



# Open Channels

## MVD prepares for summer safety, extends "Take 5 for Safety" program

By MVD Public Affairs Office

Five seconds, five minutes.

That's how much time the Mississippi Valley Division is encouraging Soldiers, Civilians and family members to take to think things through in order to help protect themselves, their family and co-workers against mishaps. Just a short time spent assessing the situation, can allow you to make a smart choice that could save lives.

In preparation for warm weather months, MVD has extended its "Take 5 for Safety" program to the 2012 Spring and Summer Safety Campaign.

### Take 5 for Safety Campaign

Army records show off-duty

fatalities between April and September have risen nearly 20 percent during the past three years, a trend that can't be curbed without help. That's why the Army has prepared a toolkit that includes posters, videos and informative articles and is available at <https://safety.army.mil>. The tools and articles in this year's Army Safe Spring/Summer campaign may be used to raise awareness of common seasonal hazards. For example, the summer driving toolkit materials note:

- The vast majority of serious road mishaps occur between the beginning of April and Labor Day.
- Speeding, non-use of seat belts and protective equipment, and drinking and driving are the predominant factors in vehicle and motorcycle mishaps.
- The same principles hold true for water-related activities, where life jackets save lives.

### Workplace Safety

- This is also the busiest season for construction, operations and maintenance, and recreational visitation activities—which means there are more distractions and more mishaps.
- USACE has a nationally recognized written process for incident prevention that includes safety plans and activity hazard analyses—but it only works if we and our contractors use it.



- The HQUSACE Safety Office has High Hazard Working Groups to provide assistance and information on several work areas that produce the worst mishaps—especially in crane/hoist operations and fall protection. Visit the [Safety Office web page](#) for information and tools for success in these areas and many others.

### Safe Recreation

- Before participating in sports or recreation activities, conduct an honest evaluation of your fitness; stretch or build up stamina through exercise before you go "all out."
- Keep an eye on the heat and be prepared: plan on taking breaks, drink plenty of water when it's hot and always apply sunscreen with a sun protection factor of at least 30 a good 15 minutes before heading out into the sun.
- Learn the signs of storms and severe weather and always have a shelter in mind should you need it.

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## Around the Bend



**Maj. Gen. John W. Peabody**  
Commander  
Mississippi Valley Division  
President-nominee  
Mississippi River Commission

MVD Team,

The months of May and June this year are marked by preparations and transitions for USACE ... preparations for key events, like the MVD annual senior leader conference, the annual budget development submittal and the Rock Island District change of command (and summer vacation for most of us) ... and transitions among most senior leaders in USACE. Last week LTG Tom Bostick assumed command of the Corps and became the 53rd Chief of Engineers. Next week CMS Buxbaum will retire and be replaced by CSM Karl Groninger. On June 11th, MG Bo Temple will retire following 37 years of active

Army service. MG Todd Semonite will replace him, and MG Ken Cox became the Deputy CG for Military and Contingency Operations in late April.

While this two-month period is an especially busy one, in reality, preparations for key events and major transitions are constantly occurring, evidence of the incessant drumbeat of change. If we prepare for change properly, we can be ready for key events and execute them well. But if we only focus on the “urgent” issues that dominate our calendar -- issues which seem far more pressing today thanks to the constant dings, bells and buzzes to distract our attention toward the “electronic leashes” that enable instant communications -- then we are likely to fail to anticipate critical “unscheduled” transitions, and be left wondering how the world passed us by.

It is the major change trends that are most important in life, yet these major trends are usually quite difficult to discern, as many of them happen slowly or even imperceptibly over many years. They can include major market shifts, commodity scarcities or plenitude, housing or technology bubbles, the build-up of risky credit innovations or burdensome national debt loads, shifting international alliances or the slow decay of transportation infrastructure. And there is no electronic reminder to herald their arrival or indicate the

changes they will bring.

