

# Electronic Town Hall



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## Diving deep Corps pulls piece of history from Texas City Channel

by Courtney Brodbeck  
Galveston District Public Affairs

Beneath the murky surface of the waters in the Texas City Channel, where sunlight can no longer permeate, lay the remains of the USS Westfield. The Army Corps of Engineers Galveston District orchestrated an archaeological recovery of the artifacts from the Civil War-era shipwreck, which included the removal of a Dahlgren cannon Nov. 22.

This recovery is part of a larger effort to deepen the Texas City Ship Channel. The \$71 million project will deepen nearly seven miles of the channel from 40 feet to 45 feet. By adding 5 feet, it will allow larger vessels to navigate the channel to provide products to the various industries, Sharon Tirpak, U.S. Army Corps of Engineer project manager for the Texas City Channel, said.

"The deepening will help the industries be more efficient with bringing in more crude to refine into gasoline and other petrochemical products," she said.

The scattered remnants of the USS Westfield were rediscovered in 2005 by archaeologists from PBS&J, a company with expertise in engineering, environmental science, architecture, planning, and construction, who was contracted to work for the Corps. The process of recovering the rusted remains of the USS Westfield began on Nov. 18, according to Janelle Stokes, District regional environmental specialist.

The USS Westfield, an 822-ton side-wheel inshore gunboat, was  
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A Civil War-era Dahlgren cannon is pulled from the Texas City Channel Nov. 22. (Photo courtesy of PBS&J)



A diver emerges from the waters of the Texas City Channel. (Photo courtesy of PBS&J)

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# From the commander



**Colonel David C. Weston**

As busy as this District has been, you might not have noticed something: we are right in the middle of the Holiday Season! First and foremost I want to wish all of you a very happy and blessed season and let you know how much I appreciate all your initiative and dedication this past year. This time around in 2009, the holidays might seem a little different. We frequently have a “quiet time” around the holidays—the time we go through files, clean out a year’s worth of old tasks and projects, and get organized for the upcoming New Year. Well, we seem to have missed it this year. You have all been so diligent in awarding contracts, completing plans, wrapping up projects, and executing our mission—you may feel that you don’t even have time for holidays.

We’ve had an eventful and, in some ways, stressful year. It began with the legionella bacteria, and included hurricane repairs as well as Recovery Act projects that continue even now. Our people have deployed to Iraq and Afghanistan, won awards and recognitions, and formed new partnerships both internal and external to the District. We have rededicated the Galveston Seawall and recovered Civil War artifacts out of the Texas City Channel; donated computers to local schools and helped our friends and

coworkers rebuild their homes after Hurricane Ike. The list of activities and accomplishments is truly very long.

But it’s important that each of you take time also to enjoy the holidays. Don’t miss the opportunity to spend time with family and friends. The holiday memories you make with them will last a lifetime. I have come to expect and appreciate a level of dedication among Galveston District members unparalleled anywhere. I am so proud of everything that you have done, and I wish each of you a safe, happy and fulfilling holiday!

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## Thanksgiving feast

by Robert Pietzsch, ACE-IT  
Native American Committee Member

On Nov. 19, the District celebrated Native American Month and Thanksgiving with a delicious lucheon and program about Native Americans who occupied the Galveston area long ago. Jodi Wright-Gidley, director of the Galveston County Museum, spoke about Native Americans, including the Karankawa tribe, which roamed and settled in the area thousands of years ago.

Wright-Gidley was an excellent speaker and was introduced by Lt. Col. Feigenbaum. She included in her PowerPoint slide presentation a couple of local archeological sites and historical contact between the Native Americans and explorer Cabeza de Vaca as well as the pirate Jean Lafitte. Wright-Gidley was well received, as was the excellent food brought by District employees.

The Native American committee, led by Mike Harris of the District’s Resource Management Office, did a great job in planning the event, which included decorating the tables, providing Native American music, publicity, program and set up.



Kenny Jaynes and Denyse Wyskup of the Regulatory Branch make preparations to the food serving table during the District’s annual Thanksgiving feast and Native American Celebration Nov. 19 at the Jadwin Building.

# USS Westfield (continued from page 1)



**Above:** A crane stands tall above a barge at the site of the USS Westfield in the Texas City Channel. (USACE photo)



**Above and below:** A crew lifts a Civil War-era Dahlgren cannon out of the waters of the Texas City Ship Channel Nov. 22. The effort is part of a larger project that will deepen nearly seven miles of the channel from 40 feet to 45 feet. (Photos courtesy of PBS&J)



built in 1861 in New York City as a civilian ferryboat. The boat was purchased by the Navy in November 1861 and placed in commission in January 1862. Sent to the Gulf of Mexico in February of that year, Westfield took an active part in the April campaign to open the lower Mississippi River and capture New Orleans. During the following three months, the gunboat supported the mortar schooner flotilla in operations up the river toward Vicksburg.

Sent to join the blockading force off Texas later in the summer of 1862, Westfield participated in the capture of Galveston in early October. The Westfield thereafter operated in that area. On Jan. 1, 1863, while serving as flagship of the Union naval forces off Galveston, the USS Westfield ran aground and was threatened by a Confederate attack. To prevent capture, the ship's captain, William Renshaw, ordered the powerfully armed ship destroyed. Renshaw poured turpentine over the deck and laid a fuse trail from the powder magazine, but when he lit the fuse, he and 13 of his crew were killed by a premature explosion. It would not be until 146 years later that the hidden treasures of the past would be discovered.

All of the artifacts from the site are the property of the Navy, which retains permanent ownership of all sunken

naval ships and aircraft. The Corps worked with the Naval History and Heritage Command and the Texas Historical Commission to ensure that the recovery efforts met all relevant archaeological regulations and standards.

