US Army Corps of Engineers ®
St. Paul District

Crosscurrents

Vol. 25, No. 4 April 2002

Emergency workers activated

by Peter Verstegen

The St. Paul District activated its Emergency Operations Center April 8 to address the potential failure of the Rapidan Dam on the Blue Earth River near Mankato, Minn.

"The state sent the Corps a letter Monday, April 8, to request assistance," said Tom Crump, project management. "The district engineer issued an emergency declaration that day. The initial request for funding went to headquarters Monday night," he said. The district used its Section 510 advance measures authority to provide emergency assistance.

"The Corps will build a rock berm in front of the dam to allow access and to close off the scour holes beneath the dam," Crump said. "Concrete will then be pumped into the confined space to fill up the scour holes and support the dam buttresses."

The Corps' fix is temporary. "The county will develop a long-term, permanent solution for the dam after the emergency subsides," he said.

Failure of the dam could result in the loss of around $700,000 in electrical generating capacity per year, the loss of 450 acres of wetlands and the closure of the bridge at County Highway 9 directly upstream of the dam. Sediment could also deposit in the Mankato flood control project, reducing the capacity of the river channel and the effectiveness of the project.

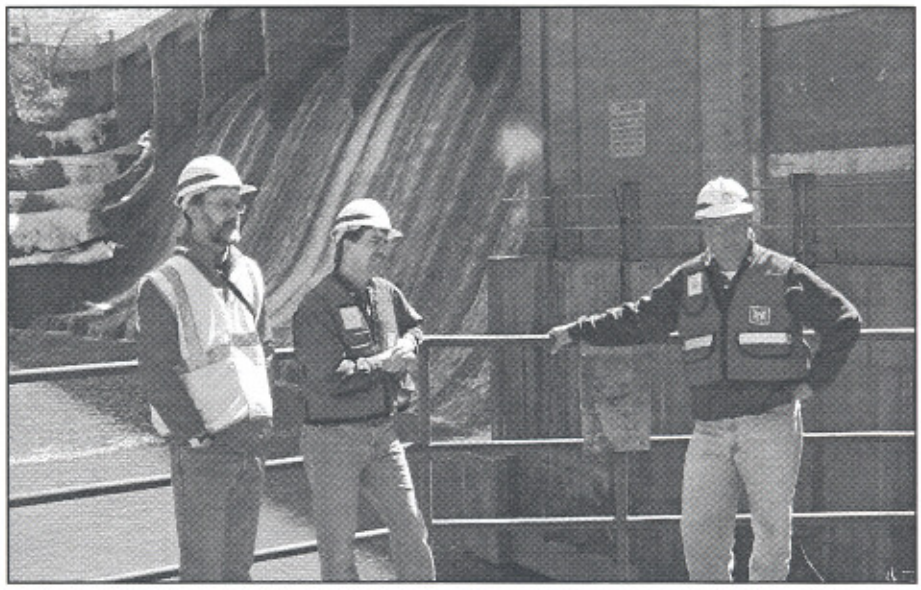


Photo by John Quist from Barr Engineering

Corps employees Scott Baker, Tom Sully and Dave Rydeen inspect the work being done at Rapidan Dam during a site visit in April

Large holes created by scouring beneath the foundation put the 92-year old dam at risk of failure. The holes extend one-third of its length and up to 29 feet in depth. Blue Earth County had started repairs on the dam and found more damage than expected. The county exhausted its funds for the repairs.

Fred Mitchell in contracting and Mike Osterby in engineering prepared a contract for bid on the failing dam in a record two days.

The team started with the Barr Engineering contract. Dave Rydeen, chief of geotechnical and geology section, edited Barr drawings to accommodate the Corps' work. The team addressed completion schedule, safety, rock placement and other repairs.

Osterby and Mitchell worked until nearly midnight on Wednesday,

(Continued on page 4)

We can all lend a helping hand

By Col. Robert L. Ball
District Engineer

I recently attended two events that seem to have nothing in common but really do. The first

event was delivering the contributions that the district made to the Neighbor-to-Neighbor program at Washington Middle School in St. Paul, Minn. The second was attending the funeral of one of your fellow workers in the district, Doug Blegen. It's what ties these two events together that I would like to comment on.

Many of you knew that Doug had suffered with stomach cancer, fought the good fight and passed away on April 10. While I never had the opportunity to meet Doug, I had heard of his exceptional work that he had done at Eau Galle and the number of friends he had within the district. What I found out about Doug when I went to his funeral only complimented what I had heard about him. The town of Spring Valley, Wis., seemed to stop for his funeral. His fellow townsfolk turned out to honor his memory and lift up his family.

Each of the people there had some tale of how Doug had impacted their lives – whether it was keeping the history of their family's part of the town's history alive, helping them fix some broken appliance or digging a grave by hand for a loved one. I knew Doug had been a trusted, valued and productive employee. What I didn't know was that his work for others didn't stop once he left the Eau Galle project site. Doug gave to his community with a spirit that was greatly appreciated and celebrated by his peers at his funeral.

Last month, the district office in St Paul had a food drive. We collectively gave 296 items of food to a food bank that serves the community surrounding the school that we earlier adopted. Gale Ribar, the manager of the food bank, gratefully received the food. As we talked about what that food would do, he told the group of us that were there about the people that would eat that food. They are mainly what we so casually call "working poor" – people who have a job, or jobs, that pays so little that they have to make a choice at the end of the month between paying the rent or buying food. When those folks go for help, the good people at Neighbor-to-Neighbor counsel each of the families and connect them with other agencies that can provide help.

However, the main thing they do is give the family 10 pounds of food per person – enough to last four days. Sometimes that is enough to keep a family from having to go hungry in order to meet their other necessary financial commitments. There is great need here, the food bank never has enough food, and we can be assured that the management of the food bank is done efficiently and with an eye towards getting its recipients self sufficient.

What do these two have in common? On one hand, we have a need identified that we have tried to help meet. On the other, we have the example of a man who went the extra mile in his community to meet similar needs and was remembered by those he touched for that. Doug Blegen didn't sit around until what should have been the natural end of his life (many years from now) to do good for others – he did it as he lived and did it with a wonderful spirit. We should follow his example. Helping the food bank is a wonderful thing, but it isn't the only need around. By all means, support our neighbors who are hungry but also look for others who are hurting or just need a hand to get on the right path.

