



Army Corps of Engineers

New Orleans District

Riverside

www.mvn.usace.army.mil

January 2001

Project Delivery Teams

District defining teamwork

James Hill new chief of Safety

To the rescue
NOD helps with oil spill

Col. Thomas F. Julich

New Emphasis on PMBP

Mr. John Saia, our new DPM, is placing increased emphasis on improving the way that we deliver projects using the project management business process (PMBP). John has already greatly improved our conduct of project review boards, helping us to focus on the real issues of project delivery. Other initiatives are coming, some of them addressed elsewhere in this edition of the *Riverside*. I want you to know that I fully support these changes in the way we do business.

A Tragic Incident

On a sad note, the loss of Mr. Joe Anderson, out of Shop's Section in Operations Division, is a real tragedy. Please keep his family in your prayers.

Key Personnel Retiring

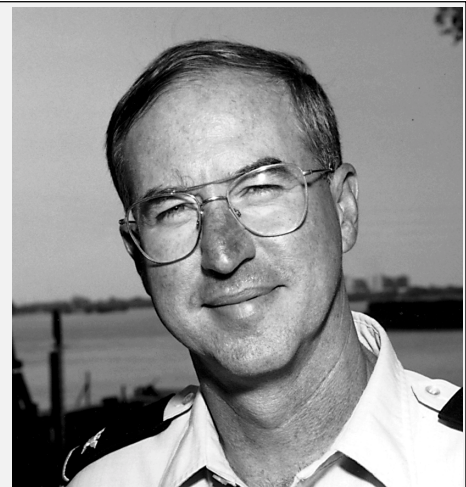
We have had several retirements of key personnel in high-grade positions in our district within the last couple of weeks: Mr. Bob Buisson and Mr. Rodney Pittman from PPPMD; Mr. Don Clement from Operations Division; and Mr. Arthur Laurent from Engineering Division. All of these key people were experienced and competent members of our district team, and dedicated many years to serving

Louisiana and our nation. It's difficult to imagine not having each of them around to help us face the many challenges ahead of us. But, I'm confident that you all will rise to the occasion and do what is needed to get the job done until we can get their replacements on board and up to speed on our many and complex missions.

Of course we will utilize the USACE corporate selection process to determine their replacements. The selection panels will use that process to recommend the best person for the job from the list of qualified applicants we receive. The recommended applicant may or may not be someone from within our district. What should be important to all of us is that the panels and selecting official will be taking a long-term view of the selection to fill the position with the best person. Since my arrival in the district a year and a half ago there have been ten high-grade (14 & 15 level positions) selections. Five of the selections were personnel from our district, and five were not. What conclusions can you draw from this?

First, there are many opportunities open to you right here in the New Orleans District. Bright and energetic leaders from our district with the right qualifications have the possibility of attaining the highest grade levels we offer.

Second, there are high-grade opportunities elsewhere in the Corps that



personnel with the right qualifications can apply and be selected for. If one of your career goals is to achieve a high-grade position, your chances of fulfilling that goal are increased if you look beyond our district to the other opportunities available to you.

Third, the best person for the job will be selected no matter where they currently work (another district, another division/office within our district, or from the private sector). Let me also say that technical ability is an important consideration for the selection, in addition to demonstrated leadership potential. The selection panels weigh all these factors before making their recommendation.

Please come see me if you have questions or concerns about how we implement the USACE corporate selection process.

Riverside

January 2001 Vol. 12 No. 1

Commander

Col. Thomas F. Julich

Public Affairs Chief

Jim Addison

Acting Editor

Shanell Williams

Contributing Writers

John Hall, Eric Hughes,

Jennifer Lefort, Julie Morgan,

Amanda Padalewski

Graphic Artists

Anne Marino, Elena Napolitano

Authorization: The New Orleans District RIVERSIDE is an unofficial publication authorized under the provisions of AR 360-1. Views and opinions expressed are not necessarily those of the Corps of Engineers or the Department of the Army. Dilbert reprinted by permission of United Features.

Submissions: Articles and story ideas are welcome; publication depends on general interest as judged by the editor. Direct queries to the editor by calling (504) 862-2201 or faxing (504) 862-1724, or e-mail Shanell.Williams@usace.army.mil.

Circulation: 2,150 copies per issue.

Reach us on the Web at
www.mvn.usace.army.mil

On Our Cover:

Leon C. Simon Drive's new floodproofed bridge, one of 10 in NOD's Lake Ponchartrain and Vicinity Hurricane Protection Project, helps protect New Orleans from hurricane storm surges.

Photo by Doug Spinks

Bob Buisson retires after years of dedication

Gone fishing

By Jennifer Lefort

After almost 38 years with the Corps, Bob Buisson, chief of Project Management-East, said goodbye. "Now is a good time to retire because I'm ready for a change," Bob said.

Bob came to the Corps in 1963 after graduating from Louisiana State University with a bachelor's degree in civil engineering. "Back then the Red River was part of the New Orleans District. I started in the Engineering Division—Basin Planning Branch—Red River Waterway Section, as an engineer trainee GS-5," he recalled.

The New Orleans native has worn many hats at the Corps. After beginning as an engineer trainee, Bob progressed to chief of the Long Range Planning Section. He was also chief of the Regional Planning Branch, chief of the Plan Formulation Branch and assistant chief of Planning Division before taking his final position in 1998, chief of Project Management Branch-East.

