

Crosscurrents

Serving the St. Paul District since 1977

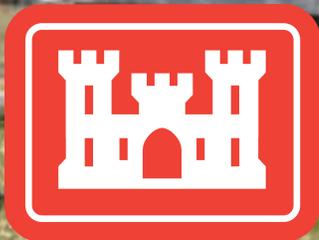
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Another spring, another flood

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Engineer travels to Brazil for work

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

Paul Machajewski, operations, plays with an 11-month-old puppy named Chuckie at a park in Fargo, N.D., April 30. Machajewski was supporting the district's Red River of the North flood fight when he rescued Chucky.



Photo by Patrick Moes

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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 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 tie-wearing project managers like Bob Edstrom, project management.

Photo by Shannon Bauer



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Comments from the top

Team,

It has come time for me to bid the district farewell. The last three years have been a tremendous and invaluable experience for me, and I can honestly say the most rewarding position I have had in my Army career. It has been my distinct honor serving alongside each of you, as you provide our nation incredible value.

As I reflect, the district was faced with numerous challenges that, together, we were able to overcome. Essentially, on the first day of my district command, we were faced with the incredible task of rallying all of the federal agencies to provide solutions to the continuing rise of Devils Lake in North Dakota. The team did a fantastic job coordinating, collaborating and providing a number of action items for the administration. One of those actions was the construction of the Tolna Coulee Control Structure. Bill Cjasko, project management, and the team developed, designed and constructed a flood control coastal emergencies structure in less than 16 months. Simply incredible!

The Fargo, N.D. / Moorhead, Minn., flood risk reduction project is another example of how the district adapted, overcame and developed a comprehensive solution to protect hundreds of thousands of people. The feasibility study has become a model for the rest of the Corps, and every day the project development team continues to find innovative ways to refine and design the project.

Our efforts in dealing with Asian carp are yet another obstacle that presented itself to the district in the past two years. Pressures from outside forces that do not understand the complete story have tested the district's authorities. This issue in particular will continue to challenge the district into the near future, but we are poised with the right team to develop the right solution with the state of Minnesota.

The 2011 flood season was probably the district's most active flood fight in recent history. The district interacted with more than 80 different communities in preparation for the flood. We fought

flood waters in almost every basin in the district; and, in the end, the district performed marvelously. Unfortunately, residents in the city of Minot, N.D., and surrounding communities suffered severe damages, and today the district continues to partner with the state of North Dakota and with the International Souris River Board to develop solutions to prevent future damages.

Today, we continue to be challenged with budgetary issues. My advice to everyone is to hang on, and to keep executing our mission to our high standard with the resources we are given. The nation and the Corps have been fiscally challenged before, and we have always found a way to survive. We do have to be ever mindful of our fiscal stewardship responsibilities, and we must become more efficient at everything we do.

It truly has been an honor serving in the St. Paul District. I feel blessed to have met so many great professionals,



Col. Michael J. Price

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

worked with the many federal and state agencies and to have interacted with all levels of government. The district has become a part of my family, and I will leave a little piece of my heart in Minnesota when I depart.

I ask that you please take care of Col. Dan Koprowski, your next St. Paul District commander, like you took care of me and keep doing the great things you do every day!

**ESSAYONS!
BUILDING STRONG!**



Col. Michael Price, St. Paul District commander, left, presents Eric Johnson, engineering and construction, with a commander's coin at the Lock and Dam 3, near Red Wing, Minn., dedication May 31.

Photo by Patrick Moes

Johnson earns national honors as Corps Hard Hat of the Year recipient

Story by Allison Fairbanks

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers' Headquarters recently announced its selection of Eric Johnson, engineering and construction, as the recipient of its Construction Hard Hat of the Year Award.

Johnson received the Corps' Mississippi Valley Division Hard Hat award, making him a contender for the national level award.

The Construction Hard Hat of the Year Award is given out annually by the Corps of Engineers to recognize excellence in construction quality management by its construction field personnel. Johnson was chosen as the recipient over contenders from 10 other divisional offices across the entire Corps of Engineers.

Knoff selected to become the deputy district engineer



Mike Knoff, engineering and construction, was selected to serve as the acting deputy district engineer.

Photo by Wendy Medlin

Michael Knoff started his career in the Omaha District in 1985 as a hydraulic engineer, after receiving his Bachelor of Science and Master of Science degrees in Civil Engineering from South Dakota State University. In 1992, he became chief of the river and reservoir engineering section. The section specialized in sedimentation, channel stabilization and water quality activities in the Omaha District.