We are engaged in a noble work in our professional lives but the Doug Blegens of the world would tell us that isn't enough. We need to reach out to our neighbors and help whenever we can. Then, when we go the way that all mankind must, it can be said of us like it was said of Doug this past week, "Well done."

US Army Corps of Engineers
St. Paul District

Crosscurrents

Crosscurrents is an unofficial publication, authorized under the provisions of AR 360-1. It is published monthly by offset for the St. Paul District, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers.

Editorial views and opinions are not necessarily those of the Corps of Engineers, nor of the Department of the Army.

Address all inquiries to:

Editor, ***Crosscurrents***
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
Army Corps of Engineers Centre
190 Fifth Street East
St. Paul, MN 55101-1638

District Engineer	Col. Robert L. Ball
Public Affairs Chief	Mark Davidson
Media Specialist	Shannon Bauer
Editor	Peter Verstegen
Production	Anna Wetterling
Phone:	651-290-5202
E-mail:	cemvp-pa@usace.army.mil

District members dredge in downtown St. Paul

by Shannon Bauer

Several members of the district's physical support branch in Fountain City, Wis., took time off from their regular duties of repairing the locks and dams, lying down rip rap and making emergency repairs to do some mechanical dredging in downtown St. Paul early April.

Mechanical dredging is when a crane and barge are used to remove sediment off the river floor. It's used when the area being dredged is too small and too costly for the more common hydraulic dredging, which is the kind performed with the Dredge Thompson.

"On the Thompson, there's a cutter with teeth that churns up the material. The sediment and water is suctioned up a long tube," said Tom Oksness, the district's physical support branch chief. "In the confined space of the marina, we really couldn't move around and reach all the material.

"Besides, if we did that in the St. Paul harbor, we'd probably suck up the docks right off the shore," he joked.

Usually, the Corps hires a contractor for mechanical dredging but Oksness' maintenance and repair crew was already in the area after completing winter repair work at St. Anthony Falls lock and dam. He said it was easier and more cost effective this time to complete the dredging themselves than to mobilize the contractor and the required completion schedule could not be met by the contract.

Lanny Krause, maintenance and repair chief in charge of the St. Paul dredging, said his crew does mechanical dredging in emergency and unusual situations. "We did some emergency work here in St. Paul last year after the spring flooding," he said, explaining the harbor was blocked because of all the debris and sediment and needed to be opened for river traffic. "We're up here again now to clean it up more."

This year, within a two-week period, the crew removed around 4,000 cubic yards of dredged material from the lower St. Paul harbor, which is located at Harriet Island upstream of the Wabasha Street bridge. And without this

(Continued on page 7)

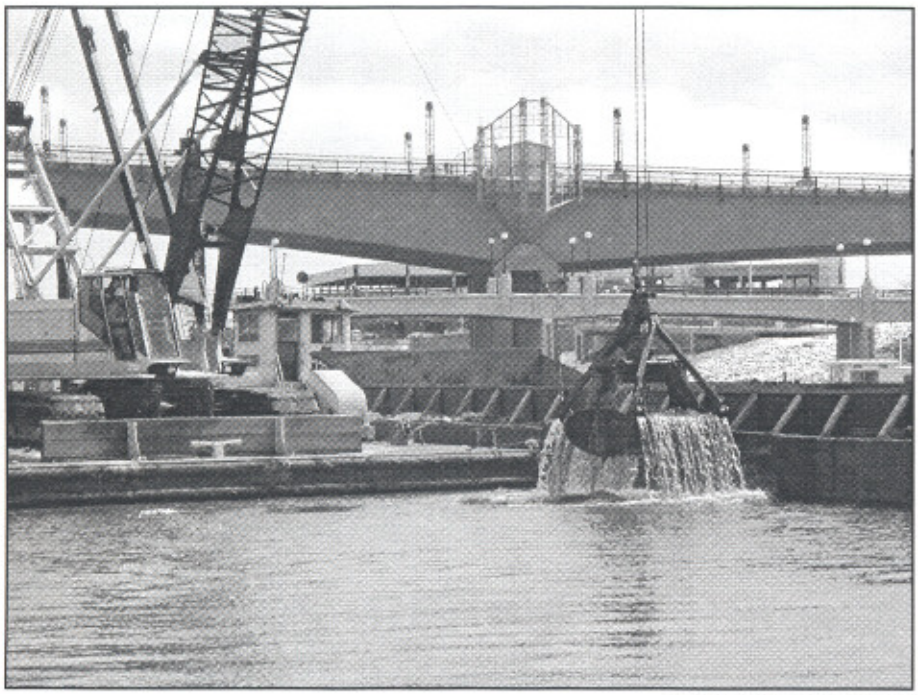


Photo by Shannon Bauer

For mechanical dredging, a clamshell crane is used to scoop sediments off the bottom of the river. The dredged materials are transported away by barge.

Photo by Shannon Bauer

Lanny Krause, from the Fountain City, Wis., maintenance and repair shop, supervised the St. Paul dredging.

Western flood-control crews train for ice rescue

by Scott Tichy

Maintenance workers and park rangers from Lake Ashtabula, Lac Qui Parle and Lake Traverse projects attended ice rescue training in Moorhead, Minn., March 19.

An instructor from Northwest Technical College campus and members of the Moorhead Fire Department conducted the training. This was an eight hour course with about three hours of classroom instruction and the remaining time split between work in the pool and out on the river ice.

The classroom instruction covered equipment and techniques used in ice rescue situations. The students watched video footage of several actual ice rescue situations and discussed what the rescuers did right and what could be improved upon. A lot of time was spent covering safety procedures rescuers need to follow to insure their own safety during rescue operations.

Before moving out on the ice for some hands on ice rescue practice, the students had a chance to try out the insulated ice rescue suits and some of the rescue equipment in the controlled environment of a pool. After the students were comfortable working with the suits, they moved on to the Red River of the North to work on the ice.

They trained on the river in an area of open water, ice flows and sheet ice. They practiced swimming in the river current with the ice suits, getting out of the river and up on the ice with and without ice picks, falling through the ice, pulling someone out of the water by hand with a pike pole and tending safety lines on shore.

"This was some of the best hands-on training I have ever received," said Scott Tichy, Baldhill Dam park ranger. "By working in and around the ice and practicing the rescue techniques in a real ice situation, we all now know what to expect in the event we are called out to aid in an ice rescue situation.

