

Intercom

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US Army Corps
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Walla Walla District



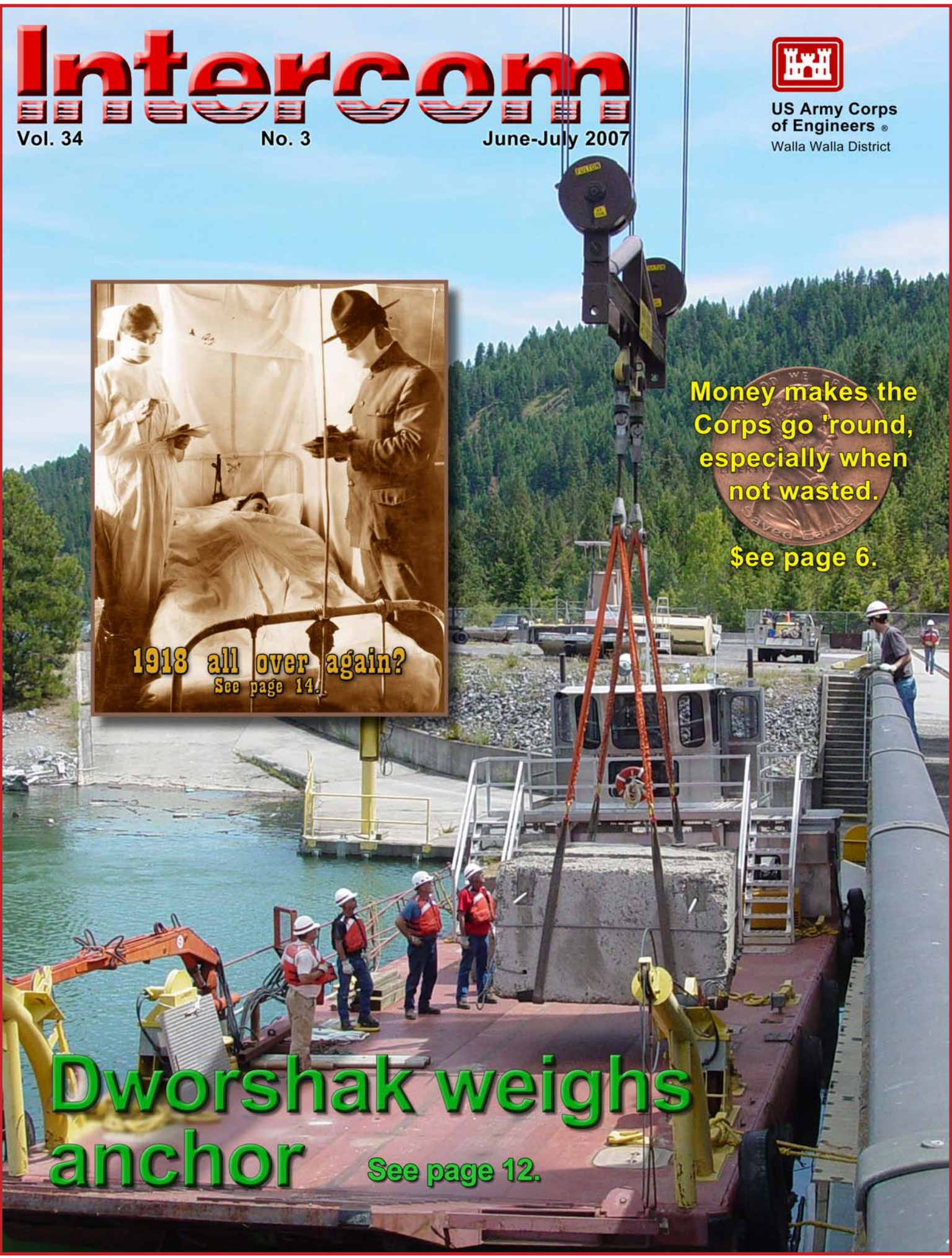
1918 all over again?
See page 14.

Money makes the
Corps go 'round,
especially when
not wasted.

See page 6.

Dworshak weighs
anchor

See page 12.



FROM WHERE I SIT

Reality hero shows play daily at 5:30 in Walla Walla District

by Joe Saxon

Have you seen a hero lately?

I saw one on the 5:30 news today, but it wasn't genuine – just some over-indulged attention-craving wannabe masquerading as the real thing.

The heroes to whom I refer are on a different 5:30 program, the one in which they get up everyday at 5 a.m. and go to work for 30 years.

We all know them since they are easy to recognize as they receive their 10, 20, 30 or 40-year service pins.

They're the ones who step up, fill the void and ask the question "How can I help?"

The Walla Walla District has an overabundance of heroes (and heroines) who answered the call with 158 deployments when the need was compelling following the onslaught of Hurricane Katrina, Rita and Wilma.

And, of course, there were also those who filled in behind them and pulled the extra load, the heavy lifters, working deep in the heart of our dams and projects.

You can find heroes in Afghanistan, Iraq or in any of the 90+ countries where the Corps is assisting. The Walla Walla District witnessed 122 of them step up, and although some of them may have been a bit reticent, they had the courage of their convictions which overcame fear.

In extreme cases, heroes make the ultimate sacrifice for country and for their band of brothers and sisters in arms.

They are pioneering research to help restore the salmon in the Northwest. They helped design and build state-of-the-art, one-of-a-kind spillway weirs to help juvenile salmon get downstream safely to the ocean.

They're providing the Northwest with the nation's lowest energy cost. They fix our navigational locks when broken and ensure that 17.5 million tons of products and goods can transit up and down river from the port of Clarkston to Portland and back.



Joe Saxon

They help us navigate the A-76 pitfalls and teach difficult subjects like NSPS to the rest of us. They run our Combined Federal Campaigns and help visitors enjoy our parks and reservoirs.

In their spare time they teach swimming to high school students, preside over local Red Cross chapters, visit our veterans, comfort crime victims and bring words of encouragement to those imprisoned.

They smile. They're positive. They mentor. They share. They're grounded in core values and principles that help them overcome negativity and pessimism. They are high-flyers and high achievers, high maintainers without being high maintenance.

In a town like Walla Walla where the median household income is about \$38,000, they're not complaining about how hard they work because they know there are other equally committed heroes and heroines working just as hard.

