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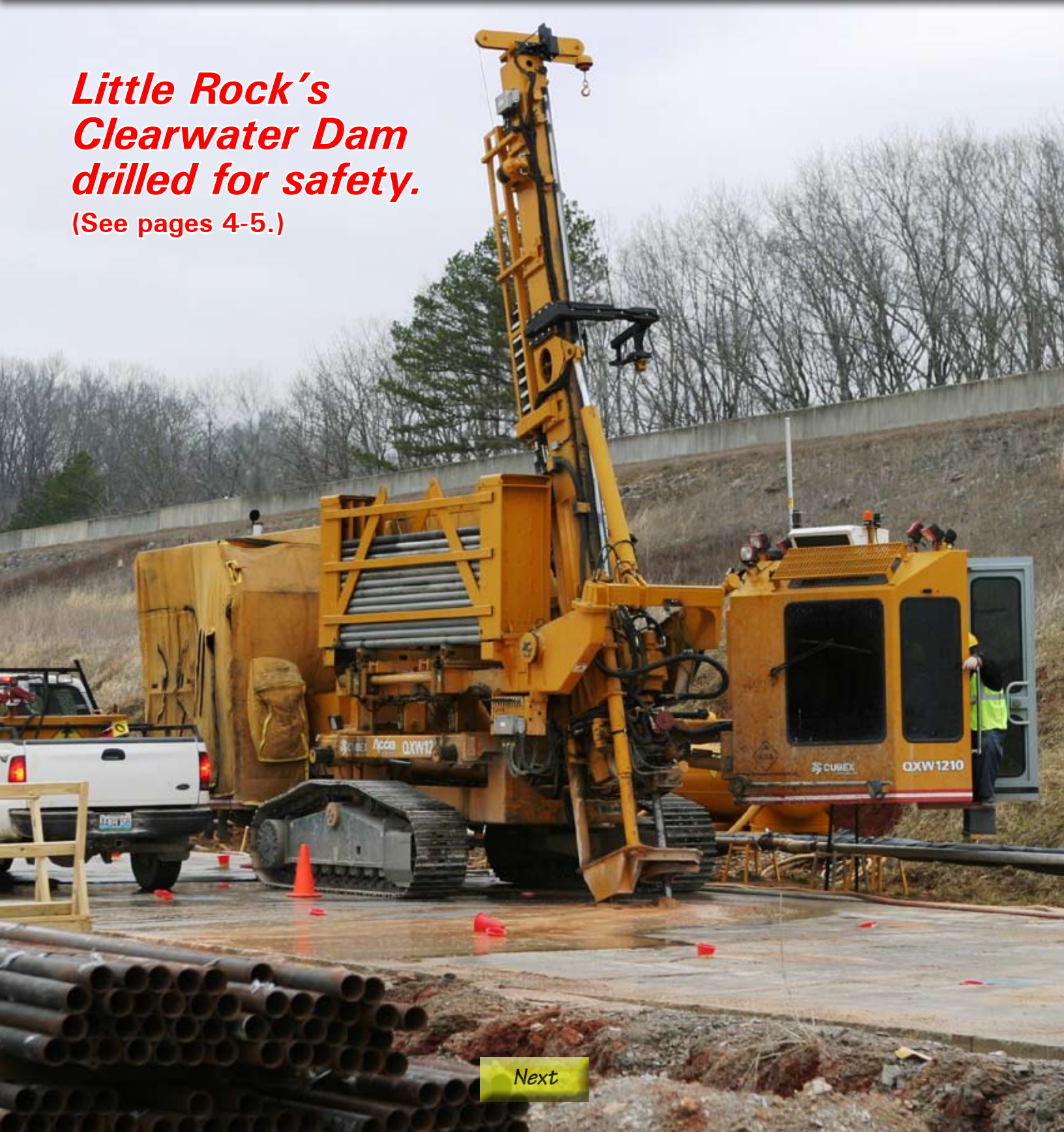

Little Rock's Clearwater Dam drilled for safety.

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Next

Pacesetter

Serving the men and women of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Southwestern Division

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For more information about the ***Pacesetter***, or to make a submission, call your local Public Affairs Office.

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On the cover: Advanced Construction Techniques contractors use a Cubex drill to bore holes down to the rock foundation of Clearwater Dam that they then will fill with grout. (Photo by Tammy Moody.)

Spring is here – Stop to smell the flowers

Brig. Gen. Kendall P. Cox
Commander, Southwestern Division

Spring is in the air and hopefully everyone is getting a chance to enjoy the beauty the sun, flowers, and budding trees present to us each and every day. Of course, with this sun normally comes our fair share of rain but so far we have been fortunate to avoid the dangerous situations of the last few years. Let's hope and pray things stay a little calmer as time progresses toward the summer.

Spring normally brings with it the excitement of new life, spring break activities, and the pending thrill of summer vacation and the end of another arduous school year. I for one am thrilled at these pending events as I will get to experience the enjoyment of my son getting married the beginning of May followed by my daughter graduating from college two short weeks later (and you can bet I'll be glad when May is over!!!).

Add to that the pending injection of funds for the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act, coupled with the largest program ever in the history of the Southwestern Division, and one can clearly see that FY09 will be a year to remember for all of us in the SWD Family.

I'm at what I had originally hoped would be the halfway point of my time as your commander. I've been blessed to be a part of the SWD Family for the past 20 months, and every day I continue to pinch myself for being so lucky.

As I travel around the region I am still filled with excitement and awe when I get to see our projects and the great team members who do so much with so little, and yet always accomplish the mission at a standard of excellence and with a smile. Our nation and those in Congress continue to challenge us with more and more demands but your "can do" attitude and selfless, dedicated service resonate loudly for others to see and appreciate. Your performance and willing desire to go the extra mile truly embody what I recently heard a colleague describe and is applicable to all of you – you are AmeriCANs!!!

Bluebonnets, the state flower of Texas.

SWD will be the site of many conferences over the next few months. It will be an opportunity for us to show off just how wonderful life is in the Southwest. I encourage all who will be a part of these activities to find ways to show our teammates all the great things we are doing, as well as escort them around our great cities to see the sites. The senior leadership of USACE knows how much you guys "rock" (I happen to be your biggest fan) but these conferences will give us a chance to show them the real deal.

And I plan to continue to beat the drum when I am in DC these next few months to ensure our leadership and those we serve in Congress fully understand our requirements and capabilities so we can bring to the people of the region as much as possible to meet their needs.

