SOUTHWESTERN DIVISION
REGIONAL
PACESETTER

DECEMBER 2008 VOL. 3, NO. 6

See pages 4-5 for an update on the Border Fence project.

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Pacesetter

Serving the men and women of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Southwestern Division

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For more information about the ***Pacesetter***, or to make a submission, call your local Public Affairs Office.

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On the cover: Granite Construction workers position a new section of border fence in October in the Imperial Sand Dunes region of southeastern California. The Border Patrol credits the newly installed fences with helping to sharply cut dangerous smuggling activity that led to the death of an agent early this year. (Photo by Todd Smith, USACE Engineering and Construction Support Office.)

Happy Holidays to all of the SWD Family

Brig. Gen. Kendall P. Cox
Commander, Southwestern Division

I hope all had an enjoyable Thanksgiving weekend with family and friends. I know I ate too much turkey, watched way too much football and even took too many naps. But it sure was great and I truly was blessed and had so much to be thankful for.

As we approach the New Year, if you are like me you are wondering where did 2008 go? It seems like it was just yesterday that I was writing this column after my first four months in command. Now I know where the expression, "Time flies when you are having fun," comes from. But we all know 2008 was the Year of Excellence for SWD, and I am so proud of all you have done. You are an amazing team of professionals who only know one standard – excellence – and you continue to exceed this in every endeavor.

As we look back on 2008, many great accomplishments come to mind. The Base, Realignment and Closure; Military Construction and Grow the Force programs at Forts Bliss, Sam Houston and Sill continue to set the standard for MILCON Transformation.

With execution rates exceeding $15 million a week across the region, no other program can compare. All projects are on or ahead of schedule and delivering at a quality that exceeds the expectations of the customer – our Soldiers and their Families.

Our Civil Works program achieved execution rates that were at the top across USACE in every category. Project Partnership Agreements were accomplished for several critical projects and progress with our teammates in many other high-visibility projects provide a tremendous outlook for 2009.

The International and Interagency Services program, headed up by the fence work and tactical infrastructure construction being done in support of the Department of Homeland Security and Customs and Border Patrol, remains the benchmark for teamwork as more than 580 members from across USACE have supported this program. Every district within the region has played huge roles in ensuring success that has received praise from the highest levels of our government. These programs accounted for just over $4 billion in total execution, a significant increase from 2007.

Finally, our faithful and selfless support, as we responded to several natural disasters across the region, ranging from ice storms in Oklahoma to floods throughout Arkansas and multiple hurricanes along the Texas coast, ensured those we live and work with every day were provided hope and comfort that only you could provide.

All this and so much more have made 2008 a year to remember, and I applaud and thank all for your dedication and persistence in serving the American people and our great nation.

Now the challenge of 2009 lies ahead and with it many more "opportunities" to excel. It will be an even bigger year than 2008, currently estimated at $5.3 billion and growing.

I am glad to be a part of this great family as together we execute the largest program in our prestigious history. We have the best team in USACE and together we can provide a service unparalleled in the Corps.

Anna Marie and I wish each of you and your loved ones a very blessed and Merry Christmas and a happy and healthy New Year. I hope all will have the chance to gather with friends and family for a much deserved time to relax, reflect and share the joy of giving with loved ones or those in need.

And please remember to say a special prayer for our deployed Soldiers, Civilians and their Families while they are separated at this special time of year as they continue to serve our nation and the American people.

Finally, let's all remember to give thanks for our many blessings and praise to the "newborn King," for he is the "real reason for the season."

BORDER FENCE ALREADY WORKING

By Jim Frisinger
Fort Worth District

Completion of vast stretches of new fence along the Mexican border, the biggest project ever executed by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Engineering and Construction Support Office, is already deterring illegal border crossings, the Border Patrol reports.

In the Yuma Sector contractors are erecting 56 miles of border fence the Border Patrol has characterized as "wild, wild West" territory with rampant illegal crossings by smugglers carrying people or drugs.

Here, south of Interstate 8 and west of the Andrade Port of Entry in California, Border Patrol Agent Luis Aguilar was run over and killed Jan. 19 trying to stop drug traffickers.

Border Patrol agents had spotted a Hummer and a Ford F-250 pickup crossing from Mexico into the United States about 20 miles west of Yuma, Ariz. As Agent Aguilar was laying down spike strips to stop the smugglers, he was struck and killed by the Hummer. Both vehicles sped back across the border into Mexico.

That can't happen again. This border segment, crossing the Imperial Sand Dunes south of the spot where Agent Aguilar was killed, is now blocked by a steel curtain – a fence erected this year by Granite Construction Co.

A recent photo, shot by Supervisory Border Patrol Agent Ben Vik, shows the fence, winding across the dunes, nailing shut this smugglers corridor.

"As you can see, it will never be the same," says Ronald Colburn, deputy chief of the Office of Border Patrol. "It is a beautiful sight. I see victory."

"As you can see, it will never be the same," says Ronald Colburn, deputy chief of the Office of Border Patrol. "It is a beautiful sight. I see victory."

It's but one section of more than 600 miles of border fence construction being completed through ECSO for its longtime customer, the Department of Homeland Security, to secure the nation's southern land border. Two of ECSO's border barrier programs, Pedestrian Fence 225 and Vehicle Fence 300, face a congressional completion deadline of Dec. 31, 2008.

While ECSO may be based in the Fort Worth District, the enormous scope and tight timetable required – and received – Corpswide support.

See "Sections of fence" next page

Sections of fence

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"We had to go from project inception all the way through to project closeout in a year and six months time on $1.2 billion worth of work," said Todd Smith the PF 225 program manager in Fort Worth.

That meant putting to the test a new Corps concept: "virtual teaming." The ECSO office had 60 employees, but has reached out to build a virtual team of 500-plus Corps employees across the country for the border fence.

"We had to reinvent every aspect of the way we deliver projects," Smith says of the challenge ECSO faced. "There really is no 'business as usual' anywhere within the fence program. We had to continuously challenge people working in the program to think outside the norm and not fall into the old comfortable ways of doing business."

For the U.S. Customs and Border Protection, the ECSO-delivered fence is one part of the personnel, technology and infrastructure mix it needs to halt illegal crossings.

Contractors work on the secondary fence at the San Diego-Tijuana border. (Photo provided by the Engineering and Construction Support Office.)

"Roads and fence are infrastructure. When we gain that proper balance we really see where our effectiveness goes up," said Jason Ciliberti, a Supervisory Border Patrol Agent.

Fresh numbers show a sharp decline in border apprehensions in the Yuma Sector – one signpost of the effectiveness of the agency's three-pronged strategy. Apprehensions in the 125-mile corridor plunged from 37,992 in fiscal year 2007 to 8,363 in FY 2008 – a 78 percent drop. Marijuana seizures have fallen 40 percent from 49,429 pounds in FY 2007 to 29,858 pounds in FY 2008.

Under the Secure Border Initiative, 14 miles of pedestrian fence and 42 miles of vehicle fence are being built in the Yuma Sector. Construction was 59 percent complete as of Nov. 14 and the crews were still racing to meet the Dec. 31 deadline.

Plugging Smuggler's Gulch gap

The Border Patrol also has high hopes that another Corps-led project at the border's Pacific Ocean terminus in San Diego County will pay similar dividends.

The ECSO is executing $59 million in contracts along a rugged border tract that abuts heavily urban Tijuana. New double fence lines, roads and lighting will be installed. Scrapers are filling in a deep canyon. Three miles of fencing will be erected.

One focus is Smuggler's Gulch, a notorious geographic feature five miles inland and long a haven for illegal border crossings.

"Historically, there has been more illegal smuggling activity in the area that includes Smuggler's Gulch than any other place in the country," said Daryl Reed, a Border Patrol spokesperson for the San Diego Sector.

The San Diego Border Patrol reports yearly apprehensions here have been as high as 200,000 to 300,000 with narcotic seizures of several tons.

The reports added that over time, tens of thousands of criminal aliens who were previously removed from the United States have re-entered through this area. Since the Sept. 11, 2001, terror attacks, it is one of the busiest areas in San Diego for apprehensions of special-interest aliens.

As of Nov. 3, 56 percent of the construction work has been completed, according to ECSO's Jason S. Price, the project manager in the San Diego Sector assigned to non-PF 225 fence work.

There had been no infrastructure to speak of in the Smuggler's Gulch section to prevent border crossings. Heavily vegetated coastal bluffs and canyons made continuous border surveillance and access impossible. Switchback roads north of the border were the only Border Patrol access to the canyon walls. Inclement weather impeded access.

The cut-and-fill work will move 1.3 million cubic yards into the south end of the canyon. It will provide agents continuous access to the entire canyon. It will include an all-weather patrol road north of the immediate border, a secondary enforcement fence north of the patrol road and another road north of the secondary fence. This will allow agents to contain most illegal activity between the border and the secondary fence to quickly address fence breaches.

Naming lock and dam 5 honors Maynard legacy

By Tammy L. Moody
Pacesetter Staff

On Oct. 6 Little Rock District held a ceremony at Lock and Dam No. 5 to name the structure the Col. Charles D. Maynard Lock and Dam after the district's 40th commander who had a significant role in developing the McClellan-Kerr Arkansas River Navigation System.

The ceremony was the culmination of years of work by the Arkansas Basin Development Association and the Arkansas Waterways Commission to honor Maynard for his work and his dedication to his adopted home of Arkansas.

Paul Revis, then president of the ABDA, wrote a letter in 2006 to Rep. Mike Ross of Arkansas' 4th Congressional District requesting the lock and dam be named after Maynard.

"This honor is small recompense for the efforts and contributions that he made to the nation and the states of Arkansas and Oklahoma," he said in the letter. "As a private organization, we also feel it is appropriate that this naming recognize the role played by a Corps of Engineers officer in the development of this region …"

Maynard was assigned as Little Rock's District Engineer for three years from 1962 to 1965. During his tenure, he directed planning, design and construction of 12 locks and dams of the navigation system. He also oversaw construction of Greers Ferry and Beaver Dams in the White River basin.

"During the 1960s, the "Arkansas River Project" was the largest civil works project ever undertaken by the Corps," Little Rock District Commander Col. Ed Jackson said during the ceremony. "Col. Charles D. Maynard successfully met the challenging schedules set by Congress and the administration while coordinating with a host of state and federal agencies in Arkansas and Oklahoma.

"It is truly fitting we recognize today this great visionary, a tireless and lifelong public servant, who epitomizes the values of our Corps and our Nation," he added.

When Maynard retired in 1965 after 24 years in the Army, he began to actively promote development of waterborne transportation in Arkansas. He was appointed by three governors to serve on the Arkansas Waterways Commission for a total of 21 years.

As a member of the Arkansas Basin Association, ABDA and the 5-state Arkansas River Inter-state Basin Committee, Maynard made numerous trips to Washington, D.C. for congres-

See "Col. Maynard" next page

(From Left) Col. Ed Jackson, commander of Little Rock District, Army Corps of Engineers, Rep. Mike Ross and Charles D. Maynard, Jr. watch as Steve Stockton, Director of Civil Works for the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, helps Mrs. Angela Maynard unveil the plaque naming Lock and Dam No. 5 after her husband Col. Charles D. Maynard. (Photo by P.J. Spaul)

Col. Maynard

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sional testimony in support of the McClellan-Kerr Arkansas River Navigation System, Fourche Creek Flood Control Project and Montgomery Point Lock and Dam.

Before he died in 2005, the colonel was active in and a leader in many professional, civic and community organizations. Family friend Wallace Gieringer spoke during the ceremony of Maynard's many accomplishments.

He said the colonel's community involvement included being the U.S. Savings Bond coordinator for Arkansas for 10 years, president of the Little Rock Chamber of Commerce, Campaign chairman for the United Way of Pulaski County, president of the Pulaski County Cancer Society, and chairman emeritus of Central Arkansas Radiation Therapy Institute.

