

Electronic Town Hall



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Better beaches

Galveston District nourishes South Padre Island beaches

Residents and local business owners of Texas' famed Spring Break destination are enjoying better beaches this March thanks to a dredging and beach nourishment project completed by the Army Corps of Engineers, Galveston District.

A contract was awarded December 2009 to Weeks Marine Inc. for dredging of the inside jetty channel across the Gulf Intracoastal Waterway into the main channel near South Padre Island, Texas, and then up the Port Isabel channel to the turning basin.

"This is a double win for the residents, businesses and Spring Break goers in the Padre Island area," said Kenneth (Chip) Worley, Brownsville Office Resident Engineer with the Galveston District, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. "Not only do we take care of our mission of keeping America's waterways navigable, but we also turn that mission into a benefit for homeowners, tourists and businesses."

Approximately 200,000 cubic yards of dredged material were placed on Padre Island beaches as a result of this operation, according to Worley.

"This beach nourishment project, called beneficial use, employed environmentally and economically



Dredged material is placed on the beaches of South Padre Island, Texas, as part of a beneficial use project completed by the Galveston District in March. (USACE photo)

responsible ways to utilize dredged materials to benefit local communities," said Worley. "Through beach nourishment, we improved eroded coastlines through the placement of this dredged material."

Work began mid-February and was completed March 12 in order to avoid both the turtle nesting season and Spring Break.

The contract award was for \$16,134,750.

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From the commander



Colonel David C. Weston

The first quarter of this calendar year has been nonstop for the Galveston District, and we have achieved a number of great things! From contract awards to recruiting events, from beach nourishment to levee repairs--all of our missions have been front and center the last few months. In February, we observed our 130th District Anniversary, quite a milestone which underscores the deep and historic roots we have with coastal Texas. In fact, the beach nourishment (South Padre Island) and levee repairs (Port Arthur) come close to spanning the entire Texas coastline--a small sampling of our very diverse and geographically spread out District mission.

One project that took quite a bit of February was the Addicks and Barker Dam Safety public outreach. Addicks and Barker have been designated extremely high risk, primarily due to their locations in what is now developed areas of Houston, in addition to structural concerns in a couple of areas. However, they are not in imminent danger of failure, a fact that we briefed to federal and local officials, news media, neighborhood associations, and the public. You can find out more about the status of Addicks and Barker, including watching a video starring

some of our finest, at www.AddicksAndBarker.info.

We were honored to be visited by the Chief of Engineers, Lt. Gen. Van Antwerp, this month. His visit gave us the opportunity to hear his thoughts about our Corps and our future direction, as well as recognize a few of our many, many outstanding District employees. It was a great way to end the month and to revitalize us for what lies down the road.

Chief of Engineers visits Galveston

Lt. Gen. Robert L. Van Antwerp, U.S. Army Chief of Engineers and Commanding General of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, visited the Galveston District March 22-23. The general received district updates, held a Town Hall meeting for employees and honored outstanding team members as well.

Courtney Brodbeck, Public Affairs assistant, receives a castle coin from Van Antwerp for her participation in the chief's Town Hall meeting March 23.



Become a Fan of the Galveston District on Facebook



Mark Williams, a budget analyst in the Resource Management Office, became a Fan of the Galveston District on Facebook March 26.



www.facebook.com/GalvestonDistrict

Corps employees, family members, sponsors and the public can now visit the Galveston District's official Web presence on Facebook, www.facebook.com/GalvestonDistrict. Visitors to the District's Fan Page can stay updated with the latest videos, news releases, photos and stories.

Employees can use this capability on government computers to communicate with friends and family during personal time, such as after-duty hours or lunchtime, but must ensure that such contact is of a reasonable nature. Performance of official duties should not be adversely affected.

Classified and sensitive information must be safeguarded at all times in all online communications and must follow Information Assurance and Operations Security Regulations.

Additionally, government e-mail addresses should not be used to establish personal accounts.

For more information on Responsible Use of Internet-based Capabilities, visit the Social Media folder in the Public Affairs Shared Files or contact the Public Affairs Office.

Galveston District reboots to Microsoft Office 2007

The Galveston District is upgrading from Microsoft Office 2003 to Microsoft Office 2007; the process will begin March 29 and is scheduled to last thru April 11. Over the next four to five weeks, employees will receive a download of Microsoft Office 2007 from the Server Center Configuration Manager (SCCM) system.

