

# Crosscurrents

*Serving the St. Paul District since 1977*

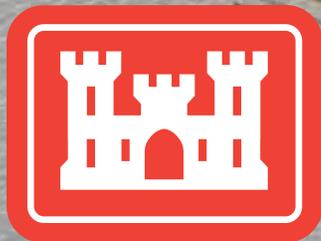
*July / August 2013 | Vol. 39, No. 5*

## **Koprowski takes the helm**

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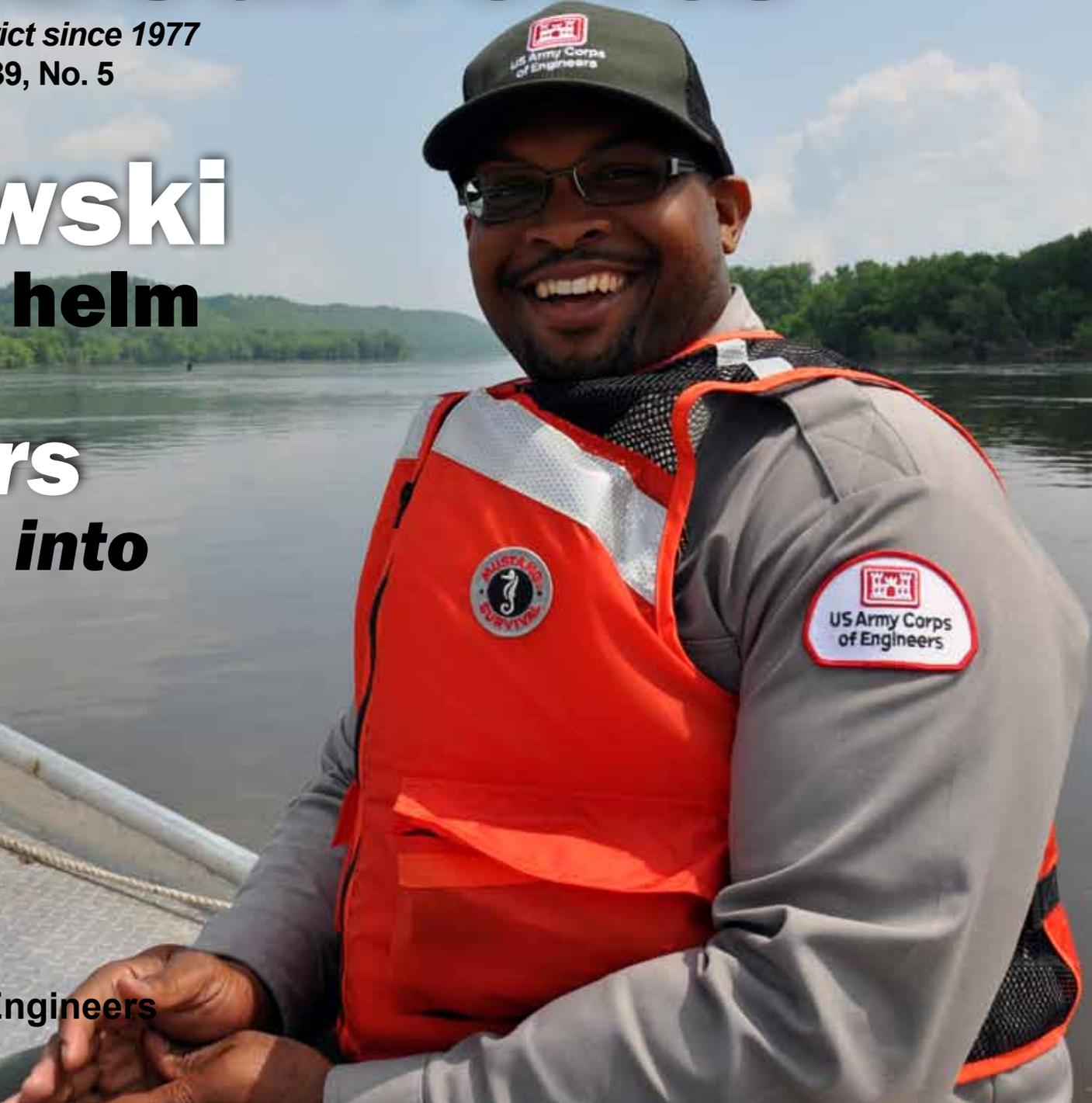
## **Foresters turn island into Petri dish**

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



Bobby Jackson, operations, conducts research along the Mississippi River near Red Wing, Minn., June 10. The district's foresters are planting thousands of trees to help improve the wildlife habitat in the area.

