

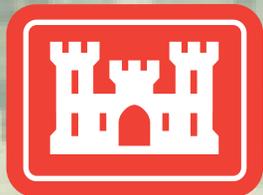
Crosscurrents

May 2011 Vol. 37, No. 5

St. Paul District since 1977



*District faces flood fight
in Upper Midwest,
Page 4*



U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
St. Paul District

BUILDING STRONG®

On the Cover



Rich Schueneman, operations, briefs county commissioners and the Valley City, N.D., mayor during the spring flood fight. John Murphy, 2nd from right, engineering, and Tim Bertschi, right, operations project manager, supported efforts in Valley City and areas along the Red River of the North.

Photo by Shannon Bauer

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

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Articles and photography submissions are welcome and must arrive by the 15th day of the publishing month for consideration. Submissions can be mailed or e-mailed.

Submissions should be in Microsoft Word format for all written copy and photos should be no smaller than a 5 x 7 at 300 dpi. All photographs appearing herein are by the St. Paul District Public Affairs Office unless otherwise accredited.

The mission of *Crosscurrents* is to support the commander's internal information program for the St. Paul District and its stakeholders.

Crosscurrents also serves as the commander's primary communication tool for accurately transmitting policies and command philosophy to the St. Paul District community and its customers.

Address all inquiries to:
Editor, *Crosscurrents*
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
180 Fifth Street East, Suite 700
St. Paul, MN 55101-1678

651-290-5202
cemvp-pa@usace.army.mil

District Commander
Public Affairs Chief
Media Specialist
Crosscurrents Editor

Col. Michael J. Price
Mark Davidson
Shannon Bauer
Patrick Moes

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Terry Williams, right, project management, talks about the Fargo, N.D./Moorhead, Minn., Metropolitan Area Feasibility Study results with members of the public at a public meeting in Kindred, N.D., March 30.

Photo by Shannon Bauer



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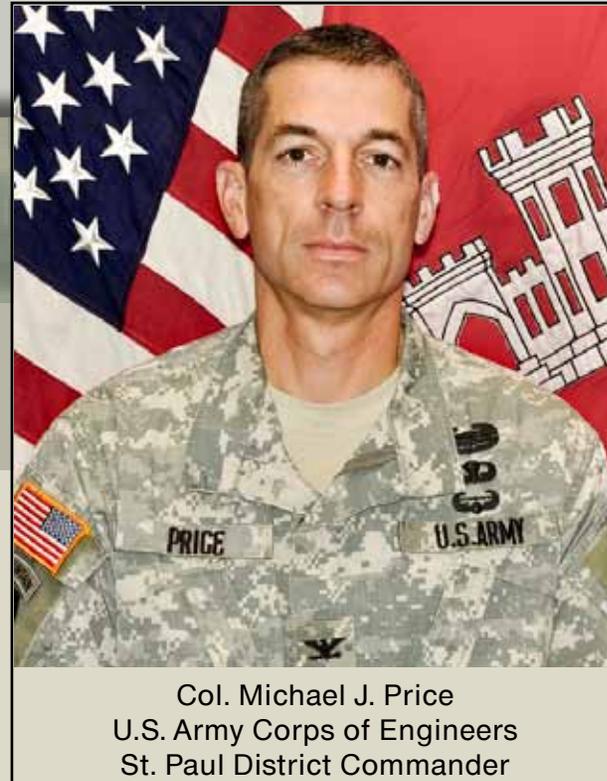
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Comments from the top



Col. Michael J. Price
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
St. Paul District Commander

Team,

As I write this, the Mississippi River is swelling out of its banks over much of the southern basin. We are experiencing a historic event and the Corps' leadership and the Mississippi River and Tributaries system is responding.

The MR&T flood protection system was authorized in 1928 and was the nation's first comprehensive flood control and navigation act. Since authorized, the nation has spent nearly \$13 billion for its four components: levees, floodways, channel improvements and channel stabilization. The current flood has put historic loads on the levees and the Corps has operated all three of the major floodways on the Mississippi River. This flood is also going to have tremendous recovery requirements that the entire Mississippi Valley Division will be involved in.

This last month, our nation also realized the demise of Osama Bin Laden. His death has increased our national pride but also strained our relationship with Pakistan. It

also caused us to increase our force protection levels, to which you each have been subjected. Over time, these measures will pass; but I would ask each of you to be vigilant and continually be aware of your surroundings and to report any suspicious behavior.

