

US Army Corps
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St. Paul District

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Crosscurrents

Vol. 33, No. 1

January 2010



**District highlights environment
and water safety missions
at science fair**



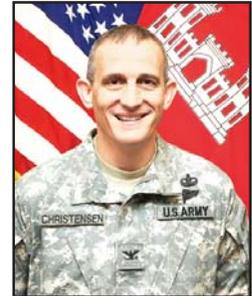
Corps of Engineers
St. Paul District



Photo by Peter Verstegen

Aaron McFarlane, environmental branch, offers a student a *Bobber the Water Safety Dog Coloring Book* at the DaVinci Fest at Stillwater, Minn., Junior High School. DaVinci Fest is a science and art fair designed to educate students in Stillwater.

**Command Corner
By Col. Jon Christensen
St. Paul District Commander**



St. Paul District Teammates,

As I start my last year as commander of the St. Paul District, I have had the opportunity to observe the many ways we interact with the public and the media, at both the district headquarters and our field sites, as part of our daily routine and during emergencies.

Interactions such as telephone calls and e-mails, public meetings, interviews with the media in-person or over the telephone and talking to the public at our work sites are part of our daily schedule and are critical to mission success.

In effect, this means that every one of us does some public affairs work in our jobs. It's a reality today that every Corps' employee should be aware of who is watching us and what kind of image we are projecting, especially with the constant scrutiny from the media and special interest groups. In this era of instant communications and pervasive media images, we have all become "strategic corporals" for the Corps – what we do or say can have a profound impact on the success of our mission.

Based on this information I want to remind you of some ways you can help the district in getting the proper messages out in 2010:

1. Before answering any media questions, contact the Public Affairs Office immediately. The PAO numbers, both office and Blackberry, are on the district Web site under "Press Room" in case you are contacted during your off-duty time. Discuss with PAO what the reporter wants, their contact information and the deadline for the interview or information. If you are the project manager or subject matter expert for the project, issue or event, chances are great that you will answer the media's questions – just let PAO know first before you answer any questions.

2. When it comes to other projects, issues and events, notify PAO a couple of months in advance if a news release is involved or a communications plan is needed. PAO can also help you prepare for public meetings by coming up with key messages and a series of questions and answers you can use to get the Corps' messages out.

3. Command Information is very important these days with increased regionalization and the increased awareness of what Corps districts and divisions are doing in the United States and around the world. Remember to keep PAO in mind when it comes to stories and photos of projects and events that district employees are doing every day.

Keeping PAO informed ahead of time will help make everyone's job run smoother and will contribute to mission success. Thanks for your cooperation in getting the word out about the district!



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Crosscurrents is an unofficial publication, authorized under the provisions of AR 360-1. It is published monthly 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.

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- Bobber the Water Safety Dog takes water safety lessons to school in La Crescent, Minn.
- St. Paul District plans to move to 180 East Fifth St., this May



Flood reduction project achieves 'Seven Wonders'

- The award will be officially presented at the organization's 46th Annual Engineers Week Awards and Recognition Banquet on Feb. 19 in Chaska, Minn.

The Minnesota Society of Professional Engineers recently selected the Grand Forks-East Grand Forks Flood Damage Reduction Project as one of the 2010 Seven Wonders of Engineering Award winners.

Designed by the St. Paul District in close coordination with the cities of Grand Forks, N.D., and East Grand Forks, Minn., the \$412 million project was completed in 2008 and designed to protect to a 250-year flood event.

"We are very pleased and proud that the cities' and Corps' hard work on this project has earned such praise from our peers in the engineering world," said Bonnie Greenleaf, St. Paul district project manager. "However, the best result of our efforts was the ease with which Grand Forks and East Grand Forks fought the significant flood event last year. The system worked exactly as it was designed and protected those two communities with minimal effort during a very high water event."



Photos by Peter Versteegen

Aaron McFarlane (left) and Dan Kelner, planning division-environmental branch, represented the St. Paul District in the annual DaVinci Fest, Jan. 9, at Stillwater, Minn., Junior High School.

District flexes its mussels

By Dan Kelner and Aaron McFarlane

The St. Paul District presented information and answered questions about exotic and native freshwater mussels at DaVinci Fest at Stillwater, Minn., Junior High School Jan. 9. More than 2,500 attended the science and art fair for students, parents and teachers.

The district's environmental branch set up an interpretative display explaining their role in supporting environmental missions in aquatic ecosystems, such as rivers, lakes and wetlands.

