



US Army Corps  
of Engineers  
St. Paul District

# Crosscurrents

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## Refuge project near Trempealeau promotes wildlife habitat

By Shannon Bauer

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, St. Paul District, and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service celebrated National Wildlife Refuge Day with a public dedication ceremony and open house for new dikes and pump stations constructed at the Trempealeau National Wildlife Refuge near Trempealeau, Wis., Oct. 18.

This 6,200-acre refuge lies within the Mississippi River flyway, adjacent to the river on the Wisconsin side at Pool 6, 20 miles upriver from La Crosse, Wis. The Fish and Wildlife Service acquired most of the land for the refuge in 1979 as a breeding ground for migratory birds and other wildlife.

The construction of the habitat project, a cooperative effort between the Corps of Engineers, Fish and Wildlife Service and Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources, began in 1995 and cost \$4.5 million. It was the largest Upper Mississippi River System Environmental Management Program contract awarded in the St. Paul District.

The project involved constructing dikes to create three separate management pools, allowing refuge managers to control water levels to

promote vegetation growth and provide optimum habitat for wildlife. The project was substantially complete in September 1999, with supplemental work performed in 2001 and 2002. In 2001, the Minnesota Society of Professional Engineers selected the project as one of the Seven Wonders of Engineering.

Prior to construction, the refuge

had been deteriorating as a feeding and resting area for migratory birds, according to Corps' project manager Don Powell. "Wetlands in the southern half of the refuge were largely unproductive for wildlife because of turbid water conditions that limited aquatic plant growth," he explained. "Wave action, rough fish and dissolved

*Refuge, continued page 4*



Photo by Shannon Bauer

**Project manager Don Powell, above, has worked on the Trempealeau National Wildlife Refuge project since its inception in 1990. The project, shown behind Powell, is near Trempealeau, Wis., and controls water levels to promote vegetation growth and provide optimum habitat for wildlife.**

## Selfless-service fosters greater good

By Col. Robert L. Ball  
District Engineer

Some of you have seen the work that Russ Snyder, project management, has done to honor



veterans who are connected to the St. Paul District. What you may not know is that he did this on his own initiative. I suspect the idea

came not only from conversations with his father about service in World War II, but also from tales of sacrifice from those of you who served. Snyder's tribute to those who served reminded me of two other instances of selfless-service.

Last month we lost our chief of contracting with very little notice.

The selection process for a replacement was going to take six months, at least, and we needed someone to be able to step in until then.

For several reasons, Dean Peterson was my first choice to act in the position. When I called Dean out of the blue and explained our need, he volunteered without hesitation. He did that even though it meant he would have to move to the Twin Cities during the workweek. Dean selflessly put aside his own convenience to serve when he was needed.

The floods in Roseau, Minn., in June caused our project response team to be called out to provide temporary housing. Normally, a PRT will be deployed for 30 days; but in this case, headquarters determined it would be best if the St. Paul District's PRT handled the mission itself. That meant that Lisa Brantner, Ray Marinan, Lowell Hanson, Randy Melby and Dave Reynolds deployed to Roseau for periods of time in June through July and again in August through October.

Others served admirably also, but these folks spent a good deal of time away from home. There was never a complaint, and they served magnificently in support of fellow citizens in need. Not only did they do that with a great attitude, they also set the record for the Federal Emergency Management Agency, providing travel trailers in response to an emergency.

None of these fine folks will get a parade or a medal, but they represent the spirit Snyder was honoring with his tribute to veterans – selfless-service for the greater good. Acts like these make me proud to serve with you.

## Performance teams click with computers and stakeholders

*Two teams from the St. Paul District apply Army Performance Improvement Criteria – one to make information technology user friendly and boost productivity, the other to bring stakeholders into decision making.*

### Team D programs productivity with user-friendly computer hardware and software

By Greg Frankosky

APIC Team D, or the automation project delivery team as we prefer to call ourselves, is addressing the objective to improve integration and application of current and future information management systems.

