US Army Corps of Engineers®
St. Paul District

Crosscurrents

Vol. 23, Nos. 4-6 April-June 2000

Hold your breath for summer awards picnic

Photo by Jon Lyman

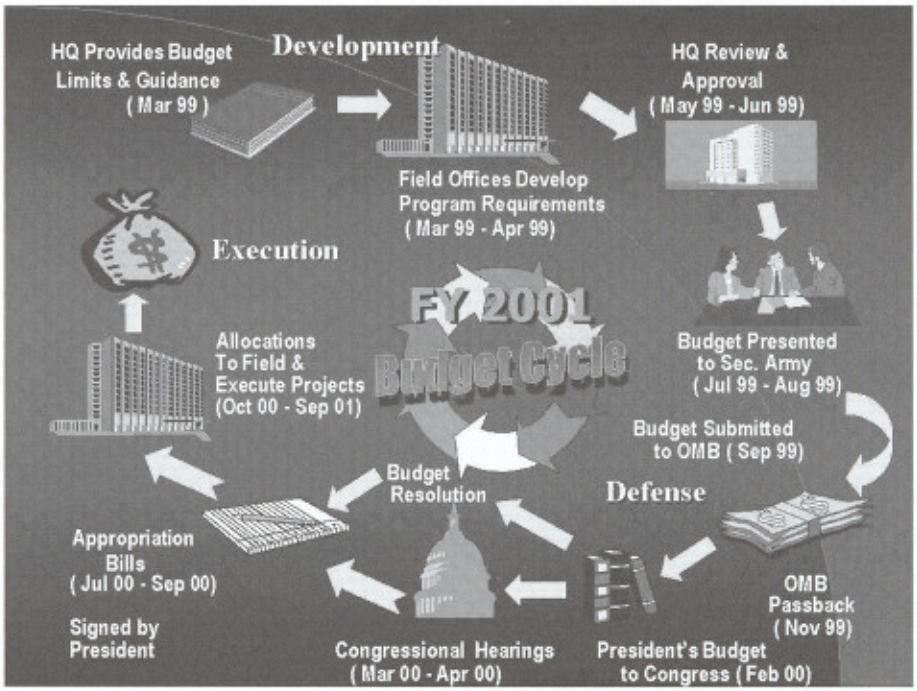
Terry Byrne (above), who works to support computers for RAM, Inc., a contractor for the St. Paul District help desk, took his turn in the dunk tank during the Awards Ceremony and Picnic on June 29. Byrne, submersed in water, holds his breath while photographer Jon Lyman of Visual Information adjusts his camera to focus through the glass of the tank. "It seemed like a minute and a half," said Byrne. "I was turning red." St. Paul District Commander Col. Kenneth Kasprisin, District Deputy Commander Maj. Lonnie Mansell, Executive Assistant Capt. John Weidner and other chiefs took turns with dunk tank duty. More photos of the Awards Ceremony and Picnic are on pages 6-7. The district held the event at Eau Galle Recreation Area in Spring Valley, Wis. Aaron Buesing, Engineering Division (ED) and Brian Johnson, ED, were co-chairmen of the event.

Civil Works budget cycle: how Congress finances public works

By Chuck Crist
Deputy for Programs and Project Management
and Col. Kenneth Kasprisin
St. Paul District Commander

Ever wonder how we get the money for the many studies and projects we undertake year after year? Sit back, kick up your feet and I'll tell you the story.

The federal budget enacted by Congress and signed by the President each year is a series of 13 appropriations bills. Each funds different agencies and programs, and all collectively set spending limits for the entire government. The bill that provides funding authority for the Corps of Engineers is called the Energy and Water Development (E&WD) Appropriations Act. If we're lucky, the President will sign the E&WD bill in time for us to receive the money at the beginning of the fiscal year—a rare occurrence in recent years. If there is a delay in signing the appropriations bill, Congress normally enacts a temporary budget authority, called a Continuing Resolution, to keep us in operation until the regular appropriations bill is signed.