The Corps funded the heavy lifting required for the project through an interagency agreement with the Navy Supervisor of Salvage. A civilian Navy subcontractor, Donjon Marine, provided the equipment and personnel required to recover the artifacts from the seafloor.

All artifacts were transported to the Center for Maritime Archaeology and Conservation at Texas A&M University in College Station for stabilization, assessment and conservation. The primary goals of the conservation project are to preserve the artifacts to the greatest degree possible. Concretions will be removed through electrolysis and manual cleaning. Metal and organic artifacts will go through a variety of chemical and electrolytic processes to stabilize and preserve the artifacts.

Conservation is expected to take 2-3 years. After conservation is complete these pieces of history will be shared with the public and be placed in museums under long-term loan agreements with the Navy.

# Marinos named Army Corps of Engineers Emergency Manager of the Year



**Gus Marinos**

by Martie Cenkci  
Galveston District Public Affairs

Constantine G. (Gus) Marinos, chief of the Emergency Management Office for the Army Corps of Engineers Galveston District, was recently named the Army Corps of Engineers Emergency Manager of the Year for 2008. The award is in recognition of his efforts in support of the Galveston District response to three hurricanes and a tropical storm during the 2008 Hurricane Season. This includes Hurricane Ike, which made landfall in the Galveston area in September 2008.

“Gus Marinos was selected from among Corps Emergency Managers across the nation in a highly competitive process,” said Colonel David C. Weston, Galveston District commander. “His outstanding performance and dedication in managing our response and recovery efforts during the 2008 Hurricane Season were truly exemplary. Add to his efforts the fact that he suffered tremendous personal damage from Hurricane Ike, and his accomplishments are even more impressive.”

Marinos provided oversight and management of the District’s response to Hurricanes Dolly,

Gustav, and Ike, as well as Tropical Storm Eduard. Hurricane Dolly made landfall on the southernmost Texas coast, impacting District operations in the Corpus Christi to Brownsville area. Marinos ensured that the response organization was in place, managed funds, and executed the mission. His involvement in Hurricane Ike included establishment of the District’s Alternate Emergency Operations Center in Houston, overseeing a full spectrum of

***“I am so honored and grateful to receive this award. Honored because every year there are so many who could very easily be recognized.”***

**-Gus Marinos**

Federal Emergency Management Agency missions (including debris, temporary power, commodities, ice, water, temporary roofing, assessment of critical infrastructure), and providing oversight and management of the Recovery Field Office, which was established in the Houston area. Under the National Response Framework, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers provides support to the Department of Homeland Security’s Federal Emergency

Management Agency by executing assigned missions.

“I am so honored and grateful to receive this award,” Marinos said. “Honored because every year there are so many who *could* very easily be recognized. And grateful that the accomplishments of Team Galveston and all those supporting our District are also recognized by this award.”

Marinos, who is a Galveston native and graduate of Texas A&M University, has been with the Galveston District for 27 years and Emergency Management chief for 18. He has supported all Galveston District emergency operations since Hurricane Alicia in 1983, and considers Hurricane Rita in 2005

as one of the most significant.

“Not only was Rita a major hurricane,” he said, “it affected two states and strategic port facilities in Beaumont. Additionally, our response resources were limited due to a significantly larger simultaneous response to Katrina.”

From his vantage point of having been involved in both Hurricane Rita and Hurricane Ike, Marinos saw

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## Marinos (continued from page 4)

several differences.

“From my perspective, Ike was much smoother,” he said. “During Ike, evacuation to our alternate Emergency Operations Center at Addicks was improved to the point we were able to stand up non-emergency teams to continue the District’s routine work. We had more survey assets for a quicker assessment of channels and we had improved communications with our survey teams and our port partners.”

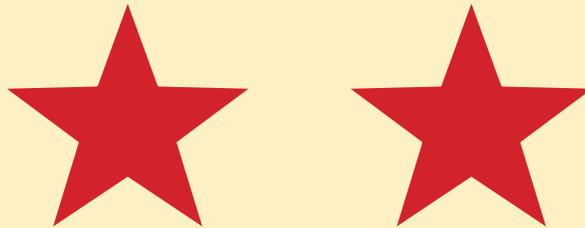
Marinos also pointed out that the District had many more employees directly impacted by Hurricane Ike, with most having damages to homes and residences.

“As a result,” he said, “the Fort Worth District held lead on the FEMA mission much longer (almost a month) to allow our team to take care of family issues. Also, Rita did not cause significant damage to hurricane protection projects, whereas Ike did.”

Marinos himself sustained heavy damage to his personal property, and could not live in his home for almost one year. In fact, he lived in 15 different places after Hurricane Ike, waiting for his home to be repaired. How did he cope with these challenges?

“The Army’s Safe Haven Program and the support from co-workers and the command staff were tremendous,” he said. “I also had the support of family and friends.”

As testament to his strong support of the Galveston District and its emergency operations, Marinos has received numerous awards in addition to this most recent recognition. Among them are the Armed Forces Civilian Service Medal, Achievement Medal for Civilian Service and three Commander’s Awards for Civilian Service.



## Maj. Gen. Temple visits Galveston District employees



Major General Merdith W. B. (Bo) Temple, deputy commanding general of civil and emergency operations for the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, visited with Galveston District employees in October.

