

# Crosscurrents

December 2012 Vol. 38, No. 9

*Serving the St. Paul District since 1977*

**Navigation season ends in  
St. Paul, Minn. Page 8**



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

**BUILDING STRONG®**

## On the Cover



Grant Riddick, Dave Rydeen, Kevin Nelson and Colin Riddick, all with engineering and construction, review drawings during maintenance at Lock and Dam 1 in Minneapolis in Sept. 27, 2012.

*Click on the photo to see the video.*

*Photo by George Stringham*

*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.

Views and opinions expressed in *Crosscurrents* are not necessarily those of the Department of the Army or the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers.

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.

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***Crosscurrents* is read by  
number crunchers like  
Cherie Law, resource  
management.**



*Photo by Shannon Bauer*



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## Comments from the top



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

Team,

We've had another successful year. I now eagerly await what the future has in store for me and my family. I continually repeat myself in telling you that I believe I have the best job in the Army, because of you and the missions you execute.

The winter holidays are here, so Teresa and I want to wish each of you and your families a safe and fulfilling holiday. This is a great time to reflect on this past year, enjoy some family time, and make new commitments for the upcoming 2013. At the same time, please remember that we have four of the districts employees overseas supporting the Corps' number one priority – overseas contingency operations, or OCO.

One of the biggest issues we face as a nation right now is sequestration or what is commonly referred to as the fiscal cliff. As many of us are spending time with family, our leaders

in Washington, D.C., are trying to compromise on a deal that would prevent us from taking the fiscal-cliff plunge. If no deal is reached, mandatory budget cuts and tax increases will begin. The Corps is not immune to these budget cuts. The latest information I have indicates that the Corps of Engineers will take an 8 percent cut across all business lines. How that would be implemented at the district level has not yet been determined. If sequestration does occur or if we get additional information regarding its implementation, the command group will distribute that plan. The bottom line is that we need to be patient and flexible as our nation navigates our economic crisis.

My priorities for next year remain relatively unchanged. My first priority is to continue supporting our overseas contingencies and

our domestic natural disasters. We have done extraordinary supporting Hurricanes Isaac and Sandy, but the district's

support to OCO is underwhelming. I urge everyone to review their personal situation and desire to serve in Afghanistan and to keep a watchful eye out for overseas opportunities. An overseas deployment is extremely rewarding.

As we move forward, we are reminded that some of our teammates aren't with us this year and some are recovering from major surgery or ailments. Please keep them in your thoughts and prayers as their friends and families deal with these difficult challenges. Thank you for what each of you do day in and day out.

Again, be safe this holiday season and enjoy the time off in the coming month, you all deserve it!

**BUILDING STRONG.**

# District employees volunteer, support wounded warrior deer hunt at Eau Galle Park

Story by Patrick Moes

What started as an idea a little more than six months ago, came to fruition Dec. 8 in the woods overlooking the Eau Galle Dam as volunteers with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, St. Paul District; Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources; Wounded Warrior Project; and Chanhassen Yellow Ribbon Program honored seven wounded warriors with a deer hunt at Eau Galle Recreation Area, near

Spring Valley, Wis.

Gathering in relative darkness around 6 a.m., the group discussed what was going to happen during the day as a fresh layer of snow covered the landscape. Tom Alich, law enforcement and security, briefed the warriors in front of interpretive building about safety issues, while reminding everyone to have fun. Once the briefings were complete, the warriors and their

hunting guides made final preparations near the interpretive building, also known as the cribbage tournament headquarters and food distribution point, before entering the woods.

Kelli Phillips, Eau Galle Park project manager, said the goal of the hunt was twofold. She wanted to do something to support the Wounded Warrior Project and the seven warrior hunters as well as reduce the deer population within the Highland Ridge campground. The deer herd had been destroying a lot of the vegetation in the area. Phillips said while hunting is authorized at the Eau Galle Recreation Area, it is only for bow hunting. She said this warrior hunt was the first time shotgun hunting was allowed within the campground area.

Phillips said she was proud to be a part the Eau Galle Park deer hunt. "These soldiers give up a lot for us, and, any way we can give back [to them] is important to me," she said. She added that she hoped each warrior would get a deer or two, but said the most important goal had already been achieved. "I feel the greater goal was accomplished before the hunt even began ... getting these Wounded Warriors in contact with one another is the true meaning of these events, the hunt was simply a bonus," she said.

