



US Army Corps  
of Engineers ®  
Rock Island District

# Tower Times

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## Spotlight on the District

**W**hen a person begins a new job, they might be a little apprehensive about what lies ahead for them regardless of their position. The higher the position, the greater the responsibility, and the better chance a person will have an immediate impact on the District.

Gary Meden, the District's new Deputy for Programs and Project Management, now holds the District's highest civilian position, and isn't apprehensive ... he's excited. Meden welcomes the challenge, the responsibility, and is ready to make a positive impact on the Rock Island District.

"I embrace change when it makes the District more efficient, and resist change when I see the costs as greater than the benefits," said Meden, who earned his new job after working for the Corps in the Europe District as the chief of the Project Management Branch for the last six years. "I want to make a difference both in the short and long-term prospects of the District and its people."

While he's ready to have an impact, Meden says what excites him most about of his new position is, "The great people, projects, and programs, but especially the people. People need to be recognized for their contributions. I am excited about learning how Rock Island District operates, and hope to bring ideas from the other districts where I have worked. I am excited about Col. Sinkler's and Brig. Gen. Walsh's visions for the future and the way in which they both operate."

When it comes to the Corps of Engineers, Meden is bringing experience to the District from both the active duty and civilian sides of the isle.

"I worked for the military side of the Corps of Engineers from 1978 through 1984 and 1987 through 1992," said Meden. "I worked in Corps districts from 1984 through 1987 and continuously since 1992. As an Army captain, I was assigned as an assistant section chief and project manager in the Military Branch of Louisville District from 1984 through 1986. In 1987, I was a project engineer in Construction Division of Louisville District and worked on projects at Indiana Army Ammunition Plant, Jefferson Proving Grounds and Fort Knox."

Meden left military service in 1992, and said he knew he wanted to continue working for the Corps.

"The work is important and varies widely from project to project," said Meden. "The Corps of Engineers makes a difference in the lives of so many people whether it is through improved navigation, recreational opportunities, improved facilities for the military, or an improved environment. There is never a dull moment in the Corps. No matter what issue, problem, or challenge is given to the Corps, or to any individual in the Corps, it is solved effectively through professional expertise, teamwork, and perseverance. The Corps family always finds a way to accomplish the mission."

With that dedication and passion about the Corps, Meden began

his career in the civil service side of the Corps.

"I moved back to the Louisville District as a geotechnical engineer from 1992 to 1995," said Meden. "I switched to environmental engineering in 1995 and was the Base Realignment and Closure section chief in the Environmental Branch from 1998 to 2001. In March 2001, I was assigned as the project manager for decommissioning NASA's nuclear reactors in Sandusky, Ohio (still working for Louisville District). In January 2002, I

moved to Wiesbaden, Germany, to become the chief of the Project Management Branch, which I continued for six years, until I was given the opportunity to work in Rock Island District."

Meden has already hit the ground running and is already putting his best foot forward in having a positive impact in his new position with the District.

"I will do my best to support the entire District in being successful and to help develop strong District teams at all levels," said Meden. "To me, success is doing the right thing for the right reason(s), and making the organization as efficient and effective as possible. I hope to contribute to ensuring that people understand how important their roles are in supporting the nation's infrastructure, safety, and vitality. Every employee in the Rock Island District should be proud of the part they play in the many successful programs and projects. Everyone is an important part of the team. I plan on listening intently in the coming months to learn as much as I can about the Rock Island District and the great people on the District team."

Meden's hobbies include travel, photography, sailing, scuba diving, reading, and skiing. He said now that he's in the right place; he'll be fishing as well.

The Rockford, Ill.-native said he looks forward to buying a house in the area and will be settling down soon with his wife, Cindy, and their daughter Kelsey, who is an eighth-grade-student. Their son, Daniel, is in his junior year at the University of Maryland in Europe and hopes to attend Augustana College in the fall. Meden said he also has two stepsons and three grandchildren in the Louisville, Ky., area.

