



US Army Corps
of Engineers®
New Orleans District

Riverside

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January - February 2004



Leadership:
what it means to you

Emerging Leaders Q&A

**Schilling new chief of
technical support**

Awards

Coastal America Partnership Award goes to Regulatory Branch

By Barry Obiol

Louisiana's Cameron Creole Watershed – Marsh Terracing Project received the state's 2003 Coastal America Partnership Award in October at Cameron Prairie National Wildlife Refuge in Bell City, La. Barry Obiol, Operations, Regulatory Branch, was a key player in making the project a reality and received the award for the district.

"The federal and state highway departments were trying to widen Highway 27 to provide a safe hurricane evacuation route in Cameron Parish," Obiol explained. "The proposal affected jurisdictional wetlands and affected lands purchased with federal money."

Obiol was assigned the project for permitting.

"Permitting such a project is difficult because of issues regarding federal refuge land and the quality of the wetlands impacted verses public safety," he said. "The project reached a roadblock regarding impact to federal land."

Obiol suggested mitigation for the permit to convert federal lands to state highways lands.

He also assisted the highway departments in drafting a memorandum of agreement with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service that allowed the transfer of funds and outlined specific responsibilities.

He then proposed a fairly new concept of utilizing plowed duck wing marsh terracing to provide the actual land necessary to complete the conversion.

But compensating for the wetlands impacts triggered a much larger marsh restoration project than originally conceived.

"We gained the attention of some local large land owners and Cameron Parish. Plowed terracing works better if more terraces are incorporated, so, since the project already had the funding in place, it was perceived as a great opportunity to add-on additional terracing."

Cameron Parish coordinated the local landowners and Ducks Unlimited in providing additional funding for more work.

"The result was a very successful project that has contributed a great deal to restoration of wetlands in southwest Louisiana while providing a safe hurricane evacuation route," said Obiol.

"Regulatory Branch is thrilled to receive this positive recognition for our environmental work," Obiol said. "We have a dedicated staff of very professional, hard working people that rarely seem to get credit for the work we do, but this was one of those rare times."

In addition to state recognition, Obiol also received a plaque and letter of recommendation from President Bush.

Riverside wins 2003 Herb Kassner Awards

The staff of Riverside is proud to announce that the magazine recently placed third in the Magazines category of the annual Herb Kassner Awards, a competition that includes all U.S. Army Corps of Engineer districts. Additionally, the editor placed second in the

Corps Civilian Journalist of the Year category. First place winners go on to compete for the Army's Keith L. Ware Award, the overall Department of Army journalism competition. We're looking forward to a sweep next year!

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Winner: The "J" Award, the highest Department of Army journalism honor, 2000 and 2003.

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Lane Lefort

The Castle Kids signal their readiness for their roles as future emerging leaders in the community.

Schilling returns to Operations as technical support chief

By Eric Lincoln

Fred Schilling is the new chief of Technical Support Branch, Operations. A New Orleans native, he has been with the Corps for almost 28 years since graduating from LSU in 1976.

Schilling says he is happy to have the opportunity to work in Operations again, after a three-year stint in Engineering.

“Three years ago, I thought it was important to broaden my Corps experience in order to compete for higher positions in the future. I was fortunate to get a position there as chief of Structures. I learned a lot about how Engineering operated, and I really value my time there.”

Most of his career has been in Operations, though, and he missed the challenges working with the Operations customers. “I’m very proud to once again be a part of such a fine organization,” he said.

He says he doesn’t plan big changes for the branch. “It’s a well-oiled machine right now. There’s always room for improvement, of course, and I’ll try to

provide the guidance to move us forward as we continue learning ... the major challenge now is continuing our transition into PMBP and P2. We also need to see how

memorable time with the district has been as Operations manager for the Mississippi River from 1987 to 2000. “I got a lot of satisfaction working with our

navigation customers, making sure we continued to provide access to the largest port complex in the world. Technical Support also works closely with our Operations customers, so I’ll be able to continue to be a part of that.”

At home, Schilling spends time with his three sons, ages 24, 22 and 18. They play basketball together in the Jefferson Adult League. Schilling played basketball when he was younger, and was thrilled when his boys asked him to play with them in the league.

“When we started playing, my competitive nature kicked in ... but I found out very quickly that you can’t

play at 49 like you can at 18. So I come in occasionally to give them a break, but other than that, I help coach. It’s fun when all four of us are out there at the same time and their mom and girlfriends are cheering us on in the stands. I’m very proud of them.”



Fred Schilling

Technical Support Branch is “a well-oiled machine right now,” says Schilling. “There’s always room for improvement... the major challenge now is continuing our transition into PMBP and P2.”

we interface with the new 2012 environment. We’ve taken a lot of training. The real thing now is to actually start using it on-the-job. I hope to provide an atmosphere where everyone can grow and develop, whatever their goals may be.”

He says some of his most

Leadership



... is the ability to guide others to a common goal, and to get them to achieve what they don't think they can, not by badgering but by setting the example; by giving them the goals to achieve, the knowledge they need to achieve them and direction along the way.

Gene Taylor
Safety, Health & Security

... is all about being there when your team needs you and providing the resources and motivation for the team to do the best job they can do. And when the job is completed, the team should say "We did it ourselves."

Janet Cruppi
Real Estate

... is the capable mobilization of teams to achieve mission-focused results—efficiently, effectively, and productively—with constant improvement by learning together. Gaining team cooperation is key, which starts with the leader explaining desired results. The work must be portrayed as meaningful, with each team member challenged in their tasks. To be a leader, a person must be driven and take the initiative. Leadership requires constant guidance of the mission until it is accomplished, facing adversity when it arises, and taking responsibility to get the job done.