Jon Sobiech, environmental, said the hunt was equally important to him. "Anytime I can get out and give opportunities to people that don't normally deer hunt, I'll jump at that chance," he said. "The value for me is visiting with these wounded warriors, getting to know them and



Photo by Patrick Moes

Derrick Ostlie, left; Col. Michael Price, St. Paul District commander, and Matt Lehto review a map prior to a wounded warrior hunt at Eau Galle Recreation Area, near Spring Valley, Wis., Dec. 8. Both Ostlie and Lehto are members of the Wounded Warrior Project.



Photo by Patrick Moes

**Volunteers from the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources, or DNR, and the district celebrate with seven wounded warriors following the first warrior deer hunt at Eau Galle Recreation Area, near Spring Valley, Wis., Dec. 8. The hunt was a collaborative effort among the DNR, the district, the Chanhassen Yellow Ribbon Program and the Wounded Warrior Project.**

hearing their story.” He added that he wanted to thank the district’s special emphasis program disability subcommittee for coordinating the volunteers.

Looking toward the future, Phillips said she is hoping the program can be expanded to other recreation areas. “It’s my hope that other recreation sites in our district and beyond will think about jumping on and providing similar opportunities for the Wounded Warrior Project,” she said. “The Wisconsin DNR has already expressed a strong interest in partnering again and providing another experience in the spring – this time turkey hunting.”

Louis Goldstein, Wounded Warrior Project alumni manager, said events like the deer hunt are great for everyone involved. He said the Wounded Warrior Project is dedicated to honoring and empowering wounded warriors and its five core values: fun, integrity, loyalty, innovation and service can all be found in hunting.

Goldstein said the event was a great experience for the warriors, the guides, the volunteers and everyone else involved. He said he is fortunate to have a job where he interacts with military veterans every day and gets to participate in deer hunts like the one at



Photo by Patrick Moes

**Derrick Ostlie, left, and Jeff Sobiech, Jon Sobiech’s brother, watch for deer during the warrior deer hunt at Eau Galle Recreation Area, near Spring Valley, Wis., Dec. 8.**

Eau Galle Recreation Area. “To be a part of this [hunt] is awesome,” he said. “Being a wounded warrior myself, being in the military for 10 years ... it’s awesome to have my job; because my job is to ensure my battle buddies are taken care of.

“I’ve been given an awesome responsibility to have the empowerment to go out and find my battle buddies and make sure they are OK, and do whatever I can to bring us together so that we know that we are all OK and we’re not scattered to the five winds. We’re still a community, and we can still hang out.”

Col. Michael Price, St. Paul District commander, concluded the day by personally thanking everyone involved with the deer hunt and presenting each wounded warrior with a St. Paul District challenge coin. As he talked about the many activities that the Corps of Engineers is involved with from disaster response to regulatory, he said, “We’ll do this again. We’re going to try and do an ice fishing event or a goose hunt, too.”

## **District earns top honors during fiscal year 2012 for small business contracting**

*Story by Patrick Moes*

The St. Paul District Small Business Program earned national first place honors for the entire Corps of Engineers during Fiscal Year 2012 for obligating small business contracting dollars.

Tom Koopmeiners, St. Paul District Small Business Program manager, said more than 94.2 percent (\$69 million) of the district's total contract dollars during the fiscal year were awarded to small businesses. Many of these businesses are located within the district's boundaries.

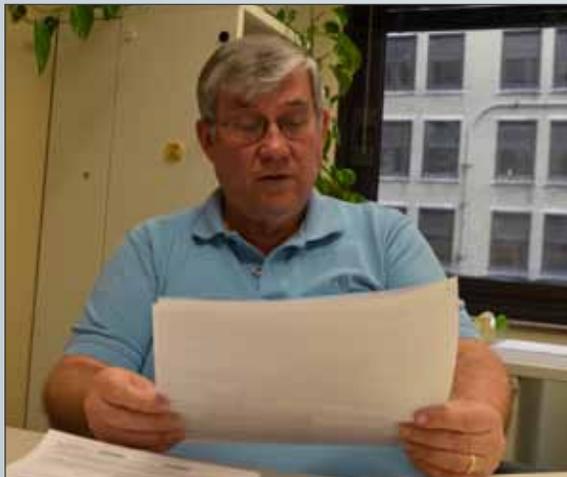
In addition to the small business achievement, the district earned fourth place in the historically underutilized business, or HUBZone category. Koopmeiners said the district obligated more than \$20 million to this category, exceeding the 7.5 percent goal by nearly 20 percent.