"He also served on the boards of the Arkansas Arts Center, the Arkansas Symphony, and the Foundation of the University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences," Gieringer added. "You need to realize, we all do, that most of these civilian efforts of Charles Maynard were in non-paying positions of responsibility for the good of the community, the state and the nation.

"Through these, and many other organizations, he contributed to a better way of life, and he touched the lives of thousands who will, sadly, never know of his efforts on their behalf." He continued, "Although Col. Maynard is no longer with us, his memory can be used to call attention to the vital role the inland waterways have for our economy, and the memories of his life and his love for God, family and country can and should remain as models for each of us, family and friends alike."

His wife of 61 years, Angela Maynard, and three of his four children attended the ceremony with a host of extended family members and navigation industry leaders. Guest speakers included Ross and Steve Stockton, Corps chief of civil works.

After Ross and Stockton spoke about the many benefits of the navigation system, they, Jackson, Angela and Charles D. Maynard Jr. unveiled the plaque with the senior Maynard's name on it.

Maynard Jr. spoke to the crowd after the unveiling.

"Everyone in the family is so thankful for this honor to dad," he said. "And, we want to thank all of those involved for their hard work in making this honor and this wonderful ceremony happen today."

Corps participates in Arkansas Governor's Conference

The 13th Arkansas Governor's Conference on Waterborne Transportation was held Oct. 6-8 in Little Rock, and it included the dedication of the Col. Charles D. Maynard Lock and Dam on the McClellan-Kerr Arkansas River Navigation System near Tucker, Ark.

The conference is jointly sponsored by Little Rock District, the Arkansas Waterways Commission and the Arkansas Waterways Association. It attracts participants from municipal and state government, as well as the Corps, Coast Guard, towing and barge industry, river port operators, and economic development groups and vendors of waterways supplies and services.

Featured at the conference was Arkansas Governor Mike Beebe who acknowledged the significant contribution waterborne transportation has made to the state and the thousands of jobs created as a result.

Steve Stockton, Corps director of Civil Works briefed the conference on Corps funding and voiced his concurrence with an earlier comment that the waterways community needed a public voice. He responded to Arkansas Waterways Commission Executive Director Keith Garrison's comment that the river navigation industry should publicly defend its projects when challenged by other groups, by observing that the Corps ultimately answers to the Commander in Chief and is not in a position to 'lobby.'

Garrison applauded the cooperation of the four Corps districts with navigation and flood damage reduction missions in Arkansas—Little Rock and Tulsa in the Southwestern Division and Memphis and Vicksburg in the Mississippi Valley Division.

District Commanders, Col. Ed Jackson, Little Rock; Col. Anthony Funkhouser, Tulsa; Col. Tom Smith, Memphis; and Col. Mike Wehr, Vicksburg; briefed the conference on their districts' accomplishments and challenges.

And did I mention refrigerators?

By Ruth Millsaps
Park Ranger
Wallisville Lake Project

In my Ecology class in college I learned an estuary is where fresh and salt water meets. The Wallisville Lake Project where I work is the estuary for the Trinity River and the greater Galveston Bay system. During Hurricane Ike salt and fresh water met miles further upstream than usual.

On Saturday afternoon, Sept. 13, I attempted to get to the Project Office for damage assessment. At that time the water was still over the service roads for I-10 and too deep for my little car to safely traverse to get to our inroad on top of the east levee. I could see that road, but just couldn't get there.

As I drove back up the service road and got onto I-10 to head toward Houston, I found that the entire eastbound side between FM 565 and the Trinity River Bridge was closed due to the vast amount of debris covering both traffic lanes. The debris line in some areas was a long way north of those I-10 bridges.

Wallisville Lock Operator Byron Smith and I took our patrol airboat out north on the Trinity River and then south into our marsh and onto the lower Trinity River below the lock on Sept. 24. I couldn't begin to count the numbers of dead fish, refrigerators, cooler boxes and boogie boards we saw.

Around the Project Office, clean up continues as our contractor, Mr. Maxey, and his crew do several heroes' share of the hard work of debris removal.

I don't think they found any refrigerators on our island, but they still might. They did find and deal with more snakes than I really ever want to know about.

We were fortunate in that the storm surge measured right at 15.5 feet by the U.S. Geological Survey gauges on our dam. That meant we did not get flooding in our office building.

However, we did have about three feet of salt water in both lock control houses, there was salt water in the control rooms on the dam structure, and salt water overtopped our tainter gates (going upstream), which were left down in the water to prevent their becoming warped by wind damage.

The project lost a whole slew of trees both by wind trimming and uprooting, and by salt water in the soil surrounding their roots. All along the river's banks there are even more trees just teetering on the edge of falling into the water depending on river flow and wind, or the next refrigerator's hit.

The floating courtesy docks at our boat ramp floated up and off their mooring posts. One ended up on the east bank of the river and the other one is on top of a riprap storage pile. I'm still wondering how we'll get them moved and replaced for service. Maybe we could float them on refrigerator boxes.

Lest I sound totally negative about the storm of the century, I must say that we have no more water hyacinth, no more alligator weed and probably many fewer Chinese tallow trees because none of these invasive plants can tolerate salt water. Refrigerators don't tolerate salt water either, unfortunately.

All in all, it's just stuff. We lost no personnel and that kind of loss would have been much harder to bear. We can pick up the pieces and even put some of them back together again. With a little time and effort, we'll get the job done!

And did I mention refrigerators? If you lived in Galveston County and lost your refrigerator during Ike, we probably have it, but I'm sorry to say it probably won't work now.

Blue Roof mission winds down after Ike

By Ross Adkins
Pacesetter Staff

Hurricane Ike has come and gone, initial recovery efforts are starting to wind down and some recovery workers are headed back home.

Col. David Weston notes, "The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers brought people in from all over -- from Florida to Washington State -- to help the people of this area recover from one of the century's worst storms to hit the Texas and Louisiana coasts."

Weston concurrently commands the Galveston District and the Task Force Pacesetters Recovery Field Office in Pasadena, Texas. That temporary office is closing down, but the recovery mission is not going away -- it is relocating to the district's home offices in Galveston.

"The FEMA mission of providing temporary roof repairs is winding down. But we are still going to be around. We are still involved assisting FEMA with their efforts to provide temporary housing for the hard hit people in the Houston and Galveston area," Weston said.

He expressed pride in the Galveston District employees who were directly affected by the hurricane, many losing their homes and belongings. When the offices reopened, most were back at work to help others in spite of personal losses.

Mike deMasi, a project manager from Galveston District who is serving as the Task Force Pacesetters deputy, is no stranger to recovery work. He was the deputy just three years ago following Hurricane Rita.

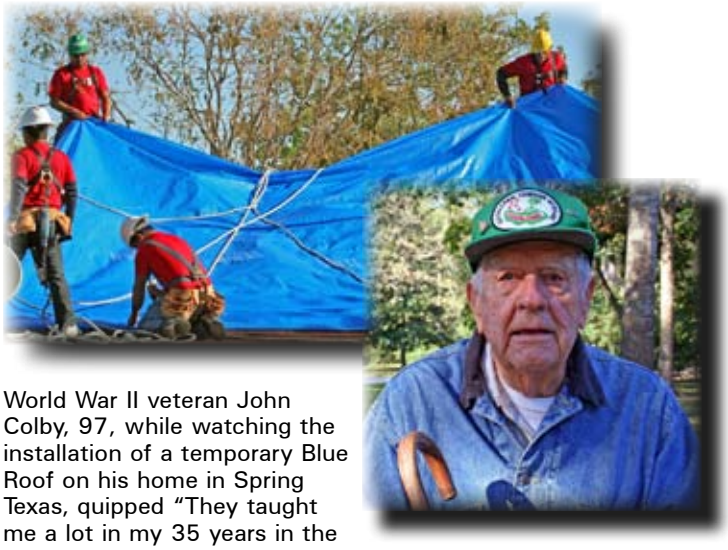
"We were actually better prepared this time around," he said. "This time, we covered more roofs in less time than in 2005. Unfortunately, or maybe it's fortunately, we learn more and improve our technology every time we have a disaster like this."

"Ike hit on the night of Sept. 12," deMasi said. "By Nov. 15 we found a mall in Pasadena relatively undamaged and leased office space there to carry out FEMA's blue roof mission. By the next day we were in business, but with little equipment and no power."

Their first applicant requesting a temporary roof signed up in the parking lot of the mall as they were putting up signs announcing the office opening.

The program provides free temporary covers for damaged roofs. The blue tops, as they are called, are plastic coverings used to protect homes from further damage from follow-on storms and rain.

At the peak of the mission, more than 35 locations were open to take applications. Several days saw more than 700 being processed. By the last day for applications, just over a month after they began, the RFO had taken in more than 36,000 requests.



World War II veteran John Colby, 97, while watching the installation of a temporary Blue Roof on his home in Spring Texas, quipped "They taught me a lot in my 35 years in the Coast Guard, but not about trees trying to escape a hurricane by coming in through my roof!" The veteran of Guadalcanal and other South Pacific battles feels he was lucky it was only his roof that was damaged. (USACE Photo.)

The Corps covered more than 27,000 roofs in less than seven weeks. It took more than 42,422,000 square feet of plastic material. That's more than one and a half square miles of blue roofing material, or 740 football fields -- including the end zones!

"No one was left waiting," Weston said. "Our folks stayed late to make sure that every applicant in line was taken care of."

In Spring, Texas, James Colby and his father John watched as workers placed temporary covering on the home owned by the 97-year-old World War II veteran. As blue covered the roof, the younger Colby said, "You guys have certainly brightened up what was beginning to look like a pretty dismal winter for my dad."

Corps employees out in the field making sure people were getting the protection they requested had a number of problems to overcome. Each day they faced things like mosquitoes, snakes, trash, upset pets, distressed homeowners, no power, heat, humidity and Houston traffic.

Reflecting on the RFO operation, deMasi said, "It seems like every disaster has its own disaster trying to get recovery operations moving. This one seemed to go a lot smoother and quicker. I think we are learning. I just hope we don't have to keep on learning. We don't need any more disasters."

SWD employees who volunteered for Hurricane Ike

The following Southwestern Division employees volunteered to work the response mission following Hurricane Ike:

SWD: Michael Fallon, Sherman Jones, Linda Robinson, Charlotte Waldron.

Fort Worth District: Dennis Akins, Brett Alexander, Emmitt Attaway, Barbara Bazar, Cody Berry, Emmett Billiott, Ben Bohac, Barbara Bonaparte, Michael Bormann, Michael Braley, James Bransford, Olen Burditt, Carla Burns, Kenneth Carleton, Frank Carter, Stayce Castillo, Jason Castro, James Chambers, Julius Clay Jr., Joseph Cormier, Douglas Cox, Kevin Craig, Bart Dearborn, Shane Demmer, Stephen Dempsey, Ernest Eberle, Charles Erickson, Tommy Fowler, Roslyn Gonzalez, Deloris Greenwood, Misti Griese, William Haferkamp, Jamie Hagio, Bryon Haney, Nekisha Harris, Roger Harris, Hyla Head, James Hegwood, Donald Hendrix, Nathan Jernigan, Charles Jones, Robert Jordan, Daniel Juracek, James Kemter, Jon Krause, Kendra Laffe, David Lee, Jennifer Linde, Christopher Martin, Dennis Massey, Murray McCarley, Daniel McClendon, Heath McLane, Thomas Mondrik, Robert Morrow, Dorotha Murphy, Theodore Nicholson, Benoit Palmer, Carol Petersen, Cherrie Phillip, Steven Reed, Noel Reyes, Sondra Richardson, Edward Rivera, James Roche, Leonard Sandoval, Terry Schmidt, Judity Scott, Mark Simmons, Mark Sissom, Thomas Smiley, Carl Smith, Christopher Story, Paul Thomas, Marcus Trojacek, Michael Velasquez, Sarah Watts, Thomas Webb, Carey Weber, Michael Weber, Donald Wiese, Sallie Wilson, James Wright.

