



NEWS RELEASE

U.S. ARMY CORPS OF ENGINEERS

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For Immediate Release:
May 18, 2012

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Release No. 051204

USACE Galveston District's Kris Brown recognized as 2012 Ronald J. Ruffennach Communicator of the Year

GALVESTON, Texas (May 18, 2012) – The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Galveston District's Kristine Brown, natural resources specialist and park ranger, was recognized as the 2012 Ronald J. Ruffennach Communicator of the Year.

Brown received the award for her continuous support in developing and executing the USACE Galveston District's Water Safety Program; an aggressive water safety community outreach and public information campaign to educate those who use Corps facilities and enhance the commitment of community leaders to promote public safety and reduce water-related fatalities.

The innovative campaign included partnering with nationally recognized water-safety organizations and using social media to maximize outreach efforts to ultimately exceed campaign objectives and contribute to a zero increase in water related fatalities in the district.

"Brown's extensive knowledge of the Corps Water Safety Program, coupled with the partnerships she cultivated throughout her 19-year career enabled her to effectively serve as a trusted subject matter expert and key USACE spokesperson to communicate critical information about the district's Water Safety Program," said Supervisory Natural Resources Manager Richard Long, USACE Galveston District.

Brown dedicated more than 500 hours in 2011 to educate Texas visitors and residents about drowning prevention and water-related fatalities. Operating under a tight budget of \$1,750, Brown assisted in implementing creative initiatives using existing resources, social media, and the power of partnering to achieve many "firsts" to reach an audience of more than one million generate about 13,700 search results on Google about the district's program, and exceed all campaign goals and objectives.

"Brown's involvement not only provided direct contact with target audiences, she effectively told the Army's story and was essential in helping the district meet its stated objectives and communicate "**safety first**" and "**water-aware**" messages through numerous outreach events in 2011," said Col. Christopher Sallese, USACE Galveston District commander.

In 2012, the USACE Galveston District's Water Safety Program was recognized at a USACE Best Management Practices Session, held in conjunction with the annual International Boating and Water Safety Summit, received first place in the USACE Herbert A. Kassner Award's Community Relations Category, and first place in the Army's Maj. Gen. Keith L. Ware Awards, U.S. Army Community Relations Program.

"These achievements arguably would not have been accomplished without Brown's dedication and hands-on approach," said Sallese. "Kris communicated transparently and strategically to deliver Corps' key messages in a timely and honest manner and in doing so became a trusted image the public came to rely on for water-safety matters."

The district's water safety campaign greatly exceeded all campaign goals in support of the division, encouraged community participation, and brought awareness of this growing problem that unnecessarily claims the lives of thousands annually.

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