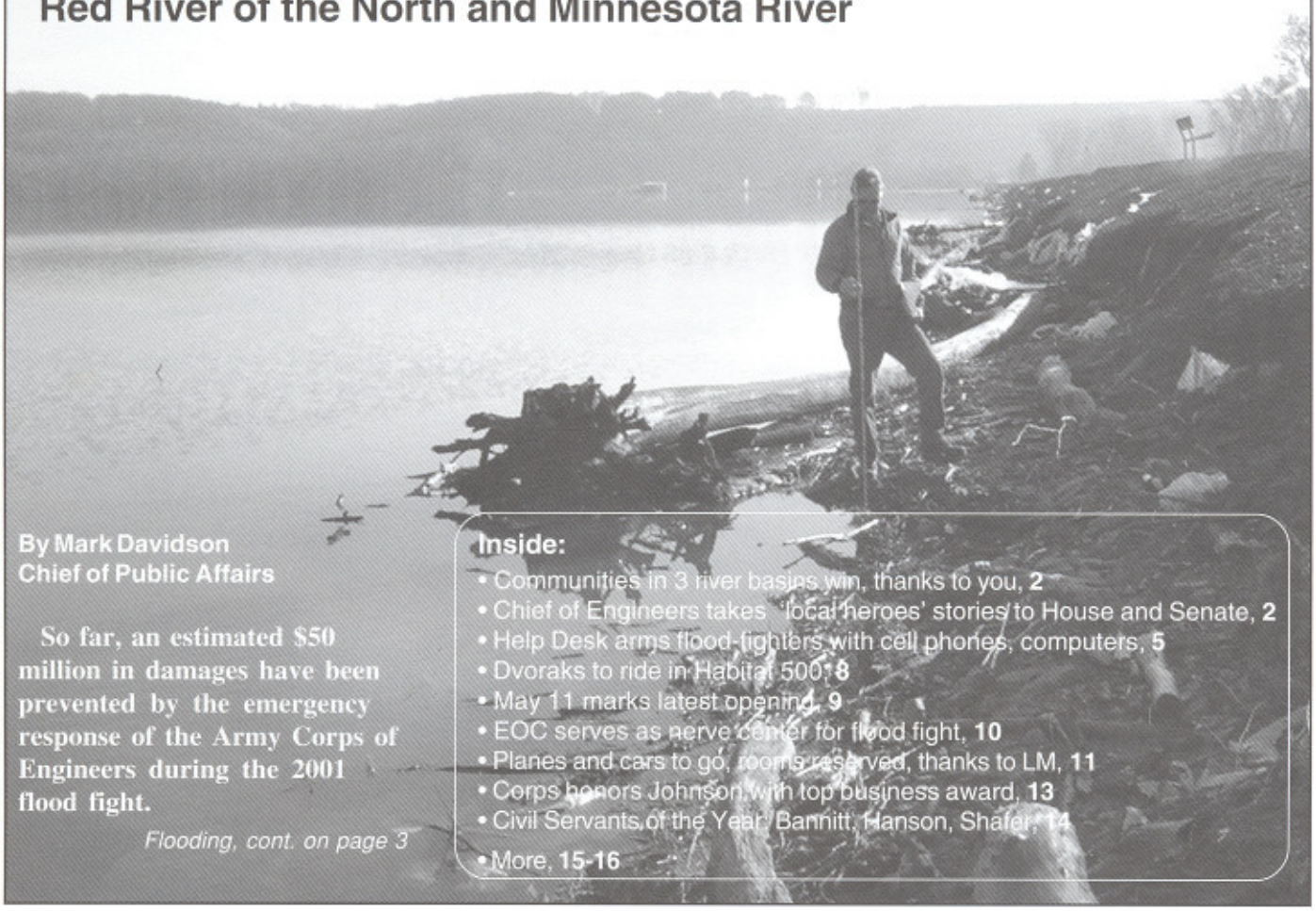
US Army Corps of Engineers®
St. Paul District

Crosscurrents

Vol. 24, Nos. 4-5 April-May 2001

District fights flooding in 3 river basins

Personnel battle twin peaks on Mississippi River, Red River of the North and Minnesota River



By Mark Davidson
Chief of Public Affairs

So far, an estimated $50 million in damages have been prevented by the emergency response of the Army Corps of Engineers during the 2001 flood fight.

Flooding, cont. on page 3

Inside:

- Communities in 3 river basins win, thanks to you, **2**
- Chief of Engineers takes 'local heroes' stories to House and Senate, **2**
- Help Desk arms flood-fighters with cell phones, computers, **5**
- Dvoraks to ride in Habitat 500, **8**
- May 11 marks latest opening, **9**
- EOC serves as nerve center for flood fight, **10**
- Planes and cars to go, rooms reserved, thanks to LM, **11**
- Corps honors Johnson with top business award, **13**
- Civil Servants of the Year: Bannitt, Hanson, Shafer, **14**
- More, **15-16**

Photo by Jeff Stanek

The Upper Mississippi River crested twice at Lock and Dam 2 in Hastings, the first on April 18-19 at 694.99 feet and the second on April 30 at 695.4 feet. On May 10, Jim Murphy, a hydraulic engineer in Engineering Division, measured bank erosion in the aftermath of flooding on the river at Lock and Dam 2. His measurements will assist embankment repairs and placement of rip rap. Flood waters carried tree trunks and other debris that surround Murphy. The debris presented a hazard to navigation and to the locks and dams.

Communities in 3 river basins win, thanks to you

By St. Paul District Commander
Col. Kenneth Kasprisin

For more than six weeks the employees of the St. Paul District battled floodwaters in three major river basins – the Red River of the North, the Minnesota River, and the Mississippi River. As the District Engineer, I offer my sincere thanks for your efforts to help the citizens of the Upper Midwest and the United States of America.

When the 2001 floods became more than a state or local community could handle with its own resources, the Corps of Engineers assisted with its technical expertise, contracting capabilities, and skilled work force. Our employees made solid preparations with many local communities and state agencies long before the flood. This preparation paid big dividends.