Galveston District: Kenneth Adams, Clark Bartee, Kimberley Benavides, Thomas Benero, Bruce Bennett, Patricia Brannan, Karl Brown, Kristine Brown, Gloria Brunt, Loretta Buddenhagen, Martha Cenkci, Jessie Chism, Curtis Cole Jr., Franchelle Craft, George Dabney, Andria Davis, Michael Demasi, Edward Feigenbaum, Michael Flynn, Norma Garcia, Albert Hervey Jr., Francis Hodges, Jerald Hood, William Hopkins, Joseph Hrametz, Steven Ireland, Eduardo Irigoyen, Kenneth Jaynes, Thelma Jaynes, Dwayne Johnson, Seth Jones, Franklin Jordan, Robert Kelly, Helene Kieslich, Samantha Lambert, Sharon Lamkins, Nicholas Laskowski, Constantine Marinos, Beverly Martin, Michelle Matte, Richard McDonald, Karen Milburn, Jantzen, Vihn Nguyen, Marcus O'Donohoe, Robert Peel, Pete Perez, David Petit, Jeffrey Pinsky, Grace Procter, Alicia Rea, Orlando Rosas, Christopher Rossi, Johnny Rozsypal, Charles Scheffler Jr., Elizabeth Shelton, Gary Stangeland, Charles Stimmel, Bernice Taylor, Dennis Thomas, Timothy Updike, Samuel Watson, David Weston, Byron Williams, Daniel Williams, Mark Williams, William Wise, Danny Wyatt.

Blue Roof applicants sign up for their roofs in the parking lot of the mall housing the temporary office. (USACE photo.)

Little Rock District: Patrick Bass, Benjamin Bremer, Billy Calloway, Dana Coburn, Robert Coke, Scott Corbitt, Tuan Dang, Fred Esser, Frank Estrada, Tyrone Fowler, John Fryer, Jason Gramlich, William Gray, Edwin Hargis, Mark Harris, Ron Helton, Richard Hightower, Michael Hill, Christopher Howard, David Howell, Ronald Hudson, Michael Jacks, Sylvester Jackson III, Shelby Jackson Jr., Melissa Jackson, Miles Johnson, Janis Jones, Ronald Jones, Donnie Lindsay, Treasa Linnell, Keith Loos, Michael Marlow, Kathy Metivier, Eric Nelson, Cedric Pelt, Gilbert Peters, Rodney Raley, Bobby Rice, Michael Rodgers, Steven Shaw, Eric Small, Bobby Smith, Christiane Smith, Douglas Stilts, Amber Turnage, Derick Walker, Bruce Watson, Elmo Webb, William Westfall, Patricia Whitfield, James Wimberly, Brandee Wright, Lisa Yoakum.

Tulsa District: Timothy Adkins, Ross Adkins, Robert Booker, Yvonne Brownrigg, Lora Carroll, Dale Davidson, Eric Fladie, Anthony Funkhouser, Michael Kerr, Andy Kmetz, Lisa Lawson, Roy Long, Ernest Martin, Michael McGill, Jim Miller, Bobby Perryman, James Ritter, John Sanders, Bruce Smith, William Smith, Kerri Stark, Stephen Timmons, Michael Ware, Connie White.

We rose to the occasion

Col. Donald E. Jackson
Commander, Little Rock District

It is hard to believe another year is coming to a close, especially one as eventful as 2008. The spring floods, tornadoes and summer hurricanes, with their abundant challenges, made this a memorable year for Little Rock District.

Thanks to everyone involved, we "waded" through it all with teamwork and an amazing amount of dedication and plain hard work.

The accolades the district has received for your efforts are glowing and have come from dignitaries such as Gov. Mike Beebe, Sen. Mark Pryor, and Rep. Jo Ann Emerson.

I have received calls from grateful members of the public and others. These accolades are a testament to the value you provide in responding to the nation's call.

Many of you extended a hand to New Orleans and Galveston Districts in supporting recovery efforts from hurricanes Gustav and Ike.

I spent a short time at the Federal Emergency Management Agency Joint Field Office and Texas State Emergency Operations Center for Hurricane Ike recovery efforts where I saw a vast operation that was truly phenomenal.

All Southwestern Division districts were represented, working seamlessly with personnel from across the country who deployed to the area. Little Rock District was well represented as we helped with Blue Roof missions.

This was a massive operation, and I gained a tremendous amount of respect for the many of you who put your own lives aside and volunteered to the region in this time of need.

Several members of the district deployed this year to support the Global War on Terror in Iraq and Afghanistan – two missions that remain critically in need of your help.

Some have completed their tours and returned home. Six SWL teammates remain. Some of these folks are on their second or third deployments.

Kris Mullins returned briefly from her deployment to Afghanistan and gave a presentation about work the Afghanistan Engineer District is doing. You can read about her presentation on page 12 of this issue.

The district continues to recruit for the positions we support in GRS. Please keep our deployed teammates, and their families, in your prayers this holiday season. Thanks to all who have deployed, and will deploy in the future.

There were some great success stories in partnering this year. The district partnered with the University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences (UAMS) to provide at least six new campsites in Maumelle Park that accommodate patients undergoing extended medical treatment in the Little Rock area.

Thanks to Lee Bass and his wife Agnes, who works at UAMS, for getting the ball rolling. This project is unique and provides a basis for similar partnerships in other districts throughout the Corps.

In November, I signed a partnership agreement with the Friends of David Foundation and Eastin Outdoor Inc. to establish David's Trail, a 50-mile network of trails on the Ozark Highland Trail around the eastern edge of Norfork Lake. This trail posthumously honors David Floyd, a local community leader who promoted outdoor activities and healthy living.

I want to also highlight the completion of a bird observation deck, at Beard's Bluff Park, overlooking Millwood Lake near Texarkana.

The deck was built in cooperation with Audubon Arkansas and Larry Phillips Contracting, and it is an accessible way for the public to bird watch at a premier location on the lake.

Projects like these are hard to fund, so it is great to work with local communities to make them happen. They benefit the district, but more importantly, they benefit the public who uses them.

December is a special time of year for many reasons. Lynne and I wish each of you, and your families, the very best of the holidays.

2009 will be a busy year. It's great to know, with great confidence, you will again rise to the occasion. Thanks for all you do.

"You-pick-a-stans" need your help

By Tammy L. Moody
Pacesetter Staff

"The vast majority of our work is in Afghanistan, but you pick a 'stan,' and we're there. We have a lot of work, and we need you," Little Rock's Kris Mullins said during a recruiting presentation she made in November at the District Office.

Mullins, home briefly from her six-month deployment to Afghanistan, described the Afghanistan Engineer District a bit before jumping into the many reasons Corps personnel should head to Afghanistan with her.

She said the AED consists of seven area offices, 21 resident offices and 12 project offices, all of which are geared to conduct project management, construction and engineering operations in the Central Asian Republics.

"The Afghanistan Engineer District is a full-service district," she said. "We have construction, office of counsel, project management, engineering, everything, so there are jobs for everyone.

"We have 350 people now, but our new Table of Distribution and Allowances authorizes 580. We will need those people by March. We currently have a number of people who are there on their fourth deployments."

Mullins said military construction will be one of their biggest programs for a while. The AED website describes how the Corps is supporting U.S. forces in Bagram, Kandahar and Kabul in Afghanistan; K2 Air Base in Uzbekistan; and Manas Air Base in Kyrgyzstan. Assistance includes construction, rehabilitation and refurbishment of facilities and runways.

Mullins added that the Corps is also doing a lot of development for the Afghan people.

"Some of that work is done by Provincial Reconstruction Teams, who are spread throughout the country. They do short term, high impact construction projects, such as drilling wells and paving roads," she added. "They are mainly Reservists, but they are supported by Corps engineers."

Other projects for the Afghan people include building compounds and projects for the Afghan National Civil Order Police and for the Afghan National Army.

"As I talk about the projects, I know safety is on everyone's minds here," Mullins said as she scanned the crowd and saw people shaking their head in agreement. "Force protection is the number one priority there. We have soldiers who are there for our protection. We are issued our helmets and flak gear, which we wear any time we go outside the compound, and we have up-armored SUVs for travel.

"I work at the headquarters in Kabul at Qalaa House. We have six bunkers inside the wire (the compound), and we have convoy escorts when we go outside the wire. I don't feel nervous at all when I have to go anywhere outside because the military in the convoys know what they are doing, and they protect us."

She said that while the command recognizes that people are their biggest assets and do their best to protect you, they also do their best to enhance your quality of life as well while you are deployed.

"I've been deployed before, and I must say, the quality of life has never been so high," Mullins said. "Communicating with your family back home is so important. Well, they have worked hard on the phone system there, and I can pick up the phone and call home when I need to, and home can call me directly at my desk and at my room. There's no connecting to an operator, or going through DSN,

See "Deploying to AED" next page

Kris Mullins enjoys some of the scenery during her deployment to Afghanistan.

(Editor's Note: The Southwestern Division is also seeking volunteers for deployment to the **Gulf Region Division's South District.** The same great benefits, and sense of contributing to a greater cause, also apply. There is a critical need for three project engineers and a variety of specialties will be required in the future.

For more information, contact your district's Emergency Management Office, or Mary Thomas, Deployment Coordination Administrator, 469-487-7115, or (Mary.G.Thomas@usace.army.mil)

Deploying to AED

continued from previous page

which makes it so much easier to keep in touch.

She said there is a phone and computer in each room, and the current living standard is a single room in most places. They are working to make that the standard in the field offices as well. There is an active Morale, Welfare and Recreation program, Qalaa House Bazaars on Thursdays and the best dining facility in Kabul.

"We also get one rest and relaxation leave for 21 days if you are there for six months, three if you are there for a year."

One of the biggest benefits to working overseas Mullins said is the money. She explained that if you go temporary duty, you receive locality pay from your current duty station, a TDY bonus of 12.5 percent for 6 months or 25 percent for one year, plus your 35 percent post differential, 35 percent danger pay and a Sunday premium of 25 percent.

"Or you could choose to do a temporary change of station, where the money is a little bit different, but still pretty good. You would really have to look at the numbers to see what one would be right for you," she said.

She ended her presentation by fielding questions. One question focused on reasons you could not deploy to Afghanistan.

"There are really only two reasons you couldn't go," she said. "One is medical and the other is your security clearance. If you have those in order, you should be good to go.

"If you want to go and can, the pay is good, and the quality of life is good as well," Mullins added. "But the main thing you'll get from your deployment is the satisfaction of seeing your work having a lasting impact on the mission. You also will see your impact on the Afghan people. Those professional and personal rewards last far longer."

Red White and Blue makes it work

The old saying, "It takes all kinds," certainly held true for staffing the Corps Hurricane Ike Recovery Field Office in Pasadena, Texas. It was manned by volunteers from as far away as Hawaii in the west to New England in the East.

"It was an All American effort," said Col. David Weston, serving as commander of both the Corps' Galveston District and the Task Force Pacesetters RFO.

Right to left, in red, Jennie Nowakowski (LRD), Mary Ellen Farmer (LRN), Belinda Taylor (SAM), Doug Ward (SAW), in white, Lisa Yoakum (SWL), Bonnie Ingalls (NWP), Nancy Knapik (NWW), Elizabeth Shelton (SWG), in blue, Harvey Edwards, Jeff Cross, John Pattie and Scott O'Meara, all Department of the Interior. Photo provided by SWD. *(Editor's note: In the picture, red shirts are worn by those working in the field, white shirts represent administrative support volunteers and the blue-shirted personnel represent the Department of the Interior.)*

The RFO reached a peak of more than 500 Corps volunteers during the recovery operations. Its main thrust was the FEMA mission of overseeing temporary roofing repairs on nearly 37,000 damaged homes and businesses in the greater Houston/Galveston area.