I visited both the Vicksburg and St. Louis Districts this month, and will complete my district visits in the near future. All of the time with the districts has been a wonderful opportunity to meet some of the expert and dedicated professionals who deliver quality outcomes for the Corps of Engineers, which is always energizing! But equally important, these visits have helped me understand critical details and nuances associated with the challenging issues we face. Information from the districts helps me move beyond merely understanding our issues and challenges, to visualizing the changes we must take on, and then deciding where to prioritize energy to influence change, and finally directing actions to carry out the needed change.

I am especially focused on executing repairs to damages from the Flood of 2011 with the supplemental funds made available, but also to advancing the Corps’ Civil Works Transformation - an initiative that is central to MVD. The flood repair work is equivalent to the “urgent” scheduled items on our calendar, but Civil Works Transformation is tantamount to the hugely “important” preparations for big changes that we must take if we are to have any hope of shaping and responding to future changes.

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The visits to the districts confirmed the criticality of focusing attention on all aspects of our O&M systems, where we spend around three quarters of the Corps budget. My key take-away is that we must focus significant energy on evaluating and perhaps changing the way we conduct operations over our projects, from the integration of asset management and FEM, to the way we are organized and how we budget and manage our limited resources. The budget pie will not grow larger under this nation's current fiscal situation, so we must ensure we are maximizing efficiencies and optimizing effectiveness. In short, we must reduce requirements and eliminate redundancies. We can only achieve this if we take a "no-holds" look at how we operate and attempt to re-imagine how we would re-invent operations if we could start from

scratch all over again. MVD senior leaders will be -focusing energy on this issue at the upcoming Senior Leader Training Conference, and then integrating this into our Implementation Plan.

In the end, there are only two types of organizations in the world... those that are assessing, adapting and improving ... and those that are rigid, stagnant and dying. Because change is a constant, there are just no other kinds of organizations that exist. We need to ask ourselves, "What will our legacy be?" ... and then firmly commit to making sure it is a legacy we can be proud of, where we are committed to tackling the tough problems and making a positive and lasting difference.

Essays! ... and Building Strong!



Hal Graef, project manager with St. Louis District U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, describes the Navigation and Ecosystem Restoration Program to Maj. Gen. John Peabody, Mississippi Valley Division Commander, during a visit to Lock and Dam 27 on the Mississippi River.



MG John W. Peabody recently visited the Vicksburg District to conduct site visits of significant projects, including the Albermarle/Buck Chute/Steel Bayou and the Quachita/Black Lock & Dam. As part of this visit, MG Peabody (standing, left) addressed a Town Hall meeting at the district and presented special awards to district employees.



# MVD announces winners of USACE's Kassner and Mouton/Robinson/Ruffenach Public Affairs Competitions

By Pamela Harrion  
MVD Public Affairs

The Mississippi Valley Division is proud to announce the winners of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers' annual public affairs contests, the Herbert A. Kassner Journalism Competition and the Mouton/Robinson/Ruffenach Competition.

The Kassner Journalism annual competition is named for Herb Kassner, the Public Affairs Officer of the Lower Mississippi Valley Division (predecessor of the present MVD) in the 1980s. Judging for this year's competition took place Feb. 8, 2012, in USACE Headquarters.

The first place winners will receive the Golden Quill Award and a letter signed by MG Bo Temple. Their entries have also been submitted to compete in the Department of the Army's Keith L. Ware Public Affairs Competition. Second and third place winners and honorable mentions will receive a certificate and letter signed by the Chief of Public Affairs.

The Locke L. Mouton Award honors individual Corps of Engineers public affairs practitioners for superior achievement. It is intended to promote outstanding efforts in public affairs activities. Individuals demonstrating superior public affairs skills are recognized in four categories: (1) Media Relations and Public Information, (2) Community Relations, (3) Command Information and (4) Emergency/Disaster Response. The Michael C. Robinson Award recognizes the year's top public affairs practitioner and is



Maj. Gen. John Peabody (left), Mississippi Valley Division Commander, and Col. Chris Hall (right), St. Louis District Commander, presented the U.S. Army Corps of Engineer's Herbert A. Kassner Civilian Journalist of the Year award to Romanda Walker at the Riverlands Audubon Center. The Civilian Journalist of the Year award recognizes outstanding print journalism across all U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Public Affairs specialists. Photo by St. Louis District.

chosen from the entrants for the Mouton competition.

