



US Army Corps  
of Engineers  
Tulsa District

# TULSA

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## DISTRICT RECORD

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Vol. 28, No. 2



### Change of Command

# Col. Miroslav Kurka Assumes Command

See story on pages 2 and 3



Fifty-four civilian volunteers have deployed from Tulsa District in support of the Restore Iraqi Oil mission in Iraq. Four are currently serving and one is preparing to serve. See story on page 4 of employees who have served.



Col. Miroslav Kurka  
District Commander

*Col. Miroslav Kurka is a native of Chicago, Illinois. He was commissioned a Second Lieutenant in the United States Army Corps of Engineers in 1980 from the United States Military Academy at West Point with a Bachelor of Science degree. He holds a Master of Science degree in Administration from Central Michigan University and a Master of Science degree in National Resource Strategy from the Industrial College of the Armed Forces. His military schooling includes the United States Army Engineer Officer Basic and Advanced Courses, the Combined Arms and Staff Services School, the Command and General Staff College, and the Industrial College of the Armed Forces.*

## Commander's Corner

Last July when I was informed that I would be joining the Tulsa District, I was thrilled. The Tulsa District has a tremendous reputation for excellence.

The district is one of the Corps leaders in the number of volunteers for duty overseas in the Global War on Terrorism. Your work for our military customers and in support of our civil works and environmental missions is consistently exceptional. It is a great honor to be your district commander, and I want to thank you for the super welcome that you have given my family and me.

Col. Robert Suthard and his lovely wife, Nancy, have been a superb command team here in Tulsa. I want to express my

appreciation to them for the absolute first class manner in which they assisted my wife, Bonnie, and me with our transition. Every door was open to us, all our questions were answered, and we were immediately made to feel a part of the Tulsa Corps Family. We wish them the very best as they move to their new post in Virginia.

The most important component of any organization is the individual member. I very much look forward to meeting all of you in the coming weeks and months. Your sacrifice and service to our great nation makes a real difference. The opportunity to work with such an outstanding group of professionals is a true privilege.



Participating in the Change of Command ceremony (left to right); Lieut. Col. Brett Perry, Deputy Commander; Col. Miroslav Kurka, incoming commander; Col. Jeffrey Dorko, Commander, Southwestern Division; Col. Robert Suthard, Jr., outgoing commander; and Mr. John Roberts, Deputy District Engineer for Programs and Project Management.

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**District Commander**  
COL Miroslav Kurka

**Public Affairs Officer**  
W. Ross Adkins

**Editor**  
Mary Beth Hudson



## Change of Command Col. Miroslav Kurka

On June 30th, Tulsa District welcomed Col. Miroslav Kurka as its newest commander and district engineer.

In a traditional Change of Command ceremony, the district's flag was passing to Col. Kurka.

About two hundred family, friends and civic leaders attended the ceremony held in the Oklahoma State University auditorium in Tulsa, Okla. The ceremony was followed by a reception hosted by Col. Kurka and his family.

Representing the Southwestern Division was Col. Jeffrey Dorko. Col. Dorko received command of the division office just days before.



Jessica Hunt honored the event with the "National Anthem" and "America the Beautiful".



New Chief of Engineers MG Strock (left) inspects with outgoing Chief of Engineers Maj. Gen. Flowers (right).

## Maj. Gen. Carl A. Strock Named 51st Chief of Engineers



*Maj. Gen. Carl A. Strock took command of the U. S. Army Corps of Engineers in a ceremony on July 1 at Fort Myer, Va. Gen. Peter J. Schoomaker, Army Chief of Staff, hosted the ceremony. Strock replaces Lt. Gen. Robert B. Flowers who retired during the same ceremony after 35 years of Army service.*

*Strock is the 51<sup>st</sup> Chief of Engineers. The U.S. Senate confirmed his nomination as Chief of Engineers on June 25, with promotion to the rank of Lieutenant General. However, the promotion will not take place until later this summer.*

*"I am deeply honored and truly humbled to stand before you today," said Strock. "I am honored because there is no greater privilege than to be entrusted with command when your nation is at war."*

*Strock has served the Army 33 years. He was previously assigned as the Director of Civil Works, and the Director of Military Programs at the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Washington D.C. He also served as Deputy Director of Operations for the Coalition Provisional Authority, Operation Iraqi Freedom.*

*As Chief of Engineers he leads the world's largest public engineering agency with 35,000 employees.*

# Employees support post-war recovery

At first glance, James Holder, a 6'3" lanky manager from the Tulsa District appears intimidating. His large stature towers over most of his American and Iraqi colleagues, but his Texas accent, jovial smile, and genuine laugh morph him instantly into what one co-worker describes as "a gentle giant."

In his short time as project manager, he has become one of the most recognized Army Corps of Engineers faces in southern Iraq. He has visited nearly every distribution-, gas-, or port-related facility from Iraq's southernmost point, traveling north to a bombed out bottling company near Baghdad. He has had dinner with Oil Ministry officials, sipped tea with a family along a pipeline, and visited the birthplace of Abraham.

He describes his role in the Basra area as a team leader, only using the word manager when asked his title. He liaises and facilitates, sayings "we" when referring to project successes and "I" only when making personal observations. He has developed personal relationships with Corps employees, contractors, and Iraqi nationals, investing himself personally in small pockets of Iraq's oil fields.

"I have a special relationship with the KBR Project Managers K.Y. (Tseng) and Jim Humphries," said Holder in response to questions about his established relationships in Iraq. "They have helped me out tremendously. They are very motivated in the field. I have to give them credit for the way I have been able to interact with the refinery and LPG staff, and if it wasn't for them, I think I would be lost," he said.

As project manager, Holder meets frequently with management staff at the refinery and the Natural Gas Liquefaction and Liquid Petroleum Gas plants in the south. He also serves as PM over construction and rehabilitation of the import facilities at the Khor Az Zubayr Marine Terminal.

"When I first came, it was completely shut down, and the plant was never really maintained properly. There was no electrical power to operate the plant," Holder said in regard to the NGL Plant, his proudest professional accomplishment in Iraq.

The facilities that link Iraq's rich oilfield, a key aspect of post-war rebuilding, are scattered in desolate areas in the south. Corps employees had to quickly learn how to navigate the unmarked roads which were sometimes blown over by sandstorms.