Graphic compiled by Jim Stadelman

But how do we get to the point where we receive the funds necessary to conduct our business? To answer that question we need to examine the ongoing process referred to as the budget cycle. The budget cycle encompasses a 30-month period and includes three distinct phases: development, defense and execution. At any point in time, we may be involved in two or three phases of the budget cycle. For example, we are currently in the initial development phase of the fiscal 2002 budget; the defense phase of the fiscal 2001 budget; and the execution phase of the fiscal 2000 budget. The Programs Management Branch (PM-P) is responsible for overseeing and implementing all budget cycle process activities. In order to understand how everything fits together, let's start at the beginning, using fiscal 2001 as the budget year—refer to the flow chart for a graphical representation of the process.

Development Phase

The budget cycle for fiscal 2001 began at the end of March '99 when HQUSACE issued the Annual Budget Engineering Circular (EC), which provided guidance to the field for preparing their budget requests. The EC included fiscal 2001 and out-year appropriation ceilings provided by the Office of Management and Budget (OMB). The district's budget request must fit within these ceiling amounts. The 10-year ceilings reflect long-term effects of the President's policies for the various programs, projects, and activities funded by each account, and serve as benchmarks for use in evaluating Congressional actions. The 10-year period approximates the implementation life of projects from start to finish, and accommodates adequate definition of long-term resource requirements. The first step in the Corps budget development process was to update study and project cost estimates to October '99 price levels applying inflation factors provided by OMB. Then optimal 10-year programs were developed for our continuing studies and projects, while remaining in compliance with the OMB ceiling restrictions; trade-offs are often necessary because of the restrictions. We

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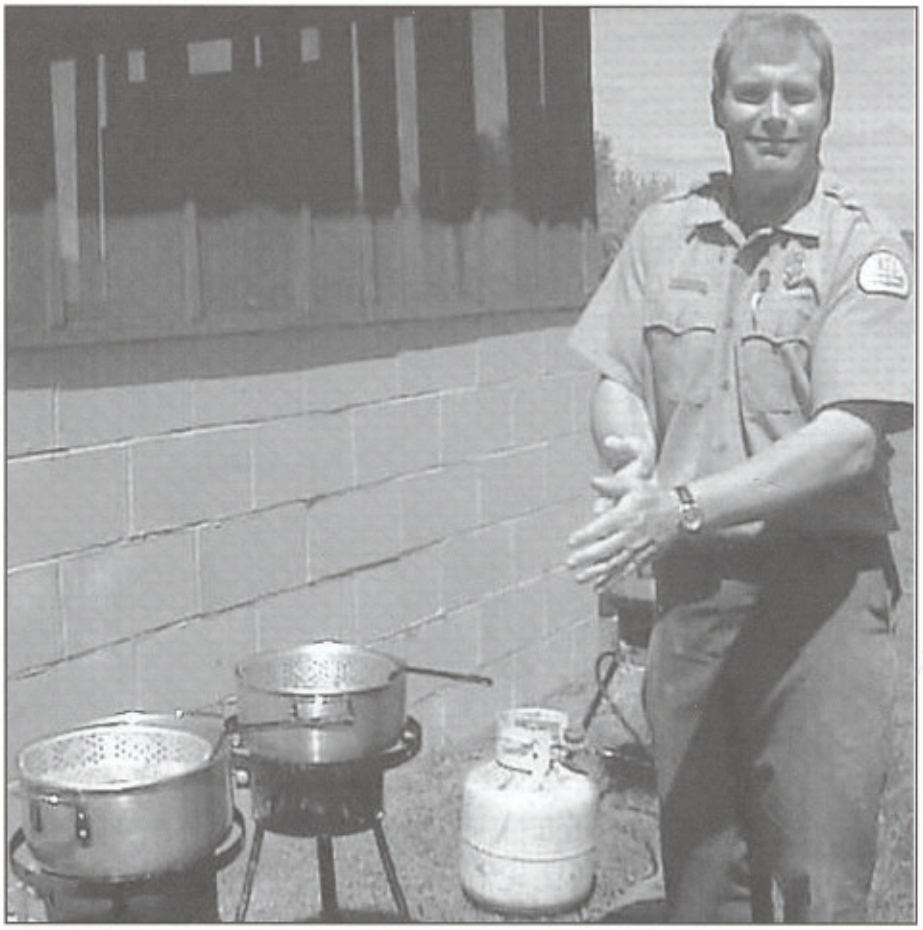
6th graders fish for lessons at Leech Lake recreation site