This broad objective is to concentrate on incremental improvement in the use and management of district data. The team has reviewed areas using computer-assisted drafting and design, geographic information systems and other geo-spatial data and investigated general document management.

But first, some definitions from the district's geographic information systems page on the St. Paul District intranet:

- Computer-assisted drafting and design is using a computer to produce drawings or blueprints as part of the design of construction projects.
- Geographic information system is using a computer system to capture, store, check, integrate, manipulate, analyze and display

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### Crosscurrents

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# Corps leads public-private Headwaters study

**Study examines flood control, environment, tribal interests, recreation, navigation, hydropower**

By Shannon Bauer

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, St. Paul District, and the U.S. Forest Service hope to change for the better the way the federal reservoir dams in the Headwaters of the Upper Mississippi River are operated.

This spring, the Corps and the Forest Service began a long-range planning process called the Headwaters Reservoir Operations Plan Evaluation, or ROPE study, to bring together Corps and non-Corps dam operators, interested federal agencies and other stakeholders in the region. The study group members will look at flood control issues, environmental concerns, tribal interests, recreational use of the lakes and rivers, navigational and hydropower concerns and more and will involve an extensive public and interagency involvement program to develop a new operating plan for the region's reservoir system.

The ROPE study is expected to last four years and cost around \$2.8 million. It will be the first time the public and other government agencies will be heavily involved with the Corps in the development of new Headwaters reservoir operating plans, as well as the first time all of the reservoirs are being looked at in a system-wide approach. In addition, it will be the first time the operating plan for this

region has been updated since the 1950s.

"An extraordinary database will be developed as part of this ROPE Study that will allow water management decisions to be made in a timely, informed and responsive manner," said John O'Leary, Headwaters operations manager. "In addition, local decision makers will have access to information that will be very useful to planning commissions and others who make land use decisions.

"This study is the single most exciting event to happen in the Headwaters in a generation," he continued. "For the first time, we have both the will and the technological capacity to develop an operating plan that is truly responsive to our customers."

St. Paul District currently operates six federal dams in the Headwaters area, including Leech, Winnibigoshish, Big Sandy, Pine (White Fish chain), Pokegama and Gull. The Corps built these dams in the late 1800s and early 1900s to manage water flows on the Mississippi River for navigation and milling in the Twin Cities and to aid in steamboat navigation and lumber transportation. But with the completion of the nine-foot navigation project on the Mississippi River in the 1930s, the headwaters dams now serve mainly to fulfill tribal trust requirements, control flooding and to maintain water levels for recreational use and fish and wildlife habitat.

The Forest Service regulates Knutson Dam on Cass. The Corps

*Headwaters, continued Page 6*



**The St. Paul District hosted a series of meetings to gather information and to inform and educate stakeholders in the Headwaters region. At right is Kenton Spading from water control section.**



St. Paul District Photo

**Tundra Swans loaf on the Mississippi River south of Goose Island County Park in Pool 8 along the Mississippi River flyway. The area is part of the national wildlife refuge.**

*Refuge, continued from Page 1*  
oxygen levels in the winter contributed to the water quality problem. In other areas of the refuge, woody vegetation was expanding into wetland areas.”

### Complex project

This project was larger and more complex than many EMP projects, he said, because of the soft sediments in the area. Most of where the Corps needed to build was underwater. In addition, a railroad embankment separated the refuge from the main channel of the Mississippi.

Originally, the site contained a large pool of around 3,000 acres. According to Powell, who has worked on the project since its inception in 1990, the lower half of the pool lacked vegetation compared to the upper part. There were also several parts of the refuge not getting enough water, accelerating the transition from wetlands into forest.

To break up the larger pool, the Corps created a 700-acre management pool by building a dike

made of dredged material and protected by rock fill. A pump was added that draws 22,000 gallons of water a minute, enabling the refuge manager to draw down the water level three feet in two to three weeks. The water is pumped into the Mississippi River through the railroad embankment. It was successfully drawn down in the summers of 2000 and 2002.