His advice to anyone reading this article is, "Your attitude is more important than your environment or your specific situation. You decide whether to be happy or not. Treat everyone with respect; they deserve it, just like you do. Stay honest." 📧



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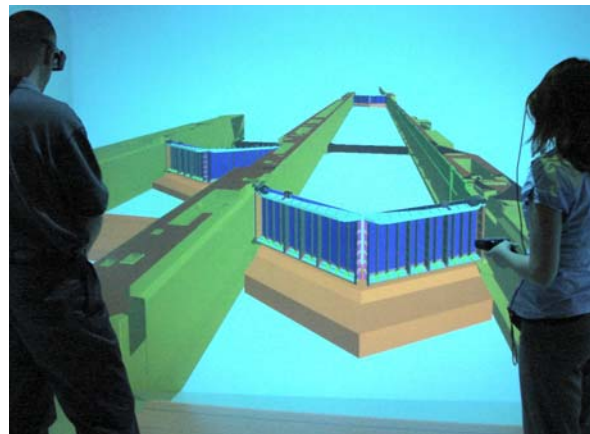
# Tower Times

## Contents



### District, Rockford Sign Flood Risk Agreement

4



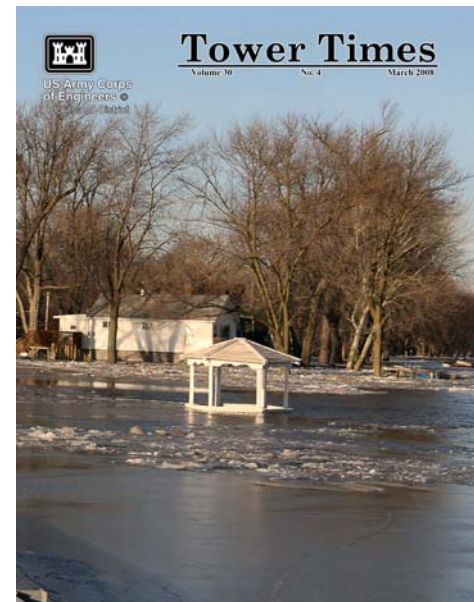
### District Uses Virtual Technology in Engineering

7



### Junior Achievement Event in the District

8



### On the Cover

The Rock River swells well beyond its banks as chunks of ice flow rapidly downstream during flooding on the river in this photo taken by David Swanson, Engineering and Construction, on March 6, on the same day as the Corps' first flood workshop. The interagency workshop brought together nearly 100 representatives from various government agencies to discuss flooding. See page 5 for more information about the workshop.

Rockford Mayor Larry Morrissey signs the Keith Creek-Alpine Dam Flood Risk Management Feasibility Study Cost-Sharing Agreement shortly after District Commander Col. Robert Sinkler signed the document. Behind Morrissey and Sinkler, from left to right, Scott Christiansen, chairman, Winnebago County Board, Illinois State Rep. Charles Jefferson, D-Ill., Sen. Dick Durbin, D-Ill., and Rep. Donald Manzullo, R-Ill.



# District, Rockford Sign Flood Risk Agreement

Story and photo by Ann McCrery, Corporate Communications

The Corps doesn't often have the opportunity to be in the public eye alongside a congressman and senator who support the Corps' work and recommendations; however, that is what happened at the Keith Creek-Alpine Dam Flood Risk Management Feasibility Study Cost-Sharing Agreement on Feb. 19, at the Rockford City Hall in Rockford, Ill.

Sen. Richard Durbin and Rep. Donald Manzullo participated in the signing ceremony where the mayor of Rockford, Larry Morrissey, and the District Commander, Col. Robert Sinkler, signed the cost-sharing agreement.

The ceremony started with a bit of laughter when Durbin made a slight miscalculation on the amount of money being provided by the federal government. He said we are happy to secure \$500 million for this project, rather than \$500,000, but once the laughter passed, it was time to talk about the task at hand.

"Rockford residents who have been faced with serious flooding in the recent past know that the problems caused by flooding don't recede as fast as the water does," Durbin said. "Families shouldn't have to spend each summer dreading the next big flood. With the signing of today's agreement, the Army Corps of Engineers will be able to begin studying the best solutions for the Keith Creek area."

The Keith Creek drainage area is in Winnebago County and consists of approximately 15-square-miles. There are approximately 11,000 homes downstream of the dam and approximately one third are at risk of serious flood damage.