Edmond Russo
Operations

... are the approaches shared by Ulysses S. Grant and Colin Powell. Though they served our nation both in uniform and out 100 years apart in time, they both exhibited an overarching under-

standing that a leader must act with integrity, establish a vision for the troops, and empower the team to succeed.

Maj. Jason A. Kirk
Project Management

... is a way of creating a strong base for the people to follow. Leadership is not limited to one person but many. Examples would be: the

"You have to express your ideals or you might just become a follower."

president, bosses, coworkers, or even you. Everybody can try to be a leader. It is nothing but being a mentor. As a leader, he or she should have a vision of the future. He or she should also have a plan.

A major issue in leadership is how to be a leader. You would need special skills to be one. An example would be interpersonal skills. Interpersonal skills produce group dynamics. With this skill, the followers and the leader can communicate and express their ideas well. Another skill is showing your voice. Your voice has an impact. To be a leader, you have to express your ideals or you might just become a follower. A major skill is thinking ahead. To think ahead, helps a group know their future plans. If you express this, you will create confidence in a follower's mind.

Being a leader is a tough job. You have to sacrifice your time and energy for the benefit of the people. You have to make sure that they understand what is going on. One major ideal should be clear: Don't leave anybody behind.

Doing this causes distress, and is a way to lose leadership. You have to go at a comfortable pace so everyone can follow you to success.

This essay is from my son Manu, an 8th grader at Newman School, who had an assignment on writing about leadership in his own words recently. I had similar thoughts as he about defining a leadership, the roll of a leader and the leader's responsibility.

**Srilatha Kris
Construction**

... is what I think of when I remember the best leader I have known: Bill Barbieri, my Peace Corps country director in Belize. Bill is a retired Catholic priest and has spent many years living and giving of himself in Latin America. He is without a doubt the kindest and most humble man I have known. One of the things that made his leadership so amazing was that he taught us that no matter how successful a Peace Corps volunteer may be, our biggest accomplishments could never be quantified. By his actions I am inspired to write a few simple words:

A leader quietly commands respect without demanding respect.

A leader is quick to encourage and is slow to reprimand.

A leader has the patience of Job.

A leader will display a smile, and not an ego.

A leader is never too busy to help.

Above all else, a leader will recognize that without followers, he or she would have nothing.

**Steve W. Roberts
Operations**

... is someone who respects each and every one of his or her followers; who knows his or her accomplishment is the product of many and shares the accolades; who admits when he or she is wrong, accepts constructive criticism, and is always open to new ways of thinking and doing.

I think of two individuals that to me represent great leadership qualities. George Washington,

our first president, was a person of outstanding character and integrity. He set high standards for himself and others and lived up to them. He was a man of big ideas and commitments, but people trusted him and followed him despite the fact that he was not the most intellectual thinker of his time. Many historians consider him a

“Outstanding leaders go out of their way to boost the self-esteem of their personnel.”

great “visionary leader” in that he had a well-constructed and coherent plan for our country, with both long and short term goals, and the passion and perseverance to implement it. A modern example of effective leadership is Sam Walton, the founder of Wal-Mart. He was a visionary in utilizing new empowering management techniques, starting with these premises: basic respect for everyone, that each member of the team is as important as any other, and that every person can offer important feedback. Walton said, “Outstanding leaders go out of their way to boost the self-esteem of their personnel. If people believe in themselves, it’s amazing what they can accomplish. High expectations are the key to everything.”

Both of these leaders used their vision and values to inspire others to great achievement.

**Lisa Gomez
Operations**

... is setting a positive example for others to follow. This action energizes the work environment more than any other. Also, all employees who devote themselves to serving as a constructive example become leaders.

**Keven Lovetro
Project Management**

... is the ability to get others to see the real purpose and need of a mission and to work with

See LEADERSHIP, page 15

ELP

Emerging Leader Program

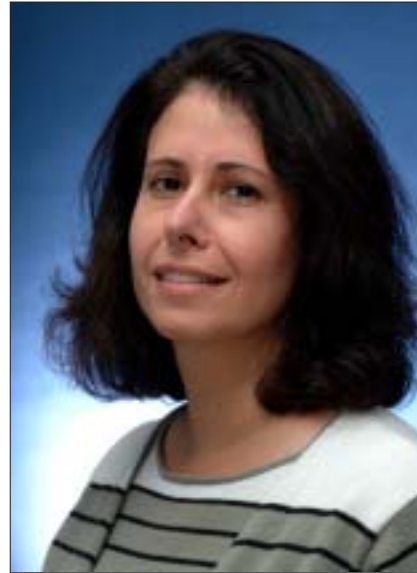
There are currently seven employees participating in the district's Emerging Leader Program (ELP).

The ELP is open to employees, GS-09 through GS-12, who exhibit interest and potential in leadership assignments, and show a desire to develop and refine their leadership and management skills. It includes opportunities to attend division conferences, participate on ELP team projects, and mentor with senior managers.



Brad J. Blanchard

started his career with the Corps at age 20 as a maintenance worker at Bayou Sorrel Lock. After 10 years as a maintenance worker, he was promoted to lock and dam equipment mechanic. In 1995, he was promoted to his current position of lockmaster at Port Allen Lock.



Jean Vossen

started working at the district as a co-op student in January 1995 and became a full-time civil engineer in December 1997. She has worked exclusively in Engineering, in General Engineering and Civil branches. She's currently a technical manager in the Levees Section of Civil Branch, a

registered PE, and working on a master's in civil engineering at UNO.

1. My goals as an emerging leader are to improve my leadership skills by having the opportunity to work with a diverse group of emerging leaders and senior leaders to further enhance my leadership abilities.