The festival endeavors to present creative art, science demonstrations and science projects which show how art, science and technology are integrated in the Stillwater area community.

The event educated the public about the Corps' mission of environmental restoration and fish and wildlife habitat improvement, and the district's involvement with zebra mussel control and endangered species conservation. Both students and

parents stopped at the district's display to ask questions and pick up environmental information.

The Partnership Plan sponsored the science and art fair. The plan is designed to enrich and enhance the educational experience of students in the Stillwater area public schools.



The exhibit showed invasive zebra mussels attached to and smothering native mussels.

District lauds achievements in safety, teamwork and emergency response

The St. Paul District held its annual Holiday Awards Ceremony in St. Paul, Minn., Dec. 17, 2009.

Col. Jon Christensen, district commander, recognized award recipients for safety, teamwork and emergency response. The program included skits, door prizes and a buffet. (Article condensed from the awards presentation script.)



Photos by Peter Versteegen

Fiscal year 2009 Accident-Free Safety Awards

These awards are presented annually to the offices that have been accident free for the entire fiscal year:

- Channels and Harbors
- North Dakota flood control section, Lake Ashtabula, Homme Dam and Souris River
- Minnesota flood control section, Lac Qui Parle, Lake Traverse and Orwell Dam
- Flood Control Offices: Northern Headwaters section of Sandy Lake, Leech Lake, Red Lake and Pokegama Lake
- Upper St. Anthony Falls
- Lock and Dam 1, Minneapolis
- Lock and Dam 4, Alma, Wis.
- Lock and Dam 5, Minnesota City, Minn.
- Lock and Dam 5A, Fountain City, Wis.
- Lock and Dam 6, Trempealeau, Wis.

Awards, continued on Page 6

Operations personnel performed a parody of the coming move to new quarters with “The Dawning of the Age of A-Corps-I-Us.” Above, from left, are: Marita Valencia, Lynnette Gandl, Jeff Olson and Jon Ahlness, all from regulatory branch.



“Santa” Jeff Pfannes, safety officer (left), and Eric Dore, equal employment opportunity office (right), wearing a Bobber the Water Safety Dog suit, made an unexpected visit to the St. Paul District Holiday Awards Ceremony, Dec. 17.

Awards, continued from Page 5

- Lock and Dam 10, Guttenburg, Iowa
- Construction branch, Eastern Area Office, Winona, Minn.
- Construction branch, Western Area Office, Fargo, N.D.
- Engineering and construction, construction branch
- Environmental section, Mississippi River, La Crescent, Minn.

Safety Now Awards

1. St. Paul District Safe Employee of the Year Award for 2009: **Low Riggin**, construction;
2. St. Paul District Contractor Superior Safety Performance for 2009: **Waldon McFarlane Maintenance Services, Inc.**, for beach/buoy/dock maintenance and cleaning of park and recreation facilities at Cross Lake Recreation Area in Crosslake, Minn.

Team Recognition

Enbridge Pipeline Permit Evaluation (all regulatory branch):

Those attending were:

- **Rachael Snyder**
- **Barbara Walther**

Those not attending were:

- **Ralph Augustin**
- **Bill Baer**
- **Jason Berkner**
- **Leo Grabowski**
- **Le Hartness**
- **Brad Johnson**
- **Kelly Urbanek**
- **Daryl Wierzbinski**

Emergency Response Awards

During this last year, the St. Paul District was called upon to respond to natural disasters within our own district boundary, as well as at the southern-most end of the Mississippi Valley Division. These

events included the record-setting flooding on the Red River of the North to hurricane response near the Gulf of Mexico.

This year brought one of the longest-lasting floods on the Red River of the North along with some of the highest flows recorded. The entire district responded by not only sending its people into the field but also having people back in the offices cover for them while deployed. The district recognized the folks who actually worked on the flood response as well as the entire work-force for the extra effort put forth to keep the district meeting its obligations without missing a beat.

Hurricanes Gustav and Ike hit the Gulf coast with a one-two punch. Thankfully, the projects the Corps has put in place in and around New Orleans withstood the wind and water of the hurricanes.

However, they still caused considerable damage and the Corps of Engineers took a lead role in the recovery.

Achievement Medals

Kevin L. Baumgard, operations:

For his invaluable contribution to district's successful 2009 spring flood response. As a flood engineer, Baumgard's work with the city of Lisbon, N.D., and flood fight contractors was exceptional and provided a major contribution to the overall success of this high priority mission.