John Zahalka, park manager at Leech Lake Recreation Area (right), demonstrates how to clean fish to a group of sixth graders. "I am pretty sure it is a walleye fillet, although they caught perch, northern pike, and rock-bass besides some walleyes," said Zahalka. They are behind Tonga's Launch Service, a concession operator at the recreation site. The students are from classes in the Remer-Longville schools. The schools sponsored the field trip on May 25 and arranged boat trips with launch services at the lake.

Photos by Tammy Wick

Lead Ranger Timm Rennecke (right), cooks on outdoor fish fryers donated by the Federal Dam Volunteer Fire Department. Rennecke is frying fish behind the Corps of Engineers fish cleaning house located in the tailwater picnic area downstream of the dam on Leech Lake River. Approximately 60 sixth grade students, aides, teachers, parents, Corps employees and guides enjoyed the fish fry in the Corps' picnic area.



Corps project at Polander Lake to benefit wildlife habitat

By Peter Verstegen
Public Affairs Office

Fish and wildlife habitat and maintenance of the navigation channel will benefit from a $2.3 million project underway at Polander Lake on the Mississippi River.

"The Corps is constructing islands with material taken from the Wild's Bend placement site and material dredged from Polander Lake," said Gary Palesh, project manager.

Polander Lake is a 1,200-acre backwater located on the Minnesota side of the Upper Mississippi River in Pool 5A, immediately above Lock and Dam 5A near Winona, Minn. The lake lies within the Upper Mississippi River National Wildlife and Fish Refuge.

"The islands are designed to improve conditions for the growth of aquatic vegetation and provide habitat for wildlife," said Palesh.

"The channel maintenance objective is to restore capacity at this historically used placement site," said Steve Tapp, channel maintenance coordinator.

The project provides capacity for future channel maintenance dredging in lower pool 5A of the Upper Mississippi River.

Approximately 500,000 cubic yards of sand will be excavated from the Wild's Bend site to provide another 15-20 years of capacity. "The excavated material would cover a football field to a height of 280 feet," said Palesh.

The project coordinates two programs – the Environmental Management Program (EMP) and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers' channel maintenance program – to improve habitat and to provide a place for dredged material storage at a reduced cost in the future. Operations and channel maintenance are separate from the EMP.

Congress first authorized the EMP in 1986. The program is designed to balance and protect the many resources of the Upper Mississippi River system. The EMP provides for habitat rehabilitation and enhancement projects, long-term resource monitoring and various studies. Congress made EMP a continuing authority in 1999.

The objective of channel maintenance operations is to maintain the nine-foot channel for river navigation.

"Sites such as Wild's Bend are used for storage of material from routine channel maintenance," said Tapp. "Once these sites are full, material is excavated from them to restore capacity. Beneficial use of the excavated material is always a high priority."

The Polander Lake Stage 2 project consists of constructing an island complex covering approximately 75 acres in the center of Polander Lake. "The islands themselves will cover about 25 acres," said Palesh.

The Wild's Bend dredged material placement site is located on the Wisconsin side of the navigation channel, just northeast of Polander Lake.

The contractor for the project is J.F Bennan Co., Inc., of La Crosse, Wis. The Corps expects the work to be done by the end of November 2000.

Photo by Jon Hendrickson

Rocks anchoring a log are part of a design to create a loafing site for wildlife on this island at Polander Lake. Two representatives from the contractor, J.F. Brennan Co., Inc., of LaCrosse, and two personnel from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, accompanied district chiefs on a site tour. The team included John Bailen, Sharonne Baylor, Steve Brossart, Al Geisen, Jon Hendrickson, Mike Knoff and Dave Rydeen.