The Ronald J. Ruffennach Communicator of the Year Award recognizes a member of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers outside of the public affairs career field for his/her outstanding contributions in communicating the USACE missions and programs.

All winners will receive a custom-designed award and a letter signed by the Chief of Engineers. In addition, the Michael C. Robinson Practitioner of the Year and the Ronald J. Ruffenach Communicator of the Year will be recognized at the Summer Leaders Conference.

The 2011 Kassner award recipients are:

### St. Paul District

- *Crosscurrents* - 2nd place in Print,

Category C, Magazines;

- *Cold, snow just part of the job at Lock and Dam 10 Dewatering* (Patrick Moes) - 2nd place in Print, Category P, Photojournalism;
- *Rowing helps employee gain focus, team work* (Tammy Wick) - 3rd place in Print, Category U, Contribution by a Stringer (Photojournalism).

### St. Louis District

- *Social Media in Emergency Response* - 2nd place in Print, Category F, Outstanding Initiatives in New Media;
- *St. Louis Gateway* - 2nd place in Print, Category H, Websites;
- *Teaching an old dredge new tricks* (Romanda Walker) - Honorable Mention in Print, Category J, News Features;
- *Hunters with disabilities hunt for deer, find friends* (Romanda Walker) - 2nd place in Print, Category N, Sports;
- *Romanda Walker* - 1st place in Print, Category X, Civilian Journalist of the Year;
- *Dredge Potter Open House* (Romanda Walker) - 2nd place in Broadcast, Category I, Television Spot Production;
- *Mary Markos* - 2nd place in Community Relations, Category A, Individual Achievement; and
- *St. Louis STEM Outreach Program* - Honorable Mention in Community Relations, Category B, Program.

### Memphis District

- *Afghans in formation* (Brenda Beasley, Afghanistan Engineer District South) - 2nd place in Print, Category S, Deployed Photo

*(Continued to page 5)*





## Eddie Belk selected to the Senior Executive Service

By Pam Vedros  
MVD Public Affairs Office

Mr. Edward E. Belk was recently selected by the Secretary of the Army as the newest member of the federal government's Senior Executive Service. The Senior Executive Service is the civilian equivalent to the military rank of General Officer.

As a result of his SES appointment, Mr. Belk will serve as Programs Director for the Mississippi Valley Division, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, and the Mississippi River Commission. In this position he will serve as the principal advisor to the MVD Commander and MRC President on the programs, planning and project management activities in the division's six district offices spanning the Mississippi River from Canada to the Gulf of Mexico.

SES leaders possess well-honed executive skills and share a broad perspective of government and a public service commitment which is grounded in the Constitution. Members of the SES serve in key positions just below the top Presidential appointees and are the major link between these appointees and the



Eddie Belk

rest of the federal work force.

Prior to his current assignment, Mr. Belk was the Deputy Director of Regional Business and the Deputy Director of Programs for MVD. Before moving to MVD, Mr. Belk served as the Deputy District Engineer for Project Management in the Memphis District. He completed two tours in Iraq as the Deputy for Project Management at Gulf Region North District in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom. He was also assigned to help stand up the Hurricane Protection Office in New Orleans in support of the overall Corps response

to Hurricanes Katrina and Rita. Other previous assignments include Chief of Project Development Branch, Chief of River Engineering and Executive Assistant to the commander in the Memphis District.

Prior to joining the Corps, Mr. Belk worked in the private sector with engineering consulting firms in both Memphis, Tenn., and Little Rock, Ark.

Mr. Belk is a native of Southaven, Miss., and graduate of Christian Brothers University, where he earned a bachelor's degree in civil engineering in 1984 and a master's degree in engineering management in 1991. He is also a 1999 graduate of the Army Management Staff College at Fort Belvoir, Va.

He is a licensed professional engineer in the state of Mississippi; a past president and director of the Society of American Military Engineers, Memphis Post; and a member of Tau Beta Pi, the national engineering honors organization.