Microsoft Office 2007 is the most recent version of the Microsoft Office System, Microsoft's productivity suite. Office 2007 includes numerous features, the most prominent being the entirely new graphical user interface called the Fluent User Interface, referred to as the Ribbon User Interface. The ribbon replaces the menus and toolbars, which have been the cornerstone of Office since its inception, with the tabbed toolbar known as the ribbon.

"Microsoft Office 2007 is not as difficult as people think, the training aids provided on the ACE-IT Web site will help immensely with the process of learning the system," said Richard Curphey, customer relationship manager for ACE-IT.

What Should You Expect

When software applications are delivered to employees' desktop via the SCCM system, they will appear in the same manner as security updates. Simply

click the bubble icon to begin the installation. Training Resources

The weekly e-mail distributed by Curphey will contain a link to interactive guides for every product within the Office suite that will highlight the visual differences between Office 2003 and Office 2007. These training courses are highly recommended in order to learn the new 2007 system.

Details about the Deployment

District employees will be able to click and install the package at their own convenience for the first week of the deployment, March 29-April 3. The second week of the deployment, April 5-11, the installation becomes mandatory and will automatically execute.

The total time for the package to install is expected to be 45-60 minutes. The package will automatically reboot your machine three times. Employees should be prepared to save all open documents prior to running the installation.

Though the visual differences between Office 2003 and Office 2007 can be overwhelming, with

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New CAC machine in Jadwin building proves to be cost-efficient

The Galveston District will soon have the resources to produce Common Access Cards (CAC) in the Jadwin building. The CAC machine proves to be not only convenient for the District but cost-efficient as well.

The CAC is a United States Department of Defense smart card issued as standard identification for active-duty military personnel, civilian employees, reserve personnel, and other non-DoD government employees. The CAC has many purposes which include, controlling access to computer networks, enabling users to sign documents electronically, encrypt email messages, and enter controlled facilities.

Prior to obtaining the CAC machine, Galveston employees had to drive about an hour to Ellington Field in Houston.

“The major benefit of the CAC machine is that our employees do not have to spend a whole day out of the office, which was costing the district around \$100,000-\$120,000 per year,” said Edwin Mason, emergency management specialist for the Army Corps of Engineers, Galveston District.

This is the first time that the Jadwin building has had a DEERS/RAPIDS (CAC)

machine. On certain days, before Hurricane Ike, employees could obtain a CAC through the Coast Guard when they were not using it.

In order for the Galveston District to attain the CAC machine, Mason had to contact the Army Human Resource Center (HRC) in St. Louis to see if they had a machine available since they only provide a limited number of machines throughout the world.



Gus Marinos, chief of the Emergency Management Office for the Galveston District, demonstrates how the new CAC machine will operate. (Photo by Courtney Brodbeck)

“Once we obtained the go ahead we were directed to HRC Manpower in Washington D.C. and were instructed by them to get the training for the Site Security Manager (SSM) completed for a primary and an alternate while we completed the paperwork,” said Mason. “Once this was completed

“It was well worth the time and effort getting the machine, it’s a great savings to the District.”

***-Gus Marinos,
Emergency Management Office chief***

and the ACE-IT requirements were accomplished the CAC machine was delivered and installed at no cost.”

The CAC machine will be operated by a part-time contractor.

At this time, the machine will only produce CAC and reset pins; eventually it will manufacture retirement cards.

The CAC machine is located on the first floor near logistics and will operate Mon, Wed and Fri from 8:30-noon and 1-4:30 p.m.; employees must call (409) 766-3955 to schedule an appointment. To find out when the CAC machine will be operational, call (409) 766-3957.

“It was well worth the time and effort getting the machine, it’s a great savings to the District.”

said Gus Marinos, chief of the Emergency Management Office for the Army Corps of Engineers, Galveston District.

Addicks and Barker Dam Safety takes center stage in Houston

When the Galveston District's Addicks and Barker dams were built in the 1940s in far west Harris County, the area was mostly farm land on the outskirts of the City of Houston. The dams were built in response to devastating floods that hit Houston in 1929 and 1935, and their purpose was—and still is—to protect areas downstream of the dams along Buffalo Bayou. Addicks and Barker have served the area well for more than 60 years, but changes brought about by residential development, industrial growth, and the effects of a multitude of factors on the structures themselves created a new set of circumstances for Addicks and Barker.