"This is an urban creek that has not seen any major improvements made to it since 1942," said Morrissey. "The flooding experienced by our city over the past two years shows a real need for flood-hazard reduction, water-quality improvements, and

the development of recreational opportunities. The Keith Creek Feasibility Study will develop plans that will analyze all aspects of the storm-water management needs on Keith Creek. By partnering with the Army Corps of Engineers the citizens of Rockford should expect an independent assessment of the creek that will allow us to better plan and manage Keith Creek."

"Nearly 1,900 private properties valued at \$133 million are threatened by a potential failure of the Alpine Dam in Rockford," said Manzullo.

"Senator Durbin and I worked hard to secure the federal funds needed to study options to protect residents and business owners along Keith Creek from a catastrophic flood," said Manzullo. "I congratulate the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and City of Rockford today for entering into this agreement for a feasibility study."

"The Corps looks forward to working with the city on this study," said Sinkler. "They (the city) have already demonstrated a great commitment to the citizens in the Keith Creek drainage area, and have continued that commitment by providing funds for this study."

The Keith Creek-Alpine Dam Flood Risk Management Feasibility Study Cost-Sharing Agreement is a joint effort between the City of Rockford and the Corps to determine whether work should be done in the interest of flood damage reduction, environmental restoration and protection, and related purposes along Keith Creek in Rockford. The study is in response to long-term concerns at the dam and recently identified flooding concerns in the south branch of Keith creek. This includes identifying repairs and improvements to Alpine Dam and its spillway. 🗑️

Every year citizens across the country, especially in the Midwest, face the real possibility of becoming a victim of spring flooding. Government agencies on all levels prepare for that possibility, but those agencies don't always take a proactive approach to making sure they're reading off the same page ... until now.

The Rock Island District set precedence in the Corps this year by creating, coordinating, and administering the first inter-agency flood-mitigation workshop to take place in the Upper Mississippi River Basin.

The early-March initiative brought together nearly 100 representatives of federal agencies, state and local governments and non-governmental organizations to get regional public works, fire, police and disaster-management personnel together to hear about the chance for flooding, to network and to learn about what assistance is available if the worst happens.

"It is better to do it now, before the event, and figure out the kind of gaps that exist (in flood-fighting efforts) and how to bridge them," said Col. Robert Sinkler, District Commander. "Our purpose is to integrate the federal, local, state and non-governmental organizations efforts in this kind of emergency. This way, we can coordinate a response to a disaster in the Upper Mississippi Valley."

The 943-acre federal campus at the Rock Island Arsenal was an ideal place for the two-day meeting, which served experts as a location to come together and discuss flood mitigation.

The workshop brought together organizations from five states to interact on flood mitigation issues. Its stated goals were:

- Provide a common platform to develop and improve interagency relationships
- Identify governmental roles and responsibilities, and define when they pertain to the different stages of flood-fight planning, response and recovery.
- Given the backdrop of an authentic, simulated flood event, explore and



Jeff Jensen, HQUSACE program manager, Flood Control and Coastal Emergencies, speaks with government representatives during the March 5 session of the Upper Midwest Interagency Flood Mitigation Workshop held on Rock Island Arsenal.

validate communication procedures and response-recovery activities.

Attendees came from agencies in Illinois, Iowa, Mississippi, Missouri and Nebraska; all states that face flood issues from the presence of the Mississippi and

Presentation," said Jones. "We were also successful in providing a platform for discussions on potential gaps in inter-agency response capabilities. The feedback we have received from workshop participants has been very positive.

Many have commented on the need to hold this type of event on an annual basis."

## District Takes Initiative, Coordinates Interagency Flood Workshop

Missouri river drainage systems.

The District's Emergency Management division was responsible for the development of the exercise topics, goals and objectives, and scenarios.

"We also identified key personnel from other agencies to participate in the event and presented their agencies' flood response program information," said Sarah Jones, Emergency Management. "We were also responsible for coordinating all organizational and logistical activities to ensure the success of the event."

Jones said many EM staff members assisted in the development of the exercise including: Jones, Kent Stenmark, Rodney Delp, Julie Fisher and Beth Nightingale.