*Photo by Shannon Bauer*



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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 emailed.

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 comprehensive cartographers like Jack Westman, planning.

*Photo by Patrick Moes*



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Click on a logo to go to the St. Paul District social media page, where you can like us, watch videos about us or see more photos.

## Comments from the top

Thank you all for the enthusiastic welcome you have given me and my family since we joined the St. Paul District! We really appreciate the warm reception and feel very lucky to have joined such a great team.

As I've traveled around the district, I've been impressed by the professionalism and dedication that you all display. Everywhere I've been, I've met employees committed to the mission and working hard to serve our customers well. It's obvious that you take pride in a job well done. Although I haven't met all of you yet, I intend to get out to as many field sites as I can, as quickly and as often as I can, in order to get to know you and learn about what you do to help make our district great. The St. Paul District has a reputation for excellence throughout the Corps of Engineers, and I am excited and proud to be a part of it.

The next few years are going to be interesting for all of us. We face a number of daunting challenges,

including the continuation of sequestration and the fiscal uncertainty that comes with it. We will likely face continued hiring pauses and pay freezes. Our workloads may shrink, even as our administrative and reporting requirements expand. It's a challenging time to be a public servant; but as many of the old hands will tell you, this isn't the first time we've had to tighten our belts. We can and will get through this period and be stronger for it. I ask that you all continue to look out for and support each other. Rest assured that I am committed to producing the best possible work environment that our circumstances allow, and I expect every leader in the district to join me in that endeavor.

I will publish a formal statement of my vision, philosophy and priorities once I've completed my assessment of the district. In the meantime, I think you'll find me pretty easy to figure out. My mantra is pretty simple: Do more than you're supposed to do, better than

you're supposed to do it, every time. I value straight talk and prefer that people tell it like it is. I expect those who serve the public (us) to do their best, because the American taxpayer deserves nothing less. I value my time and try hard to maintain balance between work and family, as I assume most of you do.

At least initially, my top priorities are to sustain the district's impeccable reputation for customer service, to take care of our people, to continue to support overseas contingency operations and to look for innovative ways to move forward, despite the current fiscal situation. To the latter end, I encourage all of you to adopt an entrepreneurial mindset. If you see a better way to do what we do, speak up! Look for opportunities to optimize performance. If you're in a position to tell people what we do and about the services we can provide, do it; and if you see opportunities for developing new projects, let us know. If we all make



**Col. Daniel C. Koprowski**

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

our parts of the operation the best they can be, the entire district will excel.

Finally, I encourage you all to enjoy what's left of summer. I haven't lived through an Upper-Midwest winter yet, but I'm told it's just around the corner. Get out and enjoy the leave you've earned while the sun is still shining. Play it safe, however, because you are a critical member of our team, and we need you.

Building Strong!  
**Essayons!**

## Koprowski takes the helm

Story by Patrick Moes

About 350 people gathered at the district's headquarters in St. Paul, Minn., June 19 to say farewell to the outgoing commander while welcoming the new one into the district's family.

Col. Daniel C. Koprowski, the new St. Paul District commander, accepted leadership of the district as the 64th district engineer with the symbolic passing of the colors during a change of command ceremony. "I am keenly aware of the enormous responsibilities that I assume today," said the New York native. "I am humbled to be a part of an organization that has fulfilled those responsibilities so well [and] for so long.