St. Paul team assists FEMA, fire victims in NM

By Joan Meier
Albuquerque District Public Affairs
and Peter Verstegen
St. Paul District Public Affairs

Santa Fe, N.M.—What began with five people grew to a team of 14 sent by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers from St. Paul, Minn.

Their mission was to provide temporary housing to as many as 200 area residents who were displaced from their homes by the Cerro Grande fire.

The fire began May 5 about five miles southwest of Los Alamos, N.M., and was 100 percent contained by early June. It damaged or destroyed more than 400 dwellings in Los Alamos County.

The Corps sent a Planning and Response Team (PRT) on May 18 from the St. Paul District to assist in providing the temporary housing.

The initial team from the district included Project Manager Bonnie Greenleaf; the Mission Specialist Jim Sentz; Site Engineer Jeff Stanek; Subject Matter Expert David Himmerich; and Action Officer Lisa Hedin.

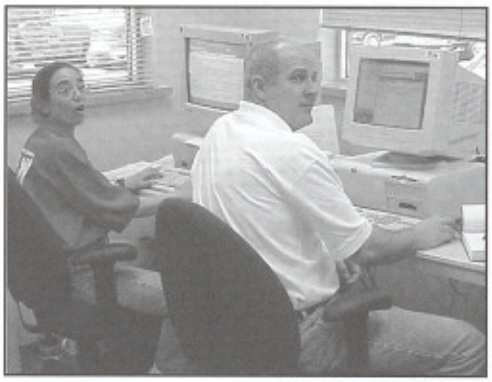


Photo by Joan Meier

Teri Alberico and Bruce Stephenson worked at the Disaster Field Office (DFO) in Santa Fe, N.M.

Nine mission specialists soon followed: Bruce Stephenson, contract specialist; Teri Alberico, NEPA compliance specialist; Rick Femrite, sanitary engineer; Kurt Reppe, Real Estate specialist; Dave Valen, electrical engineer; Lisa Lund, resident engineer; Lowell Hanson, quality assurance supervisor; Randy Melby, quality assurance inspector; and Ray Marinan, logistical support.

The Corps was one of a dozen federal agencies supporting the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) and the state of New Mexico. The $7.5 million housing mission included contracting, logistics, design, engineering and other services.

The fire forced the evacuation of nearly 18,000 residents of Los Alamos and White Rock and voluntary evacuations in some parts of Espanola.

The St. Paul team was one of five housing teams the Corps deploys for disaster relief. The St. Paul District also assisted FEMA after the disastrous flood of 1997 in Grand Forks, N.D.

The Corps performed an Environmental Assessment on six sites identified by Los Alamos County and found no significant environmental impacts would result from the project. It began work on the Los Alamos County Fairgrounds site June 3 to house approximately 115 mobile homes.

The Corps' South Pacific Division and Albuquerque District activated their emergency operation centers on May 18 as part of the disaster response. The St. Paul PRT was assigned to the Albuquerque District operation, which worked with FEMA and the state until the assigned mission was complete. At least two design team members have returned to St. Paul, and have been replaced by construction personnel.

Emergency operations were based at the Disaster Field Office (DFO) in Santa Fe, N.M.