Our Fiscal Year 2011 budget is now defined and the FY12 budget is already taking shape. We will continue to have to operate in a resource constrained environment. That makes the things we do ever so more important. We have to be efficient and good stewards of our nation's resources.

The Corps is also in transition as Lt. Gen. Robert Van Antwerp has retired. He guided the Corps to greatness and will be missed by the Corps. Lt. Gen. Thomas Bostick has been nominated to replace him and we are all anxiously awaiting Bostick's confirmation. He is another tremendous leader and will pick up right where Van Antwerp left off.

The district is extremely busy with multiple, critical projects. I am very proud of the Fargo, N.D., and Devils Lake, N.D., teams for their hard work this last month. The Fargo-Moorhead

Feasibility Report is back on the street for public comments, and all of the Devils Lake embankment contracts have been awarded ... great work by a lot of people. The division is equally busy, and the pending recovery missions will task the region's resources.

Stay focused. We have a number of priorities that will stretch us, and we cannot forget about mission accomplishment and our customers. The district continues to set high standards. Continue to take care of each other and thanks for all that you do day in and day out!

BUILDING STRONG!

District completes spring flooding assistance in upper Midwest

Story by Shannon Bauer

The St. Paul District declared a victory, once again, after battling Mother Nature this past spring.

For the third consecutive year, the district faced potentially record-setting flooding and activated its flood response team. This year, the district faced flooding in four of its five major river basins – the Minnesota, the Upper Mississippi, the Red River of the North and the Souris.

At the peak of the flood response mid April, more than 85 Corps personnel were deployed, and emergency responders were building temporary levees in Iowa along the Mississippi, in Minnesota along the Red and in North Dakota along the Red and the Souris. In the Fargo, N.D./Moorhead, Minn., metropolitan area, the Red crested at its fourth highest flood of record, making it the third year in a row this area fought potentially catastrophic flooding.

Ultimately, no community received significant damage, although a number of rural homes and homes along river banks outside of the emergency protection areas have been lost.

What was different this year was the flood season lasted longer than usual. Not only did the National Weather Service predict significant flooding for the Upper Midwest in December, a month earlier than the agency usually does; but the rivers also failed to crest until mid-April, a month later than the previous two years. “It just lasted so long,” said Tim Bertschi, Red River of the North area flood engineer. “The early preparation [we did] made a very significant flood event seem almost routine at times.”

The NWS’s early warning gave the district extra time to prepare. The St. Paul District commander, Col. Michael Price, declared a local flood emergency Jan. 28, allowing the district’s emergency operations center the opportunity to kick it into high gear by prepositioning supplies, providing training to its flood responders and making flood fighting plans with the affected states early in the year. The district’s flood engineers met with more than 80 communities well ahead of rising waters.

Additionally, with the extra warning time,



Photo by Patrick Moes

Kurt Heckendorf, engineering, monitors the construction of temporary levees in Fargo, N.D. The temporary levees held back the fourth highest crest this year.

the district put more responsibility on the local communities both in preparing for and responding to the flooding, which was well received overall, said Bertschi. At least in the Red River area, he said, “the machine from top to bottom knows how to respond [to a flood] very well.”

A number of communities in each river basin, to include the cities of Fargo and Moorhead, prepared millions of sandbags well ahead of the flooding. Fargo also built a number of emergency levees on its own this year. Further, under its advanced measures authority, the Corps built levees early in both Moorhead and Oakport, Minn., a township located just north of Moorhead.

In early April, when the district moved into emergency operations mode, flood responders began building emergency levees in the Iowa communities of Marquette and McGregor; the Minnesota communities of Breckenridge, Georgetown, Hendrum, Moorhead, Oakport, Oslo, Perley and St. Vincent; and the North Dakota communities of Davenport, Drayton, Dwight, Fargo, Ft. Ransom,



Photo by Patrick Moes

From left, Roland Hamborg, project management, Charles Boyd, Luke Schmidt and Josh Cress, all with engineering, review the Souris River Basin levee specifications during an emergency operations meeting with city officials in Minot, N.D. The team was in northern North Dakota, assisting local officials fight spring flooding.

Great Bend, Harwood, Kindred, Lisbon, Oxbow, Sawyer and Valley City. Flood responders also provided technical assistance to many more communities in all four basins.