“I have learned to take a broader approach to management and supervisory issues.”

2. After becoming an emerging leader, I realized that I often looked at things on an operational scope rather than a district or division level. Since then, I have learned to take a broader approach to management and supervisory issues.

3. I feel the emerging leaders program is basically just what it says, a program directed at developing future leaders. During the development process, emerging leaders provide input or work on district related projects that assist senior leaders and the executive staff.

There are three aspects of the Emerging Leader Program that are especially appealing to me.

First, the ELP offers the opportunity to meet senior leaders throughout MVD and learn about their concerns and challenges. This insight into the planning and implementation of new initiatives helps me to understand the direction in which the Corps is headed and how that will influence my work.

Second, the ELP offers exposure to seminars and literature on leadership both within the Corps and in the private sector. It's interesting to note that true leadership can be found at all grade levels and job titles within those individuals who perform their jobs conscientiously and are committed to making the Corps a better organization.

Third, the ELP includes plans for programs to aid the individual in assessing personal strengths and weaknesses and developing effective management skills. Although I haven't participated in this aspect of the program yet, it should be a valuable opportunity for self-improvement.

Employees receive career enhancement through increased self-awareness and a broadened understanding of the Corps, and are identified as potential leaders and managers for the Corps to draw upon in the future. Candidates for the program must be nominated by a senior leader at the district or an ELP alumnus.

The ELP program is separate from the Leadership Development Program (LDP), which Riverside reported on last September. The LDP can produce

applicants for the ELP.

We asked our current emerging leaders a few questions about the program to find out how it's working for them and the district.

1. What are your personal goals as a member of the emerging leader group?

2. What is the one thing so far you've learned about yourself as an emerging leader?

3. Aside from developing leaders, are there other values you see LDP contributing to the district?



Jim St. Germain is the project manager for SELA Orleans and St. Tammany parishes. He has been in Project Management for about one year, with the Corps for 15 and has been a construction manager in Construction and a study manager in the old Planning Division.

1. Through the emerging leader program I am trying to become more self-aware and preparing myself for a leadership role with the Corps. Additionally, participation in the program will provide me with an awareness and understanding of the vision and values of Corps leaders.

“Listening to people and actually hearing what they are saying takes more concentration and energy than speaking to them.”

2. I've learned that listening to people and actually hearing what they are saying takes more concentration and energy than speaking to them.

3. We all affect people, sometimes positively, sometimes negatively. The program helps us understand how our behavior affects others so that we can strive to be a positive influence.



Judi Gutierrez has been with the Corps since 1986. She began her career in Real Estate Division as a co-op student while attending UNO, which led to her current position as a review appraiser. In 1998, she obtained state certification as a general appraiser. She has been involved in numerous district initiatives throughout her career—currently she is a PMBP

facilitator and a member of the P2 implementation team. She is also active in the New Orleans community, donating her time to several civic and religious organizations.

1. Being a member of the ELP gives me the opportunity to work on special projects that benefit the district's community. My goal is to help develop innovative solutions to some of the district's long-term problems.

2. I have learned that leadership is not constrained by the position that I hold or the title of my job.

3. I think that the LDP will produce a more informed and educated work force. Participation in the LDP requires reading self-development books, meeting with a mentor, receiving training and participating in developmental assignments. Participation in the LDP will provide employees with tools and skills that will improve their performance of their current jobs.

Continued, next page



Tim Black graduated from Louisiana State University with a bachelor of arts in history in 1993 and a master's in business administration in 1995. He is currently a lead contract specialist in Projects West Branch. He has eight years of government contracting experience, and is a commissioned officer in the Air Force Reserve with five years

active duty. He provides contract support to the Air Mobility Command's Civil Reserve Air Fleet Program. He has completed assignments at Sheppard and Langley Air Force bases, and served in the commercial sector as a contracts manager for Textron Marine and Land Services in New Orleans. His experience with the Corps includes architect-engineering, construction and service contracts in civil works.

1. My ultimate goal is to broaden my experiences and contribute to the success of the district outside of my primary duties as a contracting officer. Also, I am using my emerging leader experience to network with folks from all over the country and learn how other districts attack problems.

2. I tend to move too fast toward solutions without spending enough time evaluating the facts. When I attended the USACE Emerging Leader Conference, I was able to take several personality tests and review personality feedback from my peers and supervisors. I learned that my thinking patterns tend to look for quick solutions ... considering all the facts is not necessarily a requirement! Knowing this about myself, I try to slow down and make sure I do not gloss over important pieces of information.

3. I do see other values to LDP: networking, broadening your experiences, opportunities to observe how senior leaders in USACE operate, contribute to special projects for the district and division, and develop a better understanding of our organization.



Kevin Wagner has been with the Corps for almost 14 years. He received his bachelors in civil engineering from UNO in 1990 and joined the Corps afterwards. He worked in Planning Division for seven years and transferred to Project Management where he served as the project manager for the Lake Pontchartrain and Vicinity Hurricane Protection

Project for four years. Several years ago, he moved to Construction and worked as the construction manager within Contract Administration Branch, Structures Section. He is currently project manager for the West Bank and Vicinity Hurricane Protection Project and New Orleans to Venice Hurricane Protection Project.

1. My goal is to enhance my career and further develop my management skills. Participating in the program provides the opportunity to learn more about the Corps and the issues that face senior leadership. You hear and get involved in conversations that you normally never hear by just sitting in your cubical. You are presented with the "big picture" issues and not the day-to-day issues.