Have a safe and happy holiday

Col. Christopher W. Martin
Commander, Fort Worth District

Things in the Fort Worth District continue to be extremely busy. I sincerely hope you all had a wonderful time sharing and celebrating with family and friends this Thanksgiving.

I am thankful for the dedicated team we have, committed to doing what is right for our Soldiers, local partners and stakeholders. Your reputation as one of the best districts in the Corps of Engineers is evident every day.

After ending Fiscal Year 2008 on several high points, everyone continues doing a wonderful job keeping the district strong and consistent.

A recent highlight was the first Brigade Combat Team at Fort Bliss, Texas, ribbon cutting ceremony attended by Sen. Kay Bailey Hutchison, who also helped cut the ribbon.

Also, the second National Security Personnel System pay pool paneling cycle just ended. For most, this was the first end-of-rating cycle and writing a self-assessment experience for non-supervisory employees.

As always the district rose to the challenge and got the job done. Now we can gather and review the lessons learned and see how we can improve the process. Notice of payouts should arrive after Jan. 4 to all employees individually.

Let's continue to keep our deployed teammates in our thoughts – Elizabeth Anderson (GRD), Kurt Floyd (AED), Samuel Masters (GRD), Joyce Oshea (GRD), Royce Summers (AED), Michelle Thrift (AED), Margaret Williams (GRD), Dale Walters (AED) – and those preparing to deploy – Denny Bays (GRD), Laverne Chisholm (GRD), Ruben Cruz (GRD), David Scott (GRD), Bart Shivers (GRD).

If you plan on traveling during this holiday season, make sure you prepare for your trip in advance. If traveling by air, arrive at the airport early to avoid potential traffic congestion and added security. If you travel by car, get plenty of rest prior to your trip, buckle up and practice good defensive driving.

Our highways present many hazards ranging from anxious motorists in a hurry to reach their destinations to those who may be driving under the influence of alcohol. If you choose to drink alcohol make sure you have a designated driver.

Please take time during this holiday season to give thanks for the privilege we have of living in a country with the freedom our forefathers fought for and our Soldiers today are still fighting to secure.

Be thankful for the sacrifices made by all of our deployed military who have to spend the holidays away from their loved ones. Take time to spend with your family and recharge so we can start the New Year off right. Have a safe and happy holiday!

BCT 1 Ribbon cutting

Fort Bliss Commander Maj. Gen. Howard B. Bromberg, U.S. Sen. Kay Bailey Hutchison and U.S. Rep. Silvestre Reyes help cut the ribbon on the newly opened 1st Heavy Brigade Combat Team, 1st Armored Division's headquarters building on East Fort Bliss during a ceremony Oct. 28. Also cutting the ribbon are Pfcs. Daizy Hunter and Joshua B. Reed.

Preservation is not about arresting time but about mediating change with sensitivity

By Judy Marsicano
Pacesetter Staff

Fort Worth's Joseph Scott Murphey, an historic architect, received a 2008-2009 Certificate of Preservation Achievement for his work in preserving the Fort Worth community's historical heritage during the "Preservation is the Art of the City" event in September.

Historic Fort Worth, Inc., presented the award to individuals, groups or organizations who made significant contributions to the preservation of the city's historic and natural resources, through leadership, education, advocacy, research or publication.

Murphey's work focused on the recognition of the downtown bluff overlooking the Trinity River as a historic site and a traditional cultural property, determining it eligible for the National Register of Historic Places.

Such recognition requires a compliance process when the Corps issues permits for development involving the Trinity River.

The Corps' innovative Central City project to reroute floodwaters on the Trinity as it passes near downtown is under way, and under the Trinity River Vision Authority an initiative called Trinity Uptown will result in private development along the historic bluff.

During the "Preservation is the Art of the City" event, Libby Buuck, the president of Preservation Texas, presents Fort Worth District's Joseph Scott Murphey with a 2008-2009 Certificate of Preservation Achievement for his work in preserving the Fort Worth community's historical heritage. (Photo provided by Historic Fort Worth, Inc.)

"Contrary to popular belief, a historic designation does not stop development along the bluff," Murphey advised, "but it does require developers to assess the impact their development is having on historic resources and seek ways to avoid or reduce those impacts."

This is done through a process spelled out by Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act. When a Corps' permit is required, parties interested in the development come together to seek ways to minimize harm to irreplaceable historic resources such as the bluff.

"Preservation is not about arresting time, but about mediating change with sensitivity," Murphey said.

"It is an honor to be recognized for my efforts, on behalf of the Corps, to mediate the progressive changes that will occur to Fort Worth in the coming years in a positive way," he said.

"Together we can ensure our historic resources such as the bluff are there for future generations to enjoy."

Chow time

SWL helps cut ribbon for LRAFB dining facility

By Cheri Dragos-Pritchard
Pacesetter Staff

During a Nov. 7 ceremony at Little Rock Air Force Base, the Little Rock District commander took part in cutting the ribbon to the new 19,000-square-foot Hercules dining facility, a $6.4 million Corps military construction project.

Col. Ed Jackson, district commander, congratulated Project Manager Steve Ring for his part in constructing the new facility for the Air Force.

"I was immediately approached by two airmen when I arrived today," the commander said. "They had nothing but positive words to say about this new facility. They are really impressed with the outcome, and this reflects back to the great work done by Steve Ring and the people working with him."

The superintendent of the dining facility, Air Force Master Sgt. Robert Boettner, had very positive comments, not only about the facility, but also about the way the Corps conducted the entire process.

From left: Senior Airman Teresa Davis, Base Airmen's Council president; Lt. Col. Jeffrey Collins, 19th Services Squadron commander; Col. C.K. Hyde, 314th Airlift Wing commander; Rep. Vic Snyder; Col. James Johnson, 19th Airlift Wing vice commander; and Col. Ed Jackson, Little Rock District commander cut the ceremonial ribbon signifying the official opening of the Hercules Dining Facility at Little Rock Air Force Base.

"This has been a great experience for me personally," Boettner stated. "Steve (Ring) has kept us involved in the entire process, taking our comments, suggestions, needs, wants and desires into consideration. Every Wednesday for the past two years I've attended a meeting about this facility."

Boettner said he liked being involved. He mentioned that he had been involved in other Corps construction projects, and they had asked what color paint or carpet they wanted, but he had never been involved to this extent.

"I don't know if this is now a normal process Corpswide, but if it's not, I would recommend it become that way," the superintendent said. "We ended up with a facility that fits our needs and more importantly the customers needs. Everyone has benefited from this process."

Rep. Vic Snyder attributed the official opening of the facility to, "another investment in the great American democracy; a symbolic gesture of peaceful transference of power that occurs in this country."

He congratulated the base and Corps for the completion of the facility and noted it was a great investment, for not only the Air Force, but also the community as a whole.

The contract for the facility was awarded in August 2006, and construction began in December that year. It provides a 60 percent increase in customer seating area as well as modern technology and energy efficient equipment.

It is located between the Airmen dormitories and adjacent to the base fitness facility. More than 700 customers will use the facility each day.

Giant salvinia found in Lake O' The Pines

By Melanie Ellis
Pacesetter Staff

Lake O' The Pines is the latest victim of the floating, invasive aquatic plant known as giant salvinia. Fort Worth District and Texas Parks and Wildlife officials documented the first occurrence of the plant at the lake in late October.

A crew from TPWD recently disposed of three large garbage bags of the plant, sprayed the area with a herbicide and left a floating boom to help contain the plant.

"A Texas Parks and Wildlife Department crew found the plant at Cedar Springs boat ramp when they were going out to sample fish populations," said Raymond Hedges, an environmental stewardship manager at Piney Woods Regional Office.

Giant salvinia is native to South America. It is a small free-floating plant that grows in clusters and can develop into dense, floating colonies in quiet water, undisturbed by wave action. It can double in size in four to 10 days given the right conditions.

"It was likely transported on someone's boat or boat trailer that had been to Caddo Lake which is the nearest body of water with a giant salvinia infestation," said Hedges.

If the plant is not attended to immediately it can cover the surface of the water causing oxygen depletions and sunlight penetration, which can cause fish and underwater plants to die off.

To ensure the plant is not growing and spreading, park rangers will be checking the area, and the Corps is looking at installing a boom retention system at the boat ramp to contain any future spread. The lake staff will also be installing warning signs around the lake to educate boaters about giant salvinia.

Sam Rayburn and B.A. Steinhagen Lakes, also in the Piney Woods Region, have documented cases of giant salvinia as well.

(Both photos) Crews from Texas Parks and Wildlife Department work to clean up the giant salvinia infestation at Lake O' The Pines. (Photos by Raymond Hedges.)

Wildlife conservation effort at Canton Lake goes to the dogs

To many, they are watchable wildlife. To some, they are a nuisance. They had also been the prime topic of discussion at public information meetings held in Canton, Okla., for the proposed construction improvements to Canton Dam.

"They" are prairie dogs, and in October, as the result of a coordinated effort between Tulsa District, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the Oklahoma Department of Wildlife Conservation, plans to relocate a town of prairie dogs at Canton Lake were finalized.

The prairie dogs at Canton had been the subject of a polarizing public debate for many years. Their town, next to Oklahoma Route 58A, lay in the path of the construction of the proposed new spillway. The many local residents who attended the public scoping meetings both for the National Environmental Policy Act and the subsequent project update meetings expressed concern about the fate of the prairie dogs who were long-standing Riverside Park inhabitants.

"We relocated the town as part of the mitigation plan that was negotiated for the Environmental Assessment completed under NEPA for this project," Tulsa District Biologist Patricia Newell said.

"Although the prairie dogs are not a protected species, and the Corps was under no federal mandate to relocate them, we appreciated the significant value they were to the local residents."

As part of the relocation, Prairie Dog Management Specialist Lynda Watson pulls a surprised prairie dog from a hole after flooding its burrow with sudsy water.

Lynda Watson, a prairie dog management specialist from Lubbock, Texas, was on hand to help with the relocation. She was able to flood the existing burrows with sudsy water, reach into the burrows with her bare hands and pull out the reluctant inhabitants too surprised to run.

Lynda Watson prepares the cute little critters for moving day. (Photos by Robert Steeds, Canton Resident Office.)

In all, about 70 prairie dogs were captured. They spent three days recuperating in cages protected from the elements, and then they were taken to their new home.

Pre-drilled starter holes lined with prairie hay were prepared at another site on Corps property, and the seven cages full of prairie dogs were released.

A prairie dog enjoys a pre-drilled starter hole lined with prairie hay at its new home.

"Many people who visited the town regularly live in Canton, so we did not want to move them too far," Newell said.

"We had to select a site that was open, with appropriate vegetation, and far enough away from their existing town that they would not run back to it. There is an abandoned air strip on Corps property that we found to be perfect."

In the subsequent weeks, the prairie dogs have colonized their new home, far enough from the proposed construction site to ensure their longevity, and close enough for their adoring public to watch.

I can never thank you enough

Col. Anthony C. Funkhouser
Commander, Tulsa District

Happy holidays to all our Tulsa Team members! Michelle and I wish you and your families a safe and joyous time. It is a time for us to reflect and be with our families and friends. Everyone continues to work extremely hard to succeed in their areas of responsibility.

I can never thank you enough for everything you all accomplish each and every day for our district and for our nation, especially our teammates volunteering overseas in support of the Global War On Terror. We hope you all enjoy your holiday meals, and we look forward to your safe return. I have been incredibly impressed with all you are doing. Keep those cards and emails coming with all your adventures!

This first quarter of Fiscal Year 2009 has gone by quickly with many success stories in a number of areas. One of the biggest is the receipt of our congressional supplemental funds.

