US Army Corps of Engineers®
St. Paul District

Crosscurrents

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District visits career fair

Jim Mosner and Ann Banitt from Engineering Division participated in a career fair at Tartan High School in Oakdale, Minn., on March 10. This was the first use of the new St. Paul District display (behind Mosner and Banitt) and the new table cloth with the traditional Corps castle (at right) at a career fair.

St. Paul District photo courtesy Tartan High School

Safety Corner

Slips may cause serious injury

From the Safety Office

Slips, trips, and falls cause many injuries, sometimes serious ones. Thousands of disabling injuries–even deaths–occur each year as a result of slips, trips and falls:

• From heights, on stairs and on level ground;

• At work and at home.

Safety regulations try to remove slip, trip, and fall hazards. OSHA (Occupational Safety and Health Administration) and agency rules try to prevent slips, trips and falls by requiring:

• Floors that are kept clean, dry, and in good repair.

• Aisles, stairs, and passageways that are free of clutter and obstructions.

• Safe ladder design and use

• Rails and guards around floors and wall openings.

• Clean, orderly, sanitary work areas.

Maintain work areas to prevent slips, trips, and falls

• Keep walkways, aisles, and stairs free of tools, materials, and other hazards.

• Clean up any leaks or spills on floors, stairs, entrance-ways, and loading docks promptly.

• Repair or report floor problems, such as broken planks or missing tiles.

• Block off and mark floor areas that are being cleaned or repaired.

• Keep cords, power cables, and air hoses out of walkways.

• Place trash promptly in proper containers.

• Keep drawers closed.

• Keep walkways cleared of ice and snow.

Take precautions on stairs and dock edges

• Report missing or broken stair rails and slippery or damaged treads.

• Walk, don't run, on stairs.

• Hold onto stair rails while going up and down.

• Don't jump on or off platforms and loading docks, and stay away from edges.

• Don't carry a load you can't see over, especially on stairs or around dock edges.

Choose and use ladders carefully

• Use a ladder, not boxes or chairs, to reach high places.

• Use only ladders that have all their parts.

• Check that cleats, rungs, and steps are firm and unbroken.

• Choose a ladder that's the right height for the job.

• Place ladders firmly on level surfaces.

• Hold the rails and face the ladder as you climb it.

• Center your body between the ladder rails; don't lean to the side.

Pay attention to your movements and surroundings

• Focus on where you're going, what you're doing and what lies ahead.

• Expect the unexpected.

• Take responsibility for fixing, removing, or avoiding hazards in your path.

• Wear sturdy shoes with nonskid soles and flat heels.

• Avoid baggy or loose pants you can trip over.

• Walk, don't run.

• Wipe your feet when you come in from rain or snow.

• Report or replace any burned out lights or inadequate lighting.

• Watch out for floors that area uneven, have holes, etc.

• For balance keep your hands at your sides and not in your pockets.

• Don't carry loads you can't see over.

• Walk slowly on slippery surfaces.

• Slide your feet and avoid sharp turns.

• Sit in chairs with all four chair legs on the floor. Make sure all wheels or casters are on the floor.

• Be constantly alert for and remove or go around obstructions in your path.

Learn to fall 'properly'

If you do fall, you can reduce the chance of serious injury if you:

• Roll with the fall.

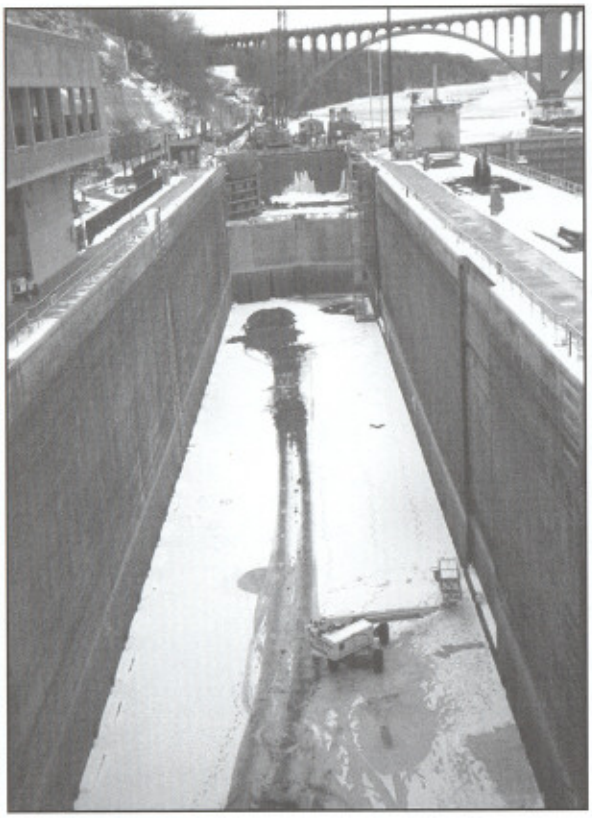
• Bend your elbows and knees and use your legs and arms to absorb the fall.

