



US Army Corps
of Engineers®
New Orleans District

Riverside

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July 2002

A man in a dark green military uniform with a name tag that reads "ROWAN" is speaking at a wooden podium. He is wearing glasses and has several ribbons on his chest. The podium features a gold-colored emblem of a castle or fort. An American flag is visible on the left side of the frame.

**Rowan takes
command**

Saia: Corps' initiatives set needed standards

By Eric Lincoln

The mandatory PMBP CD package employees were given recently is an initiative to standardize Corps projects

plained that, "What we expect from these initiatives is that each department will follow some standard that will ultimately lead to better efficiency and communication between departments."

Saia said that the MVN *Operations Plan* was created from the overall goals of the nationwide *Strategic Plan* handed down from headquarters.

"We took the goals for the Corps and then developed our own based on specific needs for the district ... though we still need the middle plan—the division's plan

for the region."

Yet to be created, this new regional-level strategy, aimed here at the Mississippi Valley Division, will be the *Campaign Plan*.

The reason for three levels of

strategic plans, Saia explained, is because the Corps is so big that broad national goals have to be narrowed down according to each district's needs.

But with so many different strategic initiatives in effect at once, how can anyone keep up with or judge the overall purpose and effectiveness?

"That's what APIC is for," Saia explained. "It's an analyzing tool that tells us what we need to improve about the initiatives and what we're missing."

APIC, short for Army Improvement Performance Criteria, will evaluate how well the district functions under current business processes by looking at all seven areas of the *Operations Plan* and giving the District Operating Team (all division and office chiefs), "a way to assess missing links in the business process," Saia said.

Leadership programs and the Enrichment Series are examples of some of the curricula APIC analyzes.

APIC will be revised constantly to stay up to date with the needs for the district. "It's a continuing saga because you always want to improve business. There's no termination date."

"We see there's a need for

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Lane Lefort

The Corps' strategic initiatives can create quite a pile of paperwork. They include the Operations Plan, Strategic Vision, PMBP, APIC and the upcoming Campaign Plan.

and is just one part of a series of strategic plans intended to improve efficiency Corps-wide.

Deputy District Engineer John Saia, Project Management, ex-

Riverside

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Commander

Col. Peter J. Rowan

Public Affairs Chief

Jim Addison

Acting Editor

Eric S. Lincoln

Contributing Writers

Amanda McLain, John Hall

Graphic Artists

Anne Marino, Elena Napolitano

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Lane Lefort

Col. Rowan speaks to a crowd of several hundred at the change of command ceremony on July 12.

Podany named assistant chief of PMD

By Amanda McLain

Tom Podany, former chief of Coastal Project Management Branch, is the district's new assistant chief of PMD. Podany is assistant to John Saia, chief of PMD, helping him implement project management business processes within the district. He is also responsible for helping the commander with executive office activities.

Podany believes his background will be of great help in this new job. "I think that one of the things that I have is a perspective on planning and project management that I have developed over the last 20 years in the district. I know some of the things that the district does pretty well, and I know some of the things that it could probably use some improvement on."

Podany's brother, an electrical engineer, introduced him to engineering. Without a good understanding of what engineering really entailed, Podany chose it as a tentative major. He was pleasantly surprised to learn how varied civil engineering is. He was also pleased to learn that it was much more people oriented than he had expected. "It's open to a lot of other disciplines," he said. "You have to take into consideration all the aspects of what you're doing, not just engineering. That's what makes it really challenging."

Podany received a bachelor of science degree in civil engineering from George Washington University. He is a native of Washington, D.C., but a shortage of jobs there led him to MVN.

"In 1982 there was a very severe recession in the

Northeast. They were letting go of people with 10 years experience from engineering firms but they weren't hiring anybody else," said Podany.

At the same time that the Northeast was letting go of engineers, MVN was having trouble keeping engineers. Many were leaving the Corps to work for private industries. The year Podany started working for the Corps, 60 trainee engineers were hired.

Moving to New Orleans was not difficult for Podany. He enjoyed coming to a place with such a unique culture.