I hope all had a blessed Easter as we celebrated the resurrection of our Lord and new life all around us. Get out, smell the roses and get your pictures taken among the bluebonnets (or flowers of your choice) and thank someone for what they do. Say a prayer for our troops and Civilians, and their loved ones, who are deployed to serve our nation and those in need around the world. And, as always, I thank each of you for what you do every day to make America and this place we call "home" a better place to live. God bless all of you, and I hope to see you soon as I continue to travel around the region to visit you and your projects.

Pacesetters – Building Strong!!

PS: Go Tar Heels!!!!!

Little Rock's Clearwater Dam major rehab moving along

Cutoff wall planned between the dots

Cubex drill and grout tents at Clearwater Dam Major Rehab.

Little Rock District's Clearwater Dam, located near Piedmont, Mo., has experienced seepage problems since it was completed in 1948. In 2003 those problems came to the forefront after the discovery of a sinkhole on the upstream face of the earthen dam. Clearwater Dam has since been categorized as one of the six highest risk dams in the Corps.

As a result, a study was launched that determined construction of a cutoff wall was the solution. Meanwhile, the district started implementing several interim risk reduction measures to significantly lower the possibility of a catastrophic dam failure.

"Specific structural measures include substantial grouting in the vicinity of the discovered sinkhole, exploratory drilling to confirm the quality of the core material, and abutment and foundation rock grouting to reduce seepage below the embankment dam," Geologist Mark Harris said.

These interim measures have reduced seepage now, and they will provide added seepage reduction beneath the more permanent solution that is in the works. Harris said the selected remedy consists of a subsurface concrete cutoff wall along the full length of the dam, extending from the top of the upstream seepage blanket down through the embankment and into the bedrock.

"We will put a concrete wall in a deep trench excavated in the soil and rock, and the result is a seepage barrier wall that should virtually cut off the subsurface seepage flow," he explained.

The project is being constructed in two phases and is expected to cost in excess of $200 million and be completed in 2013.

Phase I is the exploratory drilling and grouting program to determine the condition of the bedrock underlying the dam, grout the rock, help define how deep the cutoff wall needs to be constructed and form a composite seepage barrier with the cutoff wall.

The first phase is being accomplished using two contracts, both of which were awarded to Advanced Construction Techniques, LTD, of Kettleby, Ontario. The first contract, awarded in January 2006 and completed in October 2007, generally completed the drilling and grouting through the embankment and a short distance into the rock.

"The second contract, Phase Ib, was awarded in August 2007 and is scheduled to be completed by September," said Clearwater Construction Office Acting Resident Engineer David Howell. "This contract will complete drilling and grouting to the design depth in the rock, which will be deeper than the cutoff wall.

"For the Phase Ib exploratory drilling

See "Clearwater Rehab Update" next page

Clearwater rehab update

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Geologist Mark Harris updates area emergency personnel on the Major Rehab project. (Photos by Tammy Moody.)

and grouting, ACT continues to drill and grout the foundation rock. They are working three shifts, five days per week," Howell said. "They are using four grout plants, three rock drills, and eight grouting carts to do the work, and to date, grout equivalent to 2,700 dump trucks has been placed."

Harris said, "The results of this phase will allow the district to prioritize the work for the Phase II contract to address the most critical areas first. This is an important mitigating measure as it allows the net risk to decline on the project in the most efficient manner."

That Phase II is the cutoff wall itself, which was awarded to Bencor-Recon, Joint Venture of Dallas in September 2008, with work expected to start later this year.

Harris added that the district also has implemented numerous non-structural risk reduction measures for Clearwater Dam.

"These include more aggressive operational measures of the lake, emphasizing emergency preparedness (plans and exercises), keeping the public informed, increasing the frequency of reading and analyzing instrumentation, geophysical surveys and pre-positioning stockpiles of materials and contracts that could be used in an emergency," he explained.

"We've also initiated surveying efforts to support the creation of more detailed inundation maps and to analyze event specific operational changes to limit peak pool elevation and duration."

Harris added, despite the items implemented to date that significantly reduce the possibility of a catastrophic event, residual risks will remain at Clearwater Dam until the permanent solution is completed.

"These risks come from two primary sources. First, because of the type of foundation the dam was built on, a karstic environment, there will always be a threat of additional features being present that could lead to other sinkholes forming. We do believe this risk to be relatively low."

The second area of residual risk is the threat of an extremely high pool event exceeding elevation 575, which overtops the impervious clay blanket. District and other technical personnel recognize there is a higher risk if this were to happen.

"In the spring of 2008, after significant rainfall in the drainage basin, the pool elevation rose to elevation 563 and remained high for several months," Harris said.

"During this time, we started around-the-clock surveillance with personnel monitoring piezometers and the embankment and downstream areas for seepage. The dam performed well during the high water event with less downstream seepage because of the ongoing grouting.

"But, full confidence in Clearwater Dam's performance will not be restored until after the completion of the seepage cutoff wall in 2013," he said.

"We are currently pursuing every reasonable measure to shorten construction, but in the meantime the district has a comprehensive plan in place for virtually every conceivable scenario that identifies and manages the risks that remain. Adhering to and executing this plan should allow Clearwater Lake to remain operational while we work the permanent solution."

An ACT contractor uses an Intellicart to pump grout into holes drilled into the rock by a Cubex drill. This grout will reduce seepage below the embankment dam.

(Editor's note: The information contained in this article was compiled from technical documents prepared by Little Rock District and Mark Harris.)

Fort Worth District employees recognized for saving lives

By Melanie Ellis
Pacesetter Staff

Humble. Reserved. Selfless.

These are just a few words used to describe nine Fort Worth District employees recognized as the 2008 Castle Hero Award winners at the Commander's Field Conference.

The Castle Hero Award is a new district level award created, at the direction of District Commander Col. Christopher W. Martin, to recognize life saving actions taken by team members in the course of their duties.

According to incident records from the past 22 years, more than 30 park visitors were identified as being in life-threatening situations, and could have lost their lives had it not been for the direct actions of the district lake staff.

"There may have been even more lives saved that we don't know about," said Charles Burger, the chief of Operations Division, at the conference. "Most of our rangers are the modest type and tend to take the 'It's just part of the job' mentality."

In 2008, six visitors found themselves relying on the training, responses and actions of district team members to save their lives.

After reviewing all incident reports from last year, nine individuals were selected to receive the Castle Hero Award. Their stories are different but the results are undeniable in that without their immediate response, six families could have lost loved ones.

Marcus Schimank, site manager, Granger Lake, was on duty when he was approached by a man carrying a limp 20-month-old toddler. Schimank took the child and determined that he was not breathing and began to administer rescue breathing. He was able to successfully ventilate the child who was later determined to have experienced a heat-related emergency that caused respiratory arrest and was expected to make a full recovery.