The other two dikes constructed created two smaller pools, one of 550 acres and one of 220. Whereas the larger pool had the problem of too much water, these areas often lacked water. Willows and other hard woods were encroaching into the wetlands. Small pumping stations were added to draw in water either from the larger pool or the Trempealeau River, which is located on the east edge of the refuge.

### Pumps easy to operate

All three pumps are designed with ease of operation in mind. In addition, they are all electric in order to cut down on the noise disturbance

for the wildlife near the refuge.

To cut down on the disturbance during the construction phase, two of the dikes were built hydraulically. “[For the large pool,] we set a dredge in the Mississippi, pumped material through the railroad embankment and started building the dike from the river,” said Powell. “They [the contractors] kept removing sections of pipe as the dike took shape.” For the smaller pool, he added, a dredge was placed in a nearby pond.

Pat Vickman, a project engineer at the eastern area office, worked on the habitat project for the contractor, J.F. Brennan Company of La Crosse, Wis., before joining the Corps. He said there were many restrictions in place during the construction to minimize disturbance to fish and wildlife.

Construction had to happen around the breeding periods of eagles and ospreys, he said, and the trucks were not permitted off the road. In addition, he continued, they had to be careful not to step on turtles, leave stockpiles of equipment on site or work near where Native American artifacts were being found.

### “We’d see eagles roosting...”

“We’d see eagles roosting on the levee in the morning. They’d take off when we got there and come back when we left,” he said. “It was cool to work so close to them.”

Vickman visited the project again as a Corps employee to repair ice damage to the rock groins of the large pool, after it was damaged by ice during the 2001 winter. “I saw the pumping stations in operation,” he said. “I was very surprised by the number of fish in both pools that

*Refuge, continued page 5*

## P2 software designed to improve productivity, project execution

By Mark Davidson

P2 may be “right around the bend” for the St. Paul District but exactly when it starts here has yet to be scheduled, according to district officials.

P2 is a suite of commercial off-the-shelf software applications configured to support project execution. According to the draft P2 manual, P2 is the supporting automated information system that will enable the Corps of Engineers to change its culture, to implement PMBP and become a highly productive organization that accomplishes work by project-focused teams.

“District employees taking the project management business process training will learn more about P2 in the course six on the PMBP training disks and that will help the P2 learning process here,” said Bill Csajko, project manager responsible for implementing P2 in the district.

The events that trigger the Corps’ involvement in P2 go back to early 1999. Congress mandated that the Corps forecast, allocate and utilize Corps’ resources more efficiently and to come with a single project management tool to include a network analysis system.

The first phase of P2 will see the following business areas affected: civil works, military, environmental, international and interagency services and research,

*P2, continued Page 7*

*Refuge, continued from page 4*

are in there now.”

The waterfowl has increased in the refuge as well. According to data provided by the Fish and Wildlife Service, 6,111 ducks and 1,262 geese were counted in the refuge in 1997. After the first drawdown in 2000, 27,396 ducks and 2,116 geese were counted.

“It was almost an immediate increase in waterfowl. ... It looks like the pumps and dikes are working,” said Bob Drieslein, refuge manager. “Some of the changes we’re looking for are long-term, though; they’re not going to happen overnight. It’s a little too soon to tell.”

He said over time, by managing the water levels, the Fish and Wildlife Service hopes to see an increase in both emergent and submerged vegetation, which will in turn increase the number of game fish; rare waterfowl such as pelicans and cranes; and wetlands mammals like muskrats. “We’re starting to see a response already in Pool A [the larger of the three management pools],” he said.

The habitat project fits into a



Photo by Shannon Bauer

**St. Paul District Commander Col. Robert Ball recognized Rick Frietsche at the dedication Oct. 18. Frietsche manages the Trempealeau National Wildlife Refuge for the Fish and Wildlife Service. He formulated the project objectives at the start of planning in 1990 and worked closely with the Corps’ project team from development through construction.**

master plan developed by the refuge and the public a decade ago.

Drieslein said this project was just

part of the plan, and there are more opportunities for future projects on the refuge.