As a result of a recent Corps of Engineers evaluation of its dams nationwide, several issues were identified at Addicks and Barker, designating them as extremely high risk. This designation is primarily due to their close proximity to the Houston metropolitan area and the potential consequences in the event of a dam failure, according to Colonel David C. Weston, Galveston District commander.

"First and foremost, these dams are not in imminent danger of failing," Weston said. "Addicks and Barker are essentially dry reservoirs the great majority of the time, and they undergo daily, weekly, and annual inspection and monitoring. The fact that they protect and are a part of the nation's fourth largest metropolitan area makes the consequences in the event of a dam failure unacceptable. The Corps' primary objective is to maintain public safety by ensuring that the dams we own and operate are safe and risks to the public are minimized."

With the designation also came the need to inform officials and the public. Briefings were provided to

Congressional staff representatives, local Houston, Harris County, and Fort Bend County officials, neighborhood associations in the Houston area, and the Houston news media in early February, and four

public meetings were conducted to inform those living in the areas both downstream and upstream of Addicks and Barker. A web site was also created to ensure that current information is available to residents and property owners in the affected areas.

Weston also noted during the briefings and public meetings that this designation gives Addicks and Barker priority funding for any repairs and studies.

"The Corps of Engineers assessment actually moves Addicks and Barker to the front of the line for funding for any necessary repairs and studies," he said. "We are looking at two areas of concern, the outlet structure and the ends of the dams, and have already begun short term solutions, called Interim Risk Reduction Measures, to limit the risk. We will also be looking at long term solutions under a Dam Safety Modification Study.

"Addicks and Barker have been protecting the Houston metropolitan area for more than 60 years,

and the Corps of Engineers is working with our local Flood Control and Emergency Management partners to ensure that they continue to do so," Weston said.

For more information, visit the Addicks and Barker web site, www.AddicksAndBarker.info.



Colonel David C. Weston, Galveston District commander, briefs local officials about Addicks and Barker reservoirs at the Texas National Guard Armory located in Barker Reservoir. (USACE photo)



Richard Long, Natural Resources Manager for Addicks and Barker reservoirs, discusses the Corps' Dam Safety Program during one of four public meetings held in Houston in February. (USACE photo)

Profiles in Giving: The bonding of nature, horses and kids

by Kristine Brown
Natural Resources Specialist
Galveston District

On March 11, students and teachers from Robert E. Lee High School in Houston joined the Harris County Constable Precinct 5 Mounted Patrol and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Galveston District, for the first ever Aquatic Science Adventure at Noble Road Pond located in Barker Reservoir's George Bush Park.

The students were part of the Learning for Life Champions and Transition programs, which is a subsidiary of the Boy Scouts of America. The school-based programs are presented as progressive lessons that assist educators in preparing youth for a productive role in the workplace environment and provide a special needs curriculum that teaches youth with mental disabilities and challenges the life skills they need to achieve self-sufficiency.

In 2009, the Champions and Transition curriculum modified educational objectives to expand environmental concepts by introducing animal science. This year, deputies, under the direction of Sergeant D. Gaston, used their professional and personal connection with horses to entertain more than 36 local high school students at Barker Reservoir.

"It was a wonderful outlet for the kids to dispel their fears and anxieties and to form a connection with the horses," said Kristine Brown, a park ranger at Barker Reservoir.



The students also enjoyed a fishing event, hosted by the Corps of Engineers, Addicks Project Office, which focused on water safety and outdoor activities.

"It gives



A student from Robert E. Lee High School learns how to approach, pet and feed a horse at the first ever Aquatic Science Adventure at George Bush Park hosted by the Galveston District's Addicks Project Office. (Photo by Kristine Brown)

the students something to look forward to and get involved with and it makes them happy to be outside and be a kid," Brown said.

According to Ken Jacob from the Learning for Life Champions and Transition programs of the Sam Houston Area Council Boy Scouts of America, these programs flourish as an educational model in and around the Greater Houston area.

"Their success and the lessons learned in fully implementing the programs continues to bring families something they eagerly want, developmental benefits that their children can learn from, enjoy and carry with them for the rest of their life," Jacob said.

"Equally important is the fact that this level of program growth and activities would not be possible without the generous commitment of time, resources, spirit, and dedication from local partners and volunteers dedicated to providing special needs youth with education, opportunities and life time experiences," he added.