2. What I learned is that my parents did an excellent job raising my brothers and me. They were the ones who taught and instilled in us those values that Lt. Gen. Flowers says are important to this organization. Honesty, integrity, loyalty, duty, accountability, taking responsibility for your actions, doing the right thing, treating people with dignity and respect, going above and beyond your normal duties, fulfilling your obligations, etc., were all things they taught me before I came to work for the Corps. It highlighted that I'm working for the right organization.

3. I definitely believe the district can and will benefit from our participation in this program because we, as participants, are allowed to hear, comment on and participate in the development of initiatives that may change the way we do our business. We are sometimes given the opportunity to present the "worker bees" point of view and be a voice for the masses.



Howard Gonzales graduated from UNO in 1994 with a bachelor's in mechanical engineering, in 1998 with a master's in engineering management, and in 2001 with a master's in business administration. He has been a study and project manager with the district

during his 10-year career, and managed multiple water resources studies and projects focusing on navigation, flood protection and environmental restoration. As project manager, he currently manages efforts on the Louisiana Coastal Area Ecosystem Restoration Study, which is developing a comprehensive plan for coastal restoration and design of restoration alternatives.

Howard was nominated and selected to the MVD Emerging Leaders Program and the HQ USACE Emerging Leaders Program in 2002. He is an active participant in the district and division ELPs, and is leading a team in organizing a national LDP workshop in here this spring.

1. Exposure to Corps senior leaders and their "big picture" mindset. I anticipate being a future Corps senior leader, so I am using the opportunities I have as an emerging leader to learn as much as possible in order to continuously develop and reach my goals.

Emerging leaders get "exposure to Corps senior leaders and their 'big picture' mindset."

2. My strength as a person and a project manager is my ability to establish successful interpersonal relationships and open communications with my peers and supervisors.

3. (1) Structure and mechanism for developing Corps employees as people; (2) catalyst for change: organizational change at the working level employee and peer level; and (3) positive district representation and attitude.



Cover Kids The Castle Kids loosen up after their photo shoot for the Riverside cover.

Lane Lefort

District provides over \$834 million in economic benefit to state in 2003

By Keven Lovetro, Project Management



West Bay, December 2003

Lane Lefort

With 1,300 employees, the New Orleans District ranks as one of the largest employers in the city of New Orleans. District economists estimate that the total impact on the state from expenditures in fiscal year 2003 was about \$834 million in output of goods and services, \$295 million in earnings and over 17,000 jobs.

In the 2003 fiscal year, the district spent approximately \$409 million in the Louisiana area, providing service to taxpayers as well as creating economic benefits for the state's residents beyond the direct benefits attributable to projects currently in operation.

The table below shows the impact each expenditure category had on the local economy based

on U.S. Department of Commerce multipliers.

Displayed are the impacts of district expenditures on output, earnings and employment, both direct and indirect. Direct, or first-round impacts, are those impacts which result directly from expenditures by the district, such as employee salaries or payments to

Continued, next page

District's impact on local economy (dollar amounts in millions)

Expenditure Category	Direct Spending	Total Impact on Output	Direct Impact on Earnings	Total Impact on Earnings	Direct Impact on Employment	Total Impact on Employment
In-House Expenditures	108.0	201.9	56.4	80.6	1.3	5.3
Contract AE Expenditures	37.3	69.7	19.5	27.9	460.0	1.8
Construction Contracts	173.6	381.1	59.9	122.5	2.8	6.7
Operation & Maintenance	80.7	169.0	38.0	63.0	1.8	3.4
Real Estate Purchases	9.4	12.7	3.0	1.3	.04	0.1
Totals	409.0	834.4	174.1	295.3	6.3	17.2

local vendors who provide services to the district. Indirect, or second-round impacts result when beneficiaries of first-round payments spend these payments in the local economy.

First and second-round impacts are added to calculate the total impact on the local economy from district expenditures. For example, the district spent about \$37

million on services provided by architectural-engineering firms for fiscal year 2003 and generated



\$70 million of total output. Likewise, these services provided by architectural-engineering firms, directly contributed about \$20 million in earnings and 1,200 jobs for first-round impacts. However, the total impact on the economy was nearly \$28 million in earnings and approximately 1,800 jobs with second-round impacts.

MVD Senior Leader Conference tackles communication, USACE 2012

By Tim Black, Construction

There seems to be an emphasis on leadership now more than ever. As an LSU student in 1992, I remember listening to a WWII veteran talk about what was different about politics then and politics today. She said the difference was leadership. She felt that today's politicians were ruling by taking polls and not by leading. I think leadership is back. After the terrorist attack on Sept. 11, the days of making decisions based on the latest poll has ended. Today, more and more folks are buying into leadership as a key enabler to success.

In keeping with this new trend, the 2003 MVD Senior Leader Conference emphasized leadership as the key to making USACE 2012 work. Brig. Gen. Riley began the conference by stating the senior leaders must lead MVD into the future. He issued his vision for us:

Our people come to work excited every day because they are valued members of a continuously improving team of selfless national servants.

As he reviewed his outline on how to achieve this, I realized I had not thought about my job in those terms before. I like what I am doing and feel that I make a difference, but I had not put it all together.

The conference also hosted a panel of federal partners to discuss how together we could improve our service to the nation. The panel did make some statements that stuck with me. First, the representative from Ducks Unlimited stated they utilize their resources "for projects" instead of "against the Corps." We could probably get a tremendous amount accomplished if more of our critics had that perspective. Also, there was a comment that USACE does not partner. We show up with our partnership agreement already written and tell them where to sign. They feel it is a one-way partnership. Having never

worked on partnership agreements, I don't know if he is correct. The problem for us is that this perception exists.