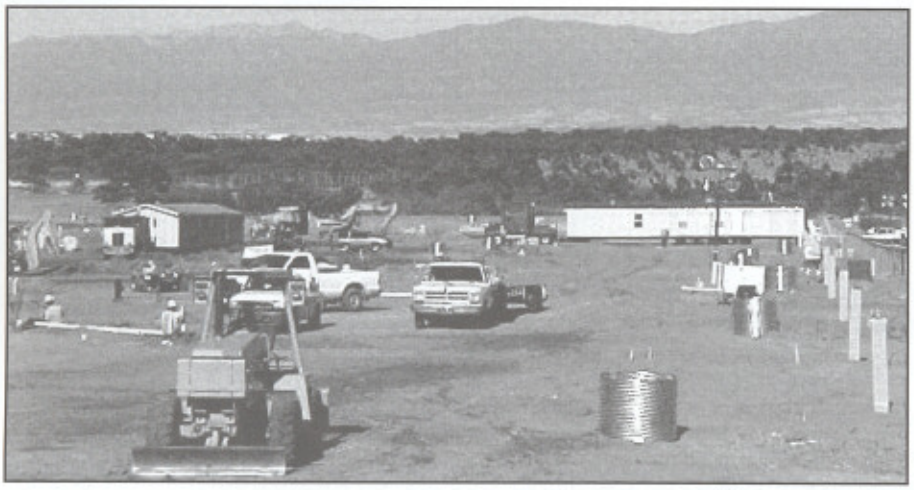


Photo courtesy Albuquerque District

Temporary housing is put in place at the lower Los Alamos County Fairgrounds site.

District holds Awards Picnic June 29 at Eau Galle Recreation Area

Photo by Anna Wetterling

Top row of photos: Ferris Chamberlin (photo at left) pres
golf competition. Frank Star and Bonnie Greenleaf (abov
for the presentation of the awards. Danielle Tschida (righ
daughter of David Tschida, tugs at the string to bounce a
Chuck Stanonik, Georgia Stanonik's husband, prepares
golf course at Spring Valley, Wis. He made the putt for a

Photo by Jon Lyman

Photo by Peter Verstegen

Bottom row: Tom Novak (above left) accepts an Army Ideas for Excellence Suggestion Award from District Commander Col. Kenneth Kasprisin. Novak's suggestion resulted in placement of safety goggles and eyewash kits in maintenance vehicles. Tom Crump (above right) spins his daughter, Lisa, on the playground equipment. Dan Ford cocks his arm to toss a baseball at the trigger for the dunk tank. Far right, Col. Kasprisin was among the executives to take turns in the dunk tank.

Photo by Jon Lyman

esented the awards for the
ove) take front row seats
ght), the 12-year-old
e a balloon off her hand.
es to putt on a green at the
a par.

Photo by Peter Verstegen

Photo by Georgia Stanonik

Photo by Anna Wetterling

Photo by Peter Verstegen

Photo by Bill Csajko

Riley Rogers, mayor of Valley City, N.D., (seated at left) and Morris Saxerud, mayor of Lisbon, listen to St. Paul District Commander Col. Kenneth Kasprisin prior to signing the project cooperation agreement.

By Peter Verstegen
Public Affairs Office

Valley City, Lisbon and other communities along the Sheyenne River in North Dakota will have an increased level of flood protection, thanks to the $9.7 million Baldhill Pool Raise Project at Lake Ashtabula.

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and the project sponsor, the Sheyenne River Joint Water Resource District, signed a project cooperation agreement on May 31 at the Mel Rieman Recreational Area at Baldhill Dam. Officials from the Corps, the project sponsor, members of the North Dakota congressional delegation and other civic officials attended.

Photo by Bill Csajko

Col. Kenneth Kasprisin (seated) and Steve Olson, chairman of the Sheyenne River Joint Water Resource District, sign the Project Cooperation Agreement. Standing behind them are Senator Kent Conrad (at left) and Congressman Earl Pomeroy.

The first construction contract will be awarded this summer with construction and real estate acquisition completed in December 2002. The Energy and Water Development Appropriations Act of 2000 provided federal funds to start construction on the project.

The federal share of the project is $7.3 million, with the balance financed by the local sponsor. The Baldhill Pool Raise is part of the Sheyenne River project, which includes the Horace to West Fargo and West Fargo projects – completed in 1992 and 1994 respectively.

Baldhill Dam, about 12 miles north of Valley City, forms Lake Ashtabula. The project will allow the reservoir to store five more feet of water during major floods. The pool raise will provide a significant reduction in flood-related damage to downstream communities. Project improvements include: replacing the existing spillway gates; acquisition of 1,500 acres of flowage easement around the lake; 300 acres for a mitigation area; raising land and buildings at the Wesley Acres Church Camp; construction of several small levees; and placement of fill near structures around the reservoir.

