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Walla Walla District

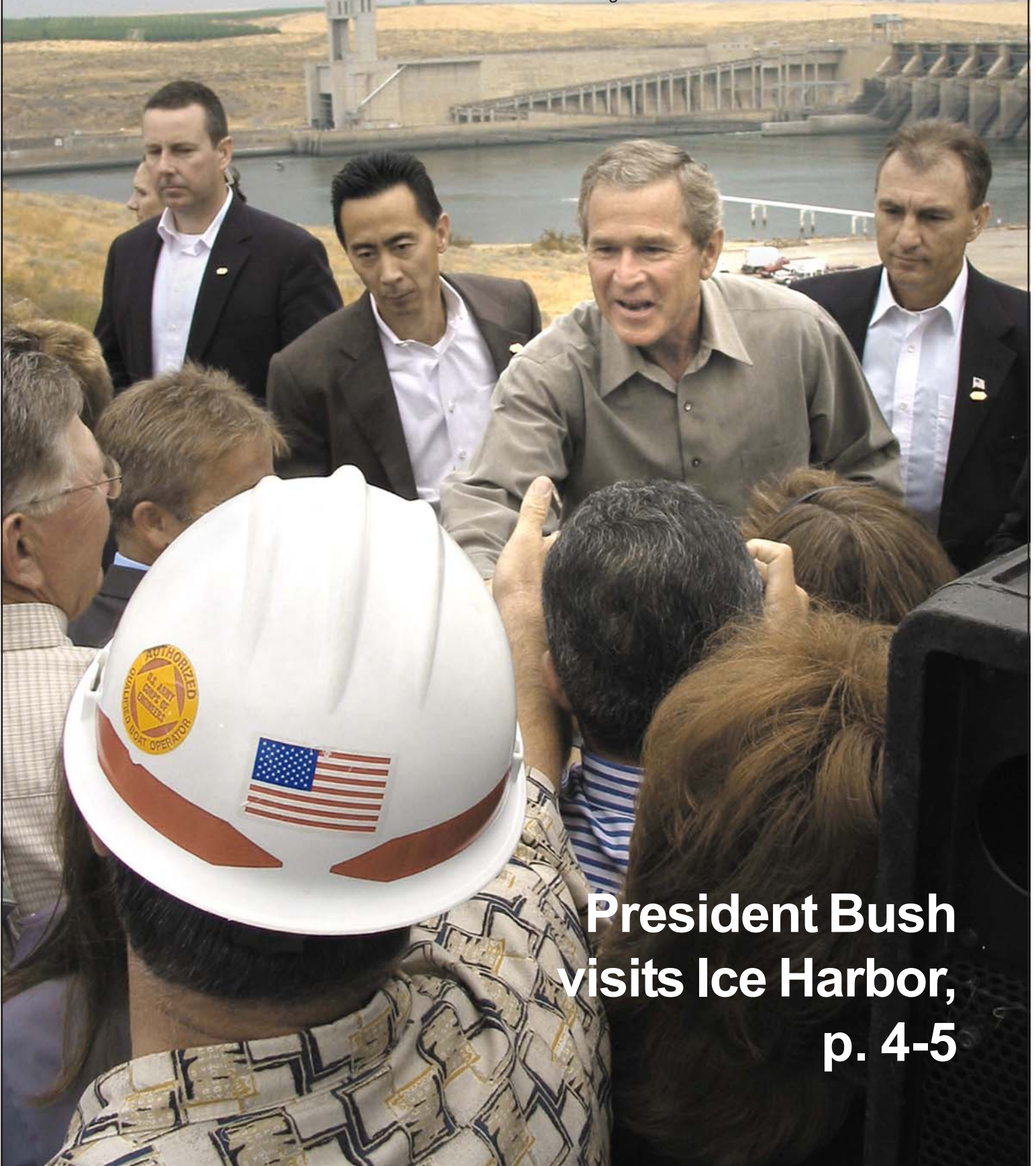
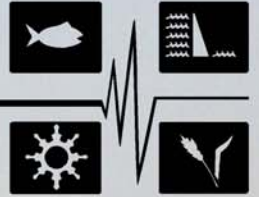
# Intercom

