

SOUNDINGS



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Soundings

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COVER: District employees Bridget Rohn and Renee Thomas go on a lunchtime training run in downtown Detroit. As reported on page 3, Rohn, Thomas and three coworkers ran in a local relay race Oct. 21. (Photo by Tom Black)

Commander's Column

Team Detroit, I recently passed the 90-day mark in command. I have received all section in-briefs, travelled to the majority of our various locations and submitted a 90-day assessment to our new Chief of Engineers, Lt. Gen. Thomas Bostick. I will repeat the statement I made in the summer edition of *Soundings*: "I am impressed by the professionalism, talent and dedication of the employees of the district."



Lt. Col. Robert J. Ells

Although I've talked about my priorities in a number of settings, sharing them during in-briefs and visits to area offices, let me reiterate what is important as we go about our business of maintaining the Great Lakes Navigation System.

People – This is the absolute foundation for all we do and I see it falling into these major functions: Hiring – Get the most qualified individuals on the team; Training – Provide the training required for our folks to do their jobs; Succession Planning – Develop plans to ensure we have leaders for the future; and Recognition – Acknowledge excellence and encourage others to excel.

Project Management – This is why we exist – to deliver projects that help the nation. As a project-funded organization, if we don't get this right, we won't be relevant. This means everything from initial planning to construction to operations and maintenance. We do this in these major areas: navigation, flood damage reduction, Interagency and International Support; and emergency management.

Relationships – The only way we will overcome challenges in the execution of our mission is if we have solid relationships built on open communication and trust. We owe this to our customers; stakeholders, elected officials and contractors.

Safety – Everything we do must be

done with safety in mind or we jeopardize the most important commodity we have – people. Safety covers all aspects of what we do on a daily basis and includes:

- Jobsite safety – Provide a safe work environment for our teammates and contractors;
- Off-duty safety – Enjoy your time off, but do it safely. We need you on the team;
- Visitor safety – Provide a safe experience for the public as they visit our facilities.

Overseas Contingency Operations – Our country still has a mission ongoing in Afghanistan and the need for volunteers to help with our massive



The Commander's Token lists priorities for the commander and district.

effort there will not go away in the near future.

- Volunteers – I will continue to encourage you all to consider how you can contribute;
- Support – We all have a role to support our deployed teammates and their families.

Complementing the priorities I have spelled out above are two documents I believe are of equal importance: the command philosophy-style document I shared and asked to be widely distributed, and the 90-day assessment we collaboratively developed.

If you have not seen both of these documents, speak with your supervisor. My intent is that everyone has a chance to read and understand these documents. Please let me know if you have questions.

Thanks for all of the incredible work you do on a daily basis. I am absolutely amazed at the talent we have within our ranks. Keep up the great work!

Employees compete as relay team in Detroit marathon

By Tom Black
Public Affairs Office

Teamwork is important in the workplace, and essential in a relay race.

On Sunday, Oct. 21, five Detroit District employees teamed up for a relay race at the 35th annual Detroit Free Press / Talmer Bank Marathon.

Finishing 94th out of 545 relay teams were Jim Tapp, chief, Operations & Technical Services; Bridget Rohn, biologist, Environmental Analysis Branch; Michael Herbon, civil engineer – construction, Detroit Arsenal Resident Office; Renee Thomas, civil engineer, Engineering & Technical Services; and Josh Hachey, mechanical engineer, Contract Administration.

As dawn broke, thousands of runners gathered in the cool air for the 7 a.m. start at Fort and Second streets.

“I was floored by the number of people,” said Rohn, who ran the first leg of the race. “I knew there was a high participation rate, but the starting line was crazy – a sea of people as far as you could see.”

Rohn said her spirits were buoyed by a “gorgeous” sunrise as she ran across the Ambassador Bridge to Windsor, Ontario on the first leg of the race. The sun stuck around for what would be a beautiful fall day with temperatures in the 60s.