Photos by Shannon Bauer

**Ray Nelson, left, with John O'Leary at Crosslake, Minn. O'Leary is Headwaters operations manager. Nelson manages the Cross Lake recreation area.**

*Headwaters, continued from Page 3* transferred the dam, which is located in the Chippewa National Forest, to this agency in 1928.

In addition to the federal Headwaters dams, a number of private dams are also operated to regulate lakes in the Mississippi Headwaters, including the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources on Mud and Goose, Ottertail Power on Bemidji and Minnesota Power on the Prairie River chain.

### Close coordination

The Corps and Forest Service will work in close coordination with these non-Corps operators, as well as with the Leech Lake Band and Mille Lacs Lake Band of the Ojibway, the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources, the Mississippi Headwaters Board and lake property groups at each of the reservoirs and environmental groups in completing this study. These involvements will be accomplished through a variety of newly formed agency task forces and through



**At left with sunglasses is Jeff Kleinert, Pokegama recreation area. At right is John O'Leary.**

local volunteers participating in lake groups.

Corps project manager Ed McNally said it was these non-Corps dam operators and the Mississippi Headwaters Board who first approached the Corps six years ago to ask the Corps to take the lead in developing a system-wide operating plan for water control. Their request resulted in a series of public meetings three years ago and then involvement by U.S. Rep. James Oberstar-D, Minn.

### Basin-wide feasibility study

The congressional interest resulted in the Corps conducting a reconnaissance study in 2000 that looked at the federal interest in water management from Lake Itasca to Lock and Dam 2 on the Mississippi River. This report allowed the Corps to identify problems and opportunities and determine the likelihood of a federal interest in more detailed feasibility studies. This study recommended a basin-wide watershed feasibility study for the Headwaters, as well as three spin-off smaller planning feasibility studies focusing in the Twin Cities area, which are currently ongoing.

However, a non-federal, cost-sharing sponsor for the ROPE study

could not be found to initiate such a comprehensive, basin-wide feasibility study. Federal operations and maintenance funding had to be used, so a less comprehensive ROPE study focusing on improving reservoir operations at the existing Corps and Forest Service dams was initiated.

The study began in November 2001 with a series of public and interagency workshops. For the most of 2002, the primary focus of the study was to begin collecting pertinent data and to mobilize a number of citizen lake groups and technical task forces to provide local perspective and scientific inputs to the study.

In 2003, the group will complete the inventory phase of the study and formal scoping for the Environmental Impact Statement, evaluate and compare alternative plans and prepare an initial screening report. This will involve developing a detailed evaluation matrix for screening operational alternatives and obtaining matrix inputs from the task forces and lake groups. Then, in 2004, McNally said he expects the draft and final reports to be prepared and fully coordinated with the public, stakeholders, government agencies and tribes.

"When we're done with this ROPE study, we are hopeful that implementable changes can be recommended and be understood and supported," said McNally. "To accomplish this, we will be continuously involving the tribes and local and state government inputs into the plan formulation, so they all have a sense of ownership in the study recommendations."

# Holiday awards slated for Dec. 13 in Oakdale

By Anna Wetterling

The 2002 Holiday Awards Ceremony is scheduled for Friday, Dec. 13, at the Prom Center in Oakdale, Minn.

In the spirit of working together and supporting each other as a team, the planning committee for this year's event hopes many employees will participate in the festivities.

Lt. Col. Thomas O'Hara, deputy district engineer, should be returning from his tour in Afghanistan and is expected to attend the ceremony.

"We are very interested in encouraging folks who have not attended awards ceremonies in the past, to consider participating this year," said Kevin Baumgard, this year's committee chairperson for the event. "One of my goals is to make sure everybody has a good time!"

Social hour begins at 11:30 a.m., followed by lunch and an awards and entertainment program. The program concludes at 3:30 p.m. Door prize drawings will take place during the program.

Entertainment will showcase the talents of our fellow Corps employees during "amateur hour," which was a popular feature last year. Individuals with a unique talent who are willing to share are encouraged to contact Marsha Mose at 651-290-5301.

Prices are \$13 for a meal ticket and \$3 for a non-meal ticket. Employee Benefit Fund members receive a \$2 discount. Ticket sales begin Nov. 25, and end Dec. 9.