"We were able to get power generation in there (NGL) with three generators that came online, but sometimes we would start the plant up and have break downs. There were pipes corroded and leaky fluid," he said. "We had to shut the plant down to get that fixed. We still have some set backs with the electrical grid system going off and mechanical problems with the turbine, but now everything is going smooth and operating."

He arrived in country in late August 2003 after the Corps' initial job of extinguishing oil well fires was complete. As the agency moved into a more proactive phase in redeveloping Iraq, Holder's objective was to bring key facilities online to help restore oil production to pre-war levels.

"I looked at this mission a lot like history and after WWII, the rebuilding of West Germany," said Holder. "The only difference is that West Germany did not have the oil resources like Iraq."

Holder's projects have allowed him to travel throughout southern Iraq, as well as more northern cities like Al Nasariya, Baghdad, Taji, Al Amarah, and the Iran border. In fact, Holder was in Nasariya on the day the Italian embassy was bombed and 17 Italian soldiers were killed.

"First there was a big boom and then a mushroom cloud. We were probably two to three miles away," he said. "We were wondering, was this an accident, or was it planned, or was it controlled demolition of ordnance?"

"After we got word that there was a bombing and some fatalities, we decided to load up and come back where it was more secure," he said. "It was a feeling of concern, not fear, as what might happen next."

He describes leaving Baghdad's Green Zone, a two-square mile compound surrounded by heavy cement walls and coalition forces, a wake-up call to the realities of working in a war zone like Iraq.

"Andrew (Miller) and I were in Baghdad and we went to the Gas Bottling Company with an armored car. The KBR guys had two escorts in front and back, and they were covering every bridge and underpass. They had been shot at before," he said. "That experience was a bigger wake-up call than the Nasariya blast."

But overall, his time in Iraq has been a balance of work and personal experiences that have nothing to do with the hostile zones. When he speaks to his family, his wife and three children,

he usually talks about the people he has met.

"What I told my wife, when I first got here, is that what I envision Hell might be like is southern Iraq — the conditions the people live in and the heat they endure," Holder said.

When he speaks about the people, his voice gets a little quieter and his gaze becomes a bit more distant. Particularly, when he speaks of a family he met while inspecting a pipeline break.

"We met up with them and saw how they lived and the conditions in which they lived. It made me thankful for how my life is and the stuff I've been able to have in my life," he said. "What gets me is when people (in the United States) complain about their lifestyle, and they've never seen the way some people live."



**Now, that's refined!**  
James Holder pauses from work to have tea before the start of a meeting at the refinery.

Through Holder's eyes, the Broadcut family who invited him into their home, live in deplorable conditions in the middle of the desert. Their home is a fenced-in chicken coop with corrugated metal, no running water, no restroom, and no electricity.

"We visited after a heavy rainstorm, and I could see blankets and the sleeping pads on the soaking wet sand. The living room was in the chicken pen, and we sat on the ground," he said of the first of many visits he has made to their home. "I noticed that, compared to what we are used to, it was deplorable living conditions."

"And the big surprise," he said looking up smiling. "They seemed perfectly healthy; they weren't dehydrated, and they seemed genuinely happy."

It was after that visit that Holder, along with several Corps employees in Basra and his key KBR project managers, decided to help the family.

On Christmas Eve, they delivered bags of clothes, toys, water, food, and health products. The day after Christmas, they replaced the family's small, tattered tent with a brand new, deluxe cloth tent made for the harsh Iraqi desert. The Iraqi family, along with Holder and the other American soldiers and civilians serving in Iraq, worked side by side to erect the new home.

"What is so special about this family is that these people aren't out on the road begging. One of my thoughts is that it seems a lot of families send kids out on the road with their hands out to beg," said Holder. "They were off the road, interested in us and not in just receiving money, food, or water — which we gave them, but they didn't ask for it."

Holder did receive a turquoise ring that he wears on his pinky finger from the family's father. In the Arabic culture, it is customary that if one receives a gift, the gift should be reciprocated at a later date.

Holder has worked and played hard, making his life in Iraq technical and personal. Blending his talent as a natural leader and compassion for human life, Holder has left behind lasting impressions among Task Force Restore Iraqi Oil workers, including Corps employees, contractors, and the local Iraqi management who threw a going away party for Holder.

The Southern Refinery Company management staff, along with KBR project managers, bid Holder farewell at the Basra Refinery where he was treated to traditional Iraqi and Lebanese appetizers and pastries. Holder was presented a framed Arabian dagger from all and a personal tea set from Mr. Thaeer, the SRC director general.

"During my four and half months, I have made friends that I will cherish the rest of my life," he said. "One of the saddest parts is leaving, though, without seeing a conclusion on projects that SRC, KBR, and Task Force RIO worked so hard to justify and request funding for."

Holder, an avid hunter, returned to the United States in time to catch the last six weeks of the Oklahoma and Texas quail season with his three pointers.

*Holder returned to the United States Jan. 3, 2004.*

*by Carolyn Vadino  
FEST-RIO Public Affairs*

September 11 is no longer just a day in the fall; it is synonymous with a mixture of emotions that runs from the highest points of happiness to lowest pits of sadness, anger, and rage. And as the years pull away from 2001, some individuals' sentiments grow weaker with the passing time. However, for Jeromy Caldwell, 2003's anniversary took on a whole new meaning.

Caldwell, a 36-year-old park ranger and father of two from Hugo, Okla., was trading in his life and work at Hugo Lake for desert heat, sand, and the unknown. As people across the world were mourning a tragedy, he was walking down a tarmac towards a plane destined for Iraq.

"It was poignant when we left," said Caldwell. "The preparation we went through (at CRC, Fort Bliss Texas) and all the soldiers that were getting ready to go off to war meant extra since it was September 11th."

Ready for the unexpected, Caldwell landed in Kuwait and convoyed soon after to his new, four-month home in Basrah, Iraq. The transplanted park ranger turned quality assurance representative is one of about 70 U.S. Army Corps of Engineers



*Jeromy Caldwell and one of man's best friends in Iraq.*

civilians that volunteered to be part of Task Force Restore Iraqi Oil. For Caldwell, the biggest difference in his daily routine is his uniform; trading in the green pants, gray shirt, and badge of a park ranger for desert camouflage, combat boots, and armor gear.