Serving the military and civilian members of the Walla Walla District

Vol. 30

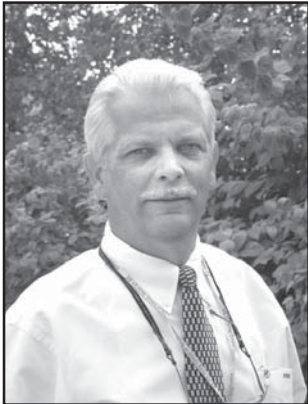
No. 8

August 2003



**President Bush  
visits Ice Harbor,  
p. 4-5**

# End of fiscal year spurs reflection, future challenges



**Paul Wemhoener**

In preparing for my chance at "From Where I Sit," I reflected on my short 18 months as a member of the Walla Walla District team.

From my past experiences, I can honestly say that this district has produced some of the most innovative and technically challenging products I have ever seen. Our employees surely are not afraid to stretch the boundaries of technology through systematic, thorough research. Our work in advancing the

science of fish recovery is nothing but a marvel.

It is always good to look back. Reflecting on our most recent history, we owe ourselves a chance to reflect on the president's visit and pat ourselves on the back.

That said, high-performing organizations always spend more time looking ahead. Using the foundation of the past, all of us must look forward and plan for the challenges and opportunities of the future. This is TEAM Ball!! Everyone must participate for the Walla Walla District to remain viable in the future.

Our fiscal year 2003 budget was \$137 million; the president's 2004 budget for Walla Walla District is \$139 million, an increase of \$1.7 million. In developing our budget for 2005, we expect to continue this robust commitment to our customers, region, the Congress and the president. The 2004 congressional appropriation process could add as much as \$3.5 million to the president's budget numbers. Included

in the process is a new mission for our District: supporting rural Idaho by problem-solving drinking and sewage issues in two locations.

We also face a markedly changing environment. The new business process software package (P2) presents both challenges and opportunities, providing new tools to enhance our program execution. We are also concentrating on and enhancing use of obligation and expenditures curves to better plan and monitor our work progress. We are standing-up an acquisition strategy board to insure we corporately align our work using both in-house and contracting tools efficiently.

We will continue to hear more about the FAIR ACT. Headquarters and the division offices are reinventing themselves through the 2012 process. Placing functional business lines that are not inherently governmental in competition against others outside of government should help to ensure we can offer customers and stakeholders the most efficient organization.

We are on the cusp of a new millennium. We must focus on the future as we continue to support this great nation in peace and war. We must forego placing blame when things go not according to plan – we must focus on developing solutions to get us back on plan.

These are exciting times. It is truly a time for planning our work and then working the plan. I am proud to be a member of the team. Together, we will move forward and strive to build our reputation as a high-performing public service organization.

**Paul Wemhoener**  
**Deputy District Engineer**  
**for Project Management**

## Ice Harbor and McNary visitor centers reopen to public

The powerhouse visitor centers at Ice Harbor and McNary dams reopened to the public Aug. 30.

The centers will be open from 9 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. daily through Sept. 30. McNary's center contains many historical artifacts from the dam's construction period and allows visitors a behind-the-glass inside view of the powerhouse. Ice Harbor's visitor center has no window on the generators, but offers an underwater view of the south shore's fish ladder and several interpretive displays.

All the District's power-producing dams closed to the public after the Sept. 11 terrorist attacks for security reasons. Last year, Lucky Peak Dam near Boise, Idaho, was reopened to cross-dam traffic after the District conducted detailed threat assessments there.

"Our plan is to allow public access to these visitor centers throughout the prime recreation season, April

1 to Sept. 30," said Lt. Col. Ed Kertis, Walla Walla District commander.

Dam officials advise that visitors may experience short delays at security access points.

"The guards have other duties, so we're asking visitors to be patient with any delays," said Dave Coleman, McNary operations manager.

Visitors will be required to park their vehicles outside the security fence and check in through the security gate near the visitor centers. Visitor badges issued at the guard station must be worn at all times. Visitors will not be allowed to bring in purses, cameras and similar items. These items cannot be checked in with the security guards and should be left in visitors' vehicles. Visitor center access at the dams is subject to change without notice.