As an added incentive to purchase tickets early, a special raffle will be held for all those who purchase tickets by 3 p.m. on Tuesday, Dec. 3.

Ticket sellers will be available on each floor. Field employees may contact Stephanie Dupey at 651-290-5296 for ticket reservations. Retirees may contact Jan Pream at 651-290-5312. Both field and retiree tickets are payable on the day of the event.

The public affairs office will sponsor a food drive for the Neighbor-to-Neighbor Food Shelf, which operates in conjunction with the district's adopted school, Washington Magnet Middle School. Bring a non-perishable food item or a cash donation.

Interpreters will be present for hearing-impaired individuals. If there are other accommodation needs, please contact Kevin Baumgard at 651-290-5320.

The Prom Center is located immediately north of I-94 on Inwood Avenue, approximately nine miles east of the district office.

*P2, continued from Page 5*  
and development.

"The St. Paul District will be largely affected in the civil works area," said Csajko. "Phase two will affect additional Corps and office requirements, such as real estate, logistics management, office of counsel and so on."

The first phase of P2 will interface with CEFMS financial management and RMS for real estate.

Csajko said an assortment of data bases, project scheduling and budget-related project applications such as PROMIS, PPDS will be discontinued as part of P2.

## Meet and greet welcomes new employees

The Special Emphasis Program Committee sponsored a meet and greet session Oct. 31 to welcome the following persons to the district:

Douglas Bruner, ED-D  
Nathan Johnson, L&D 1  
Jennifer McCarthy, CO-R  
Angelita Phipps, EEO  
Timothy Tabery, L&D 1  
See Xiong, PM-A

Tamara Cameron, CO-R  
Daniel Kelner, PM-E  
Constance McCullick, L&D 8  
Rebecca Soileau, ED-H  
Patricia Wright, CO-R  
Mee Yang, PA

## Obituaries

**Martin N. Frawley**, age 52, of Isanti, Minn., formerly of Minneapolis. He is survived by wife, Rochelle, and many other relatives and friends. He had worked in real estate in the St. Paul District. The funeral service was Nov. 6 at First Baptist Church, Cambridge, Minn.

**Ken Harrell**, age 70, on Nov. 17, 2002, in Indianapolis, Ind. He is survived by many children. He formerly worked in Construction-Operations Regulatory Branch. He had lived in Indianapolis for roughly 10 years. The funeral service was at Holy Angels Church, Nov. 23, in Indianapolis.

*APIC*, continued from Page 2  
data related to positions on the earth's surface. Typically, a GIS is used for handling a variety of maps.

- Metadata is data about data and is similar to cataloging methods used in libraries, museums and archives. It is a way of documenting information about data sets.

The team developed an action plan with four tasks:

**Task One:** Improve CADD/GIS utilization so that design information is properly filed and readily available;

**Task Two:** Develop geo-spatial data management control plan so that geo-spatial data information is categorized and available;

**Task Three:** Implement an enterprise geo-spatial information system plan; and

**Task Four:** Develop an electronic document management control plan so that documents are categorized and available.

**Meeting Tasks One-Four:** Currently, the team is addressing all of the tasks by assisting existing district committees on computer-assisted design and drafting, geographic information systems and geo-spatial data systems. Team members are working to further metadata and develop geo-technical and regulatory databases for use with geographic information systems.

Updating the St. Paul District computer-assisted design and drafting standards to align with corps-wide architect-engineer-construction standards. Investigating the Projectwise® application software for improved file management, design and drafting, and other document

management strategies, such as DocumentUm,® Falcon,® and Sharepoint,® off-the-shelf text document management. Team members are making progress and will continue to share the results. The team is also open to suggestions, ideas or comments relating to data management. Contact David Berna (-5737) or Greg Frankosky (-5582).

## F troop plans for partnerships

By Russ Snyder

The mission for Team F was to develop a plan for building effective relationships with external partners, stakeholders, interest groups and customers. Kevin Baumgard, Judy DesHarnais, Charles Horwitz, Mary Kay Linder, Dick Otto, Dave Rydeen, Jim Sentz and Russ Snyder formed Team F, or "F troop," as we called ourselves.