In the photo, Maria Rodriguez and Angela Zahid of the district’s Contracting Office meet with Maj. Gen. Temple. (Photo by Vinh Nguyen)

# Rescued pelican heads south to the border

by Isidro Reyna  
Galveston District Public Affairs

It's not everyday a 15-pound pelican with a six-foot wingspan approaches a fisher at the Galveston District's Jadwin fishing pier. It's also not everyday that the same pelican would steal bait from someone's fishing line.

"That's exactly what happened," said Steve Walls, a regulatory project manager with the Galveston District. "The pelican had a broken wing and would come into the docks and steal fish off of people's hooks. He became so notorious, people named him Buddy."

The Jadwin fishing pier unofficially became home to the injured pelican in early November, according to Walls. Buddy would sleep atop the pilings beneath the pier.

"He was probably injured on a shrimp trawler," said Walls. "The hungrier he got, the more he learned that if he came in and scavenged, he could get people to feed him.

"We noticed the pelican getting bolder and bolder and more desperate," said Walls. "Buddy became a little bit of a fish thief. I think that was his downfall and his saving at the same time.

"We called the Fish and Wildlife Service and they told us, 'if you guys can catch him and take it to the rehab center, we'll support you doing it' and if things got worse, to call them back," said Walls. "We were thinking we don't have the expertise to capture a bird with a beak like that. They're big birds.

"We were out flounder fishing one day and Buddy tried to grab



Rescued pelican, Buddy, sits in a crate at a wildlife rehabilitation facility in Clear Lake, Texas. The pelican was found injured at the Galveston District's Jadwin Pier. (Photo courtesy of wrande.org)

someone's bait when he got hooked," said Walls. "He was trying to expel it and he couldn't. He had broken the line and still had the hook, a sinker and a steel line attached to him. I was worried it was going to wrap around his beak and he wouldn't be able to eat.

"I got him loose and noticed that he continued to hang around so we called the Fish and Wildlife Service back," said Walls. "One of the Fish and Wildlife Service employees, Donna Anderson, works at the Jadwin Building a few days a week from the Clear Lake office."

Walls and

Anderson went out to the pier looking for Buddy.

One of the fishers noticed the two looking for the pelican and said, "Buddy sleeps over there."

"One of the fishermen had a bucket of small fish and I asked if I could have some for Buddy," said Walls. "We threw a fish by the bulkhead and when Buddy got closer, we put a net over him but he got out. He was so hungry, he hung around. I threw another fish by the bulkhead and he came up and grabbed the fish. This time, Donna

from the Fish and Wildlife Service, put him in a headlock.

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A hook is removed from the pelican's beak at a wildlife rehabilitation facility in Clear Lake, Texas. The pelican was rescued by Steve Walls of the district's Regulatory Branch. (Photo courtesy of wrande.org)

## Pelican (continued from previous page)

“She grabbed him by the beak and I got a box,” said Walls. “She literally got him in a headlock. We drove him down to a wildlife rehabilitator in the Clear Lake area.

“The bird had mites and lice. While I was driving, Donna wanted to stop because mites were crawling on her, but I suggested she hold on to him,” said Walls. “I could see us heading down IH-45 with a pelican loose in the vehicle.

“The pelican was emaciated and dehydrated,” said Walls. “Fluids were given to him, along with antibiotics, a bath, lice and pain medicine.

“I called the rehabilitation center the next morning and asked about Buddy. I was told ‘the pelican bit

someone twice this morning, so he’s doing well,’” said Walls. “He ate 150 fish that morning and has been eating several hundred fish a day since then. Although he has ‘sauerkraut’ breath, he is now out in the open. He seems to be doing well.”

Permits have been obtained for Buddy to head south to a zoo in Brownsville, Texas, with two other birds. The birds collectively have been named “the three amigos.”

“The birds won’t have to worry about cold winters,” said Walls. “We are taking contributions to the wildlife fund for Buddy’s rehab since he lost his fishing privileges for ‘fowling’ up and getting caught.”



**“We are taking contributions to the wildlife fund for Buddy’s rehab since he lost his fishing privileges for ‘fowling’ up and getting caught.”**

*-Steve Walls,  
Regulatory Project Manager*

## Spirit of giving in Galveston



Paula Wise, left, operations project manager in the Operations Division, and Lisa Johnson, project assistant in the Engineering and Construction Division, work on fleece quilts for area cancer patients for the holiday season.

This ongoing project was begun by Wise when her father was undergoing treatment for cancer and she noticed how cold patients get after losing weight and withstanding hours in treatment facilities. She now makes dozens of these quilts year-round, paying out of her own pocket.

Other District employees and contractors who have assisted with the project include Mary Ann Cooper, Alice Ewing, Helene Kieslich, Susan Martin and Betty Shives. Anyone interested in helping with these quilts should contact Wise.

# Night Fish 2009 for Redfish

 U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Galveston District

The 2009-'10 Recreation Committee hosted the first ever Night Fish for Redfish and Flounder Fest fishing tournaments Oct. 16 and Dec. 4, respectively, at the district's headquarters building. Galveston District employees and guests enjoyed two fundraising events complete with food, fish and fun!

"I was so pleased that everyone had such a great time and that the events were so successful," said committee chairperson Bernice Taylor of the district's resource management office. "Participation in our events has been exceptional this year and we look forward to many more successful fundraising events in 2010."



## *Night Fish for Redfish winners:*

### **First Place**

Kris Flores (Guest of Paul Szempruch)  
41 inches

### **Second Place**

Jeff Pinsky  
40 1/2 inches

### **Third Place**

Jantzen Miller  
39 1/4 inches

- In the photos, counterclockwise: Jeff Pinsky holds up his award-winning redfish at the Jadwin fishing pier.
- Col. David C. Weston holds up a catch during the night's activities.
- Randy Moore and guest enjoy a great fishing spot at the tournament.
- Rec Committee members huddle after the event.