Students join Bobber, the Corps' Water Safety mascot, Harris County Constable Precinct 5 Mounted Patrol and Learning for Life Champions and Transition programs of the Sam Houston Area Council Boy Scouts of America at the Aquatic Science Adventure in George Bush Park. (Photo by Kristine Brown)

Spotlight on the Galveston District's Brownsville Resident Office

by Isidro Reyna
Galveston District Public Affairs

Tucked away at the southernmost point in Texas is a small Corps of Engineers office with a large mission – a mission which keeps America's waterways open for navigation and provides construction for local governmental agencies.

With a full-time staff of nine employees and an additional augmented staff, the Galveston District's Brownsville Resident Office makes it possible for industry to succeed in the Rio Grande Valley by dredging miles of channels and waterways in South Texas and building essential facilities for its partners.

"The Brownsville Resident Office is one of two resident offices that fall under the District's Southern Area Office," said Resident Engineer, Kenneth (Chip) Worley. "Our area of operation spans across Texas' Rio Grande Valley."

The Resident Office is responsible for dredging approximately 62 miles of the Gulf Intracoastal Waterway from Port Isabel to Mud Flats, which is north of Port Mansfield, according to Worley.

"We've recently dredged 35 sections from Port Isabel to Mud Flats and have also dredged the Port Mansfield cut," said Worley. "We completed dredging of the South Padre Island Jetty Channel which provided beach nourishment to the island and we're continuing on to the Brownsville Ship Channel, a project that will remove shoaling responsible for a 36-foot draft restriction and restore the channel to its 44-foot authorized depth."

The Brownsville Resident Office maintains approximately 21 miles of deep draft channel in Brownsville, which supports industrial and



The Galveston District's Brownsville Resident Office, located at the tip of South Texas, plays a key role in America's well being by keeping waterways open for navigation and providing construction for local governmental agencies. (Photo by Isidro Reyna)

manufacturing industry and 28 miles of shallow draft channels in the Harlingen Channel, which primarily supports agricultural industry. Additionally, the office oversees dredging of the Port Isabel Small Boat Channel, which is approximately 5 miles of shallow draft and the Port Isabel Turning Basin, a deep draft channel.

"For this area, the ports bring an enormous amount of commerce and jobs," said Worley.

Worley is responsible for supervising field staff, project engineers, quality assurance representatives and acts as the administrative contracting officer on the construction contracts for the Resident Office's area of responsibility.

One of those contracts includes the construction of 34 miles of border fence along the Texas and Mexico border in Cameron County. The Resident Office is

responsible for maintenance contracts covering portions of border fence maintenance in Hidalgo and Cameron counties, supporting the Department of Homeland Security within the U.S. Border Patrol's Rio Grande Valley Sector.

"We also support the Port Isabel Detention Center," said Worley. "We have a constant business relationship with the detention facility -- it's a big compound with several dormitories, medical facilities, power generation equipment, administration and their own public works. It's good to be in the area to meet with them routinely and understand what their needs are."

The Brownsville Resident Office has overseen the construction of Border Patrol stations and has projects in both Rio Grande City and Falfurrias, Texas. The Resident Office is also managing a \$12 million project to construct a U.S. Army Reserve Center in Brownsville.

Galveston District reboots continued from page 3

preparedness and training employees-will feel more comfortable using the system. The interactive guides and demos will give the district a better indication of what to expect once the upgrade is complete.

To access the interactive guides and demo, visit the links below.

The link will take you to the ACE-IT Online Web site for information and training on Microsoft Office 2007.

<https://aceit.usace.army.mil/education/Pages/MSSOffice2007.aspx>

Microsoft's Web site is also provided, which includes an Interactive Guide for Excel 2007, Outlook 2007, PowerPoint 2007, Access 2007, and Word 2007. <http://office.microsoft.com/en-us/training/HA102295841033.aspx>



by Galveston District Safety Office

How often do you meet someone who was surprised to find out about an activity the Corps of Engineers is involved in? If you are like most of us, it happens quite often. Here is an easy one for you. Did you know that the Corps of Engineers does water safety educational outreach? A common reaction is "What does a group of engineers have to do with saving the lives of boaters and swimmers?" The answer is more than most people would believe.

The history of the Corps' early involvement in water safety is not clearly recognized, but the Corps participated in early associations with other agencies concerned with water safety as far back as the early 1950's. More than 50 years ago, Corps safety experts were among the founding fathers of the National Water Safety Congress.