The team recommended increasing the number and quality of customer contacts to build relationships with these target audiences and to learn and understand their perspectives and needs. These contacts would be focused initially with high priority partners, stakeholders, customers and interest groups. These groups would be assigned account managers or stakeholder liaisons that would be responsible for developing an action plan for their group.

To support this initiative, the team developed tasks that mirrored the account manager concept being developed as part of the district's outreach program. The program is currently focused on developing and maintaining better relationships with

key groups.

The team developed these tasks to build upon the existing handshake understandings:

**Task One:** Define high-priority customers, interest groups, stakeholders and partners for fiscal 2002 and assign a Corps manager or liaison to the "account."

**Meeting Task One:** This task was completed by district outreach coordinator, Russel Snyder, following coordination with key individuals both within and outside of Team F.

**Task Two:** Develop account manager instructions and briefing (training).

**Meeting Task Two:** The team held a short training session for selected managers in May.

**Task Three:** Update existing account plans or create new plans.

**Meeting Task Three:** Drafting these plans are the responsibility of the assigned account managers. The end of the fiscal year marked completion of approximately 70 percent of the plans.

**Task Four:** Update the outreach intranet site.

**Meeting Task Four:** The existing outreach site, assessable only to Corps employees, was updated to include the completed account plans. The plans include information such as agency points of contacts and summaries and assessments of customer and stakeholder interests in Corps projects and programs.

**Task Five:** Fiscal 2003 account managers' conference.

**Meeting Task Five:** Hold meeting of the assigned account managers in early fiscal 2003 to assess the status of the relationship-building project and to determine actions for fiscal 2003.

## 2080 hours boils down to two hours

By Amanda Dirnberger

The bean counters at the St. Paul District used to work late nights and overtime hours to closeout the fiscal year. Those days are gone. A year with 2080 hours closed out in two.

"The end of fiscal year, from Oct. 1 to Sept. 30, was a success and was finished in record time, just under two hours," said Randal Brunet, chief of resource management.

Sandra Spruell and DeLisa Kviz, both of RM, worked only one late night for Corps of Engineers Financial Management System closeout. They and a few others in RM worked a few hours during the weekend of Sept. 28-29 to adjust accounts and reconcile account balances. This year, the last transaction was recorded at 5:15 p.m. on Sept. 30; closeout began immediately in coordination with the Corps' finance center in Millington, Tenn., and finished around 7:15 p.m.

The success of year-end was due to experience and coordination among the offices, said Robinson, an accountant.

"People adhered to the suspense dates as documented in the district plan," said DeLisa Kviz, a systems accountant. "They were willing to do whatever it takes to get the job done. The bottom line was teamwork."

"It happened because everyone involved has been doing their jobs properly and has worked for months in advance to make this a smooth closeout," said Mary Kay Linder, executive office administrative assistant.

The finance center and the CEFMS development team also contributed to the success of the fiscal year-end closeout.

The Corps of Engineers undergoes an annual process called year-end, meaning the closing of the fiscal year. Contracting, program management, RM and other offices work together to balance the fiscal books for the district.

Division and Corps headquarters grade the districts on fiscal management. "Year-end is important to the Corps for accuracy of the financial statements," said Robinson. "Also, it is when the district is rated on many indicators, such as nominal balances and program and project execution."

Nominal balances are accounts where expenses must be recouped through the overhead rates and must be met within one percent by year-end. Execution is the obligating of funds provided by appropriations. "It is a task that you must inevitably do every year, accurately and on short time frames," said Judy Marshall, project management.

Most bills are paid to contractors early, to avoid interest-bearing late

payments.

When comparing this year's year-end to previous ones, the experience of many is positive. "People are getting more comfortable with CEFMS and their roles in year-end activities," said Robinson.

Preparation for closeout is critical, according to Brunet. "Monitoring the financial activity and the more intense forth quarter analysis and preparations lay the groundwork for us being able to close out the fiscal year with minimal disruption," he said.