# Commander reviews NWW highlights

Our District recently experienced an event that rarely happens and that other districts only dream about: we hosted the President of the United States.

Beginning with our confidential notification 10 days prior to his arrival, dozens of District and Division personnel worked long hours preparing for the visit. Of particular note is all the hard work the men and women of Ice Harbor Lock and Dam did. They accomplished every task asked of them. I am still receiving kudos from around the country concerning the District's performance during the visit, and I

want to make sure everyone knows that it took the entire District to pull this off. It is also noteworthy to mention that Ice Harbor was augmented with personnel from Northwestern Division, Portland District, from most of our other operating projects and natural resource offices and from the District headquarters. We clearly demonstrated a regional approach to accomplishing this mission.

But this mission was not accomplished on 22 August and the ten days prior. This visit was a reflection of the decades of work our District, in conjunction with other Corps districts, centers, HQUSACE, and other federal agencies, has done to ensure our nation can have clean, renewable hydropower and protect species of tremendous significance. Consider the amazing journey salmon make, from inland streams hundreds of miles from the ocean, to years spent feeding in the ocean and back to their home streams to spawn. We can be proud to know our efforts to make biology and engineering meet contribute in some way to the sustenance of the species.

Another event of historic significance is the release of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers final draft of the USACE 2012 report. The 2012 report is the blueprint for the vision of how the Corps of Engineers will operate and be structured in the future. As our society moves deeper into the information age, the Corps must also increase our use of the powerful information technology tools

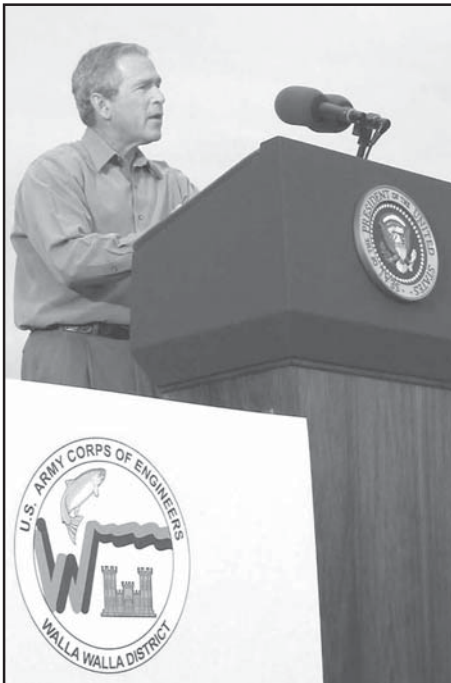


**During the past few years, record numbers of endangered salmon and steelhead have returned to District spawning grounds.**

being placed at our disposal. The 2012 report will move us further toward regionalization and virtual operations. Nationwide Communities of Practice will share information, districts will focus on executing their missions and our support base will expand regionally. This model currently exists in many successful global companies and adopting it will make the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers much stronger. I encourage everyone to take a look at the report, and submit comments to HQUSACE before the comment period ends Sept. 8.

Finally, we continue to rotate personnel overseas to take part in the Global War on Terror. These continue to be dangerous assignments, undertaken amid harsh living conditions, and our personnel that deploy are brave and selfless. Walla Walla District has led the way with one of the highest number of volunteers per capita of any district. Your nation thanks you.

**Lt. Col. Edward J. Kertis**  
District Commander



**President George W. Bush visited the Walla Walla District on Aug. 22.**

## On the Cover...

During his visit to Ice Harbor Lock and Dam on Aug. 22, President George W. Bush shakes hands with some of the more than 600 people who gathered to hear his speech, including Mark Plummer (wearing the Corps hardhat), a fisheries biologist at the dam. (photo by Gina Schwetz)



## Intercom



The **INTERCOM** is an unofficial publication authorized by the provisions of Army Regulation 360-1. It is published by the Public Affairs Office, Walla Walla District, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. It has a distribution of 1,500 copies. It is digitally printed by the Defense Automation and Production Service. Contents of the **INTERCOM** are not necessarily the official views of, or endorsed by, the U.S. Government, the Department of Defense, or the Walla Walla District, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers.

