



**US Army Corps
of Engineers**®

St. Paul District

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Public Affairs

Corps Facts

Fountain City Service Base
Fountain City, Wis.

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The Fountain City Service Base, located in Fountain City, Wis., plays an essential role in supporting the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, St. Paul District, effort to improve navigation on the Upper Mississippi River north of Guttenberg, Iowa. The Corps has used the facility for the construction, repair and maintenance of vessels and equipment used for river improvement projects for more than a century.

History

The Fountain City Service Base, or “Boatyard” as it is known locally, is located on a 3.6-acre tract of land between the Mississippi River and Wisconsin Highway 35. The site was chosen because Fountain City has a natural protective harbor formed by the widening mouth of Waumandee Creek as it joins the Mississippi River at the north end of town, and because the site is adjacent to a limestone quarry that supplied material for early channel control structures. The Corps purchased the land in 1894 and began using it as a boatyard in 1895. As the number and complexity of navigation projects on the Upper Mississippi River expanded, the Corps constructed an extensive fleet of boats of various types to do its work. More than 200 towboats, tenders, snag boats, dipper and hydraulic dredges, quarters’ boats, barges, launches and skiffs have been serviced at the Boatyard in the years since 1895. All of these vessels were repaired and maintained at the Fountain City Service Base and, additionally, a number of them were constructed on the premises.

Mission

The harbor at the Boatyard serves as the mooring point for Corps’ fleets during months when the river is closed by ice. Work performed today at the Boatyard includes maintenance and repairs on barges and floating plant equipment, as well as custom metal fabrications for a wide range of district projects. The Boatyard is the home base for the necessary heavy equipment, such as cranes, bulldozers, excavators, loaders, welders, compressors and blasting and painting tools used to support and maintain the district’s locks and dams and floating plant. The maintenance of the nine-foot channel is primarily the responsibility of the crews that call the Boatyard their home. They include the locks and dams project office; the channels and harbors project office, which performs channel surveys and directs Upper Mississippi River dredging; and the physical support branch with its Dredge Goetz and maintenance and repair fleets.