Excited about retirement, yet in awe that the time has finally come, Bob said, "When you look back you realize that the time you spend here [at the Corps] really does fly." Bob's years with the Corps have been fulfilling and he recommends that others follow in his steps and make the Corps a career.

"People really need to work here a whole career to see the fruits of their efforts. You really can't get an idea if you are only here for a few years," he advised.

Seeing the fruits of his efforts has been one of the most rewarding aspects for Bob. "Many of the projects that we are now constructing, I had a hand in. The Red River Waterway Project and many of the hurricane protection projects and freshwater diversion projects, I have been here long enough to see them happen," he said.

Bob has been involved in many important projects during his tenure with the district. As he leaves the Corps, he is happy knowing that he played a role in bringing beneficial projects to the state and people of Louisiana.

"When you look back you realize that the time you spend here really does fly."

"All the projects that I have worked on have been satisfying. The Corps has been a great place to work. It has been busy, busy and it will stay busy, busy," he stated.

It sounds like Bob will stay busy, busy in retirement. He has seven grandchildren and plans to stay active by attending their



Photo by Michael Maples

Bob Buisson moves from Project Management to woodworking shop.

functions, babysitting and even taking them fishing. He also looks forward to taking several trips a year with his wife and to finally utilize his full woodworking shop.

"I don't plan on overworking myself at any time during retirement, but I am looking forward to finally doing some of those handyman projects that I always put off."

He jokingly added that his wife threatens to give him a paintbrush so he can paint everything from the front door to the back door of their house. "I want to do all the things I didn't have time to do while I was working, while I'm still able to do them," he said.

"A few years ago I set goals for myself, as far as what I would need to do to be ready to retire, and I reached them. I'm ready for a change in life. Once you meet most of your goals, once you have achieved what you set out to do, the next step is to change," he explained.

Bob's last day at the Corps was December 29, 2000. A retirement luncheon in his honor was held on January 3 at Smilie's Restaurant.

James Hill named new chief of Safety

By Amanda Padalewski

James Hill, the new chief of safety, is in the office and ready to work in his new position. He will be a first-time Corps employee, but is no stranger to the federal government.

Hill grew up in Mississippi and later relocated to Memphis, Tenn. He started his career in the Army at the age of 15 and received his education through military tuition assistance. He graduated in 1978 from Park College in Missouri with a degree in management and human resources.

After being an aviator in the Army, Hill flew as a commercial pilot for a short time. He then became a Navy flight simulator instructor.

Hill began his career in occupational safety as an investigator with the U.S. Army Safety Center.

His first position was in Korea as an Army aviation safety officer. Later in

Korea, he held the position of deputy director of safety at the headquarters for U.S. Forces in Korea.

After 10 years in Korea, Hill returned to the U.S. to become the chief of safety at the New Orleans District.

When asked what changes might be made Hill said that he doesn't foresee any. "I'm impressed with what I've seen so far with the people and the organization," he said.

"I'm a mission-focused guy...safety isn't intended to impede the mission...we need to look at things to mitigate risk so the mission can be done without losses due to accidents," Hill said.

Hill is enthusiastic about working with the highly specialized and well-qualified individuals here. He plans to work effectively with district employees to influence their safety habits and provide a safe work environment.

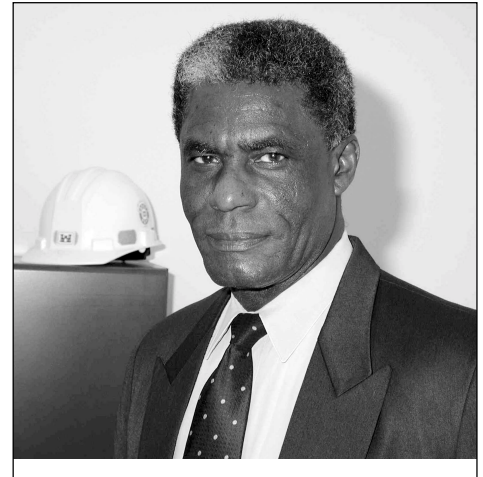


photo by Scott Riecke

In his spare time, Hill likes to play racquetball. He also has an interest in sports cars, but with buckled seat belts, of course.

Schroeder and Williams honored

by Eric Hughes

Diversity is a significant ingredient in today's workplace, and Robert Schroeder (OD) and Janice Williams (RE) were recognized in December for helping to promote it.

The Equal Employment Office named Schroeder EEO Division Chief of the Year, and Williams the EEO Special Emphasis Program Committee (SEPC) Member of the Year, after fellow employees nominated the two. The awards honor individuals that have shown great efforts and contributions during the previous fiscal year.

In his two years as Operations chief, Schroeder has been instrumental in implementing several internal EEO policies and procedures.

Schroeder has increased the representation of both women and minorities in Operations. There are now several high grade positions in Operations held by women and minorities, and certain jobs underrepresented by them have been restructured to qualify the two groups. Schroeder has also pushed for a stronger Wage Grade Career Development Plan than the one MVD drafted. His role in the mentoring program has allowed blue-collar workers to fully participate.

"We have better opportunities that will

benefit minorities and give them a chance to excel," Schroeder said. "Our approach is to improve the people and get them qualified for better jobs."

Schroeder started with the district in 1964, and he's grown to know that diversity is very important. He commends his entire division for their efforts.

"This award is really for the whole division," Schroeder said, explaining that



Photo by Michael Maples

Schroeder and Williams display their awards for promoting diversity in the workplace.