In our public affairs office we try and introduce you and the public to these doers, these strivers, these men and women who make positive differences in the lives of ordinary people.

Our heroes aren't perfect — no one is. They try and sometimes fail, but they inspire us with their ability to venture forth, bounce back from adversity, take the hard lessons learned in defeat and apply them to the next challenge, always putting one foot in front of the other enroute to turning "no" to "how."

There are 715 potential reality hero shows playing daily in the Walla Walla District, and you don't need to go far to see one. Chances are you can catch a glimpse of one hard at work huddled over in the next cubicle or turning a wrench nearby at one of the projects. When you find one offer up a simple "thanks," or better still, join the show.

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On the Cover...

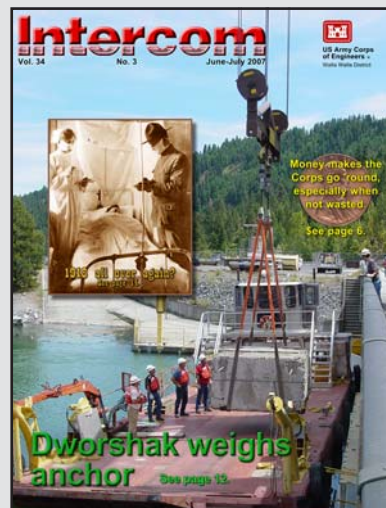


photo: Paul Pence, Dworshak Natural Resources Manager

The crew at Dworshak Dam monitors the loading of concrete blocks onto the project's work barge June 20. The two 24,000 pound blocks were lashed together to provide a for-all-practical-purposes immovable object at the bottom of the reservoir from which an anchor cable could be attached to secure the Big Eddy Marina. The first anchor cable broke in April due to corrosion.

Inset photo courtesy of American Red Cross.

Family, friends, Corps coworkers mourn death of Steve Torretta

Steven Edward Torretta, 58, regional information officer and chief of information management for Walla Walla District, died at his family farm on Spring Creek Road east of Walla Walla, Wash., June 30.

Torretta was born in Walla Walla Dec. 26, 1948, to Albert and Dorothy (Meiners) Torretta. Albert was a longtime electrician in Walla Walla and Dorothy was a registered nurse and homemaker who raised six children.

Steve Torretta attended St. Patrick's Elementary School and DeSales High School. He relocated to study at University of San Francisco where he made many lifelong friends. He took an extended break from his studies and worked at Pacific Gas and Electric. Between jobs he explored Europe, where he developed a lifelong love of traveling and Mediterranean culture.

Torretta met Jennifer Shields in Seattle and they were married in 1975. Steve and Jennifer were finishing degrees at University of Arizona when their daughter, Angela, was born in 1977. After Torretta finished his Bachelor of Science degree in forested watershed management, the couple moved to Alaska, where he worked as a hydrologist for the U.S. Forest Service. Their son, Brian, was born in 1981 while they were living in the small Tlingit village of Hoonah, Alaska. The family also lived in Sitka and Juneau. After nine years in Alaska, the family moved to the Mt. St. Helens area of Washington, where Steve worked as the monument hydrologist. Torretta changed his government occupation in 1994 to information management for the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service in Portland where both children graduated from high school and Jennifer completed nursing school.

The couple transferred in 2000 to Naples, Italy, where Torretta was the supervisory computer specialist for the Naval Support Activity, and they soon developed a passion for Italian culture. Torretta loved languages and quickly learned conversational Italian, which he enjoyed practicing with friends and family. He also had great interest in southern Italian

cooking and spent many hours exploring small villages in Italy, living "la dolce vita." The couple moved back to the family farm in Walla Walla in 2005, when Torretta was hired to lead Walla Walla District's information management office.

The information management office is responsible for technology support services including managing, planning and budgeting of records and correspondence, forms, publications, and services such as printing and duplicating, library, mail, audiovisual and graphics, electronic publishing and computer services.

Torretta received numerous commendations for outstanding performance during his career.

Torretta is survived by his wife of 32 years, Jennifer Shields; children Angela, of Redding, Calif., and Brian, of Seattle, Wash.; and parents Albert and Dorothy Torretta, of Walla Walla, Wash. Also surviving are brothers, Pat, of Spokane; John, of Edmonds; and Mark, of Renton; and sister Mariann, of Spokane, all in Washington State, as well as many extended family members and friends. Steve Torretta was preceded in death by his sister Paula.

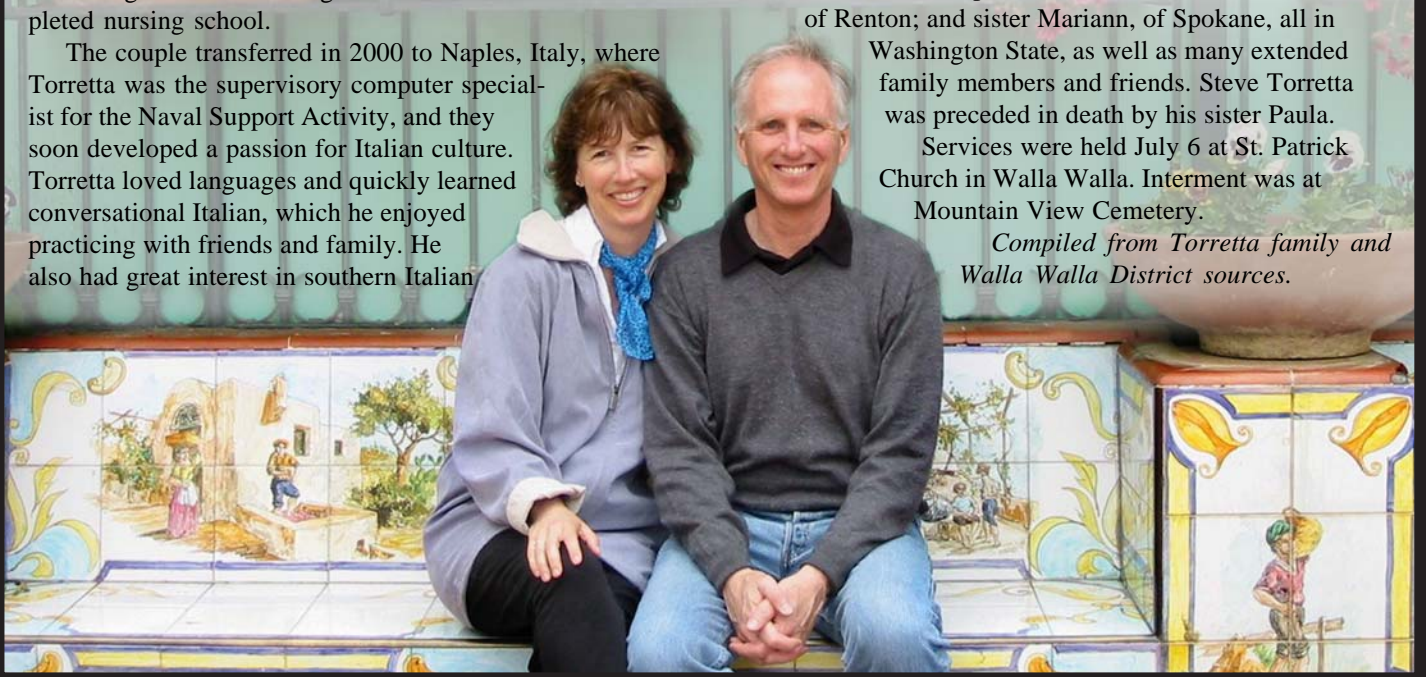
Services were held July 6 at St. Patrick Church in Walla Walla. Interment was at Mountain View Cemetery.