Enthusiastic spectators displayed hand-made signs and provided musical entertainment along the way, making the race more enjoyable, Rohn said. Hachey took over for the second leg, joining the throng of runners in returning to the U.S. through the Windsor Tunnel.

The route headed west into Mexicantown, then east through Corktown. Herbon’s portion included running by the McNamara Building, then continuing east through Campus Martius and into Indian Village. Then Tapp took over, crossing the MacArthur Bridge to Belle Isle for a loop route and returning to the main-



photo by Tom Black

The Detroit District relay race team: from left, Jim Tapp, Bridget Rohn, Mike Herbon, Renee Thomas and Josh Hachey. The team finished 94th out of 535 entrants.

land. Thomas ran the final portion, heading west to the finish line at Fort and Second streets.

“Residents were very friendly in Indian Village,” Herbon said, noting many of them handed out sports drinks. Herbon finished his 6.7-mile section in 52 minutes, 36 seconds. “I was very pleased to beat my 8 minutes per mile goal,” he said.

Race participants each attached a tiny computer chip to their shoe laces to record their times. Electronic mats at the beginning and end of each race segment activate the chip, which collects and processes results for each runner.

Such precision is especially important in an event involving thousands of competitors, Thomas explained, since it can take a half hour or longer for runners to reach the starting line after the starting gun sounds.

All of the participants said they had a good time. “It was really fun and we’re going to try and do it again next year,” Thomas said.

Coast Guard inspects and tests Detroit Area Office oil boom



U.S. Coast Guard photo

The U.S. Coast Guard conducts a Sept. 25 exercise intended to ensure the integrity of the Detroit Area Office’s oil spill containment boom. Launching from a boat slip outside the Area Office, the Coast Guard deployed and inspected the oil boom in the Detroit River.

Detroit Boat Show set for Feb. 16-24, 2013

The 55th annual Detroit Boat Show is slated for Feb. 16-24 at Cobo Center.

The district will sponsor an exhibit to highlight the Corps’ role in supporting Great Lakes navigation, protecting the environment and promoting boating safety.

For information, contact Tom Black, 313-226-6750.

Channel expansion made Detroit River safer for mariners

Tom Black
Public Affairs Office

One hundred years ago, the Detroit District wrapped up an expansion and widening of the Livingstone Channel in the lower Detroit River, a key navigational passage leading into Lake Erie.

Between 1907 and 1912, a massive widening and deepening project took place in the 12-mile channel. Cofferdams were built to hold back the water, and dynamite was used



USACE Photo
The bottom of the Livingstone Channel, dewatered in this 1933 photo, features formidable bedrock and limestone formations.

to blast out bedrock and limestone. October 2012 was the 100-year anniversary of the opening of the channel following the expansion project.

Workers removed 9.5 million cubic yards of material, including 2.1 million tons of hard rock, said George Ryan, former president of the Cleveland-based Lake Carriers Association, LCA. The channel, which previously had a depth of about 13 feet, was deepened to a minimum of 22-23 feet and its width increased from 300 feet to a range of 450 to 800 feet. Livingstone serves as

a downbound channel, while the Amherstburg Channel, between Bois Blanc Island and the Canadian mainland, handles upbound traffic.

The LCA Annual Report of 1912 states the Livingstone project was “the largest and most expensive of any similar work ever undertaken by the United States within its boundaries.” The Corps undertook the \$6.7 million

project because of the Livingstone Channel’s treacherous reputation and heavy traffic load. Located west of Bois Blanc Island just north of Lake Erie, the passage was notorious for its tricky cross currents and fast-flowing, shallow water that caused trouble for mariners and sometimes delayed

shipping traffic.

“(Mariners) had to hug the Canadian shore in what is now the Amherstburg Channel,” said



Graphic courtesy of U.S. Geological Survey

The Livingstone Channel, in the lower Detroit River just north of Lake Erie, has been expanded several times to accommodate shipping.