Operations is no different from the rest of the district, other than having the largest work force and minority group. "My job is to guide and set the tone."

Like Schroeder, Williams has been instrumental in promoting diversity. She's been with the Special Emphasis Program Committee since 1993, and served as chairperson in 1995.

"It was a complete surprise," Williams said about her reaction to the award. As a member of SEPC, Williams participates in several EEO program committees such as those for the Federal Women's, Hispanic Employment, and Black Employment programs.

Williams is noted for bringing people together and making things possible. The Department of Army rewarded her last year for the Federally Employed Women's National Training Program. She was a leading coordinator for the event.

Outside of work, Williams is an active member with her church and the Make A Wish Foundation for sick children. As for this, Williams said she doesn't deserve all the credit.

"We are a very dedicated committee that works well together and are willing to see a project from beginning to end," she said. "This makes it easy for us to accomplish our goals."

Greatest hits

How well do you know the district Web site?

The focus for the first month in the new year is on Planning, Programs, and Project Management. At your fingertips, is a review of the useful information they provide to the public and employees.



Planning, Programs, and Project Management Division...

*(Start with **Organization** at the home page):*

- * Provides a list of the PPPMD branches and their purpose.
- * Gives links to information concerning major projects associated with the Corps.

Recommended for: Students, general public, employees and reporters.

Projects...

*(Start with the blue **Projects** button at the home page):*

- * Gives definitions of the major types of projects.
- * Provides a complete list of current New Orleans District projects.
- * Link to “Civil Works Digital Project Notebook,” an interactive map of all Civil Works projects the Corps is currently working on.
- * Contains links to project fact sheets.
- * Provides project maps for Civil Works projects, listed by major appropriations.

Recommended for: General public, reporters, employees.

IHNC Replacement Lock...

*(Start with the blue **Projects** button at the home page):*

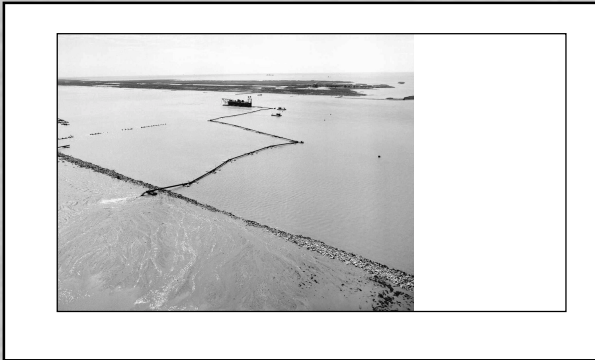
- * Provides a construction schedule for the replacement lock.
- * Supports a link to the “IHNC Community-Based Mitigation Committee.” Also gives the economic report stating the projected costs and what will result economically for New Orleans.
- * Provides the public with a status report on the IHNC lock concerning closures, traffic, gauge readings, outages and measurements.

Recommended for: General public, employees, maritime professionals, those concerned with the economic effects of the IHNC replacement lock on the community.

Weaknesses: Some pages concerning U.S. Environmental Protection Agency Superfund sites haven't been updated as to whether or not the projects have been completed date. Also, many of the listed projects don't have fact sheets accessible through the Web.

Future Growth Ideas: Create an Intranet site where information about schedules, teams, and meetings can be conveyed to employees.

Creating the *Project Management Business Process*



Creating new marsh using dredged material is one of many district activities that requires teamwork across the district to be most effective.

By Shanell Williams

NOD is continuing to work on a new way to do business, and improving district effectiveness is the primary goal. It's called the Project Management Business Process, and empowered project delivery teams are the chosen tool. These teams consist of project managers and members of any other division or office that's needed to execute a project.

In the past, separate divisions worked together but somewhat independently to produce a product. Most of the major decision-making rested with upper management. Over the last few years the idea has been to promote more teamwork among the divisions and empower project delivery teams for project implementation.

"We all work as a team to get the job done," said John Saia, deputy district engineer for project management and chief of Planning, Programs & Project Management.

The district implemented the empowered team concept about two years ago when Planning and Project Management divisions were combined. Falcolm Hull, chief of Project Management-West, refers to the concept as "pushing the power down to the people doing the work." These teams have the authority to make decisions, thereby executing a project faster and more effectively.

"Jobs as supervisors have changed,"

explained Keven Lovetro, chief of General Water Resources Section, Economics Branch. "We don't have to look over our employees' shoulder anymore."

But the actual definition of empowered teams is still under construction. "There are several definitions of an empowered team," Hull said. "In order for us to operate effectively and efficiently in the New Orleans District, we need a common definition."

At the request of Saia, Hull organized a process action team of chosen employees from each division to research and define empowered teams. They're responsible for recommending how an empowered project delivery team will operate.

"Whenever there's a particular issue to be solved in terms of how the organization interacts with one another, a process action team can be developed," according to Lovetro.

The Executive Team will use the information from the process action team to get a clearer definition of empowered project delivery teams' roles, responsibilities, procedures, and their interaction in the district.

Once the Executive Team sets the policy, they will extend this information

to the branch chiefs. The branch chiefs will continue to use their professional expertise to train the project delivery teams. "Everyone will know how we operate from top to bottom," Hull said.

Not only is the definition of empowered teams important, but also our strategy for overall teamwork is equally important. According to Saia, we need to understand how we evaluate our teams and team members and how we conduct ourselves individually as district team members.