Compiled from Torretta family and Walla Walla District sources.



photo: Bryan Shollenberger, NWW Technical Services Branch

Above: Steve Torretta is very much in his element as master of the revels for children's games June 22 at Rooks Park for the Corps Day picnic. Below: Steve and Jennifer enjoy the "la dolce vita" lifestyle on Italy's Isle of Capri.



LOMO RSW closer to delivery, installation

The removable spillway weir destined for Lower Monumental Lock and Dam stands out in any crowd, on Swan Island at Port of Portland June 26.



photos: Joe Saxon

By Joe Saxon

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Walla Walla District is taking another step forward in its effort to restore fish populations in the Northwest with the unveiling of its latest removable spillway weir (RSW).

The project, currently being constructed by Advanced American

Construction, Inc. and Oregon Iron Works Inc., is the third spillway weir built by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Walla Walla District. It will be installed at Lower Monumental Dam on the lower Snake River in the fall.

“The spillway weir is essentially a giant ‘fish slide’ that helps juvenile salmon and steelhead migrate to the ocean by passing lower Snake River dams near the water’s surface,” said Cary Rahn, project manager for the Lower Monumental spillway weir. “This provides a more efficient and less stressful option than traditional dam passage routes,” he said.

The massive coated-steel structure stands about 120-foot high, 80-foot wide, 70-foot deep, weighs about 2-million pounds and is attached to the upstream side of a dam. A prototype spillway weir was installed at Lower Granite Dam

on the Snake River in 2001 and the second was installed at Ice Harbor Dam in 2005. Little Goose Dam, also on the Snake River, is slated to receive an RSW in 2009.



Cary Rahn

The spillway weir passes juvenile salmon and steelhead over a raised spillway crest, similar to a waterslide. Juvenile salmon and steelhead pass the dam near the water’s surface under lower accelerations and lower pressures, providing a more efficient and less stressful route while reducing migration delays at the dam.

“This is the first one we’ve undertaken to do internally with our staff architects, engineers and biologists,” Rahn said. “Our people did a tremendous job pulling this third RSW together. My hat goes out to everyone who has gotten us to this point.”

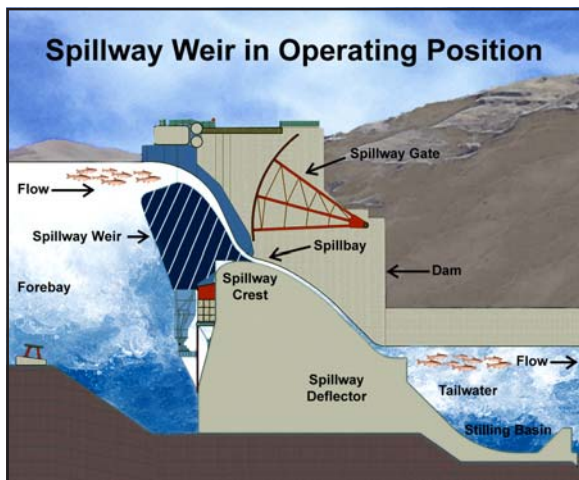




photo: Mike Remington, Safety Manager



photo: U.S. Army Corps of Engineers

Phil Bengé assisted with the debris clean-up mission while deployed to Mississippi for Hurricane Katrina relief efforts (above) and at right, he helps a youngster with a personal flotation device.

Bengé double-downs for Corps and

by Joe Saxon

“Helping those in need” fits the Red Cross, reflects the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers’ values and suits Phil Bengé just fine.

Bengé, a natural resources specialist with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (Corps) Walla Walla District, recently completed a two-year term as chairman of the board of the local Red Cross chapter. In that role he provided the board’s direction to the Executive Director, Terry Hackney, a man he called “extremely diligent and good to work with and one who made my job pretty easy.”

The local chapter, which covers Walla Walla and Columbia Counties through Dayton, provides disaster aid, blood services and volunteers who spearhead blood drives. They also offer training for first-aid, CPR and life guards and coordinate military emergency notifications calls each month for “family members trying to get in touch.”

According to Bengé, disaster response for home fires marks the bulk of their activities, which include one to two family fires each month in which families have lost everything.

“We have a disaster action service team that goes on-scene to assist families and provides food and water to fire fighters. If you have a fire at 2 a.m. the Red Cross has a team out there. It’s such an emotional time for those affected so having people dedicated to helping them is critical,” he said.

The Red Cross provides emergency housing, clothing and food vouchers during disasters. In the event of large-scale disasters like floods, Bengé said they have agreements with other entities to provide shelters while the Red Cross would stockpile them with supplies to accommodate several hundred.

Bengé joined the Red Cross board of directors in 2000 because of his “interest in disasters” and the Corp’s connection

to them. That melding of interest proved useful to the local chapter in the following years as the Red Cross responded to numerous tragedies including Hurricanes Francis, Rita and Katrina, and a devastating 2004 Indian Ocean tsunami that left 229,000 dead or missing.