On the next day of the conference, the emerging leaders had the opportunity to give a presentation on communication. The presentation outlined the Malcolm Baldrige National Quality Award criteria for communications, examples of communication techniques from high performing commercial organizations, the results of an informal survey of MVD personnel, and a recommendation on how to improve communication. Our presentation demonstrated that the division has no idea how effective its communication is because the effectiveness is not measured. We recommended developing a systematic way to measure communication effectiveness as a first step to improvement. The tool that was recommended was telephonic tracking polls to see if our senior leader messages were reaching all employees and if those messages were understood.

The remaining time at the conference focused on how the senior leaders could incorporate the principles of USACE 2012 into the campaign plan. They broke into working groups to ensure our strategic planning was consistent with the principles of USACE 2012.

My overall impression from the conference is that our senior leaders share many of my concerns and questions about USACE 2012. I guess this is because of the way it was written. The document is big on ideas and short on details. The writers are depending on us to fill in the details. The future is not clear, but our goals are certain. Leadership will be our enabler to success.

Employee assistance program offers better confidentiality, 24-hour access

By Eric Lincoln

The Health Office is offering new and improved employee assistance and counseling services through Employee Assistance Programs (EAP) of Louisiana, a division of EAP Inc.

The program began at the district on Jan. 1. "We're offering additional services from the previous contractor," said Tina Taylor, president and owner. "An EAP counselor will continue to be on-site on Wednesdays from 9 to 12 p.m. However, we also offer 24-hour, 7-day-a-week services, which was unavailable with the previous contractor."

There are four office locations—Metairie, Uptown New Orleans, New Orleans East and the West Bank—available to employees and their families. Clients call in to set up an appointment. "Having multiple off-site locations is also different from what was previously offered," said Taylor. "It opens up an opportunity for people to use the program who would not have used it before."

A national provider network is available for employees who work outside of the New Orleans area and even out-of-

state. "No matter where you are in the U.S., we have affiliates there," Taylor said.

The company is the oldest

site, has worked as a board certified substance abuse counselor, CEAP and a SAP for 23 years.

Both counselors also work with the Navy, Department of Energy and several other agencies that receive federal funding. "Our services are used quite a lot at these other agencies and companies," said Taylor.

They want employees to know that they are there to listen, no matter what the issue.

"It doesn't have to be a 'problem,'" said Benton. "If you just need to vent, or if something's on your mind and you need someone to listen, we're there.

There's nothing too small. You don't have to make up a problem to come in."

Clients can have three sessions per person, per issue. "That means that you can come in today with stress issues, then three months later with marital issues," explained Taylor, "or a spouse or family member can come in, and they don't have to mention it to anyone.

They just come in and say their family member works here, and we will talk with them, no questions asked."

The first session is used for an assessment, with two more strictly for counseling. "Most issues are solved within three



and first EAP in the state. It was founded in 1980 as an outreach program by a psychiatrist who wanted to extend assistance outside of the clinic to those who often don't get help at all.

Taylor has been a licensed

"There's nothing too small. You don't have to make up a problem to come in."

EAP counselor Linda Benton

clinical social worker, certified employee assistance professional (CEAP) and a Dept. of Transportation-qualified substance abuse professional (SAP) for over 15 years. Linda Benton, who will be the primary counselor on-



The Employee Assistance Program is encouraged, supported and utilized by top management in every agency her company works with, said Tina Taylor, president and owner of EAP of Louisiana. "Employees think they are the only ones who come in. But we've had CEOs use our services—management goes through issues, too," she said. *Left to right:* Tina Taylor, Col. Rowan and Linda Benton, primary on-site counselor for the district.

one-hour sessions, probably 75 percent of them. But if we determine more assistance or a higher level of care is needed, we will refer to another source, often within the individual's benefit plan," said Benton.

In her years of practice, said Taylor, she's only seen one or two family members come directly to a work site for assistance, and that's why she's glad to be able to offer off-site services. "Naturally, it's very limiting when family members have to come to the work site, where often the person they need to discuss is working down the hall or other employees can see them. The off-site office locations offer confidentiality, convenience and a comfortable environment."

Taylor said that this honor

system to assist family members has worked well. "It hasn't been abused, and even if it had been occasionally, we'd be able to say we did a good deed ... one woman at a hospital we worked with saw our flier and came to us, and even though she wasn't an employee, we were able to help her. She was in crisis and really needed someone to talk to."

Benton says the most prevalent problems they see are family issues and emotional issues such as depression and stress.

Both counselors have experience in emergencies, also, and are trained in crisis intervention procedures. "After traumatic events, we'll offer to take groups of employees through a process that will help them assess the event and

prevent residual problems."

The counselors pointed out that the program is encouraged, supported and utilized by top management. "Employees think they are the only ones who come in. But we've had CEOs use our services—management goes through issues, too," said Taylor.

The company's Web site, www.Lifeworks.com, is a "great resource, and the information changes regularly," says Taylor. "There's a 'How May I Help You' feature that is extremely user-friendly, and everything from financial calculators and a child care locator, to

articles about ergonomics, office communication and retirement planning."

To access the site, use the ID "EAP" and password "123."

There will soon be a link to Lifeworks directly from the Insight homepage. Appointments must be scheduled over the phone, however.

The counselors will be holding workshops and support groups at the district, also, and sending out quarterly information. Employees will be receiving orientation brochures and wallet cards soon.

EAP staff members also include Monitetra King, Marlene Billiot, Brett Fauchaux, Ann Wilder and Michelle Woods. To schedule a confidential appointment, call the company's appointment line at 504-244-9898, or 1-800-749-3277, anytime.

Student employment programs open doors

By Eric Lincoln

Students from universities in the New Orleans area and beyond are getting a foot in the door and on-the-job experience while finishing school, thanks to district internship programs.