"I've always felt like you need to be ready to respond to the unexpected things that life throws your way," said Schimank. "When you're around a lake that has public visitation, you can assume that you will need to be prepared to respond to an emergency."

Park Ranger Brad Arldt receives a Castle Hero award from Col. Christopher W. Martin. (Photos provided by Fort Worth.)

Steven Ridlehuber and Tommy Clark, both park rangers at Bardwell Lake, were on duty when Ridlehuber noticed an inflatable lounge raft drifting offshore in high winds. He contacted Clark and they launched the Corps patrol boat and drove to the area where the raft was last seen. A man on a personal water craft was trying to retrieve the raft that was blowing freely.

The rangers searched to mid-lake and observed two persons in the water calling for help. They were able to rescue the two individuals, and their two dogs, from the water. The victims said they had fallen asleep in the raft and while trying to get back to shore became separated from it. They reported they could not have stayed afloat much longer and would have drowned had the rangers not rescued them.

Wright Patman Lake Forester Matt Seavey and Park Ranger Brad Arldt were contacted by the Cass County Sheriff's Office with a report of four boaters stranded on the lake in high winds.

Seavey and Arldt reported to the scene and were met by the deputy sheriff who had rescued two children from the lake in his personal boat but did not have room for the two adults. Seavey and Arldt launched the Corps patrol boat and in high winds, waves and complete darkness located the two remaining victims.

Neither of the victims had a functional life jacket, and one of their flatboats

See "Castle Heroes" next page

Frank Carter, John Nikodem, and Claude Spanhanks from Sam Rayburn Powerhouse, each received a Castle Hero Award for saving the life of a co-worker.

Castle Heroes

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had already been capsized by the waves. They were already in the early stages of hypothermia, but Seavey and Arldt were able to get them into the Corps boat and safely back to shore.

Lavon Lake Park Ranger Matt Falkner was contacted at home to respond to a boater in distress call that a local fire department could not respond to because of high winds. Falkner recruited a Corps volunteer to help him launch the patrol vessel.

The lake manager was able to maintain phone contact with the distressed boater who reported he was mid-lake with no working motor or life jacket and in a flat-bottomed boat that was taking on water.

Falkner and the volunteer, in total darkness and high winds and waves, located the boater several miles from his initial location. Falkner successfully rescued the man, towed his boat to a nearby ramp and cited him for operating a vessel without the required safety equipment.

Sam Rayburn Powerhouse Operator Frank Carter, Senior Electrician John Nikodem and Senior Mechanic Claude Spanhanks responded to a friend and co-worker in need when he collapsed in the control room and was rendered unconscious.

Nikodem, who recognized the seriousness of the situation immediately, retrieved the Automatic Electronic Defibrillator, assembled it, and then he and Carter attached the electrode pads to their co-worker. The AED indicated that a shock was needed and Carter applied the shock and then the AED indicated that Cardio Pulmonary Resuscitation was needed. Carter began chest compressions while Spanhanks gave rescue breaths. Their friend's color returned shortly after CPR began and he became responsive.

They continued to care for their co-worker by assisting the hospital staff by downloading the AED data recorded, for use by the attending cardiologist. Their co-worker was treated and released from the hospital.

"We would hope that our visitors do not put themselves in dangerous situations, and we also hope that our own team members are not sricken with injuries or medical emergencies," Burger said during the awards presentations.

"We do know that either situation could happen at any time. We have to keep our people well trained, well equipped, and available to respond so we can ensure that their own courage and abilities enable them to do what is needed during an emergency."

Supporting cast, innovation crucial to border fence project

By Jim Frisinger
USACE Engineering and Construction Support
Fort Worth

For Corps of Engineers real estate personnel, this would be land acquisition like no other.

A single project work area, 1,800 miles long, that would require dealing with a maze of international, federal, tribal, state and local agencies controlling miles of tracts. Hundreds of private parcels – with wobbly title histories, poor land maps and many reluctant sellers – would be needed.

Imagine doing it so construction could be completed within 24 months.

That's the tall order that faced the border fence real estate team when it first met with the Department of Homeland Security in late 2006. The goal: secure the right to survey, then build, more than 600 miles of fence along the Southwest land border with Mexico for the DHS Secure Border Initiative. After the Sept. 11, 2001 terrorist attacks, the fence would be one tool to deter it from happening again.

It would be the first time in United States history that a comprehensive border fencing program would be launched – something President Theodore Roosevelt envisioned 102 years ago. In 1907, he proclaimed, as an anti-smuggling tool, a federal reservation for a 60-foot-wide strip of public land just north of the Southwest land border in California and the territories of Arizona and New Mexico, now known as the Roosevelt Reservation.

Meeting the two-year deadline mandated by Congress required an extraordinary push by the Corps' Fort Worth-based Engineering and Construction Support Office, which long has worked in support of the Border Patrol.

The land acquisition team's playing field was scattered across the borderlands of Texas, New Mexico, Arizona and California. And back in October 2006 when President George W. Bush signed the Secure Fence Act, the Border Patrol had not yet finalized the "footprint" needed for the fence. Design work needed real estate personnel to secure legal rights of entry.

Blake Bryant, ECSO's only real estate person, would need help. He was joined early on by Paula Johnson-Muic, a real estate acquisitions specialist and attorney detailed from the Southwestern Division in Dallas. They knew then that one of the four states, Texas, would be a challenge – most of the privately-owned border parcels needed for the fence project were here. Public lands in the other three states made access and control easier.

"We all knew that in Texas the land records were abysmal," Bryant said. "Not only were many deeds not recorded, but GIS [Geospatial Information Systems] mapping was poor.

"We also had a feel for the public opposition to the congressional mandate. There had been a lot of demonstrations across Texas," Bryant added. "We knew we were in for some difficult times."

In early 2007, the real estate team emphasized three points to meet the deadline:

1. Make decisions on the fence footprint early.
2. Minimize the fence modules to be built in Texas.
3. Streamline procedures. To help, the ECSO-led team offered to perform the entire range of real estate services needed.

See "Rapid Real Estate" next page

Rapid Real Estate

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As it turned out, the footprint design did not come early. So the acquisition team had to be flexible – initially preparing to seek control of a 150-foot-wide swath along the border. The team later was able to scale back when fence designers determined 60 feet would be enough.

U.S. Customs and Border Protection also wanted to put the fence where it was "most operationally needed, which is smart, but, unfortunately, it meant that a lot of it would be in Texas near population centers," Bryant said. The agency also wanted to retain hands-on authority over real estate.