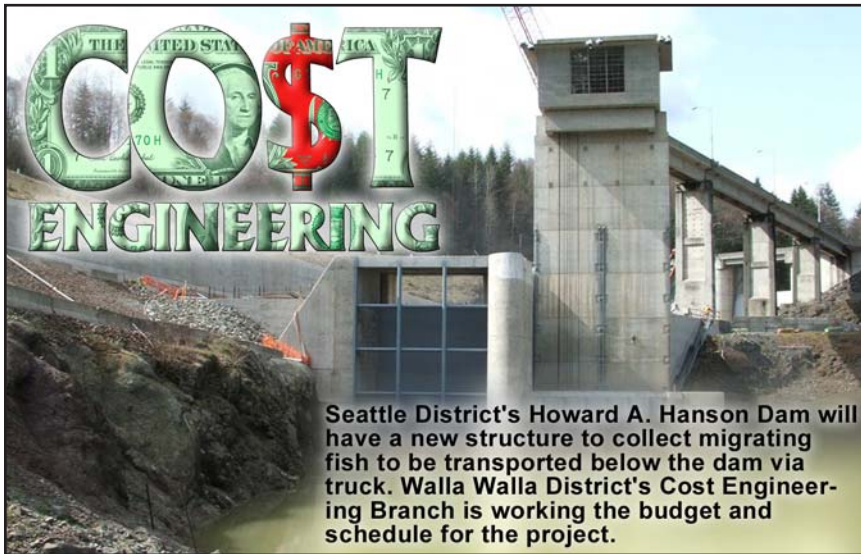
The response in Walla Walla to those incidents was very positive, Bengé said. “The Red Cross collected money for the Tsunami victims, did direct fundraising following Hurricanes Francis and Rita and the community raised about \$200,000 for Katrina victims, which is a lot for a small community.”

“Walla Walla also provided about 12 helpers who deployed for Hurricane Francis and 25 others who volunteered and stayed from 12 days to 3 months to assist with Hurricane Katrina,” he said.

Bengé went to Florida and Mississippi to support the Corps’ Hurricane Francis and Katrina relief efforts, and while there, witnessed the Red Cross in action. “Seeing them providing food three times a day to those in need was phenomenal,” he said. “The Corps and Red Cross may work at different levels, but whether it’s a home fire or a Hurricane Katrina, you’re still there for people helping them get their lives together.”

Bengé summed up his experience as chairman saying “It was a pleasure working with an outstanding staff, executive director and board,” and noted that “Walla Walla is an extremely generous community. They give and give and give.”

“We have people donating blood, serving on boards and giving their time. That generosity is reflective of the type of community we live in and the great people we have here,” he said. “If you’re interested in volunteering for the Red Cross, I’d love to talk to you.”



Seattle District's Howard A. Hanson Dam will have a new structure to collect migrating fish to be transported below the dam via truck. Walla Walla District's Cost Engineering Branch is working the budget and schedule for the project.

by Rick Haverinen

If a Corps cost engineer was going to retire and set up shop on Main Street, the sign outside the front door might illustrate a turbaned juggler riding a unicycle on a high wire. The turban would show the cost engineer has to have more psychic insight than Edgar Cayce, the juggling would mean he or she has to keep multiple projects going at the same time, and the unicycle way up in the air would convey the stressful nature of the work.



Carl Bender

You could also stretch that high wire between the apexes of two pointed structures in Giza.

"Cost overruns were probably encountered during construction of the first pyramid," said Carl Bender, one of Walla Walla District's 12 full-time cost engineers. Cost engineering, or at least the set of tasks now routine to cost engineers, probably is as old as those ancient Egyptian monuments. A U.S. Department of Energy Web site says, "Cost estimation in the private sector has literally been around forever." Engineers from the disciplines of structural, electrical, civil, and mechanical design most frequently find themselves parked in cubicles in the Cost Engineering Branch.

"It matters how much a product costs or how much you're going to pay for it," Bender said. "We are mandated by regulation to provide a way to compare the bids and proposals from private contractors and evaluate them based on whether they're fair and reasonable. It's history. I think it's been around since the beginning of time."

The Cost Engineering Branch got a beginning of time estimation when the human remains of Kennewick Man were found in July 1996 and they worked the figures for a scientific excavation of the discovery site plus helicopter transportation.

More contemporary projects and taskings compel this team of jugglers to keep all their balls in the air. Walla Walla District periodically produces a contractor-owned construction equipment database that breaks down costs for contractors to use in



Mike Jacobs

their bids. The District financial experts also publish construction cost indices for civil works projects and a computer program for estimating dredging costs. The branch is regularly consulted for construction project cost estimates in other Corps districts projects all over the nation.

Supervisory Civil Engineer Kim Callan has just completed a multi-million dollar estimate for major Columbia River dredging work.

Cost Engineer Jim Neubauer has had high-profile assignments in New Orleans following the 2005 hurricane season and at the Hanford Nuclear Reservation in Richland, Wash., studying estimates for their multi-billion dollar waste treatment plant.

Neubauer was selected by Corps Headquarters as the most recent Cost Engineer of the Year. Other Walla Walla District engineers previously tapped for the same honor include Karl Pankaskie, Rick Grubb, and Kim Callan.

Pankaskie is working on plans to add another spillway at Folsom Dam near Sacramento, Calif., and major environmental restoration construction at Howard A. Hanson Dam in the Seattle District. Hanson Dam will have a structure to collect migrating juvenile fish so they can be transported below the dam via truck.

The team also did a Texas-sized estimate for a powerhouse retrofit for Whitney Dam in Fort Worth District.

The better mousetrap must have several creative parents by now, as the Walla Walla cost engineers will at times devise construction solutions to design problems. Mechanical Engineer Mike Jacobs invented a method of controlling water intake shutters at Folsom Dam.

"You basically stack all the shutters one on top of the other and you only lift from the bottom shutter," Jacobs said, "and each gate has its own latching mechanism. You run the gates up, and latch the gate you want at the level you want to stay open. That latch holds that gate and the ones above it up, and you can lower unused ones back down to the bottom."