"There are a lot of things about this place that are really very nice and that a lot of other places don't have." He was also happy to be working in such an important area of the country, and noted that New

Orleans is home to many national interests, including being the number one port, having many waterways, dealing with hurricane protection and flood control, as well as being an important place for the oil and gas industry.



Lane Lefort

"I would like get to the point where other customers see the Corps as the engineering agency of choice."

"You couldn't really ask for more than that, to have all these engineering challenges here in an area that means so much to the country."

New Orleans is also where Podany met his wife, Lynne. They have four children: Mark, Chris, Kevin and

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clarification of the business processes," Saia said. "When there are 10 ways of doing something one way, there has to be a standardization—but we also need flexibility. We don't want to define a process to the tiniest degree but we need standards."

"We have to do all this now so we

don't keep re-creating the wheel."

Bob Fairless, assistant chief of engineering, agreed that the initiatives are "not a be-all, end-all solution. If we're looking for perfection, we won't get there."

He said employees have mostly been quiet about the new strategies since implementation of the

plans is mostly dependant on branch chiefs and assistants. "I doubt most of them see any of the small, incremental changes taking place ... Otherwise, everyone involved seems to be on-board with the concepts."

The flag changes hands as

By Eric Lincoln

Col. Peter J. Rowan became the 57th commander and district engineer of MVN in a formal military change of command ceremony on July 12.

Brig. Gen. Edwin J. Arnold Jr., Mississippi Valley Division commander, placed the Corps of Engineers flag, symbolizing command of the district, in Rowan's hands in the 10 a.m. ceremony.

Outgoing Commander Col. Thomas F. Julich has moved to West Point, N.Y., where he has been assigned to the U.S. Military Academy as director of housing and public works.

A horn section from the Jefferson Performing Arts Society played the national anthem and the Engineer Regimental March during the ceremony, which was attended by VIP's including Lt. Gen. Vald Heiberg III, former Chief of Engineers, Brig. Gen. Gene Witherspoon, former MVD commander, Jimmy Fitzmorris, former lieutenant governor, State Sen. John Hainkel, State Rep. Steve Scalise, W. Clifford Smith, commissioner of the Mississippi River Commission (MRC) and Frank Walk, former commissioner of the MRC.

Arnold spoke to the crowd of several hundred employees and invited guests about Julich's record, citing the success of projects such as SELA, Coast 2050, Davis Pond and

even the Wellness Program.

"Tom, you should take a deep breath, you must be tired," he said. "You have left a living legacy here ... and you and your family are always welcome to come back; besides, you can't get crawfish in New York."

He also cautioned Rowan about the highs and lows of his new position. "But if it gets out of control, just call me," he offered.

Julich then said he would remember the great friendships he had built in New Orleans, many of them cultivated at crawfish boils. "You'd be amazed at how many problems are solved in little forums like that." He also said the sight of the coast disappearing and the work that so many people are putting into preventing that from happening will stay with him.

"My efforts have been minimal compared to that of the employees," he said.

After the crowd gave Julich a standing ovation, Rowan said that the labors of the district "have not gone unnoticed," and he looks forward to "the best support of any district in the Corps."

"I'm confident we can meet the challenges ahead ... Please keep up your efforts and be patient with me. You're starting at ground zero again—or in New Orleans, zero minus two," he joked.

At MVN, Rowan will draw on his civil works experience as the commander of the Chicago District from 1998-2000. His most recent assignment was with the Assistant Chief of Staff for Installation Management as a resource integration officer, responsible for serving Army installations around the world.

A native of Glenham, N.Y., Rowan is married to the former Jeanne Marie Garrison, and they have four children.



Col. Rowan and his wife, Jeanne, greet Suzanne Hawes, Project Management, in the lobby after the ceremony. Hawes was one of many employees who stood in the receiving line to extend greetings to the district's new family.