"The District received support from the Readiness Support Center in Mobile, Ala., with the development of the Scenario

In addition to presentations on various flood-related topics, including forecasts for possible flooding of the Upper Mississippi Valley later this year, representatives broke into small groups to respond to emergencies in a flood simulation exercise on the second day of the workshop. The exercise began with scheduling of resources a week before a predicted flood, and then advanced to mitigating the effects of the flood, and continued to advance in one-week increments to a month after the flooding came under control. At each stage, the various organizations talked to each other, planning responses to the situation and working with their real-life counterparts from other state and federal agencies.

*Eric Cramer, Public Affairs Officer, Rock Island Arsenal Garrison Public Affairs; and Tom Saul, Quad-City Times, contributed to this article.*



# Investing In Our People

## Around the District

### District Commander's Award

**Tabitha Belton**, office automation clerk, Operations Division, received the December Commander's Award.

Belton earned the award for her work in December for the Permit Evaluation Section while the section's administrative staff was assigned training or on leave for a week.

The administrative staff normally issues the public notices of permit applications. The Clean Water Act requires that all applications for individual permits be issued within 15 days of the project manager determining the application complete.

Belton volunteered to learn the system for processing notices and then timely and correctly processed the notices and performed all other administrative duties for the section during that week.

### MVD Change of Command



In a formal change of command and retirement ceremony, on Feb. 20, Brig. Gen. Michael Walsh accepted command of the Mississippi Valley Division from Brig. Gen.

Robert Crear.

The ceremony was officiated by the Corps' Chief of Engineers, Lt. Gen. Robert Van Antwerp.

Walsh came to MVD from Baghdad, Iraq, where he served as the division engineer of the Corps' Gulf Region

Division. He has held a variety of other command and staff positions in the United States and overseas, including division engineer of the Corps' Southwestern Division, Dallas, Texas, chief of staff at Headquarters from May 2003 to June 2004 and the Corps' executive director of Civil Works from August 2001 to May 2003. In addition, Walsh's career includes two Corps district commands: Sacramento District from 1998 to 2001, and San Francisco District from 1994 to 1996.

Crear served as the MVD commander and president of the Mississippi River Commission since June 2004. The ceremony also marked his retirement from the Army after more than 32 years of service.

### An Earth Day Event



To help restore the natural woodland habitat around Coralville Lake, the Army Corps of Engineers is hosting an Earth Day event April 18 through 20.

Volunteers will be working in teams to remove invasive species from the oak-hickory woodlands around Coralville Dam, in the West Overlook area.

To get involved fill out the registration form located at: [www.mvr.usace.army.mil/earthday08-reg.doc](http://www.mvr.usace.army.mil/earthday08-reg.doc) to pre-register for the event. Pre-registration by April 1 is required to receive two nights of free camping, lunch on Saturday, and a T-shirt.

### Congrats ...



Congratulations to **Heather and Charlie Bishop**, Engineering and Construction, on the birth of a baby boy, Nathaniel Charles, Feb. 13. He was 7 pounds, 15 ounces, and 20 inches long.



Congratulations to **Becky and Kevin Landwehr**, Office of Counsel and Engineering and Construction, on the birth of a baby girl, Sarah Anne, Jan. 9. She was 7 pounds, 7 ounces, and 20 inches long.

### Retirements ...

**Victoria Davis**, administrative support assistant, Resource Management Office, retired March 1, after dedicating 27 years and four months to the federal government.

**Mark Lampe**, senior staff accountant, Finance and Accounting Branch, Resource Management, retired Feb. 29, after dedicating 26 years, six months, and 13 days to the federal government.

### Sympathy ...



**Daniel Bowers**, 52, of Pittsfield, Ill., died March 6, at this home in Pittsfield.

He was a lock and dam operator at Lock and Dam 21 in Quincy, Ill., and started working at the lock and dam on Feb. 28, 1999.

Bowers was a veteran and served his country in the U.S. Army.