What was challenging this year included changing NWS forecasts on both the Mississippi and the Sheyenne, a tributary of the Red. On the Upper Mississippi, just as the river began to crest at Hastings, Minn., colder temperatures set in, slowing both the melt and the rise, which resulted in a second crest several weeks later.

“The colder temperatures separated the flooding,” explained Liz Nelsen, St. Paul District water control. “The driving force of the high stages on the Mississippi River was to be the runoff from the



Photo by Patrick Moes

Rich Schueneman, Valley City, N.D., area flood sub-engineer and Lake Ashtabula/Baldhill Dam manager, reviews a map highlighting the temporary levees that were built in Valley City to protect it from spring flooding.

Minnesota River basin, in addition to the flow from the Mississippi Headwaters basin. The Mississippi River basin above Hastings melted in two phases which created two crests down the Mississippi River. If it had been one crest, it would have been much higher.”

On the Sheyenne, changing forecasts for the amount of water flowing into the district’s Baldhill Dam resulted in the Corps raising levees in Valley City, a community located just downstream of the dam, not once but three times. “It’s a pretty dynamic basin,” explained Rich Schueneman, sub area flood engineer. “We really didn’t have a good idea what was coming at us.”

Between the second and third levee raise, the district had already begun sending home its quality assurance inspectors, and the Corps contractors had begun releasing some of its equipment, when the NWS again raised the forecast. Schueneman said, “We need to get together with the NWS and the U.S. Geological Survey and look at ways to do a better analysis on what’s coming down on us during future events.”

Teri Alberico, St. Paul District’s emergency operations chief, said, “Overall, preparedness



Photos by Shannon Bauer

(Above) Kevin Ressie, operations and a Corps quality assurance representative, talks to a Corps contractor completing construction in Oxbow, N.D., in preparation for the spring flooding along the Red River of the North. (Right) Kristin Moe, operations, and a Corps quality assurance representative, monitors construction of a temporary emergency levee along the Red River of the North.

and collaboration were the keys to this year's successful flood response. All levels – community, county, state and federal – worked together from the initial flood forecast announcement. At the request of the states, the Corps provided contingency planning support to communities; and they, the communities, stepped up to the plate to prepare themselves for flooding by buying sandbags, renting pumps and making contingency plans for levees. ... Everything went very smoothly considering the forecast we were faced with this year.”



From SPAM to Minot, Corps employee goes the distance

Story by Patrick Moes

He grew up in Austin, Minn., playing hockey and eating SPAM.

Graduating high school early, Karl Schmitz joined the U.S. Army in 1980 for six years as a field artillery surveyor. Nearly 30 years later, he continues his service as a dredging coordinator with the Rock Island District.

Schmitz said working for the Corps affords him unique opportunities that he wouldn't get anywhere else.

"Not every day is the same," he said with a smile. "I get to work around some really big equipment, too."

While the equipment changes, depending on the task, Schmitz' current job finds him as a quality assurance representative, or QA, supporting the St. Paul District's spring flood fight in North Dakota – for the third consecutive year.

"I like coming up here," said the SPAM fanatic who enjoys discussing how he makes "SPAMtastic" chili. "I like doing this kind of duty, and the people are really good up here." He added that people in North Dakota often ask him what they can do to help him, and they go well beyond his expectations.

This willingness to go above and beyond is nothing new to Schmitz. He has volunteered to do the hard work multiple times.

"I can't sit around and do nothing," he said. "I need to be busy and doing something."

Some of the more interesting assignments Schmitz has had with the Corps were while helping survivors in New Orleans after Hurricane Katrina and deploying to Iraq in

2004. The avid duck hunter also serves on Rock Island District's dive team.

He said he learned to dive while he was a surveyor in the Army. "Living in Panama with all the water and beaches was great," he said. "I just always wanted to



Photo by Patrick Moes

Karl Schmitz, Rock Island District dredging coordinator, looks at a recently built temporary levee in Sawyer, N.D., during the district's flood fight in the Souris River basin. This was the third consecutive year that Schmitz volunteered to help.

dive." He now uses those diving skills to complete inspections and carry out routine maintenance for Corps projects. One of the biggest challenges he deals with as a diver is having little to no vision. "It's all black water diving," said Schmitz. "You have to

feel your way around."