The ceremony, officiated by Maj. Gen. John Peabody, Mississippi Valley Division commander, was attended by both current and former Corps of Engineers employees; federal, state and local partners from communities across the entire district; and friends. A military band with the Minnesota National Guard's 34th Infantry Division was also on-hand to play music.

During his speech Peabody said he recognized the importance of the military ceremony as a symbolic bookend to the end of one command and the beginning of a new one. "A change of command is a time for reflection, as we recall

the challenges and accomplishments under one commander and anticipate continuing challenges, new issues and opportunities the next commander will face," he said.

Koprowski echoed that sentiment and said, "There are plenty of both challenges and opportunities ahead, and I look forward to working with all of you to embrace those, as we build a better future for all of our communities."

Prior to this command, Koprowski attended the National War College in Washington, D.C.

His awards and decorations include the Bronze Star Medal, the Meritorious Service Medal, the Army Commendation Medal, the Combat Action Badge and the Bronze Order of the DeFleury Medal.

Col. Michael Price, the district's 63rd commander, thanked everyone for attending the ceremony during his remarks as he reflected on his three years as the district's commander. "This has been a tremendous tour for me," he said. "I have been truly honored to stand among these many. I thank each of you for allowing me to represent this district; and not lead you, but serve alongside you."

Price left immediately after the ceremony and assumed command of the Corps of Engineers, Afghanistan District, a few days later.



Col. Michael Price, outgoing St. Paul District commander (left); Maj. Gen. John Peabody, Mississippi Valley Division commander; and Col. Daniel C. Koprowski, St. Paul District commander, listen to a speech during the change of command ceremony at the district headquarters in St. Paul, Minn., June 19.

Photo by Patrick Moes



Col. Daniel C. Koprowski, assumes command of the St. Paul District during a ceremony at the district headquarters in St. Paul, Minn., June 19. [Click on the photos link to view more photos.](#)

Photo by Wendy Medlin

## District foresters turn island into large Petri dish

Story by Shannon Bauer

The district recently finished a three-year reforestation project with a massive planting of 7,000 trees. The Gores Reforestation Project is intended to enhance wildlife habitat and manage invasive species on a Mississippi River island located near Red Wing, Minn., which is public land managed by the Corps. Reed canary grass, an invasive, has slowly been taking over this island.

The project included having 60 acres on the island broken into three 20-acre sites, each using one of three 'silviculture' treatments, to include clear cutting, group selections (removing a percentage of the trees in small groups)

and shelter wood (removing overgrown trees to release established seedlings), to determine which treatment works best. Bobby Jackson, Corps forester and project manager, said the Corps and Minnesota Department of Natural Resources will monitor the site for an additional five years to determine which method yields the best results.

"Our main objective is to ultimately have a new forest made up of native trees that provide high level habitat for the next 50 to 100 years," said Jackson. "We want to be able to manage the spread of reed canary grass, because we know we can't control it."

Additional partners are working with

the district to collect more data during the life of the project for a number of different research projects. Jackson said the U.S. Geological Survey is monitoring bird response pre and post – harvesting to document bird response in each treatment. They are also testing two different types of deer enclosures on the new seedlings. He said, Minnesota, Iowa and Wisconsin DNRs and Pierce and Vernon counties in Wisconsin are studying the planting of enriched American Elm at the site to see how they compare in survival and growth in each treatment, as well as how they compare with other types of native hardwood species also being planted.

Since the site is natural habitat and ever fluctuating, due to it being on a river island, Jackson said the project has involved a lot of adaptive management. For example, he said, he had to change one of the sites at the last minute with the contractor standing there due to high water content in the soils where it wasn't anticipated.

"Overall, it's been very challenging, but the data we obtain from this project will help us at our other sites," he said, explaining that the data will assist the many agencies working on the Mississippi River in coming up with a cost effective, consistent management plan for reforestation along the river.



Ray Marinan, operations, observes eagles during a tree planting on a Mississippi River island near Red Wing, Minn., June 6.

*Courtesy photo*



Dan Reburn, operations, drives a boat to a Mississippi River island near Red Wing, Minn., June 10.