"It is very similar work because, as a park ranger, we are wearing a uniform; we don't have guns; and are driving around in a somewhat unsecured environment checking, reporting, and inspecting things," he said. "And here, we do pretty much the same thing. We wear different uniforms, but it is still a uniform; we don't carry a gun; and we are driving around in a very unsecured environment inspecting and reporting."

As a quality assurance representative, Caldwell's job was to travel from nine different locations in the North Rumaila oilfield and document the daily work being done at each facility. At the end of the day, his quality assurance reports served as the eyes and ears for the field.

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“After I got here, I took it a step further and started a photo report in addition to a written report,” he said. “That way, others who come after me can read exactly what I did and see exactly what I saw.”

And Caldwell arrived in Iraq at a time that the results of looting were still visible. “I am glad when I first came out here that it had not been totally cleaned, the extent of the vandalism that had taken place,” he said, stating it was one of the most profound things he has seen. “You can’t take a picture or describe it when you see the electrical stuff completely torn down.”

Caldwell has had plenty of profound realizations while driving through the southern oil fields. And obviously, he viewed Iraq through a park ranger’s eyes, seeing the drained wetlands and subsequent loss of its natural habitat. “I look for the same thing everywhere — the environment, plants, and what should be there,” he said.

“We were driving around seeing all the fences that Saddam put up, and I realized it wasn’t to defend against people like us (Americans), it was to defend against his own people. The compound around the NGL plant, the GOSPs — they have berms, fences, barb wire to keep out the locals.”

Caldwell also remembered the shift in interaction between the cultures working together. “Before, and I don’t know the

right way to put it, it seemed like such a cultural difference between the Iraqis and Americans,” he said, peppering his paused thoughts with, “I don’t know how much of that was just me.” Now, he says, “There is a change; maybe we are more used to each other.”

“They are learning as much from us as we are learning from them,” he said. “In the beginning you heard, ‘salama alaykum’ (Arabic greeting for ‘peace upon you’), and you’d respond, ‘alaykum salam’ (‘and peace with you’). Now, you hear, ‘good morning.’”

While he noted that progress has been made at all the facilities he visited, he singled out two in particular during his deployment, a water intake site along the former Saddam River and the Natural Gas Liquefaction plants.

“All the facilities had a lot of work done to them,” he said. “They have come a long way, but I am disappointed I won’t get to see the completion of the Cluster Pump Stations or Qarmet Ali Water Treatment Plant

“I have really enjoyed it. I get to see new and interesting things,” he said of his time in Iraq. “We have been able to stay busy inspecting and going from place to place,” he said.

Caldwell especially enjoyed getting to know his security team. Since safety is still a concern in Southern Iraq, armored guards accompanied each group that drove out into the field. Referred to as Gurkhas, the former British soldiers from Nepal continue to make a significant contribution to the safety of the Corps and KBR employees working in the oil fields.

*See FEST, page 7*



Marjorie Ellenberg (left) and David Steele (right) and some scenes from Baghdad.

and the

towers  
towers

tumbling

came

down



On May 8, the fluidized catalytic cracking tower and the isostripper tower were brought to the ground at the former refinery in Cyril, Okla. The towers were 148 feet and 143 feet tall, respectively.

Linear shape charges and dynamite kickers were used to remove supports and allow the towers to fall to the ground in predetermined locations.

This event marks the near completion of a 10-month-long removal action effort being done for the Environmental Protection Agency, Region VI, at the Oklahoma Refining Company Superfund Site. The contractor, Shaw Environmental, holds one of the HTRW Design Center's Total Environ-

mental Restoration Contracts. Dykon was the explosive specialist subcontractor.

The tower demolition was executed without flaw and was supported by local emergency officials who handled traffic and crowd control. The state provided press releases, and the EPA addressed public concerns.

About 200 spectators turned out.

The Tulsa District team is led by Eddie Mattioda, Programs and Project

Management Division, with technical help from Frank Roth and Doug Eppinette, HTRW Design Center.

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“Getting to know the Gurkhas, they have impressed me so much,” said Caldwell. “They are supposed to be the fierce, fighting force from Nepal. They are well respected all over the world, trained by the British, and a well known fighting force. But to meet them, they are just as nice, polite, and gentle people that you’d ever want to meet. I have never seen one do anything distasteful, or ugly, or anything,” he said laughing. “They are

wonderful people. We have a different group every day, but I have my favorite crew that has gone out with me quite a bit, but they are probably others’ favorite crew as well.”

Caldwell has maintained a nice sense of life and work balance while living in Basra which can be difficult when working long hours, seven days a week.

“I have routine workouts, three days a week,” he said. “If you don’t have

something to do on a routine basis, then it can be groundhog day everyday. You know what day it is by which workout.”

Overall, Caldwell has enjoyed his personal and professional experiences in Iraq. He feels he has made a small contribution to the work being done to restore Iraqi’s oil to pre-war levels.

*Caldwell returned to the United States Jan. 12.*

**FEST-RIO Public Affairs**

# Air Force taps Tulsa as “Design Agent of the Year”

Tulsa District has added an important trophy to its case. It has been named the 2004 Air Force Design Agent of the Year. Just a sampling of the work done by the district for the Air Force is highlighted on these two pages.

John Roberts, deputy district engineer for project management, said, “The best recognition that the district can receive is that from our customers. Thus, I am honored that the Air Force has selected Tulsa District for the distinguished Air Force Design Agent of the Year Award. This achievement recognizes Tulsa District’s performance not only within the Corps of Engineers, but among other

service agents supporting Air Force installations such as the Navy and even within the Air Force, such as AFCEE. The many employees in the district who serve on Air Force Design Project Delivery Teams should be extremely honored with this recognition from a very important and demanding customer who values our service.”

Ramona Wagner, chief of Design Branch, said, “This award is a credit to the hard-working men and women in this district, our respected contractor partners, both in the architect-engineer and construction communities, and the Air Force personnel at our installations.”



Building 199, Vance Air Force Base

## Vance hangar first in 50 years

Building 199, a \$10 million aircraft maintenance hangar, was officially dedicated during a ribbon cutting ceremony at Vance Air Force Base in March.

The first new hangar at this base in about 50 years, the 50,000 square foot hangar was designed to support maintenance of the T-1 aircraft. It provides maintenance space for eight aircraft; each maintenance bay has its own door. Spe-

cial features include fabric fold-up hangar doors and pre-insulated metal roof panels.