Darrell W. Morey, engineering:

For his diligent effort toward the district's successful 2009 spring flood response. As a geo-technical engineer, Morey's work throughout the Red River of the North basin was critical to decision making concerning levee construction.

Awards, continued Page 7



Photo by Shannon Bauer

Lupe Santos-Jensen, equal employment opportunity, and Carol Johnson, resource management, staffed the registration table to greet employees, retirees and family members.

Awards, continued from Page 6

Teri Alberico, emergency response:

For her exceptional achievements as the Emergency Operations Center chief during the district's successful response to and recovery efforts for several events during the past year. Alberico provided invaluable leadership to the Emergency Operations Center Crisis Action Team for Hurricanes Gustav and Ike and the historic 2009 Spring floods and recovery.

Kristen Fairbanks, engineering:

For her exceptional service and support for the district's response and recovery efforts over the past year. For the Hurricane Gustav Recovery Field Office, Fairbanks ensured that personnel requirements were completed to ensure successful mission execution. She also served as the



Photo by Shannon Bauer

Andy Sander, hydraulics and hydrology, won a magic set in the door prize drawing.

contract coordinator for the 2009 spring floods.

Ryan Price, engineering:

For his exceptional service and support for the district's response and recovery efforts over the past year. As an office and field engineer supporting the Emergency

Operations Center and the Recovery Field Office during Hurricane Gustav and as a flood engineer during the 2009 district spring flood.

Shannon Bauer, public affairs:

For her exceptional achievements as a public affairs specialist during St. Paul District's successful response to and recovery efforts for several natural disaster events during 2009. Bauer provided invaluable service to the Emergency Operations Center and to the public through information operations for Hurricanes Gustav and Ike and during the historic 2009 spring floods and recovery response.

Commander's Award

Elizabeth Dvorak, civilian personnel:

Awards, continued on Page 8



Photo by Peter Verstegen

Among those who received the Achievement or the Commander's awards for Civilian Service for the successful response to the flood in North Dakota and Minnesota and hurricane response in Louisiana are: from left: Ryan Price, engineering and construction; Kevin Baumgard, operations; Teri Alberico, operations; Ferris Chamberlin, EC, Mike Dahlquist, EC; Darrell Morey, EC; Kris Fairbanks, EC; Shannon Bauer, public affairs; Scott Jutila, EC; Liz Dvorak, civilian personnel; Mark Nelson, real estate; and Neil Schwanz, EC.

Awards, continued from Page 7

For her exceptional service and support for the district’s recovery efforts in 2008 during Hurricane Gustav. As the lead in receiving and processing personnel, she ensured incoming staff were fully prepared to perform their duties.

Mark Nelson, real estate:

For his exceptional service and support for the district’s recovery efforts in 2008 during Hurricane Gustav. As the chief of real estate, Nelson ensured the district was ready to quickly execute the Recovery Field Office mission without delay or compromise to other ongoing missions.

Ferris Chamberlin, water management:

For his contribution to the successful 2009 Red River of the

North flood fight. As chief of the water management and hydrology section, he demonstrated professionalism and courage in making real time water management decisions that had direct impact on communities and ongoing flood fight activities.

Michael Dahlquist, engineering:

For his high level of professionalism, technical competence and communication in many areas and situations throughout the Red River basin. Dahlquist played a critical role in managing contracts for Hesco® basket installations – a technique never used before in the district during flood response.

Scott Jutila, engineering:

For his high level of

professionalism, knowledge of hydrologic conditions and leadership abilities during the spring 2009 Red River flood response. Jutila coordinated the reconnaissance team and provided critical information to local, state, and federal officials so that proper decisions could be made concerning the level of response to this historic flooding.

Neil Schwanz, engineering:

For his efforts in the Sheyenne River basin during the spring 2009 district flood response. Schwanz is recognized as a national technical expert in the geotechnical field, and he conducted a thorough evaluation of the Baldhill Dam structure at Valley City, N.D., ensuring its operability during this high priority flood event.



Photo by Stefania Padalino

Among retirees attending the holiday awards ceremony were, from left: Don Powell, project management; George Fortune, engineering; Maurice Geiken, operations; Chuck Crist, programs and project management; Wayne Scheffel, resource management; Mary Kay Linder, executive office; Dave Haumersen, the old construction-operations; Mary Jane Trcka, resource management; Rick Rothbauer, project management; Betty Krueger, contracting; Ron O’Brien, operations; Joyce Johaneck, engineering; Darrell Morey, engineering construction; Chris Kroll, operations; and Dave Christenson, emergency management.