We had people at the flooded areas, in our district office, and in our field offices battling the 2001 floods. Many of these people have battled floods in this region over the past 30 years and have worked in concert with local communities and the states of Minnesota, North Dakota, Iowa and Wisconsin to develop and implement flood prevention projects and mitigation strategies.

Some of our flood fighters experienced their first major flood event. They came through with flying colors and are now flood-fight veterans who can use that experience when the next flood occurs, which we all know will happen sooner rather than later.

I am proud to say that our flood fighters made positive and lasting impressions on community and state leaders at all levels. Non-Corps officials provided dozens of in-person comments, e-mails, telephone calls, and letters praising the employees of the St. Paul District for their tireless efforts during the flood fight.

We can be proud of our successes and the benefits provided to the region. Our emergency measures and levees prevented more than $50 million dollars in damages this year. The 13 permanent flood control structures in the three flooded major river basins prevented more than $176 million in damages this year. Since 1965, our permanent Corps flood-prevention projects have provided a total estimated $1 billion in benefits to more than 42 communities.

I ask you to share this 2001 flood fight message with your families, friends, neighbors and other people you know to let them know what the St. Paul District did to help the citizens of the Upper Midwest and the United States of America. Essayons!

Chief of Engineers takes 'local heroes' stories to House and Senate

The following excerpts are from Lt. Gen. Robert Flowers' fiscal 2002 budget testimony before congressional subcommittees on April 25, 26 and May 2. The complete version of the April testimony is on the Corps' web site at http://www.usace.army.mil/inet/functions/cw/hot_topics/testimony_index.htm.

April 25: U.S. House Subcommittee on Energy and Water Development

.... Yesterday, the Mississippi River reached a flood crest in Davenport, Iowa. Their homegrown levee held back the floodwaters from the snow melt and heavy spring rains that have brought floods to the upper Midwest.

When I was there on Sunday, I met local officials, together with residents

Local heroes, cont. on page 12

Photo by James Greene

A crew at Lock and Dam 8 in Genoa, Wis., anchors the dike at the lock in mid-April on the Mississippi River to prevent erosion. The Mississippi River crested at Lock and Dam 8 on April 20 at 636.85 feet.

Flooding, cont. from page 1

According to Colonel Kenneth Kasprisin, the St. Paul District commander, the Corps was "ready for the flood fight of 2001 on all fronts, starting with recent winter meetings with state and local officials, and the building of permanent flood control structures over the last 35 years." These comments were made during a recent flood fight 2001 briefing.

Flood fight 2001

"We fought floods on three of the four major river basins in our district in March and April – the Red River of the North and the Minnesota River, and the Mississippi River," said Kasprisin. The Souris River in North Dakota is the other major river basin in the district.

"The Corps gave out 3.2 million sandbags to communities. The Corps directed the building, or raising, of approximately 20 miles of earthen levees in the three flood fight basins," said David Christenson, the district Readiness Branch chief. "The Corps hires commercial contractors to dig up the dirt fill for the levee, transport it to the flood-fight area, and directs it where to be placed to stop the water," he said. "The Corps engineers actually design the specific dimensions of the levee, and make sure it's built to stop the water. Our engineers constantly inspect the levee to ensure its worthiness."

The Corps' emergency work, mostly levee building, during the 2001 flood fight, prevented more than $50 million in damages to the North Dakota cities of Wahpeton and Fargo, and the Minnesota cities of Breckenridge, Montevideo and Granite Falls.

"For comparison, in the 1997 flood, Corps emergency measures prevented more than $145 million dollars in damages," said Kasprisin, "in the river basins of the Mississippi, Minnesota and the Red River due to more levees built in response to a wider area of flooding."

Christenson said that the Corps provided the mayors and leadership of cities and towns with sound engineering advice before and during a flood fight.

"We work, and coordinate with, the mayors, city councils and city governments to develop a plan to combat the flood that is heading downstream for their particular city," said John Bailen, chief of Engineering Division.

Bailen said that Corps officials let the cities know what kinds of resources they will need to fight the flood and what the Corps can provide them in the way of equipment, sandbags and pumps.

"Just as the flood fight starts, our Corps people set up a field office and work with the local emergency management people to coordinate with the local cities, counties, states and other federal agencies involved," said Bailen.

Here are the river basins and cities where the district built emergency levees:

Red River of the North

In Breckenridge, Minn., Wahpeton, N.D., Fargo, N.D.,

Flooding, cont. on page 4

and Grand Forks, N.D., 10 contractors built 84,735 linear feet of levees for $2.1 million. The Corps provided more than 1.43 million sandbags to these communities, and loaned 28 pumps to keep these communities dry.

Minnesota River

At Montevideo, Minn., and Granite Falls, Minn., four contractors built 11,300 linear feet of levees for $517,000. The Corps provided more than 1.7 million sandbags and 12 pumps are on loan to keep these communities dry.

Mississippi River

In the Iowa cities of Marquette and McGregor, two contractors built 2,100 linear feet of levees for $7,000. The district distributed more than 79,000 sandbags and 34 pumps to cities along the Mississippi River to keep them dry.

The majority of the 13 locks and dams of the St. Paul District, from Minneapolis to Guttenberg, Iowa, closed due to the high waters on April 12 and reopened on May 9. The Corps worked with the Coast Guard to close the river to all traffic.

More than 320 district employees were directly involved in the flood fight. About 220 Corps employees who work at the locks and dams were involved in sandbagging the control structures at each facility to protect them from water damage, according to Ken Buck, chief of the district's Construction-Operations Division.

"The other 100 Corps personnel were involved in the flood fight, either at the scene of the flooding or working in the 24-hour operation at the district's Emergency Operations Center (EOC) in St. Paul," said Shelly Shafer, the EOC manager.

Permanent flood control structures prevent damage

Since 1965, when the Upper Midwest experienced record flood levels, the Corps' St. Paul District has constructed 42 flood-damage reduction projects in the region. Including the 2001 flood, Corps officials estimate that the flood damages prevented by these projects since 1965 tops $1 billion.