Attending for Tulsa District were Walt Garner, deputy district engineer, and Jerry Grosz, Vance AFB project engineer. Grosz said, “This project had its challenges, but was completed on time and is a functional and attractive building.”

Representatives from the offices of Senator Inhofe, Congressman Lucas, and

the mayor of Enid, Okla., were at the ceremony.

The project was designed with in-house resources except for the building structure, structural foundation, and interior floor. The building structure was designed by a metal building specialty contractor. The floor and support structure were designed by The Benham Group, Tulsa office. Construction contractor was The Ross Group.

# Sheppard team wins honor

The Sheppard Project Delivery Team was named “PDT of the Quarter” for the work done to award the FY 04 Student Pipeline Dormitory project at the end of the first quarter.

The team convened a Source Evaluation Board and evaluated proposals from four contractors. They first received information that funding would not be available until mid-January 2004. Then, on Dec. 19, 2003, when they were notified that funds were available, members gave up annual leave to ensure award would be made. They juggled two national holidays and lost an entire afternoon to an anthrax scare.

The award, made in the amount of \$20.4 million, was the first FY 04 project awarded for Air Education Training Command (AETC) in FY 04. Officials at both AETC and Sheppard Air Force Base were pleased with the award and very appreciative of the PDT’s efforts. Brig. Gen. Rooney and Col. Bird expressed their appreciation at a Senior Executive Review Group meeting in January.

The PDT was able to achieve the first quarter award by innovatively reducing the design time, making an early advertisement, and streamlining the evaluation period. Coordination with AETC of the authorities to advertise, open, and award was crucial to ensure the process could move forward. Finally, the award price was approximately \$9 million under the program amount, allowing AETC the flexibility to fund additional projects this fiscal year.



Col. Suthard joins Tulsa District members of the award-winning Sheppard Project Delivery. From left: Steve Harmon, Debbie Gibbs, Tim Peasley, Jane Noble, John Forslund, Randy Bratcher, and Denise Henderson. Other team members included Dennis Johnson, Marshall Boyken, Dee Dee Hurd, David Webster, Ken Lehman, Frank Ostrowski, Tom Skelton, Colleen Diven, and Brenda Anderson of the Tulsa District; and David Pierson, AETC; David Vance and Raul Madarang, 82nd CES.



Fitness Center at Sheppard Air Force Base



Sheppard Air Force Base Dormitory - an FY 02 project.



Sheppard's Dining Hall - an FY 01 project.

# Remembering Memorial Day floods

*Editor's Note: It has been 30 years since Tulsa's Memorial Day flood of 1974 and 20 since the 1984 Memorial Day flood. Included on the following pages are flood photos (courtesy of the City of Tulsa), and first-person accounts from several Corps employees of their memories.*

## John Daylor

**Sure, I've got some experiences to share. Not too dramatic but, nonetheless had some impact on what I do today.**

The 1974 flood occurred when I was a freshman in Broken Arrow. A teacher who admitted to being a flood victim described a wall of water coming down the stream. I had trouble visualizing this concept of a wall of water. Is this water against the wall of your house or what? Flood waves are not walls!

By the time the 1984 Memorial Day flood occurred, I was a recent college graduate and new hire with the Corps of Engineers working in what was then the

Small Projects Section of Planning Division on the two-year student detachment rotation.

Some old high school and college friends and I were camping on the banks of the Illinois River that weekend. The night of the storm involved a lot of lightning, thunder, and some moderate rainfall. I didn't get much sleep that night and things were wet, so we decided to pack things up and head to the house.

Upon returning home, we got word of the flooding through a phone call from the Corps needing folks to establish high-water flood marks. I spent the day marking peak flood levels in the Tulsa vicinity.

It's a good thing the camping effort was scrapped because the river rose and would have got us. Later that week, I was

tasked with mapping flood fatalities and their locations for presentation by others. Mapping the fatalities and learning how they drowned was the most difficult part. Still today, although I can't remember the names, I still vividly recall the situations they were in.

## Beth Sauls

**I live on a dead-end street. The street ends at Little Joe Creek, and my house is the third one up from the creek. In 1974, my three kids were at friends' houses so there were only three of us, my mother, father, and me at the house when**



the water started running back from the creek -- not into it.

Of course I was frantic! This was before the advent of cell phones, and our phone went out, so I couldn't check on the kids. My dad and I rushed to move cars to what we hoped would be safe ground.

When we went out, the water was already starting to come into the garage, so I stopped and picked up the lawn mower and put it on a table (stupid -- the mower didn't cost near what a car would).

By the time I got into my car, water was almost to the bottom of the doors. I was able to get the car out and parked up a hill. When I tried to get back to my house, I realized how fast the water was rising. I was in water up to my chest at the corner of my street. Since there were several cars still parked along the street, I was able to get back to my house by pulling myself along the cars -- grab the rear bumper, pull up to the car, grab a door handle, pull, repeat several times -- almost a full block.

The current was getting worse all the time; large tree trunks were moving at a good pace and not in the direction I needed to go. Now, I realize how foolish it was to do that, but at the time it seemed perfectly reasonable.

I was finally able to make it to the front porch of my house; it's about three feet above ground level. Water was running about six inches deep over the porch. I didn't want to open the door because the water would rush in, so I climbed in a window. Once I got back inside, I joined my folks in stuffing towels around the doors. When water started coming up through the heat/ac vents, we started throwing everything on top of beds or in the bathtubs to keep them dry. It finally quit raining and we went to bed.

It was really thrilling the next morning to step onto a wet, cold carpet. We were lucky; the water never got above six inches in our house. Our neighbors across the street had water up to the ceiling -- lost everything.

Something like this really makes you appreciate your friends. The water hadn't completely gone down before several friends walked in to see what they could do to help. No one asked them; they just came. One couple had just returned from

their honeymoon -- they were the first ones to get there.

In 1984, I was supposed to leave that Sunday for a two-week school in Colorado. Of course, the rains came and my car drowned. It was a little car -- very low to the ground. Once again, we went through the towel stuffing and throwing anything (shoes, etc.) on beds and in the tubs.

However, the first thing we did was go into the garage where the trash cans were floating in three feet of water. You see, since the work on Joe Creek was supposed to be finished, we decided not to renew the flood insurance. The payment was due the next month, and we had pitched the bill. It was really fun picking through all the papers that were floating on top of the water in the garage. We found the bill though and, after drying it with a hairdryer, mailed the payment for another year's coverage . . .

