst, Business Resources Division, Regional Business Directorate, Southwestern Division headquarters, April 29.

On April 23, Little Rock's Operations Division announced the selection of **Gail Jones** for the position of GS-12 program analyst.

Ryan D. Jones, 20, son of **George Jones** of Little Rock's Dardanelle Power Plant, left for Camp Pendleton, Calif., May 8 as a new recruit in the U.S. Marine Corps for thirteen weeks of boot camp.

Samantha Lambert, 24, participated in the 111th Boston Marathon April 16. Samantha completed the 40K at a clocked time of 3:31:56. She works as a civil engineer intern in the Engineering Branch of the Engineering and Construction Division, Galveston District.

Sara Milholland, daughter of **Mark A. Milholland**, Operations Manager for Little Rock's Russellville Project Office, graduated in May from Russellville High School. She will be attending the University of Arkansas Fort Smith in the fall.

Billy Reed, a Corps employee at Lock 52 on the Ohio River, was selected for the river and harbor maintenance worker position at Little Rock's Dardanelle Marine Terminal, effective June 10.

Patrick Smith, son of **Mike Smith** of Little Rock's Logistics Management

Office, graduated May 5 from the University of Central Arkansas with a B.A. in Digital Filmmaking.

Lauren Tapp, daughter of **Elizabeth Whitmore** of Little Rock's Programs and Project Management, graduated May 26 from Oak Grove High School. She will attend the University of Central Arkansas this fall.

Donna Wilkerson was selected as Little Rock's Operations Division GS-12 program analyst.

On May 31, **Jimmy "Hoover" Willard** was selected as the operations project manager for Little Rock's Nimrod-Blue Mountain Project Office. Willard, the supervisory natural resources specialist at Little Rock's Nimrod-Blue Mountain Project Office, also recently earned the Project Management Professional credential from the Project Management Institute Global Operations Center. This certification is issued as a result of successfully demonstrating project management knowledge by passing the PMP examination and documenting project management experience and education. He is among the first Operations Division field personnel to earn the PMP credential in Southwestern Division.

Congratulations **Little Rock blood donors!** The American Red Cross goal for April's blood drive was 30 units. Federal building donors produced 35 units!

Outreach

On March 11, Little Rock's **Tom Clement** presented an hour long presentation on Montgomery Point Lock and Dam to engineering faculty and civil engineering students who are members of the Chi Epsilon Fraternity at the University of Arkansas in Fayetteville.

On March 26, **Timothy Scott** of Little Rock District's Regulatory Branch presented a 40-minute Corps regulatory and erosion information program to 35 engineers, consultants, developers and city officials. The workshop, organized by the City of Little Rock Public Works, was entitled Erosion Control Workshop, and it is part of the city engineer's continuing education program.

Retirements

Nancy Boyd, Realty Specialist, Programs Directorate, Southwestern Division headquarters, retired May 1, following more than 30 years of service.

Warren Hayman Dengler, civil engineer, Freeport Project Office, retired June 2 after 34 years of service.

Pramod Desai, structural engineer, Geotechnical and Structures Section, Galveston District, retired May 31 after 23 years of service.

Darrell Dunkerson of Little Rock's Logistics Management Office retired April 1 after 20 years and one month of service.

Tim Few retired from Galveston District's Geotechnical and Structures Section where he served as a civil engineer. Tim retired after 24 years of service.

Jerry F. Jones, a forester at Little Rock's Nimrod-Blue Mountain Project, retired May 3 after 31 years of federal service. As the first forester hired in the Little Rock District, he did an outstanding job in timber management field work at Nimrod and Blue Mountain. He also worked 13 years with the Forest Service. Jones said that although he is very appreciative of the job he held with the Corps of Engineers and will miss his co-workers, he's looking forward to living on his cattle ranch in Gravelly, Ark., with his wife and sons.

Judie Lester, civil engineering technician, General Engineering Section, Galveston District, retired April 3 after 31 years of service.

Ron Meyers, Chief, Project Engineering Section, Galveston District, retired May 17 after 35 years of federal service.

Glenn Roberts, civil engineering technician, General Engineering Section, Galveston District, retired April 30 after 29 years of service.

Gordon Sumner, Contracting Officer, Southwestern Division headquarters, retired April 30, following more than 24 years of combined military and federal service.

Ishaq Syed retired April 30 from the Galveston District's Hydrology and Hydraulics Section where he served as a hydraulic engineer, after 24 years of service. 