"Our intent is to ensure that our team members have the tools necessary to do their jobs, the support of management to accomplish their jobs, and a consistent understanding across the district of what teamwork is," Saia said.

Even though the new Project Management Business Process has only been implemented for two years, the outlook is positive. When asked if the process is working to the level it needs to be, Saia responded, "We're getting there."

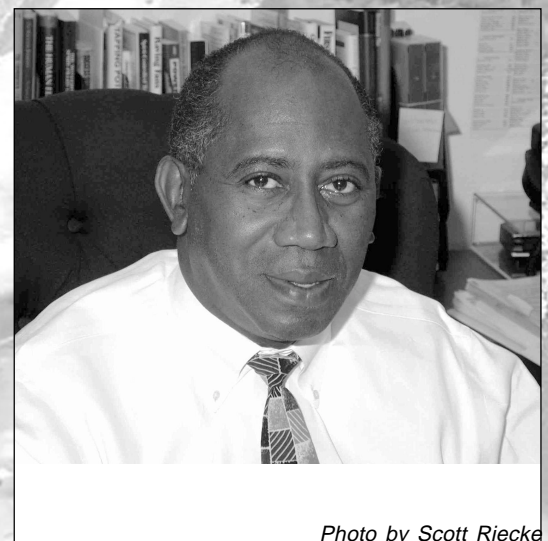


Photo by Scott Riecke

Falcolm Hull (PM) organized the current process action team that's working to strengthen empowered teams.

e right teams

Process: Empowering teamwork

Executive Team – Executive Office, Division Chiefs, Counsel and Resource Management

Provides policies and decisions for major district activities.

District Operating Team -- Assistant Division Chiefs and Branch Chiefs

Implements Executive Team's policies and defines procedures.

Project Delivery Team-- Project Managers and Cross-District Members

Executes projects within those policies and procedures.

Organizing workload for easy access

by Julie Morgan

In the "good old days," all information generated for a project was stored in an orderly fashion in a filing cabinet. Otherwise, on their annual inspection, Management Information Section would require an immediate cleanup of the contents, making it easily accessible to all.

Today, each person involved in a project stores the information they've generated on their PC, on the network, or on a CD somewhere – a method sure to cause future problems considering that employees transfer, are promoted or retire.

So Engineering Division, as well as PMD, is initiating new workflow management systems for the district's enormous volume of work.

Called ProjectWise, the new process will document Engineering Division's project processes from concept to final drawings. "It will be an organized computer system for managing project data," said Ralph Scheid, civil engineer.

According to Scheid, documents from various phases in a project, such as drawings, plans, specifications, environmental impact statements, and real estate transactions, will be filed together for easy reference. Check out the ProjectWise site on the intranet at <http://www.intra.mvn.usace.army.mil/eng/projectwise/> for detailed information.

In addition to Scheid, Engineering's Ernest Amedee and Denis Beer are migrating the system maintenance from Systems and Programming Section to Drafting Section where it will complement the division's central files function. Carl Broyles, a contractor hired through the Information Management Office, is the ProjectWise administrator for Engineering. The division expects to have the system up and running by April 1.

Likewise, Beth Cottone in Project Management has been given the responsibility of anticipating how the district will transition to new PM

business processes software.

After many years of struggling to develop its own software package to serve both as a hub and interface with other systems, such as the Financial Management System (CEFMS) and Real Estate Management System (REMIS), the Corps has decided to acquire one.

The district will use a customized Oracle Projects Web database, P2, and Primavera's P3e as the network analysis system (NAS). P2's web-based features will put detailed project management information at the fingertips of anyone with a keyboard, as well as tie together CEFMS, REMIS, the Resource Management System and others.

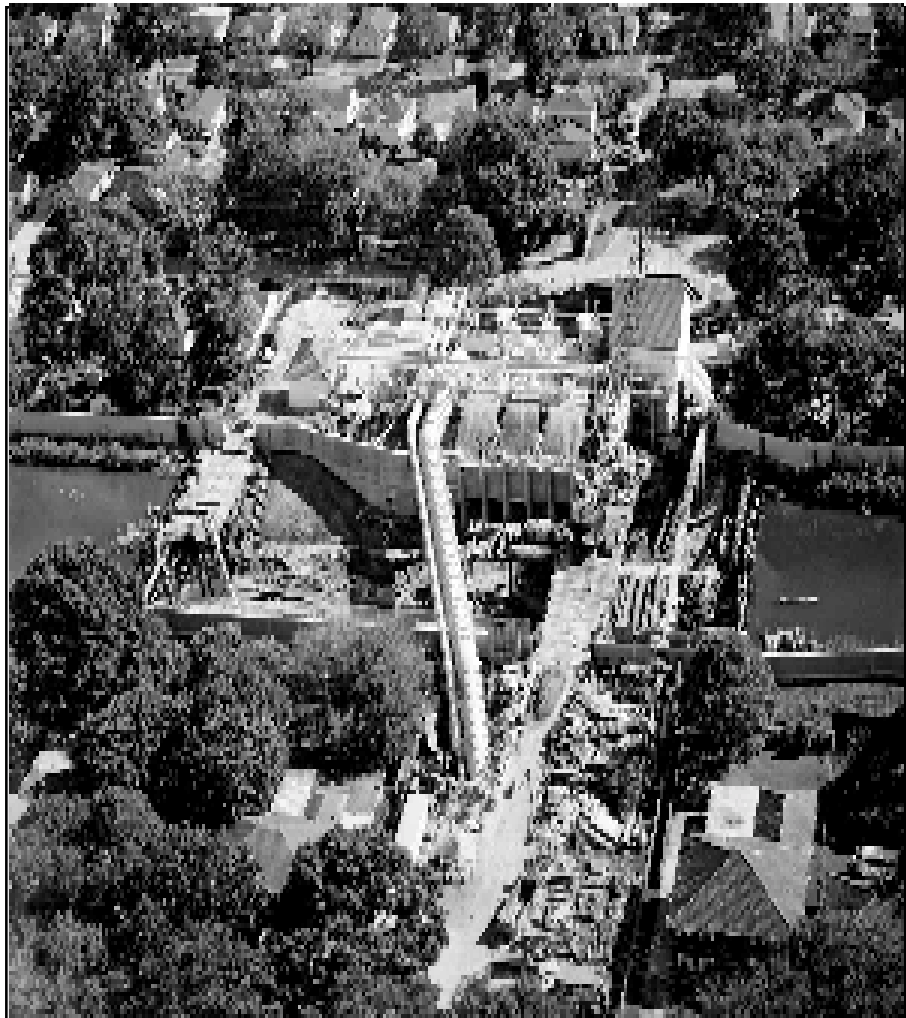
Cottone will soon be visiting other districts to study the systems in operation. "I hope that by early spring the district can embark on a real-time project management information system that will assist project teams in managing and delivering their projects," Cottone said.