MVD reestablishes planning

By Susan Smith, MVD planning

The following explains a change from a district to a regional-oriented planning process and reorganizations to support the regional approach. Mark Davidson, St. Paul District public affairs, contributed to this article.

“The new planning structure is an integral part of the Mississippi Valley Division’s drive for interdependence across the spectrum of disciplines,” said Col. Jon Christensen, St. Paul District commander. “The new organizational structure will allow us to increase planning technical competency, improve our ability to deliver our historically high program, drive interdependence and enhance delivery and quality of planning products and services to our customers.”

The initiative began in 2008, when the Mississippi Valley Division looked ahead to its responsibility for delivering the largest civil works program in the history of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. The Mississippi Valley Division Fiscal Year 2009 program included the simultaneous delivery of the massive

Hurricane Storm Damage Risk Reduction System in the New Orleans area, a huge but then unknown American Recovery and Reinvestment Act Program, and the annual regional program.

The scope of this division program was essentially three times the Corps’ typical total annual civil works program. In order to deliver this unprecedented program, the division had to find a way to focus the resources of the entire region on efficient and effective program delivery.

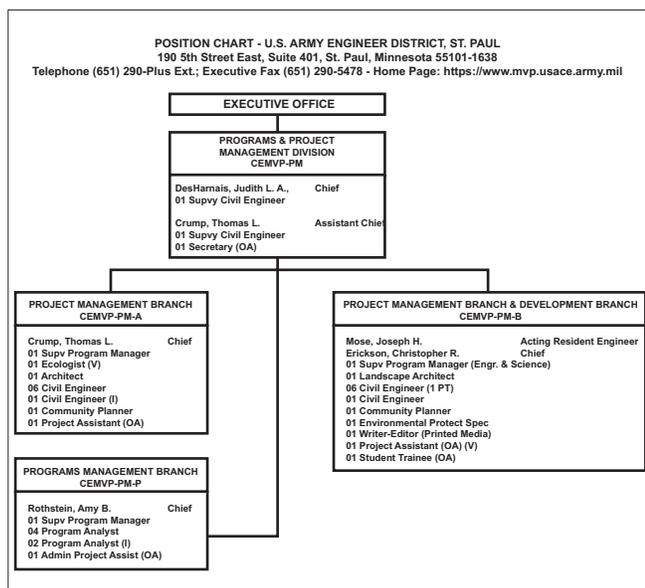
Successful program execution would require a significant change from the historic “district-centric” business processes and procedures to a more regional focus. A more regional focus would also prepare the division for the potential program reduction in 2012 when construction projects are completed through the hurricane storm damage and risk reduction system, or HSDRRS, and the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act. A regional focus also provides flexibility for efficient use of resources wherever requirements arise across the region.

As a first step in late 2008, the civilian functional leads for planning, real estate and contracting formed project delivery teams, or PDTs, to develop courses of actions, or COAs, that would meet the enhanced regional support goals. The PDTs’ objectives were to identify a COA which would deliver quality products and services to customers, increase technical competency, achieve economies of scale and drive regional interdependence. In April 2009, the Regional Command Council selected a COA for planning, real estate and contracting divisions. For Fiscal Year 2010, this challenge has been extended to engineering, construction and operations divisions to develop COAs to meet these same goals.

In developing a COA, planning’s task was doubly hard since, in the late 1990s, the decision was made in the division to combine planning with programs and project management. This was done in an attempt to take full advantage of planners’ customer focus and knowledge of available authorities, maintain a robust career path and attain efficiencies in the delivery of projects.

While some of these intentions were met, the immediacy of project management duties often shifted the project manager/planner’s focus from planning to project management tasks. Consequently, with the

Planning, continued on Page 10



Graphic by Emily Blanton

The new name for what used to be Planning, Programs and Project Management Division is now Programs and Project Management Division.

Planning, continued from Page 9

retirement of experienced planners, planning technical capability suffered. Division officials had to address a loss of technical capability as a key detriment for program execution. Fluctuations in individual district workload/funding made it difficult for districts to plan and maintain technical expertise. Some of the districts had too many resources and not enough work. With 50 percent of the planning work-force eligible to retire in five years, it was critical that a succession plan was in place to sustain the required planning capability.