# Janecka honored by Lamar University



**Arthur Janecka**

Arthur J. Janecka, the Deputy District Engineer and Chief of Program and Project Management for the Galveston District Army Corps of Engineers, was recognized by his alma mater Lamar University on Dec. 3 with a Chapter Honor Membership in the Chi Epsilon national civil engineering honor society. The honor award was for his outstanding professional achievements in the field of civil engineering.

“Chapter Honor Membership may be granted to anyone who, by virtue of professional accomplishments in the field of civil engineering, has attained a degree of eminence in the profession, and who exhibited experience and ability worthy of emulation by young civil engineers,” said Chi Epsilon President Mariantonieta Gutierrez. “Mr. Janecka is an inspiration to all of us at Lamar University. He has helped the community since day one and should be recognized for his efforts.”

Chi Epsilon recognized Janecka for upholding the four pillars that are the foundation for the honor society: scholarship, character, practicality, and sociability.

“He is an example for future generations as an incentive to greater achievements in the civil engineering profession,” Gutierrez added.

Janecka, who began his career as an intern in the Galveston District in 1964 following graduation from Lamar University, offered advice to all rising through the ranks: “Always strive to learn more,

the more education the better. The times are constantly changing so you must be relevant, flexible and understanding of human needs.”

“Be a person of your word,” he added, “and know that when you make a commitment, you must live with that decision.”

Through the years Janecka has been dedicated to many Corps projects. Some of his proudest efforts involved Freeport Harbor, Brazos Island Harbor, the Houston-Galveston Ship Channel, and the relationship created with local sponsors.

“He is one of the most experienced people that I’ve had the pleasure to serve with in my military career,” said Lt. Col. Edward P. Feigenbaum, Galveston District deputy commander. “Due to the number of years of his service he is a wealth of information and an outstanding friend and mentor to all those who serve around him.”

## Proudly serving our Nation

Pete Perez, chief of the Galveston District’s Engineering and Construction Division, deployed to Afghanistan November 2009.

Perez stands with Lieutenant General Robert L. “Van” Van Antwerp, the U.S. Army Chief of Engineers and commanding general of the U.S. Army Corps Engineers. (USACE photo)





## *Holiday cheer!*

Employees from the Galveston District gathered in front of the Executive Office in December to share holiday spirit through caroling.

## A water safe Halloween

Students from Jessup Elementary School in Houston received a welcomed surprise from Bobber, the Corps' water safety dog, during the school's annual fall carnival and health fair Oct. 31. Greeted by many hugs, Bobber kicked off a "Water Safe" Halloween celebration with costumed children, parents, employees and staff members.

"Children really get into visiting with Bobber, who like them wears a costume," said Bill Krampe, a Corps employee at the Addicks Project Office who dresses as Bobber. "It puts it over the top for them."

Children received brightly-colored orange Bobber bags for use during trick-or-treating at the school, which were filled with water safety materials and prizes. The Jessup Elementary fall carnival and health fair is free to all participants and organized by the school's counseling department and Communities in Schools. More than 2,000 people attend the event including children varying in age from 1 to 13 years old.



**Left:** Corps Park Ranger, Kris Brown, discusses water safety with a student using Bobber's water safety wheel.



**Right:** Students pose for a photo with Bobber at Jessup Elementary's annual fall carnival.

# Planning and environmental chief Medina retires after 36 years

by Isidro Reyna  
Galveston District Public Affairs

There's much to be said about a Galveston District employee who can describe both a highlight and lowlight of his career in one event – kissing a pig named Miss Priss.

For Richard “Rick” Medina, Planning and Environmental Branch chief, that's one of the many memories he'll leave behind as he embarks on a new chapter of his life following his retirement from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Galveston District, Jan. 3, 2010, after more than 36 years of dedicated service to the nation.

When asked if he remembered his first day at the Corps, he jokingly replied that he had trouble remembering last week.

“My first recollection of that time is of being an environmental person in an office that was very skeptical of an environmental person,” said Medina. “I was the first environmental person in what was called the Operations and Maintenance Branch, the equivalent of today's Operations Division. It was a branch with senior civil engineers and here was this young environmental person who they knew they had to start working with.”

“The reason I was hired was because of the passage of the National Environmental Policy Act or NEPA in 1969,” said Medina. “The Corps was required to start complying with that Act and several biologists had been hired in the environmental section, but on the

operations side, there were none. They were looking for someone to coordinate those requirements with the environmental group.

“To their credit, the engineers recognized they had to have someone who could understand the environmental requirements and still represent the operations issues,” said Medina. “The Corps was used to doing things a certain way and NEPA forced everyone to change the way things had been done in the past. I think it was very enlightening for both of us.

“The first part of my career, the first 17 years, I spent in the Operations and Maintenance Branch or the dredging world,” said Medina. “The major accomplishment in the first half of my career was making sure that all of our operations and maintenance dredging projects were in compliance with NEPA.”

According to Medina, NEPA was just the beginning of a multitude of requirements that all federal agencies had to meet.

“Ensuring that the maintenance dredging program continued in the face of this new environmental legislation was a challenge,” said Medina. “Helping to improve the dredging program while minimizing its impact on the environment was where I believe I contributed the most.”