• Get medical attention after a fall to treat anything torn, sprained or broken.

Be alert and safety consciousness prevent slips, trips, and falls

Pay attention to your movements and remove potential hazards from your path so you and others won't be injured by slips, trips or falls.

Lock 1 dewatered for maintenance



Photos by Gerald Cohen

The above photo shows a crane barge and other heavy equipment positioned in the water at the end of the Lock and Dam 1. The equipment assists in routine rehabilitation and repair. The total cost of the dewatering project, including engineering, design and construction, was $1.2 million.

These December 1999 photos show a dewatered Lock and Dam 1 on the Mississippi River in Minneapolis, Minn. The lock chamber holds 6.4 million gallons of water, which was drained from the lock for major maintenance and repairs. The Maintenance and Repair Section (formerly Rivers and Harbors Unit) at the district's facility in Fountain City, Wis., worked at the lock from mid-December to mid-March. Other seasonal maintenance on the river included electrical repowering and other stage 2 work at Lock and Dam 5A in Fountain City and repair of a damaged upper guidewall at Lock and Dam 10 in Guttenberg, Iowa.

Strategic Vision: *Satisfy the Customer*

District, SBA prime the pump for small business

By Patricia Johnson
Deputy for Small Business

Photo by Peter Verstegen

From the left are George Johnson, Procurement Technical Assistance Center (PTAC) in Minnesota; Jackie Neubauer, from the North Dakota PTAC; and Chuck Crist, deputy district engineer for Project Management. The PTACs help small businesses compete for defense contracts. They met in the district office in November.

The St. Paul District, the Small Business Administration (SBA) and state agencies met here in November to discuss strategic opportunities for small businesses to compete for defense contract dollars.

The district hosted about 20 agency officials for the second annual Army Corps of Engineers-SBA business meeting on November 4-5.

SBA personnel from three states – Minnesota, Wisconsin and North Dakota–represented minority enterprise development, contracting and small business development. Officials from Contracting Division, Programs and Project Management Division and Engineering Division participated on behalf of the district.

The meeting refined the district's cooperative relationship with the SBA and the Procurement Technical Assistance Centers (PTACs). The PTACs are part of the SBA but funded by states and the Department of Defense (DoD). The PTACs help small businesses generate jobs and improve the general economy by successfully competing for defense contracts. Congress established the program in 1985 as part of the DoD.

The district supports the PTACs and SBA by providing information about on-going 8(a) construction service projects, the time constraints induced by tight weather windows, new projects, and qualified contractors. 8(a) is an SBA development program for small disadvantaged businesses.

Wisconsin SBA Minority Enterprise Development Specialist Paul Roppuld described initiatives to support small businesses faced with complex DoD bundling requirements. Bundling is when a contract out for bids has so many disciplines and is of such size that the requirements put a small business at a competitive disadvantage.

In an effort to level the playing field for small businesses, the SBA is exploring joint ventures of two or more small business contractors with one being the prime contractor. The prime contractor is the 8(a) contractor and a minority or women-owned enterprise joins as a small-business joint venture.

A new 8(a) construction contractor training pilot program was initiated in October. The program is a team effort with trainers from the Corps of Engineers, the SBA and the PTACs. This two-day training program helps 8(a) contractors understand the complexities of contracting with the Corps and what contractors can expect in

Continued on next page

Strategic Vision: *Satisfy the Customer*

District, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service highlight Long Lake Project at media day

Photo by Lisa Lund

The St. Paul District and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service highlighted the environmental benefits and their interagency cooperation of the Long Lake Project by hosting a media day at the project site in November. The project is on the Mississippi River in Pool No. 7 near Trempealeau, Wis., and is part of the Environmental Management Program (EMP). The Corps is excavating a 760-foot long channel from the Mississippi River to Long Lake. The excavation will promote fish habitat by restoring normal oxygen levels in the water. The 15-acre lake is a semi-isolated backwater. In the above photo, "the contractor is using a bulldozer to level the gravel on the maintenance road that extends out on the jetty," said Lisa Lund, project engineer. A construction contract was awarded in May 1999 to Phenco, Inc., of Neenah, Wis. Construction will be completed next summer at an estimated cost of $346,000.