"All of us working in the field with the St. Paul District work in and around conditions where the need for an ice rescue may occur. I would highly recommend this training for anyone who works in the field in the winter," Tichy continued. "Not only does the training prepare you to come to someone else's aid, but the experience and skills learned will help everyone who participates be more safety conscious in and around lake and river ice."

Besides Tichy, the other district members who participated included: Chris Botz and Doug Kelly, Lake Ashtabula; Rod Pederson and Duane Wilson, Lac Qui Parle; and Milton Haupert, Lake Traverse.

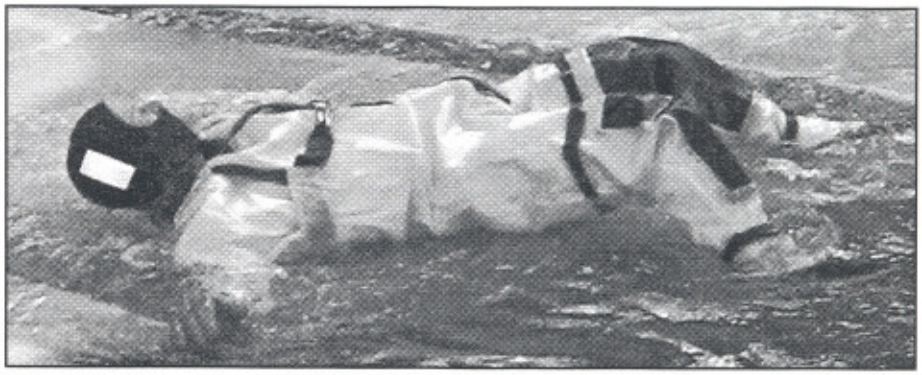


Photo by Steve Odegaard

Lake Ashtabula maintenance worker Doug Kelly plays as a patient needing to be rescued during ice rescue training last month.

Rapidan

(Continued from page 1)

April 10. "We got our marching orders in a meeting Wednesday at 1 p.m." said Osterby. "At 11:30 p.m., Fred [Mitchell] and I put the plans and specs on [Tom] Sully's desk." Andrea Childress of engineering stayed until 7 p.m. to photocopy critical documents.

Mike Dahlquist, chief of cost and specifications section, completed the government estimate — a necessary step for a bid opening.

Tom Sully, chief of structural section, departed from the district office with the contract at 6 a.m. on Thursday. The district considered two bids and awarded the contract Friday, April 12.

The swift action meant no work interruption and a seamless transition from the county to a federal contract.

Public affairs staff garners awards

by Shannon Bauer

Photo by Shannon Bauer

Nadine Dupree, Peter Verstegen and Mark Davidson received the Locke L. Mouton award for their public affairs efforts during the floods last spring.

Headquarters U.S. Army Corps of Engineers selected the St. Paul District public affairs office for two Corps-wide annual public affairs awards early April.

Mark Davidson, district public affairs chief, was selected for the Michael C. Robinson Award, which is to recognize the top USACE public affairs practitioner of the year. The entire staff, plus augmentees, received the Locke L. Mouton Award for outstanding public affairs efforts during the flooding of spring 2001.

Davidson will accept both awards at the USACE senior leaders conference in August.

"I was very surprised, very honored, to receive these awards," said Davidson, "but it all happened because of team effort and because of the people outside of the public affairs office who helped us."

The Mouton award is to recognize public affairs specialists based on an evaluation of an individual or team's superior performance in one or more areas of public affairs to include community relations, media relations, internal or command information and emergency or disaster response. The Robinson award is selected from the several Mouton winners. Judges for the awards work outside the Corps.

Those recognized for the Mouton with Davidson were Peter Verstegen and Nadine DuPree of the St. Paul District public affairs office, Dan Oles of the St. Paul District natural resources office, Karen Buehler of the Mississippi Valley Division public affairs office and Julie Morgan of the New Orleans District public affairs office.

Carol Sanders, USACE chief of public affairs, said the award is being presented to these individuals for the three-month long effort they put into getting the word out about the Corps during the floods, as well as their advance preparations that enabled them to succeed.

Pre-flood preparations by the public affairs staff included developing a media plan for the floods, obtaining and packing up equipment for possible deployment, writing media guidelines for non-public affairs people in the district, training public affairs augmentees, contacting news media outlets and writing press releases regarding the upcoming floods.

During the flood fight, the office staff wrote more than 40 news releases, which resulted in hundreds of media interviews for many members of the St. Paul District.

"Aside from the Sept. 11 attacks, it was probably the Corps' next biggest disaster response in 2001," said Davidson. "I think we did a pretty good job in meeting public affairs expectations.

"And as more and more of our employees interact with the public and the media, it proves they must be aware of what they're saying and how they say it," he continued. "Public affairs people can't be everywhere. We [the public affairs office] need to train our personnel how to react to the media, so they do a good job and present a good image of the Corps."

Hendrickson, Noss, Verstegen named St. Paul District Civil Servants of the Year

Jon Hendrickson

Position Title: Hydraulic Engineer

2001 Highlights: Coordinated water and sediment monitoring for the Pool 8 water-level drawdown, provided support to the Mississippi River area engineer during the spring floods, completed the design of the Pool 8 phase three islands project and gave expert guidance to several engineers in the hydraulics branch. Served as the design leader for two projects that were honored as recipients of the Minnesota Seven Wonders of Engineering award in 2001 and 2002.

Number of Years at the Corps: 16, St. Paul District

Education: Bachelor of Science, civil engineering, and Master of

(Continued on next page)

Marilyn Noss

Position Title: Office Automation Clerk

2001 Highlights: Helped coordinate logistical and administrative support, which required overtime on her part, within the western area office during the spring floods. This included assisting in the administration of more than $2 million in emergency flood fight contracts in seven communities, determining logistical requirements and coordinating nearly $10,000 in local purchases of safety equipment, rain gear, rental vehicles and supplies for the inspectors and engineers at each project site.

Number of Years at the Corps: Almost 1.5 years, St. Paul District

Previous Positions: 11.5 years

(Continued on next page)

Peter Verstegen

Position Title: Public Affairs Specialist

2001 Highlights: Worked long days during the spring flooding doing interviews with international, regional and local media; put together a 16-page special flood fight newsletter and responded to more than 800 public queries; and received a Mississippi Valley Division Commander's Coin for his work with the news media during this time. Produced the district's monthly newsletter despite being alone in the office for several months.