Robinson said initial closeout activities could begin as early as July. Also, project managers begin checking their reports more closely to monitor account balances.

"We started preparing for year-end in early August by meeting with the point-of-contact from each office, outlining and documenting the suspense dates for reports or accounts and communicating expectations," said Kviz. "From that time, it was a continual process of completing transactions as early as possible, monitoring reconciliations and other reports, catching

*Year-end, continued Page 10*



Photo by Peter Verstegen  
DeLisa Kviz (left) and Sandra Spruell (center), resource management, worked only one late night for CEFMS closeout. Sue Robinson (right) said initial closeout activities can begin as early as July.

# Coats for Byrd, Lindbergh came from this ol' building

By Matt Percy

The fur flew out of the building that the Corps' St. Paul District calls home.

Aviator Charles Lindberg selected his fur-lined flight-suits, made by Gordon & Ferguson in what is now the Army Corps of Engineers Centre, for the first non-stop flight to Paris. Back then, the building housed the manufacturing and sales activities of the Gordon & Ferguson Company, a furrier.

Richards Gordon immigrated to the United States from Wexford, Ireland, in the 1840s. He moved to

St. Paul in 1854 and opened a wholesale hat and cap business. In 1858, he began manufacturing buffalo coats from hides collected by the tens of thousands from the herds that still roamed the Great Plains. Gordon brought in Paul Ferguson in 1871 and changed the company name to Gordon & Ferguson.

By 1912, Gordon & Ferguson had become a world-renowned furrier and had outgrown its building. Under the leadership of Gordon's son, Charles, the company began planning the construction of new offices at Sibley and Fourth Streets.

They hired the famed Minnesota architect, Clarence Johnston, to build the new Gordon & Ferguson Building. Johnston also designed all of the buildings on the University of Minnesota's main campus in Minneapolis. In private practice, he designed numerous residences and public buildings, including 42 houses still standing on Summit Avenue in St. Paul.

In 1913, at a cost of \$250,000, the structure was built and covered nearly half of a city block to the height of nine stories, with eight above ground

and one below. The main entrance was originally located on Sibley Street, and it housed sales-rooms on the bottom floors, with the manufacturing processes and the main fur factory located on the upper floors. The fleshing machines, fur-dressing shops, drying racks, cleaning drums and cases, tannery, dye house and skin rooms were located in separate "out" buildings.

The Gordon & Ferguson Company prospered throughout its residency at 333 Sibley St. Because of its reputation as a maker of fur coats, it was tasked with supplying the fur coats worn by Admiral Richard E. Byrd on his first expedition to Antarctica in 1928.

The company also manufactured flight apparel, including fur-lined flight suits for open-cockpit bi-planes, and the company was selected by Minnesota local Charles Lindbergh to supply the flight suit he wore when flying "The Spirit of St. Louis" on the first non-stop flight from the United States to Paris. The company later became a major supplier to the armed forces in the United States during World War II.

By 1944, the company had outgrown the building and abandoned it. The building remained

*Building, continued page 12*



Photo courtesy of Minnesota State Historical Society  
**The Army Corps of Engineers Centre in a 1959 photo taken from Mears Park. Note the fire escape and the absence of a main entrance on Fifth Street.**

*Year-end, continued from page 9*

discrepancies as they arise, and taking immediate actions in correcting those.”

“You should start thinking about year-end closing a month or two in advance by watching what is awarded, what is expended, what will be expended and labor needed to finish out the year. Most of what needs to be done is taken care of the last week, week-and-a half,” said Marshall.

The new fiscal year begins in early October after the closeout team has completed running all of the closeout

programs in coordination with the finance center. The activities really run into mid-October according to Robinson, because RM has to load funding and complete year-end reports.

“We all seemed to work well, as one team focusing on a common goal. I also received all the assistance I needed to complete this new challenge,” said Marshall.

“To sum it all up, it is not the work of a single individual, rather it is a group of folks who made it a success,” Kviz said.