"In fairness to them, it was first time they had done this type of extensive land acquisition, and of course, they were accountable to Congress," Johnson-Muic said.

But the third point, speeding up procedures, came quickly:

• A large real estate team was mobilized – first from districts touching the borderlands, then nationwide. Nearly 150 Corps professionals would help, including administrative, GIS experts and mappers. A dozen rehired annuitants – seasoned retired real estate professionals – came on board. Bryant and Johnson-Muic credit Corps leadership – up to the chief of engineers, Lt. Gen. Robert Van Antwerp – for helping secure this breadth of talent quickly.

• Real estate chiefs in each of the Corps Southwestern border districts (Fort Worth Sacramento, Albuquerque and Los Angeles) were charged with managing the work in their areas.

• An interagency legal SWAT team was formed and armed with new technology, including Engineering Knowledge Online. They were able to share, process and win approval for legal documents quickly. A model condemnation package was formulated, with the Department of Justice to handle filings. A stripped-down interagency team was formed with a limited number of attorneys given full authority to act. Turnaround time was cut drastically.

• They exercised a little-known section of the Uniform Relocation Act – the bible of procedure for federal land acquisitions – to allow administrative waivers.

From left: George Triggs, Louisville District; John Buford, Texas landowner; and Ricky Villagomez, Galveston District check a map for the border fence's route. (Photo provided by Fort Worth.)

• Veteran Corps real estate personnel were told to abandon decades of administrative procedure to meet deadline constraints.

"It was kind of chaotic. People were struggling," Johnson-Muic said. "This was not a normal process. They didn't have the title. They didn't have the surveys. They were talking to the last owner of record."

Some family estates never had been probated. In one Texas case, matriarch Rita Yzaguirre died in 1933, and the land remained on the records in her name without mention of land conveyance to following generations. The real estate team scrambled to find the great-grandchildren, who were her heirs. (They found the majority, 10, but were only able to reach agreement with one heir holding two-thirds of the property rights.)

The real estate team also had to impress upon others the difficulties of real estate transactions in an adversarial situation. People, whose only experience with real estate was a friendly realtor in a willing-seller transaction, didn't understand that this would be very different.

"You're not approaching people who are selling a house. They don't have [the land] on the market. They might not want to sell a little strip to you," Johnson-Muic said.

Because of political sensitivities, condemnation letters had to be cleared by the White House.

By fall 2008, the project had secured the last of the necessary real estate in California, Arizona and New Mexico, letting contractors loose. But in Texas, some condemnation cases are still tied up in court.

U.S. District Judge Andrew Hanen takes a strict view of the valuation and possession procedure. Typically, the government gains possession within weeks of filing and the only thing left to decide is fair compensation. But Judge Hanen has insisted on hearings to allow landowners ample time to voice their objections – leaving the government without possession in 75 cases. By year-end 2008, the government had filed 296 declarations of takings in the four states – 91 percent in Texas (where only about 17 percent of the fence will be built).

But even as some real estate bumps remain, most of the fence did get built by Dec. 31, 2008 – more than 578 miles according to the Department of Homeland Security tally. By March 2, 2009, 610 miles were up and the dirt was still flying.

Tulsa holds workshop for military

Tulsa's Commander Col. Anthony Funkhouser hosted the fifth annual Base Civil Engineer/ Directorate of Public Works workshop at Fort Sill Jan. 20-21. Attendees included Lt. Col. Vaughn, BCE, Altus Air Force Base; Randy Butler, DPW, Fort Sill; Cathy Scheirman, deputy BCE, Tinker AFB; and Terry Wafford, DPW, McAlester Army Ammunition Plant.

Items of discussion included the military program at Fort Sill, contracting initiatives, economic stimulus legislation and early contractor involvement.

Customer survey results were reviewed, and continuous improvement discussions focused on design and construction quality challenges including scope tradeoff to stay within programmed amount, Type 5 Military Construction, coordination with Centers of Standardization, and heavy workload, including stimulus bill additions.

Tulsa District Commander Col. Anthony Funkhouser and Lt. Col. David Vaughn, base civil engineer for Altus Air Force Base tour Fort Sill. (Photo provided by Tulsa District.)

Lessons learned and after action reviews were also shared by the installations. Participants were able to tour Fort Sill and visit several projects that Tulsa District is constructing.

SBI Tactical Infrastructure Team receives award from CBP

In an awards ceremony March 13 in Washington, D.C., the Secure Border Initiative Tactical Infrastructure Team received a Special Recognition Award from Customs and Border Protection. The event was chaired by the Acting CBP Commissioner, Jayson Ahern, and the guest speaker was the Secretary of Homeland Security, Janet Napolitano.

In his opening remarks, Ahern outlined the 2008 successes of CBP, including the completion of the border fence with its partner, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers.

The award was presented to the Washington SBI TI team, including the Southwestern Division's Director of the Engineering and Construction Support Office, Eric Verwers, and Col. John Gessner, ECSO's Military Deputy for CBP Projects.

Eric Verwers is congratulated by David Aguilar, Chief of the Border Patrol. (Photo provided by SWD.)

The citation read, "This team is recognized for working tirelessly toward the Department's goal of approximately 670 miles of fencing completed, under construction or under contract along the Southwest border by the end of calendar year 2008, which has proven to disrupt illegal cross-border activity and provides additional safety and security to CBP's agents and officers. To accomplish this, TI government employees and contractors worked together to overcome several hurdles while briefing and responding to hundreds of stakeholders including officials on Capital Hill and individual landowners. They accomplished all this while managing a budget of $2.1 billion, remaining focused on the end state and maintaining a professional office environment.

Dallas Levee Floodway System receives unacceptable rating during inspection

By Melanie Ellis
Pacesetter Staff

Based on the most recent Periodic Inspection Report, completed March 31, the four levees in the Dallas Floodway Levee System joined the list of more than 200 other levees across the nation that received an unacceptable rating.

The Fort Worth District released the PIR for the Dallas Levee System that noted several deficiencies requiring the City of Dallas to conduct additional investigations to determine if these deficiencies pose a threat to the integrity of the system.

The Dallas Levee System, commonly known as the Trinity River Corridor Project, is made up of four levees and associated drainage infrastructure totaling approximately 30 miles. Assistant City Manager Ramon Miguez briefed the Dallas City Council on April 1 to explain the rating and the way forward.

The announcement of the rating was difficult for some to hear but all council members publicly thanked Corps representatives for being honest and forthcoming with the rating information.