Rowan takes command



Nancy Mayberry



Anne Marino

Above and right: "I'm confident we can meet the challenges ahead," Col. Rowan tells the crowd of several hundred. **Right:** Background, left to right, are: Brig. Gen. Arnold, Col. Julich and Deputy John Saia. **Below:** As Col. Rowan watches, Col. Julich accepts the Corps of Engineers flag from Deputy John Saia before relinquishing control



Scott Riecke

of the district to Brig. Gen. Arnold. **Below:** Col. Julich gives awards to his secretaries, Rea Dutton and Kitty Miller, at his going-away party the night before the change of command ceremony. **Below, left:** Employees presented the outgoing commander with gifts and a little comic relief at the party.



Anne Marino



Lane Lefort







Howard Gonzales is congratulated by Col. Julich at the TAC awards in June for his nomination to attend the Headquarters Emerging Leaders Conference.

Michael Maples

Developing managers

The Emerging Leaders Program

promotions, but it is intended to develop and challenge its participants while making them more visible in the organization.

Gonzales said he will use his experience from the conference to “maximize my effectiveness as a leader in the district” and that he will “work to ensure that all district employees are given the opportunity to compete for future ELP positions.”

Mike Stout, natural resources manager and co-chair of the ELP, said, “It’s always difficult to make a decision on who you consider to be the most qualified candidate ... here at MVN, this is an extremely difficult decision because we have so many outstanding individuals who excel in their jobs.”

Candidates who express interest in the program are nominated by a board of at least three to five current or alumni emerging leaders. The nominations are then submitted to the district commander

By Eric Lincoln

Howie Gonzales didn’t expect to be going to Florida this year, but that’s where he’s headed as a participant in the HQ Emerging Leaders Conference (ELC) to be held in Orlando.

As one of two finalists in the Emerging Leaders Program (ELP), Gonzales was chosen by MVD Commander Brig. Gen. Arnold to represent the district at a four-day rigorous leadership development workshop just prior to the annual Senior Leaders Conference.

The ELP is Corps-wide and helps identify and develop potential leaders, like Gonzales, project manager, and secondary finalist Brad Blanchard, Port Allen lockmaster, providing career-enhancing opportunities and a pool of candidates from which the Corps can fill future management vacancies.

Participation in the ELP does not guarantee

It’s “difficult to make a decision ... we have so many outstanding individuals who excel in their jobs,” said Stout.

who chooses just two members to participate in the ELP. Either of those candidates then has the potential to be nominated by Arnold to attend the ELC.

Over the course of five years, ELP members broaden their understanding of the organization through conference attendance, formal training, mentoring, shadowing senior leaders and participating in various program activities.

The district is currently formulating a Leadership Development Program for the district as well, said ELP member Kevin Wagner.

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Juliet. They range from age 2 to 11. When Podany is not listening to music or reading mysteries, he devotes his time to Cub Scouts and Boy Scouts, which his sons have been involved with. He is even a scoutmaster and helped to establish a troop. “I find it’s very rewarding. It’s a way to give back a little bit.”

Podany wants to increase the morale of Corps employees by changing the image the public has of the Corps. “I would like get to the point where other customers see the Corps as the engineering agency of choice,” he said.

Current members of the ELP: *Thomas Tobin, Kevin Wagner, Judith Gutierrez, James St. Germain, Brad Blanchard, Howard Gonzales, Pierre Hingle, Linda Labure and Jean Vossen.*

Past members of the ELP: *Michael Stout, Elizabeth Cottone, Judith Frichter, Al Naomi, Pam Deloach, Michelle Marceau, Joaquin Mujica and Carolyn Earl.*

Ideas program creates atmosphere for change

By Eric Lincoln

The Army believes that creative acts and good ideas are likely to occur more often with the added possibility of a \$25,000 cash award.

To that end, the Ideas for Excellence Program (AIEP) is an incentive that encourages soldiers and civilians within the Department of the Army to submit ideas that, if adopted, will increase efficiency and reduce costs.

The program was established in 1990 though the concept goes as far back as 1917 to the creation of the Army Suggestion Program.

The program has achieved positive results—in 1999, for example, the Army received over 5000 suggestions, resulting in \$770,000 in cash awards and \$24 million in tangible benefits.

This year, MVN has processed 10 cash awards and two non-monetary awards.