You realize, 1974 wasn't the first time Joe Creek flooded. In 1960, when I was at TU, the creek flooded. Everyone in my sorority was singing the Johnny Cash song, "How High's the Water, Mama? Five Foot High and Rising."

Southern Hills was hit pretty badly then. I was living in the same house; it's not in Southern Hills but on the north side of 61st Street. The water got up to the porch, but not in the house that time.

However, my next door neighbor had two VWs in his driveway. The water picked them and moved them along at a good pace. One wiped out a small redbud tree in our front yard and the other slammed into one of the wrought iron supports of our carport. The bulge in the support post is still there.

Even now, long after the completion of the Joe Creek project, every time we have a lot of rain, we keep looking at the



street. As long as the water is running to the creek, we're okay. It's just when it starts going back up the street that we know we're in trouble.



#### **Pam Chronister**

**My husband, John, and I were members of the local Corvette club. Every Memorial Day weekend, the club put on a regional event that included drag races, a day at Hallett, concours, and funkahanna, plus parties every night. It always rained at least once during the weekend.**

The last party was on Sunday night at the old Sheraton Skyline Hotel on I-44. Trophies were awarded, and we generously imbibed our favorite beverages. During the party, it rained buckets. We thought it was just the runoff from the roof until we went to get in our car in the wee hours of the morning. Oblivious to the rising waters, we drove home without incident, which was good because Corvettes are not known for their ability to maneuver through high water.

The next morning, we found out about the flood. The hillside between I-44 and the hotel had slid onto the interstate. Some out-of-town attendees found their

precious, concours-quality cars, which they thought were safely parked in a nearby parking garage on the lower level, covered in water. Talk about being up a creek without a paddle!!

In true Tulsa hospitality fashion, local Corvette club members came to their aid and provided assistance to the stranded travelers. God really does drive a Ford!!



**Steve Timmons**

**You bet I remember the flood of '84! I went from Broken Bow Lake to Keystone Lake to help** at the powerhouse. Water was already in the control room and transformer bank. I remember pitching sand bags to Lowell Thomas; I think he was the chief of Operations Division. We worked more than 20 hours straight.

At one point, several powerhouse people were sent inside the powerhouse, and then it was sandbagged on the outside (although we did have an escape route). Releases were being made through the tainter gates. At one point, the talk was that the releases were going to be increased (I think to 350,000), and Alan Geismar said, "If you're going to do that, let me get these guys out of here, because it's (the structure) going to go." They decided not to increase it that much.

It was really interesting the next morning to see all the sea gulls. It looked like a battle zone with all the helicopters flying around.



**Ed Rossman**

**The City of Tulsa requested a wide-range of support from the Corps immediately after the 1984 Mingo Creek Flood.** Ann Patton, former Corps employee, was working for the city council. She was familiar with my work as a sociologist with the Tulsa District. She requested my assistance conducting interviews with flood victims about their needs.

I conducted interviews in the flooded neighborhoods. I listened to accounts of



the physical, psychological, and social impacts of the flood. Many victims gave moving descriptions of medical problems, mental health issues, and changes in family and social interaction. The summer reinforced my understanding of the most important output of government -- providing for the general welfare of the people.

The experience illustrated the government's role in sound planning principles and sustainable development. The experience also provided insight into the need to measure more than just dollars in Corps studies of flood damage reduction. After discussions with the Corps study team members, Tulsa District analyzed the non-economic damages associated with flooding including the analysis in the Corps justification documentation. The economic damages were significant enough for justifying the Corps Mingo Creek flood reduction project. However, the victimization data was presented to stress the significance of the other social effects of reducing flooding.

I used this to focus my Ph.D. dissertation on measuring and explaining flood victimization. Along with being used in the Corps documentation and my dissertation, the findings were presented at scholarly meetings and the data used in a number of scientific journal articles.



**Dana Linduff**

**In '84, the district office employees left their downtown offices** to fill sand bags for use along Riverside Drive. The colonel was doing a fly over of the flooded area. He landed in a 'copter and gave us a pep talk. It was hard, hard work and very, very tiring.



**James McCoy**

**1974, I was stationed at Fort Bliss, Texas, which is in El Paso.** I was a Specialist 4. I was called home by the American Red Cross. My house trailer, one of my cars, and my civilian belongings had floated away. I was parked at the now defunct Mingo Creek Trailer Park.

I remember the Red Cross giving us doughnuts and coffee and assisting our claims paperwork. There were no computers in those days. Everything was, "Press hard so we can get good copies." My trailer was completely turned around and water was halfway up inside of it. My car had been washed from the lawn and rested up against a tree about 100 yards away. Both were total loses.

Many things were lost that could not be replaced. Lots of childhood keepsakes from various sports and academics were gone. I was 20 years old and had just found out I was headed for South Korea. That was a terrible time in my life, but everyone treated me with respect and hurried my claims as I was leaving for South Korea soon. I was very blessed amidst all the chaos.

Life went on, and I have had many blessings since.

How time does fly! I had almost forgotten about that time in my life.



**Michael Mills**

**During the night, I awoke and, while laying in bed, thought to myself, "It is really raining hard."** After a few moments of waking, the thought became more emphatic, "It is raining, really, really hard!" I got up and looked out the front window to see water running down the street, curb deep. Curb deep on a downhill slope is a lot of water.

I lived a block south of Jones Elementary School, off of 15th Street, between Sheridan and Memorial. This area received over 13 inches in two to three hours in May 1984.

My house was safely six feet above the street. The street had a nice slope down to a "T" intersection where the water crossed, flowed over the far curb, into my neighbor's yard, and, at his front door, turned right. The water continued by flowing across the yard into Jones Creek (ditch). Much of the water flowed back across the street and into the schoolyard. From there it flooded homes 300 feet further downstream.

After this really, really, hard rain, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers designed and built another drainage system for Jones Creek.



From left, Col. Suthard, Charles Hardt, and Tulsa Mayor Bill LaFortune wait in the gazebo for the flood commemoration and celebration to begin.

## 2004 event marks anniversary

*Mary Beth Hudson, Public Affairs Office*

**I**n the middle of the Memorial Day weekend, in a park along Mingo Creek, people gathered at a gazebo to remember a bleak time in Tulsa's past and look to the future.