With these funds, we have begun to complete repairs at our project sites that were damaged during the last two years of record flooding. We will see many repairs to our structures, the channels, and to the recreation areas that will directly impact safe operations and what the public sees at our facilities. It was a real team effort across all our organizations to get everything ready to advertise and then award the contracts. We will also see significant dredge operations to make repairs to the McClellan Kerr Arkansas River Navigation System over the remaining FY. We accumulated a lot of sand and silt from all the rains.

I also want to thank the employees at our project offices for their work hosting youth hunts this fall. I received countless notes of thanks for your efforts. You all positively impact our communities each and every day.

I had the great privilege of recently speaking at the Arkansas Governor's Conference on Waterborne Transportation and later at the Oklahoma Governor's Water Conference. It was great to see the ever-increasing emphasis being placed by the state organizations and also by the public and local communities.

Our planning and regulatory teams were recognized multiple times for all their efforts this last year. Our increased engagement with stakeholders has been recognized and valued. I want to distinguish Sue Haslett's and David Manning's teams for all their hard work!

I recently traveled to Kansas and met with our stakeholders for the Sand Creek and Cowskin projects in Newton and Wichita. Rich Bilinski and Mike Nance were highly regarded by each of these communities for delivering high quality projects on time and to standard.

We also extended an invitation for the Kansas Water Office to visit our headquarters and meet with their counterparts in an effort to better understand each organization's processes. They were very interested, and I look forward to hosting them next year.

In our military programs side, we have made some significant accomplishments. At Fort Sill our team successfully completed the Neighborhood Revitalization Project approximately six months early and allowed the installation to turn over all the units to the contractor of the Residential Construction Initiative prior to Nov. 1. Great job by the employees at the Fort Sill Resident Office.

Our work for the Department of Energy Pantex Plant continued under the International and Interagency Services program with turning over the Exterior Gas Main Project approximately three months early in November. The Project Delivery Team worked closely with DOE to manage changes to the project. The exceptional communication skills of our field personnel as well as a high level of understanding of the DOE client made this project a success.

Finally, we just completed our military customer surveys for this year. We have consistently placed in the top quarter year after year. This year, we scored our highest customer satisfaction scores ever, and we can attribute that to our high performing PDTs. Thanks to all the military programs employees for raising the bar and giving our partners the highest caliber service we can provide. January 2009 is just around the corner. It will be a transition year as we see a new presidential administration take office. I do not know what opportunities are ahead, but I know we will continue to focus on "execution" for the remainder of the FY. As our division commander, Brig. Gen. Cox says, we will "Get 'r dun!" Building Strong!

Fisherman finds long-lost class ring in 8-pound bass

BUNA, Texas — A class ring lost for decades in an (Fort Worth District) East Texas lake is back with its owner after turning up in a fish caught the day after Thanksgiving.

Joe Richardson of Buna told The Associated Press on Wednesday that he wishes he knew "how many fish it's been in."

Richardson was fishing at Lake Sam Rayburn about two weeks after his 1987 graduation from Universal Technical Institute in Houston when he lost the ring.

The 41-year-old mechanic says on Nov. 28 he received a call from a fisherman who had reeled in a more than 8-pound bass. The ring that had been in the fish had "Joe Richardson" etched in the band.

Richardson says the fisherman did an Internet search and made several calls before reaching him and returning the ring.

Buna is about 110 miles northeast of Houston.

Little Rock holds youth deer hunt at Millwood

Little Rock District's Millwood Tri-Lakes Project Office held a Youth Deer Hunt Nov. 1 and 2. Nine hunters were chosen in a random drawing, and among them they harvested six deer. The goal was to expose the young hunters to the outdoors and teach them safe hunting practices and principles.

The participants were from several Arkansas communities. They included Dillion Baldwin of White Cliffs, Trevor Kelly of Fouke, Brandon Cramer of Ashdown, Alyssa Patterson of Fouke, Matthew Glasgow of De Queen, Jason Hankins of Texarkana, Brittany Wright of Wilton, Chance Pearson of Lockesburg and Logan Wiley of Pine Bluff.

The youths had an opportunity to hunt on food plots planted around Millwood Lake by Corps staff. Four 8-point bucks, one 4-point buck, and one spike buck were harvested.

Hunt organizers offer special thanks to Gander Mt., Brookshire's, Edwards Sign, Larry Phillips Contracting, Five Hats Contracting, Alps, Changing Seasons, Commercial National Bank, Wal-Mart, Odis Machine Shop, and Harrington Forestry Road Maintenance Inc. for help with sponsoring the event.

(From left) Front row - Hunters - Dillion Baldwin, Trevor Kelly, Brandon Cramer, and Alyssa Patterson. Middle Row - Assistants (from left) Franklin Walker, Troy Love, Mickey Vaughn, and Robert Patterson. Back Row - Millwood Lake employees and volunteers - Roger Batchelor, Brooke Kervin, Derick Walker, Darell Argenbright, Frankie Johnson, Dustin Thomason, and Roy Burk (not pictured). (Photo provided by Millwood Tri-Lakes.)

Developing leaders look at strengths

By Diane Fortelka
Tulsa District

Ten Southwestern Division team members attended Clifton StrengthsFinder Performance Coach training in September at Gallup University in Omaha, Neb.

The Clifton StrengthsFinder measures the presence of talents in 34 general areas, or "themes." While talents (recurring patterns of thought, feeling, or behavior that can be productively applied) naturally exist within individuals, strengths (the ability to provide consistent, near-perfect performance in a specific task) must be developed and are the product that results when one's talents are refined with acquired skills and knowledge.

The StrengthsFinder assessment serves as a starting point for self-discovery. After completing an assessment, a group of developmental suggestions is customized to the individual's top five themes, called his or her signature themes. The coach then helps them develop and leverage their signature themes for greater personal engagement, productivity and effectiveness.

Developing leaders from across the Corps delved into strengths assessment during recent training in Omaha, Neb. (Photo provided by Tulsa District.)

Corps leadership encourages supervisors, managers and military commanders to take the Clifton StrengthsFinder. Leadership Development Program participants and interns also take StrengthsFinder as part of their developmental plan.

SWL emerging leaders attend conference

Clearwater Project Office Chief Park Ranger Randy Devenport and Little Rock District Civil Engineering Technician Sandy Higgins of the Central Arkansas Area Office were the newly selected Emerging Leaders from the Little Rock District for the Regional Leadership Development Program sponsored by Southwestern Division.

Regional Leadership Development is a three year program that gives those selected the opportunity to shadow senior leaders, work on project development teams and enhance personal development.

From left: Command Sgt. Maj. Michael L. Buxbaum, Jason Owen, SWF; Randy Devenport, SWL; SWD Commander Brig. Gen. Kendall Cox, Sandy Higgins, SWL; Brett Cowen, SWT and USACE Chief of Engineers Lt. Gen. Robert Van Antwerp. (Photo provided by Tulsa District.)

As part of the program, the first year ELs have the opportunity to attend the Summer Leadership Conference. This year both Randy and Sandy were selected to attend. They were among 39 Emerging Leaders selected Corps-wide. Each emerging leader was assigned a senior leader to shadow throughout the conference.

SWL partners with pro anglers to help disabled kids

By Cheri Dragos-Pritchard
Pacesetter Staff

Little Rock District park rangers joined with several other partners through the Catch a Special Thrill (C.A.S.T.) for Kids Foundation in October to give 25 disabled children a chance to fish with the pros at Table Rock Lake.

Table Rock's Chief Park Ranger Jeff Farquhar took the lead role as the committee chair for the event, bringing together sponsors, the foundation and, most importantly, the children and their families.

The C.A.S.T. for Kids foundation was formed in 1991 in Washington State. It now encompasses 23 plus states, but its mission has remained the same -- to get volunteers who love to fish together for a day with disabled and disadvantaged children who want to fish and leave their troubles on the shore.

"We partnered into this event because it was just the right thing to do," Farquhar said. "It was the perfect opportunity for the Corps to help kids enjoy the outdoors through the sport of fishing."

Farquhar went on to say he volunteered for the same reason, and he knows the kids now have a fun-filled memory that may well last them a lifetime.

"My favorite memory of this entire event is when a little boy bounded off the boat as it docked and ran up to me shouting, 'I got to drive the boat!' He probably ran to me because I was the first person he saw or because I was in uniform, but either way, his energy and excitement made it all worthwhile for me," the ranger declared.

Farquhar said all of the children caught fish. He also noted the children and a parent or guardian were teamed up with a professional angler or a professional fishing guide during the day out on the lake.

The other partners in the event were Bass Pro Shops, Big Cedar Lodge, Table Rock Bass Club, Branson Bass Club, Western Taney County Fire and Rescue, Zebco Rods and Reels, Plano Tackle Boxes and Eagle Claw Hooks.

Children, parents, park rangers and others gather on the docks during a recent C.A.S.T. for Kids Foundation event at Table Rock Lake. The C.A.S.T. for Kids Foundation partnered with the Corps and other businesses to give the children the opportunity to fish with a pro in October. (Photos provided by Table Rock Lake.)

Table Rock Park Rangers help register 25 disabled children for a day of fishing at Table Rock Lake.

"The partnership worked out great," Farquhar said. "They all had a particular niche that fit perfectly into this type of event. We had planned for this day for about one year. The C.A.S.T. Director Jim Owens even flew in from Seattle to witness this bigger and better event."

Also helping out during the day of the event were Table Rock Rangers Larry Hurley, Malcolm Fortson and Gary Hill. Farquhar's son, Landon, also helped along with Table Rock Operations Manager Jim Sandberg.

Galveston's enduring spirit

Col. David C. Weston
Commander, Galveston District

It is the holiday season, a time for joy and reflection. We experienced the highs and lows of a roller coaster year, making 2008 one that will stand out in Galveston District history for many years to come.

What stands out most to me is the enduring spirit of every one of you and the great personal courage and fortitude you displayed to continue to accomplish the district's mission while enduring several devastating events.

A tremendous example of your generosity and resilience is the new district record we just set for our Combined Federal Campaign donations this year—more than $31,000. For the district to set that record at a time when so many of you are still trying to rebuild says it all.

Despite the battering of a devastating hurricane season and the tough loss of some of our family members and colleagues, we stood strong as a district and delivered.

As I told the mayor of Galveston and several congressional members that visited following the impact of Hurricane Ike, Galveston District has stood shoulder to shoulder with the coastal communities of Texas for more than 128 years, and we are committed to aiding their recovery through the delivery of value added service now and in the future.

Though we have been scuffed up a bit - we have not been defeated, and we have incredibly important missions to accomplish to not only execute the program we expected to have in 2009, but to also repair and rebuild the structures that were damaged by Hurricane Ike. We literally have five years of workload to execute over the next two years.

To do that we must (despite all the organizational and personal challenges that I know are remaining) focus our energy and efforts like a laser now to achieve excellence in 2009. It will not be easy, but the strength I have seen displayed this past year tells me that together we can do it, and we have a lot of partners out there across USACE and private industry that are ready to help. The people, communities and industries that rely on us to safeguard and enhance their way of life here along the Texas coast are counting on us to stand tall and deliver.

On top of our original program, which includes the construction of the entire PF225 border fence in the Rio Grande Valley, we must complete repairs of the hurricane protection structures damaged by Hurricane Ike prior to the onset of next summer's storm season.

While these projects (Galveston Sea Wall, Freeport Levee, Texas City Levee, and Port Arthur Levee) stood strong against the ravages of Hurricane Ike, they did suffer from the erosive effects of the tremendous storm surge. These structures hit a home run this year, and must be ready to do the same this coming summer.

Doing so will be a challenge, but it is a challenge we must meet (and challenge industry to meet) in order to preserve the faith and confidence that our communities have in this district's and USACE's ability to deliver on their critical needs.

July 1, 2009 is the mark on the wall, and similar to the PF225 fence deadline, it is a date that will not slip.

2009 will be a year of moving forward for Galveston District and the coastal communities of Texas. We are going to move forward and get our homes rebuilt, our communities restored and our mission accomplished.