Implementing beneficial uses of dredged material and initiating



**Richard Medina**

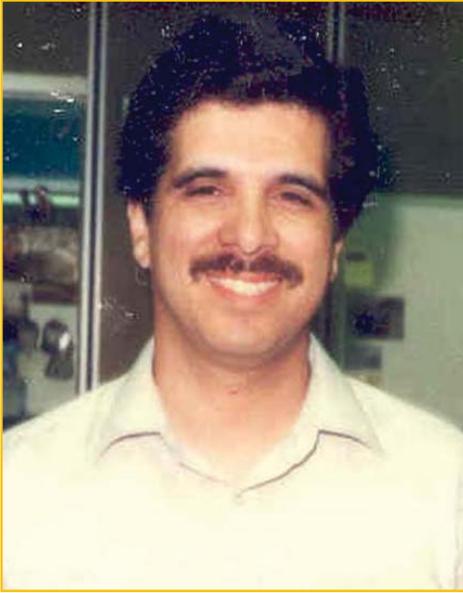
a water and sediment sampling program that's still in place today are other accomplishments, according to Medina.

“I initiated the dredging conferences that are still held today,” said Medina. “At the time it was environmental agencies and dredging contractors coming together to hear each other's concerns.”

“The second half of my career has been in the planning and environmental area,” said Medina. “My most significant accomplishment is related to the Houston Galveston

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## Medina (continued from previous page)



**Richard (Rick) Medina in earlier years at the District**

Navigation Channels project -- the limited reevaluation report and the environmental impact study that was produced in 1996.

"At the time, it was the largest construction and environmental restoration project in the Galveston District," said Medina. "The environmental and planning issues involved in that project led to the formation of interagency coordination teams and it's a process that continues to this day. It's been praised and lauded by agencies and used as a model on how the Corps should be operating -- being inclusive and collaborating on projects."

In his current position, Medina has been responsible for all planning and environmental activities associated with the district's multibillion dollar navigation, flood risk management and environmental restoration

projects.

According to Medina, there is more recognition about environmental constraints and environmental needs.

"In the earlier part of my career, it was always kind of a battle," said Medina. "Trying to satisfy the engineering requirements and the environmental requirements would always lead to some compromise."

"Today there is a much greater understanding of the environmental requirements and a willingness to find a solution that benefits the environment," said Medina. "The recognition that environmental concerns are an integral part project design, planning and construction is a great reflection on the Corps' commitment to the environment.

"The Galveston District and the Corps is an exceptionally talented agency," said Medina. "The employees are caring, dedicated, devoted and often passionate about making sure that the job is done right with quality and care.

"It's been a great career and I couldn't have done it without a lot of

***"The (Galveston District) employees are caring, dedicated, devoted and often passionate about making sure that the job is done right with quality and care."***

***-Richard Medina***

help from a lot of people both past and present," said Medina. "I've progressed further than I've ever imagined and it's a credit to a great organization like the Corps that gives you the opportunity to excel, achieve and succeed."

Co-worker Diana Laird, chief of the district's planning section, is thankful for Medina's support throughout the years.

"Rick is really exceptional in the role that he's in because he's been the chief for both of the sections he manages," said Laird. "He's immensely qualified, he's a very good mentor, an excellent boss, very tolerant and one of the things that I'll miss is his humor.

"He's very witty, very funny and extraordinarily smart," said Laird. "He's going to leave a big hole in Galveston District because he's so knowledgeable and so well-qualified for the job he has.

"My hope is that he pays as much attention to having fun with his family and his retirement as with the attention and dedication he gave to his job while he worked at the Galveston District."

Laird says she'll also miss Medina's personality.

"I remember one year the district was raising funds for the recreation committee and I was Rick's campaign manager during the kiss a pig contest," said Laird. "Thanks to successful campaigning, we got him to kiss a pig. He was good about that."

As for kissing a pig, that's not something Medina plans to pick up as a hobby.

Besides building a house in Bastrop, Texas, Medina plans to travel, do some part-time consulting, and learn to play golf.

"As a retiree, I feel obliged to take up golf," said Medina. "I think it's a prerequisite and I'm going to give that a try."

U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Galveston District

# FLOUNDER



# FEST '09

## *Flounder Fest Winners:*

### **First Place**

Steve Walls - 3 pounds, 2 ounces

### **Second Place**

Jayson Hudson - 3 pounds, 1 ounce

### **Third Place**

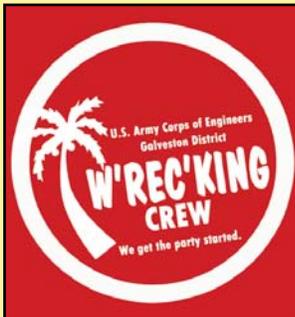
Eddie Irigoyen - 1 pound, 15 ounces



Steve Walls holds up a flounder during the tournament.



**Above:** Winners and Rec Committee members hold up tournament trophies at Flounder Fest.



### **2009-'10 Rec Committee Members**

- Brittany Howell
- Dwayne Johnson
- Nicholas Laskowski
- Lisa Lathem
- Nicholas Perez
- Isidro Reyna
- Kim Roberts
- Michael Robison
- Bernice Taylor, chair
- Kara Vick



**Left:** Lisa Lathem weighs a fish as Jayson Hudson looks on at the first ever Flounder Fest.



# 2009

## Galveston District: A year in review

Galveston District began 2009 by bidding adieu to Hurricane Ike—though the ghost of Ike did shadow the District for a while. In fact, Ike made its last bad impression on the District in January, when the legionella bacteria—the one that causes Legionnaire’s Disease—was found in the Jadwin Building water supply. District leaders aggressively tackled the issue, however, with water treatment and follow-up testing for a six month period, and finally the remnants of Ike were gone, except for projects to repair the damages caused by the storm.

In 2009, the District did not respond to any hurricanes or tropical storms. That left time for many other projects that had a positive impact on the District and the communities served.