## Division commander holds town hall meeting



Photo by Shannon Bauer

Brig. Gen. Don T. Riley, Mississippi Valley Division commander, recognized Virginia Gnasasik, project management, for outstanding customer care on the Grand Forks-East Grand Forks flood damage reduction project. He recognized her at a town hall meeting in St. Paul, Nov. 19.



Photo by Peter Versteegen

Riley recognized Scott Baker, construction-operations, for graduation from the Department of the Army's Leadership Development Program. Leon Moucha also completed the program.

### Spading chosen for September Employee of the Month



Photo by Shannon Bauer

**Kenton Spading**

Matt Percy, district historian, nominated **Kenton Spading** for Employee of the Month. Recently, Spading was contacted by John Ekberg, whose late father, Jarl, worked for the Corps of Engineers in the 1930s and 40s. Jarl had worked as a concrete inspector on the construction of Lock and Dam 6, Trempealeau, Wis., and later worked as a dam tender at Leech and Gull lakes. He died on August 20, 1945, while on the job at Gull Lake, and Ekberg remembers taking hydraulic measurements in his father's absence until the new dam tender arrived.

Hearing Ekberg's historic link to the district, Spading retrieved the hydraulic records containing Jarl's signatures for both lakes and met with Ekberg. Spading also contacted Percy to see whether there was any other information available on Ekberg's father. In addition to some ancillary materials, Spading and Percy located a photo of Ekberg's father while at work on Lock and Dam 6 on the day Ekberg was born, June 17, 1936. Ekberg left with a smile on his face – an example of selfless service by a Corps' employee working as a public servant without benefit to himself.

## Veterans and families honored

Veterans Day, observed annually on Nov. 11, honors those, living and dead, who have served with the U.S. Armed Forces in times of peace and war. Russ Snyder, project management, prepared a Veterans Day presentation with a St. Paul District employee connection.

The tribute features photographs and information provided by district employees. The slide show remembers and celebrates both our employee veterans and our employee family member veterans.

The slides Snyder has compiled are available for viewing via a link from the Corps intranet page which is assessable from your Corps computer at: <http://mvp02.usace.army.mil> (Access to the site is limited to St. Paul District government computers.)

“It’s not too late to submit a photo and background information to be included when we update the site,” said Marsha Mose, executive assistant. “We hope to have more photos included in the future. Depending on interest and support, we may expand the site in the future to include some the veteran’s short stories we have heard while compiling the slide show.”

E-mail Snyder or phone him at 651-290-5439 for information.



St. Paul District photo

## Corps takes snags out of navigation channel

**A contractor working for the Corps of Engineers removed 18 trees of all sizes from six locations in the Minnesota River on Sep. 19, 2002, as part of a snagging and removal operation. L & S Industrial and Marine, Inc., of Hugo, Minn., removed the trees from the confluence of the Minnesota River, where it meets the Mississippi River, to an upstream location at the Cedar Avenue bridge in Bloomington, Minn.**



Minnesota State Historical Society photo

**An employee of Gordon & Ferguson makes hats in 1935 in what is today’s Army Corps of Engineers Centre building.**

*Building, continued from page 10*

vacant from 1944-1959 before being converted to office space and becoming the Nalpak Building in 1959.

The Kaplan’s of St. Paul purchased and refurbished the building (Nalpak is “Kaplan” in reverse). Under their ownership, the building housed mostly state offices, including the Minnesota Department of Administration, the Minnesota Council on Developmental Disabilities and the Minnesota Department of Human Rights.

The district leased portions of the building in 1988 for 80 employees in construction-operations and moved the entire district headquarters into the building in 1993, after more than 53 years in the old Post Office Building on Kellogg Blvd. The new building was completely renovated for the Corps and renamed.

### Wanted: Your news!

PAO seeks information about special events in you life (e.g., births, deaths, marriages, engagements). If you would like to share these items, please contact Public Affairs at 651-290-5202, -5108 or -5201 or send an e-mail to: [cemvp-pa@mvp02.usace.army.mil](mailto:cemvp-pa@mvp02.usace.army.mil).