Seven water resource districts make up the Sheyenne River Joint Water Resource Board. They are Southeast Cass, Barnes County, Griggs County, Nelson County, Ransom County, Richland County and Steele County.

The dam was first constructed in 1950 for water supply, pollution abatement and flood control.

Grand Forks PCA and ground breaking

Photo courtesy City of Grand Forks

On June 26 St. Paul District Commander Col. Kenneth Kasprisin (above) spoke at the ground-breaking ceremony for the $350 million flood control project at Grand Forks, N.D., and East Grand Forks, Minn. The local sponsors and the Corps had signed the Project Cooperation Agreement on Jan. 31 in Grand Forks. Lisa Hedin is the project manager; Bonnie Greenleaf is the project manager for the English Coulee Diversion portion, the first stage to be constructed.

Red River flood insurance studies updated

The St. Paul District sent four representatives to participate in Red River Hydrology public meetings on June 1-2 in Fargo, N.D., and Grand Forks.

Aaron Buesing, Engineering Division (ED); Terry Engel, Project Management; Bob Engelstad, ED; and Terry Zein, ED, discussed the draft results of the updated Red River hydrology study.

The update covers the main stem from Wahpeton-Breckenridge to Emerson, Manitoba, Canada, and has potential impacts on effective flood insurance studies. "This is what counties and communities use for flood-plain management zoning purposes," said Engel. "It's also used by insurance agents to determine flood insurance policy rates," he said.

They presented preliminary water surface profile impacts and said that significant work remains to be done. Communities such as Fargo will show a larger 100-year flood plain that may impose flood insurance for an additional number of people. "The new data will probably become effective in three years," said Engel.

Hokens tapped for leadership program

Kent Hokens, Engineering Division, has recently been selected for the 13-week resident Sustaining Base Leadership and Management Program (formerly called Army Management Staff College) in September 2000.

Civil Servants of the Year honored

John Anfinson, Project Management Division (PM); Mark Nelson, Real Estate Division (RE); and Michelle Shafer, Construction-Operations Division (CO), were honored as St. Paul District Civil Servants of the Year for 2000.

The awards luncheon was held in Bloomington, Minn., on May 4. The key note speaker was Mickey Ibarra, Special Assistant to the President, Office of Intergovernmental Affairs.

District seeks comments on dam improvements

By Mark Davidson
Chief of Public Affairs

The St. Paul District, in cooperation with the city of Fargo and the Fargo/Moorhead Council of Governments, invited residents from Fargo, N.D., Moorhead, Minn., and the surrounding area to an open house on April 13 at Fargo City Hall to comment on proposed aquatic improvements to the North Dam. The dam is on the Red River of the North in the north part of the cities of Fargo and Moorhead. John Blackstone, project manager, explained the project and answered questions for about 50 residents, including a group of Girl Scouts.

A chevron weir, similar to the structure downstream of the Midtown Dam, will be constructed from rocks and boulders. The weir will simulate a natural rock rapids, improve fish passage and contribute to safety.

Budget, cont. from page 2

rarely get the funding amounts we would like on all of our projects.

Once the initial budget amounts have been determined, PM-P prepares justifications for the studies and projects for which we are requesting funds in fiscal 2001. Included in this mix are proposals for new start studies and projects.

During a period of several months, the funding proposals are reviewed, prioritized and ultimately approved by MVD (Mississippi Valley Division) and HQUSACE (Headquarters) and presented to the Secretary of the Army for submittal to OMB.

Defense Phase

The Corps of Engineers' budget requests and justifications are reviewed by OMB, which determines whether they comply with the President's objectives. Often the budget requests exceed amounts anticipated by the Administration. In that case, OMB evaluates the merits of the requests and sends its decisions back to the Corps in a process known as "passback."

> "...optimal 10-year programs were developed for our continuing studies and projects, while remaining in compliance with the OMB ceiling restrictions; trade-offs are often necessary because of the restrictions. We rarely get the funding amounts we would like on all of our projects."

The Corps may appeal the OMB passback decisions in a process referred to as a reclama; this usually involves information gathering and negotiation between OMB and higher levels of the Corps. In recent years, OMB passback decisions have occasionally included deletion of new start studies and projects from the budget request.