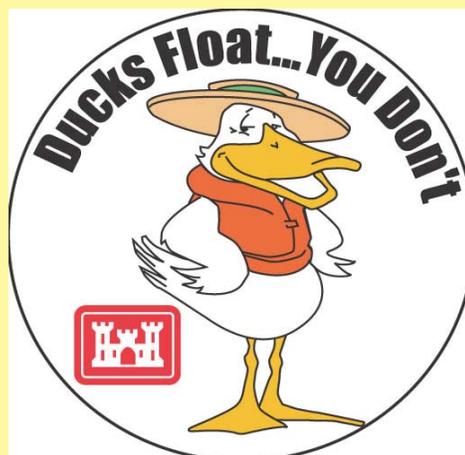
Ever since park rangers were hired for lake and waterway project staffs, it is certain that they became key players in public safety and assistance programs. Larger divisions, such as the South Atlantic Division and South West Division, were among the first to put together comprehensive plans to decrease public fatalities and accidents.

During the mid-1970's the Chief of Engineers noted that nearly 500 lives a year were being lost at Corps lakes and waterways. Recognizing that more effort

was needed to improve public safety in Corps areas, he issued the first official directive for the Corps to intensify their water safety educational efforts.

In 1986, the start of a centralized Corps National Water Safety Program began, when Operations became an advocate for a centralized program product development. The product development oversight was given to headquarters, while program coordination was assigned to the Natural Resources Management Office. The intent of centralizing the program was to improve the professional quality of products and to assure that materials were made available unilaterally throughout the Corps.

In 1994, an agreement was negotiated with Walla Walla District, Northwestern Division, to establish a National Operation Center (NOC) for Water Safety. Water safety product development and program oversight tasks shifted to the NOC. This move was seen as an opportunity to maintain the centralized program while allowing for more grassroots level involvement. A product advisory committee was created to provide input into the program and improve field level involvement. This program setup proved to be beneficial and is still operating successfully today.



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Water safety program continued from previous page

Know the Facts

Don't Become Another Statistic

- Nationwide, more than 800 people lose their lives in boating accidents each year.
- Nearly 9 out of 10 of these victims were not wearing a life jacket.
- More than 4,500 people are injured each year in boating accidents.
- Approximately \$29 million in property damages are attributed on an annual basis to boating accidents.
- Alcohol is involved in over 50% of these accidents.
- Nearly all drownings occur within 10 feet of safety.
- Non-swimmers often drown because of poor judgment, for example wading in non-designated area or relying on an inflatable device that is not Coast Guard approved.

Boating Safety Tips

- Check and heed weather forecasts
- Keep clear of swimmers and designated swimming areas
- Please don't drink and drive while boating, alcohol is involved in over 50% of all boating fatalities.
- Take a safe boating course
- The best protection against drowning is to wear a life jacket
- Whether inside or outside your boat, an accumulation of carbon monoxide may harm you.

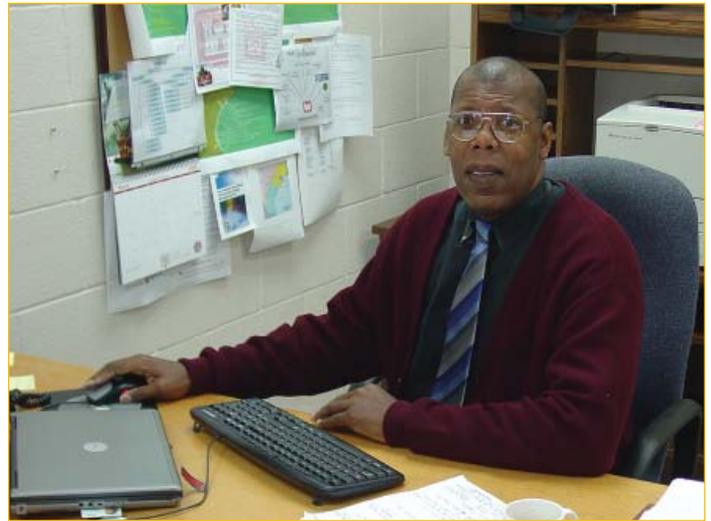
Swimming Safety Tips

- Never swim alone
- Do not dive into a lake—whether from a boat, bridge or shore
- Keep a watchful eye on children at all times
- Learn basic non-swimming rescue techniques
- Swim in designated areas
- For more info please visit: <http://bobber.info/>



Galveston District Arrivals

Tyrone Crear arrived at the Galveston District Jan. 19 as an area engineer for the Southern Area Office. In this position, Crear will provide contract administration and quality assurance for civil works and military construction. He will also provide surveillance of federally authorized channels to assure project depths are maintained. Prior to joining the District, the Lake Providence, La., native worked as an area engineer for the Mazir-e-Sharif Area Office, Afghanistan District. Crear has relatives in San Antonio and Dallas and his hobbies include watching sports.