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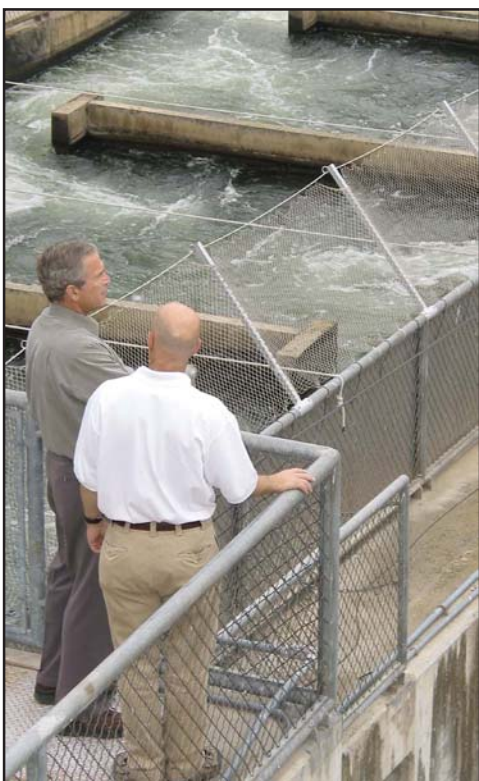
# President visits Ice Harbor, praises fish recovery efforts

by Dutch Meier

The president came to Ice Harbor Lock and Dam near Burbank, Wash., Aug. 22 to learn more about endangered species recovery and share his thoughts about rebounding runs of protected salmon and steelhead in the Northwest.

President George W. Bush flew into Pasco aboard Air Force One and traveled by motorcade to the dam. While touring Ice Harbor, he visited the powerhouse, fish passage facilities and visitor center. He then appeared before a seated audience of more than 500 people, with many more standing.

Shortly after introductory remarks



Above, Witt Anderson, chief of Northwestern Division's fish management office, shows President George W. Bush the fish passage facilities (photo by Gina Schwetz). Right, with a picturesque view of Ice Harbor Lock and Dam in the background, Bush addresses more than 600 people during his speech about balancing the needs for power production and environmental protection (photo by Dutch Meier).

by Interior Secretary Gale Norton, the president gave a 20-minute speech that was interrupted with frequent bursts of applause and approval by attendees that included stakeholders like farmers, port authorities and shippers, to name a few.

"We just had a great tour, seeing this facility and its technological wonders. This work has added to the strength of your state, and it's added to the prosperity of the people. It's really important that we remember that we're talking about national assets. After all, the people's money built this facility, and we want the facility to help the people. The facility has been a crucial part of the past in this region, and I'm here to tell you it's going to be a crucial part of the future, as well," said Bush.

Corps efforts to improve its facilities for safer and better fish passage caught the president's attention, too.

"I was pleased to see the incredible care that goes into protecting the salmon that journey up the river. It's an important message to send to people, it seems like to me, that a flourishing salmon population is a vital part of the

vibrancy of this incredibly beautiful part of our country. And, I appreciate the commitment that we are making as a country, and that you're making as a community, for salmon restoration.

What I saw was, and what you know first-hand, is that we can have good, clean hydroelectric power and salmon restoration going on at the same time," Bush said.

Bush reassured attendees that his opinion that the four lower Snake River dams should not be breached was ongoing and that fish recovery efforts would continue.

Following the president's departure, District Commander Lt. Col. Ed Kertis took Norton and many other attending local, state and federal dignitaries on a tour of the dam and its related facilities. Several members of the Corps' chain of command were in the group – Acting Secretary of the Army Les Brownlee, Deputy Chief of Engineers Maj. Gen. Robert Griffin and Northwestern Division Commander Brig. Gen. William T. Grisoli.