In 1995, he transferred to become the operations manager of the Gavins Point Project in Yankton, S.D. In that position he was responsible for all activities at the large multi-purpose dam, reservoir and hydropower project located on the main stem of the Missouri River.

Knoff joined the St. Paul District in 1999 as the hydraulics and hydrology branch chief. The branch is responsible for hydraulic and hydrologic engineering associated with the planning, design, construction, operation and maintenance for civil works projects, including regulation of the district's 13 navigation locks and dams and 16 multipurpose dams and reservoirs. He also supervised the district's levee safety program, which conducts inspections and other federal oversight activities of 81 levee systems in the St. Paul District area of responsibility.

Knoff has several collateral duties. He is the advisor to the district's engineering and construction division interns, coordinating their 2-year developmental assignments. He is also the coordinator of the St. Paul District Leadership Development Program and the primary district point of contact for the Mississippi Valley Division's emerging leader program.

He is a registered professional engineer in Nebraska.

The St. Paul District 2013 Civil Servants of the Year:



Tim Smith

Position title: Chief, Technical Services Section, Regulatory Branch, St. Paul, Minn.
Total years with St. Paul District: 10
Total years with Corps of Engineers: 16
Total years with federal government: 16
Previous Positions/Employment: U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Wilmington District, and U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Los Angeles District
Education: Master of Science in environmental science, Indiana University in Bloomington, Ind.; Bachelor of Science in environmental administration, University of Evansville in Evansville, Ind.
Hobbies: Triathlon, brewing beer and woodworking.
Residence: White Bear Lake, Minn.
Comments: "It is a great honor to be nominated for this award by the St. Paul District. To be recognized as a leader by the people you work with, and for, everyday is very satisfying."

Gary Wolf

Position title: Civil Engineer, Design Branch, St. Paul, Minn.
Total years with St. Paul District: 13
Total years with Corps of Engineers: 13
Total years with federal government: 13
Previous Positions/Employment: Environmental protection engineer at Illinois Environmental Protection Agency (1991-2000)
Education: Bachelor of Science in civil engineering, Southern Illinois University at Edwardsville, Ill.
Hobbies: Camping, canoeing, biking, hiking, running ... Anything outdoors
Residence: Roseville, Minn.
Comments: "I am very humbled by this award. I would like to thank all the great people I work with at the Army Corps of Engineers-St Paul District. Without their support, hard work and dedication, I would not be accepting this award."

Scott Tichy

Position title: Park Ranger/Natural Resource Specialist, Baldhill Dam, Valley City, N.D.
Total years with St. Paul District: 17
Total years with Corps of Engineers: 21
Total years with federal government: 21
Education: Bachelor's of Science in recreation resource management from the University of Minnesota in Minneapolis
Hobbies: Woodworking, hunting
Residence: Tower City, N.D.
Comments: "I feel honored to have been nominated for the Civil Servant of the Year award. Mostly I feel fortunate to work with such a great group of folks at the Baldhill Dam office and the rest of the recreation and natural resources branch."



St. Paul District leaders, partners and congressional representatives cut a ceremonial ribbon at Lock and Dam 3, near Red Wing, Minn., May 31.

Photo by Patrick Moes

District, partners cut ribbon on three-year lock and dam construction

Story by Patrick Moes

The district capped off years of planning and three years of construction at Lock and Dam 3, near Red Wing, Minn., with a ribbon cutting ceremony May 31.

District leaders, partners and congressional representatives spoke about the importance of the project as it relates to navigation safety. Prior to the district completing the nearly \$70 million in improvements to the lock, there were more than 10 lock accidents since the 1960s due to extremely

unfavorable outdraft conditions because the lock being built along a bend on the Mississippi River.

Greg Genz, Upper Mississippi Waterway Association president, said he's talked to a lot of mariners and all of them are amazed and what the project has done to reduce accidents at the lock. He said people used to dread having to navigate through the lock, because the currents were so dangerous.

Greg Bohrer, congressional aide to

Senator Amy Klobuchar, echoed those remarks and said the inland waterway system is incredibly important to the region. "More than \$2 billion in goods move in and out of Minnesota every year along the Mississippi River," he said.

The project improvements include an 862-foot-long guide wall extension, a closure dike, channel dredging and embankment improvements, such as several thousand linear feet of earthwork and rock protection, concrete spillways and associated control structures.

While the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act project provides improvements that increase navigation safety, there are other unique factors that are associated with this project, said Tom Novak, project management. The contractors completed the construction without closing the lock to the navigation industry and pleasure craft operators. The project was also unique in the fact that it was the first time the district finished a plan as a design-build contract, he added.