*Photo by Shannon Bauer*



Dan Reburn, left, operations, and Bobby Jackson, operations, discuss a reforestation project during a tree planting on a Mississippi River island near Red Wing, Minn., June 10.

*Photo by Shannon Bauer*

## District team earns national value engineering honors

Story by Allison Fairbanks

The district earned another national-level award for engineering earlier this summer at a summit in Arlington, Va.

The value engineering team received the national award from the Society of American Value Engineers, or SAVE, International organization during the SAVE Value Summit June 26.

The Gordon Frank Award recognizes outstanding teams and government accomplishments. It also highlights the value methodology in government projects that have benefited from decreasing costs while improving quality. The Fargo, N.D./ Moorhead, Minn., Metropolitan Area Flood Risk Management Project was selected for this award.

The team was also recently recognized as the recipient of the Department of Defense Value Engineering Award in the “project” category.

“It’s great to see the team being recognized for their hard work,” said Brett Coleman, project management. “The coordinated effort between the Corps and the sponsors allowed for the value engineering team to find areas within the project where we could potentially save tax dollars. They truly put the ‘value’ in value engineering.”

The proposed project involves a

35-mile long diversion channel located in North Dakota that will divert flood waters around the Fargo/Moorhead area. The proposed project will have the ability to temporarily store up to 150,000 acre-feet of floodwater upstream of the diversion channel inlet to minimize impacts to downstream communities.

The award nomination included three value engineering studies and two value-based design charrettes. There were nearly 100 participants and facilitators involved in the success of these studies, and they included local sponsors, consultants and Corps personnel.

“I [was] pleased to endorse the nomination,” said April Walker, city engineer for Fargo. “Because of the successful implementation of value management, the design team considered long-term operations and maintenance during design rather than incorporating it as an afterthought.”

Megan McGuire, planning, said the value engineering program is a structured method of finding cost savings and improving value. “During a long design process, it can be easy to get lost in the details,” she said. “Value engineering studies are a chance to look at the bigger picture, see how all the pieces fit together and why.”



Katie Opsahl, planning, left; and Bob Edstrom, project management, prepare for a public meeting about the Fargo, N.D./ Moorhead, Minn., Metropolitan Area Flood Risk Management Project in Fargo June 26.

*Photo by Shannon Bauer*



Kevin Bluhm, planning, second from the right, discusses the Fargo, N.D./ Moorhead, Minn., Metropolitan Area Flood Risk Management Project with area citizens during a public meeting in Fargo June 25.

*Photo by Shannon Bauer*



Sam Mathiowetz, operations, left, shows a youngster how to operate the district's lock model during an open house at Lock and Dam 1 in Minneapolis, July 19. [Click on the photos link for more photos.](#)

*Photo by Shannon Bauer*



Tim Tabery, operations, left, explains to a group of visitors how the lock and dam is operated during an open house at Lock and Dam 1 in Minneapolis, July 19.

*Photo by Patrick Moes*

## Visitors get hands-on opportunity during Lock and Dam 1 open house

Story by Shannon Bauer

The St. Paul District hosted its annual open house at Lock and Dam 1 in Minneapolis in conjunction with the annual Highland Fest, celebrated by the St. Paul, Minn., Highland neighborhood, July 19.

This year's event drew about 750 individuals through the lock and dam. The shop area was staged as

a welcome introduction to the facility, complete with a small-scale lock and dam model. Jessica Jones, Upper St. Anthony Falls Lock and Dam tour guide in Minneapolis, answered questions from visitors on the promenade overlooking the lock chamber. The lock staff also opened the central control tower to the public. They were able

to watch two different videos about the locks and dams, as well as look at historic photos and log books. A lock operator answered questions from control tower that serves as a bird's eye view of the lock chamber.

"I think the open house was well planned, perfectly staffed and executed without incident. The lock and dam

model seemed to be enjoyed by the children who visited," said Lockmaster Tim Tabery. "The open house could not have been conducted without the help from the public affairs staff, a tour guide from Upper St. Anthony Falls and the staff from Lock 1. With all participants assisting, the open house went off without a hitch."