# SUPPORT, SACRIFICE FOR CORPS

Thanks to our employees who are deployed or have completed duty in support of the Global War on Terrorism, as well as those who are deployed or have completed duty in support of Natural Disaster Relief Operations

*Thank You For Serving!*



A listing of all the current District employees who are, or have been, involved in supporting the Global War on Terrorism and Natural Disaster Relief Operations can be seen on the District's Internet at:



[www.mvr.usace.army.mil/PublicAffairsOffice/TowerTimes/support-for-corps/support-for-corps.htm](http://www.mvr.usace.army.mil/PublicAffairsOffice/TowerTimes/support-for-corps/support-for-corps.htm)



## District Uses Virtual Technology in Engineering

Engineers are using proven technologies and looking to the latest in computer and virtual reality to help them better visualize their designs and see possible inconsistencies or incompatibilities before construction begins on seven new locks on the Upper Mississippi River System.

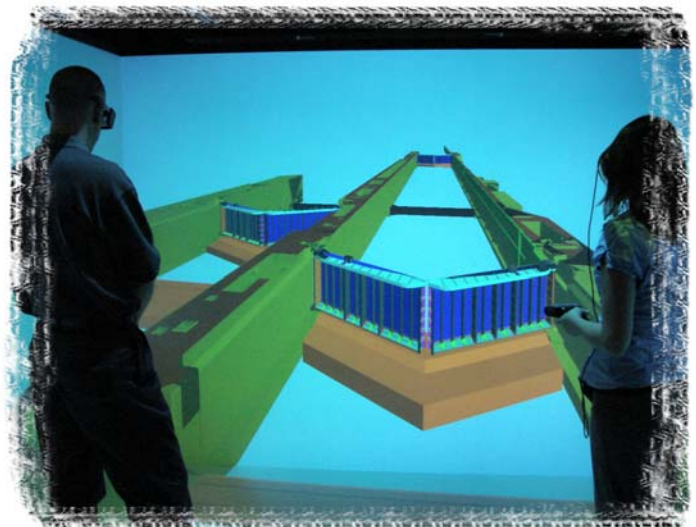
One of the new technological resources being used creates three-dimensional, high-tech models of new locks to assess potential construction problems to an accuracy level never before possible.

The tool is the CAVE Automatic Virtual Environment, which takes the three-dimensional idea and kicks it up a notch.

The process projects the design in real space, allowing designers to step into a 3-D virtual reality environment wearing polarized goggles to see the locks as if they were standing inside them. CAVE technology was designed to surround the user into a virtual reality environment where projectors are directed to three, four, five or six of the walls of a room-sized cube.

"The application is truly leading edge," said Michael Tarpey, Programs and Project Management. "We're not aware of anything similar."

The technology will help to reduce possible conflicts not evident on paper. Teams also will be able to see more accurately how confined or unconfined a space may be and know, for example, if a welder or diver could fit into a confined space to gain access. ■



District engineers explore a new lock design in the CAVE virtual reality environment.



### On The 'Net

[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cave\\_Automatic\\_Virtual\\_Environment](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cave_Automatic_Virtual_Environment)

(Right) George Millar, Engineering and Construction, speaks to Sudlow Intermediate School students as a part of the Geotechnical Lab tour during Groundhog Job Shadow Day held at District Headquarters. (Below) Two students from Sudlow Intermediate School look at an inert explosive during a bomb display by Joe Vann, Engineering and Construction, during the Junior Achievement event.



## Junior Achievement Event in the District

Story and photos by Mark Kane

Students from Sudlow Intermediate School in Davenport, Iowa, came to the District's Clock Tower Building Feb. 28, to participate in Junior Achievement's Groundhog Job Shadow Day held throughout the United States to encourage young people to value free enterprise, business and economics, in order to improve the quality of their lives. The District supports this effort by providing volunteers to JA.

Twelve District employees participated in this year's event as mentors to approxi-

mately 30 students from Sudlow Intermediate School.

Groundhog Job Shadow Day is only one small part of the District's involvement in the JA program. For more information on becoming a volunteer in the JA program, please contact Justine Barati by e-mail or at ext. 5204. 📧

### On The 'Net

[www.ja.org](http://www.ja.org)

[www.jobshadow.org](http://www.jobshadow.org)

[www.davenportschools.org/sudlow](http://www.davenportschools.org/sudlow)

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