"Public safety is the number one priority for the City and we will fix the levee system to protect our citizens," said Dallas Mayor Tom Leppert. "The City of Dallas appreciates the Corps being forthcoming with the report findings."

Miguez and other city members met with Kevin Craig, acting director, Trinity River Corridor Project, Fort Worth District, to determine the most effective and efficient way forward.

Dallas had two federally authorized projects in place to address problems with the levees before the PI was conducted. Now those projects are being reviewed to determine what mitigation efforts, if any, can be conducted under those projects.

"Our first step is to determine which of the unacceptable items actually pose a threat to the integrity of the levee system," said Craig. "We are going to do that by conducting additional investigations on those items. Some of the investigations will have to be paid for by the city and others may be incorporated in the federally authorized projects."

The importance of the next steps, to determine the scope of work, the costs associated with that work and determining how the work can be funded has been reinforced by a primary concern of citizens, "Who's going to pay to fix the levees?"

"While the city is taking a lead role in developing the scope of additional investigations, it's too early to speculate on how all of the remediation measures will be funded. A comprehensive levee remediation plan will be developed first, to identify the appropriate actions needed to restore the levees," said Craig. "Afterward, a strategic implementation plan will be prepared showing if and how these measures can be implemented in conjunction with the other ongoing projects that make up the Trinity River Corridor Project."

Craig and a team made up of Corps and city members have already begun working on these issues to ensure the priority missions of public safety and restoring the levees are accomplished.

Corps, community celebrate restoring mouth of the San Bernard River

By Martie Cenkci
Pacesetter Staff

About 400 people from along the Texas coast gathered near the area called River's End in Brazoria, Texas, March 21. Pontoons and speedboats ferried people to the spot where the San Bernard River now empties into the Gulf of Mexico. The celebration that brought together a congressman, state and local officials, news media and hundreds of residents and well wishers marked the completion of a river restoration project and the realization of a dream—thanks, in large part, to the Army Corps of Engineers.

"It looks pretty good, doesn't it?" Col. David C. Weston, Galveston District commander asked the crowd looking out to the Gulf of Mexico. "It was a real team effort, and I applaud you."

The project began a couple of years ago when a local community group, the Friends of the River, approached local and state officials about the problems caused by the blockage at the river's mouth.

The mouth of the San Bernard River had closed at its original location and migrated eastward because of sand accretion. This choked off development and recreation along the length of the river, and also diverted the water flow into the Gulf Intracoastal Waterway eastward, exiting through the Brazos River Flood Gates.

The increased velocity of the current there created problems for commercial navigation. About 30,000 barges cross the intersection of the Brazos River and the GIWW, making it one of the busiest along the waterway.

When the river's mouth closed, the water merged with the Brazos River. It caused steep drop-offs at the Brazos River during heavy rains. But after about a year of planning and coordination and 6 weeks of dredging, the waters of the San Bernard and the Gulf of Mexico once again mingled.

In January 2007, Galveston District announced it would undertake restoring the mouth under its authority to maintain safe waterways for commercial navigation. The project called for cutting a 10-foot deep, 100-foot wide opening that ran almost 8,500 feet.

Hurricane Ike and potential environmental issues pushed the project into 2009, with a $2.27 million contract awarded in January.

On Feb. 22, the dredging crew broke through the surf line and the two bodies of water joined. Dredging finished up around mid-March, and the Friends of the River brought out the hot dogs and champagne for a March 21 celebration.

Among the 400 celebrants were government and industry officials from all levels, a sure sign of the successful blending of benefits to the local community, government and the navigation industry.

"You can't find a better model for community activity and how to go about harnessing the expertise and wherewithal of government to get something like this done," Weston told the crowd. "You are all great Americans."

Judging by the applause and cheers that greeted Weston's remark, the crowd returned the compliment.

Art Janecka, the deputy district engineer for Project Management, heads to the celebration. (Photo provided by Galveston.)

Tommy Greenfield of Havana, Ark., tries one of the desks normally shared by two to three students at a time in the tiny six-classroom Hilal Al Bajari School in Al-Muthanna Province. This school has dirt floors, no electric lighting, fans, heat or air conditioning. A modern eight-classroom school is scheduled to open there in September, and School Headmaster Salem Jaheel says the community appreciates the quality facility the United States is providing.

The first grade entryway at a primary school in rural Al-Muthanna Province does not provide much headroom for headmaster Salem Jaheel. USACE recently delivered several boxes of school supplies for the 120 students attending class there.

Helping Iraqi children with school supplies, toy donations

Story and photos by Norris Jones
Gulf Region Division , South District

TALLIL, Iraq— Because of the generosity of individuals and groups in America, the Gulf Region Division, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers in Iraq is doing more than just overseeing the construction of essential service projects in Iraq.

"We're going out in the community distributing school supplies, clothing, and toys to some very grateful Iraqis," said Construction Representative Tommy Greenfield from Gulf Region South district in Tallil.

"It touches your heart when you're out there seeing their smiles," said Greenfield, who deployed from Little Rock District.

His fellow stateside employees have sent a number of packages filled with donated items.

In addition, church, school and community groups near his home have stepped forward as well.

"They all want to help and their outpouring of support has been heart-warming and much appreciated," he noted. "We're making a difference."

He, along with Air Force Master Sgt. Robert Spencer and Greg Werncke, a USACE civil engineer, visited the rural six-classroom Hilal Al Bajari School in Al-Muthanna Province March 18 where more than 120 students ages 6-12 are enrolled.

School Headmaster Salem Jaheel pointed out a modern eight-classroom facility is scheduled to open there in September.

"We're very grateful for what the United States is doing for us," the headmaster said.

Those interested in supporting the effort are asked to mail clothes, shoes (any size), school supplies, and toys to the following address: USACE GRS, Toys/Donation Closet, COB Adder, Tallil, Iraq APO AE 09331.

(Southwestern Division is seeking volunteers for deployment to the Gulf Region Division. For more information, contact your district's Emergency Management Office, or Mary Thomas, Deployment Coordination Administrator, 469-487-7115, or (Mary.G.Thomas@usace.army.mil)

National Water Safety team visits, teaches, learns, plays

By Mary Beth Hudson
Pacesetter Staff

What do you do in the Dallas area? If you're the Corps of Engineers National Water Safety Advisory Committee, you take advantage of the location for your annual meeting and visit the Hal D. Malone Water Safety Complex at Lake Texoma.

Tulsa District's premier water safety complex has four outdoor classrooms – three carved out of the woods and one on water. It was built by the Texoma staff and has been a favorite destination for area fourth grade field trips since its opening in 1993. At the complex, rangers hold outside classes on the fundamentals of water safety. All classrooms are fun and "hands on."