On the weekend of May 26-27, 1984, the city of Tulsa experienced its worst flood in recorded history, with damage estimates of more than \$180 million. The flood claimed 14 lives, and more than 2,100 families were forced to flee from their homes as record torrential rainfall pelted the sleeping city.

Twenty years later, people gathered to celebrate the dramatic improvements made over the 20 years and commemorate those who lost their lives. The event took place at one of the many recreation areas developed in one of the worst hit areas.

Charles Hardt, Tulsa's director of public works; Col. Suthard; and Mayor LaFortune all spoke. They recalled that Tulsa was once the most-flooded city in the nation, and now its flood protection project is rated the best in the country. It is used as an example for other cities and countries experiencing flooding problems.

Following the speakers, Ann Patton, former Corps employee, was honored upon her retirement from the city for her career in hazard mitigation. The area where the event took place was officially named "Ann Patton Commons."

At the end of the dedication, a commemoration ceremony was held for the 14 people who lost their lives. "Taps" were played, the colors were retired, and people went back to their holiday plans, knowing that almost everyone there had played some part in turning the tides of disaster, protecting citizens and property, and making Tulsa a much safer place to live.



# District seeks ways to improve

*by John Roberts  
Deputy District Engineer for Program and Project Management*

Tulsa District hosted the second annual Base Civil Engineer/Directorate of Public Works workshop in Oklahoma City in February. Continuous improvement was again a workshop theme. Workshop participants used the results of the FY 03 military customer care surveys and performance measurements using Air Force DIRTkicker criteria to identify performance improvement initiatives. Workgroups were formed by installation, and brainstorming sessions produced many initiatives including:

- Develop/improve Corps report format for Line Item Reviews;
- Access to/from each other's databases; and
- Institutionalize success.

Another highly successful part of the workshop was the Lessons Learned Forum, in which workshop participants shared their successes and challenges.

This workshop was a prime example of being a learning organization. District employees took the time to listen to customers and work with these customers to better understand their needs, build on lessons learned, and work jointly to identify improvement initiatives to ultimately better serve the soldiers and airmen at the installations.

Attendees at the workshop included Bob Slockbower, Debbie Perrin, and Bob McCollum from the Southwestern Division Office. District representatives were Col. Suthard, John Roberts, Clif Warren, Rick Hedrick, Christine Altendorf, Maj. John Connor, and district military resident engineers and project managers.

Attendees from the installations included Col. Soltero from Fort Sill; Col. Emanuel from Sheppard Air Force Base; Steve Mallott from Tinker AFB; Walter Sweet from Vance AFB; Bill Proffitt from Altus AFB; Nelson Day from McAlester Army Ammunition Plant, and other key representatives.

BCE/DPW workshops address the basic goals of People, Process, and Communication that enable the district to continue among the Corps best in "overall level of customer satisfaction" with military customers.

The workshop concluded with Col. Suthard presenting the Eagle Eye Safety Award to McMasters and the Altus AFB Resident Office for safety during construction of the C-17 Compartment Cargo Trainer Project.



**Karen White**  
Customer Care Employee  
First Quarter, FY 04

## White honored

Karen White, a staff accountant in the Finance and Accounting Office, Resource Management Branch, was named the Customer Care Employee of the Quarter for the first quarter of FY 04. In addition to her normal duties, White provided information for auditors and created work categories for new Operations and Maintenance work items.

According to her nomination, White has handled many challenges and faced each with great customer care:

- She is the F&A point of contact for data calls. She works closely with other technical offices and ensures auditors have their required information on time.
- She has been involved since December 2003 with outside auditors working for Southwest Power Administration auditing hydropower financial statements.
- She has entered thousands of new work category codes/work category elements in CEFMS.

Nominators say White has "served Tulsa District for many years with intelligence, conscientiousness, and integrity."

# Decade improves partnership

by Lori Hunnighake, PPMD

Team members from Fort Sill, Southwestern Division, and Tulsa District met Feb. 3 for an Expanded Line Item Review and took the opportunity to celebrate and renew the goals of their District/Directorate of Public Works partnership that has been a model for the Army.

Ten years ago, the district functioned as a service provider, mostly for the MILCON programs, not as a true partner and team member of the DPW. Discussions at that time focused on the Corps not sharing the same sense of urgency as the DPW; being remote, distant, and not having a visible presence with the DPW; and not sharing in the DPW's pride of ownership and accomplishment.

What a difference 10 years make! The Fort Sill Resident Office, led by Rick West, moved from its previous isolated offices on Fort Sill into the DPW compound. The district's project manager, Burl Ragland, moved his office from Tulsa right into the DPW office. New contracting initiatives were implemented to provide faster response, and regular Line Item Reviews were held and attended by senior leaders from the district, representatives from Southwestern Division, and other key members from Programs and Project Management, Real Estate, Engineering and Construction, and Contracting Divisions.

The original District/DPW partnering agreement was signed Jan. 6, 1994. A separate partnering agreement between the district and the Directorate of Environmental Quality was signed Aug. 19, 1998.

## Partnering Charter Goals

- Deliver quality products on schedule at a fair price.
- Foster effective and continual communication.
- Enjoy pride of accomplishments through joint ownership.
- Establish realistic expectations considering all parties' needs and constraints.
- Involve all team members throughout the life cycle of each project.
- Resolve issues at the lowest possible level and in a timely manner.
- Be a seamless organization, both in receiving praise and recognition and accepting blame and criticism.
- Follow through on partnering tasks.

A further step toward teamwork was taken when a "refreshed" partnering agreement was entered into among the DPW, DEQ, and Tulsa District at the February meeting.

The team members, who have a great deal of pride in the accomplishments since the 1994 agreement, decided to keep the original agreement and modify it as follows:

***On February 3, 2004, celebrating the 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary of this agreement, we reaffirm our commitment to these goals in Support of the Soldier.***



Celebrating 10 years of partnership with a renewed commitment are these representatives at Fort Sill's Expanded Line Item Review. Included (but not identified above) are: Representing the installation, the new garrison commander, Col. Herring; the new DPW, Col. Soltero; the DEQ, Glen What; and their key representatives. Bill Bowen from the Corps Southwestern Division; Tulsa's deputy for project management, John Roberts; the acting chief of Engineering and Construction Division, Clif Warren; and several key team members rounded out the group.