Hosting the president's visit was a







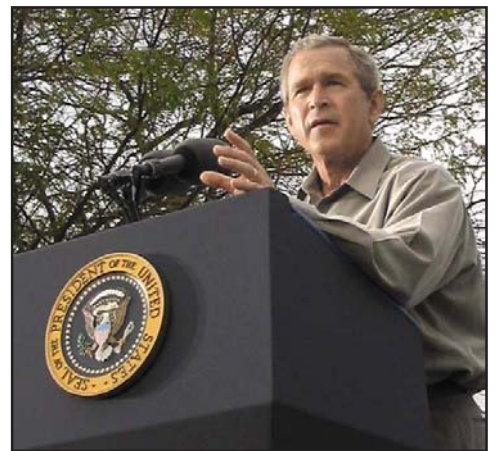
**Above, while shaking hands with dozens of attendees, President George W. Bush chats briefly with Walla Walla Mayor Jerry Cummins. Left, Ice Harbor Lock and Dam Operations Manager Scott Sutliff, leads a group of Corps and federal officials through the dam's visitor center (photos by Gina Schwetz).**

new and unique experience for Ice Harbor Operations Manager Scott Sutliff. Planning for the Commander-in-Chief's visit began less than two weeks before the roughly two-hour event.

"My whole project team worked night and day to make all the logistical and administrative needs come to completion so that all of our facilities and equipment were completely at the disposal of our important visitors. Every project mechanic, operator, electrician, painter, crane operator, rigger,

utilityman and natural resources ranger, guide and maintenance worker, biologist and office clerk – all made a tremendous contribution to the success of this visit. We also received a lot of help from the technical and administrative teams at the District headquarters and senior leadership from Northwestern Division. This was a real example of the concept of 'one team, one fight.' It's been nearly 40 years since someone from the White House visited Ice Harbor, the last was Vice

President Lyndon Johnson when the dam was dedicated in 1962," said Sutliff. "Our commander sent out an e-mail immediately after the visit was finished telling us all how everyone from the White House advance team and Secret Service complimented us highly for making this a smooth and easy visit. I wasn't surprised – I had talented and hard-working professionals who showed what they're made of and what they can do. This was their moment to shine, and they certainly did!"



**Above, President George W. Bush praises many agencies for their efforts to improve passage for endangered fish species. Left, Scott Sutliff, Ice Harbor's operations manager, explains to Acting Secretary of the Army Les Brownlee and Secretary of the Interior Gale Norton how the fish screens work to divert fish away from the turbines (photos by Gina Schwetz).**

# Walla Walla District's annual awards recognize excellence, achievement

by Gina Schwetz

Three Walla Walla District employees earned special recognition for performance throughout the past year. During a town hall meeting held at the headquarters building June 13, District Commander Lt. Col. Ed Kertis presented awards for the calendar year 2002 to top achievers in three categories: engineering, trades and crafts, and other-than-engineer general-schedule employees.

Steve Thompson, a natural resource specialist at Mill Creek Project, earned the Outstanding Achievement Award (General Schedule) for his unmatched success as



**Steve Thompson**

a volunteer coordinator. His efforts over the year yielded more than 260 volunteers who contributed 2,481 hours to work projects around Mill Creek and its facilities. The estimated value of volunteer work at Mill Creek totaled more than \$27,000.

Thompson became a park ranger with the National Park Service in Wisconsin about seven years ago.

Since then, he went to work for the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and has served in two other districts, with the past four years in Walla Walla. He holds a bachelor's degree in Natural Resource Management Environmental Law and associates degrees in Wildland Recreation and Business.

Jerry Dixon an L-grade operator at McNary Lock and Dam's powerhouse, received the Outstanding Achievement Award (Trades and Crafts) for service and dedication to numerous programs at the dam. His many contributions beyond his primary job description include: consultant to the dam's Generic Data Acquisition and Controls System team, lead contact for the operations section's rewrite of Safe Clearance Procedures for the control of hazardous energy and technical advisor and mentor for the District's Power Plant Apprenticeship Program.