"The credit truly goes to the district's contracting team," said Koopmeiners. "I appreciate all of their hard work, and they should know that they are contributing to the economic well being of this nation every day by putting small businesses to work."

Small business groups include small disadvantaged businesses, woman owned businesses, HUBZone businesses and service disabled veteran businesses.

**Tom Koopmeiners, small business program manager, led the district program to top honors during Fiscal Year 2012. More than \$69 million was awarded to small businesses during the fiscal year.**

*Photo by Patrick Moes*



## **Corps' publication receives national interpretation award**

*Story by Patrick Moes*

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers' *Our Mississippi* was recently recognized by the National Association for Interpretation, or NAI, as the 2012 first place winner in the media curriculum category.

The "*Our Mississippi: Educational Activities*" curriculum and innovative presentation were cited as the key reasons for the NAI recognition. The award was presented at NAI's national conference Nov. 15.

"By viewing the finished report product as more than a finite document, we were able to produce a dynamic educational tool that will provide benefits to people around the world," said Kim Rea, director of interpretive services at the rivers project office in West Alton, Mo. "A better understanding of the Mississippi River and its relationship with the entire watershed can be applied in nearly any community on the globe."

Dan Cottrell, Mississippi River channel maintenance coordinator in Fountain City, Wis., said, "Having helped facilitate two *Our Mississippi* educator workshops with Living Lands and Waters this summer, the feedback on the curriculum from the attendees was very positive. Many teachers and non-traditional educators felt they would be able to take the new guide and use the lesson plans provided immediately."

Funds from the Navigation and Ecosystem Sustainability Program were initially used to identify the cultural resources at risk in the Upper Mississippi River watershed. In 2006, a cultural resources and mitigation team was formed to develop a plan while providing educational materials, too. The "*Our Mississippi: Educational Activities*" are produced by Formations, Inc., of Portland, Ore., and the Corps of Engineers' St. Paul, Rock Island and St. Louis districts.



# Emergency management hosts informational meetings in January

Story by Vanessa Hamer

The most predictable thing about Mother Nature is her unpredictability. During the past five years, district employees have supported numerous emergency events both within the district and elsewhere.

“While the St. Paul District’s responsibility to support all of the Corps’ missions is vital, the emergency response and overseas contingency operations missions are currently our district’s top priorities,” said Mark Koenig, emergency manager.

Due to the change in priorities for the district, Col. Michael Price, St. Paul District commander, signed the policy letter, “District Response to Emergency Operations,” in October. Corps employees can find guidance within the policy regarding how the district will prepare for and respond to emergencies. It is important for every employee, including supervisors, to know what their role is during an emergency. Even those employees that don’t deploy have a role to fill during an emergency. Koenig said those employees not deployed in support of the disaster will help the district by filling in for the team members that are deployed.

The support of the entire district is critical in determining the success of an event. The new district policy states, “Emergency response is the district’s top priority. St. Paul District will provide personnel and resources to support federal, state and local response efforts during emergency situations.”

Our emergency operations center has the primary function to successfully prepare for and execute an emergency mission,” said Koenig. “We rely on other offices within the district to fill many critical components, and in order for us to continue to succeed in this mission, each office needs to have individuals who are trained, qualified and prepared for deployment.”

The emergency management staff is planning an emergency management awareness month in January. Koenig said he and the rest of his staff encourage everyone to attend the special events, learn about all the ways you can help and enjoy some good food.

**GET INVOLVED!**

## EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT

RECRUITMENT | QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS  
PROGRAM INFORMATION | GET READY FOR SPRING

Come attend informational meetings in **JANUARY**, enjoy some **FREE FOOD**, and find out about:



### Housing PRT

Information and Recruitment

JANUARY

9



### ACE-IT Information

Recruitment and Appreciation

JANUARY

16



### Flood Response and Crisis Action Team

Information and Recruitment

JANUARY

23



### Individual Preparedness Open House

Opportunity to update PDSs, Medical Screenings, etc - General assistance with ENGLink

JANUARY

30

# Another Upper Mississippi River navigation season comes to an end, sees increases in commodities

Story by Patrick Moes

The district officially ended the 2012 Upper Mississippi River navigation season Dec. 3.