“By asking our employees for their ideas, we demon-

strate respect for worker skills and commitment, encourage participation and promote a continued search for excellence,” says Marsha Holley, program coordinator in Resource Management.

And while they might not result in cash, Holley said, “Even disapprovals count; they question the status quo and create an atmosphere for change.”

Using AIEP, an employee submits an idea to Holley (x2293) or fills out DA Form 1054 (found in Form Flow). If the idea shows merit, it is either adopted or forwarded through the chain of command to the office that has authority to adopt it.

Awards are based on projected benefits (e.g., an idea for the replacement of a sewage treatment plant resulted in an \$1,180 award for the MVN employee who suggested it).

For more information, go to: www.hqda.army.mil/leadingchange/AIEP/AIEP.htm.

Corps, local group open second ATV area in spillway

By Eric Lincoln

The district has implemented the second phase of all-terrain vehicle (ATV) use areas in the Bonnet Carre Spillway with the recent opening of Area 2 and the improvement of the access road and parking.

Located in a 412-acre wooded tract along the lower borrow canal and north of Airline Highway, the second area provides a system of trails for ATV and motorcycle enthusiasts.

Establishment of the areas was a cooperative effort with the South Louisiana Trailblazers, a local citizens group that has donated hundreds of hours of labor and obtained federal grants to help the Corps establish trails, parking areas and access roads.

“Working together we have expanded recreational opportunities at the project while enhancing public safety,” said Lead Park Ranger Greg Malon.

Col. Julich presented certificates of appreciation to club members on July 8 at the spillway.

“The relationship we have developed with the South Louisiana Trailblazers has become a model of

public-private partnering that other Corps districts and federal agencies are hoping to duplicate,” he said.

While Area 2 was being readied for use, the Corps allowed the public to ride in a temporarily expanded area around Area 1 that stretches from levee to levee between Airline Highway and the railroad tracks.

Area 2 provides sufficient space to accommodate the public, however, and the temporary extensions around Area 1 will be terminated in September. Over the last several months, the three Corps park rangers at Bonnet Carre have informed the visiting public about Area 2 and the impending closure of the temporary areas.

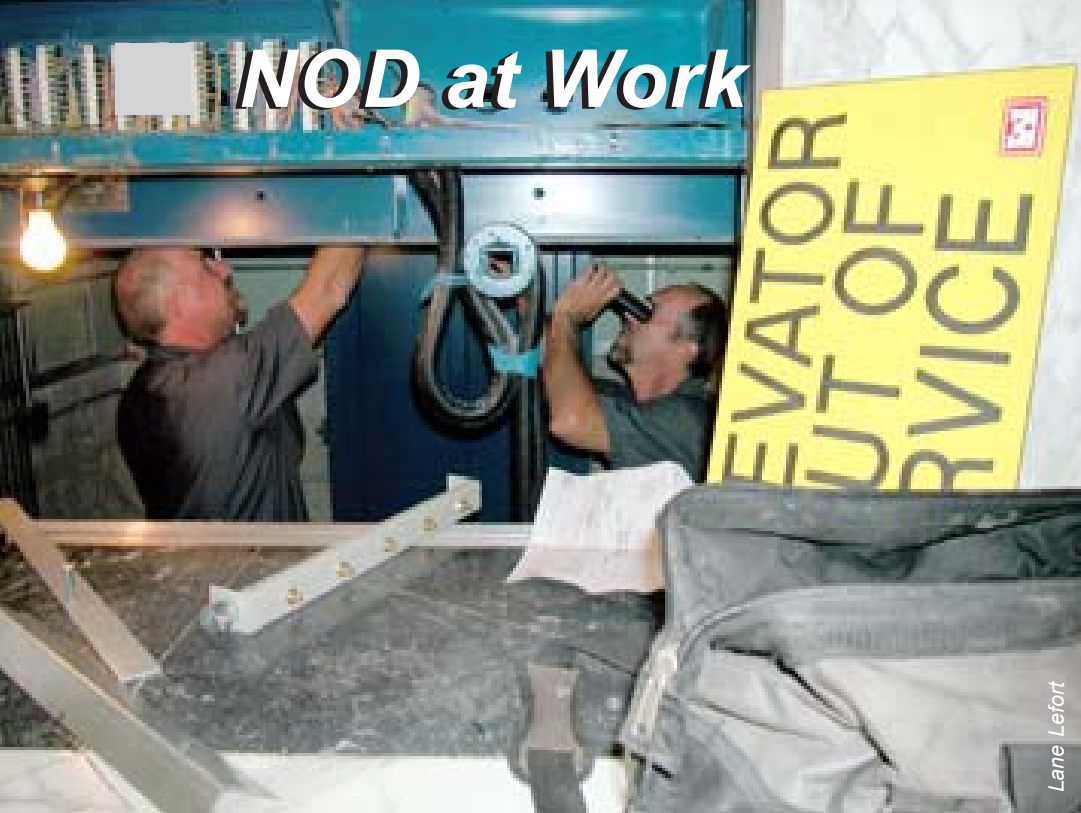
Area 1 was opened in 1999 and consists of 480 acres of cleared land in the middle of the spillway south of Airline Highway. Together, the two areas provide about 900 acres of recreational lands.