Don't you wish you had thought of that? Pankaskie innovated a new way of looking at money expended for any project over the time period of its construction. Called Cost-Loaded Scheduling, Pankaskie's creation helps Corps financial programmers estimate how much money will have to be paid out as a project progresses.

"It's something I stumbled upon, working on things," Pankaskie said. "It's innovative because cost engineers and schedulers are two separate groups. What we're trying to do is combine these two groups using both their sets of knowledge, to come up with a better schedule. We find the schedule helps check the estimate, and the estimate helps check the schedule."

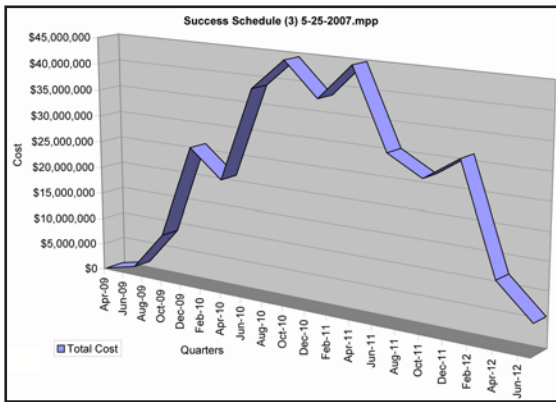
That ability to forecast the time needed as well as the cost for construction has been helpful for Walla Walla District Project Manager Rick Emmert.

"When you take a project concept to cost engineering during the initial budgeting and scheduling phase," Emmert said, "they'll help build a budget and schedule for you that are real. They're a

Continued to next page



Karl Pankaskie



Karl Pankaskie's Cost-Loaded Schedule helps financial programmers forecast what amount of money must be paid out over time.

Cost Engineering

Continued from previous page

great resource for project managers."

A sampling of projects being reviewed for Walla Walla District include a new

juvenile fish facility for Lower Granite Dam, a removable spillway weir for Little Goose Dam, and the Walla Walla River Water Exchange Conveyance System that will tap the Columbia River and transport water to aid the thirsty Walla Walla River. Carl Bender was working on this same project ten years ago.

"It will have 30 miles of six-foot diameter pipe and two 17,000 horsepower pump stations," Bender said. "They'll take the water out of Wallula Junction and they have to get over the hump there and go along the valley kind of parallel to the Walla Walla River and come in at Milton-Freewater."

The cost engineers will put on negotiator hats in cases when only one contractor bids a particular project.

The estimators play with their cards held closely to their vests. Their work would be worthless if a contractor got an impression of what dollar value a particular project was worth to the government, and the spirit of competition would be destroyed.

With estimates running into the millions or even billions of dollars, these construction financial experts literally can't afford to make mistakes by overlooking details.

"It's fun, but it's also very stressful," Bender said, "and it's also something you can't put off. When you have an absolute bid opening date, say at two o'clock on July 20, it's at two o'clock on July 20. In fact, if the bidders are one second late after the clock strikes two, they're disqualified. They may have worked on a bid for a month. They have to be there by the bid opening time, and so do we."

Cost Engineer of the Year worked New Orleans, Hanford

By Rick Haverinen

High-profile assignments are rewarding, but USACE's most recent Cost Engineer of the Year said the people he works with make the job most interesting.

Jim Neubauer of Walla Walla District certainly has had his share of notorious projects to work on. For about six weeks in the fall of 2005 Neubauer was Cost Lead in New Orleans District in the wake of Hurricane Katrina working on infrastructure estimates and as a contracting officer's representative building a medical clinic.

"A lot of the employees in New Orleans District were scattered due to the hurricanes," Neubauer said, "and some lost their homes. Meanwhile they were trying to work overtime. So in the October-November 2005 we were supporting them to help lighten the load."

Neubauer barely unpacked upon returning to Walla Walla when he was sent off to Richland for almost 10 months as Cost Engineer in Charge of the cost, schedule, and risk review of the Department of Energy's nuclear waste treatment plant construction at the Hanford site.

"I believe at the time it was the largest governmental civil works project in the nation," Neubauer said. "We had a team that averaged 20-25 people reviewing that program which I believe was valued at 12-13 billion dollars."

Neubauer finished that job in August 2006, and again barely opened his dresser drawers to put away his socks before he was whisked back to New Orleans.

"That time I was the Co-Cost Lead," Neubauer said, "because during that period, we were transferring the baseline cost estimate, program schedule and risk analyses over to New Orleans District. Our intention was to take this total program and move it back to them for their ownership."

Like Hanford, the work in New Orleans will also add up to billions of dollars, and will provide civil works infrastructure

designed to help prevent damage from a 100-year flood event. Neubauer and his team looked at infrastructure designs to develop cost estimates and construction schedules so they can be relayed to the U.S. Congress for funding.

Neubauer likens the team startup to figuring out how to best use the tools in his toolbox.

"Once I determine what their qualifications are, I give them their specific piece, or responsibility, and that allows them ownership, where they're in charge of that part of the pie," Neubauer said. "By being in charge and responsible for their own stuff, it creates better morale in the team."



Jim Neubauer

Neubauer knows how to employ both senior and younger cost engineers on the same team.

"You may have a senior estimator that's less qualified in the MII (cost estimating) software but very qualified in estimates in and of themselves," Neubauer said. "They may look at the architectural-engineering estimates. I like to have the younger people on the crews because they bring enthusiasm to the table, and usually they're pretty good on the software, so they can pound keys as well. But having a good mix works pretty well."

Neubauer challenges his crew members to feel confident in challenging him.

"It's important to me that they have fun," Neubauer said, "because I want them to feel good about working on very historical projects, and I encourage each team member, especially the younger ones, to feel confident that they can voice their opinions, any disagreements, any new ideas. I start that up front because we're paying for their expertise and I want my money's worth. Humor is very important to me, because that's morale. I instruct them, that if I lose my sense of humor, I expect them to counsel me."

SCHOOLING the w

On, in or near the water, extra caution is needed to prevent drownings. The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers is eager to spread the water safety message, as Corps employees from Ice Harbor Lock and Dam did June 28 for about 200 summer school kids at Amistad Elementary School in Kennewick.

The water safety event lasted all morning and featured activity stations covering elements of boat and water safety. One station allowed students to perform boat inspections to test whether three vessels had all their needed safety equipment. Another station challenged students in a make-believe boat in trouble to see how quickly they could put on their life jackets. They learned if they had their life jackets already on, they would have been better prepared for an emergency.