Tulane, UNO, LSU, Delgado, Dillard, SUNO, Southern in Baton Rouge and Xavier are some of the schools represented, with interns majoring in civil and mechanical engineering, biology, computer science and geology.

There are two types of programs: the Student Temporary Employment Program (STEP) and the Student Career Employment Program (SCEP). The main focus for the STEP is to provide employment for the student. Students pursuing any degree can be hired on a temporary basis and can advance to the GS-3 level. The focus for the SCEP is different. Students are hired to work in an occupational area that corresponds with their academic studies. This gives them the opportunity to be converted into a permanent position upon graduation.

“We have a wide-open program,” says Cheryl Weber, program coordinator in the Civilian Personnel Advisory Center (CPAC). “We accept resumes from students at any time. The district has expanded its SCEP appointments into environmental operations – management is now considering biology and science majors, not just engineering students.”

She said Operations Division fully utilizes the STEPs. A significant number of appointments are made during the

summer months at the locks and other field sites. This allows the field offices to accomplish some needed work during the summer.

Micheal Sullivan, a 23-year-old civil engineering major at UNO, has been a SCEP for three years. He was considering multiple offers in his field when a friend already interning here suggested he give the Corps a try.

“The schedule was a big factor,” he explained. “The Corps works around my classes. I’m allowed to work five to 30 hours a week, and I work about 15. In the private sector, they want you to come in more hours, but it isn’t possible when you’re in school full-time. The pay is better here, too, and you get raises depending on the level of school courses you complete. And they treat you like a full-time employee – you’re eligible for benefits, and there’s the possibility to convert to full-time when you graduate.

“I didn’t expect to stay here, but I’m a senior now. I’ll wait to see if they offer me a full-time position when I graduate.”

As student applications are received, they are distributed to managers and supervisors. Each office determines its own need for students and reviews resumes. If a match is not found, CPAC contacts the universities so they can announce the district’s need to students.

The district fully supports the student programs, says Weber. There are an average of 90 students on board throughout the year, and 95 percent of SCEPs are converted to permanent positions upon graduation.

If you would like to know more about the program, contact CPAC at 862-2800.

Hispanic Employment Committee

toy drive -- The Hispanic Employment Committee organized a holiday toy drive to give Christmas gifts to children in Honduras. The following people donated presents: Connie Caruso; Christie Nunez and her mother Tudy Nunez; Julie LeBlanc; Alan Schulz; Mireya Laigast; Judith Gutierrez; Maurya Kilroy; Marian Askegren; Leroy Williams; Jo Ann Rosenfeld; Mary Hazen; Bich Quach; Peggy Galliano; Cindy Lee and Lourdes Gonzalez.



Lane Lefort

Leaders should empower, inspire

them in developing and achieving the team's goals to meet that mission.

Steve Patorno
Operations

... is assigned many faces and yet we still cannot teach it to someone. The characteristics of a good leader have been qualified and attempts have been made to match prospective candidates to a set of leadership qualities. However, what leadership actually is still evades us. We know a leader when we see one, but we cannot find one when the need arises. The need brings out the leader. It is this need that defines the leadership qualities required. And needs change.

History is replete with people who have led well when the situation demanded, but faded into obscurity when their job was complete. I consider these events an example of the fluid nature of leadership. The qualities these people had was

“It’s an ability to direct others toward a difficult task and have them actually look forward to the opportunity.”

clarity of purpose, a definable goal and the trust of followers. But the leadership quality we seek, the one that is most difficult to define, is that ability to direct others toward a difficult

task and have them actually look forward to the opportunity. True leaders inspire those who choose to follow. It is a charismatic talent that these individuals have that creates the fertile environment necessary for the success of an operation.

In summary, no survey, physiological exam or interview will guarantee a leader has been chosen. Leadership can be studied but not taught. Its characteristics can be identified only after they have been exhibited, not before. A leader can motivate an individual, but an individual cannot be motivated to become a leader. The quality of leadership is like any other natural ability. You know when you see it and not everyone has it.

Barry Obiol
Operations

... is sometimes difficult to attribute to one person, because when effective leadership occurs you can't always identify the true leader. Leadership merges with empowerment and you

create an equilibrium that feels natural.

*Well could he ride, and often men would say,
“That horse his mettle from his rider takes:
Proud of subjection, noble by the sway,
What rounds, what bounds, what course, and
what stop he makes!”*

*And controversy hence a question takes,
Whether the horse by him became his deed,
Or he his manage by the well-doing steed.*

—William Shakespeare, *A Lover's Complaint* (1609)

James Addison
Public Affairs



Seating solutions aid posture, ease back pain

stays in one position, the diffusion process is mostly blocked, starving the cells that build proteoglycan. After a few hours of “just sitting there,” you experience discomfort, exhaustion and loss of mobility.

After repeated episodes, your body becomes frail, less able to support itself and less able to cope with the pressures put on it when you stand and move, and soon you get what is officially-termed “mechanical low back pain” (MLBP). It is widespread and responsible for more time-off-work than any other condition, and pain—sometimes immobilizing—is its primary symptom. While most episodes of MLBP settle within six weeks regardless of treatment, there is a 60 to 80 percent recurrence rate. About one tenth of cases of acute MLBP do not resolve and are at risk of becoming chronic pain conditions.

So what can you do about it? Exercise, stretch breaks and walking are the best ways to avoid problems during the workday. One employee says she combats trouble by making sure just to keep changing positions during the day. But since you can’t walk away from the desk permanently without retiring, there are some space-age seating options that can help while you aren’t standing. They take a little getting used to, but they should improve posture, aid greater movement, give you a surprising increase in energy during the day and can make a tremendous difference between back pain or comfort, possibly for life.