Operations

BONNET CARRÉ SPILLWAY—Users of all terrain vehicles (ATV) at the Bonnet Carré must now wear helmets. Also, alcohol is prohibited within the designated ATV and four-wheel drive areas. These changes were made as a part of the Bonnet Carré Spillway Master Plan, and took effect Jan. 1.

PORT ALLEN LOCK—Ronda Gaudet, Port Allen locktender, saved a life with quick thinking and knowledge of safety procedures. Josh Peebles, a deckhand on the M/V Donald E. Clark, lost his footing and fell overboard between the vessel and the lock wall. Gaudet immediately alerted the vessel's captain by radio and was prepared to drop a safety block if it was needed. Congratulations to Gaudet for acting fast!

MORGAN CITY HURRICANE EVACUATION ROUTE PROTECTED—On Dec. 14 Col. Julich signed an agreement with St. Mary Parish officials to protect the only hurricane evacuation route out of Morgan City. Erosion has eaten away the shoreline bordering Hwy. 70, the only major route from Morgan City going north. The Corps will add 400 feet to the existing shoreline using dredged material from a current maintenance project. The Louisiana Department of Natural Resources Atchafalaya will fund 35 percent of the \$4.6 million project.



PUMPING STATION NUMBER 4—Construction is almost complete on fronting protection of Pumping Station No.4 on the London Avenue Outfall Canal in Orleans Parish. Sluice gates, vertical gates in front of the station, are being constructed to prevent water from entering the pumping station, which would impede pump operations. Once the tide reaches a certain height during a storm, the gates close off the discharge tubes so water doesn't get pushed back into the

Project Management

BAYOU TREPAGNIER STRUCTURE DEDICATION—On Jan. 9 the Corps and Pontchartrain Levee District dedicated the Bayou Trepagnier drainage structure. The structure, part of the Lake Pontchartrain and Vicinity Hurricane Protection Project, is the first of five drainage structures to be completed in St. Charles Parish. The drainage structures will be open for natural drainage and close only when a hurricane approaches. The structure was completed at a cost of \$1.8 million.

DESIGN BEGINS ON HOUMA NAVIGATION CANAL LOCK—The Louisiana Department of Transportation and Corps of Engineers have together awarded a \$2 million contract for the design of a new Houma Navigation Canal Lock. The new lock will be an important part of the Morganza to the Gulf Hurricane Protection Project, which will protect against tidal surges in Terrebonne and Lafourche parishes, reduce wetland loss and preserve the environment from saltwater intrusion. The design is scheduled for completion in 2003.

DRAINAGE IMPROVEMENTS—Two Southeast Louisiana Urban Flood Control projects are underway in Jefferson Parish. The work to be done in both projects will improve the drainage system and reduce future flooding in the parish. Contractor Miller Excavating started work on the Elmwood Canal on Nov. 15. The project is expected to be completed in May at a cost of \$2 million. Contractor Circle Inc. began the Suburban at Veterans improvements in January. It is estimated to cost \$8 million and expected to be completed July 2002.

"Big Joe" had a big heart

By Eric Hughes

Joseph Anderson will be remembered as a man with a big heart. On Jan. 4, Joe's life ended shortly after arriving for work. The tragedy left his co-workers and friends with questions and despair.

The 54-year-old Vietnam veteran started his civilian government career in 1976, on the Dredge *Langfitt*. Later on, he was part of the Shops Maintenance Unit as a temporary painter. In 1987 he was hired permanently as a laborer, and promoted to motor vehicle operator in 1991.

Anderson was a union member, and for several years he drove colonels and chiefs to their destinations in a Corps van, which was a task his co-workers said he look forward to.