SBA, continued from previous page

dealing with a government agency.

Contractors may incur a financial penalty for noncompliance of their contract if they fail to meet their small-business subcontract requirements, according to Randy Czaia from the SBA. This is part of the prime contractor and subcontract compliance review in which the district and SBA work as a team.

The district's cooperation with SBA benefits our target market– women-owned and small and disadvantaged businesses. The outcome of this interagency cooperation brought a superb fiscal year. The district and the SBA achieved more than eight percent – the highest percentage ever – on women-owned business and nearly 19 percent contracts with small and disadvantaged businesses.

Other presentations were given by Chuck Spitzack, who spoke on the civil works program and processes. David Raasch, a project manager, spoke about the problems that the 8(a) contractor encountered and overcame at a flood control project in Marshall, Minn. The contractor completed the project ahead of schedule. The meeting included a briefing on contracting opportunities on upcoming projects in the Red River Basin.

A navigation success

The downbound Motor Vessel Prosperity and its 15 barges arrived at Lock and Dam 10 in Guttenberg, Iowa, at 5:45 a.m. on Dec. 15, marking the end of the navigation season.

"The final figures are not compiled yet, but we should approach...record tonnage through Lock and Dam 10, our historical benchmark, this year," said Dean Peterson, operations manager for locks and dams.

"This is one of the latest end-of-the-navigation-season closings that we have experienced. There were no unscheduled lock closures and no channel closures that impacted navigation."

Benefits information changed

By the St. Paul District CPAC staff

March 27 marked a significant change in the way district employees obtain information about and make changes to their benefits.

Instead of contacting the Civilian Personnel Advisory Center (CPAC) in the district office, employees can access most services from the Army Benefits Center-Civilian (ABC-C), the Army's new centralized call center for benefits and entitlements. The ABC-C is located at Fort Riley, Kansas, and will provide services to Army civilian employees worldwide.

The center provides counseling and assistance on health benefits, life insurance, Thrift Savings Plan (TSP) and retirement through an internet site and an interactive voicemail response system. The center will process most benefit changes and retirements. ABC-C benefit counselors will be also available by phone to assist employees as needed. The center can assist you in obtaining up-to-date information in the following program areas:

- Retirement (Civil Service Retirement System (CSRS)and Federal Employees' Retirement (FERS) System);
- Thrift Savings Plan (TSP);
- Federal Employees Health Benefits (FEHB);
- Federal Employees' Group Life Insurance (FEGLI);
- Survivor Benefits (Death and Dismemberment).

Civilian benefits on the web or phone

Learn about basic employee benefits and keep up-to-date on legislative issues simply by using the web address of www.abc.army.mil or a touch-tone telephone at 1-877-ARMY-CTR (1-877-276-9287) to contact the center. Access to the system requires your social security number (SSN) followed by a Personal Identification Number (PIN). Initially, your PIN will be your four-digit date of birth (MMYY). For security purposes, we recommend you immediately access the system and change your PIN. Do not share your PIN number.

EBF sustains sense of Corps family

By Christine Afdahl
Civil engineer and EBF president

The mission of EBF (Employee Benefit Fund) is to create and sustain a sense of the Corps family. We have heard about this Corps family thing for a long time and, I think, many of us just laugh it off. The EBF is the one organization that helps in creating this Corps family. We do this in many ways, ways that many of you may not be aware of and probably take for granted. There are two types of activities.

For group events, we support the summer awards day, holiday awards, student week, diversity week and CFC (Combined Federal Campaign).

For more personal events, we send flowers, memorials, and give monetary gifts for occasions such as marriages, births, deaths, hospitalization, retirements, and goings away for the members and their immediate families.

We are in the process of rebuilding EBF to be an organization that can support all of the employees. We have lots of plans and are always looking for fresh ideas. Additional memberships would allow us to fund more events (such as the boat cruise that we sponsored a few years ago) and help strengthen the "Corps" family.

Our membership is $8 a year, which we collect in the spring.

If you have any questions, contact one of the committee members: Craig Evans, Kris Fairbanks, Ivette Garrett, Tim Grundhoffer, Marv Hrdlicka, Sue Robinson and Diana Tschida.

EBF on the intranet

http://mvpiis/activities_and_groups/EBF/

Look for the EBF web page located on the district's intranet site in the pull-down menu.