Back FAQs

❑ Loss of spinal disc hydration, caused especially by insufficient spinal mobility, is one of the chief factors affecting lower back pain.

❑ Spine problems are often caused by long-term bad body posture—mostly incorrect, static seating posture.

❑ Ten million people are off work daily in the United States due to back pain.

❑ The incidence rate of low back pain in sedentary workers is the same as in those doing heavy labor.

1) **The Swopper** encourages spinal movement while sitting because the seat is mounted, basically, on a large spring. One report said it feels like levitating. It swivels, it bounces, it bends from side to side. It’s fully adjustable, and it looks really cool. Of all, it seems to be the most highly recommended by medical professionals. It might make your wallet spin first, though, since it sells for about \$600.



2) **Kneeling chairs** have been around for a while. They encourage proper spinal posture by forcing the user to sit with legs bent and lumbar region thrust slightly forward. Some say they are also easier to move around in, but they aren’t for users with knee problems. They

are best used in combination with a typical chair, switching between the two as comfort dictates. Some of these chairs come with Tempur-Pedic foam for added comfort. They sell for between \$100-\$500.

3) **The Swiss Ergo chair** touts itself as the best in comfort and healthy simplicity. It’s an egg-shaped balloon mounted securely on a rolling frame. The flexibility and shape of the balloon encourages spinal movement and proper posture. Frame and balloon sell for around \$200.



4) The Capisco Saddle

chair is sold as the most ergonomically adjustable chair on the market. It can support either a seated or half-standing position, or whatever “dynamic” position is desired. The design is based on—guess what—a horse saddle, with the idea that a horse rider is the most active and healthiest sitter. Oops, there goes your wallet again—this chair also costs about \$600.



5) For those of you who can't spring for a Swopper or one of the other choices, there's a cheap and practical alternative to the alternatives: **a fitness ball.** They can be bought at most local exercise stores in different sizes, and provide most of the benefits as the



more expensive options, including encouragement of proper posture and spinal movement while seated. They sell for as low as \$25 and go up to \$85 for the “indestructible” versions. See the chart below for sizing.

Ball sizing chart

Ball Diameter	User Height
30 cm. (14 inches)	children 1-2 years old
42 cm. (16 inches)	4'10" tall
53 cm. (21 inches)	4'11" to 5'4" tall
65 cm. (25 inches)	5'5" to 5'11" tall
75 cm. (29 inches)	6' tall

Any one of these chairs might gain you infamy in the office. But for the benefits to your back, it's probably worth it.

Editor's note: shortly before this issue went to press, we were informed that certain types of chairs might be disallowed for safety and legal concerns. More on what is and isn't allowed in the next issue.

For more information, see www.postureball.com, www.bodytrends.com, www.spine-health.com and www.kneelsit.com.

Safe seating tips

By Susan Mabry

I have experienced major pain in my right arm, and someone said that it was because of repetitive motion since she experienced it while working in a factory. I researched and found out that more aches, pains and injuries are being linked to computer use. Like most of the people at the district, I sit at my computer a lot. I am hunched over the computer from the minute I get to work until the minute I leave. No wonder my back and neck always bother me at night. Studies show that using the computer at least three hours a day is enough to raise our risk of back and neck problems, as well as repetitive injuries. Doctors have found sitting at a computer can sometimes cause blood clots to form in the legs. The good news is that there are easy ways to reduce these risks. Just getting up and walking around helps ease the tension. I personally try to walk to my co-worker's area instead of using the phone. It helps me relieve some of the neck and back strain. Studies show that drinking orange juice helps prevent and reduce symptoms of repetitive stress injuries. Vitamin C spurs the synthesis of new collagen in cartilage, preventing certain enzymes from attacking the bones, and stimulates the formation of anti-inflammatory hormones that builds healthy joints. So, if you don't like orange juice you can take vitamin C. Here are some tips that helped me:

- Standing up, even for 15 seconds, decreases the stress on the spine.
- Change the position of the telephone.
- Periodically change the position of the mouse, keyboard and monitor to help counteract repetitive stress injury.
- Ensure that you don't make the same motions and use the same muscles over and over again.
- Practice keyboard functions instead of using the mouse constantly.

I hope that these helpful hints will be useful to many people at work.

Around the District

Congratulations

to **Patricia Broussard** (ED), whose daughter, Bria Monique, was student of the month for November at Jean Gordon Elementary and excelled on her report for the first quarter of the new school year.

to **Randy Marchiafava** (SB), the new deputy for Small Business.

to **Gretchen Hammond** (ED), who passed the professional engineering exam on her first attempt and became a licensed PE on Jan. 6.



Lane Lefort

Deanna Walker (RE) is the new vice president of the local chapter of the International Right of Way. The association is dedicated to the advancement and education of right-of-way and land acquisition professionals.

to **Mary** (OD) and **Mike Horn** (ED) on the birth of their granddaughter Isabelle Marie McLeod on Dec. 29.

to **Bonnie** and **Barry Obiol** (OD) on the birth of their grandson Christopher Patrick West on Jan. 9.

to **Sally Fromherz** (WCSC), on receiving the fourth quarter 2003 Peer Recognition Award.