The Corps estimates that their permanent flood control structures have saved cities and states more than $176 million in urban flood damages during this year's flood.

The permanent flood-control projects built by the Corps in the 1980s and 1990s include: Minnesota – St. Paul, Winona, South St. Paul, Mankato, Henderson, Halstad and Chaska; North Dakota – Grand Forks, Fargo, Pembina, and Oslo; and Iowa - Guttenberg.

This year, city of Chaska officials were relieved that their flood-control project, designed and constructed by the Corps of Engineers in the 1990s, was in place and operated as intended.

"We were happy with the operation and the city was well protected, both this year and during the 1997 flood. We were very relieved not to repeat the devastating flood damage of the 1965 and 1993 floods," said Bill Monk, Chaska city engineer. The $43.7 million flood control project at Chaska is on the

Flooding, cont. on page 6

St. Paul District photo

Darrell Morey (left), St. Paul District, discusses levee construction with Brad Reily, superintendent of Comstock Construction. They are in Breckenridge, Minn.

Help Desk arms flood-fighters with cell phones, computers

By Julie T. Morgan
Public Affairs Specialist
New Orleans District

Driving up Hwy 59 along the Minnesota River, Kristen Kosterman of Information Management (IM) realized that flood field engineers in the area would not be able to place calls with their current cell phones. With no towers in site and reception poor, Kosterman knew IM would have to come up with another alternative if communications were to be effective between the field and the EOC during a flood fight.

She tested several different types of cell phones before heading home with one powerful enough to do the job. This was just one of many pre-flood tasks Information Management (IM) carried out in support of Flood Fight 2001.

IM also worked to set up and test the Emergency Operations Center (EOC) in March, installing new computers and the appropriate software in the Command Post, ensuring reliable connections to the network. "The IM team provided excellent support for the EOC and the field" said IM Chief Dave Berna. "We tried to anticipate all the IM related challenges before the event."

The Help Desk worked extremely hard in preparing the district's information systems for flood fight personnel, in the process making sure that computers operated properly. Berna noted, "Everyone understands the importance of computers and communications during a flood fight and with personnel like Mitch Dolan and her team of professionals at our Help Desk, we are able to keep up with and respond to calls for assistance to keep our systems operating and the lines of communication open."

"We are ready to respond to any IM related problem for the district and through out this flood fight our customers can depend on us to meet their communications needs. I am proud of our efforts and of every member of the IM team."

Julie T. Morgan, New Orleans District Public Affairs Office, worked flood duty in the St. Paul District.

The number of visits, or requests for information, from the district's home page more than doubled during the flood. In March and April 2001, the system registered more than 32,000 visits. The same two months in 2000, the MVP home page logged about 14,500 visits.

St. Paul District photo by Burch Communications

Dan Oles (left) waits on a levee in Breckenridge while Darrell Morey discusses the flood fight on his cell phone. Communications via cell phones and computers were vital to the success of the flood fight. Morey was a sub-area engineer for the flood fight.

St. Paul District photo by Burch Communications

Matt Bray, sub-area engineer with the St. Paul District (right), met Spec. 4 Hugh Zajac (left) and Spec. 4 Christopher Neppl of the North Dakota National Guard in mid-April on a levee constructed to protect Wahpeton, N.D., from flooding by the Red River of the North. Zajac and Neppl are with Company B, 142nd Engineers in Wahpeton.

Flooding, cont. from page 4

Minnesota River in Carver County. The project consists of levees with landward drainage facilities and a storm water pumping station.

The residents of South St. Paul appreciate their Corps-built flood control project, according to their mayor, Kathleen Gaylord. "The residents of South St. Paul are very pleased and grateful for the floodwall that is protecting our city," she said.

Current and future flood control projects

The Corps' St. Paul District is currently working in partnership with many communities on studies for permanent flood protection projects, according to Judy DesHarnais, the Deputy District Engineer for Project Management. In Minnesota, these include East Grand Forks, Breckenridge, Granite Falls, Montevideo, Dawson, Crookston, Oakport, Jordan, and Newport. North Dakota communities include Grand Forks, Wahpeton, Devils Lake, Neche and the Ridgewood Addition in Fargo.

"If these projects are found feasible and constructed, the damages from the next 1997 or 2001 flood will be greatly reduced," said Kasprisin. The Corps is also working with cities, states, regional groups and other federal agencies on comprehensive water resource studies for the Mississippi River Basin north of Minneapolis and the Red River of the North Basin.

The Red River Reconnaissance Study, just begun, "offers the

Photo by Lon Meixner

The day after the Mississippi River crested, a crew at Lock and Dam 4 in Alma, Wis., began to clean up debris in water nearly two feet deep. "This area is the upper portion of the lower guide wall," said Lon Meixner, lockmaster. "The velocity of the water was not very fast. The crew was cleaning flood debris from this area." The crew on duty were Fred Maule, Joe Dale, Terry Fluekiger, Danny Kircher, Bobbie Jo Roundy, and George Braunreiter.

region the opportunity to work through the Corps for federal cost sharing of integrated studies of all the area's water resource needs," pointed out Kasprisin. These studies could lead to cost-shared construction of basin-wide projects to reduce flooding, improve water supply and quality and restore damaged ecosystems, he said.

Corps provides emergency response

Corps officials' brief state, county and city officials in the major river basins every year in December and January on what assistance the Corps can provide. When the flood threat grows closer, the city, in conjunction with state emergency division officials, assesses their ability to respond to the flood with their own resources.

"If the city and state determine they can't respond, the governor can request Corps assistance," said Robert Silvagni, Readiness Branch specialist. "If there is an imminent threat of flooding, the Corps will mobilize its resources and personnel immediately. The district engineer can respond to this request using his authority under Public Law 84-99."

How the Corps works with communities over the long term

The Corps of Engineers offers many programs for communities to partner on water resources projects. "Large projects," said Kasprisin, "like the East Grand Forks/Grand Forks project require separate congressional authorization and funding. For smaller local flood-protection projects like Granite Falls and Montevideo, the Corps' Continuing Authorities Program offers a streamlined method of study leading to faster construction times."