# Land ready to use again

Andy Obrochta  
Army/FUDS Section  
Engineering and Construction Division

This ready-for-reuse letter was the first to be presented to a BRAC installation as well as the first presented to an Army base.

Several thousand acres of land formerly owned by the Department of the Army now belong to the Fort Chaffee public trust. When the Base Realignment and Closure Commission declared 7,000 of Fort Chaffee's 73,000 acres to be excess in 1995, every one of the four dozen or so environmental sites on the property was thoroughly investigated and either cleaned or determined to be suitable for transfer. Two Corps districts, Tulsa and Little Rock, worked closely with Fort Chaffee's Base Transition Team. Tulsa performed environmental investigations and Little Rock did the property transfer.

## Army signs transfer deed

On Nov. 20, 2003, the property transfer was completed with an official signing ceremony at the Fort Smith Convention Center. Thomas Lederle, director of the BRAC Hampton Field Office, and Jerry Stewart, chairman of the Fort Chaffee Redevelopment Authority, signed the final deed. The project team kept moving on an aggressive schedule and completed the transfer a full year ahead of expectations.

## EPA issues ready for reuse letter

On Feb. 25, Region 6, Environmental Protection Agency in conjunction with the Arkansas Department of Environmental Quality issued a letter declaring Fort Chaffee excess property recently transferred to the public to be "ready for reuse." In a letter issued jointly to the Fort Chaffee Public Trust and the Department of the Army, the regulators stated that:

# Zeltner returns as chief of Real Estate Division



The face is familiar -- it's the clothes that seem strange.

Stephen Zeltner, former deputy district engineer and retired lieutenant colonel, has returned to Tulsa District -- this time in civilian clothing. Zeltner has been selected as the Chief of the district's Real Estate Division.

"It's really great to be back," he said, "and to be able to work with a lot of the same folks in a different capacity."

"The hardest part of the transition has been having to change my first name -- from colonel to Steve," he said.

Zeltner is a native of Seattle, Wash. He obtained an undergraduate degree from the University of Wisconsin and spent three years operating a family business in Chetek, Wis. Following 17 months as an enlisted infantryman, he attended Officer Candidate School at Fort Benning, Ga., and was commissioned a

second lieutenant in the Corps of Engineers.

In addition to his Bachelor's Degree in Engineering, he holds a Master's Degree in Public Administration from Troy State University and a Master's Degree in Education from the University of Oklahoma.

The district's Real Estate Division employs 32 people who manage the real estate needs of 1,271,000 acres of civil works land. They collect \$1.8 million in annual rent and handle almost 4,000 outgrants (third highest in the Corps).

*"In recognition of the United States Army's efforts to investigate and, where necessary, remediate Finding of Suitability to Transfer (FOST) Areas I - IV, the Arkansas Department of Environmental Quality and the United States Environmental Protection Agency Region 6 together have determined that the Property is Ready for Reuse... and that environmental conditions on the Property are protective of human health and the environment."*

This determination bolsters new owner's confidence that the environmental laws have been complied with, and that there are no issues that would prevent reuse of the property.

Fort Chaffee's ready for reuse letter was signed by Carl Edlund, Region 6 director of Multimedia Planning and Permitting, and Marcus Devine, ADEQ director. It was presented to Richard Newsome, acting deputy assistant secretary for environmental, safety, and occupational health, and Jerry Stewart of the Redevelopment Authority.

# Building builds Association's associations

*Tom Heathcock  
Park Ranger*

A new building has helped breathe new life into an organization formed specifically to attract tourists to the Fort Gibson Lake area.

The Fort Gibson Lake Association was founded in the late 1950s. During George Nigh's administration as governor, the current Oklahoma lake organizations were formed. The state's 18 lake associations operate under the Oklahoma legislature and the Oklahoma Tourism and Recreation Department. Their purpose is to promote events that inform and attract tourists to the lake areas.

The FGLA was very active many years ago, but memberships declined in the late 1970s and early 1980s primarily due to a PCB scare on the lake. With limited funding through the 1990s, membership remained low and tourism suffered. The tourism department felt that small communities along state highway 69 were missing out on potential tourist dollars, so Oklahoma legislators voted to provide funds to build an office/visitor center.

For the last few years, the funding has been approved and made available to the FGLA.

Board members began the long process of finding land, designing a building, locating contractors, and making the many decisions associated with a project of this size. Their hard work paid off.



Shots of the exterior and interior of the new Fort Gibson Lake Association Visitor Center.

April 24, 2004, was proclaimed "Fort Gibson Lake Association Day" by Governor Brad Henry. On that day, a large turnout gathered at the new FGLA Visitor Center for the official opening and dedication. Ralph McClamont, interim executive director for the Oklahoma Tourism and Recreation Department, was the featured speaker.

The new center is located at the intersection of state highways 69 and 51. The Fort Gibson Lake Office has provided water safety material and a display area.

The building is already reaping benefits. FGLA memberships are on the rise, and several activities are being planned. Once again the association is becoming a vital part of Fort Gibson Lake and the surrounding communities.

**To: Col. Suthard**  
**From: Col. David F. Bird Jr., The Civil Engineer, U.S. Air Force**

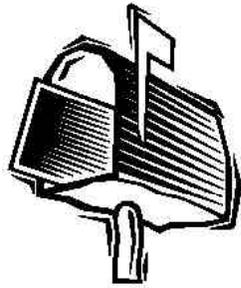
*Congratulations! The Tulsa District Corps of Engineers has been selected as the District Agent of the year in the Design Category for the 2004 Air Force Design Awards Program. Your district has truly demonstrated a strong commitment to design excellence in providing outstanding design service to Altus, Sheppard, and Vance AFBs.*

*Please pass our congratulations to your staff. Their efforts and hard work truly bring credit to our command and the United State Air Force, and we are very proud of their accomplishments.*

*Our best wishes for continued success.*

**To: Col. Suthard**  
**From: Brig. Gen. Crear**

*I reviewed the results of the FY 03 Military Customer Survey for all SWD military districts. I am extremely pleased to see*



## From the Mailbox

*that SWT's performance ranks well above the aggregate Corps-wide average in practically all questions surveyed. In fact, SWT continues to lead the Corps in relationships and quality products where the customer is a valued part of the team, clearly evident in the customer survey responses. SWT ranked first or second in 20 questions last year and first or second in 26 questions this year.*