Traditionally, the last tow heading south of Lock and Dam 2, near Hastings, Minn., has marked the end of the navigation season. This year was no different. The Motor Vessel Show Me State locked through the lock

Nov. 28 heading south for the season. The season began this year when the Motor Vessel Deanna Ann locked through Lock and Dam 2 March 17.

Despite the fact that the river hasn't completely frozen yet, the district had to close the navigation season to begin winter

renovation and maintenance at Lock and Dam 6, near Trempealeau, Wis., Dec. 3. The repairs require the lock to be completely closed during the maintenance, which also means the end of the navigation season. The lock repairs are scheduled to be complete by March 11, before the 2013 navigation season.



Photo by Vanessa Hamer

A tow boat navigates the Mississippi River during the 2012 navigation season near Lansing, Iowa. The season started March 17 and finished in St. Paul, Minn., Dec. 3.

# District employees receive recognition for their work

## Joe Willging Office of Counsel



Joe Willging, chief counsel

The district's chief attorney and Eagan, Minn., resident Joe Willging was recently selected as the 2012 E. Manning Seltzer Award recipient.

The E. Manning Award is a national award named after the chief legal advisor to the Chief of Engineers and General Counsel of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers from 1956 to 1977. The award recognizes an attorney who has made one or more special contributions to the Corps' legal services mission through the development of a legal theory, a legal management innovation or practice or outstanding performance in solving a legal or management problem.

Willging was recognized for his efforts regarding the Tolna Coulee project, in Tolna, N.D. The project presented many challenges which were overcome by Willging's ability to counsel and advise his clients on the various laws, rules and regulations governing complex civil works projects.

Willging has served as the district's chief attorney since June 2008. Prior to coming to the Corps, he was an associate deputy general counsel in the Office of the Army General Counsel from December 2005 until June 2008, providing advice to senior Army Secretariat officials.

## Rebecca Graser Regulatory



Rebecca Graser, regulatory

The Mississippi Valley Division selected Rebecca Graser, St. Paul District employee and Waukesha, Wis., resident as its division nominee for the 2012 Don Lawyer Regulator of the Year.

The Don Lawyer Award recognizes an outstanding Corps of Engineers regulatory or permitting officer who is reasonable, decisive and timely, as well as projects a positive and professional image of the Corps. This biennial award is the highest regulatory recognition a Corps employee can receive and recognizes individuals for their superiority in the field of regulatory operations and his or her contribution to maintaining the integrity of the Corps' regulatory program.

Graser serves as the Wisconsin regulatory program manager, as well as the St. Paul District point of contact for National Environmental Policy Act and Clean Water Act issues. She also manages several high-profile, complex permit evaluations and has represented the district's regulatory branch during meetings with the Wisconsin governor's office, Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources and state congressional representatives regarding proposed changes to state regulations of work in waters and wetlands within Wisconsin.

# Celebrations, honors and reflections

## District gathers for winter awards ceremony

District employees gathered Dec. 14 in St. Paul, Minn., to recognize excellence and revisit the past year.

Employees and teams from across the district honored during the ceremony were:

The Corps of Engineers' Headquarters selected the Fargo, N.D. / Moorhead, Minn., Metropolitan Flood Risk Project Delivery Team as the planning team of the year. The team won the 2011 Outstanding Planning Achievement Award for completing an extremely complicated flood risk feasibility report in less than 36 months, according to the citation.

Shannon Bauer, public affairs; Patrick Moes, public affairs; and Jeff DeZellar, project management, were recognized as the 2011 recipients of the Locke L. Mouton Award for media relations. The award honors individual Corps of Engineers public affairs practitioners for superior achievement.

The Corps of Engineers' Headquarters selected Loren Nishek as the recipient of the 2011 Construction Hard Hat of the Year Award. The annual award recognizes excellence in construction quality management by Corps construction field personnel. Nishek now works for Omaha District.

The Corps of Engineers' Headquarters also selected Adèle Braun as the inaugural recipient of the 2012 Value Engineering Rising Star. The award was established to recognize the significant accomplishments of an individual who is new to the value engineering community.