The EBF mission is to encourage and support activities and establish and maintain facilities, which contribute to the comfort, pleasure, and mental or physical well being of employees.

We have our committee listed, our membership, and those who we acknowledge.

We continue to add information to inform our members how and what we are doing.

–Chris Afdahl, president

Condos-at-cost program offers budget vacations

By Jim Garamone, American Forces Press Service, and Peter Verstegen, Public Affairs Office

WASHINGTON — Service members and DoD civilians can sign up to participate in a new vacation club arranged between Army Morale, Welfare and Recreation and Resort Condominiums International (RCI).

The deal, open to active and reserve component service members, military retirees, DoD civilians and any other persons eligible to use military morale, welfare and recreation offices, offers condominium unit rentals for $209 per week at selected resorts.

The normal rates are $600 to $1,500 per week in season, according to John Cully, RCI national vice president.

"The program seems to have a lot of response from people," said Dan Yount, chief of Army leisure travel services.

Yount said he thinks the program is a good deal for the DoD community. "I've stayed in some of these places at a much higher rate," he said. "It costs me $1,000-plus. So $209 a week for anything from a three-bedroom unit to an efficiency is a good deal. Also, these units are renovated every three years. These are great places."

RCI is a managing company affiliated with more than 3,500 timeshare resorts worldwide. Because not all resort units are used by owners or rented all the time, the company must still pay upkeep costs, but receives no revenue while units are vacant. Sales vice president Mike Overfelt and Culley, both retired Army officers, suggested RCI offer condo rentals at cost to military members and DoD civilians.

In the arrangement between the Army and RCI, the vacationer can go to any military morale, welfare and recreation office and pick up an Armed Forces Vacation Club space-available voucher.

In the Twin Cities, vouchers for the St. Paul District are available at 934th Airlift Wing, at the U.S. Air Reserve, phone 612-713-1496.

In Wisconsin, contact Otto Peterson, Recreation Center/ITR Manager, attn: AFRC-FM-HCC-BC Rec. Center, Building 2000, #221 Ft. McCoy, WI 54656-5141. Phone: 608-388-3213.

Call RCI at (800) 724-9988 to make a reservation. A representative will ask for a voucher number.

- The voucher number is 7033-00000;
- The installation number is 221 (Fort McCoy, Wis);

An RCI representative will describe what's available.

- RCI's internet web site is http://www.rci.com.
- The voucher number and list of vacation sites are also available at the Army Leisure Travel web site at: http://trol.redstone.army.mil/mwr/business_programs/patron/SAV.htm. Click on "Armed Forces Vacation Club." Service members or civilians give the voucher number and reserve a condo using a major credit card. The MWR office receives $20 for every voucher it issues that is used.

Some restrictions apply. Confirmed vacations are not transferable. The customer purchasing the space-available voucher must check in to the resort and be at least 21 years old. Pets are not allowed at any resort location.

Cully said service members and civilians must be flexible with their requests. "Generally what's available is off-season."

Participating resorts have different amenities. Typically, condos feature up to three bedrooms, a living room and fully equipped full or partial kitchens. Many units have laundry facilities or such amenities as whirlpool tubs or fireplaces.

Guests have access to on-site or nearby facilities, such as beaches, golf courses, tennis courts, spas, ski slopes, fishing lakes, hiking paths, horseback riding, restaurants and shops. Many resorts also provide planned adult and children's activities.

Obituary

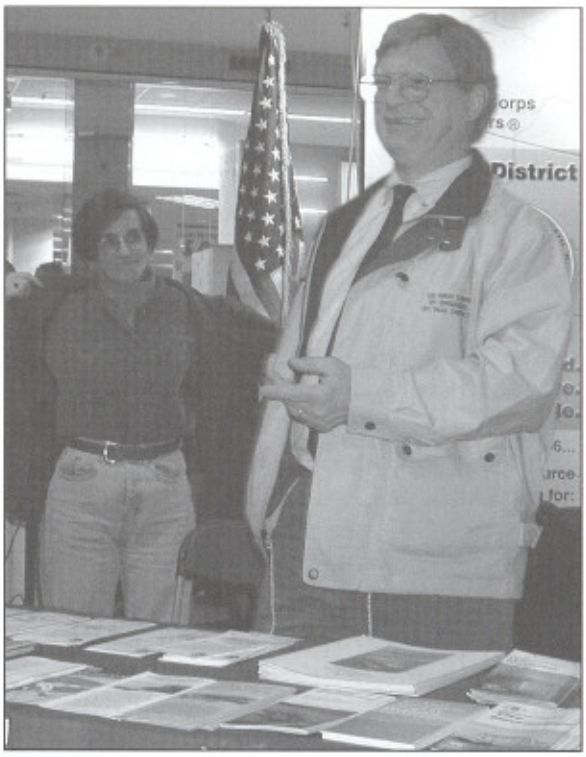
Harold E. Taggatz of Center City on Dec. 29, 1999 at age 60. He was preceded in death by his father and is survived by his wife, Maureen; his mother; children; grandchildren; and siblings. The funeral service was held Jan. 3, 2000, at Chisago Lakes Lutheran Church in Center City. He was chairman of Chisago Lakes School Board and retired from the St. Paul District in April 1998 after more than 35 years of federal service – the last 12 as assistant chief of Construction Operations Division. He received the prestigious Hammer Award in 1996 for the Corps' National Task Force for O&M Plan of Improvement.