He is married and has three children.

## MVD announces winners of USACE's "Kassner" and "Mouton/Robinson/Ruffenach" Competitions (continued from page 4)

tograph.

### New Orleans District

- *Strengthening Community Relations During an Emergency* - 2nd place in Community Relations, Category B, Program.

- Locke L. Mouton Award for Excellence (Media Relations & Public Information): Shannon Bauer, St. Paul District, Public Affairs Chief with assistance from Patrick Moes and Jeff DeZellar;
- Locke L. Mouton Award for Excellence (Emergency Response/ Disaster Response): Ken Holder,

New Orleans District, (Public Affairs Chief); and

- Michael C. Robinson Practitioner of the Year: Ken Holder, New Orleans District, Public Affairs Chief.

The 2011 Mouton/Robinson/Ruffenach award recipients are:

Congratulations to all of the award winners!



## Corps of Engineers awards major contract to repair floodway levee

By James Pogue  
Memphis District

The Memphis District, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, today awarded a Multiple Award Task Order Contract (MATOC) for repairs to the Birds Point-New Madrid frontline levee to three firms: Young's General Contracting, of Poplar Bluff, Mo.; Kingridge Enterprises, Inc., of Little Rock, Ark.; and Harold Coffey Construction Co., of Hickman, Ky. The total contract amount is not to exceed \$20 million.

"This is the first significant step in restoring the confluence area and the Birds Point-New Madrid Floodway from the damages incurred from the historical flood of 2011," Col. Vernie Reichling, the Corps' Memphis District commander said on Wednesday. "Our team, made up of our partners in Missouri and in the Memphis District,

To watch a video of the removal of the HESCO bastions at the Birds Point-New Madrid Floodway, you may visit the following YouTube link:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=40-FJXBD4FE&feature=youtu.be>

has worked diligently to set the conditions for an excellent construction season this year."

"But this is only the first step," Col. Reichling went on to say. "We plan on awarding several contracts this year to repair damages in Kentucky and Illinois."

Task Order No. 1 for repairs to the upper crevasse was awarded to Young's General Contracting for \$2,438,963. This task order addresses permanent repairs and will provide a full levee cross-section at a level of protection equivalent to 55 feet on the Cairo (Illinois) gage.

Additional task orders will provide for the completion of remaining work at all three crevasses to fully restore the floodway frontline levee to its original condition prior to activation in May 2011.

Work to restore the Birds Point-New Madrid frontline levee is one part of the comprehensive repairs taking place in the confluence area where the Mississippi and Ohio rivers converge. Work is also in progress or planned for locations in and around Cairo, Ill., and in Fulton County, Ky.

As always, public safety remains the number one priority for the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers.

## MVD's website will migrate by end of 2012

By MVD Public Affairs

MVD's website, along with all other U.S. Army Corps of Engineers websites across the nation, will soon have a new appearance.

By the end of 2012, USACE will migrate their main public websites to the American Forces Public Information Management System, a content management system run by the Defense Media Activity, in order to create a consistent look and feel, streamline the content management process and deliver a richer end-user experience.



MVD's website will soon look identical to USACE HQ's new website at <http://www.usace.army.mil/>.

This transition will include MVD's completion of required content provider training, and subsequently, working with the Defense Media Activity to migrate content on its current sites to the new platform. DMA is the Corps headquarters' contracted web team.

The migration will involve uploading files and documents, copying and pasting text from the legacy site, building web pages and setting up all necessary modules for functionality and content.



## Stewart presented Regulator of the Year award

By Kavanaugh Breazeale  
Vicksburg District

Mike Stewart, senior environmental specialist, was recently presented the prestigious Larry N. Harper “Regulator of the Year” award for his outstanding service to the Vicksburg District regulatory team. The Larry N. Harper “Regulator of the Year” award is presented during Earth Day in recognition of the regulatory team’s efforts designed to preserve the environment.

The first annual Larry N. Harper award was presented in 2008 as a means of celebrating Earth Day and honoring a highly respected former member of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers regulatory team. The award recognizes the regulator that exemplifies the Army values of loyalty, duty, respect, selfless service, honor, integrity and personal courage.