At a water rescue station the kids practiced tossing life saving devices like life rings and float cushions to a person in the water and then pulling them in.

The big chill was experienced as kids placed their hands in

ice-cold water for five seconds and then grasped a small chain at the bottom of a barrel to reattach it to a floating key chain. The idea was to show how difficult it is to use hands and fingers during cold conditions and that being prepared, like already having a life jacket on, would be best. Ranger Kye Carpenter even coaxed the teachers to participate.

A scavenger hunt on the boats let kids compete to find water and boat safety items. The list included a life jacket, fire extinguisher, rope, a floating throw ring, first aid kit, ladder, reach pole, and more.

The event included a bag for each child filled with items to reinforce water safety messages.

Natural Resource Specialist Phil Bengé, who is lead Water Safety Program Manager for the Walla Walla District, said an event like the one at Amistad Elementary helps teach children about water safety because it's hands-on and fun. Kids learn water safety information, and take it home to their parents.



Visitors enjoy the beach on Lake Wallula above McNary Dam last summer. About a dozen kids are in the water but only one wears a life jacket, so there's still more water safety education work to be done.

Photo: Rick Haverinen



water safety message

Left, John Baugh from the Pasco Resource and Maintenance Shop lets kids inspect several boats on trailers. Below, Myrna Loy-Zolyomi, Washington State Parks and Recreation Commission, conducts a water safety class. Above right, Ice Harbor Ranger Kye Carpenter turns down the thermostat as kids get a feel of hypothermia in ice-cold water. Below right, Ice Harbor Ranger Peter Diaz hosts a life ring toss game that might have a serious benefit if a person can be saved from drowning.

Photos: Scott Moore, Outdoor Recreation Planner



Regulating waterways for the “win win”

By Joe Saxon

Start with Idaho, pour in its waterways and wetlands, sprinkle in generous doses of the public with a dash of stubborn independence, wrap it in an ever-changing judicial landscape and shake. Vigorously.

That’s the environment that Brad Daly, Chief of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (Corps) Walla Walla District’s Regulatory Division operates. The Rochester, New York native has worked regulatory issues for the Corps for 30 years and he and his 12-member staff are on the front lines looking for win-win situations in Boise, Idaho Falls and Coeur d’Alene.

Their area of responsibility is different than the District’s civil works boundaries. “We cover the entire state of Idaho including the northern panhandle area that is within Seattle District’s civil work boundary. By the same token, we have nothing to do with SE Washington or NE Oregon, which are in our civil works boundaries,” he said.

“We regulate activities on private and public land and our decisions affect people’s lives and livelihoods,” Daly said.

“We try our best to balance private landowners’ needs with protecting aquatic resources including rivers, lakes, streams, ponds and wetlands. Our job requires lots of judgment, reasonableness and fairness.

“We work with the public to modify their projects, when needed, to turn ‘no’s’ to ‘how.’ Ideally, we would like to find a path forward that enables property owners to proceed and achieve their goals without the need for a permit. For us that is a win-win,” Daly said.

Nation-wide, the Corps processes about 90,000 permits a year involving about \$200 billion in construction. The Walla Walla District “processes about a 1,000 permit applications yearly compared with about 1,500 apiece for Portland and Seattle districts who have 27 and 38 people respectively. At any one time each of our field people will have a minimum of 30 on-going actions,” he said.

The Corps’s regulation over public waterways began with the passage of the Rivers and Harbors Act in 1899 designed to protect the nation’s navigable

waterways. It was expanded in 1968 to include the country’s growing environmental values and increased further in 1972 when Section 404 of the Water Pollution Control Act empowered the Corps to regulate discharges of dredged or fill material into waters of the United States. Subsequently, numerous court rulings further refined and defined the Corps’ authority.

Activities requiring permits include any dredging or disposal of dredged materials, excavation, filling or any other modification of a navigable waterway of the United States. In addition, permits are required for placing dredged or fill material in other “non-navigable” waterways. It applies to all structures from the smallest recreational dock, to the largest commercial undertaking including residential subdivisions, resort developments with golf courses, gold, garnet and phosphate mines to major highway reconstruction efforts.

Greg Martinez, environmental resources specialist in the Boise field office summed up the regulatory beat saying, “It’s a challenging job, where you meet all kinds of people, most of whom are willing to accept your recommendations to construct a good project. There are a handful of people, though, who want nothing to do with any type of regulation, so finding a way to reconcile the law with their perspective can be challenging.”



Idaho’s rivers, lakes and streams provide critically needed water supplies, irrigation, commercial navigation, power generation and recreational opportunities while wetlands provide food, habitat, and spawning grounds for an abundance of life. Wetlands also are key buffers which protect shorelines from erosion, moderate storm surges and purify water by filtering pollutants.

The Walla Walla District’s Regulatory Division has a staff of 12 who process about 1,000 permits annually and operate field offices in Boise, Idaho Falls and Coeur d’Alene to protect these valuable natural resources.

Photo: U.S. Army Corps of Engineers

Ice Harbor has new mural



photos: U.S. Army Corps of Engineers

The Ice Harbor Visitor Center received a new addition to the fish viewing room.

Local artists Gail Pittman and Ivy Anderson, a mother and daughter team from Pasco, created a lifelike mural for visitors to enjoy. Gail has been involved in artwork all of her life and she has been working with her daughter five years.

Ice Harbor would like to invite you to see their visitor center, open daily, 9 a.m.-5 p.m. Some of the interesting things to see include various water safety messages, fish videos, Native American artifacts, a model

of the dam, and several fish traveling through the fish ladder. Some of the fish you might see include Chinook salmon, steelhead, bass, walleye, and sturgeon.

If you happen to come by on a 'slow run' day, the new mural gives you a picture of the fish that travel through the dam.



Scouts volunteer at McNary



photo: U.S. Army Corps of Engineers

Local Cub Scouts helped Ranger Michael Stanley create a tree nursery in an area between the Oregon fish ladder and the earthen section of McNary Dam June 14 during a three-day gathering in West Park. The cubs planted about 50 cottonwood saplings, which will replace non-native Russian olive trees. About 125 cub scouts participated in the project.