Number of Years at the Corps: Around 11, St. Paul District

Previous Positions: Employee communications specialist with NCR Comten in Roseville, Minn.;

(Continued on next page)

Hendrickson

(Continued from previous page)

Science, civil engineering; University of Minnesota, Minneapolis.

Hobbies: Serve as scoutmaster of Boy Scout Troop 733 in Forest Lake, Minn. This fits perfectly with my interests in a number of outdoor activities, including hunting, canoeing and skiing.

City, State of Residence: Forest Lake, Minn.

Family: My wife, Andrea, is also a hydraulic engineer, working for the Minnesota Department of Transportation. We have three sons: Matthew, 15; Jacob, 13; and Isaac, 10.

Comments: "This certainly is one of the top events in my career with the St. Paul District. I have been fortunate to have had excellent supervisors, who provided guidance when needed but also allowed me the amount of independence needed to develop as an engineer. Like all St. Paul District employees, I have benefited from the team spirit and can-do attitude that this district is known for. The project team members I have worked with have all been top-notch, and I owe much of my success to them."

Noss

(Continued from previous page)

civil service at Grand Forks Air Force Base, N.D., as a secretary for the fire department in a civil engineer squadron, a shipping clerk for the traffic management office, a budget clerk in a transportation squadron and a cash clerk at the commissary.

Education: Secretarial Finishing Degree, Aaker's Business College, Grand Forks, N.D.; Bachelors of Science, elementary education, Mayville State College, Mayville, N.D.

Hobbies: Saturday night trivia, reading, crossword puzzles, bowling, and darts, as well as watching the University of North Dakota Fighting Sioux, Minnesota Vikings and NASCAR.

City, State of Residence: Grand Forks, N.D.

Family: Single, No Children

Comments: "I feel thrilled and privileged to be honored as one of the recipients of the 2002 Civil Servant of the Year award. I have the pleasure and opportunity to work with generous and knowledgeable people, both in the western-area office and it's subordinate offices, as well as the St. Paul District, who have been instrumental in helping me with my transition to the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers."

Verstegen

(Continued from previous page)

staff assistant with U.S. Sen. Rudy Boschwitz; freelance writer and correspondent for the *St. Paul Pioneer Press*; and staff assistant for U.S. Rep. Jim Leach.

Education: Bachelors of Arts, Hiram College, Hiram, Ohio; Masters of Arts, University of Iowa.

Hobbies: Reading, cooking, movies, ongoing physical therapy and selective volunteering with the American Syringomyelia Alliance Project

City, State of Residence: Hudson, Wis.

Family: Wife, Colleen; aunt, uncle and cousins in St. Paul, Minn., and surrounding communities; sisters and their families on the east and west coasts.

Comments: "It's an unexpected honor to be selected. Many individuals throughout the St. Paul District, including my supervisor Mark Davidson, have supported me with timely and accurate information to answer media and public queries. They share in this honor."

Dredging

(Continued from page 3)

dredging, the water would be too shallow for boats to maneuver in and out of the harbor. The St. Paul harbor is one of 18 congressionally authorized shallow draft harbors that the district is responsible for maintaining adequate depths.

Krause said the crew used a crane mounted on a barge, using a clamshell bucket to scoop up the sediments and then dumped it on a cargo barge for transportation. To assist him, he had two push boats to move the barges around.

The dredged material removed from the harbor was relocated to the St. Paul Port Authority's Southport dredged material placement site for recycling, where most of it will be eventually removed and used as landfill at other locations in the areas, including the city of St. Paul's riverfront development program.

District biologist volunteers time to protect the Kinni

by Shannon Bauer

Oak savannah, white pine forest, wooded coulees and sedge meadows frame the cold and fast-flowing 22-mile long Kinnickinnic River located about 35 minutes from the district office in western Wisconsin.

Nicknamed the 'Kinni' by its neighbors, it's a favorite among Midwestern fly fisherman, being one of the most productive natural trout fisheries in the region and producing both brook and brown. In addition, more than 40 state-listed endangered and threatened species call the Kinni watershed home.

With the Twin Cities on the left; Eau Claire, Wis., on the right; and River Falls, Wis., on top of it, however, the Kinni is endangered from all sides. Residential development, storm water run-off, agriculture pollution and steambank erosion all threaten the health of this natural resource.

It is for preserving this river and its quality that St. Paul District fisheries and biologist, project manager and River Falls-area resident Dan Wilcox spends much of his off-duty time volunteering. Six years ago, he and 11 of his neighbors formed the Kinnickinnic River Land Trust, a nonprofit land conservation group dedicated to defending the Kinni and its watershed.

Since then, this land trust has safeguarded more than 1,100 acres and recruited around 500 members from across the nation. Its creation resulted in inspiring the formation of several more land trusts in western Wisconsin.

"The Kinnickinnic is a real beautiful river with many unique qualities. It's really important to the community," said Wilcox. "We wanted to see it protected from the development that's caused many streams elsewhere to deteriorate."

Wilcox, who's continued to serve on the board since its inception, said it was set up to operate in several ways. "We take donations of and purchase conservation easements, as well as purchase land out right," he said. "Additionally, the land trust enters into management agreements with land owners to protect the quality of the land.

"We do a lot of educating in the community about the river and the watershed and participate in monitoring the river," he added.

Photo provided by Dan Wilcox

St. Paul District fisheries and biologist, project manager and River Falls-area resident Dan Wilcox spends much of his free time on the Kinnickinnic River, or 'Kinni.' He and several of his neighbors formed the Kinnick River Land Trust six years ago to protect this natural resource from development.

Wilcox has worked for the Corps on fisheries and water quality for 23 years, both in the Savannah and St. Paul districts. He said his work and his volunteer experiences compliment each other. "This kind of thing [working on behalf of the land trust] fits in with what I like to do," he explained.

Besides serving as a board member, his contributions to

(Continued on next page)

Wilcox

(Continued from previous page)

the Kinnickinnic River Land Trust include attending local government meetings to help promote better watershed management, cleaning up the river each year, conducting vegetation surveys, developing a computer geographic information system for the Kinnickinnic watershed and taking students and other interested parties on canoe trips to explain the ecology of the river and help them understand land trust management.

One of his bigger projects for the Kinni included developing a management plan for Kelly Creek, which is a spring tributary of the river and an important spawning area for brook trout. The land trust purchased the 25 acres that Kelly Creek flows through, so members of the public could do hands-on conservation work there, as well as enjoy its beauty, and teachers can use the area for education.