Mike Stewart

Stewart graduated from Warren Central High School and received his bachelor’s and master’s degrees in biology from the University of Southern Mississippi.

The Vicksburg District regulatory team continues to work daily to assure that the nation’s aquatic resources are protected, while allowing reasonable development through fair, flexible and balanced permit decisions. Every year, the Vicksburg District regulatory team reviews thousands of requests for jurisdictional determinations and subsequent permit applications under Section 404 of the Clean Water Act and Section 10 of the Rivers and Harbors Act of 1899.

## Crystal, Minn., resident receives national Corps of Engineers award

By Patrick Moes  
St. Paul District

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Headquarters, recently selected St. Paul District employee Adèle Braun as the recipient of its inaugural 2012 Value Engineering “Rising Star” Award.

The award was established to recognize the significant accomplishments of an individual who is new to the value engineering community. It is given to the Corps professional whose contributions to the value engineering program are not only exceptional in their first few years, but show the dedication and drive to deliver the highest value to customers.

“This award is validation for the creative value engineering planning efforts that we have given the projects in the St Paul District,” said Braun. “My goal for the [value



Adèle Braun

engineering] program is to create a program where project managers see the value of utilizing the [value engineering] methodology.”

“Adèle has put a lot of hard work into the district’s value engineering program since she took on the role,” said Michael Dahlquist, Braun’s supervisor. “With an emphasis on enhancing the vitality and credibility of value engineering in the district, she has taken an innovative approach to the implantation of the value engineering program during a period when the laws and regulations surrounding value engineering were undergoing significant change.”

Braun, a Crystal, Minn., resident, has served as the value engineering officer for the St. Paul District for more than one year. During her tenure, she led the Fargo, N.D.,-Moorhead, Minn., Metropolitan Area Flood Risk Mitigation Project value engineering team, whose goal was to increase the value to the proposed Red River of the North diversion project.





## ***MVD Regional Logistics presents certificate of achievement to Memphis District's Transportation Assistance Team***



MVD Regional Logistics Manager Harold Riley Jr. (left) presented a certificate of achievement to MVN Transportation Tech Mark Goff (right) on behalf of the Memphis District Transportation Assistance Team and Lead Alfred Williams in their efforts to right size the GSA fleet with alternative vehicles; this team has been instrumental in moving Memphis District in the right direction to improve fleet performance. Their aggressive approach in providing the commander and staff with recommendations of alternative ways to increase the district utilization rate has been outstanding. The mileage use increased, and the fuel consumption dropped 13,493 gallons, due to the right sizing of the fleet with alternative vehicles. With fuel costs on the rise, there is a fairly good savings with this. Great job, Alfred and the Transportation Team!

## ***MVD EEO Training for Non-Supervisors***



Dr. Ann Bargains (standing, right), USACE EEO and Chief, MVD EEO, presented "EEO Training for Non-Supervisors" to MVD staff on May 3, 2012. Topics covered during the training included equal employment opportunity, age discrimination, the process for complaints, reasonable accommodation, harassment, alternative dispute resolution (ADR), etc.





## Welcome Aboard!



**Gabe Harris**

Rock Island District Program Manager for the Upper District Support Team

Although born an Army brat in Ft. Benning, Ga., I was raised in Vicksburg and call it home. I am a second-generation Corps employee and started my career with the Vicksburg District as a civil engineer in the Engineering and Construction Division. After years of design experience, I moved over to

ter's degree in Management Systems Engineering. In addition, I am a registered Professional Engineer in the State of Mississippi.

In my spare time I enjoy canine training and working on my three sport cars, which include a 1992 and 1998 Mustang and a 1989 Camaro.

I am married to the former Andrea Johnson, and we've been blessed with three kids. Emily (age 7) keeps us busy with dance, piano and tennis, and the twins (age 4) Sam and Charlie keep us busy just being themselves.

the Programs and Project Management Division as a project manager on several teams with the most recent being Delta Headwaters and Section 592. I am happy to join the division as the Rock Island Program Manager on the Upper District Support Team.