While under water, Schmitz uses his sense of touch to go from one place to the next. In North Dakota, he uses his truck to navigate countless miles of prairies. He stated this spring's flood fight in the east side of the state where he served as a quality assurance specialist in Harwood, N.D. He then went to Minot, N.D., as a QA where he completed a job in Sawyer, N.D.

Schmitz is also helping the district's reconnaissance team by shooting high water marks since he has his surveying equipment in his truck at all times.

"It's a handy tool to have," he said. "It always seems to help out in situations like this." He added, "It's part of the reason why they bring me up here."

"He's been a tremendous help to the Corps," said Roland Hamborg, Souris River Basin flood area engineer. "He can do QA work extremely well, and he saves the government a lot of money by doing survey work."

Hamborg said having Schmitz doing survey work allows for instant spot checks during construction of temporary levees without the need for the local community or the Corps to hire a contractor to do the work.

With the flood fight completed, Schmitz said he had one thing left to do before getting back to the Mississippi River and start the dredging season. "I need to stop by the SPAM museum and get a new T-shirt. The old one I have is worn out."

Red River area flood engineer receives Corps award for work

Story by Shannon Bauer

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Headquarters recently announced that St. Paul District employee and Fargo, N.D., resident Tim Bertschi was selected as the 2009 Corps of Engineers Disaster Responder of the Year.

This annual award is given to one Corps of Engineers employee who makes significant contributions to response and recovery operations during a significant incident or crisis. Bertschi received his award for serving as the Red River of the North area flood engineer during the spring 2009 flood fight in the river valley.

Bertschi serves as the district's operations project manager, managing its environmental programs for thousands of acres



Photo by Shannon Bauer

Tim Bertschi, left, natural resources manager and Red River of the North area flood engineer, receives the Corps of Engineers' Emergency Manager of the Year Award from Maj. Gen. Michael Walsh, Mississippi Valley Division commander, recently.

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Photo by Shannon Bauer

Tim Bertschi, operations, was selected as the 2009 Corps of Engineers Disaster Responder of the Year. Bertschi has served as the Red River of the North area flood engineer since 1993.



Photo by Shannon Bauer

Col. Michael Price, St. Paul District commander; Michael Bart, chief of engineering; and Tim Bertschi, operations, discuss floodfight preparations in the Red River of the North basin during the spring flooding.

of public lands; 13 flood control/multi-purpose reservoirs in Minnesota, North Dakota and Wisconsin; and 16 parks and natural resources projects; and maintenance, technical and management staff at those sites.

Starting with the Corps in 1978 as a student trainee in the natural resource management area, Bertschi has worked his way up to his current position. He voluntarily responded to his first flood fight, doing gauge reading and reconnaissance work, in the early 1980s. His first flood fight in the Red River basin was in 1989.

Bertschi volunteered to serve as the Red River of the North area flood engineer as an additional duty in 1993. This role involves working with local communities throughout the year to prepare for flooding, as well as serving as project manager for any Corps participation in any Red River flood fights. He said his first “big” one occurred in 1996, when the Red crested in Grand Forks, N.D., as the third highest flood.

Since then, Bertschi has overseen six major flood responses in the Red River basin to include the record breaking floods of 1997 and 2009. In 2009, Bertschi was responsible for a Corps emergency response staff of around 150, the execution of 28 construction contracts valued at more than \$16 million and the building of around 37 miles of levee in eight days. Six basin cities, including Abercrombie, Fargo, Lisbon and Valley City in North Dakota and Moorhead and Oakport Township in Minnesota, faced floods of record, yet no city

lost more than a few homes. According to his award nomination, Bertschi’s “leadership, integrity and skill helped to ensure the 2009 Red River flood fight was a success.”

Teri Alberico, emergency operations center chief, said, “This award is well-deserved not just for 2009, but for the many years of support and commitment Tim [Bertschi] has provided to the Red River of the North Basin. He has developed relationships with the communities based on capability and trust and he orchestrates our flood response in the basin.”

Corps recons river basin, helps the National Weather Service

Story by Patrick Moes

District hydraulic engineers logged countless miles in their car this past month as they monitored water levels within the Des Lacs and Souris river basins in North Dakota.

Michelle Schneider, engineering, said they looked at every coulee from Minot, N.D., to the Des Lacs National Wildlife Refuge, in Kenmare, N.D., while supporting the district's flood fight.