Subjects include the effects of hypothermia, importance of properly-sized life jackets, how to identify buoys, and safe rescue techniques. Each student experiences the crippling effects of cold water and of alcohol consumption (by wearing "fatal vision" goggles). They also get to operate battery-powered mini boats.

"This is huge for my team – to be able to experience the whole spectrum of this facility," said Lynda Nutt, manager of the National Operations Center for Water Safety.

Grady Dobbs, lead park ranger at Texoma, arranged to have 60 Colbert, Okla., fourth graders at the complex the day 13 members of the national committee visited. Simultaneous classes are held in the four classrooms, and all students rotate through each class.

"This is a time-consuming effort that takes many rangers away from their daily duties, but if it saves one life, it's time well spent," Dobbs said. "Our hope is that from our efforts, maybe the members of the national team will take some of these ideas back to other parts of the country and make impacts there as well."

Lake Texoma Park Ranger Mark Boling demonstrates the importance of a properly fitting life jacket with a fourth grade student from Colbert, Okla. (Photos provided by Tulsa.

Nutt said, "The team was given the opportunity to assist the lake's outstanding park rangers during the event, which gave the national team members a great hands-on experience rather than just a site tour."

In addition to Dobbs, Texoma rangers teaching at the complex that day were Cindy Buchanan, Mark Boling, Josh Wingfield, Dwaine Mcbee, Phil Newton, Isaac Martin and Billy Williams.

"Everyone was quite impressed with the design of the facility and the wealth of information provided to the kids, not to mention the fun," Nutt added.

She said the Lake Texoma staff also held a frank discussion with the national team on the challenges of maintenance and of keeping the facility operational.

Mike Stegall, the Southwestern Division representative on the national team, is its newest member. He is a natural resource specialist at Fort Worth's Sam Rayburn Lake in Texas. "This week, I'm a sponge," he said. "I feel very honored to be able to be with the water safety team and learn from them and take back. I'm looking forward to seeing what others in the division do because we all do the same things differently. I've already found a couple of things to take back, to either duplicate or modify."

See "Hands on safety" next page

Hands on safety

continued from previous page

The Corps National Water Safety Advisory Committee was formed to provide grassroots perspective on issues, materials and initiatives of the National Operations Center for Water Safety.

Members of the committee represent every division of the Corps, as well as headquarters' Operations, Safety and Public Affairs Offices.

The team was holding its annual products and program meeting at Lewisville Lake in the Dallas area when it made its side trip to Lake Texoma and its uniquely designed water safety complex.

The National Water Safety Advisory Committee is:

Lynda Nutt, Chair and Manager of the National Operations Center for Water Safety

Rachel Garren, Natural Resource Specialist, Saint Louis District -- Policy Advisor;

Madeline Morgan, Chief, Safety, Fort Worth District -- Headquarters Safety Representative

Gary Foster, Natural Resources Specialist, Kansas City District -- Partnership Representative

Dana Matics, Park Ranger, Wilmington District -- SAD Representative and National Seamoor Coordinator

Mike Stegall, Park Ranger, Fort Worth District -- SWD Representative

Robert Moreno, Senior Park Ranger, Sacramento District -- SPD Representative and Bilingual Team

Deb Norton, Park Ranger, Walla Walla District -- NWD Representative (Pacific)

Karla Zeutenhorst, Park Ranger, Omaha District -- NWD Representative (Omaha/Kansas City)

Steve Patchkofsky, Environmental Compliance Coordinator, New England District -- NAD Representative

Julie Stone, Park Ranger, Pittsburgh District -- LRD Representative

Pam Doty, Lead Interpretive Park Ranger, Saint Louis District -- MVD Representative

Students react to the cold water in a hypothermia exercise. Lynda Nutt, national water committee manager, stands ready with paper towels while Lake Texoma Park Ranger Cindy Buchanan times the exercise.

Happy Birthday Galveston

Galveston District celebrated its 129th anniversary March 5 with a town hall meeting, which included a district update and question and answer session hosted by District Commander Col. David C. Weston, followed by a year-in-review anniversary video.

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. Martinez has been with Galveston since 1962. (Photo by Travers Powell, Galveston District.)

Tulsa's flooding has happy ending

By Edward Engelke
Pacesetter Staff

Funds made available through the fiscal year 2008 Emergency Supplemental Appropriations Bill have enabled Tulsa District to make health and safety repairs to damage caused by the 2007 floods. These operations and maintenance improvements to the damaged facilities were critical to getting projects fully open and safe for the public.

In early 2007, Tulsa District lake and project managers were fighting the effects of a drought - a drought spanning several preceding years. Lakes were at their lowest points, many approaching a critical level where local communities would lose access to their usually dependable supplies of water.

Then the rains came. It didn't take long for the district's lakes to fill. Several filled to the top of their flood storage pools. Rain, up to 18 inches in Oklahoma and as much as 40 to 45 inches in southern Kansas, saturated the ground. It rained a record 20 of the 30 days in June. The result of too much water was immediately seen. High water forced the evacuation of campers as facilities were inundated.

Although the facilities were designed to withstand brief periods underwater, flooding at many projects continued for weeks. When the water receded, the damage was obvious, and, in many cases, the district did not have the resources to make needed safety and operational repairs. It had to close certain areas at lakes where safety was an issue.

District project employees and volunteers did what they could to make repairs "on a dime." On Friday, June 29, 2007, Col. Anthony Funkhouser took command of the Tulsa District. The following day he was visiting storm damage throughout the district. With the information on the extent of the damage to the district's 33 lakes, he met with local and state officials, and congressional staff members to inform them of that damage.

The August 2007 Pacesetter article, "It's Either Feast or Famine, Flood or Drought," stated that, "It is estimated that it will take $40.5 million to repair damage and return lakes and recreational facilities to usable conditions."

That was a sum Tulsa did not have available. The passage of the 2008 Emergency Supplemental Appropriations Bill has helped make this a story with a happier ending.

Elk City Lake - Outlet Repair - Before

and Near Completion

Rip rap rock replacement repair at Outlet Channel, Elk City Lake, Independence, Kansas: Using emergency supplemental funding of $130,000, the Corps placed 5,390 tons of 24-inch and 36-inch rock to repair the channel from scouring damage caused by the 2007 and 2008 periods of high water releases. Timely repairs were necessary to protect the outlet channel from further scouring and loss of materials that would have the potential to put the dam at risk.

Worth mooing about ...