Maps showing the new trail system are located on information boards at the spillway and on the Web site at www.mvn.usace.army.mil/recreation.

The opening of a second ATV area at the Bonnet Carre Spillway gives riders another 412 acres of recreational space to drive in.



Courtesy photo



Workers dismantle components under the center lobby elevators. Obsolete technology in the 17-year-old system has contributed to recent breakdowns, said Shelton Kennedy, Facilities and Services Branch manager. Repairs will be complete about mid-August and the new system will be digital, more energy efficient and require less maintenance.

Construction

SELA RECEIVES FUNDING — Corps headquarters shifted \$7.1 million in late June to keep work going on SELA projects. The money was borrowed from other Corps-wide projects unlikely to need it before the new fiscal year. Rep. William Jefferson, D-New Orleans, said he would ask the Corps to give the project an emergency designation, which would allow simpler movement of money from other programs. “Any delay on these projects could lead to major storm-water flooding,” he warned.

Project Management

FALSE RIVER STUDY — Accumulated silt in False River and similar problems at Bayou Grosse Tete and Lake Verret has reduced water quality so much that MVN began a preliminary study last month to find a solution. **Jackie Purrington**, project manager, explained to a crowd of about 100 citizens in New Roads that engineers have visited the site to deter-

mine where the silt is coming from. A full ecosystem restoration study will begin once funding is allocated.

REVIVING NEW RIVER — Project Manager **Chris Gilmore** gave the Ascension Parish Gravity Drainage Board a proposal in June to bring New River back to its original healthy state, but residents questioned the plan and the board requested at least two weeks to vote on providing an estimated \$225,000 in matching funds. Sludge at the bottom of the stream is currently creating an oxygen-poor environment for fish and plant life. The mostly federally funded project would involve removal of a drainage weir and dredging at a cost of approximately \$900,000.

Small Business

ACQUISITION FAIR — There were over 200 small businesses present at the MVN Acquisition Fair on May 29. The event was sponsored with the Louisiana Procurement Technical Assistance Center and will probably be continued

annually, according to **Robert Dempsey**, deputy for small business. For contracts over \$10,000, Dempsey designs a subcontracting plan that requires small businesses be used for some of the work. Acquisition fairs give businesses the chance to learn what it takes to get a larger contract and helps some companies find the subcontractors they need to fulfill the requirements.

Operations

HURRICANE PROTECTION — The first enlargement of the West Bank Hurricane Protection Project, East of Algiers Canal, Hero Canal Reach 1, was completed in mid-May.

Public Affairs

WORLD OF WORK — Five middle school students from several area schools are spending three hours each morning for three weeks at MVN shadowing various employees. Offices participating in the “World of Work Academy” include Engineering, Operations, PMD, IMO, LMO, Health and Safety, OC, RM and Public Affairs.