“It [the new planning structure] will bring all of the region’s planning resources to bear on difficult planning problems, while offering opportunities for planners to broaden their experiences by working on issues outside of their traditional district footprint. I am excited to have the opportunity to establish and operate this POD here in St. Paul,” said Christensen.

Under the “district-centric” business model, maintaining planning capability was difficult and neither efficient nor effective. “Work across the region has been inconsistent, and the planning capability in some areas is waning,” said Judy DesHarnais, St. Paul District Deputy for programs and project management. “By combining planning organizations, we can still accommodate the ups and downs of individual district

funding streams, but allow a new planning division to focus on developing and sustaining planning,” she said. “It will also provide the structure to support sharing work seamlessly across the upper three districts.”

As a result of this regionalization initiative, the division reestablished planning as a separate organization. The approved planning community created two regional planning divisions – Regional Planning Division North and Regional Planning Division South. Brig. Gen. Walsh, Mississippi Valley Division commander, signed a permanent order Oct. 15, 2009, to realign all planning personnel to one of the two planning divisions, and the two division chief positions have been temporarily filled.

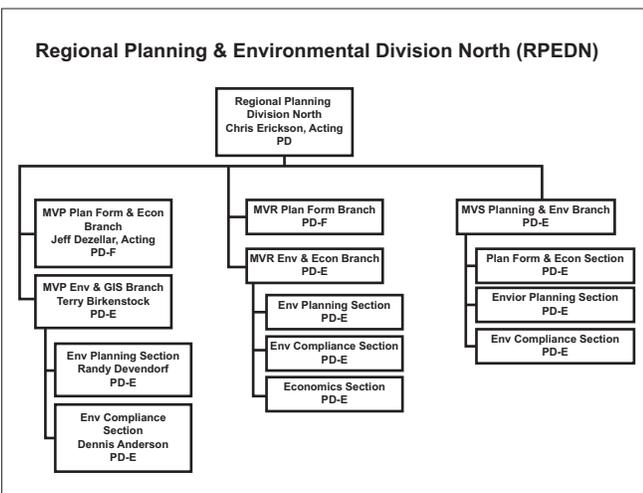
The northern division consists of planners from the St. Paul, Rock Island and St. Louis districts, and its chief will be located at St. Paul.

The southern division consists of planners from the Memphis, Vicksburg and New Orleans Districts and its chief will be located at New Orleans.

In 2010, the division will assess the progress achieved by this course of action and assess the need for additional refinements to achieve the goals of delivering quality products and services, increasing technical competency, achieving economies of scale and driving regional interdependence.

“MVD’s newly formed planning organization focuses the planning technical resources of the entire region in a manner that best supports MVD’s regional program and project execution,” said Rayford Wilbanks, leader of the MVD planning community of practice. “It also provides a structure that enables the enhancement of planning technical competencies and allows flexibility in placing these resources within the six districts in MVD. It enhances the Corps’ pursuit of ‘Good to Great’ by efficiently and effectively focusing the resources of the entire region on project delivery and increasing our planning technical capability.”

Wilbanks also said establishing the new planning organization is vital to the delivery of the current planning mission, provides the flexibility to utilize the region’s resources where surges in resource requirements may occur in the future and gives a broader platform to enhance planning technical capability.



Graphic by Emily Blanton

Employees of the St. Paul District, Rock Island District and St. Louis District form the Regional Planning and Environment Division North. RPEDN has two branches and two sections within the division.

News and Notes



Photo by Peter Versteegen

The St. Paul District set up a table for food-bank donations, staffed by Mark Davidson, public affairs, at the awards banquet in St. Paul, Minn., Dec. 17. Trinity Mission in St. Paul received 55 toys, 175 food items and \$100 cash. Keystone Community Services in St. Paul received \$170 to help needy families.



St. Paul District photo courtesy of Mary Jo Mickschl

Bobber the Water Safety Dog took the district's water safety program to the Crucifixion Elementary School in La Crescent, Minn., Jan. 26. Two groups, grades kindergarten to sixth, totaling 77 students, watched and listened as Bobber and Randy Urich, a forester in the Natural Resources Office, LaCrescent, showed them proper use of personal flotation devices and presented other water safety information. Bobber, worn by Randy's wife and a former volunteer at the school, Katie Urich, left the school to a chorus of "Bobber Rocks!" Randy Urich is handing out water safety coloring books and Katie Urich is handing out frisbees with a water safety message on each.

The St. Paul District is planning to move into the building next door at 180 East Fifth St., in May 2010.