Timothy Murphy, left, and Paul Machajewski, operations, play with Murphy's puppy, Chuckie, at a park in Fargo, N.D., April 30. Chuckie is an accomplished escape artist.

Photo by Patrick Moes

District employee supports North Dakota flood fight and saves a puppy along the way

Story by Patrick Moes

When Paul Machajewski, operations, left his home near Winona, Minn., earlier this spring to serve as an emergency operations construction representative for the work being done in and around Fargo, N.D., rescuing a puppy wasn't even a thought on his mind.

With flood forecasts indicating the potential for a flood of record, the district team began supporting the city of Fargo by constructing several levees. One of the key areas he was initially responsible for involved a temporary emergency levee in the Lindenood Drive area. While on site, Machajewski said he noticed black lab puppy running around the construction area. "He was small, and he was full of energy and constantly moving, so we needed to get him out of there, and we didn't want him anywhere near the equipment," he said.

As a self-proclaimed dog lover, Machajewski said he knew the puppy would get hurt or worse, if the dog continued to be around the area where increasing larger levees were being built to hold back the rising river, so he

walked the puppy toward an area where people were standing outside. He said the puppy, an 11-month-old named Chuckie, took off toward the group. Timothy Murphy, one of those people in the group, happened to be Chuckie's owner.

Murphy, an accomplished poet and author, said Chuckie is an "escape artist" much like one of his previous labs – Feeny. "Chuckie's staged five jail breaks in six days," said Murphy. "So this was not a surprise, but right now, he is in jail out at Sheyenne River Kennels where they have 8-foot chain link fences. As soon as I can get one of those built, he can come home."

According to Murphy, Chuckie's family history includes more than just being able to escape. The history includes several national field champions. Machajewski said the most significant part of this fact is that Chuckie's mother was a national champion. There have been very few female labs that have successfully competed at such a high level.

District supports another spring flood fight along the Red River of the North

Story by Patrick Moes and Virginia Regorrah

The district faced dire flood predictions along the Red River of the North earlier this year as winter weather lingered into spring.

With some forecasts estimating a nearly 50 percent chance of exceeding the flood of record in Fargo, N.D., the district's flood fight effort began. District members began arriving in the basin toward the end of April to support the effort and provide assistance to local communities along the river. Although the flood predictions never materialized as originally forecast, the district was prepared and ready to respond.

The district constructed a little more

than 2 miles of temporary emergency levees in the Fargo area and placed more than 50,000 cubic yards of dirt. The largest area of construction was along 2nd Street in downtown Fargo. The district completed that levee construction in less than two days.

"At the peak of the flood fight, we [had] people working all the way from Wahpeton, N.D., to the Canadian boarder," said Col. Michael Price, St. Paul District commander. "We [had] hydrologists looking at the water in the basin, we [had] quality assurance professionals observing the construction, and we [had] engineers

here to make sure [we built what we needed to, when we needed] to."

Closer to Canada, the district's flood fight effort was supported by the Grand Forks office. According to Virginia Regorrah, engineering and construction, the office staff was busy advising and coordinating with a number of communities. Fortunately, she said, the district only needed to build a levee in Grafton, N.D.

She said Grafton was a great success story, because the temporary emergency levees protected the community from the 4th highest flood of record. Regorrah said the team

relied on the experience from the district and locals and the coordination with the National Weather Service's River Forecast Center to build levees high enough to protect the critical infrastructure within the community.

"Grafton is always a tricky location, because it is directly below Homme Dam and, therefore, there are no gauging stations above it to judge the eventual river crest," said Regorrah. The river twists through town, making ice jamming and localized "bumps" in the river elevation a real problem.



Christian DeJesus, logistics, left, and Dan Fleck, engineering and construction, observe temporary emergency levee construction along the Red River of the North in Fargo, N.D., April 27.

Photo by Patrick Moes



John Bostrock, operations, monitors a temporary borrow pit that is being used for material to build temporary emergency levees along the Red River of the North April 27.

Photo by Patrick Moes



Ryan Price, engineering and construction, left, Greta Schmale, engineering and construction, and Paul Machajewski, operations, discuss the temporary emergency levee construction along the Red River of the North in Fargo, N.D., April 28.

Photo by Patrick Moes

Lake Ashtabula park rangers partner with local school to plant trees, celebrate the outdoors

Story by George Stringham

District staff from Lake Ashtabula, near Valley City, N.D., and faculty and students from Jefferson Elementary School in Valley City, celebrated the National Kids to Parks Day at the park May 16.