## District staff, tribes gather to remember Big Sandy Lake tragedy

Story by Patrick Moes

Around 200 people gathered at the district's Big Sandy Lake Recreation Area, near McGregor, Minn., July 31 to honor and remember a tragedy that occurred 163 years ago.

District employees; tribal members associated with the Great Lakes Indian Fish and Wildlife Commission, or GLIFWC; and friends honored the more than 400 Anishinaabe, or Ojibwe, people that died during the 1850-1851 winter. The group honored the GLIFWC ancestors by canoeing across Big Sandy Lake before a picnic in the park. Following the picnic, tribal leaders and representatives from the 12 tribes that represent the 1850 bands reflected on the significance of the event.

Jim Zorn, GLIFWC executive administrator, said, Mikwendaagoziwag" (Ojibwe for "We remember them") prior to the start of the canoe trip. "You can't remember [the ancestors] without remembering their story, and there are new stories to be made."

The story began when more than 400 Anishinaabe people that died during the fall and winter in 1850-1851 were at the lake awaiting their annuity payments for ceded lands. More than 150 people died at the lake during the six-week period as they waited for payment. The remaining 250 people died as they

attempted to return to their homes.

Mic Isham, GLIFWC and Lac Courte Oreilles Band of Ojibwa chairman, said, "Paddling across the lake with the wind and the waves was tough, but nowhere near what our ancestors dealt with in 1850-1851." Holding a speaking stick in his hand as he addressed the group, Isham added, "While these events are tragic, we're still here, and we're going to be here for a long time.

"Life is a ceremony," he added. "We have birth, life and death; and today, we honor our ancestors. They are every blade of grass, drop of water and cloud in the sky."

Zorn said he was impressed with the number of people that turned out for the ceremony and noted that the number of people attending the ceremony continues to get bigger every year. He said the event is a great teaching opportunity for the next generation. "We all know treaty history is made every day."

Michaa Aubid, Mille Lacs Band of Ojibwe member, said these events are important to them, but most important to the kids. "They need to know our culture, language and background," he said. "They are our future, and we need to get them involved. Without them, there is no future."



Members of the St. Croix Ojibwe Tribe launch their hand-made birchbark canoes at Big Sandy Lake, near McGregor, Minn., July 31. About 200 people gathered to remember the more than 400 Anishinaabe people that died during the winter of 1850-1851.

Photo by Patrick Moes



Tom Crump, planning, left, and Mic Isham, Great Lakes Indian Fish and Wildlife Commission and Lac Courte Oreilles Band of Ojibwa chairman, canoe Big Sandy Lake, near McGregor, Minn., July 31.

[Click on the photos link for more photos.](#)

Photo by Patrick Moes



## Teamwork helps district repair damages to Lock and Dam 5A gate



Story by George Stringham

A tow heading downriver struck and severely damaged a miter gate at Lock and Dam 5A near Winona, Minn., May 16.

The damaged gate was still operational but in a limited capacity and action needed to be taken to make the lock fully operational.

“Our top priority was keeping the lock open,” said Bryan Peterson, lock and dams section chief. “Another incident, even a minor one, could have closed the lock down until the gate could be replaced.”

Engineers with the St. Paul District contacted their counterparts at Rock

Island District for support. The Rock Island District has specially designed sectional miter gates that are adjustable and available for just such an incident. While the widths of most of the lock chambers on the Upper Mississippi River are the same, the depths vary. The river depth determines the gate height.

Rock Island’s team mobilized to Lock and Dam 5A, bringing the matching pair of replacement gates, a heavy-lift crane and crew within a few days after the accident. Maintenance teams from both districts prepared both the damaged and spare gates to be replaced. The biggest concern, said

Peterson, was whether the spare gate would miter correctly with the existing, non-damaged gate. Miter describes the position and angle formed when the lock gates are in the closed position.

“You have to remember, we’re talking about using a temporary replacement gate that was built fairly recently and trying to make it work with something that was built more than 80 years ago,” Peterson said. “We can measure and look at drawings all day. Until we get the gate installed, [we don’t] know if it will work.”