Wilcox also participated in burning brush at the site and helped plant native prairie and oak savannah to restore the original flora of the area.

"Dan [Wilcox] is invaluable to us, because he's the only professional ecologist on board," said Rick McMonagle, executive director of the land trust and neighbor of Wilcox. "He brings lots of contacts, resources and knowledge.

"But on a personal side, he knows this river," he continued. "He canoes, he fishes and he hunts. He spends a lot of time out there on the water."

The land trust raises funds through membership donations, grants and government programs. In some of the land trust's management agreements, they partner with groups like Pheasant's Forever, Trout Unlimited and the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources.

"I've gotten to know a lot of people, as a result of my participation in the land trust," said Wilcox. "I've learned how nonprofit organizations operate, and I've learned a lot from other board members."

His biggest reward, though, he said, is "leaving a great legacy that will become increasingly more valuable over time. I've come to appreciate that river and other rivers a lot more. … Through our land protection efforts, too, I now have a place to go fishing and run my dog."

Wilcox recognized for planning

by Shannon Bauer

Mississippi Valley Division presented the 2001 Outstanding Planning Achievement Award to St. Paul District fisheries and biologist project manager Dan Wilcox at its planning conference in Memphis April 9.

The award, which resulted from Wilcox's work on the Upper Mississippi River System Habitat Needs Assessment, was presented to all the members of the Corps Habitat Needs Assessment team, which, besides Wilcox, also included Gary Swenson, Charles Theiling and Scott Whitney from Rock Island District and Thixton Miller and Mike Thompson from St. Louis District.

The Habitat Needs Assessment is part of the Corps' environmental management program for the Upper Mississippi River. It's the first part of an ongoing process, which will help guide future protection and restoration projects on the Upper Mississippi River. Habitat needs were identified by examining past, present and forecasted future conditions and by identifying target future conditions.

The assessment took two years of effort from Wilcox and the rest of the Corps team and involved working with many federal and state government agencies, such as U.S. Fish and Wildlife, U.S. Geological Survey and five state natural resource departments.

Wilcox originally wrote the scope of work for the Habitat Needs Assessment, worked with an interagency technical team to conduct the assessment and helped develop a habitat needs query tool. "The tool is a GIS- [geographic information system] based computer program that estimates habitat availability for different species," he explained. "Using a simple menu, you can identify species of interest to generate maps and acreage estimates of where there's habitat available for them throughout the Upper Mississippi and Illinois rivers."

About his award, he said, "Recognition from peers is always welcome. Conducting the habitat needs assessment and assisting the Upper Mississippi River management community in setting objectives for condition of the river ecosystem was rewarding."

Heritage Toastmasters provides leadership, communication opportunities

by Daniel Yang

St. Paul District employees interested in improving their leadership skills and increasing their confidence participate in Toastmasters International.

Members of the Heritage Toastmasters Club, which includ members outside of the district, meet every Tuesday over their lunch hour at the St. Paul District building and practice various speaking situations at club meetings to enhance their communication skills.

Here, the members of the heritage club participate in exercises to develop leadership and speaking skills. These exercises include table topics "on-the-spot" speaking and thinking, prepared speeches and evaluations. The mission of Toastmasters is for its members to have the opportunity to develop communication and leadership skills, which, in turn, is supposed to foster self-confidence and personal growth.

"Toastmasters is an organization that helps build leadership throughout the Corps – whether you're in engineering, public affairs or accounting," said Russ Williams, Heritage Club president and St. Paul District project manager. "We offer effective speech and listening training. In addition, though, the club provides an opportunity for different individuals to meet and interact with each other. People with different backgrounds and disciplines are able to socialize in a fun environment."

The club meetings provide relaxed surroundings for members to practice a full range of speaking situations with constant positive reinforcement. Often, members practice upcoming work-related presentations with the club. They have found that through evaluations of their presentations, the constructive and positive feedback received from fellow members have greatly increased the effectiveness of their work-related presentations and performance, said many of the members.

"Participating in Toastmasters has given me confidence in both work and life in general. I feel much more comfortable expressing my personal ideas and thoughts," said Anna Wetterling, visual information specialist, who first became involved with the club five years ago in Bismark, N.D.

Photo by Daniel Yang

Russell Williams, Stuart Dobberpuhl and Anna Wetterling pose around the Heritage Toastmasters banner.

Col. Robert Ball, St. Paul District commander, noted that communication improvement has become a significant issue in the district. "Recent APIC [Army Performance Improvement Criteria] planning activities resulted in the identification of internal communications skills as an area of weakness. To enhance verbal communication skills, it is recommended that managers provide opportunities to their staff to engage in public speaking activities," he said. "One of these opportunities recommended is participation in Toastmaster's International."

Russell Williams won first place in Table Topics at the Area 14 spring speech contest held March 26. He went on to compete in the Eastern Area division contest held April 4.

Table Topics is a portion of a Toastmasters meeting during which members are asked to speak extemporaneously on a subject for one to two minutes.

2001 Upper Mississippi Navigation Charts mark paradigm shift

by Peter Verstegen

The Corps engineered a paradigm shift when it published the new 2001 Upper Mississippi River Navigation Charts this March.

The charts are on the Internet for public access. "If a recreational boater wants just one or two of the pages, they can print them out at home," said Dan Krumholz, project manager in the channels and harbors unit at Fountain City, Wis.

Krumholz and Keith LeClaire, a cartographer in the project management branch, coordinated with Holly Zillmer, the district's webmaster, to post the charts online.

The Corps is in the process of digitally mastering the charts. "This will be the basis for future electronic charting," said Krumholz. Electronic charting provides the opportunity for a boater to see the boat's location in real time on a computer as it moves from point to point on the chart.

"The data is not static," said LeClaire. "The charts can be quickly updated on the Internet to reflect changes in navigation. Map features are generally accurate to within one to three meters. The data is truly a digital product," he said.

Digital mapping integrates geographic information systems and global positioning systems technology to display navigation and recreational river features.

Michael Walker, a cartographic technician, and Byron Williams, a cartographer, contributed to the 2001 edition. They work with LeClaire.

A CD-ROM that contains an electronic version of the charts is tucked into the inside back page of the bound papercharts. The digital version can be viewed on Windows'-based and Macintosh computers.

Navigation safety was the driving force behind the paradigm shift. The Corps publishes the charts under the authority of its navigation mission.