Students, faculty and park staff helped plant trees and a native prairie garden near the Baldhill Dam office with grant money. The Lake Ashtabula park was

one of two Corps of Engineers sites selected this year to receive a grant for National Kids to Parks Day. Nicole Powers, a kindergarten teacher at Jefferson Elementary School, submitted the grant application. The \$970 grant was used to pay for the trees and plants that the students planted, as well as their transportation to the park.

The event focused on more than

planting trees and grasses. The children also participated in water safety activities and were treated to a tour of Baldhill Dam, which impounds the Sheyenne River to create Lake Ashtabula. "The event was a blast," said Rich Schueneman, Lake Ashtabula site manager. "Those kids sure have some energy."

National Kids to Parks Day is organized by the National Park Trust and is held annually, the weekend prior to the official start to summer. The National Park Trust encourages children to explore neighborhood parks and discover the history, nature and adventure in the environment around them.



Rich Schueneman, site manager for Lake Ashtabula, near Valley City, N.D., gives temporary water safety tattoos to a group of elementary students that helped plant trees at the park May 16.
Photo by George Dutton



Scott Tichy, Lake Ashtabula park ranger, and Nicole Powers, Jefferson Elementary School teacher in Valley City, N.D., celebrate the National Kids to Parks Day with the elementary students at Baldhill Dam May 16.
Photo by George Dutton



Hlee Moua, engineering and construction, stands next to her Asian Pacific Month display at the district's headquarters in St. Paul, Minn.

Photo by Allison Fairbanks



Hlee Moua, engineering and construction, wears a traditional Hmong headpiece at the district's headquarters in St. Paul, Minn.

Photo by Allison Fairbanks

District celebrates Asian Pacific Month

Story by Allison Fairbanks

In May, the Corps of Engineers celebrated, with the rest of the nation, by raising awareness to those of Asian-Pacific heritage. Asians and Pacific Islanders come from the continent of Asia and the Pacific islands of Melanesia, Micronesia and Polynesia. In 1992, George H.W. Bush designated May to commemorate the immigration of the first Japanese to the United

States, calling it Asian-Pacific American Heritage Month.

Hlee Moua, an engineering technician for the St. Paul District, was born into a Hmong family with more modern views of their culture. In recognition of her heritage and to commemorate Asian-Pacific month, she brought some of her family heirlooms to the district headquarters to display them in

a case outside the equal employment opportunity office. Moua said she was proud and honored to share her culture with the district.

Among the items is a baby carriage passed down from her husband's family, story cloths that tell Hmong folk stories and two of Moua's favorite sashes, one pink and one that is vibrant green. Also displayed what traditional pompoms believed to ward off evil. Moua said that in her culture, they are very proud of the beautiful bright colors and intricacy in their clothing because of

the workmanship of the designs that are passed down through generations.

Moua is one of many Asian Pacific Americans who work in the St. Paul District. Asian Pacific Month, like other designated cultural awareness months, gives people the opportunity to expand their horizons, learn about each other's traditions and appreciate our district's diversity. In Moua's words, "Asian Pacific Month is a reminder that we all come from different places." She encourages us all to branch out and learn about different cultures.



Kurt Heckendorf, engineering and construction, stands in front of a constructed deflector at the project Ilha Tapera, near Barra, Bahia, Brazil

Courtesy photo

Heckendorf finds travel, learning opportunities while working in Brazil

Story by Shannon Bauer

Geotechnical engineer Kurt Heckendorf recently returned from a six-month trip to Brasilia, the capitol of Brazil, where he lived and worked alongside the local population.

Heckendorf was in Brasilia as part of an international agreement the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers has in this nation intended to foster a strong relationship between the two countries. The Corps part of this agreement involves working with Brazilian Engineers to mentor and transfer knowledge to them. Specifically, Heckendorf worked for the company CODEVASF, which is in charge of development within the São Francisco and Parnaíba river valleys for agricultural, navigation and social purposes.

Although it was Heckendorf's role to provide technical mentoring to CODEVASF, he said, the experience was just as much a learning opportunity for him as it was for the Brazilians. "The team that I worked with down there made this one of the best experiences of my life," he said. He and his wife, Roshell, got to learn the Brazilian culture, have new experiences, both personally and professionally, and make new friends. "They took us into their country, into their homes and into their

families," he said.

The CODEVASF/Corps program in Brazil is intended to last three years and to complete 12 projects, four a year. Ultimately, the goal is to ensure the Brazilians have enough expertise to complete these types of projects on their own without Corps assistance. Heckendorf applied to be a part of this program through the Mobile District and was selected to be there during the second part of the first year. While there, he worked on bank erosion and navigation issues.