David Bennion, a geographer with the Biology Division of the U.S. Geological Survey in Ann Arbor, Mich.

The Livingstone Channel underwent additional deepening and widening projects during the 1920s and 1930s.

Channel expansions plus infrastructure improvements to the Great Lakes Navigation System helped increase overall tonnage of goods shipped each year, Ryan said.



USACE Photo

A crane and drag line, which is attached to a dredging bucket, at work in a sump area of the Livingstone Channel. On the right side of this 1933 photo is a scow where dredged materials were placed and then pumped to the opposite side of the coffer dam.

Winter is here — take precautions against carbon monoxide

Winter is on its way, bringing with it a number of home safety challenges that may be met without interrupting the daily routine or incurring great expense.

In particular, pay attention to the threat of carbon monoxide poisoning, a risk that cannot be overstated.

It is a sad fact that this coming winter, hundreds of people will be sickened or killed by overexposure to carbon monoxide gas. And most victims don't realize they are being poisoned until it is too late.

Carbon monoxide is a colorless, tasteless and odorless gas that, when inhaled, diminishes the ability of red blood cells to carry oxygen to bodily tissues.

Carbon monoxide poisoning can present itself as an acute condition when high concentrations are inhaled in a short period of time, or as a chronic illness when lower concentrations are inhaled over time. Both acute and chronic cases of carbon monoxide poisoning may cause serious injury or death – primarily by damaging the heart and nervous system.

A rapid onset of dizziness, loss of coordination, red flushed skin, mental confusion, coma and even death can be symptoms of acute carbon monoxide poisoning. Chronic, or long-term, poisoning symptoms may be overlooked as being “the flu” or “holiday blues” with disastrous results. These symptoms often include headache, lassitude and moodiness, all of which seem to ease when the victim is physically away from the contaminated space.

Air pollution, cigarette smoke and industrial processes are major sources of carbon monoxide.

Around the home, carbon monoxide poisoning is often caused by heating systems having deteriorated heat exchangers or faulty flues or chimneys.

Blockages in chimneys, often caused by storm damage to chimney caps or nests made by birds and other animals, can prevent carbon monoxide from leaving a house. Clues to carbon monoxide entering a living area include excessive condensation on windows, a rank musty odor in the home and soot on household surfaces.

Anyone whose home is heated by natural gas or heating oil should have the heating system evaluated



Batteries of smoke detectors and carbon monoxide detectors should be replaced twice a year. An easy way to remember is to do it whenever Daylight Savings Time begins or ends.

It is a sad fact that this coming winter, hundreds of people will be sickened or killed by overexposure to carbon monoxide gas.

every autumn by a qualified professional.

Household carbon monoxide detectors are an important line of defense, and they require maintenance to ensure proper functioning. Remember to replace the batteries of smoke detectors and carbon monoxide detectors twice a year

– each time daylight savings time begins or ends and the clocks are changed. Each bedroom and the main living area should have a detector.

Automobiles also pose a carbon monoxide danger. Autumn is an excellent time to have a mechanic check the integrity of your vehicle's exhaust system. Tiny carbon

monoxide detectors about the size of a keychain are available to warn drivers and passengers of the presence of carbon monoxide.

Remember never to warm up your vehicle in a garage or car port, as carbon monoxide can enter the passenger compartment. Carbon monoxide poisoning is one of the most preventable of winter season tragedies. Being aware of it and taking the proper steps will help avert needless tragedy.

This article was provided by Pete Flanigan, Chicago District safety officer.

Looking ahead to quality activities in fiscal year 2013

We have made great progress in instilling a culture of quality throughout the Detroit District. The district's Quality Management System is a valuable resource for all employees to assist in the consistent and accurate application of business processes for all functional areas. To capitalize on the progress we have made and continue to advance our quality movement, I wanted to share with you our fiscal year 2013 quality initiatives.