*These results show a district staff with a solid day-to-day commitment to customer delight. I commend you for your outstanding performance. Please pass*

*on to your staff my personal appreciation for a difficult job, very well done. I encourage you to seek out opportunities to export your business practices to others throughout the Corps that result in such positive customer feedback.*

**To: Col. Suthard**  
**From: Tim Lovell and Juanise Weatherman, Tulsa Partners/Mayor's Citizen Corps**

*Thank you for speaking at our May 30 celebration/commemoration event. Your remarks on the history of the Mingo project and the partnership of the City and the Corps were both interesting and educational. The beautiful site at which the ceremony was held, once the most frequently flooded area of the city, is a testament to the accomplishments of the two entities working together.*

*We appreciate you and Corps for your enthusiastic participation in this public ceremony.*

# GIS comes to the web

*By Jim Leach*  
*Geospatial Data & Systems Manager*

Tulsa District will soon deploy a GIS intranet web site. Just what is GIS? GIS stands for "Geographic Information

Systems" which is an organized collection of computer hardware, software, geographic data, and personnel designed to

Below, is an example of what a typical GIS map will look like.



efficiently capture, store, update, manipulate, analyze, and display all forms of geographically referenced information. Put more simply, anything that occupies a space on the earth can be described by a GIS.

More than 60 people in the district use GIS to some extent in their daily routines. Several divisions and branches use the geospatial technology for a variety of reasons:

- Field offices to track boat docks, recreation facilities, utilities, hunting areas, brush piles, and outgrants.
- Hydrology and Hydraulics Branch to develop watershed parameters and floodplain geometry that goes into their H&H models and then automate the floodplain delineations.
- Planning Division for mapping, economic analyses, and plan formulation.
- Real Estate Division to keep track of land holdings and easements.

See GIS, page 19



# Family News



## New Additions

**Brock Douglas Mattioda, March 11**, son of Eddie and Angie Mattioda. Eddie is an environmental project manager in Project Management Branch, PPMD.

**Leah Rylee Knack, March 25**, daughter of Jeff and Bobbi Knack. He is a regulatory project manager in Regulatory Branch, PER.

## Congratulations!

**Federal Womens Program.** Nominees for this year's Federal Womens Program awards were Yvonne Brownrigg, DeeAnn Himebaugh, Helen Jackson, Lucy Spaulding, Latreta Stout, Sally Van Winkle, Walt Garner, and Bob Vandegriff. DeeAnn Himebaugh, Sheppard Project Office, and Helen Jackson, Fort Sill Resident Office, were chosen as recipients of the administrative/clerical awards. Sally VanWinkle was named Woman of the Year, and Bob Vandegriff was chosen Mentor of the Year.

## ... GIS

from page 18

- Regulatory Branch to facilitate input of their Section 404 requests.

So, what will the new GIS website look like and what will it do? The opening page will show a basic map of the Tulsa District with major interstates, rivers, and communities. As you zoom in, additional features will appear, like counties, federal and state highways and minor

## Condolences

On February 28, Nicholas E. Osier, 88 years old, passed away. He was the father of Nick Osier, Logistics Management Office.

Margaret "Jeannie" Long passed away March 6. Her daughter, Laura Long, is an auditor in Internal Review Office.

Condolences to the Corps Family on the March 15 death of retired Command Sgt. Maj. Edward H. Lugo.

Robert Cyrus' sister, Gwendlyn Blocker, passed away March 20. Cyrus is a lock and dam mechanic at Newt Graham Lock 18. At one time, Blocker also worked for Tulsa District.

Charles Schrod, environmental specialist for the Eastern Area Office, lost his father, Henry "Poss" Schrod, April 24.

Lucille Graves passed away April 15. She was mother-in-law to Kris Graves in IMO. Kris is an information management specialist.

Dennis Johnson's mother, May Johnson, passed away May 2. Dennis is resident engineer at Sheppard Resident Office.

Retiree, Walter "Stoney" Stone passed away in May. He was the lockmaster of Newt Graham Lock and Dam from the opening of the lock until about 1987.

Norman Hendrix died May 15. He was the brother of Don Hendrix, construction representative at Sheppard Resident Office, Sheppard Air Force Base, Texas.

Condolences to the Jim Fry family on the passing of his father-in-law, Richard Hager. Fry is the lake manager at Fall River Lake.

It is with sadness that we announce the passing of Susie Ross's father, Vincent D. O'Conner. Susie is the administrative clerk at Lake Eufaula.

Condolences to Cheryl Wickson, Contracting Division, on the passing of her brother, Bruce Lone Wolf.

On June 7, Billy and Daly Phillips were killed in an accident in Checotah, Okla. Billy was the daughter-in-law and Daly the grandson of Dennis Guffey. He is a lock and dam operator at Webbers Falls Lock and Dam 16.

**New Professional.** James Ritter, Fort Sill Resident Office, passed his Oklahoma Electrical Contractor's Licensure Examination in March.

**Emerging Leaders Chosen.** Dawn Rice and Louis Vogele were chosen as the two Southwestern Division Emerging Leaders to attend headquarter's EL Conference in Saint Louis this summer. Competition was keen divisionwide, and their selection is quite an honor.

roads, smaller streams, and railroads. There will be a tool to quickly zoom you to a specific section, township and range, and one to zoom to a specific latitude and longitude. A drop list of all Corps lake projects will be available.

The ability to view and print images of U.S. Geological Survey quad maps and aerial imagery will also be available, and you won't have to know the quad name – it will automatically appear!

This will put the power and function of GIS on everyone's desktop.

**Volunteers Top 34,000 Hours.** Keystone Lake logged 34,000 hours of volunteer labor in 2003. The volunteers' efforts help keep Keystone Lake beautiful and the workforce strong.

**Graduate Magna Cum Laude.** Contracting Division is pleased to announce that Wyman Walker, contract specialist co-op, graduated magna cum laude on May 6 from Langston University, earning a Bachelor of Business Administration degree. He was also named Outstanding Student for the School of Business.



### *Flash from the past*

These two scenes are from the early days of recreation at Corps projects. Today's demands by RVers, fishermen, jet skiers, etc., are much greater. They put the editor in mind Mike McCoy, former Texoma manager, who said, "Some of these parks are so old – why, they look like someone just went out and sewed picnic table seed, and the camp spots sprung up where the seeds took root!"