Dworshak does self-service cable fix



Left to right, Dworshak maintenance crewmembers Eric Engle, John Beck, Ben Perkins, Jeff Ohlson and Butch Hall work with Clearwater County Sheriff's Deputy Michael Gladhart and two divers to install an anchor cable for Big Eddy Marina June 20.

photo: Paul Pence, Dworshak Natural Resources Manager

by Rick Haverinen

The crew at Dworshak Dam and Reservoir was successful June 20 in reattaching one of Big Eddy Marina's six anchor cables.

An initial effort to attach the cable on June 6 failed after the anchor became disconnected during the submersion process.

An outboard marina anchor cable at the Big Eddy Marina on Dworshak Reservoir, which is operated by Dworshak State Park, first broke free from the floating winch platform in late April due to corrosion from aging and an improper adjustment following an earlier than expected rise in the reservoir. Afterwards, Corps officials advised the State to not allow the public to use the marina until the anchor was fixed because high winds could cause more damage or loss of property.

According to Paul Pence, Dworshak's Natural Resource Manager, "It took a lot of time and effort, and it worked this time."

The June 6 repair attempt used a system designed from two 24,000-pound concrete blocks, left over from dam construction, and 3/4-inch stainless steel cable. During the lowering process, the anchor became detached and fell to the bottom of the reservoir.

This time the Dworshak maintenance employees found a spool of one-inch steel cable in the dam's salvage yard, and used that in combination with a four-foot buoy and a barge to successfully sink another anchor of the same size and weight on June 20.

The anchor had to be submerged in an area of the reservoir that is about 350 feet deep, adding to the complexity of the job.

For public safety reasons, Big Eddy boat ramp and the area surrounding the marina were restricted during the anchor deployment operation.

"A lot had to be planned to keep Dworshak employees, members of the public, and property safe," Pence said. "The plan was executed flawlessly."

Recreational operations at Big Eddy Marina immediately returned to normal after the anchor was successfully placed.

"One of the drawbacks of doing the anchor placement with our own staff is we had to take some people away from other duties, such as servicing remote campsites or removing woody debris from the reservoir," Pence said. "We appreciate the public's patience with us while we can catch up on that routine work."

Dworshak shows benefit from nutrient program



photos: Rick Haverinen

By Gina Baltrusch

Just one month after kicking off Dworshak's Nutrient Supplementation Pilot Program, monitoring tests conducted in June indicate the added fertilizer is already having a positive effect on the reservoir.

Water clarity and food-chain organisms show early benefits from the additional nitrogen and phosphorus which have been added weekly since May 10, according to Eric Stark, senior fishery research biologist for the Idaho Department of Fish and Game (IDFG).

Idaho Fish and Game partnered with Walla Walla District on the project designed to improve the reservoir ecosystem and food sources for fish. IDFG performs monitoring during the five-year pilot program. IDFG is using kokanee salmon as the indicator species for their research because kokanee feed exclusively on zooplankton, one of the food-chain organisms targeted for improvement.

Compared to the 2005-2006 average depth of 3 meters for water clarity, tests performed in June by IDFG showed an increase of 1.5 meters in clarity depth. The improvement in clarity is attributable, in large part, to the supplementa-



Dave Hurson

tion program, Stark said during a June 20 telephone interview.

Improvements in the reservoir's food chain are already starting to show, too, he said, "The response has been very quick at the base of the food chain."

Adding nutrients to the water should help bring conditions back into balance and encourage the growth of organisms that support aquatic species' food chain – like zooplankton which eat phytoplankton, said Stark.

The most dramatic test results indicating reservoir ecosystem improvement were seen in increased levels of beneficial bacteria, said Dave Hurson, Walla Walla District fisheries biologist and Corps project manager for the pilot program.

"Bacteria are typically the first organisms to react to a change in conditions," said Hurson. "These first tests show levels of beneficial bacteria at three to four times last year's baseline measurements."

"We're optimistic that it (nutrient supplementation) is meeting or exceeding our expectations. It's early to say for sure, but we're starting to see increases in beneficial phytoplankton and zooplankton," said Stark. "It will take a few years before the full benefits



Darren Brandt of TerraGraphics Environmental Engineering monitors progress as Tommy Cummings pilots the barge on May 10.

of supplementation can be measured across the kokanee population – the species has a three-year life cycle from fry to spawning adults. Based on increases we're seeing in edible phytoplankton and zooplankton, we're quite certain the kokanee growth rate should increase as well."

The average size of kokanee salmon in Dworshak Reservoir diminished since the dam was constructed, Stark noted. IDFG performed a baseline kokanee evaluation in April and will conduct additional evaluations in July and October to monitor growth rates. He said he looks forward to seeing how the indicator species responds to the Nutrient Supplementation Program.



One flu may not have flown

by Rick Haverinen

If the world gets socked by another influenza pandemic as was experienced in 1918, an ounce of planning and prevention is well worth a pound of cure.



Jeff Stidham

“A pandemic influenza is when we have a large-scale spread of an infectious influenza strain,” said Jeff Stidham, the Disaster Response Manager in Walla Walla District’s Readiness Branch. “Swine flu for example was a big issue years ago.”

Stidham said there have been three large outbreaks of flu since 1918, when the Spanish flu was responsible for the deaths of 500,000 Americans and an estimated 21 million persons world-wide.

“Research indicates that the Spanish influenza was an avian

flu, which is the flu being monitored most closely now,” Stidham said. “It was very infectious and it took place at a time when we had many Americans deployed to Europe for World War I and it had huge economic impact.”

Stidham said the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the World Health Organization are closely monitoring how flu viruses are behaving.

“What they’re looking for is a jump from an animal species to a human species,” Stidham said. “They’re concerned that it might make a jump and spread human to human. So if we see the onset of an influenza coming in then the Centers for Disease Control and other agencies can start ramping up health measures, but it takes 9-12 months to develop and produce a vaccine. That would start to have an impact on our economy, because we could expect a decrease in our typical workforce of up to 40 percent.”

The Homeland Security Council reported that an estimated 90 million persons would be ill and another two million would die in the U.S. alone if a flu outbreak similar to the 1918 Spanish influenza occurred again.

“That’s the scenario they want to avoid,” Stidham said, “and this is where emergency management comes into play. Really, it’s a contingency plan to maintain basic government services.”