We will remember 2008 (the good, the bad and the ugly!), but we will look and move forward into a bright future. In Stephen Covey's "The Seven Habits of Highly Effective People," the second habit is to "begin with the end in mind." We know what we need to do - at home and at work. We know what projects need repair, and we are going to get it done.

It is hard to believe it has been two years since my family and I got to join your team. It has been a heck of a ride, and I am honored to serve the nation side-by-side with you.

Kim and I wish you all the best this Holiday Season and look forward to the challenges and opportunities of the New Year.

Worth Remembering ...

Great Salt Plains Dam arises in depression era

By Judy Bullwinkle
Historian

In 1941, Tulsa District completed the Great Salt Plains Dam, a project inherited from Little Rock District after a district boundary change. The dam, located on the Salt Fork of the Arkansas River, about 12 miles east of Cherokee, Okla., provided needed flood control as well as needed jobs in the economically depressed area.

Noted as a geologic wonder, located in north-central Oklahoma, the Great Salt Plains is a flat, barren, 11,000-acre piece of land known for it s selenite crystals.

A thin layer of salt, presumably from salt deposited by a shallow sea millions of years ago, covers the entire area. The salt remained because of saline groundwater slightly below the surface. The combination of concentrated saline water and gypsum create hour-glass shaped selenite crystals.

Native American cultures vied for the area – it was a natural attraction for large numbers of animals. Although tribes, such as the Cherokee, occupied the land, early treaties provided access to the valuable resources to multiple tribes. Not only did the salt attract animals for hunting, but both Native Americans and settlers used or sold the salt.

Other concerns for the area developed in the 20th century. Great interest in advancing local flood control projects as well as navigation projects had magnified following the disastrous Mississippi River flood of 1927.

An offshoot of the Flood Control Act of 1928, the comprehensive study of the Arkansas River and its tributaries became House Document 308 of the 74th Congress, first session, in 1936.

The "Arkansas 308 Report" became the starting point of all investigations in the area. Filled with information on the river basin and the possible methods of flood control as well as navigation, hydropower and irrigation possibilities, the three-volume report identified levees and unstable banks as well as possible sites for dams.

One of the dam sites was the Great Salt Plains Reservoir. The flood control benefit of this site was augmented with the establishment of a wild bird sanctuary.

As authorized, the dam fell under the supervision of Little Rock District to be operated as a unit of the coordinated reservoir system in the Arkansas River Basin. The project also carried the missions of recreation and the preservation of wildlife.

An additional factor in authorizing a project such as this was to provide jobs for the unemployed during the Great Depression.

From the passage of the Flood Control Act of 1936, the Works Progress Administration (WPA) had been funding and performing flood control construction projects under the guidance of the Corps of Engineers.

By late 1938 President Roosevelt directed that all WPA project construction would be supervised by the Corps.

This ruling cemented the Corps' role in civil works projects and ended an earlier threat that those functions would be completed by other federal agencies.

Construction began in September 1938. In January 1939, Southwestern Division Engineer Col. Eugene Reybold began to divide the large, overburdened Little Rock District.

With the establishment of Tulsa District that same year, he passed the work of several reservoir projects, including the Great Salt Plains dam.

During World War II, the area proved useful for training as a bomber range was established in the salt plains area.

Today, the Great Salt Plains Lake provides numerous recreation activities including bird watching, fishing, swimming and camping.

Located on the Central Flyway, the 32,000-acre national wildlife refuge, which borders the lake on its upper end, offers habitat for more than 300 species throughout the year. From April 1 through Oct. 31 visitors can also enjoy mining for selenite crystals.

SWL partners with foundation to establish trail

By Cheri Dragos-Pritchard
Pacesetter Staff

During a small Nov. 6 ceremony, Little Rock District Commander Col. Ed Jackson signed a partnership agreement with the Friends of David Foundation and Eastin Outdoor Inc. to establish David's Trail, a big 50-mile network of trails on the Ozark Highland Trail around the eastern edge Norfork Lake.

The trail is named after David Floyd who is noted on the Web site (www.davidstrail.org) as an active runner and a community leader, "who used his time and talent to better the lives of those around him."

As part of the partnership, the district will provide guidance and advice on trail location and layout, as well as GPS mapping of the trail.

"The Norfork section of the Ozark Highlands Trail was approved in the project's master plan in 1988," Mountain Home acting Operations Manager Jon Hiser noted. "Since then we have completed about 13 miles of an approximately 80 mile trail. The completion of this would connect the OHT in Arkansas with the Ozark Trail in Missouri. This system of trails form what is called the Trans-Ozark Trail, and it allows people to hike from St. Louis to Fort Smith. Completing David's Trail will help in finalizing that trail."

Construction through the partnership began on the trail in September, and the agreement calls for a five-year period for completion.

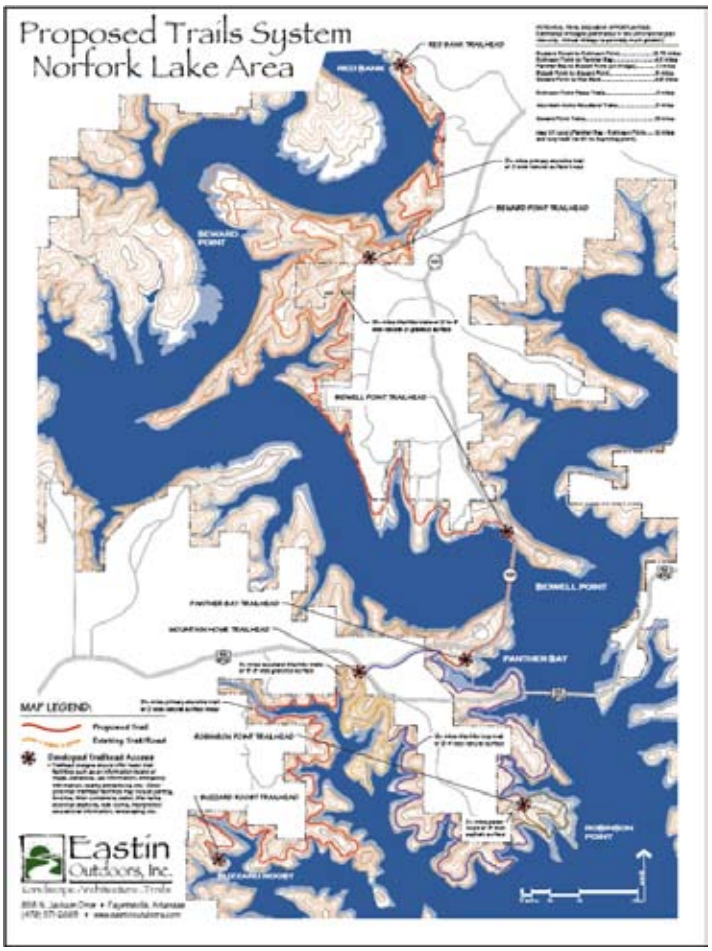
The trail will provide fitness opportunities such as walking, jogging, hiking, biking, fishing, camping and bird and wildlife watching or photography among other things for visitors.

Hiser commented that the partnership is beneficial to the Corps in many ways.

"One of the partners said that if you want to grow a tree for tomorrow, plant a seed today," Hiser recalled. "That's exactly what this partnership is all about. We're doing something great that will endure for years to come.

"Not only that, but this trail will promote an active lifestyle, and that ties directly into the Corps' effort to encourage the use of public lands and waters for health and wellness benefits." Hiser went on to say, "This trail will ultimately provide opportunities for people of all levels of fitness to get some exercise and fresh air in one of the most scenic areas in the U.S."

Jackson Rhoades, Col. Ed Jackson, and Cindi, Meredith, Leah and Anna Floyd stand at the entrance to David's Trail South. (Photo provided by Mountain Home Project Office.)



Combined forces recover cars from lake

By Rodney Beard
Operations and Maintenance Manager
Major Maintenance Unit, Tulsa District

Last December, a deer hunter found a partially submerged vehicle in Tulsa District's Kerr Lake near the Sallisaw Creek Park area. The Sequoyah County Sheriff's office determined the vehicle was only partially submerged because there were several others underneath it! The stolen vehicles had been pushed off a 30-foot bluff. Removing those vehicles was a challenge that took most of a year to accomplish.

At first, the Corps ensured environmental and navigation issues were addressed and left the removal up to the Cherokee Marshal's and the Sequoyah County Sheriff's Departments.

Due to the terrain and height of the bluff, removal from land was impossible. Tulsa District was then approached about using its marine fleet to remove the now totally submerged vehicles.

Since divers would be needed and the Huntington District dive team was scheduled to do inspections on the navigation system, an extra day was added to their schedule. Mother Nature had a different schedule, however, and heavy spring rains postponed all dive inspections.

This fall, Trooper Rodney Copeland of the Oklahoma Highway Patrol was ready to try again and approached Corps officials about the situation. Chuck Miles, Tulsa District dive coordinator, and Lt. Jeremy Allread, OHP dive coordinator, came up with a game plan. They worked out the details and coordinated to ensure safety.

On Nov. 4, Tulsa's Major Maintenance Unit; Vic Heister, Corps dive coordinator; Chad Ford, park ranger; the Sequoyah County Sheriff's Office, the Cherokee Nation Marshal Service, the OHP Dive Team and the OHP Lake Patrol joined forces to pull the vehicles from the lake. The operation went very well, and three stolen vehicles were recovered.

The OHP dive team was so impressed with the operation they have requested to work with the Corps for training purposes in the future.

Crew members from Tulsa's Major Maintenance Unit pull in one of three stolen vehicles recovered recently from Kerr Lake near the Sallisaw Creek Park area. (Photos provided by Tulsa District.)

After pulling the stolen cars from the lake, Major Maintenance crew members place the vehicles on the unit's barge. The Oklahoma Highway Patrol Dive Team and the Major Maintenance Unit worked together to remove the stolen vehicles from Kerr Lake.

Operation Santa Claus

Larry Staten, Biggs Area Office, Fort Worth District, was asked to be the Santa at the Operation Santa Claus at Fort Bliss, Texas.

Operation Santa Clause is an organization that collects new toys all year and gives them away to Soldiers that need help for Christmas. This program has been around for 51 years and Larry and his wife, Janis, served as Mr. & Mrs. Claus for the organization.

This year more than 536 Soldiers' Families were provided toys for their families. "Mrs. Claus and I were privileged to be the first Claus' to be part of this program," said Staten. "We had over 150 pictures taken with the Soldiers' Families. We were very humbled by this experience.

"The Army Corps of Engineers now has a Santa that made history at Fort Bliss, by being the first Santa in 51 years to help with Operation Santa Claus," he said.

Santa and Mrs. Claus, also known as Larry Staten and his wife Janis, receive a Commander's Coin from Command Sgt. Maj. Lynwood Lewis, 6th Air Defense Artillery Brigade at Fort Bliss, Texas.

Commentary

Remember diversity during the holidays

By Tammy L. Moody
Pacesetter Staff

One of Southwestern Division's strongest attributes is its people, a diverse group of men and women who work all across four districts keeping those districts running and maintaining relationships with our publics and stakeholders.

The holidays give us a great chance to honor that diversity and the many cultural differences we see in the faces around us. People of diverse faiths and cultures celebrate the holiday season in diverse ways. We have learned through the years to value our differences and to improve our relationships with others by learning more about them.

For instance, Christmas celebrates the birth of Jesus Christ. Jewish people celebrate Hanukkah. Another celebration this time of year is Kwanzaa. This African-American and Pan-African holiday celebrates family, community and culture. Our Muslim co-workers and our teammates in the Middle East could observe the Muslim celebration of Eid al-Adha around the second week in December this year.

Also in the second week of December, Buddhists observe Bodhi Day. Some Native American tribes and other groups have celebrations tied to the Winter Solstice, the first day of winter, when the night time hours are the longest.