In the first quarter of fiscal year 2013, the district will complete internal quality audits of selected processes. A total of 12 processes will be reviewed across functional lines. The regional quality team selected these processes, and all districts will review them. Your continued support and cooperation in completing these reviews is vital to the advancement of our Quality Management System.

Subsequent to the completion of the internal audits, the district will undergo an external review of key processes as part of the Great Lakes and Ohio River Division's ISO certification process. This audit is scheduled for the first week of March 2013 and plays an essential role in maintaining the division's ISO certification. While the emphasis for this review will be in the Operations & Maintenance, Regulatory and Emergency Management functions, all offices will be included as part of the review. Refresher training will be provided



Scott Thieme

to better prepare us as we near the March audit.

Some useful tips for undergoing an audit are as follows:

- Go over the project documents and procedure you are being audited on. No need to memorize anything; you will have the procedure open on your desktop during the audit.
- Be able to locate all files for the project being audited, especially those for which you or your office are responsible.
- Check any records related to the procedure and project being audited for completion ahead of time. Make any corrections necessary.
- Do NOT print it out or keep paper copies of procedures in view – these are considered “uncontrolled” and if not dated as the latest revision, will result in non-compliance.

- Be able to go to the procedure being audited in Qualtrax quickly and be aware of how to get to Quality Management System-specific procedures – especially the division's quality policy.

Should you have questions regarding this topic, contact one of our LRD Quality Team members: Joyce Hess, Resource Management; Crystal Kelly, Engineering and Technical Services / Operations & Maintenance; John Niemiec, Programs and Project Management; or Bill Stafford, Internal Review. Thanks to Bill Stafford for contributing the text for this article.

Scott Thieme, deputy district engineer for project management, serves as the Detroit District Quality Champion.

New 'Building Strong' brochure available online

Headquarters has produced a new brochure, “BUILDING STRONG - U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Priorities & Direction” that is available online.

The Army values, vision and mission statements, and chief of engineers' intentions are included in the full-color tri-fold.

The brochure also highlights USACE's strong support of “STEM” — science, technology, engineering and mathematics education, for the critical role it plays in helping our nation remain an economic and technological leader.

Download the brochure at:
http://www.usace.army.mil/Portals/2/docs/USACEBrochure_22OCT2012_web_email.pdf

Silent Auction raises funds for charities



Photo by Tom Black

Jim Luke writes down his bid amount during the district's Third Annual Silent Auction Nov. 15. More than \$1,500 was raised to benefit various charities as part of the Combined Federal Campaign. Employees bid on items ranging from homemade baked goods and preserves to handmade crafts and jewelry to gift baskets and lunch with executive staff members.

Detroit District wins diversity award

The Detroit District has received a Diversity Award from USACE headquarters Equal Employment Opportunity Office, EEO, for its outstanding compliance with a model EEO Program.

“We are honored and pleased to receive this award,” said Val Stevenson, EEO officer. “This is evidence that the Detroit District consistently and effectively incorporates all elements of the EEO program into its operations. We are grateful for the strong support our district management provides to the EEO program.”

Award criteria include:

- Making EEO an integral part of the district’s strategic mission;



- Ensuring all employees are informed of EEO initiatives;
- Demonstrating the value of EEO to the agency and employees;
- Ensuring accountability by management;
- Being pro-

active in preventing unlawful discrimination;

- Community outreach;
- Providing sufficient staffing and resources to effectively operate the EEO program; and
- Demonstrating responsiveness and legal compliance.

Agencies review their EEO and human resources programs, policies and performance against these criteria to identify how and where their EEO programs can become more effective.

Employees selected for leadership development

Five district employees will participate in the 2013 regional Leadership Development Program II, LDPII.

Aaron Damrill of the Regulatory Office; Jan Smith, Management Support Branch; Matt McClerren, Hydraulics & Hydrology Office; Josh Hachey, Contract Administration Branch; and Peter Spote, Soo Area Office.

LDP II is an eight-month program designed to develop employees’ problem-solving and decision-making skills, build teamwork and nurture leadership qualities.