In February, the District re-opened the mouth of the San Bernard River, breaking through the surf line in a project that not only relieved a blockage at the Gulf Intracoastal Waterway but also brought new life to communities around the old river mouth. The District also responded to rising waters at Addicks and Barker reservoirs in Houston, monitoring the rain event to ensure the safety of those around the reservoirs.

Later in the spring, the District announced a list of almost two

dozen projects to be undertaken under the American Reinvestment and Recovery Act (ARRA) funding. These contracts, covering both construction and operations and maintenance, provide long term economic benefits to local communities.

The District also undertook Flood Control and Coastal Emergencies repairs to hurricane protection structures, including the Port Arthur and Texas City levees and the Galveston Seawall.

In the midst of all this activity,

everyone took a break to recognize outstanding employees at the June Engineer Day Ceremony. Walking away with the top honors were Fred Anthamatten, Chief of the Regulatory Branch, for Employee of the Year; Willie Joe Honza, Engineering Branch, for Engineer of the Year. Regulator of the Year award went to Andria Davis, Regulatory Branch, and Administrative Professional of the Year to Jill Wiggins, also from the Regulatory Branch. Fern Kirkley, Engineering



**Happy Birthday!** The District celebrated its 129th anniversary March 5. In the photo, Col. David C. Weston looks on as the District’s youngest employee, Jessie K. Chism, a Department of the Army intern, cuts the anniversary cake alongside the oldest employee present at the festivities, civil engineer Isidoro S. Martinez.

# Year in review (continued from previous page)

and Construction Division received a service pin for 50 years of service; 45-year pin went to Arthur J. Janecka, deputy district engineer and chief of program and project management; 40-year pins went to John Hander, Engineering and Construction, and John J. (Jack) Otis, Programs and Project Management.

The autumn brought several high visibility projects that brought much positive coverage of the Galveston District.

First, the Galveston Seawall was rededicated in October in a ceremony on the West End that included the local community and officials. And in November, working with the U.S. Navy, the City of Texas City, the Texas Historical Commission, and several other organizations, the District recovered historical artifacts from a sunken civil war vessel, the USS Westfield.

In retrospect, 2009 was a year that challenged the Galveston District with a heavier-than-usual workload due to the ARRA and hurricane recovery projects, but also brought many opportunities to make a positive impact on our local communities and our nation.



The Corps flag catches the coastal breeze off the Gulf of Mexico at the March 21 celebration of the opening of the mouth of the San Bernard River.

Workers make repairs to one of the rock groins on Galveston Island. The Galveston Seawall and related repairs were funded under Public Law 84-99, Flood Control and Coastal Emergencies.



One set of four pairs of gates at the Colorado River Locks in Matagorda County, Texas. Every eight to ten years, the gates are removed, steel is replaced where needed, and the gates are sand-blasted and painted. Throughout the past 10 years, the first pair of lock gates accumulated nearly 60 tons of marine growth, bringing the total weight to 150 tons. After a four month rehabilitation by Galveston District, they were reinstalled weighing 90 tons. Congress appropriated nearly \$9 million for the project which is scheduled for completion in March or April 2010.

# 2009 Photo Flashbacks

**Right:** Don Carelock, Galveston District Northern Area Engineer, explains Galveston Seawall repairs on the West End to Houston's Fox affiliate during a Seawall media event on May 21. Galveston and Houston area news media reported on the repair work on damages caused by Hurricane Ike as well as public safety precautions for the summer holidays.



**Right:** Andria Davis, a project manager in the compliance section of the Regulatory Branch, Galveston District, was chosen Southwestern Division Regulator of the Year. Davis was cited for her leadership through selfless dedication and tireless effort in performing her duties during 2008.



**Above:** Fred Anthamatten was named Galveston District's Employee of the Year for 2009. Anthamatten has worked for the Corps of Engineers for 32 years, all of which have been with the Galveston District. He led the district's regulatory program to a highly successful year of significant accomplishments, providing guidance in developing processes and training for the newly-implemented regulatory management database. Anthamatten also directed the initiation of an expanded cumulative impact assessment on Galveston Island and has developed a climate of responsiveness, completing on-time responses to both internal and external requests for public information.



**Left:** Jill Wiggins, Regulatory Branch secretary for the Galveston District, was named Administrative Professional of the Year during a ceremony held April 22 at the District's headquarters building.

"Because of Ms. Wiggins' reliability and proactive role modeling, the Galveston District is a more efficient and effective force on the Texas coast," said Casey Cutler, assistant Regulatory Branch chief for the District. "Her attitude and relationships help make the Galveston District a more pleasant place to work."



**Left:** Willie Joe Honza was named Galveston District's Engineer of the Year for 2009. Honza started his career in the district as an office engineer in the Construction Branch and has 20 years of federal service. He negotiated, finalized and issued six architectural and

engineering task orders for the Flood Control and Coastal Emergency contracts. Honza's efforts enabled the district to meet an aggressive schedule to award contracts before the 2009 hurricane season. Due to his tremendous increase in workload, the district's architectural and engineering capacity was exhausted early in the fiscal year; however, Honza was able to borrow additional architectural and engineering capacity from other districts to assure the district met its required mission.



**Above:** Col. David C. Weston and local community officials, rededicated the Galveston Seawall atop completed repair work on the West End of Galveston Island Oct. 6.



**Above:** Record rainfall in the west Houston area in April sent accumulated water levels at Addicks Reservoir to its second highest pool reading in the structure's 60-year history. The rainfall caused the closure of State Highway 6 and county-run parks in both the Addicks and Barker reservoirs.