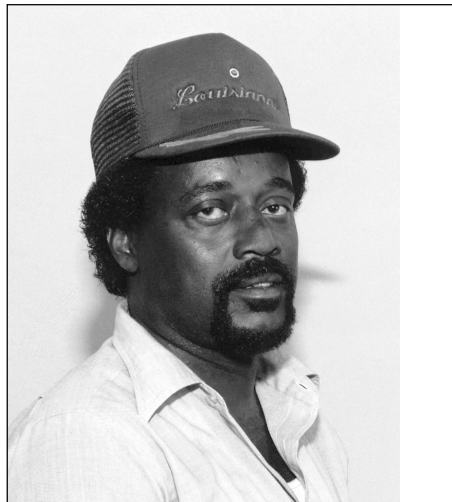
Joe had been coping with several personal problems. "Everyone in Shops sat with him and talked to him," said Don Mitchell, co-worker and best friend. "We were all worried."

Despite his own troubles, Joe still managed to be humorous and outspoken towards his co-workers. As a member of Shops, he was best known as "Big Joe."

"He was full of life, larger than life, funny

and had a heart as big as all outdoors," said Joyce Williams (OD), one of Joe's close friends. "He loved people and loved being around people."

"He was the kind of guy that would give you the shirt off his back," said Carl Robinson, chief of Facilities Management Section.



Courtesy photo

Friends and co-workers remember Joe's love for cooking and sense of humor.

Shops Accounting Technician Annette Vanderson found Joe's humor unique.

"You could not help but laugh at the things he would say," Vanderson said. Fellow co-workers picked on Joe to hear his witty responses.

Besides making people laugh, Joe enjoyed cooking. He brought food to the Shops office occasionally, and the annual Engineers' Day Picnic was his favorite opportunity to cater for his co-workers.

"He came out with money he didn't have to make a better picnic," Mitchell said about Joe's love of sharing.

Joe's giving nature was evident, especially with children. He gave money to several of his co-workers' children, who called him "Uncle Joe." He also took pleasure in putting on a costume and giving Halloween candy to the district's Castle Kids day care children on his day off.

"He was Big Joe with a big heart," said Bruce Breaux, a fellow Shops partner.

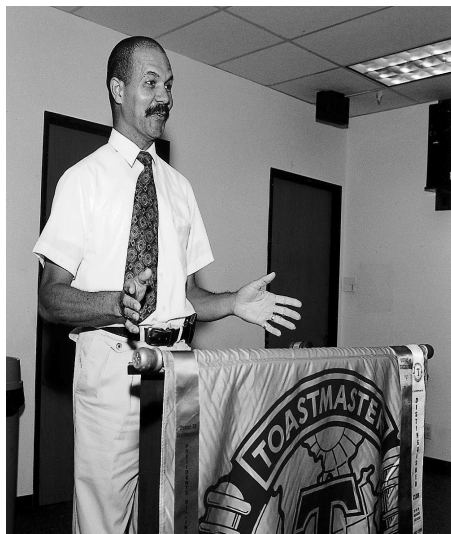
"Joe was a good guy," Williams said. "We're all going to miss him."

Joe is survived by his mother, stepfather, son, daughter and several other family members.

Speaking of Toastmasters...

By Amanda Padalewski

The district Toastmasters organization is well into its fourth year and more employees are becoming aware of the benefits of being a Toastmaster.



Burnell Thibodeaux (OD) can't contain his excitement

Burnell Thibodeaux (ED), vice president of education, joined Toastmasters three and a half years ago because "it was an opportunity for personal development." As Thibodeaux says, "everyone is there to help you grow."

Felix Cretini (OD), vice-president of membership, has been a Toastmaster for two years. When asked how Toastmasters has helped him, Cretini said, "It helped me become a better leader." It also improved his communication skills at work.

In his first year as a member, Cretini was sergeant-at-arms. It was his responsibility to make sure everything was in order for the meetings such as sound and light checks. This was just the beginning of Cretini's leadership development. As vice president of membership, Cretini's focus has changed from light and sound checks to the new challenge of recruiting members to join.

Each new member of Toastmasters is given a mentor. The mentors, along with other members of Toastmasters, supply the support needed for individuals to improve their public speaking. Cretini believes that

"mutual support is one of the most satisfying benefits of Toastmasters."

Meetings are held once a month in the District Assembly Room and are centered on three or more prepared speeches. After each speech, an evaluation is given.

In addition to prepared speeches, there are exercises called "Table Topics," which develop an individual's ability to think and respond quickly in situations such as interviews, seminars, business meetings and conversations.

After completing 10 speeches, each member earns the title of "Competent Toastmaster" for their accomplishment.

"We are not only judged by what we say but how we say it," says Cretini. Toastmasters helps each individual improve. Toastmasters enables you to express your ideas and also gives you the confidence to express those ideas in a clear and effective manner.

If you're interested in overcoming your fear of public speaking and increasing your leadership abilities, contact Felix Cretini x2916, or Richard Pinner, x1033.

OIL SPILL: *Corps lends everyone a hand*

By John Hall

Oil cleanup photos: www.incidentnews.gov

The Army Corps of Engineers played a multi-part role in helping the Coast Guard, navigators and government scientists to cope with one of America's largest oil spills since the Exxon Valdez made history in 1989.

The 890-foot tanker Westchester spilled 544,400 gallons of Nigerian crude into the Mississippi River after striking an unknown object on Nov. 28, about 57 miles downriver from New Orleans.

New Orleans District contributions included:

- ▼ Supplying data to help the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) track the oil's subtler movements.
- ▼ Deploying a sonar-equipped boat to scan for objects that may have ruptured the Westchester, and to re-survey bottom contours.