For public facilities threatened by stream-bank erosion, the Corps has a program to cost-share emergency erosion protection. Local communities can contact the Corps directly for this type of assistance.

The Corps works with

Flooding, cont. on page 8

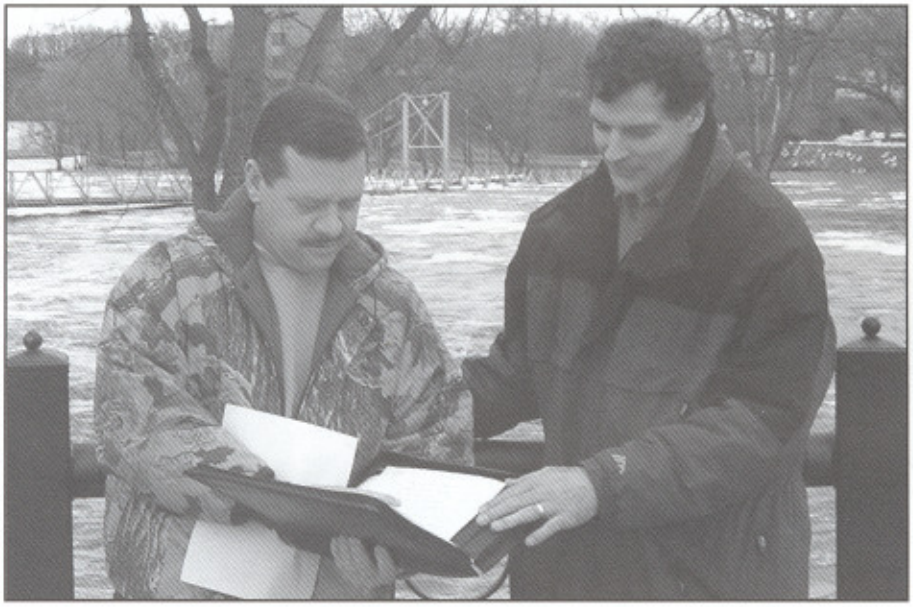


Photo by Tom Crump

On April 13, John Bailen and City Administrator Bill Lavin discussed flood fight activities in Granite Falls, Minn. Lavin is the administrator there. In the background high water on the Minnesota River is nearly at the same level as the pedestrian bridge.

Photo by Virginia Regorrah

On April 13, Tom Stiel of district's Western Area Office in Grand Forks, N.D. (left), was on a levee in East Grand Forks, Minn., to confirm the height with surveyor Pat Krug. Krug's GPS (global position system) pole and backpack electronically transmitted the height of 51.5 feet. The Corps' objective was to build the levee to 52 feet to protect the community from flooding by the Red River of the North. Krug is a subcontractor for an engineering firm retained by the city of East Grand Forks.

communities on basin studies that can lead to cost sharing of many different types of basin-wide water resource projects. Projects may include data collection for improved forecasting, wetland restoration and construction of new reservoirs to store floodwaters, and stream restoration with setback levees to reduce flooding while improving the ecosystem. The Corps can also work with communities on the relocation of flood-prone buildings, integrated operation of existing flood storage reservoirs to maximize their flood control benefits and flood protection for localized areas.

Dvoraks to ride in Habitat 500

By Peter Verstegen
Public Affairs Specialist

"As some of you know, we have committed to riding the Habitat 500 this summer. Some of you may think, we should be committed for taking on this challenge to ride our (hardly broken-in) bikes 500 miles in one week," wrote Joe and Liz Dvorak. Joe is Upper Area

Lockmaster and Liz is a personnel management specialist in the Civilian Personnel Advisory Center. Their comments circulated in an appeal letter to friends and family. Their goal is to raise $750 each for Habitat for Humanity projects in the Twin Cities.

Habitat 500 is a pledged 500-mile bicycle ride benefiting Habitat for Humanity, an internationally respected nonprofit organization dedicated to building homes and creating home ownership opportunities for low-income families.

The Dvoraks join more than 80 cyclists from 12 states to raise money for the habitat chapters worldwide. The ride starts July 15 in Stillwater, Minn.

May 11 marks latest lock opening

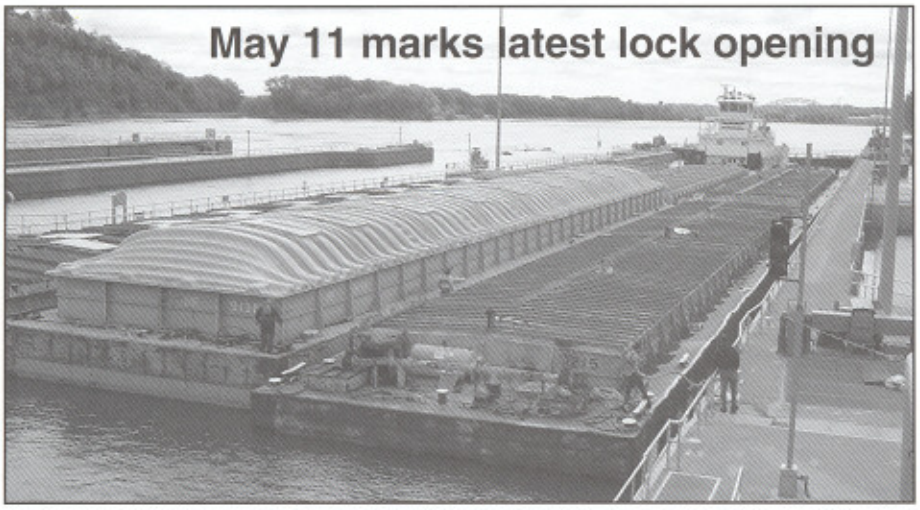


Photo by Al Pallas

The Motor Vessel Jane. G. Huffman locked through Lock and Dam 2 in Hastings about 2 p.m. on May 11, 2001.

By Mark Davidson
Chief of Public Affairs

The first interstate tow of the 2001 navigation season arrived in St. Paul May 11, 2001, at about 4 p.m., according to Dennis Erickson, chief of Operations for the St. Paul District. This is nearly two months after the average opening of the navigation season and about one month later than the latest opening previously recorded.