Around the District

Congratulations

to **Joe Dicharry** (PM) and his wife, Nancy, on the birth of their first grandchild, Riley Ann Buras, born June 27. The parents are Marcy (the Dicharrys' daughter) and Brett Buras.

to **Howie Gonzales** (PM) and his wife, Gwen, on the birth of their daughter, Logan Amber, on June 11. Logan weighed 6 lbs., 5 oz.

to **Greg Breerwood** (OD) on the birth of his grandchild, Emma Lynn Carter, who was born April 24.

to **Bruce Breaux** (OD), whose daughter, Jamie (LM), made the president's list for the spring semester at Holy Cross College.

to **Freddy Lawrence** (ED), whose wife, Margaret, graduated with her Ph.D in Christian counseling on June 7. Margaret is the speaker for Heart Call Ministries on KKAY, 1590AM, Sundays at 3:30 p.m.

to **Lekesha Williams** (PM), who was married to Byron Reynolds on June 30.

Condolences

to **Dave Justison** (SS), whose mother, Elizabeth Ann Justison, passed away on June 30.

to **Shenetta Della** (PM) and Glenn Brown (ED), whose mother and mother-in-law, respectively, Beatrice Della, passed away on June 23.

to the family of **Roy Brown**, retired motor vehicle operator, who passed away on June 18.

to **Joyce Williams** (OD), whose mother, Mildred Mills, passed away on June 17.

Farewell

to **Tanja Doucet** (PMD), who moved to a new assignment in Germany on Jun 2

to **Joe Gibson** (IM), who retired July 1 after 22 years of service.

Who is Jim Flock?

Sometimes a page can be balanced visually by reversing an image but as this error from last month shows, it's easy to make mistakes in the process. We published a reversed image (left) in June but, when writing the caption, forgot to reverse the names of the golfers. The proper image (below) shows, left to right: Bobby Gautreau (now left-handed), Jim Flock, Paul Gautreau and Roger Gonzalez. We also incorrectly listed Flock as chief of Information Management under the Length of Service awards. Flock is actually chief of Design Services Branch, Engineering.



Lane Lefort

DILBERT® by Scott Adams



Talk Back

Last month we solicited your comments on "Developmental Training."

This month's winner believes that employees should be offered workshops that teach how to better utilize office automation tools such as MS Office.

Demystify office automation

MVN employees struggle with their office automation tools every day. The MS Office suite and other prevalent software tools give the promise of enhanced productivity, but reality can fall short. The first leap of productivity was when PCs first arrived and early automation tools were provided. Now, newer versions of these tools are increasingly complex and they are loaded with subtle features that are not routinely exploited and even easily disabled.

Our personnel now utilize the network and automation environment after investing years of individual OJT.

We should not assume that new employees and interns are already familiar with using our automation tools, CEFMS,

Formflow, Outlook mail archiving, the Intranet, MicroStation, Windows 2000 and our local network environment. Their education should not be strictly OJT.

New technology has added great potential for productivity. We need to offer an orientation to our information technology tools and practices. The district will benefit from repeated low intensity exposure to our automation technology. I recommend that new employees (and the rest of us) be offered a series of office automation workshops on a regularly scheduled basis.

Ralph Scheid

Engineering Division

*Ralph is the winner of our free parking space.



District chiefs attending the MVD technical directorate meeting at the St. Paul District in May visited the headwaters of the Mississippi River at Lake Itasca. Left to right are: Bill Lewis, Real Estate; Greg Breerwood, Operations; Gerry Satterlee, Engineering; and Jim Miles, Construction.

TO HAVE YOUR IDEAS PRINTED IN THE NEXT ISSUE

AND

WIN A RESERVED PARKING SPOT FOR AN ENTIRE MONTH

**RESPOND BY
AUGUST 14**

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

**PROJECT
MANAGEMENT
BUSINESS
PROCESS**

>WHAT HAVE YOU GAINED FROM THE EARLY STAGES OF THE PMBP TRAINING?

THE EDITOR RESERVES THE RIGHT TO PICK WHICH RESPONSES TO PUBLISH AND AWARD.

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