These are just a few of the diverse holidays celebrated this time of year. Each of us holds our personal faith and our holiday traditions dear. Generally though, whatever we celebrate, the theme this time of year is compassion for humankind and gratitude and love for who we have in our lives. I wish you Happy Holidays and all the best in the New Year.

SWD hosts annual Hispanic Training Workshop, supports HENAAC 20th anniversary conference

By Edward Rivera
Pacesetter Staff

In coordination with the Hispanic Engineer National Achievement Awards Corporation's 20th anniversary the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers recently held its 5th Annual Hispanic Training Workshop in Houston, Texas.

Hosted by the Southwestern Division and supported by Galveston District, the workshop, themed "Going from Good to Great," took place the day before the HENAAC conference.

Fidel J. Rodriguez, the USACE HENAAC Project Delivery Team Program Manager, said this year's USACE Hispanic Training Workshop was one of the best.

"The workshop was a successful one, and on point to going from "Good to Great," he said.

There were approximately 120 participants representing a majority of the Corps' areas of responsibility. They had the opportunity to listen to HENAAC CEO Raymond G. Mellado, USACE leaders and engineers involved on the front to increase professional awareness in science, technology, engineering and mathematics among Hispanic youth.

HENAAC was established in 1989 as a means of identifying, honoring and documenting the contributions of outstanding Hispanic American Science, Technology, Engineering and Math professionals. This year the Corps participated as a platinum-level sponsor.

"This conference provides a unique opportunity for the Corps Family to interact with large segments of the Nation's Hispanic STEM community," said Chief of Engineers Lt. Gen. Robert L. Van Antwerp.

Chief of Engineers Lt. Gen. Robert Van Antwerp with Fort Worth's John Moreno after presenting him with a USACE 2008 Hispanic Award for Engineering.

"Our participation demonstrates our commitment to the principles of the Partnership Agreement: increasing those professions' awareness among Hispanic youth; facilitating the increased presence of Hispanic students in university-level STEM programs; and diversifying the USACE work force by marketing the Corps as an employer of choice."

Southwestern Division Regional Business Director Robert E. Slockbower said the workshop provided an exceptional opportunity through presentations, panels and breakout sessions to build a passionate team to drive USACE from 'Good to Great' through disciplined people, thought and action.

"It truly is all about people and how we recruit, train and retain the talent needed to meet the needs of the Army and the nation," said Slockbower.

This event is also dedicated to recognizing both Hispanics' military and civilian excellence in STEM. Corps employees recognized through the HENAAC award nomination process were: Wilmel Varela-Ortiz, Engineer Research and Development Center, Most Promising Engineer; Fidel J. Rodriguez, HQUSACE, Lifetime Achievement; Alfonso Quintero, South Pacific Division, Civil Engineering; Angel Fernandez and Maria E. De La Torre, North Atlantic Division, Professional Achievement; Nelson Mora, South Atlantic Division, Outstanding Technical; Jose M. Rosado, South Atlantic Division, Civil Engineering; John Moreno, Southwestern Division, Civil Engineering; and Enrique Villagomez, Southwestern Division, Professional Achievement.

"It felt great to be recognized for my achievements, especially knowing the high caliber folks who are involved," said John Moreno, Fort Worth District.

Slockbower said one of the great added benefits about our participation in HENAAC " is the opportunity it provides us to recognize and honor individual excellence by Corps members of our profession in a very public way along with other public and private organizations."

Moreno, along with other USACE members, engaged conference attendees during a career fair in which they exceeded their recruiting goal by making 54 tentative job offers. Two of which Moreno was able to make for his location, Fort Bliss in El Paso, Texas.

"Our partnership with HENAAC is one of several very important partnerships that will help us address many of the human capital challenges we face in the Corps, the Army and the nation," Slockbower said.

Rack 'em, stack 'em the Army way

By Ross Adkins
Pacesetter Staff

The U.S. Army has initiated some "extreme changes" in the way it is doing military construction, and the Corps of Engineers is at the helm leading these changes. But in order to move quickly and meet the needs of today's ever-changing mission requirements, the Corps has adapted the civil sector's modular construction techniques.

Recently Tulsa District was tasked to prepare the site and build a complete battalion-sized facility with housing and administrative space for 2,400 Soldiers including all Soldier amenities such as air conditioning, laundry, training rooms, offices, etc., and have it ready for use in SIX months!

Yes, that's right – six months. Using traditional processes and techniques, a project of this magnitude would take between two to three years to finish; however, according to Cliff Warren, the chief of Engineering and Construction Division, the Tulsa District team completed the fiscal year 2008 TRAP Relocatables project at Fort Sill, Okla., in a little more than six months.

TRAP stands for Training Resource Arbitration Panel. But what's relocatable? In order to meet timeline objectives, Project Engineer Brad Carter explained, "We used a building block concept -- rack and stack them much like you do with kids' Lego building blocks."

Adopting the modular building concept, the Tulsa team had the much-needed structures built in a factory, moved on site and erected. The finishing touches were added, and they were ready for occupancy before the troops got there.

"There was a lot of planning involved at the beginning," Carter said. "We had to have each module configured for a specific purpose. For instance, in a barracks, you may have six units on the bottom and six on top for a total of 12 modular units to house the Soldiers."

These modules are individually designed either as an open area for a large room, or smaller areas that contain bathrooms, laundry or utilities such as air conditioning and heating. Another multiple modular unit building may be filled with offices or training rooms.

This brigade-sized project required 25 buildings containing 344 individual modular units. Each unit had to be trucked in and craned into place.

"Once all the units were in place, you had to line them up exactly, build stairs, put in the flooring, finish the interiors and hook everything up," Carter said.

Contractors stack modular units together that were built in a factory and moved to the site to be erected. The finishing touches will be added so they will be ready for occupancy before the troops get there. (Photo provided Tulsa District.)

With manufacturing of the units taking place in five different manufacturing plants, Carter said there were a lot of challenges.

"But you know what? If you set the ground rules and have people on the ground willing to communicate, you get the job done."

This was the first time the Tulsa District Team had tackled this kind of construction -- but it won't be the last.

"I see this as just a beginning," Warren said. "A number of other installations are also going to this modular style of construction because it gets things built and ready to use when they are needed, not years down the line."

Carter explained, "If you used the traditional method of military construction that is built to last decades, a young recruit going through this facility would probably be a noncommissioned officer by the time the same traditional style facility could be completed."

Warren said Tulsa District expects to build another similar facility on Fort Sill that could be almost twice the size of this one. He's confident that the communication and coordination lessons learned on this TRAP project will serve the team well when it tackles the next one.

Little Rock District league still bowling after 70 years

By Cheri Dragos-Pritchard
Pacesetter Staff

Twenty years ago the Arkansas Gazette ran a feature article about Little Rock District's bowling league that stated it was amazing for a league to remain organized after five decades – that same league celebrated 70 years together this year.

None of the original members are still on the team. However, 10 members have been bowling in the league for 20 years or more, with four of them for more than 44 years.

The league debuted at the Pla-Mor bowling lanes some time around September 1938 and remained there until 1945. From there they journeyed to Center Lanes until 1961 when they relocated to Park Plaza Lanes. Then in 1976, they moved again. This time they went to Professor Bowl South. After six seasons there, they moved to Pleasure Lanes for one season and then Pike Lanes in 1984. After another three moves around the Little Rock area, the team has settled in at Millennium Bowl.

"We're just like any other league," League secretary Rick Amos noted. "However, we are unique in that we have a need to rotate out our team players. Some of them have duty obligations that take them away from the area. So unlike other teams, most nights we don't have the same team members participating in the league."

The league has seen some of the teams win the championship title for several years in a row and some members reach great heights in their hobby.

According to Foster McConnell, a league member for 46 years, the Engineer League has produced four bowlers who made it into the Arkansas Hall of Fame. They are Conn Wilson (the creator of the league), Charles Ketzcher, Homer Rabjohn and Carl McConnell.

"Bowling in 1955 cost 35 cents a game," McConnell said. "It was an astounding $7.50 for all five men to bowl three games."

McConnell mentioned that for 34 years the Engineer League was an all male team. Then the Corps experienced a reduction in force, and the teams voted and agreed to change the rules to allow spouses and family members to bowl in the league.

"This brought about a more fun league and changed a long standing bowling tradition," McConnell noted.

Amos said he is due to retire and move back to his hometown of Fort Smith next year. However, before he leaves, he would like to see the league grow and continue on for many years to come.

"We've recently established a display case memorializing some of the history of the league," Amos stated. "I'd like to hand this over to someone who will keep the league together and at the same time make sure all of our records are kept for historical purposes. It is truly amazing for a league to stay organized for as long as this league has. I think it should be recognized and preserved."

Pin of Honor Recipients

Charlie Reaves	1953-2001	48 Years
Jack Stanley	1961-Now	47 Years
Foster McConnel	1962-Now	46 Years
Charlie Blagg	1962-Now	46 Years
Jerry Noggle	1964-Now	44 Years
Leon Gray	1970-Now	38 Years
Wayne Bryant	1971-Now	37 Years
Shirley McConnell	1972-Now	36 Years
Bonnie Noggle	1972-Now	36 Years
Janie Robinson	1988-Now	20 Years
Steve Robinson	1988-Now	20 Years

Little Rock District Bowling League: Front Row from left: Leon Gray, Bonnie Noggle, Shirley McConnell, Jack Stanley. Back Row from left: Jerry Noggle, Wayne Bryant, Foster McConnell, Charlie Blagg. Not pictured: Janie Robinson and Steve Robinson. (Photo provided by Bowling League.)

Martin Luther King Jr., federal holiday – Jan. 19

By Gerard M. Francis
SWL EEO Manager

"I have a dream that one day this nation will rise up, live out the true meaning of its creed, 'We hold these truths to be self-evident; that all men are created equal.'" Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., spoke those words on Aug. 28, 1963 in Washington D.C.

Today, as we enter a new era in America's history, it is good to reflect on what distinguished Martin Luther King Jr. from others, and why he is worthy of our remembrance.

Dr. King changed our nation forever through his leadership, service and clarity of vision.

On the Martin Luther King Jr. Federal Holiday we honor the lasting legacy of this great American, remembering the ideals for which he fought, and we recommit ourselves to ensuring that our country's promise extends to all Americans across this great land.

A piece of the dream was realized on Nov. 4 this year, 40 years after his death, when Americans elected the first African-American man as president of the United States of America.

Many consider Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. to be one of the greatest figures of the 20th century, certainly one of the greatest orators in American history.

Like other heroic figures, Dr. King was uniquely prepared to meet the challenges of his time and equally willing, even eager, to answer the call to leadership.

As the pre-eminent champion of civil rights and nonviolent social change, Dr. King dominated the social landscape in the third quarter of the 20th century as America came to terms with centuries of discrimination and disenfranchisement.

"A piece of the dream was realized on Nov. 4 this year, 40 years after his death, when Americans elected the first African-American man as president of the United States." -- Gerard Francis

Some Americans remember well Dr. King and the tumultuous events that swirled about him. Some were even touched directly by his eloquent words and courageous deeds.

Yet many younger Americans know of him only through a sound bite of famous oratory. They have no substantive knowledge of who he was and how he led America through a revolution for justice.

Our nation has made progress toward realizing Dr. King's dream, yet the work to achieve liberty and justice for all is never ending.

Today, we celebrate the bridges Dr. King created and built through his many tribulations of personal attacks, abuse, arrests and assaults. Those bridges were global, and they were for all of mankind that led from segregation to desegregation, injustice to justice, inequality to equality, indignity to dignity and from the back house to the White House.

Dr. King was driven by the simple desire to see all Americans enjoy equal rights and opportunities. While some other African-American leaders espoused separation and violence, Dr. King envisioned a united America created through nonviolent social change.

His philosophy of nonviolence flowed logically from his upbringing in the African-American church and his preparation for the ministry. Over the course of 14 grueling years, he molded the tactic of nonviolent, direct action from an admirable theory into a powerful force for concrete social change.