Edgardo Perez-Cosme joined the Galveston District Feb. 5 as a project engineer for the Sinton Army Reserve Center and assistant project engineer for the Kingsville Army Reserve Center. Prior to joining the District, the Bayamon, Puerto Rico, native worked as a project engineer and office engineer for the Baltimore District at Fort Belvoir, Va. In this position, he assisted with the Missile Defense Agency Headquarters project. He is married with one son. Perez-Cosme's parents and siblings live in Puerto Rico, except one brother that lives in San Antonio and is active duty in the Army. In his spare time, he enjoys traveling, scale modeling and reading. Perez-Cosme is also part of the National Guard and is proud to join the Corps family at the Galveston District.

Michael Rawls arrived at the Galveston District Jan. 25 as a retired annuitant engineer for the Northern Area Office. In 2005, Rawls was a construction manager for the Construction Branch, and he also performed disaster work as a rehired annuitant after Hurricane Rita for the District in 2006. He and his wife Susan celebrated their 30th wedding anniversary and they have two children, Benjamin and Angie. His hobbies include playing golf and traveling.



Mark Garza joined the Galveston District Jan. 4 as a biologist in the Environmental Branch. A graduate of the University of Texas at San Antonio, Garza has a bachelor's degree in biology and a master's degree in wildlife and fisheries from Texas A&M. Prior to joining the District, the San Antonio native worked for the U.S. Forest Service as a fisheries biologist at Klamath National Forest in northern California. He is married and his interests include reading, hiking, gardening and making BBQ.



Gary Chow joined the Galveston District Jan. 19 as a technical specialist/manager. In this position, he has overall responsibility for the District's geotechnical and coastal engineering programs. Prior to joining the District, the Hong Kong, native worked at Arcadis US, Inc. in Houston as a principal engineer. Chow is married with two sons and enjoys home projects, music, jogging and fishing.

James Nicholson arrived at the Galveston District Dec. 21 as a construction control representative for the Southern Area Office in Corpus Christi. Prior to joining the District, the Gulf Breeze, Fla., native worked as a safety superintendent for a general contractor in Fla. He is married and has a 10-year-old daughter. In his spare time, he enjoys fishing and outdoor activities.



Departures

Russell Malahay departed the District's Wallisville Lake Project Office Jan. 2 to work for the Little Rock District as a natural resources specialist.

Condolences

Sincere condolences to **Luis Saenz**, whose mother, Yolanda R. Saenz, passed away Feb. 16.

Sincere condolences to **Norma Garcia**, whose mother, Antonia "Toni" Serrato, passed away Jan. 29.

Congratulations

Cindy Jones was selected for the GS-12 Budget Analyst position in the Resource Management Office.

Diana Laird was selected as chief, Planning and Environmental Branch. Laird brings a variety of experience to the position, most recently as chief of the Planning Section.

Molly Morrison, daughter of **Marcus O'Donohoe**, Bay Area Office, and **Sandra Morrison O'Donohoe**, General Engineering, married Michael Filidei on March 13, 2010, at the Haak Winery in Santa Fe, Texas. The couple honeymooned in New Orleans and will reside in Texas City, Texas.

Parting shot



Ken Adams, Small Business Office, Colonel David C. Weston, Galveston District commander, Dolan Dunn, chief of the Planning, Environmental and Regulatory Division and Karl Brown of the Navigation Branch, pose for a group shot at the Texas Sentinels Foundation Scholarship Golf Tournament held March 25 at the South Shore Harbor Country Club in League City, Texas.

The Texas Sentinels Foundation Scholarship was created to benefit qualified members of the U.S. Armed Forces severely injured in the line of duty on or after Sept. 11, 2001.

The program helps servicemembers readjust to civilian life and prosper in their hometowns or new communities in Texas.