I am a graduate of Mississippi State University with a bachelor's degree in Civil Engineering, Alcorn State University with a bachelor's degree in Mathematics and Mississippi State University with a mas-

If you have a new employee in your office, or if you ARE a new employee to the Mississippi Valley Division, please contact the Public Affairs Office at 634-7729, so that we can introduce you to everyone in Open Channels.

## 'MyBiz' is cool employee tool on DCPAS website

By MVD Public Affairs

Need to send your employment information securely to a business or a bank in order to get that home loan processed in a hurry?

Well, there is a cool employee tool located on the Department of Defense's DCPAS (Defense Civilian Personnel Advisory Service) website that is sure to get that process rolling.



to access their DCPAS employment-related information and submit this information to an external organization such as a business or a bank directly from DCPAS. This information is sent in an email via a secure internet connection.

To access "MyBiz," you must log

The Self Service Employee "MyBiz" module provides DoD employees the ability

into the DCPAS Portal. After successfully accessing your region via the DCPAS Portal, the "MyBiz" home page displays. Selecting the "MyBiz" link will open the "Functions" menu of available tasks.

A self service user guide on how to access "MyBiz" is available at the following link: [http://www.cpms.osd.mil/hrbits/selfservice/selfservice\\_userguide.aspx](http://www.cpms.osd.mil/hrbits/selfservice/selfservice_userguide.aspx). You can also log into CPOL at <http://cpol.army.mil> to access this information as well.



## Around the Division



MG Peabody (right) presented MVD Management Analyst Diane Bailey (left) with a Commander's Award for Civilian Service during her farewell ceremony, held May 18, 2012. Bailey was employed with MVD since October 2008. She transferred to the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Little Rock District.



Leah Norris, MVD Chief of Operations Dennis Norris' wife, recently won several arts awards (pictured above) at the Vicksburg Art Association's art competition held recently. Norris won 1st place in Drawing and Best in Show-3rd place in Drawing for her piece titled "On the Phone." Norris also won 1st place in 3-Dimensional and Best in Show-2nd place in 3-D for her piece titled "Cultivator."

## Open Channels

U.S. Army Corps of Engineers  
Mississippi Valley Division



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Maj. Gen. John W.  
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### Museum and Riverfront Interpretive Center nearing completion

By Kavanaugh Breazeale  
Vicksburg District

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Vicksburg District's construction of the Lower Mississippi River Museum and Riverfront Interpretive Center is nearing completion. The museum will consist of a two-story, 20,000-square-foot building attached to the Motor Vessel *MISSISSIPPI*. The building will include a reception area, orientation theater, interactive displays and exhibits and a classroom/activity room.

Displays and exhibits inside the Motor Vessel *MISSISSIPPI* are scheduled to be completed approximately mid-July 2012. The Engineer



A 1550-gallon aquarium is being prepared for pets in the LMR Museum and Riverfront Interpretive Center.

Research and Development Center will construct a model of the Mississippi River that will interpret the stretch of the Mississippi River from Greenville to Vicksburg. The model will be located on the west side of the grounds of the museum building.

The museum will educate and inform visitors about the lower Mississippi River and its relationship to Vicksburg and the lower Mississippi Delta region. The museum opening date is scheduled for August 24, 2012.



Hurricane season officially runs from June 1 to Nov. 30 each year. For more information on how to prepare, you may visit <http://www.ready.gov/hurricanes> and <http://www.msema.org/preparation/hurricanes.html>.

## Did you know?

- The Mississippi River and Tributaries project has four major features: levees/floodwalls; tributary basin improvements; channel improvement and stabilization; and floodways.
- There are five flood risk management reservoirs in the tributary basin improvement plan: Wappello Lake in the St. Francis Basin, and four lakes—Arkabutla, Sardis, Enid and Grenada—in the Yazoo Basin.
- Some 3,727 miles of levees, including tributary levees, have been authorized for the Mississippi River and Tributaries and 3,477 miles are in place.