Where he saw that CODEVASF needed the most assistance was with planning, he said. "Had the previous consultants/designers hired by CODEVASF spent more time looking at the purpose of its projects, they might have had better suited projects on their own." The Brazilian engineers were presented the Corps' six step planning process, and they loved that, he said. The team also talked to the people who lived where the projects were intended to go, which provided great insight into local conditions.

For his part, he said one of his biggest challenges was communicating, although he was surprised by how many technical words in Portuguese were similar to what

they are in English. Another challenge, he said, included driving, due to traffic and occasional flooding. “You still have to worry about horse and buggies there,” he added. Yet another challenge, he said, included obtaining IT (information technology) support, since it had to officially be requested through channels.

Outside of work, Heckendorf said he tried to experience as much of the culture and the country as he was able. He spent a lot of time with his Brazilian co-workers

outside of duty hours, and both his wife and his father were able to join him for parts of his stay to get to experience what he was getting to experience – his wife stayed with him for the last three months of his trip and his father visited him for 10 days. “If you go there, try everything,” he advised. “It’s worth it!”

Heckendorf said he will definitely be going back. “Leaving was bittersweet,” he explained. “It was very hard to leave. They became so much like family!”



Kurt Heckendorf, engineering and construction, works at one of Codevasf’s on-going construction projects in Brazil.

Courtesy photo



Kurt Heckendorf, engineering and construction, center, poses for a photo during a field visit at Barra, Bahia, Brazil, with Codevasf Civil Engineer Rafa Brito and Forest Engineer Lucio Mauro.

Courtesy photo



Kurt Heckendorf, engineering and construction, prepares to eat ribs prepared in the tradition of the Gaúcho with residents from southern Brazil.

Courtesy photo

Congratulations

- Congratulations to **John Murphy**, engineering and construction, on his selection as the 2013 Tor L. Brekke Award recipient from the University of California, Berkeley.
- Congratulations to **Adèle Braun** and the entire St. Paul District value engineering team on their selection as the Outstanding Value Methodology in Government Award recipient from SAVE International.
- Congratulations to **Randy Brunet** and **Lowell Hanson** on their selection into the St. Paul District Hall of Fame.
- Congratulations are extended to **Bobbie Jo Roundy**, operations, and **Justen Kosok**, on the birth of their baby boy, **Jackson Arlan Kosok**. Jackson weighed in at 4 lbs. 3 oz. and is 18 inches long.
- Congratulations to **Tom Rohrer**, operations, and his wife, **Amy**, on the birth of their daughter, **Bailey Ann**. She was born May 16 and was 8 lbs., 19 3/4 inches long.
- Congratulations to Lock and Dam 7 Lock Operators **Nathan Osmundson** and **Gene Nessler** for their quick response to a boating accident at the dam May 27.



Nathan Osmundson



Gene Nessler

- Congratulations to **Matthew Breza**, operations, and his wife, **Tanya**, on the birth of their son, **Bentley Justin Breza**, to their family May 12. He was 6 lbs, 10ozs.



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.

Retirements

- Tom Novak**, Supervisory park ranger, operations, Blackhawk Park, De Soto, Wis.
- Jeff DeZellar**, project manager, project management, district office.
- William Heublein**, engineering equipment operator, operations, Fountain City, Wis.
- Mike Evenson**, Supervisory civil engineer, engineering and construction, Fargo, N.D.
- Gary Nelson**, Supervisory management analysis, operations, district office.

New Hires

- Angela Mary Awender**, student trainee, operations, Valley City, N.D.
- Paul Butler**, student trainee, operations, Grand Rapids, Minn.
- Andrew Chambers**, student trainee, operations, Grand Rapids, Minn.
- Dylan Duellman**, student trainee, operations, district office.
- Andrew Grunwald**, student trainee, operations, De Soto, Wis.
- Barry Jeffs**, student trainee, operations, Crosslake, Minn.
- Kacey Jertson**, student trainee, operations, LaCrescent, Minn.
- Jason Johnson**, student trainee, operations, LaCrescent, Minn.
- Miranda Peters**, student trainee, operations, McGregor, Minn.
- Andrea Roberts**, student trainee, operations, Crosslake, Minn.
- Justin Scheel**, student trainee, operations, Minneapolis
- Daniel Sheehan**, student trainee, operations, De Soto, Wis.
- Andrew Tandberg**, student trainee, operations, Spring Valley, Wis.
- Martin Thorne**, student trainee, operations, Federal Dam, Minn.
- Bobbi Trout**, student trainee, operations, Spring Valley, Wis.
- Dan Wenger**, lock and dam operator, operations, Fountain City, Wis.
- Joshua Wert**, student trainee, operations, Valley City, N.D.
- Ronald Woodall**, student trainee, operations, McGregor, Minn.