To **Scott Riecke** (IM), whose

stepson, Eric, represented Import Tuner magazine with one of his cars at the World on Wheels. He was awarded Best of Class and Street Achievement Award for Best Import/Import Tuner.

to **Kitty Miller** (EX), who was selected to be the executive secretary to the commander and deputy.

to **Lindsay** (EO) and **Scott Denneau** (CD), who were married on Dec. 27.

to **Bruce Terrell** (CD), who is the new chief of Construction Division.

to **LTC Stephen E. Jeselink** on his promotion.

to **Ralph Guy** (OD) on his promotion to lockmaster at Harvey Lock

to **Tracy** (OD) and **Sid Falk** (ED), who traveled to Rome in November to meet Sean and Lori Brunet, who have been living in Germany for the past four years. Sean is a district employee currently serving a five-year tour in Darmstadt. Lori recently had a daughter, Claire Elizabeth, born April 23, and the family asked that Sid be the godfather, prompting the trip.

Civilian employees scheduled for deployment to Iraq are debriefed on Jan 20. Twenty-two civilians have been deployed, 12 are currently in Iraq and three more are scheduled to go before April.



Farewell

to **James Flock** (ED), who retired on Jan. 3 with over 37 years of service.

to **Frank Gagliano** (ED), who retired on Jan. 3 after nearly 39 years of service.

to **Judy Smith** (HR), who retired on Jan. 3 after 32 years of service.



Lane Lefort



Lane Lefort

The P2 Cuties dance team open the inaugural episode of "P2 Survivor" in the DARM on Jan. 29. Right to left: LaToya Davis, Keiara Phillips and Eprsy Livas. Future installments of this lively briefing will be held in March.

to the family of **Bill Cavitt** (retired, PMD), who passed away on Dec. 14.

to **Jim Barr** (CT), whose brother, **Louis Barr** (retired, CD), passed away on Feb. 8.

to **Jackie Eli** (RE), whose mother, Gladys Gray, passed away Feb. 5.

Kudos

to **Joan Excnicios** (PM), who was a guest speaker at the Plaquemines Historic Association meeting last

month where she

talked about the history of Fort St. Mary and the English Turn Levee Enlargement Project.

to **Jack Fredine** (PM), manager of the Davis Pond Freshwater Diversion Project, who spoke at the St. Charles Rotary Club's meeting on Jan. 7.

to **Brian Oberlies** (OD), who helped rescue Sara Whitcomb Johnson, 73, after her Jeep flipped over into the water in the Florida Keys. Oberlies and his friend, Billy Thomas, were in the area for a fishing trip and saw a Jeep careen off the cliff.

They jumped in after the car, under four feet of water. "I felt around and felt this head," said Oberlies, "then the woman put her hands on my hands, and I knew she was alive." They pulled Johnson out, and aside from swallowing some "salt water and small critters," according to her husband, she's doing fine. The fishing trip was a success, too, Oberlies said.

to all **Operations team members** who participated in the holiday Adopt-A-Soldier campaign. Twenty-eight packages were shipped to soldiers in Afghanistan and Iraq. Special thanks to **Donna Lachin** (OD) and **Jessica Boone** (OD) who packed and wrapped.

to the five employees at Calcasieu Lock who quit smoking last year to make their environment smoke-free for all the workers.

Condolences

to **Veneta Mays** (ED), whose father, Howard Sylvie Sr., passed away on Jan. 3.

to **Margie Rankin** (CD), whose brother, Christopher Ranlett, passed away on Feb. 1.

to **Mike Sanchez** (ED), whose father, passed away on Dec. 23.

to **Jennie Ebanks** (RM), whose mother, Rosaly Ebanks, passed away on Dec. 13.

to **John G. Fogarty** (CD), whose father, John G. Fogarty Sr., passed away on Dec. 21.

to **Maurice** (CD) and **Michael Ducarpe** (OD), whose father, Maurice J. Ducarpe Jr., passed away on Dec. 20.

to **Ronald Lawrence** (ED), whose father, Harold J. Lawrence, passed away on Dec. 13.



Michael Maples

Col. Charles Everhardt (CD) and his family celebrate his retirement from the Army Reserves on Jan. 13 after 30 years of service. Everhardt served as deputy chief of staff for Engineer, U.S. Army Special Operations Command, Ft. Bragg, N.C.

Alternative seating for a mobile and healthy spine

By Eric Lincoln

Do you feel exhausted at the end of the workday, then wonder why because all you did was sit all day?

Did you know it's a medically proven fact that sitting at a desk job all day can be as debilitating to your back as jobs that require heavy lifting?

It's no wonder a lot of office workers have complaints about back pain.

The main problem? Sitting in a chair does not encourage movement. It also creates great stress on the lower back because the lumbosacral, or lower, spinal discs are loaded three times more than standing.

And even though you may go to the gym regularly, it's likely you are only exercising major muscles. The smaller, deeper muscles are weaker, and an imbalance is being created.

Good seating posture dictates that the spine stay in roughly the same alignment as when you stand. So what about using a well designed, "typical" ergonomic chair for support? Certainly, at least in

some of these chairs, when you have them adjusted properly, your spine can be held in correct alignment. The problem is there is still very little movement permitted and certainly no encouragement to move.

Ultimately, though you may be able to sit "properly" for 10 minutes, the muscles will become tired and your spine will slump. Then you stay in this distorted position for hours, placing unusual pressures on the discs in between each vertebra and on the ligaments and muscles supporting the spine. It follows that the muscles—particularly the small, deep-trunk muscles—weaken and offer less support over time.

Spinal discs are made of about 85 percent water. The primary way the discs receive nourishment is when the spine is in motion.



Lane Lefort

While doing the research for this article, the editor decided to give alternative seating a try by sitting on a fitness ball instead of his chair. After one day, he noticed an increase in energy level and decrease in back pain. Two weeks later, he still prefers the ball over the old chair.

Fluids that bring in oxygen and build proteoglycan, a special lubricant for the spine, normally flow freely through the discs during movement. But when the spine

See **SPINE**, page 16

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