**Left:** Patricia Brannan, a project assistant in the Galveston District's Engineering Branch, portrayed Rosie the Riveter during a Women's Equality Day program at the district's headquarters

building. "I wanted to pay tribute to my mom, Mary S. King," said Brannan. "When she was younger, she worked during World War II when the men went off to war and there was no one to man the refineries in Port Arthur, Texas, where she lived at the time.

"The women were asked to work in the refineries to replace the men who went to fight in the war," she said. "My mother went to work at the Gulf refinery to help with the war effort, packing part of the refinery where they canned 50-gallon drums and loaded oil to transport to other places. "It was awesome," said Brannan. "My mom was Rosie the Riveter-like."

# District arrivals



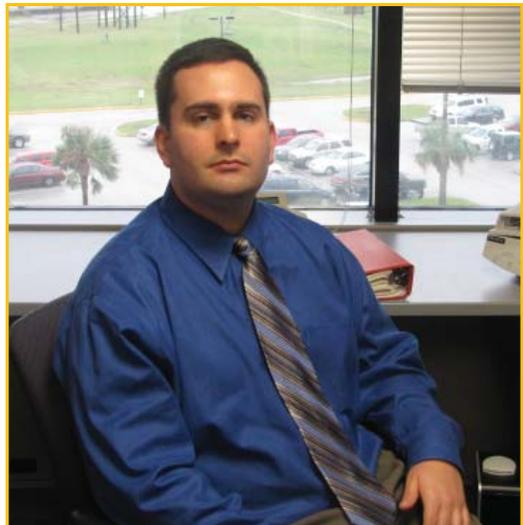
**Aldrich Nichols** joined the Galveston District Oct. 26 as a contract specialist. Prior to joining the District, the Cleveland, Miss., native was a contract specialist for the Army Materiel Command in the FELLOWS program. Nichols is married with two daughters, ages 15 and 26. In his spare time, he enjoys deep sea fishing, reading, watching SEC football and weight lifting.



**Thomas Schmidt** arrived at the Galveston District Oct. 11 as an administrative support assistant in the Regulatory Branch. Prior to joining the District, the Milwaukee, Wis., native worked as a human resources assistant with the U.S. Army Recruiting Battalion. His hobbies include playing disc golf and riding his bike.



**Elois Washington** arrived at the Galveston District Nov. 2 as a contract specialist. Prior to joining the District, the Marshall, Texas, native worked as a senior contract specialist and lead negotiator for the U.S. Army Tank Automotive, Life Cycle Management Command and Tactical Vehicles System Contracting Group in Warren, Mich. Washington is the seventh child of 13 and has one son, Jamar, who attends Tuskegee University in Alabama. In her spare time, she enjoys dancing, going on cruises and reading suspense novels. She is glad to be back in Texas and at the Galveston District.



**Eric Wood** joined the Galveston District Nov. 23 as a civil engineer in the Hydraulics Branch. Wood was born in East Lansing, Mich., but grew up in Houston and graduated from the University of Texas in Austin. Prior to joining the district, he was a senior engineer in Houston for PBS&J. Wood is a Registered Professional Engineer in Texas and Florida and a certified floodplain manager. His interests include sports and music.

# District departures

**Abel Contreras** of the Galveston District's Southern Area Office is scheduled to retire Dec. 31.

**Thomas Benero**, Galveston District's Chief of Contracting, accepted a position as the Chief of Contracting for the Fort Worth District's San Antonio Office at Fort Sam Houston. Benero departed the District in October 2009.

**Bill Hopkins** of the Galveston District's Operations Division is scheduled to retire Jan. 2, 2010.

**Rick Medina**, Galveston District's Planning and Environmental Branch Chief, is scheduled to retire Jan. 3, 2010 after more than 36 years of Federal service.

**Stephen Rodgers** departed the district Nov. 9 to join the Omaha District's Real Estate Division.

## Congratulations!

**Veronica Benavides** welcomed two grandchildren recently. Granddaughter Peyton Marie Reynolds was born to daughter **Kimberley** (Kim) and Steven Reynolds Oct. 29 at 10:55 a.m. weighing 7 pounds, 12 ounces and 20 inches long. Kim is a SCEP employee in the Northern Area Office. Nathan Gregory Benavides was born to son Jerry Benavides Jr and his wife Katie, Dec. 2, weighing 7 pounds, 5 ounces and 21 inches.

**Humberto Troche**, civil engineering technician with the Galveston District, Southern Area Office, and his wife are the proud parents of Christopher Matthew Troche, who was born Nov. 20, weighing 7 pounds, 10 ounces.

**Mike Sells**, civil engineering technician with the Galveston District, and his wife welcomed Emery Grace into the world Nov. 18. She weighed 6 pounds, 11 ounces.



## Hopkins to retire after more than 40 years of service

Bill Hopkins, left, the District's chief of the Project Operations Branch, is scheduled to retire Jan. 2, 2010. Hopkins and his wife, Mary Anne, celebrate at a retirement reception held mid-December at the Jadwin Building along with Johnny Rozsypal, Operations Division chief, and his wife Jane.

# Holiday safety is everyone's business

by Galveston District Safety Office

The winter holidays are a time for celebration, which means more cooking, home decorating, entertaining and unfortunately an increased risk of fire.

Every year hospital emergency rooms treat about 12,500 people for injuries and illness, due to falls, food poisoning and fires associated with holiday decorations, according to the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission.

The Galveston District Safety Office wants you to have a holiday season that is filled with joy and happiness instead of marred with a trip to the doctor's office or the emergency room.

We can prevent senseless injury or fire hazards by planning for safety in advance and by following sound advice about fire prevention. Do not become complacent about the lurking dangers of the holiday activities.