The district, in cooperation with the U.S. Coast Guard, reopened its locks and dams from downstream of Hastings, Minn., to Genoa, Wis., on May 9. Erickson said that this sets the record for the latest date that any district locks and dams have opened.

The motor vessel (MV) Jane G. Huffman, out of St. Louis, and its 15 barges, were docked in Winona, Minn., during the flooding and high water on the Mississippi River. The Huffman locked through the Lock and Dam 2 in Hastings, Minn., about 2 p.m. on May 11. The tow pushed barges filled with fertilizer, phosphate and aggregate (crushed rock).

The average date for the first tow to arrive in St. Paul over the last 30 years has been March 17; March 18 at Lock and Dam 4 in Alma, Wis.; March 16 at Lock and Dam 6 in Trempealeau, Wis.; and March 11 in Guttenberg, Iowa, according to Corps records.

"The 2001 flood event for the Mississippi River actually started with ice blocking navigation through Lake Pepin in March and in the first two weeks of April," said Erickson. "This prevented interstate commercial shipping from the south. By the time the ice melted, the flooding had started, so we had to close the seven locks and dams from Upper St. Anthony Falls to Minnesota City, Minn." The district closed the seven upper locks from April 9-14. The locks and dams from Fountain City, Wis., to Guttenberg, Iowa, were closed between April 15-19.

The Coast Guard kept closed the Mississippi River from the Upper St. Anthony Falls Lock and Dam in Minneapolis to upstream of Lock and Dam 2 in Hastings, Minn. The locks in the Twin Cities opened on May 11.

Also closed were the Lock and Dam 9, 15 miles north of Prairie du Chien, Wis., and Lock and Dam 10 at Guttenberg, Iowa. These locks and dams opened the week of May 14.

Photo by Mark Scholl

On March 23, survey crew members Jim Marquardt and John Baures (above) ventured out on the ice on Lake Pepin. They measured the ice at 14 to 15 inches thick. Ice gripped the lake until April 11 when the district sent a tow boat and crane barge through ice to Lock and Dam 3 near Red Wing.

EOC serves as nerve center for flood fight

By Julie T. Morgan
Public Affairs Specialist
New Orleans District

"The St. Paul District is ready for the flood fight of 2001 on all fronts, starting with recent winter meetings with state and local officials, and the building of permanent flood control structures over the last 35 years."
–Col. Kenneth Kasprisin during a recent "Flood Fight 2001" briefing.

Officially, the Emergency Operations Center (EOC) activated on April 6 when water neared flood stages at Wahpeton, N.D., and Breckenridge, Minn., on the Red River of the North. Col. Kenneth Kasprisin declared an emergency in conjunction with the state of North Dakota's declaration of emergency.

Actual flood fight activities began in mid-March when the National Weather Service predicted that the Red River of the North would crest above current levels of protection for the communities of Wahpeton and Breckenridge.

The district's Readiness Branch (RB) coordinated Project Information Reports (PIR) to forward through Mississippi Valley Division (MVD) to headquarters for approval and Advance Measures funding to build emergency levees for these communities.

This action was preceded, however, by even earlier events when David Christenson, chief of

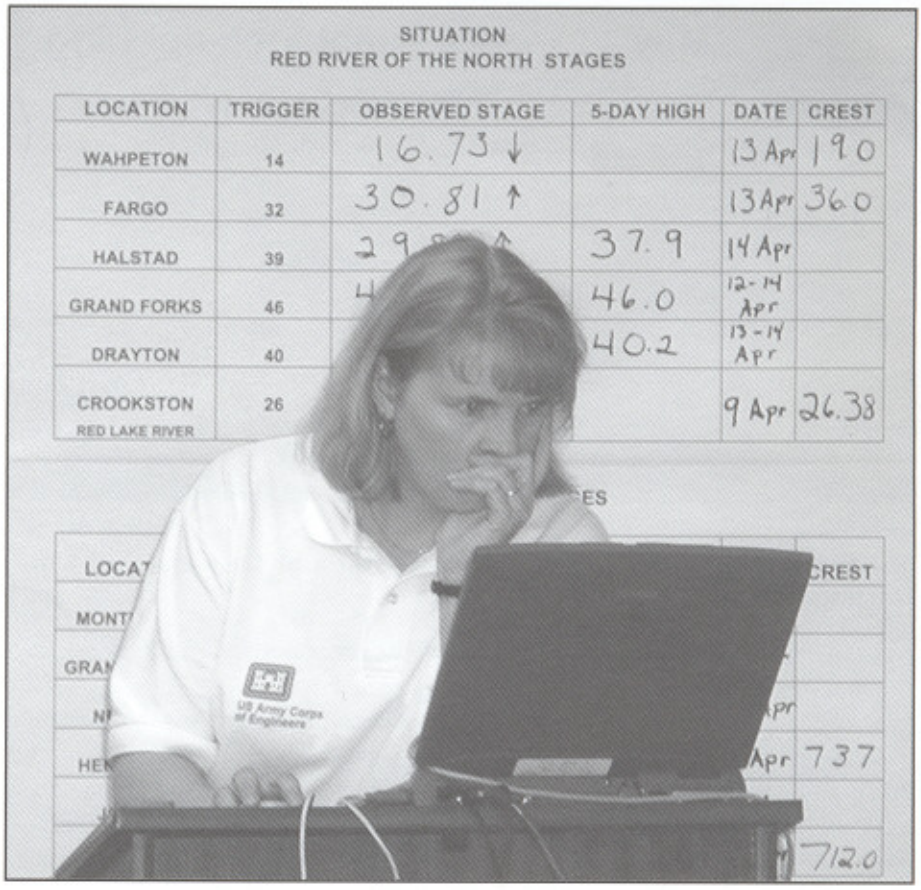


Photo by Peter Verstegen

Shelly Shafer, Emergency Operations Center (EOC) manager, concentrates on data for the daily flood briefing in the EOC.

RB, held seminars in February to discuss possible flooding and to educate local governments on the process of requesting help from the Corps.