SWF team attends holistic management training

By Melanie Ellis
Pacesetter Staff

Members of Fort Worth's Operations Division attended a training course in Abilene, Texas, to learn more about Holistic Management to address vegetation issues at regional lakes.

Holistic Management is a natural, environmentally friendly land management practice that uses land, grazing animals and water in ways that mimic natural processes.

"The program provides the potential of appropriately managing the vegetation at Corps lakes while improving the soils and lands," said Navarro Mills Lake Site Manager Alton Hurley.

Grazing and agricultural leases have been used for many years at Corps lakes to manage vegetation, but many are limited in length and are based on continuous grazing.

"When cattle or other grazing animals remain on a piece of land for extended periods of time, they tend to seek out the most desirable vegetation and graze that out first," Hurley said. "That leaves many of the less palatable plants to propagate and increase to the point that they may eventually take over that area."

Native prairies evolved under a much different system with large herds of buffalo migrating across much of the continent.

"The herds were less selective of the vegetation that was consumed as they moved across the country," he added.

Large populations were concentrated on relatively small amounts of acreage for a very short period of time. The shorter the duration of grazing allows time for the plants and land to recover. Continuous grazing systems do not provide enough recovery time.

Grazing systems used by the Holistic Management International, who conducted the training course, are intensive, short duration grazing systems. These systems more likely replicate the conditions under which most of the North American native prairies evolved.

There are a few concerns with the Holistic Management approach. The short duration grazing systems are labor and management intensive because herds have to be moved frequently.

"Most livestock producers do not have the time, resources, or willingness to deploy such a labor and management intensive program," said Hurley.

It is argued that the pros outweigh the cons. HMI advises that the increased productivity and improved sustainability of the land is worth implementing the program.

Susan Haney, an environmental stewardship business line manager with Three Rivers Region, is exploring the possibility of establishing a partnership with HMI that may provide the additional resources necessary to implement the program on a trial basis.

"We are excited about the proposed agreement to work with Holistic Management International in improving the health of our public resources," she said.

Holistic practices are said to create economic, environmental and social benefits by improving soil health, increasing biodiversity of rangelands and pastures, improving wildlife habitat, optimally using rainfall and conserving water, reversing desertification in dry environments, reduced costs; and removal of existing, and emitting less, carbon monoxide due to reduction of crop and forage burning.

Tulsa answers the call

Col. Anthony C. Funkhouser
Commander, Tulsa District

We are more than halfway through this fiscal year and have accomplished more than we would have imagined this time last year. Many would have said it would be impossible to do that much work in a compressed time schedule and with our existing number of employees. We are executing our annual program, our FY08 and FY09 supplemental funds for flood damage repairs and on top of that the FY09 American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (Stimulus) funds.

Somehow, Tulsa District has answered the call and risen to a level never before seen. We still have a long way to go, but, through perseverance and teamwork, we are prevailing. I want to thank everyone up front for what you have done so far and what you will accomplish before the end of this FY. I couldn't be prouder of being part of this team!

What we accomplish this year will be an incredible legacy to this district. When I arrived in Tulsa nearly two years ago I was confronted with the challenges of our aging infrastructure with a large backlog of required repairs and record floods that strained our structures and caused additional damage. These additional but limited funds have reinvigorated our maintenance program and allowed us to reduce the backlog of maintenance, address many safety improvements and improve the operations of our systems.

Future Corps employees, our partners and the public will all benefit from our hard work this year. I want to thank everyone in advance for your efforts, your hard work and your patience to make this a record year for our district and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers.

That said, I want to recognize and highlight a few recent accomplishments around the district.

Tulsa District hosted the National Dam Safety Officer training from March 17-19. Nancy Crenshaw did a great job coordinating it. Jim McHenry, Wade Anderson and Randal Mead provided outstanding presentations that included a tour of the Keystone Dam.

On March 27 we hosted a Keystone Lake emergency flood scenario exercise with leadership from all the local communities and agencies. The comments were very favorable as everyone will use the information to update their Emergency Action Plans. Our Level 2 Leadership Development Program team of Laura Long, Maria Wegner-Johnson, Kimberly Jackson, Daniel Morales, Kerri Stark, Amanda Peters, Robert Booker and Mike Kerr coordinated and hosted the event. Thanks for a phenomenal effort.

The Chief of Engineers has asked us to improve our technical competence as part of the USACE Campaign Plan. This issue we have additional recognition for Steve Isaacs, a Mechanical Engineer, Civil Design Section, Design Branch, who became a Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design Accredited Professional Feb. 7. Also Rory Wale, an architect assigned to the Military Design Section, Design Branch, became registered as an Interior Designer by the State of Oklahoma Feb. 10.

John Lambert, Chief of Army/Formerly Used Defense Sites Section; Hazardous, Toxic, and Radioactive Waste Branch received a "Project Leadership Award" for his support of the Garland Creosote Superfund project during the annual Environmental Protection Agency Superfund Remediation Conference in Monterey, Calif. in February. Lambert was nominated for the award by EPA Region VI in part for his "superb leadership and proactive foresight in managing the Garland Creosote Superfund Site."

I also want to recognize our teams in Real Estate and Counsel who worked on the Skiatook Cross Timbers project recently. Pam Kelly and Keith Francis worked with the State of Oklahoma's Department of Environmental Quality and others to facilitate a May ribbon cutting event that will include many VIPs. In addition, Ida Lafayette and Doug Beck worked with the General Services Administration to finalize the last land tracts at Candy Lake to the National Park Service who will then deed the land to the State of Oklahoma Department of Wildlife Conservation. The assignments of these tracts will complete the Water Resources Development Act directed nature of transferring and subsequent deeding of the land to the State of Oklahoma. Great job!

See "Many accomplishments" next page

Little Rock District gets new deputy commander

Maj. Marvin L. Griffin is the new deputy district commander of the Army Corps of Engineers Little Rock District. Griffin replaces Lt. Col. Don Balch who retired from active duty.

He comes to Little Rock from Fort Stewart, Ga., where he served with the 3rd Infantry Division. He has held a number of command and staff assignments both stateside and abroad.

As deputy district commander, Griffin is second in command of district civil works activities, which span a 35,000-square-mile area covering about half of Arkansas and the southern part of Missouri.

The district plans, builds and operates water resource projects in the Arkansas, White and Little River basins to provide flood damage reduction, hydropower generation, navigation, water supply, recreation, environmental and other uses directed by Congress.

Griffin's responsibilities also include construction and real estate support to military installations, as well as Army Reserve and recruiting offices for all branches of the military. The district also supports Middle East military and reconstruction efforts.