## SIMPLE RULES FOR HOLIDAY SAFETY

### Artificial trees

- Artificial trees are the safest trees for your home during the holiday season.
- Artificial trees should have a "fire resistant" label. This indicates that the tree will resist burning. This does not mean it will not catch fire.

### Live trees

- When purchasing a live tree, check for freshness. A fresh tree is green, needles are hard to pull from branches and do not break when bent between your fingers. The trunk butt of a fresh tree is sticky with resin, and when tapped on the ground, the tree should not lose many needles.
- When setting up a tree at home, place it away from fireplaces and any sources of heat. Heated rooms will dry live trees out rapidly. Be sure to keep the stand filled with water.
- Refresh the tree by making a straight cut, taking one inch off the butt and immediately place in water. This will improve water uptake.

- Place the tree in a stand that can hold at least 1 gallon of water. You should expect the tree to take up additional water. Water the new tree until water uptake stops.
- Always keep the base of a tree in water. If the base dries out, resin will form over the cut end and the tree will not be able to absorb water and will dry out quickly. You do not need anything other than regular tap water. Commercially prepared mixes; aspirin, sugar and other additives introduced into the water are not necessary.

### Candles

- Extinguish all candles when leaving the room or going to sleep.
- Keep candles away from items that can catch fire.
- Use candleholders that are sturdy, will not tip over easily, are made from a material that can't burn and are large enough to collect dripping wax.
- Place candleholders on a sturdy, uncluttered surface and do not use candles in places where they could be knocked over by children or pets.
- Don't place lit candles in windows, where blinds and curtains can close over them.
- Keep candles and all open flames away from flammable liquids.
- Keep candlewicks trimmed to one-quarter inch and extinguish taper and pillar candles when they get to within two inches of the holder or decorative material. Votives and containers should be extinguished before the last half-inch of wax starts to melt.
- Avoid candles with combustible items embedded in them.

### Food safety

- Unattended cooking is the leading cause of home fires in the U.S. When cooking for holiday visitors, remember to keep an eye on the range.
- Keep hot food hot, and cold food cold. Remember bacteria grows between 40 and 140 degrees fahrenheit. Raw and cooked foods should not be kept in this danger zone any longer than absolutely

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# Holiday safety (continued from previous page)

necessary.

- Do not allow foods to sit several hours at room temperature as this will provide time for the growth of disease-causing bacteria. Refrigerate stuffing and other items separately from the bird.
- Do not cool leftovers on the kitchen counter. Divide them into smaller portions so they will cool more quickly and put them in the refrigerator as soon as possible.
- After the meal, immediately refrigerate leftovers such as meat, dressing, gravy or soups in small shallow containers.
- Eat refrigerated turkey within three to four days and stuffing and gravy within one to two days.

## Common Sense Safety

- Smoke detectors are often overlooked but you should check them to ensure they are working during the holiday season.
- Always unplug tree lights before leaving home or

going to sleep.

- Always maintain 3 points of contact when hanging holiday lights.
- If using a ladder, never let your belt buckle leave the horizontal or vertical plane of the ladder. In other words, don't overextend or overreach.
- Outdoor electric lights and decorations should be plugged into circuits protected by ground fault circuit interrupters (GFCIs). Portable outdoor GFCIs can be purchased where electrical supplies are sold.
- Before using lights outdoors, check labels to be sure they have been certified for outdoor use.
- Use no more than three standard-size sets of lights per single extension cord. Make sure the extension cord is rated for the intended use.
- Fasten outdoor lights securely to trees, house walls, or other firm supports to protect the lights from wind damage. Use only insulated staples to hold strings in place, not nails or tacks. Or, run strings of lights through hooks (available at hardware stores).

# Happy Holidays!



**Clockwise:** Natalie Rund, Kenny Jaynes, Cheryl Jaynes, Charles Stimmel and Christy Farmer prepare to enjoy a meal at the District's holiday party at Moody Gardens December 11.

Bill Wise and wife Paula Wise enjoy the party's festivities.

Lee Coe and wife Susie along with Michelle Matte catch the holiday spirit at the District's annual party.





# *T'was the Night for Fire Safety*

author unknown

'T  
w a s  
the night  
b e f o r e  
Christmas,  
when all through  
the house ★ Not a  
creature was stirring,  
noteven a mouse. ★ When  
down through the chimney,  
all covered with soot ★ Came  
the "Spirit of Fire", an ugly galoot.  
★ His eyes glowed like embers, his  
features were stern ★ As he looked all  
around him for something to burn. ★ What  
he saw made him grumble-his anger grew  
higher ★ For there wasn't a single thing that  
would start a good fire. ★ No door had been  
blocked by the big Christmas tree ★ It stood in the  
corner, leaving passageways free. ★ The lights that glow  
brightly for Betty and Tim ★ Had been hung with precau-  
tion, so none touched a limb. ★ All wiring was new, not a  
break could be seen ★ And wet sand at its base kept the tree nice  
and green. ★ The tree had been trimmed by a mother insistent ★  
That the ornaments used should be fire resistant. ★ The mother had  
known the things to avoid, ★ Like cotton and paper and plain celluloid.  
★ Rock wool, metal icicles and trinkets of glass ★ Gave life to the tree - it  
really had class. ★ And would you believe it, right next to the tree ★ Was a  
suitable box for holding debris ★ A place to hold wrappings of paper and string  
★ From all of the gifts that Santa might bring. ★ The ugly galoot was so mad he  
could bust ★ As he climbed up the chimney in utter disgust. ★ For the folks in this  
home had paid  
close attention ★  
To all of the  
rules of good  
fire prevention.