The EOC and RB also conducted flood-preparedness exercises to provide training for in-house flood-fight teams and EOC staff.

According to Shelly Shafer, EOC manager, the EOC's primary purpose is to support flood engineers with levee construction, contracting, coordinating personnel needs, supplying pumps, sandbags and poly (plastic sheeting), and monitoring and upward reporting on all flood fight activities. "We also hold a daily flood briefing to inform the command staff and office chiefs of current operations, issues and future activities," Shafer said.

At the height of activities, about 12 people worked in the EOC, with additional personnel from all of the district's support offices providing support – sometimes in 24-hour shifts. Since the flood fight began, the Corps has provided about 3.3 million sandbags and 115 pumps to communities in the Red River to the North, Minnesota and Mississippi River basins.

Craig Evans, Kris Fairbanks, Marc Krumholz, Frank Star and Bob LeMonds coordinated contracts for the sandbags, poly

and pumps as well as for construction contractors, photographers, rental cars and hotel rooms. They processed more than 52 basic contracts in addition to "a slew of VISA purchases," said Evans.

"While everyone has their own role," he said, "that can change depending on what's needed at that moment. It has been a real experience."

Fairbanks agrees. "This is my first experience with a flood fight," she said. "I can say I've learned more about St. Paul District and its mission in the last two weeks than in the 10 years I've been here."

Henrik Strandskov and Dave Studenski prepared the daily situation reports and sent them up the chain and to other interested parties, including the state emergency management people. Strandskov was called into the EOC on April 10 and hasn't had a chance to look back. "I've worked in this district for 24 years and this is my first experience with flood fight. It's been a challenge, but it's been fun."

"The entire EOC staff has done an excellent job," said Shafer. "Everyone worked great as a team, adapted to the constantly changing environment and responded to countless challenges. There were also countless employees who worked behind the scenes to provide key support to this year's flood fight. The EOC and Readiness Branch greatly appreciates the support we have received from Engineering Division, Logistics Management (LM), Information Management (IM), Resource Management (RM), Contracting Division (CT), Office of Counsel (OC), Public Affairs (PA), Safety Office (SO), Civilian Personnel Advisory Center (CPAC), Regulatory Branch, Project Management (PM), Real Estate Division (RE), and Construction Branch."

Planes and cars to go, rooms reserved, thanks to LM

By Julie T. Morgan
Public Affairs Specialist
New Orleans District

Ensuring the mobility and well being of district employees during a flood fight is the bottom line for Logistics Management Office (LM).

"By providing the essentials, if you will, our people are able to get the job done in the most adverse of conditions," said Dave DePoint, chief of LM.

The essentials are air and vehicular transportation and the proper equipment. District-wide, LM manages 140 vehicles that can be rerouted in emergencies. During the months of March and April, LM coordinated the procurement of additional contract rental and GSA vehicles in support of the Red River of the North flood.

LM also contracted with local car rental companies to obtain additional assets to support personnel in the Minnesota and Mississippi River basins who were dealing with flood emergencies. Commercial air was provided to personnel immediately required on the scene.

"Throughout any emergency response, we will do the 'what if' drill, to determine the appropriate support for any possible situation," said DePoint.

In addition, LM processes the innumerable travel orders required to get the authorized personnel to their target area. So far, more than 150 travel orders have been processed. "Once we take all information into consideration, we work quickly to get our people out the door to where they need to go," DePoint said.

As for out-of-town volunteers, DePoint believes that foresight pays off. Once alerted to a possible emergency, Logistics personnel will contract for hotels and rental vehicles ahead of time, depending on the magnitude of the emergency.

"It's smart on our part to ensure beforehand that out-of-town volunteers have a place to stay," said DePoint. "In '97, for example, the place was swarming with volunteers, in addition to those people who had been flooded out of their homes. While overnight accommodations were at a premium, our people had reserved lodgings." Fast forward to 2001 and Logistics had contracts already in place for lodging and vehicles required to support flood-fight personnel.

LM also provides flood-fighters with boots, hard hats, gloves and flashlights, as well as rain gear and flotation coats. The flotation coats, used for the first time this flood fight, serve to keep the wearer warm and serve as a flotation device.

Local heroes, cont. from page 2

and volunteers, as they engaged in a heroic effort to keep flood damage at a minimum. Their actions are an affirmation of the spirit of their community.

I am proud to say that our Army Corps of Engineers provided sandbags and technical assistance for the flood-fighting effort in Davenport and in other communities, large and small.

Corps employees have been helping to keep high water from overwhelming their homes, their farms, their businesses and their livelihoods.

Let me speak of other Corps heroes.

The Granite Falls mayor, Dave Smiglewski, had a problem with the flooding Minnesota River at 1 a.m. on April 12.

The Dike Road levee in his community had been 12 to 14 feet wide earlier on April 11. Now it was only seven feet wide. The force of the current had washed away a substantial portion of a protective levee road.

He found **Tom Heyerman** at his motel, then **Doug Crum** at work on emergency contracts in City Hall in Granite Falls. Both work for our St. Paul District and had volunteered for flood duty.

The Corps' Crum and Heyerman and the mayor discussed the alternatives. Worst case. Probable case. The hydrology. The city and the Corps had prepared for this possibility ahead of time by adding sandbags in a dry channel where the water would go if this levee washed out.

This was done to minimize the impact of the surge of water. They had prepared for the levels of the 1997 flood. They agreed that they were ready if the levee failed. Fortunately, the levee held.

Here's what Dave Smiglewski said afterwards:

"It's a tremendous help to small towns to have the Corps present. They know how rivers react. The Corps was in Granite Falls close to two weeks helping us prepare for this flood."

April 26: U.S. Senate Subcommittee on Transportation and Infrastructure

.... Let me speak of other Corps heroes.

Michelle Schneider and **Terry Zien** of our St. Paul District were checking the main tributaries of the Minnesota River on the afternoon of April 7 after a night of heavy rain added to the peak of the floodwaters. They observed a large volume on the Pomme de Terre River upstream of Appleton, Minnesota.