The 2001 charts introduce new features to support safety. The charts locate navigable sloughs, open channels, navigation hazards, historical features, small boat harbors, wildlife sanctuaries, bridge clearances, locks, dams and other facilities.

New features are numbers for railroad miles, highlights for day marks, red-dashed lines designating dam safety zones and a light blue color to identify navigable depths for commercial vessels drafting up to nine feet. The charts also comply with National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration standards for day mark symbols and colors.

The charts introduce 10 "critical zones" upstream of Lock and Dam 10 in Guttenberg, Iowa. They mark spots where the river coincides with railroad lines, and there is a site-specific concern for track bed erosion. "One reason for the critical zones was a barge-train accident in 1991 between river miles 731.2-731.6," said Krumholz. One of the zones designates this site downstream of Fountain City. Wave action, river currents and vessel prop wash had eroded the stream bank, undermining the track bed.

"There were no deaths, injuries

(Continued on page 13)

Photo by Jon Lyman

Michael Walker, Col. Robert Ball, Byron Williams and Keith LeClaire. Ball presented these individuals with coins and certificates of appreciation for their work on the new navigation charts.

Corps' kid requests help sandbagging

by Shannon Bauer

Maj. Thomas O'Hara, deputy district engineer, thought it kind of appropriate for a member of the Corps of Engineers to be asked to be a sandbag for an hour or so.

So when Peter Sauser, the sixth-grade son of district design engineer Phil Sauser, asked him to play games with students at Highwood Hills Elementary School in St. Paul, Minn., last month as part of a community program that compares spending time with children to a community flood-fighting effort, he accepted.

"I thought it was appropriate to what the Corps does and what our mission is," said O'Hara. "The kids are our future, and we need to make an effort to spend time with them."

The program involves inviting adults who live or work in the St. Paul community to the classroom to interact with the students through playing games for 40 minutes on one Friday. Sharon Hendrix, Peter Sauser's teacher, said she created this game time for her classroom to teach her students some social skills.

"The students benefit hugely from modeling the behaviors of the adults," she said. "It also shows the kids that they're important and that they have access to important people in the community."

She compares the necessity of this interaction to an approaching flood-fight in her written description of the program: "When disaster is about to strike, it takes more than one person, regardless of how passionate or diligent the person, to hold the waters back. All the members of the community need to take action in a group sandbagging effort.

"Currently, there are waters rising around our kids, which require immediate sandbagging attention."

O'Hara was community member number 42 to participate as a sandbag this year. Other visitors have included Minnesota Congresswoman Betty McCollum, former St. Paul Mayor Norm Coleman and St. Paul School Board Member John Broderick (while he was running for office).

Peter Sauser said he decided to invite O'Hara to his classroom after his dad showed him an email O'Hara had sent to district employees regarding community service projects. Sauser said he brought the email to his teacher, and she assisted him in sending O'Hara a hand-written invitation to attend their game day. "I thought he might be interesting," he said.

O'Hara wore his Army battle dress uniform and passed out Corps of Engineers stickers and pens shaped like bolts. "Maj. O'Hara wore his fatigues, and he brought cool stuff, so he was cool," said Hendrix. "Some of the people who come don't know how to interact with kids, but he was good. He talked to them."

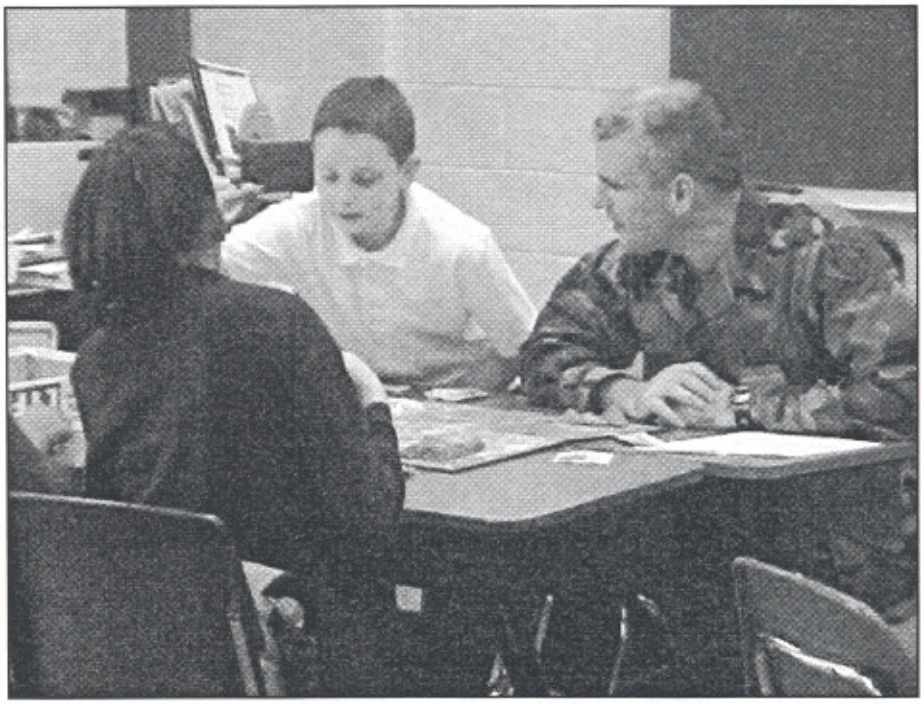


Photo provided by Maj. Thomas O'Hara

Maj. Thomas O'Hara, deputy district engineer, and Peter Sauser, son of district design engineer Phil Sauser, play the board game Life™ at Highwood Hills Elementary in St. Paul, Minn., during a March visit to the school by O'Hara.

The program isn't formal. It involves sitting at a table with a group of students and playing a game of their choice with them. While he was there, O'Hara said,

(Continued on next page)

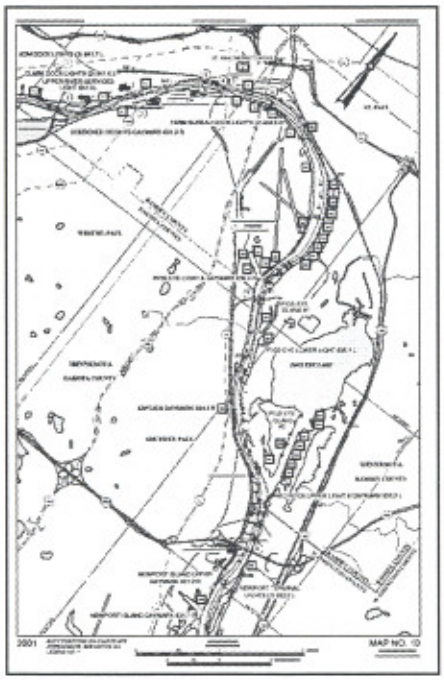
Navigation

(Continued from page 11)

or significant damage to river resources" Krumholz said, "but those concerns prompted action to identify critical zones and to take measures to reduce erosion."