The temporary gate was installed May 23. “This was a great example

of a successful, collaborative effort,” Peterson said. “By pulling the resources readily available in the Rock Island District, in one week, we went from a seriously damaged miter gate that could potentially have had serious impacts on both recreation and commercial navigation to a fully operational facility.”

The damaged miter gate is being repaired by both St. Paul and Rock Island district personnel at Rock Island’s service base in Pleasant Valley, Iowa. Repairs are estimated at \$1.4 million and should be completed early this fall with the repaired gate reinstalled prior to the river freezing.



Crew members from St. Paul and Rock Islands districts install a temporary gate at Lock and Dam 5A, near Minnesota City, Minn., May 23. [Click on the photos and video links for more photos and a video.](#)  
*Photo by George Stringham*



Crew members from St. Paul and Rock Islands districts install a temporary gate at Lock and Dam 5A, near Minnesota City, Minn., May 23.  
*Photo by George Stringham*



The Fighting Calculators robot.  
Courtesy Photo



The Fighting Calculators team is mentored by Tom Crump, far right, planning; and Rick Femrite, engineering and construction.  
[Click on the photos link for more photos.](#)  
Courtesy Photo

## District engineers use robots for STEM Outreach

Story by Tom Crump

One of the challenges we face as a nation is getting kids excited about Science, Technology, Engineering and Math, or STEM, in order to develop the problem solvers of the future. One way I am helping to meet that challenge is by mentoring a high school robotic team – The Fighting Calculators.

The team recently participated in the

FIRST (For Inspiration and Recognition of Science and Technology) Robotic Competition, a program where high school students build robots and compete against other teams. FIRST encourages STEM education through a suite of robotic competitions, ranging from FIRST Lego League for elementary school kids up to FIRST Robotic Competition for high school teams.

FIRST Robotics is the fastest growing sport in the nation. In Minnesota, there are more high school robotics teams than high school hockey teams.

### The ROBOT

The robots can weigh up to 120 pounds and stand 7 feet tall. Each year, the students are given a new mission and then have six weeks to plan,

design, build, program and test a robot that can perform these missions. This year's mission was to shoot Frisbees into targets, and then climb a 9-foot tall pyramid. After the six-week build season, the teams head to competitions. There are 50 to 60 robots at every regional competition. Teams compete in groups of three robots, called alliances. There are three red



robots and three blue robots playing against each other. Some robots are designed for defense, to push other robots around and prevent them from scoring. Other robots are offense orientated. During a match, six robots zoom around the field leading to some substantial collisions. Designing the robots to withstand these harsh conditions adds to the challenge.

#### The TEAM

Like most FIRST Robotics Challenge teams, The Fighting Calculators are made up of a diverse group of teenagers. Some kids love to work at the computer, others want to get dirty working at the lathe, drill press or the milling machine. Some are outgoing, others are more reserved. The team must organize themselves to utilize all their collective strengths to accomplish the mission.

Designs are made, prototypes are built, tested and then revised. The team makes compromises in order to meet design objectives within strict time restrictions and budget constraints.

#### The METHOD

FIRST uses a mentor based philosophy to teach and inspire students. Practicing professionals donate their time to instruct team members in both technical and non-technical skills. Getting a 40-member team to collectively construct a robot requires communication and project

management skills.

#### GRACIOUS PROFESSIONALISM

It's not winning at all costs at the robotic competition. FIRST stresses good sportsmanship with a phrase they call "Gracious Professionalism." Teams are willing to assist each other in any way they can, but then become fierce competitors on the playing field. Teams frequently help out other teams by loaning parts, proving technical assistance and offering support and encouragement.