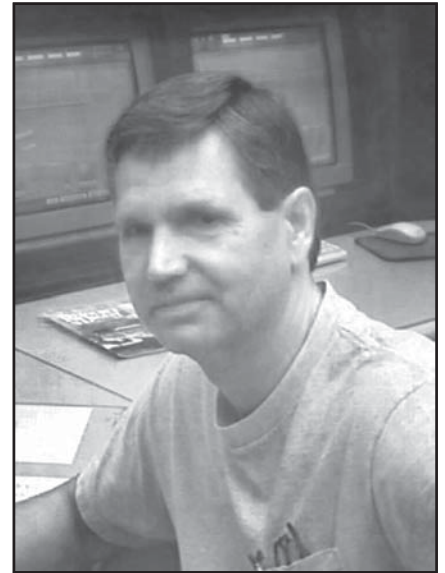
Dixon joined the District as a power plant apprentice

in 1977. Since then, he has established an impressive record of achievement and become known as a highly-sought-after technical expert on numerous topics. His skills at troubleshooting problems and applying attention to details, especially safety aspects, have earned him a reputation for "running work plans through the wringer" – an advisor whose tough questions will

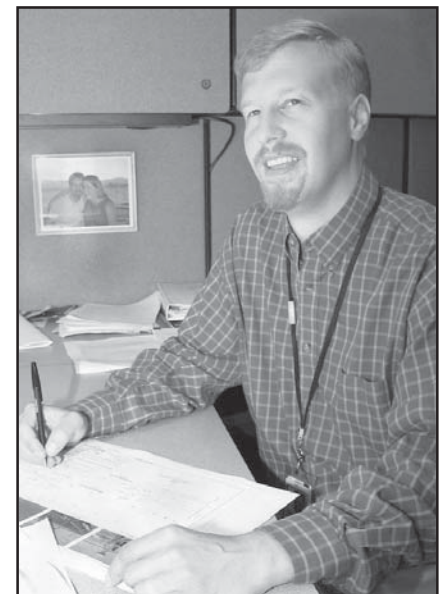
ensure safety considerations and sound technical reasoning is applied to all hazardous energy work done on his watch.

Dwayne Weston, a mechanical engineer in Design Branch, was honored with the Engineering Excellence Award primarily for his leadership on the District's security program product delivery team. A local extension of the Corps-wide Critical Project Security Program, Weston and his team delivered the District security plan on schedule and under budget, something most other districts are unable to claim. As a result of the team's work, Walla Walla District has become a national CPSP leader.

Weston, a native of The Dalles, Ore., holds a bachelor's degree in mechanical engineering from Portland State University, a State of Oregon Professional Engineer license and has additional training in Risk Assessment Methodology for Dams. He has served more than 11 years with the Corps at various Northwestern Division locations.



**Jerry Dixon**



**Dwayne Weston**



# CPOC recruiting system changes Oct. 1; employees gain easier application process

## Localized from a West CPOC release

There are some improved changes in store for District personnel concerning application procedures for RESUMIX.

The West Region Civilian Personnel Operations Center has used an inventory-based recruiting system (IBRS) to recruit and fill civilian positions since the CPOC began operations in March 1998. In a decision strongly supported by Department of Army, the West decided to move from IBRS to a system that uses a combination of open continuous vacancy announcements and individual vacancy announcements to fill positions. This decision was made based on customer feedback and a desire to standardize applicant processes across the Department of the Army.

Walla Walla District employees will see two primary differences in the recruiting and hiring process, said District personnel action center officials.

"Most employees will want to reenter their resume data in the Army Resume Builder on-line right now," said Debbie Mallard, a District personnel management specialist.

Once the new system kicks in, the standard Army resume will also cover the West Region, and supplemental data that an applicant must address will be greatly streamlined and simplified. The use of a central resume database, a central resume processing center, a standard resume and the West's migration from IBRS all are converging to make Army's goal for one standard application process for all Army vacancies a reality.

The Army's on-line automated format to create resumes, Army Resume Builder, can be found on-line at <http://www.cpol.army.mil>. Click on employment and then

resume builder.

The resume builder is a pop-up screen that allows applicants to fill out resumes on-line. It is screen activated and has boxes for all pertinent information. Once the applicant completes all boxes, they then submit it to the CPOC's central resume database.

"It sounds complicated, but it's actually quite easy. If you have your current resume in an electronic text file, you can simply block-copy-paste from your resume to the Army Resume Builder," said Mallard. "And, the Builder allows more room for employment data."