Through it all, he motivated others through his mastery of the spoken word and his willingness to suffer on behalf of others. His commitment to civil and human rights eventually cost him his life.

Dr. King's legacy is now enshrined in a national holiday, and will endure into the 21st century and beyond.

Please join the Little Rock District in celebrating this great American's memory by performing acts of kindness through service to others and honor his lasting legacy.

Lewis named new chief of operations for Little Rock

By Cheri Dragos-Pritchard
Pacesetter Staff

Andrea Lewis has been named Little Rock District's chief of Operations Division. She replaces Lee Bass, who retired Dec. 3.

In her new job, Lewis will serve as the principal technical advisor and consultant to the district commander for the operations and maintenance program for navigation, flood control, recreation, natural resources management and hydropower production.

She will manage water resources infrastructure worth $6.5 billion, including 13 locks and dams on the Arkansas River, 12 multipurpose dams and lakes, seven hydroelectric powerhouses and 178 public parks and recreation areas that log more than 30 million visits a year. The district operations and maintenance budget averages more than $80 million annually.

Lewis has 20 years of federal service with the Corps. Prior to her selection for the new post, she was the assistant chief of Operations Division.

Lewis holds a bachelor's degree in Wildlife Biology from Texas State University and a master's degree in Geography and Environmental Resources from Southern Illinois University Carbondale. She is certified by the National Wildlife Society as a wildlife biologist, the natural resource management equivalent to a professional engineer.

Lewis worked in St. Louis District before coming to Little Rock. She also served on several professional developmental assignments and project development teams.

Lewis is involved in the National Turkey Federation, National Wildlife Society and American Business Women's Association. Her hobbies include running, reading, hunting, fishing and being outdoors.

SWD, SWF attend SAMMC–North groundbreaking

Col. Billy G. Tollison, deputy commander, Southwestern Division, and Col. Christopher W. Martin, commander, Fort Worth District, attended the groundbreaking marking the beginning of construction of the San Antonio Military Medical Center – North on Fort Sam Houston. The construction of SAMMC-North involves additions and renovations to Brooke Army Medical Center that will add almost 738,000 square feet to the existing hospital, expanding the facility roughly 50 percent. A multi-story addition will house a Level 1 trauma center, operating rooms, clinical and administrative space and an extension of BAMC's internationally acclaimed burn center. A 5,000 space parking garage will also be built, as well as a central energy plant. Approximately 288,000 square feet of the existing BAMC facilities will be renovated. (Photo by Brian Dwyer, Joint Program Management Office.

Lights, camera, action!

A production film crew for the Discovery Channel films Engineering and Construction engineers Mark McMahon and Scott Leimer as they re-create a post-Hurricane Ike inspection of the seawall in Galveston. The segment will be part of a program on hurricanes set to air in Spring 2009. The film crew visited Nov. 13-14 and also took part in a survey boat mission to learn how the Corps works to open waterways after a hurricane. They also visited the Texas City levee, which protected the vital petrochemical industry during Ike.

Pacesetter Points

Congratulations

SWD headquarters retiree **Bill Johnson** received the Lifetime Service Award from the Texas Section, American Society of Civil Engineers Oct. 3. The award, given once every five years by ASCE, honors his enduring service and leadership at the local, state and national levels. He served nearly 41 years as a Civilian and commissioned officer before his retirement in 1998.

Little Rock's **Steve Corley** was selected Oct. 22 as the new chief of surveys section.

Laura Cameron of Little Rock's Planning Office graduated Oct. 27 with a master's degree in Civil Engineering from Colorado State University.

Teresa Gonzalez joined the Readiness and Operations staff, Southwestern Division headquarters in October. Her primary duties include serving as the point of contact for the Family Readiness Program and for Military Personnel. Gonzalez also serves as a staff sergeant in the U.S. Army Reserve.

Jason C. Hauck, P.E., has been named as the new Director of the Fort Bliss Program Office with the Fort Worth District.

Jeff Mahaffey joined the SWD headquarters as a logistics specialist, USACE Logistics Agency, Nov. 17, to provide support region wide. Since 2002, he has served in Fort Worth District, including a deployment to Iraq during Task Force Restore Iraqi Oil. He is a member of the Texas Army National Guard and has also completed a deployment to Iraq as an infantryman.

Little Rock's **Andrea Lewis** was selected Nov. 21 as the new Chief of Operations.

Retirements

Ronald Hudson, an environmental protection specialist at Little Rock's Russellville office, retired Oct. 31 after 26 years of service.

Lee Bass, chief of Operations for Little Rock, retired Dec. 3. Bass held that post since April 2006. His 34 years of service included serving as Little Rock's Assistant Chief of Programs and Project Management, as well

Continued on next page

as other leadership positions stateside and in Europe. He was chapter director of Arkansas Society of Professional Engineers, and served in various offices of the Razorback Post of the Society of American Military Engineers. He is a Registered Professional Engineer in Arkansas.

Judy Bullwinkle, Little Rock's librarian and Southwestern Division's historian, retires Dec. 21 after 25 years of service.

Little Rock's **Mobie Price**, Millwood Lake Operations Manager, retires Dec. 22 after 32 years of service.

David Johnston, an engineering technician at Little Rock's Clearwater Lake, retires Dec. 31 after 25 years of service.

Robert Woolems, a lock and dam operator at Little Rock's Pine Bluff Project Office, retires Dec. 31 after 31 years of service.

Tommy Perritt, a lock and dam operator at Little Rock's Pine Bluff Project Office, retires Dec. 31 after 24 years of service.

Gayle King, a power plant senior electrician at Little Rock's Mountain Home Project Office, retires Dec. 31 after 13 years of service.

Jerry Stephens, a power plant mechanic at Little Rock's Table Rock Lake office, retires Jan. 2 after 34 years of service.

Lou Ann Stewart, an administrative assistant at Little Rock's Table Rock Lake office, retires Jan. 30 after 29 years of service.

Garry Alverson, a lock and dam operator at Little Rock's Pine Bluff Office, retires Jan. 31 after 22 years of service.

Condolences

Jayne Hopson, 84, former Tulsa District office manager, passed away Sept. 29.

Jack Frauenthal, brother to Little Rock's **Max Frauenthal** of the Planning and Environmental Office, passed away Oct. 15.

David Colen Johnson Sr., 79, Tulsa District retiree, died Oct. 19.

Randy Becker, a long time employee of the Little Rock District who retired May 27 from the Natural Resources Management Section, passed away Oct. 27.

Irma Reznicek, the mother of **Ken Reznicek**, Tulsa District, passed away in October.

Cale Kastanek, 29-year-old nephew of **Eugene Kastanek**, attorney in SWD headquarters' Office of Counsel, died in an auto racing accident Nov. 7 in West Virginia. He was a civilian executive jet pilot who raced cars as a hobby.

Louise Hirchert, mother to Janelle and mother-in-law of **Robert Slockbower**, director, Regional Business Directorate, SWD headquarters, passed away at her residence in Savoy, Ill., Nov. 8.

Don Ringeisen, former chief of Tulsa District's Regulatory Branch, passed away Nov. 18. He retired in 1991. He was a Korean War veteran and had worked at Corps lakes as a civil engineer. He is survived by his wife Bernice and daughters Carol and Cindy.

Cathy (Cooper) Hendrix of the Tenkiller Lake Office lost her mother Nov. 23.

Tommy Lee "Ricky" Wright, 51, husband of **Lanora Wright**, regional economist, Planning Division, Programs Directorate, SWD headquarters, passed away Nov. 26.

Charles Green, father of Little Rock's **Kyle Green** of Planning and Environmental Office, passed away Dec. 3.

Retired Little Rock Lock Master **Homer Moore,** father of **Mark Moore**, Programs Directorate, Real Estate Division, HQ SWD, passed away Dec. 3.

Family Matters

Little Rock's **Jesse Palmer** of Nimrod-Blue Mountain and his wife, Tosha, are the proud parents of Heidi Kathlene. She was born Sept. 27, weighing 6 pounds, 15 ounces and was 20 inches long.

Johnny Bray, Tulsa District, welcomed his first grandson, Bret Daniel Burdick, into this world Oct. 16. He weighed 7 pounds, 6 ounces and was 19.5 inches long. Rumor control has it he will be a future Sooner.

Presley Elizabeth Lawrence entered the world Oct. 19, weighing 6 pounds, 1 ounce, and measuring 19.5 inches. She is the daughter of Erin Hudson and Richard Lawrence, the granddaughter of **Mary Beth Hudson** of Tulsa District's Public Affairs Office, and Corbin's little sister. She spent some time in the neonatal intensive care unit clearing up some lung issues but is now home and, as of this writing, FINALLY gaining some weight.

Little Rock's **Rod Gaines** of the Design Branch and his wife, Angela, welcomed Christopher

Continued on next page

Samuel into the family Oct. 28. He weighed 8 pounds, 12 ounces and was 20 inches long.

Little Rock's **Bruce Johnson** of Nimrod-Blue Mountain and **Connie Johnson** of Russellville Project Office are proud first-time grandparents of Chloe Ray Johnson. She was born Oct. 28, weighed 5 pounds, 15 ounces and was 20.75 inches long.

Outreach

PJ Spaul of Little Rock's Public Affairs Office gave a presentation in December called "Plan Your Next Move: Develop a Media Strategy in Three Pages or Less" to a group of about 35 communicators at the Double Tree Hotel in Little Rock. The presentation was part of a 2 and one-half day conference with the theme "Media Relations Made Easy."

The conference was sponsored by the Cooperative Extension System, University of Arkansas Pine Bluff, Prairie View (Texas A&M) Cooperative Extension Program, National Center for Foreign Animal and Zoonotic Disease Defense, and Association of Extension Administrators.

Good news everyone, OPM has extended the open season through Jan. 31.

Information received from the Office of Personnel Management late Dec. 5 allows for belated FEHB enrollments through Jan 31. Employees who need to utilize the belated election opportunity will be required to contact a benefits counselor directly at the toll free number for ABC-C, 1-877-276-9287, or TDD 1-877-276-9833. Please refer to the ABC-C website for the overseas phone numbers.

You may make belated Open Season enrollment changes to your FEHB Program, Federal Employees Dental and Vision Insurance Program, and the Federal Flexible Spending Account Program if FEHB benefit changes affect your enrollment decisions in these programs. You will have an extended enrollment opportunity through January to make any enrollment changes in these programs.

Also, if you make a belated Open Season change to your enrollment in these programs, the effective dates of the belated change will vary among the programs. Depending on the timing of your change and your pay periods it may take one or more pay periods for your Federal Benefits deductions/allotments to be adjusted to match your new election. You need to know if you make a belated Open Season change and you have claims for services incurred in 2009 under your former plan, you and/or your provider may be responsible for reimbursing the former plan for any benefits paid.

Effective Dates

Belated FEHB changes will take effect the first day of the pay period that starts on or after Jan. 1. Belated FEDVIP changes will take effect Jan. 1. Belated FSAFEDS changes will take effect on Jan. 1, or the day after the change is received, whichever is later.

Employees will not be able to make belated Open Season changes through EBIS.

Little Rock Halloween costume contest winners

Toby Isbell, an ACE-IT visual information specialist, earned first place in Little Rock's Halloween Costume Contest, with his "Indiana Isbell and the Corpse of the Engineer" costume and personally designed movie poster. (Photos by Cheri Dragos-Pritchard.)

Little Rock's Regulatory crew earned the Best Team Award for their cleaning crew routine and cleaning supply shirts that spelled out "PC Refresh!" on the backs. It was obviously a topic on everyone's mind as the reveal produced laughter throughout the crowd.

Little Rock retirees rock the boat

In October almost 200 retirees and volunteers enjoyed lunch and a barge ride up the Arkansas River to celebrate the many years of service the retirees have given to the district.