Sessions and workshops will focus on communication, public speaking, effective writing, and learning about Corps of Engineers business processes.

Enhancing employee capabilities, strengthening strategic commitment and fostering organizational success are the long-term goals of LDP II.

For more information on LDP II, contact Tim Smith of the Geotech and Structures Branch, (313) 226-2632.

Work begins on Cat Island restoration project in Green Bay



Work has begun on the main wave barrier portion of the Cat Island restoration project in Green Bay, Wis. A 4.3-mile stone dike will create a dredged material disposal facility with 20 years of capacity. Deposited dredged materials will gradually build up three islands, intended to foster vegetation and habitat for fish and wildlife. The project is expected to be completed by 2015. Project updates are available at <http://1.usa.gov/WUPtHh>.

photo by Duane Talbot

Employees of the Quarter

Fourth Quarter 2012



Walt Hart
Soo Area
Office

Walt Hart, an electrical engineer and chief of the Hydropower Section at the Soo Area Office, played a major role in getting the new Fox River gate automation system up and running. Although Hart was busy with projects in the Soo, he took time to help the Lake Michigan Area Office understand the electrical engineering terminology as well as provided his invaluable expertise to bring about a more efficient automation system for the Fox River system's nine dams that will benefit the district for years to come.



Brian Essenburg
Lake Michigan
Area Office

Brian Essenburg, a construction representative with the Lake Michigan Area Office, is recognized for his excellent work on the project to install a new boiler at the Battle Creek Veterans Affairs Medical Center in Battle Creek, Mich.

Essenburg's knowledge of VA policies and staff has been a great help in keeping the project on track. The Corps' project partners have provided positive feedback about Essenburg's work.

He is an outstanding example of the professionalism the Detroit District brings to its projects.



Paul Allerding
Environmental
Analysis Branch

Paul Allerding, a biologist in the Environmental Analysis Branch, EAB, has exhibited leadership as acting branch chief, taking on some of the responsibilities of Charlie Uhlarik, who is away on assignment.

Allerding's extra duties include evaluating proposals to do work for other agencies and assigning work to EAB staffers; reviewing documents for EAB sign-off; and coordinating executive level meetings.

Allerding's commitment and dedication demonstrate he is a true asset to the district.

Innovator of the Quarter



Cassandra Kardeke
Public Affairs
Office

Cassandra Kardeke, public affairs specialist in the district headquarters office, has demonstrated a commitment to improving employee morale with her popular "Things to Do" emails.

Kardeke researches, compiles and disseminates "Things to Do," which promotes employee involvement in local activities and events and helps strengthen ties between local communities.

CORPS SPEAKS

Jean Battle, regulatory project manager with the Marquette, Mich., field office, spoke Nov. 13, 14 and 26, 2012 on the USACE regulatory program and wetlands delineation. She gave her presentations to soils classes at Northern Michigan University in Marquette.

Thom Holden, director of the Lake Superior Maritime Visitor Center, spoke Oct. 22, 2012, to 41 people at the University of Minnesota-Duluth. His talk, "Influences on the Maritime History of Duluth-Superior Harbor; the last 1.3 Billion Years," was given as part of University for Seniors, an enrichment program.

In September, Holden gave several talks regarding Lake Superior shipwrecks and other topics.

On Sept. 17, 2012, Holden spoke to 14 people on the topic

"Lewis & Clark: the Corps of Discovery." His talk was given to the University of Wisconsin Elderhostel, a senior citizens travel and educational group, on the University of Wisconsin's Superior campus. On Sept. 19, Holden spoke to the same group about the wreck of the *Edmund Fitzgerald*.

One week later, on Sept. 26, Holden spoke to 47 people at a gathering of the Cedar Falls Historical Society in Duluth, Minn. His topic was Duluth-Superior Harbor and Shipwrecks of Lake Superior.

The Historical Society members also spent time at the Lake Superior Maritime Visitor Center on Sept. 27.