District displays missions at megamall

The St. Paul District set up its new display at the Mall of America for Government on Display weekend Feb. 5-6, 2000, sponsored by the Federal Executive Board (FEB). District Deputy Commander Maj. Lonnie Mansell represented the district at the FEB and coordinated the participation of eight state and federal natural resources agencies. This was the second year for the event.

Photos by Peter Verstegen

Above is Yvonne Berner from Construction Operations' Regulatory Branch (CO-R). At left are Ray Marinan from Natural Resources Branch and Jan Lassen, Engineering Division-Design Branch (ED-D).



Marsha Gilliland (top photo at left) of Contracting Branch, welcomed Marianne Price, manager of the EEO Office, to the district's exhibit at the mall. Price visited the mall to accomplish Easter shopping with her granddaughter Caleicia. Ken Beck from Real Estate Division and his wife Donna are in the top right photo. Georgia Stanonik (middle left photo) from Office of Counsel visited the Food and Drug Administration booth where she displayed a stuffed frog. St. Paul District Deputy Commander Maj. Lonnie Mansell and Mark Davidson (middle photo), who was Public Affairs (PA) Chief at the 934th Airlift Wing of the U.S. Air Reserve, discuss displays at the mall. Davidson became PA chief of the St. Paul District in March. In photos above and at left Mike DeRusha of Lock and Dam 1 in Minneapolis explains Corps missions to members of the public. Carl Gray, at left with sport coat and tie, works in Design Branch. Nearly 20 district employees worked the event.

Bits and Pieces

New chiefs enter the new year

A number of new division and branch chiefs who were promoted in 1999 are entering their first full year in office.

John Bailen became chief of Engineering Division in October 1999. Bailen had been acting chief since Bob Post retired from the position in March. Jim Peak, who arrived from Japan, started as assistant chief of Engineering Division in March.

Knoff

Mike Knoff began as chief of Hydraulics and Hydrology Branch in June. He previously worked in the Omaha District.

Ken Buck became chief of Construction-Operations Division in June. Ben Wopat was permanently assigned as assistant chief of Construction-Operations Division in December 1999. He previously worked as chief of Regulatory Branch since 1986 and had been acting chief of Construction-Operations Division until Buck's appointment.

Judy DesHarnais became chief of Project Management Branch in October.

DesHarnais

Bruce Boldon was promoted to chief of Construction Branch.

Jeff Pfannes came to the St. Paul District as the new chief of the Safety Office in October. His job focus is safety and occupational health. He worked previously as the safety and occupational health manager at the Defense Reutilization and Marketing Service in Detroit.

Position Management Committee formed

Effective November 1999, St. Paul District Commander Col. Kenneth Kasprisin formed a five-member Position Management Committee. "The purpose is to review position classification actions to ensure efficient and economical position structures and consistency with position management guidance from higher headquarters," said Kasprisin.

The committee will review personnel requests referred to it by the Civilian Personnel Advisory Center (CPAC) and recommend approval or disapproval by the district commander.

The committee members are:

- Executive Assistant, chairman and position management officer;
- Deputy District Commander;
- Deputy for Programs and Project Management;
- Chief, Engineering Division;
- Chief, Construction-Operations Division;
- Chief, Civilian Personnel Advisory Center (CPAC).

The committee will review establishment of new positions, upgrades or current positions, reorganization and realignments, and selected actions to recruit and fill positions at the GS-12 (general schedule) and above.

The executive assistant, Capt. John Weidner, serves as the position management officer and permanent chairman of the committee. The committee meets at the request of the chairman.

Crosscurrents

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