An article by the Corps' Robert Mann of the Topographic Engineering Center in the March 2002 issue of *Sea Technology* highlighted the need for accurate and timely navigational data. In 1993, a tug and tow, operating in limited visibility, struck a railroad bridge pier in a bayou near Mobile, Ala. The hit caused significant damage to the rails. Shortly thereafter, an Amtrak train crossed the bridge and plunged into the bayou causing the loss of more than 30 passengers and crew. The National Transportation Safety Board reported that electronic chart technology, together with global positioning systems technology, could have prevented the tragedy.

These charts update the paper-based 1989 version, which were 9 by 15 inches. The new 11 by 17 inch spiral-bound charts show



St. Paul District graphic

Example of a nagivation chart

navigation for 866 miles of the Mississippi River from Coon Rapids, Minn., to the mouth of the Ohio River at Cairo, Ill.

LeClaire and Krumholz worked closely with others in the district and with other outside stakeholders to map 251 miles in the St. Paul District between Minneapolis and Guttenberg, Iowa. They updated and improved charts for 27 miles of the St. Croix River, 28 miles of the Minnesota River and two miles of the Black River in Wisconsin. Map No. 8 marks river mile 857.6 in Minneapolis as the upstream limit of the Corps' nine-foot channel.

The charts contain regulations, graphics of navigation aids, transportation, management areas, navigation facilities, a graphic showing typical land cover, pictures of various aids to navigation, lock and dam phone numbers, radio frequencies, gage locations and other useful information.

The charts are $30 plus $6.50 for shipping. To obtain a copy, send a check or money order payable to: FOA, U.S. Army, St. Paul District, COE. Mail it to USACE, St. Paul District, Attention: Library Sales, 190 Fifth St. E., St. Paul, MN 55101-1638. For more information or to order five or more books, please call 651-290-5680. For credit card orders, please call 309-794-4338.

The web address to access the 2001 charts is: http://www.mvr.usace.army.mil/NavCharts/UMRNavCharts.asp

School

(Continued from previous page)

"We played the game of Life™. They beat me; I lost."

While they played, he said the students asked him several questions about being in the Army. They also presented him with a sandbag pin to wear. "I thought it was appropriate, considering our flood-control program," he said.

"I had a great time," he continued. "It gave me an appreciation for these kids and reinforced my feeling that it's important to go out and remain involved in the community."

Suaser, too, said he likes game day "because it's fun and it's better than doing school work. … I guess I learn what they [the visitors] do and what kind of jobs they have."

When asked, though, if Sauser wanted to grow up and work for the Corps like his father and O'Hara, he said, "No." He explained, "I want to be a veterinarian."

To volunteer to be a future sandbag one Friday, contact Hendrix at 651-293-8875. She said she is always looking for more participants.

Diversity appreciation blossoms into marriage

by Peter Verstegen

Jodi Stillson Dutta lives diversity – in her marriage, geographically, culturally and in her education. Dutta works as a civil engineer in engineering division.

"Rather than a wedding date, we've had a wedding transition," said Dutta. The transition began last October and will end in July. "We wanted to have a celebration in both places — India and the United States."

Dutta's husband, Autri, is a graduate student in computer science at the University of Minnesota. He is from Assam, India, a province bordered by China, Bangladesh and Myanmar (formerly Burma).

They met in 1989 as undergraduates in college, where she majored in Spanish. Before her graduation, she decided to pursue a degree in civil engineering at UW-Madison. Dutta and Autri lost track of one another after Dutta moved to Mexico for three years. They reconnected in 1999 in Wausau, Wis., where she worked as an engineer for a reservoir management and river regulation company.

Her Spanish degree at the University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire, prepared her for Mexico. "I've always been attracted to learning about other cultures. It deepened with my interest in Spanish," Dutta said. Her experiences in Mexico and India have taught her to be sensitive to different perspectives.

Photo by Peter Verstegen

Jodi Stillson Dutta wears a Sari, a traditional dress for women in India. The dot on her forehead is decorative. A red mark near her hairline, covered by her Corps hardhat, indicates her status as married. The cloth on her cube wall at left is a traditional Assamese wall hanging.

"It's important to be truly aware of other persons' backgrounds," she said. "In what ways are they seeing differently than I am?" Their marriage vows started with a civil ceremony in Minnesota last October. A two-day Hindu ceremony followed in January in Assam. This July, they will reaffirm their vows in a traditional Christian ceremony in her hometown in Appleton, Wis.

"The Hindu wedding is very different from a Christian ceremony," she said. "It usually spans three days, but ours was compressed into two days." The ritual incorporates "nuani," in which her head is doused with water from the Fox River in Wisconsin and the Brahmaputra River in Assam – symbolic of the union of two cultures.

Throughout the festivities in India, excited talking, chatting and laughing filled the air. At other times, she found unfamiliar sounds to be captivating. "In the morning, at critical points of the ceremonial activities, several aunts would call out in a high-pitched, pulsing 'oooooooo' (by repeatedly covering their mouth with a closed fist) in order to scare away evil spirits," she said. "During the evening ceremony, in the sacred area where the ceremony takes place, one of the two Hindu priests would tend to placing offerings in the fire (a physical representation of God) while the other chanted the prayers and vows in mesmerizing, harmonious, staccato Sanskrit.

"It was amazing for me, and for everyone, to see how quickly and deeply the ties grew between our families and friends in India. I'm sure this came about because so many people were truly open to learning from and connecting with each other," said Dutta.

"My family and other U.S. friends that joined us were all very moved by the welcoming and openness of Autri's family — they received us with a warmth that was truly inspiring, exemplified by their deeply sincere hospitality and the comfort we all felt while being drawn into the celebrations. They enjoyed seeing their American guests wearing their native dress at the ceremonies (sari's for the women and kurta's for the men) and were grateful for the presence of so many who would travel to a new place, on the other side of the world, in order to celebrate with us."