"The snow is melting away," said Schneider. "A lot of the coulees south of Minot have already peaked."

Schneider and her colleague, Ed Eaton, engineering, monitored the basins to determine how much more water was expected to pass through the Minot area via

the Souris River, or Mouse River. The river starts in Weyburn, Saskatchewan, before heading south toward Minot; it then heads north back into Canada before spilling into the Assiniboine River.

The increased water volumes entering the lake needed to be released in a controlled manner, said Eaton. The release levels were determined, in part, by the work of the reconnaissance team and their measurements. The team calculated the local runoff and the river flows already in the system to better understand what flows could be released from the lake. All of this was done while trying to reach a target flow of 5,000 cubic feet per second at the U.S. Geological Survey's river gage four miles



Photo by Patrick Moes



Photo by Patrick Moes

(Left) Ed Eaton, engineering, stands on a bridge as he looks at a river gage in the Souris River Basin to provide up-to-date information to the National Weather Service. (Above) Michelle Schneider, engineering, writes down measurements after observing water flows near Berthold, N.D.,



Photo by Patrick Moes



Photo by Patrick Moes

(Left) Michelle Schneider, engineering, checks her equipment before going out to measure water levels. (Above) Ed Eaton, engineering, talks with Josh Cress, engineering, near Mouse River Park in North Dakota.

northwest of Minot. During flood events, the Corps manages Lake Darling's water releases into the Souris River.

The information the team collected was shared with the district's water management section and the National Weather Service, or NWS, in Chanhassen, Minn. Schneider said the teamwork between the Corps and the NWS has been great.

"It's almost like working for the NWS," she added.

The NWS used the information gathered by the reconnaissance team to help forecast the probable river crests within the two basins.

"We provide the field work so they can provide better forecasts," concluded Schneider.

3 district employees honored for civilian service

Story by Shannon Bauer

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, St. Paul District, celebrated the selection of its three Civil Servants of the Year, Bill Csajko, Craig Evans and Roy Lawson, at a Federal Executive Board luncheon in St. Paul, Minn., May 6. The FEB hosts this luncheon annually to honor the civil servants of the year from all federal agencies in Minnesota. According to FEB officials, those selected have demonstrated exceptional performance and dedication as a public servant and/or have contributed voluntary time and service to the community during Fiscal Year 2010. A FEB committee selects the top federal civil servants from the state from this pool of honorees. St. Paul District's Lawson was a nominee for a statewide award. Click [here](#) for more photos of the luncheon.



Courtesy photo



Photo by Shannon Bauer

The 2011 District Civil Servants of the Year are Roy Lawson, engineering, Craig Evans, planning; and Bill Csajko, project management. (Left) Roy Lawson receives his award from Col. Michael Price, St. Paul District commander, on May 17. Lawson was unable to attend the ceremony in St. Paul, Minn. (Right) Evans and Csajko accepted their awards during the Federal Executive Board luncheon on May 6.

Roy Lawson



Position title:
Construction
representative

Total years with St Paul District: 7

Total years with federal Government: 13

Previous positions/employment: Construction superintendent,
Blue Scope Construction

Education: General Studies, University of North Dakota,
Grand Forks, N.D.

Hobbies: snowmobiling, four wheeling, ice fishing

Residence: Warren, Minn.

Comments: "I'm honored to be selected for this award. I truly owe this award to the outstanding people I've had the pleasure to work with and learn from in the Corps of Engineers."

Craig Evans



Position title: Chief,
Plan Formulation and
Economics Branch

Total Years with St. Paul District/Corps of Engineers: 24

Total Years with federal government: 24

Previous Positions/Employment: Has worked with the St. Paul District since graduating from college

Education: Masters of Arts in Public Administration, Hamline University, St. Paul, Minn.; Bachelor's of Civil Engineer, University of Minnesota, Minneapolis

Hobbies: Camping, Boy Scouts, playing drums

Residence: St. Paul, Minn. (Como Park neighborhood)

Comments: *"I am truly honored to be chosen as a Civil Servant of the Year. Working for the Corps has been very rewarding, and I'm grateful for all the opportunities to work with other professionals on projects that make a difference in people's lives."*

Bill Csajko



Position title:
Civil Engineer

Total Years with St. Paul District/Corps of Engineers: 13/32

Total Years with federal government: 32

Previous Positions/Employment: Program manager, South Pacific Division (1987-1997); project manager, Naval Facilities Engineering Command, San Bruno, Calif. (two months in 1987 -- found out about the SPD job the first week I got there); civil engineer/project manager, Portland District (1979-1987); civil engineer, Avco-Lycoming, Stratford, Conn. (1977 - 1979)

Education: Bachelor's of Science, Clarkson College, Potsdam, N.Y.