Stidham said social distancing helped control the 1918 flu outbreak and it would help in any future pandemic.

“So they’re suggesting you don’t have any more social contact than necessary, including work,” Stidham said.

The 1918 pandemic occurred in three waves and any future flu lifecycle could have a similar pattern.

“These waves could last 4-8 weeks,” Stidham said. “You could have a break and you might have another wave of influenza for 4-8 weeks. Just imagine yourself in a community where people don’t want to go outside for a couple months. This is going to cause some problems. We’re also talking about a huge load on our medical system.”

Stidham said Walla Walla District emergency operations during any massive influenza outbreak can be based on a general plan already in existence.

“Walla Walla District already has a continuity of operations plan in case we lose the building,” Stidham said, “but in a flu outbreak we’re going to lose the people. They’re not going to be available for work.”

Stidham said timekeeping is an example of a necessary function because people would not be paid unless it happens.

“We’re going to start identifying who’s important, where

the backup is, also, how can we back up the technology, how can we use our available communications assets to work remotely, as an example,” Stidham said.

Stidham said Corps employees should be mindful we could be faced with an emergency scenario at any time, and it doesn’t have to be an influenza pandemic.

“It could be a flood,” Stidham said. “It could be a blizzard. It could be a massive power outage. So it’s always good in a general sense to have yourself prepared. One rule of thumb, maintain three to five days of food in your house at all times. Have a family plan in case something happens. And really, that lets you start being flexible because, yes, you have to be flexible in how you’re going to approach a problem.

“We really can’t say what the problem’s going to be

until it hits us, but when it happens, we’re going to have to start reacting very quickly. Also, people will have to accept a certain amount of reduced standards. Maybe we’re not going to do an eight hour day. Maybe we’re going to do four tens. But we’re trying to take care of our employees. That’s really the bottom line. There’s going to have to be some changes in how we do things. In that regard, it’s flexibility, it’s cooperation, and it’s professionalism all rolled into one. We have a job to do, and it’s a key one, and we can’t drop it.”



photo courtesy of American Red Cross

The Green Lake line streetcar conductor in Seattle would not let a passenger board without a gauze mask in December 1918. The American Red Cross manufactured 240,000 such masks during the Spanish flu pandemic.

CAPITAL Connection

Debbie Willis “educates, communicates and collaborates” on Corps issues in Boise and nation’s capital



photo: Brayton Willis

Debbie Willis at Idaho’s Capitol

By Joe Saxon

They say that D.C.’s a nice place to visit, but you wouldn’t want to live there.

Debbie Willis, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (Corps) project manager for the Corps’ Boise, Idaho office says the year she spent there detailed to Congress “was an opportunity of a lifetime -- to be able to see the ins and outs of Congress and the ties to the operations of the Federal government.”

Since arriving in Boise in September 1999 with her husband Brayton (who retired from the Corps earlier this year), the Charlotte, NC native has been “educating, communicating and collaborating” with the public as well as local, state and other federal agencies on water resource related issues.

“Through numerous meetings and workshops we have helped potential sponsors develop scopes of work and cost sharing agreements on issues ranging from flood damage reduction to stream bank protection, environmental restoration and water and wastewater infrastructure,” she said. She also manages those projects as they come to fruition.

Last year she temporarily shifted her focus from Idaho’s capital to the nation’s capital, where she spent 11 months in the capitol detailed to the House of Representatives Appropriations Subcommittee on Energy and Water Development.

That is the subcommittee responsible for funding the Corps multi-billion dollar budget, the Department of Energy, the Interior Department’s Bureau of Reclamation and several other energy and water focused small agencies.

Willis arrived in D.C. in February 2006, following her nomination by HQ USACE and selection by the subcommittee’s minority clerk, and was assigned to work with the minority clerk in support of the ranking member of the subcommittee.

She immediately began preparing for agency hearings and preparing the \$30 billion energy and water development appropriations bill for Fiscal Year 2007. According to Willis, it entailed long hours, “10 -12 hours a day on average,” and constant coordination.

“I was responsible for keeping track of member requests sent to the ranking member and coordinating requests with HQ USACE to ensure appropriate authorization and appropriate incremental capabilities. In addition, I worked closely with members’ staffs and the Corps to address issues on current projects,” she said.

They prepared the bill for presentation to the subcommittee, the full appropriations committee and finally, to the entire House for passage.

After completing her duties, Willis returned to Boise and her normal routine, and occasionally reflects upon her D.C. experience.

“I’m very appreciative of the opportunity to have represented the Corps,” she said, and learned the importance of maintaining good working relationships at all levels.

“I’m also more aware of how critical it is for us to provide the most accurate data we can on our projects. There are many crucial decisions being made, and in some cases, very rapidly. Also, we need to be sure that we can execute what we say we can because there are many needs all across the country.”

Willis added, “It was tough being away from home for so long as well as being away from my projects, but it was well worth it to get a better understanding of the bigger picture.”

Drake on third deployment in support of GWOT reconstruction efforts

By Joe Saxon

Jim Drake has been down-range twice, and the way the ex-marine sees it, the third time’s a charm.

Drake is an industrial painter at Ice Harbor Dam who spent six months at Kirkuk, Iraq in 2003 and returned last April from a six month tour of Farah, Afghanistan.

He said he is returning to Afghanistan to continue lending his support to the global war on terror “because I’m a little gung-ho.”

Drake specialized in quality control while in Kirkuk, where he supervised Iraqi teams working on barracks, a new hospital, chow hall, perimeter fence and a medivac helo pad. “If you wanted to get things done, then it meant working 12 hour days, seven days a week,” he said.

During his initial Afghanistan tour, he served as facility manager on a new firebase and was embedded with a provisional reconstruction team that accompanied United Nations and State Department staff on civil works missions.

Dr. Robert Finn, U.S. Ambassador to Afghanistan said, “civil affairs soldiers with expertise in medicine, engineering and law enforcement” are furthering Afghanistan’s reconstruction and development efforts.

Drake said his biggest thrill there was establishing a mentoring system for seven workers “who were eager to learn,” and showing them how to maintain water and septic systems. “I’m here to do a job and make some friends who I hope can appreciate that flag on my shoulder when we’re done,” he said.

Corps Day fashionable, festive, fun



Photos by Chris Koch