After passback and reclama, PM-P prepares the final justifications for inclusion in the President's budget. Until the budget is officially published, the Corps is prohibited from releasing any information on the program or budget for any study or project to the public.

The budget is officially released when the President submits it to Congress on the first Monday in February. The House and Senate authorizing committees submit their views and estimates to their respective budget committees, which then establish broad funding targets and compile a comprehensive budget resolution that contains allocations for each of the next 10 fiscal years.

After both houses of Congress agree on a budget resolution, the chairmen of the appropriations committees establish allocations for each of the 13 appropriations bills under the jurisdiction of their respective subcommittees. The allocations limit the amount of funding appropriations subcommittees can grant for programs under their jurisdiction. Once the allocations have been assigned it becomes a "zero sum game"—when you add to the amount, you have to subtract a like amount.

While the authorizing and budget committees work to develop the budget resolution, the Energy and Water Development Appropriations Subcommittees in both the House and Senate conduct hearings within a month or two of the President's budget release. The Division Commander, Chief of Engineers and the Assistant Secretary of the Army for Civil Works or both will formally testify at the hearings and answer questions asked by the committee members or submitted for the record by other members of Congress. Many of the questions submitted for the record are forwarded to PM-P to provide written responses.

Shortly after the testimony, both the House and Senate begin their markups of the President's budget. This is the beginning of the "Congressional Add" process. Many members of Congress will write their respective subcommittee chairman asking for consideration for funding of studies and projects requested by their constituents. PM-P prepares "Member Fact Sheets" so that the committees can have information on which to evaluate and prioritize the relative merits of the requests. After markup and floor votes, the House and Senate each pass their own version of the appropriations bill. Conference committee members are selected from both houses to resolve differences between the two bills. Once the conference committee completes action on the appropriations bill, both the full House and Senate vote on it and send it to the President for signature.

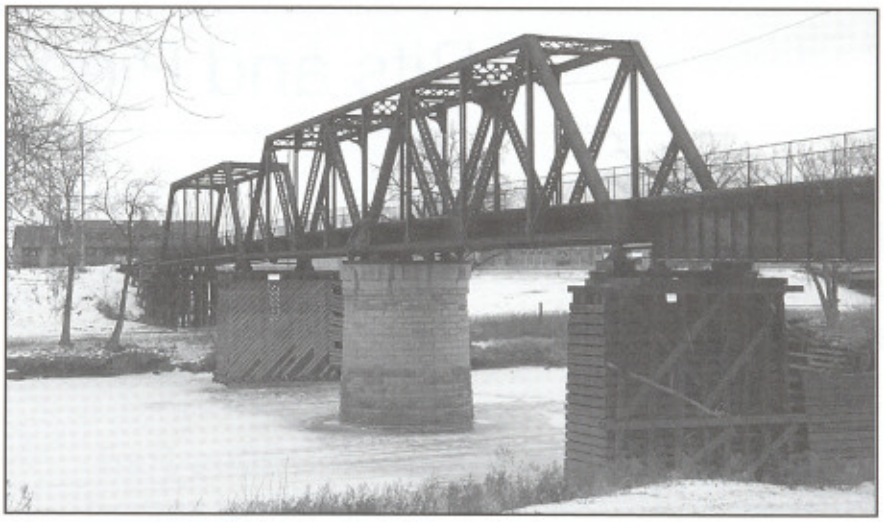
Execution Phase

After Congress and the President agree on the federal budget, OMB authorizes the U.S. Treasury to

Budget, cont. next page

Bridge for sale

By Peter Verstegen
Public Affairs Office



St. Paul District file photo

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and the city of Grand Forks, N.D., have put the former Northern Pacific Railroad (NPRR) Bridge on the market.

The bridge spans the Red River at Grand Forks, N.D., and East Grand Forks, Minn. The city and the Corps plan to remove the bridge as part of the local flood protection project. The bridge is being removed because it increases water levels during floods.