Hobbies: Gardening, cooking, sailing

Residence: Winona, Minn.

Comments: *"While I am honored to receive this award, it is only due to the professionalism and hard work of all the great people I have been able to work with in Minnesota, North Dakota, Louisiana and elsewhere."*

Comprehensive fitness provides strength, resilience

Story by Patrick Moes

Remembering to maintain your fitness and resiliency is as important as ever as the 2011 spring flood fight begins winding down and the summer projects begin within the district.

In light of the increased workload, the U.S. Army's Comprehensive Soldier Fitness program, or CSF, has tips for soldiers, Department of the Army civilians and family members looking to improve their fitness. The program focuses on a holistic approach that provides five dimensions for strength. The elements include physical, emotional, social, family and spiritual.

According to the website, CSF is "a structured, long term assessment and development program to build the resilience and enhance the performance of every soldier, family member and [Department of the Army] civilian."

In addition to the five dimensions, the CSF has four pillars of fitness focusing on the tools to help people reach their personal fitness goals. The pillars provide the foundation to create a sustainable fitness plan. These pillars include the global assessment tool, master resilience trainers,

comprehensive resilience modules and institutional training.

The global assessment tool is a web-based survey that is required for soldiers and recommended for Department of the Army civilians. The tool assesses your "emotional, social, spiritual, and family fitness." Department of the Army civilians can click [here](#) to take the global assessment tool survey.

In an effort to support the CSF program, provide a more resilient workforce and align with the Corps' Strategic Vision commitment to "be healthy," the district will continue partnering with area fitness centers to subsidize employees' membership costs. The incentive is a 50 percent savings on an individual membership. Employees working near the Twin Cities can join their local YMCA. Field personnel can contact Tom Sully, district executive assistant, for information on finding a facility close to your work.

In addition to the reduced fees, the YMCA is offering a two-week trial membership in June. You can click [here](#) to learn more about the YMCA.



Social



Physical



Family



Spiritual



Emotional

News & Notes

Mark your calendars

The district's Summer Awards Ceremony and family picnic is scheduled for June 24. This year's event will be held at the Como Park Pavilion in St. Paul, Minn. Ticket prices will be \$8 for adults, \$5 for children and \$3 for individuals not eating.

Retirements

William Burrows, 17 years federal service, lock and dam operator, Minneapolis.

Jeff Huseby, 33 federal service, maintenance and repair coordinator, Valley City, N.D.

Leonard Lettner, 26 federal service, lock and dam operator, Lock and Dam #, Trempealeau, Wis.

Judith Parker, 24 federal service, program analyst, district office

Newcomers

Timothy Baker, lock and dam operator, Lock and Dam No. 4, Alma, Wis.

Brittney Hauptert, park ranger, Grand Rapids, Minn.

Paul Kedrowski, park ranger, Cross Lake, Minn.

Nathan Paler, laborer, Fergus Falls, Minn.

Judith Parker, program analyst, district office (rehired annuitant)

Daniel Reburn, student trainee, La Crescent, Minn.

Josh Rockey, student trainee, La Crescent, Minn.

Alexander Schlueter, student trainee, De Soto, Wis.

Nathan Thompson, park ranger, Grand Rapids, Minn.

Editor's Note

Do you have news that you want to share with the district? Send your announcements of births, weddings, graduations, etc. to *Crosscurrents*. cemvp-pa@usace.army.mil.

Congratulations

Teri Stamm, safety, was recognized as the honor graduate for the Joint Safety and Occupational Health Course, a 15-week course.

Taps

Leander D. 'Butch' Kulas, 71, from Bluff Siding, Wis., passed away May 14 at St. Marys Hospital in Rochester, Minn. Kulas retired from Lock and Dam No. 5.

Welcome home



Courtesy photo

Army Reserve Sgt. 1st Class Phil White, district security chief, recently returned from Afghanistan where he was deployed for the past year.