Photo by Patrick Moes

**Col. Michael Price, district commander, does push ups following the conclusion of the holiday awards ceremony at the Double Tree hotel in St. Paul, Minn., Dec. 14.**

In addition to national awards, numerous employees were recognized for local awards. Jim Mosner, engineering and construction; Aaron Snyder, project management; and Annette Vogel, engineering and construction, were recognized for their service during the 35th Annual Federal Civil Servant of the Year Awards Program and Luncheon in St. Paul, Minn., May 4.

The 2012 St. Paul District Hall of Fame Inductee was Mark Nelson. Nelson served as the district's real estate chief.

Chris Afdahl, engineering and construction, earned the title of fellow from the Society of American Military Engineers.

The holiday awards ceremony also offered the opportunity to present the final awards to the employees that supported the district's



*Photo by Jennie Wilson*

**Marlene Blevins, executive office, celebrates after winning a gift basket during the holiday awards ceremony at the Double Tree hotel in St. Paul, Minn., Dec. 14.**



*Photo by Jennie Wilson*

**George Fortune, retired; Chris Afdahl, engineering and construction; and Dave Tschida, engineering and construction, enjoying the holiday awards ceremony at the Double Tree hotel in St. Paul, Minn., Dec. 14.**

2011 Minot, N.D., housing mission. The awardees include:

- Lisa Draves, contracting;
- Terry Jessesky, operations, retired;
- Brian Johnson, engineering and construction;
- Mark Koenig, emergency management;
- Lisa Lund, operations; and
- Leon Opatz, engineering and construction.

The Devils Lake, N.D., Flood Risk Management Team was recognized for their successful completion of the phase 2 and 3 designs to reduce the flood risks in Devils Lake.

The Minot Project Information Report Team was recognized for their work following the 2011 floods. The team produced plans and specifications to begin the recovery efforts for four separate construction projects in approximately eight months.



*Photo by Shannon Bauer*

**Marsha Mose, engineering and construction; Doris Sullivan, retired; and Janet Golubski, engineering and construction, enjoy the holiday awards ceremony.**

## Editor's note

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

## Retirees

**Joel Face**, civil engineer, engineering and construction, district office.  
**Chris Knotts**, biologist, operations, Stevens Point, Wis.  
**Robert Kupietz**, diesel electric striker, operations, Fountain City, Wis.  
**Georgia Stanonik**, legal assistant, office of counsel, district office.

## Taps



**Justin Breza, 1991-2012**

**Therese Jaszczak**, operations, passed away June 17. Services were held June 22 at the Wulff Funeral Home in St. Paul, Minn.  
**Justin Breza**, lock operator, Lock and Dam 6, Trempeleau, Wis., passed away Dec. 9. Services were held Dec. 22 at Central Lutheran Church, Winona, Minn.

## Food / toy drive

The district collected 204 lbs of food during the annual holiday food drive for Emergency Foodshelf Network. According to the network, the district's generous donations are equivalent of providing pantry staples for more than 150 meals.

The district's toy drive brought in enough toys to help six to 10 families.

## Newcomers

**Jason Brownrigg**, administrative assistant, operations, Fountain City, Wis.

**Molly Wezel-Peterson**, administrative assistant, engineering and construction, district office.

## Civil service nominations due in March

The 36th Annual Minnesota Federal Civil Service Recognition Awards Program is looking for exemplary employees who went above and beyond the call of duty in 2012. If an employee clearly made a difference this past year, please consider nominating them for the annual award. Nominations are due in early March. Contact Jamie Engelbretson for more information.

## Congratulations

**Jane Flewellen**, engineering and construction, and her husband, **Jared**, celebrated the birth of a daughter, **Charlee Delorme**, Sept. 21. Charlee arrived at 20 inches and 7 lbs., 5 oz.

**Michael Gunderson**, operations, was selected as the maintenance and repair foreman in Fountain City, Wis.

**Roberta [Huck] Just**, married **Karl** in St. Paul, Minn., Oct. 20.

**Eric Johnson**, contractor officer representative, Eastern Area Office, Winona, Minn., was selected as the 2012 Mississippi Valley Division Hard Hat of the Year recipient.

**Christopher Stai**, operations, was selected as the master derrickboat (Supervisory) position Fountain City, Wis.