There are other advantages in using the Resume Builder:

- It is posted to the database as soon as you submit it. The old system took up to two weeks to post resumes.
- You can make edits on-line.
- It can go to all Army CPOCs.

"We encourage all employees to submit a resume through the Army Resume Builder as soon as possible," Mallard added. "Although employees can elect to use their current resume on file at the West CPOC, it will not have the posting/viewing/editing features of the Army's resume builder mentioned above."

The new recruiting system gives employees more control over the recruiting process, according to West CPOC officials who visited the District Aug. 4-7 to brief employees on the upcoming changes.

"Starting October 1, employees will be able to self-nominate for advertised positions," said Nicole Rose, a staffing specialist at West CPOC.

Under the new Self-Nomination System on Resumix, abbreviated job announcements will be posted on the Army's CPOL website and applicants will self-nominate to

each individual job announcement.

Individual vacancy announcements will be issued when officials determined that issuing an open continuous announcement may not be the best recruiting tool. One example is when a particular type of position is only filled occasionally and applicants are generally available.

In addition to the individual job announcements, there will be some open-continuous announcements for hard-to-fill positions. This process will require applicants to apply only once to a certain occupation/location and they will be automatically considered for the position/location anytime throughout the year without having to reapply. Walla Walla District will use open continuous announcements for some power trades and bio-tech positions only. The remaining positions will be individually announced.

The use of open continuous announcements will enable the West Region to retain one of the biggest advantages of the IBRS system – the ability to issue referrals without having to re-announce vacancies repeatedly. This type of announcement, when used for targeted positions, also reduces the requirement for applicants to continuously monitor the Internet and self-nominate repeatedly for multiple, like, vacancies. The new open continuous announcements, in contrast to IBRS announcements, will be much more specific in terms of type of position, grade, and location(s).

Both types of announcements will continue to be posted on the Internet at <http://cpol.army.mil> in the employment section.

If you have questions about the CPOL's new Self-Nomination System or the Army's Resume Builder, please contact the District's CPAC at 527-7027.



# District fair booth lures all ages

by Craig Newcomb, Planning Division economist

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers booth at the Walla Walla Fair and Frontier Days packed the crowds in this year. A combination of interactive and informational displays caught and held visitors' attention.

Volunteers from across the District helped man the booth and its displays. One display was a working generator model. At the push of a button, a pump shot water into a Pelton-style water wheel that was connected to generator by a shaft. The power generated was shown as an ammeter displayed the current.

One of the big hits of the booth was a hands-on stream table filled with sand and supplied with a constant flow of water. Visitors could build their own stream; add features such as bridges, levees, dams, gabions, rock structures and other features. Then they could watch the forces of erosion at work as scours, sand bars and deltas formed in front of them.

Further into the booth, visitors could watch water safety videos, practice "walking the line" while wearing Fatal Vision goggles designed to mimic intoxication and explore the "hands-on" Lewis and Clark displays. Additional District volunteers were trained to operate Seamoor the Sea Serpent, an icon of the Corps' water safety program, during on-stage performances and in the hallways near the booth.

The District fair committee wanted a booth that would attract more visitors and then hold them long enough to present a message about the Corps. The constant flow of people into the booth and the often-crowded conditions



Keri Schenter, a District paralegal specialist, helps young fair visitors build a dam and explains how the running water super-saturates the sand and eventually "floods" the stream table's down-river end (photo by Gina Schwetz).

indicated they met their goal. A father of five children spent more than an hour with his family building stream models, then had a hard time convincing his children it was time to leave. Other booth vendors came over to the Corps booth to see what was attracting all the people.

"I've been involved with the fair in some way since 1962," said Terry Atchison, a District information manager who, during his off-duty time, has served as director of commercial exhibits on the fair board for the past four years. "This was by far the most popular Corps fair booth we've had in many years."



Left, Will Newton, a utilityman from Lower Monumental Lock and Dam, takes "Seamoor the Sea Serpent" to the Pavillion Stage for his next water safety show (photo by Gina Schwetz). Above, Robin German, District communications manager, and Carl Knaak, chief of maintenance engineering, layer paper mache over wire forms to create castle towers for the District fair booth's entrance (photo by Chris Koch).