They immediately notified city officials, who had not yet begun flood-fighting preparations. The city quickly began sandbagging operations and was able to keep ahead of the floodwaters. The river rose eight feet overnight.

Thanks to their rapid response, damages to the community were averted. You can be proud of these public servants. They are 150 strong, and they have been working around the clock to control the effects of high water on the Red, Minnesota and upper Mississippi rivers. Their efforts and expertise are paying off for the citizens of Hometown, America.

May 2: U.S. House Subcommittee on Water Resources and Environment

.... Let me speak of some of our Corps heroes.

When **Lori Taylor** of our St. Paul District began her first day ever of flood duty, she discovered that the small village of Glenhaven, Wis., was at risk. Her research indicated that the community would be inundated because the flood would crest one foot higher than the levee that had been built three decades ago.

She was on site the next day inspecting the construction of a 600-foot-long rise in the levee. Her actions helped save the village.

Meanwhile, **Kent Pederson** and **Terry Zien** from St. Paul spotted severe erosion at Marsh Lake Dam near Appleton, Minnesota. Wind gusts had driven ice and waves into the dam embankment to create the problem. Later, they found erosion at a difficult-to-reach overflow spillway.

The situation called for urgent repairs. A team of park rangers, engineers and contractors assembled, and their quick action to repair the damages protected Montevideo, Granite Falls and other downstream communities from additional floodwaters.

You can be proud of these public servants. They are 150 strong and their efforts and expertise have been paid great dividends for the citizens of our hometowns.

Corps honors Johnson with top business award

By Mark Davidson
Chief of Public Affairs

Patricia Johnson was very surprised that she won the USACE 2000 Deputy for Small Business award on March 22. She received the recognition from Lt. Gen. Flowers, chief of Engineers, at a meeting of district SADBU (Small and Disadvantaged Business Unit) directors in Washington, D.C.

"The winner of this award usually has a disaster in their district that automatically generates all kinds of work for small businesses," said Johnson, the district's deputy for small business. "There were no disasters in the district in 2000."

Johnson was very proactive in many other areas with small businesses in 2000. She developed and conducted a one-day training course for contractors in construction in three states that saved the Corps time and money. "The savings are from opening the door for participation to more small businesses and generating more competition," said Johnson. The states include Minnesota, North Dakota and Wisconsin.

Johnson organized and initiated an annual joint local Corps and Small Business Administration (SBA) conference. "We had SBA representatives from the three states in which we conduct projects," said Johnson, "and everyone involved thought it was so worthwhile that the next conference will be three days."

Photo by Mark Davidson

Pat Johnson received the 2000 Deputy for Small Business Award for small business outreach.

Getting out and telling the public about what the Corps can do for the public was another strong point for Johnson in 2000. "I was on the road two weeks a month. I participated in 12 trade shows, some in very remote communities within the district boundaries," said Johnson. She also visited three cities in each of the states that the district serves and teamed with the SBA office and the state procurement technical assistance center (PTAC) in workshops to educate the small business owners.

Johnson also opened doors for the Corps to the minority business community and supported the Corps program to reach historically black universities and minority institutions. She sent out nearly 1,000 letters to minority, women-owned, small-disadvantaged, and veteran-owned small businesses last year to inform them of contracting opportunities with the district.

Johnson found time to visit 15 new businesses and brief them on how to contract with the Corps. "I also helped establish the first annual Twin Cities Federal Executive Board (FEB) Small and Disadvantaged Business Opportunities Council (SADBOC) trade fair in the Minneapolis – St. Paul area," said Johnson. "I think it helps the Corps image with the public and elected representatives when they know we have a sincere interest in working with small businesses."

Johnson also developed and initiated an annual training program on small business for district employees. "The training program informs and educates technical and government personnel at the locks and dams, the recreation areas, and construction sites about the importance of awarding to small business, the impact on the way we do business, and the district's accomplishments in meeting floors and goals," said Johnson.

Her activities out of the office and in-house requirements keep Johnson busy with paperwork when she gets back to the office. "But it's all worth it when I find out that another small business gets a contract with the Corps. Then I know it was worth the effort," said Johnson.

Civil Servants of the Year: Banitt, Hanson, Shafer

By Mark Davidson
Chief of Public Affairs

The three people selected as the district's civil servants of the year, Ann Banitt, Lowell Hanson and Jeanette Shafer, received their awards on May 3, 2001, at the 24th Federal Civil Servant of the Year awards ceremony conducted by the Federal Executive Board (FEB) of Minnesota. The FEB honored 122 federal employees at this ceremony.

Photo by Mark Davidson

The Civil Servants of the Year for the St. Paul District are (from left) Ann Banitt, Lowell Hanson and Jean Shafer.

Banitt, a hydraulic engineer in Engineering Division, was also selected as a 2001 special honoree in the professional category. Only five civil servants received the 2001 Special Honoree Award with the other categories being administrative, community, leadership, and wage board. A panel comprised of staff members of the Minnesota congressional delegation chose the five special honorees.

"Getting involved and making contributions in her job, her profession and her community are attributes that Ann carries out every day," said Bob Engelstad, her supervisor. "She helped develop the Geographic Information System, or GIS, framework for the hydraulics branch ... and created many of the in-house training opportunities for her colleagues."

Banitt is also the Corps' representative on the State of Minnesota Governor's Hydrography Subcommittee task force. She's a registered professional engineer and gave technical presentations at two national conferences last year. Banitt is a member of the Twin Cities chapter of the Society of Military Engineers, or SAME and is the chair of the SAME continuing professional competency committee.

Her contributions outside of the office include church youth activities and music. "I like working with young people," said Banitt. "I've participated in student outreach activities with the Corps and through my church."

Shafer, a civilian pay technician in Resource Management (RM), coordinates the payroll for 45 timekeepers and 800 employees, said Randy Brunet of RM.

"Jane is very patient with all of the different people she works with on the payroll program," said Brunet. "Many of the timekeepers that work with her speak highly of her work efforts and say she has a positive and uplifting approach to working with them."