▼ With traffic halted on the Mississippi, re-routing 1½ months' worth of ocean-bound ships through an already busy Corps lock in 24 hours.

"This port benefited by such quiet, behind-the-scenes cooperation from many agencies," said J. Ron Brinson, president of the Port of New Orleans. "The Corps of Engineers helped navigation return to normal in America's greatest port complex and aided the environmental work as well."

The outbound ships used the Industrial Canal Lock in New Orleans to reach open water via the Mississippi River-Gulf Outlet, a 70-mile, Corps-built waterway.

"On Nov. 29-30, we handled 27 lockings [the average] in 24 hours, plus six ships. This is 50 percent more ships than we normally have in a month," said David Labruzzo, the head lock operator.

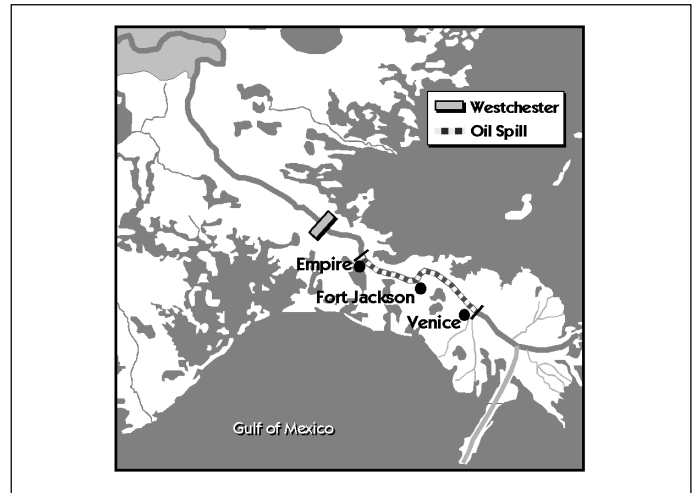
Only mini-ships can use the lock's 625-foot chamber, but passing them takes 45 minutes, almost twice the time required for the inland barges and towboats that are the lock's main users. Larger ships, including some turned away by lock operators, were forced to remain at river wharves or anchorages until the Coast Guard reopened the Mississippi.

Helped look for cause

The Westchester spill occurred near Port Sulphur. Around the area, the OD survey boat W-46 searched with side-scan sonar and determined water depth with standard hydrographic survey equipment.

"We didn't find anything that could have been the cause of the ship's hull rupture," said Greg Breerwood, assistant chief of Operations.

"We did determine that the bottom contours are the same as shown on hydro charts and used by pilots. The shipping channel is wide and deep, and there has been little change in the river bottom in the area for a long time," Breerwood said.



Hydro data provided

Within 10 days, most of the oil was stranded on shorelines within 10 miles of Fort Jackson, or 18 miles below the spill. In addition to dispersion, some of the light oil was evaporating.

That left a major, potential hiding place that worried people from NOAA's Hazard Materials Response Division in Seattle. How much oil was going to the bottom through a process known as sediment scavenging? Oil molecules can attach to sedimentary particles and sink.

"We needed data to understand how dispersion, evaporation and scavenging were divvying up the oil," NOAA's Marc Hodges said. "As temperatures and salinities increase, both dispersion and scavenging increase."

Hydraulics and Hydrologic Branch helped track down the data. Rodney Mach correlated chloride concentrations and flows along the river that helped NOAA to determine surface salinity, Hodges said. And Jerry Gogreve came up with historical data and local expertise about the seasonally low river flow at the time, he said.

"Based on this data and real-time observations, we were able to rule out concerns about significant quantities of oil being lost subsurface," Hodges said.

Another significant Corps contribution helped deal with the oil's being stranded at the outset by the highest tide for two weeks to come, NOAA's Debbie Payton said. The Corps' "important information provided the Incident Command with potential timing on when stranded oil might be refloated," Payton said.

By Dec. 28, hundreds of workers were completing the Coast Guard's clean up. Oil was blamed for the deaths of seven birds and wildlife people cleaned 13 more. Recovery crews collected more than 555,000 gallons of oil emulsified with water and 2,218 tons of oily sand.

And what damaged the Westchester? "It's still under investigation," Coast Guard Lt. Cmdr. Kim Croke said.

Around the District



Photo by Michael Maples

Participants in the 2000 Corporate Cup race take a moment to smile for the camera.

Honoring Dr. Martin Luther King

In January 1996, the Black Employment Program Committee, in conjunction with the other Special Emphasis Program Committees planted and dedicated a Dawn Redwood tree in honor of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.'s birthday.

The tree symbolizes the unity Dr. King sought among all men. As it grows, the tree will reflect the united effort of teamwork and dedication among the employees at NOD and each other.

The Unity tree is located on the north lawn in front of Engineering Division.



Photo by Doug Spinks

The Credit Union gets a new look and Col. Julich joins employees in the ribbon cutting.

Correction

The NOD at Work article on the reconnaissance report to restore the Amite River, incorrectly identified the completion date as July 2002. It also did not mention various federal and state agencies participating in the study. The completion date is expected FY 2004, and the Natural Resources Conservation Service, U.S. Geological Survey, Louisiana Department of Environmental Quality and the Louisiana Department of Natural Resources are the other agencies involved.