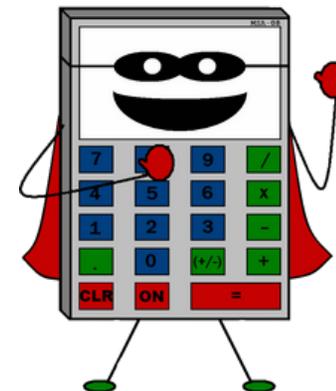
#### The RESULTS

Mentoring a FIRST robotic team has proven positive impact on inspiring high school students to pursue STEM careers. While keeping high school students enthused about academics is tough, more than 70 percent of high school students who participate FIRST report an increased motivation to do well in school. Once kids are hooked on this program, they usually go to extraordinary lengths to be successful as demonstrated by placing first at the Minnesota state tournament. Team members routinely give robot demonstrations at elementary schools, community fairs, 4H clubs and even the state fair, ensuring STEM excitement starts at an early age. FIRST participants are passionate about this program. To learn more or to get involved, go to: <http://www.usfirst.org> or <http://fightingcalculators.org/>.



Rick Femrite, engineering and construction, discusses the robot computer aided design with a Fighting Calculators team member.

*Courtesy Photo*





Celebrate the National Women's Equality Day. **Click on the banner to learn more about a few of the women in the St. Paul District.**

**Note: You must be on the St. Paul District network to view this link.**

## Congratulations

- Congratulations **Karl Hunt**, logistics, and his wife, **Tiffany Macy**, on the birth of their son, **Bentley Allen**, July 10. He weighed 7 lbs., 15 oz., and was 21.5 inches.
- Congratulations **Derrick Deering**, engineering and construction, and his wife, **Danie Marie Deering**, on their marriage July 13 in Grand Forks, N.D.
- Congratulations **Terri Stamm**, safety, on earning the Associate Safety Professional title from the Board of Certified Safety Professionals.
- Congratulations to **Sharon Garay-Rodriguez's** son, **2nd Lt. Jean (John) C. Roman Rodriguez** on his graduation and commissioning from the U.S. Military Academy at West Point, N.Y., May 25.

## Retirements

- Verna Coyle**, secretary, planning, Rock Island, Ill.
- Leonard Grabowski**, biologist, operations, Brainerd, Minn.
- Thomas Krumholz**, lock and dam operator, operations, Alma, Wis.
- Rick Magee**, sign program manager, operations, district office.
- Dan Seemon**, ecologist, operations, district office.
- Dave Tschida**, civil engineer, engineering and construction, district office.

## Taps

- Armin Arms** passed away July 12. Services were held July 20 at Cornerstone Funeral and Cremation Services in Beaver Dam, Wis.
- Ronald J. Wolney** passed away Aug. 17. Services were held Aug. 30 at Our Lady of the Lakes in Spicer, Minn.

## Seasonal/New Hires

- Timothy Haukoos**, deckhand, operations, Fountain City, Wis.
- Joshua Isakson**, deckhand, operations, Fountain City, Wis.
- Branden Johnson**, deckhand, operations, Fountain City, Wis.
- Christopher Laine**, lock and dam operator, operations, Minneapolis
- Thomas Mikrut**, deckhand, operations, Fountain City, Wis.
- Edward Morgan**, deckhand, operations, Fountain City, Wis.
- Clinton Passeno**, deckhand, operations, Fountain City, Wis.
- Scott Rolbiecki**, deckhand, operations, Fountain City, Wis.
- Keith Schindler**, deckhand, operations, Fountain City, Wis.
- Kurt Schroeder**, survey technician, operations, Fountain City, Wis.
- Daniel Teigen**, deckhand, operations, Fountain City, Wis.
- Keli Ward**, student trainee, operations, De Soto, Wis.

## Leadership development program team graduates



Congratulations to from left, **Jay Grimsled**, operations; **Nate Wallerstedt**, project management; **Jake Fall**, engineering and construction; **Elizabeth Nelsen**, engineering and construction; **Elizabeth Killian**, engineering and construction; **Kelli Phillips**, operations; **Angela Deen**, program management; and **Dave Potter**, planning, on their completion of the district's leadership development program.

## Save the date

The 38th annual Retirees' Reunion Luncheon and Hall of Fame Induction is scheduled for Sept. 12 in Egan, Minn.