Shafer said that she did not expect "to be selected as the one of the civil servants of the year in a million years. I believe my selection is a reflection on every employee of the Corps and to be recognized by fellow workers means the world to me."

When Shafer is not working, she finds time to volunteer at the University of Minnesota Hospital's Pediatric Cardiac Unit. "My own daughter had nine open-heart surgeries there, so I can relate to the feelings a parent has while their child is in cardiac surgery. I use my experience to try to console and encourage other parents," said Shafer.

As the lone district employee at Devils Lake, **Hanson**, a construction representative, administered the completion of five projects last year with a combined contract total of more than $34

million.

"Lowell works closely with the local communities and the District's emergency response unit every spring as the possibility of flooding comes up," said Tom Eidson, his supervisor in the Western area office. Hanson said that he is "very honored to be selected as one of the district's civil servants of the year. I'm grateful for being nominated and being selected."

Striking award

Photo by Peter Verstegen

Neil Schwanz demonstrates his award-winning bowling form with a trophy he won for a perfect 300 game. He bowled the 300 at Maplewood Lanes in the Corps of Engineers Bowling League on March 6, 2001. "Our team, 'Hard Corps,' was bowling against 'Gutter Crew Too' on lanes 31 and 32. The 300 was rolled in the third game," said Schwanz. Darrell Morey, league president, presented the trophy in April at the district office. Morey and Schwanz work in Design Branch.

Projects receive '7 Wonders' Awards

The Minnesota Society of Professional Engineers recognized the Trempealeau Refuge Habitat Project and the Souris River Flood Control Project for the 2001 Seven Wonders of Engineering Awards in Minnesota. The recognition banquet was held in February 2001. Attendees from the St. Paul District included Col. Kasprisin, John Bailen, Bonnie Greenleaf, Jim Mosner, Chris Afdahl, John Blackstone and Jon Hendrickson.

5 individuals, group honored for EEO

Five individuals and the Disability Subcommittee of the Special Emphasis Program Committee received recognition on April 4 for outstanding achievement in equal employment opportunity (EEO).

Marinanne Price, EEO program manager, presented the District Trophy Award to the subcommittee for modifications to improve accessibility to the district office building and disability awareness training to facilitate the employment of people with disabilities.

She presented awards for individual accomplishment to: Brent Johnson, Nan Bischoff, Donna Kell, Terry Zien and Jeff Pfannes.

Subcommittee members are: Ed Bankston, Nan Bischoff, Larry Joachim, Donna Kell, DeLisa Kviz, Angie Peterson, Jim Muegge (retired), Julie Ritter, Joe Skupa, Chuck Spitzack, Lori Taylor and Peter Verstegen.

Recruitment team needs names from you by June 22

The recruitment team has a June 22 suspense for all district employees.

"The recruitment team asks all district employees to think of people in their duty and off-duty lives who can connect the Corps to people looking for jobs," said Mike Knoff, ED.

Andrea Childress of Engineering Divison (ED) and member of team, said that invitations for an open house that targets recruiters and career counselors are going out very soon. These contacts can connect the Corps to more people looking for employment. "We need the names and addresses of the people you are nominating by June 22 so we can send them an invitation," she said.

The St. Paul District will be hosting a recruitment open house on Oct. 17, 2001, from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. But this open house is to identify specific groups. "We want high school and college guidance counselors, employment recruiters, and key people from organizations who can assist us in meeting and recruiting diverse and high quality applicants," said Russ Williams, Program Management, and a member of the district recruitment team.

"Thirty percent of the district employees are eligible to retire in five years," said Yvonne Berner of Regulatory Branch and a member of the recruitment team. For more information call Knoff at ext. 5600 or Berner at ext. 5365.

Students 'on ice' at Leech Lake for Project Outdoors

Photo by Tammy Wick

Jason Hauser of the Leech Lake staff shows two students how to release a fish from a hook on the ice at Leech Lake on March 16. They were among 50 fifth and sixth grade students who spent the day learning about conservation practices and ice fishing. John Zahalka, Timm Rennecke, and Hauser of the district's Leech Lake office instructed students on proper fish handling, catch-and-release practices and water safety both on the ice and during the open-water season. The Corps and other natural resource agencies assisted in "Project Outdoors" coordinated by the Longville Elementary School.

Crosscurrents

US Army Corps of Engineers
St. Paul District

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

Editorial views and opinions are not necessarily those of the Corps of Engineers, nor of the Department of the Army.

Address all inquiries to:

Editor, *Crosscurrents*
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
Army Corps of Engineers Centre
190 Fifth Street East
St. Paul, MN 55101-1638

District Engineer	Col. Kenneth Kasprisin
Public Affairs Chief	Mark Davidson
Editor	Peter Verstegen
Phone:	651-290-5202
e-mail:	cemvp-pa@usace.army.mil

New assignments

Ben Wopat, assistant chief of Construction-Operations Division, has been selected to serve as the Deputy District Engineer (DDE) until Maj. Tom O'Hara arrives in late July. Wopat began his new assignment on May 21. Wopat replaces Capt. John Weidner, who will be attending graduate school.

In other assignments, on March 26 Marita Valencia began a 120-day assignment as acting chief, Environmental and Economic Analysis Branch. She replaces Bob Whiting who is the new chief of Regulatory Branch.

On March 15 Roland Hamborg, the new Operations Manager for the Headwaters Lakes Project, held his first all-staff meeting with the Headwaters Lakes Project staff.

Awards Picnic, golf tourney on June 21

The Awards Picnic will be held on June 21 at Long Lake Regional Park in New Brighton.

Coordinators for the picnic are Joe Mose at 651-290-5567 and Jim Sentz at 651-290-5625.

The golf tournament will be at Majestic Oaks Golf Course in Ham Lake, just north of Blaine.

The shotgun start is at 7 a.m. The $55 fee includes $50 for a mandatory cart (pay at course) and $5 fee to cover prizes.

For further information on the golf tournament, contact:

- Ferris Chamberlin at 651-290-5619; or
- Kent Pederson at 651-290-5609.

Two years ago the picnic and golf tournament were held at the same spots.