"The rails and ties were removed prior to its being sold to the city of Grand Forks and converted to a pedestrian bridge in the early 1980s," said Virginia Gnabasik in Project Management's Environmental Section. "The bridge trusses are scheduled for removal this summer, but the pivot mechanism and stone center pier are not part of this sale," she said.

The span is 215.0 feet long, 19.8 feet wide on the outside, has an inside width of 16.1 feet, and is about 30 feet high at the low steel beam.

Budget, cont. from preceding page

transfer funds to the Corps of Engineers account. HQUSACE issues Initial Work Allowances to specific studies and projects so that we can execute our program.

Throughout the fiscal year, PM-P monitors schedules and expenditure rates to identify potential execution problems and take corrective actions, if necessary. Typically, this involves numerous reprogramming actions, which result in the reallocation of funds from studies or projects experiencing execution problems or delays to studies or projects that are ahead of schedule.

> "Throughout the fiscal year, PM-P monitors schedules and expenditure rates to identify potential execution problems and take corrective actions..."

Congress has provided specific guidance with regard to reprogramming within the CG (Construction General) appropriation via report language accompanying several appropriations acts. HQUSACE has informal agreements with the congressional appropriations committees regarding reprogramming within the GI (General Investigations) and O&M (Operations and Maintenance) appropriations; the reprogramming guidance is set forth in ER 11-2-201. The execution process for fiscal 2001 will culminate in September 2001 when we go through the hectic year-end closeout, some 30 months after the budget cycle began.

So there it is...everything you wanted to know (and more) about the Civil Works budget, an important, albeit convoluted, process. What? You were expecting a *simple* explanation?

Portions of this article were taken from "The Heritage Foundation Guide to the Federal Budget Process" by Peter Sperry. The Heritage Foundation's web site is http://www.heritage.org for additional information. The site also contains links to other sites relating to the federal budget process.

Bits and Pieces

St. Paul, Detroit districts hold environmental meeting in Duluth

The St. Paul and Detroit District offices hosted an informational meeting on the Corps new Section 569 Northeastern Minnesota program in Duluth, Minnesota on February 24.

Section 569 of the Water Resources Development Act of 1999 provided an authorization for a pilot program to provide environmental assistance to non-federal interests in northeastern Minnesota. U.S. Representative Jim Oberstar, Eighth District (D-Minnesota), provided introductory remarks and helped facilitate a question-and-answer session following a program overview provided by St. Paul District (MVP) Outreach Coordinator, Russel Snyder. Chuck Crist, MVP DPPM, and Scott Parker, Detroit District DPPM, attended the meeting. Oberstar drafted Section 569 and is the ranking minority member on the Transportation and Infrastructure Committee.

IJC releases Red River flood report

Members of the International Red River Basin Task Force, composed of officials from the United States and Canada who represent the International Joint Commission (IJC), briefed the media and public officials on April 17 in Grand Forks and Fargo on final flood report that describes how the communities can better prepare for future floods. Chuck Crist, district deputy for programs and project management, Dave Loss, project manager, and Mark Davidson, chief of Public Affairs, attended the briefing.

The report and the meetings came nearly three years to the day after the Flood of 1997 inundated the Red River Valley, members Task force representatives distributed the 164-page final report of the International Red River Basin Task Force, "The Next Flood: Getting Prepared."

Task force members did a short presentation and opened the meeting for questions and answers.

The report examines issues related to the flood of 1997 and actions required to be better prepared for floods of a similar magnitude in the future. The report makes recommendations for flood management, communities at risk, preparedness and resiliency, data and decision-support needs and institutional mechanisms for better flood management. The report presents results of studies and investigations outlined in the task force's December 1997 interim report on Red River Flooding.

The 1909 Boundary Waters Treaty established the IJC to assist governments in the U.S. and Canada in finding impartial solutions to water problems in rivers and some of the largest lakes which lie along or flow across the border between the U.S. and Canada.

Crist, task force co-director, and Loss, technical advisor, met officials and the media in Grand Forks at Grand Forks Herald Community Room and in West Fargo at the S.E Cass County Water Resource District.

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