2000 Corporate Cup Team Captains

Sheryl Austin
Bruce Bivona
Scott Blanchard
Greg Breerwood
Gay Browning
Clark Carroll
Greg Debose
Joe Dicharry
Angela Duncan
Dom Elguezabal
John Fogarty
Judy Frilot
Gary Herndon
Rodney Mach
Mike Park
Mel Ray
Bill Rester
Lynn Tinto

Condolences

to **Ulysses Hester** (ED), whose father Robert Lee Hester died Dec. 18.

to **Melvin Jourdan** (ED), whose father died on Jan. 4.

A Job Well Done

to **David Ramirez** (ED), who made a presentation on Nov. 22 to a senior-level hydraulic class at the University of Louisiana Lafayette.

He spoke on his experience with the hydraulic model HEC-RAS, as well as his expectations, duties and continuing training as an entry-level civil engineer for the Corps.

to the **Hispanic Employment Program Committee** for adopting a needy family for Christmas. The committee collected canned foods, toys, and clothing for a family of six.

Congratulations

to **Lt. Col. Knieriemen** for being selected for the list for Colonel.

to retired Operation's Division employee **Irma Reinikes'** latest achievement. Her photograph, entitled "I Touched the Liberty Bell," was selected in the International Open Amateur Photography Contest. It will be printed in a hard-bound collection of photographs, "Wonderous Worlds."

She is also listed in "Who's Who in America" and "Who's Who in American Women," both the millennium editions.

to **Debbie Blood** (RE) whose son Patrick, along with seven students from the John Curtis School of Engineering Advancement Program participated in the University of New Orleans College of Engineering JETS/TEAM competition.

This team received 1st place in Division III and 5th place overall in the competition which consisted of 30 high schools.

to **Nathan Turner** (Shops) for being selected for the 2001 edition of International "Who's Who of Professionals."

New Beginnings

to **Mike Stout** (PM) and his wife Susan on the birth of their son, Matthew Ray Stout, born Oct. 31, 2000 at 7:33 a.m. Matthew weighed 6 lbs. 8 oz. and was 19 inches long.

to **Mary** (ED) and **Mike** (OD) **Horn** on the birth of their grandson, Alexander David McLeod, born Jan. 8 at 7:22 p.m. He weighed 8 lbs. 11 oz. and was 21.5 inches long.



Photo by Michael Maples

Contracting Division strikes a pose around food and gifts for a needy family.

Talk Back

This regards the December Talk Back letter by Vojkovich, et al, which was written in response to a letter by Mr. Kenneth Kanik of Resources Management. Mr. Kanik expressed concern that some jobs have been misclassified as engineer positions, raising the cost and difficulty of filling those positions.

I agree with Mr. Kanik that there have been instances where the district has used engineers for jobs that could have been filled by people from other disciplines. An example occurred in the former Planning Division. With few exceptions, study manager jobs had for years been classified as engineer positions. At the same time, districts around the country successfully used people from several different disciplines as study managers.

The misclassification problem goes beyond the important issue of labor costs. Engineers-only restrictions serve to limit career potential for employees of other disciplines, and that hurts our ability to recruit and retain non-engineers. People from many disciplines are necessary to fulfill our mission. According to the district's personnel data system, sixty percent of the district's employees are not engineers.

I am not arguing that we employ non-engineers to do design work. Mr. Kanik was not suggesting that either. Rather, the argument is that we should be careful in evaluating jobs and only reserve them for people with an engineering background when it really is necessary to do so.

The environment is changing. In my early

years with the Corps, I was often admonished that "it is the Corps of *Engineers*, after all". The implication, of course, being that this is the Corps *for* Engineers, and not for the various hangers on who populate the hallways.

We need to recognize that it's counterproductive to constantly tell the majority of our people that their work and their career opportunities are not important to the agency because they are not engineers.

Today managers are more willing to open up opportunities for non-engineers. For example, the task of study management has been taken over by project managers in PPPMD, and the most recently opened GS-12 and -13 project manager positions have all been advertised as interdisciplinary. The greater respect for other disciplines expressed by management does filter down; I hear the phrase mentioned in the above paragraph less with each passing year. Despite these reasons for optimism, the pace of change has been less than meteoric. All branch managers and senior project managers in PPPMD are engineers.

In closing, I take issue with the strident tone of the response by Vojkovich, et al, which used as much ink in attacking the original author and his writing style as it did in countering his argument. Moreover, the signature list of 60 employees was designed to intimidate. Such responses discourage dialogue. If we are to continuously improve the products and services we provide, employees need to feel free to write about issues affecting our productivity.

--Michael Holland, PPPMD

TO HAVE YOUR
IDEAS PRINTED
IN THE NEXT ISSUE

AND

WIN A RESERVED
PARKING SPOT FOR
AN ENTIRE MONTH

RESPOND BY
FEBRUARY 16

LET US KNOW WHAT
YOU THINK ABOUT
THIS MONTH'S
Talk Back TOPIC:

TEAMWORK

>WHAT POLICIES OR
BUSINESS PROCESSES
WOULD YOU CHANGE TO
EMPOWER TEAMWORK?

The editor reserves the
right to determine which
responses to publish and
award.

Editor's note:

The above letter to Talk Back will be the last letter to be published in the Riverside on the subject of "engineer vs. non-engineer positions." We will, however, gladly post any further comments received, as well as all previous letters, on a new Talk Back Intranet Web page.

Department of the Army
New Orleans District, Corps of Engineers
P.O. Box 60267
New Orleans, LA 70160-0267
Office: Public Affairs Office
Official Business

First Class Mail
Postage & Fees Paid
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
New Orleans District
Permit No. 80

Address Correction Requested