Bits and Pieces

Welcome:

Work-study student **Heidi Kern** will assist Denise Julson in the district records management section. She is currently a senior at Cochrane-Fountain City High School in Fountain City, Wis., and plans on attending Winona State University in Winona, Minn., next fall, while continuing to work for the Corps.

Tricia Liggett was recently hired as a civil engineer at the western area office in East Grand Forks, Minn. She was working at Puget Sound Naval Shipyard in Bremerton, Wash. Originally, she is from Lakeville, Minn.

Michael Nelson was recently hired as an office engineer on the English Coulee Diversion project at the western area office in Grand Forks, N.D. For the past three-and-a-half years, he worked as a project engineer at M.A. Mortenson. In 1991, he graduated from North Dakota State University in Fargo, N.D.

John Ogren was recently hired as a lock and dam operator at the Lower St. Anthony Falls Lock and Dam. For 35 years, he was a retail store manager for a carpet and furniture store. He currently resides in Coon Rapids, Minn.

Sandra Spruell recently transferred to the district's resource management office from the finance center in Millington, Tenn. There, she was an accountant in the field reporting section, where she processed the Military, Civil, Revolving Fund and Air Force reports for the Los Angeles District and the South Pacific Division.

Work-study student **Daniel Yang** will assist the district public affairs office with various and sundry duties. He is currently a senior at Harding High School in St. Paul, Minn., and plans on attending the University of Minnesota in Minneapolis next fall, while continuing to work for the Corps.

Welcome back:

Phillip Lapinski will be returning in his seventh year with the Corps. He will be responsible for maintenance and equipment upkeep at Eau Galle Lake, Wis., for the summer. He has served 13 years in the U.S. Navy. Originally, he is from Superior, Wis., where he graduated from the University of Wisconsin Superior.

Larry McClellan will be returning as a laborer to Black Hawk Park, near De Soto, Wis., this summer. He first began working with the Corps in 1984. He will be responsible for camp ground maintenance. This will be his twelfth year at Black Hawk Park.

Allen Stahl will be returning for his sixth year with the Corps at Lock and Damn No. 9. He first began as a laborer and is now a lock and damn operator. Before joining the Corps, he spent two years in Army Aviation and 30 years as a power plant electrician.

Farewell:

Project manager **Bob Penniman** retired from the Corps of Engineers, St. Paul District, March 29, after 33 years of civil service.

Project manager **Tom Heyerman** retired from the Corps of Engineers, St. Paul District, March 29, after 33 years of civil service.

Engagements:

Linda Wiley in the equal opportunity office will marry Jeff Nielsen, Sept. 15, in St. Paul, Minn.

Michele "Mich" Dolan in the information technology office will marry Kevin Goodspeed Oct. 12 at St. Sahag Armenian Church in St. Paul, Minn.

Births:

Col. Robert Ball, district engineer, became the proud grandparent of a baby girl, **Hannah Lynne**, March 27. Hannah arrived at 7 lbs. 14 ounces and 19.5 inches long.

Death:

Doug Blegen, maintenance worker at the Eau Galle Dam, passed away April 7 at his home after a short but courageous fight with cancer.

Lohmann chosen as February '02 Employee of the Month

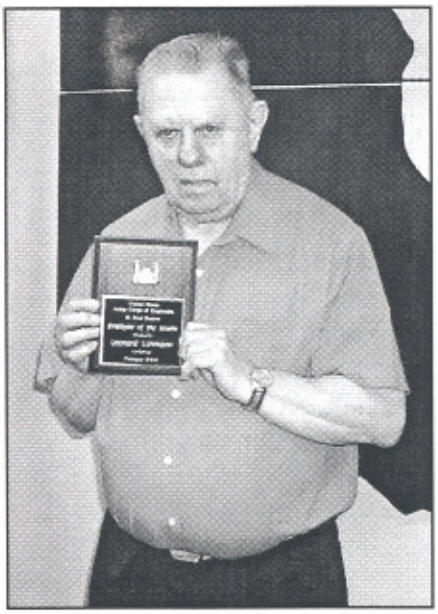


Photo by Jon Lyman

Dave Koepsell, resource management, nominated Leonard Lohmann, information management, stating, "During the 11 years I have worked with Leonard, I have never made a request that he hasn't followed up on immediately and thoroughly. Whether it was retrieving records or tracking down copies of old regulations, Leonard could be counted on to find it. He has always been a model of diligence and responsibility. I admire and appreciate Leonard for his contributions and selfless service and believe he is highly deserving of recognition as Employee of the Month."

Record contract awarded to Minnesota company

by Daniel Yang

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, St. Paul District, awarded Gowan Construction, Inc., of Oslo, Minn., with the largest HUBZone contract in history this past January.

The record $12.9 million base award will be used over the next couple of years for the English Coulee Diversion construction in Grand Forks, N.D., which is a flood-control project on the Red River of the North.

The area's crippling floods of 1997 pushed local officials and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to find a solution. Instead of rerouting the Red River around the city, it was resolved that the creation and lengthening of already existing channels in the English Coulee Diversion would be a more cost effective alternative. Around $4 million of the award is to be used for construction this year.

The HUBZone Program attempts to utilize a valuable government resource, a government contract, and make it available to small businesses that agree in return to locate in economically distressed areas and employ people from these areas. Contracts to small businesses in HUBZones can translate into thousands of job opportunities for persons who are unemployed or underemployed, according to a recent report by the U.S. Senate Committee on Small Business.

"It's the largest HUBZone contract nationwide. We are extremely proud to be a part of it," said Tom Koopmeiners, St. Paul District small business specialist. "The Gowan Construction contract has been a very exciting and rewarding process to take part in."

Gowan Construction started the English Coulee Diversion project in late January. They will be responsible for construction of approximately four-and-a-half miles of new channel, along with the expansion of five miles of already existing channel. Gowan Construction will also reconstruct seven miles of gravel roadway and 4,000 feet of highway road rise. Project completion is expected by Nov. 15, 2003.

"Gowan Construction has always been known for their dependability. We are very pleased with the contract and are looking forward to a successful completion of the project," said Fred Mitchell, contracting officer.

Wanted: Your news!

PAO is seeking information about special events in you life (e.g., births, deaths, marriages, engagements). If you would like to share these items, please contact Shannon Bauer at 651-290-5108, or send an e-mail to shannon.l.bauer@mvp02.usace.army.mil.