Little Rock District's new Deputy Commander, Maj. Marvin Griffin, listens to Brig. Gen. Kendall P. Cox's opening remarks during a recent meeting. (Photo by Tammy Moody.)

Griffin graduated from the United States Military Academy at West Point in 1994 and was commissioned into the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers.

He holds a Bachelor of Science Degree in Civil Engineering from West Point and a Master of Science Degree in Civil (Structural) Engineering from the Georgia Institute of Technology. He is a Licensed Professional Engineer in Missouri.

Griffin is a graduate of the Engineer Officer Basic and Advanced Courses, Combined Arms and Services Staff School, and the Command and General Staff College, as well as Airborne, Air Assault, and Ranger Schools.

His awards and decorations include the Bronze Star Medal, the Meritorious Service Medal, the Army Commendation Medal, the Army Achievement Medal, the Kosovo and Iraqi Campaign Medals, the NATO Medal for Kosovo, Parachutist Badge, Air Assault Badge, and Ranger Tab.

He is married to the former Alison Parrish of Hendersonville, N.C., and together they are the proud parents of two sons, Benjamin and William.

Many accomplishments

continued from previous page

Operations and Contracting have been focused on awarding the supplemental funds to repair our projects from the previous year floods. We expect to see a lot of work this year in many of our dams and even our parks that don't always get the funding they need.

Our Operations Emergency Management Team also worked hard to support Little Rock District during the recent Ice Storm. A special thanks to that team who included Kerri Stark, Connie White, Paul Bisdorf, Michael Wingfield, Kim Shirley, Richard Thomas, Stephen Timmons, Andy Kmetz, Richard McCanlies, Jim Miller, Diane Cianci, Patrick Mclaughlan, Laura Long, Jan Hotubbee, James Hendricks, Kent Dunlap and Richard Spencer.

Special congratulations to our Federal Women's Program Award Recipients. They included Glenda Blakeslee for Administrative Employee of the Year, Ed Rossman for Mentor of the Year, and Diane Fortelka for Woman of the Year.

As always, let me end by thanking our deployed employees and their families for carrying the load overseas for our districts in theater. We wish you all continued successes and a safe return!

Tulsa Teamwork!

Army Engineer Coin is literally 'out of this world'

By Tammy L. Moody
Pacesetter Staff

Military commanders present coins to individuals who accomplish something particularly special or go beyond the call of duty, and Brig. Gen. Kendall P. Cox is no different. He has handed out many coins during his career as a military leader, but none have experienced a journey quite like the one he awarded last summer.

Cox helped lead the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers' recovery efforts last year after Hurricane Ike hit the Texas coast. While touring the impacted area and monitoring some of the Corps' missions, he came across a woman who had volunteered to distribute drinking water. As a gesture of appreciation for her service, he presented her with a Southwestern Division coin for excellence. Little did he know where that coin would wind up next.

On Nov. 14, 2008, the volunteer packed along that same coin with some of her personal belongings for a trip as part of her next job assignment: a launch aboard Space Shuttle Endeavour.

You see, that volunteer was Navy Capt. Heidemarie Stefanyshyn-Piper, a NASA astronaut. She and her crew traveled to the International Space Station to deliver equipment and supplies and perform maintenance and repairs - and found time to take a few pictures of her coin.

In all, the coin spent 15 days, 20 hours, 29 minutes, 37 seconds in orbit around the world.

Upon returning to Earth, Stefanyshyn-Piper sent a short note and a special gift to Cox. "I am returning the unit coin that was given to me by BG Cox," she wrote in a note to the Commander. "I know you don't normally return this item, but in this case he may want it back based on where it has been."

She attached two photos from space showing the coin perched in windows of her spacecraft, with planet Earth in the background.

"I'm going to send her another coin as soon as I get a photo to send with it," said Cox.

Though his photos may not be as out-of-this-world as Stefanyshyn-Piper's.

Funkhouser tours Big Red

While engaged in tainter gate repairs at the W.D. Mayo Lock and Dam, Tulsa District Crane Operator Joe Johnson gave Commander Col. Anthony Funkhouser a tour of the district's new crane and crane barge. The new crane was recently mounted to the crane barge after modifications were made to the barge during a dry-dock period in Memphis, Tenn. (Photo provided by Tulsa District.)

First summer holiday approaching; think safety

Great memories of summer often begin with Memorial Day Weekend, and for many SWD families, it all starts with an outing to one of our own waterside parks.

Park rangers from Little Rock District want families to be safe if spending time around the water during this first summer holiday weekend.

The Little Rock District cautions lake visitors about trees damaged during the January ice storm. Along the walking paths and along the shorelines, some branches are still broken high up in the trees and have not been removed. These branches could break loose at any time and present a hazard to those below.

The rangers also caution that parks, lakes and rivers will be more congested during this weekend, and they ask all visitors to be courteous to one another while waiting at boat ramps and while sharing beaches and waterways.

Here are some other tips they offer to help keep the family safe:

Swimming:

* Learn to swim ... Learn to swim well!
* Buy a life jacket that fits - one size does not fit all
* Read the label – it provides weight, size and suggested use information
* Try it on to check the fit – once buckles and straps are secured and tightened, it should not float above the wearer's ears when in the water
* Watch your children at all times when around the water, and put a life jacket on them
* Never dive into lakes or rivers
* Never rely on toys such as inner tubes and water wings to stay afloat
* Discard and replace life vests that have leakage, mildew or rot present
* Adults, wear a life jacket - set the example for children and increase chances for survival
* Don't take chances by over-estimating your swimming skills
* Reach or throw a floatation device to help someone in trouble. Don't go in the water!
* Swim only in designated swimming areas
* Never swim alone

Boating:

* Don't operate a boat while under the influence of alcoholic beverages
* Always wear a life jacket. It's the law for children 12 and younger and a great idea for adults – set the example for children
* Know your boat and know the rules of the water
* Carry navigation charts on board
* Check your boat for all required safety equipment and use it
* Don't overload the boat (consider boat size, number of passengers and equipment)
* Follow manufacturer's suggested procedures before starting the engine
* Check the weather forecast, and check flow conditions (if boating on a river)
* File a float plan with family or friends who are not on the vessel

Carbon Monoxide:

* Carbon monoxide is a silent, odorless killer
* There are many more carbon monoxide deaths from boating than most people realize
* A typical boat engine can put out as much carbon monoxide as 188 automobiles
* Danger is on, under, or near any rear deck, as well as in rear seats, near exhaust discharges or inside cabins

Being aware of and following these safety tips can help make the holiday weekend a safe and enjoyable one. Don't let the family's Memorial Day Weekend memories be bad ones.

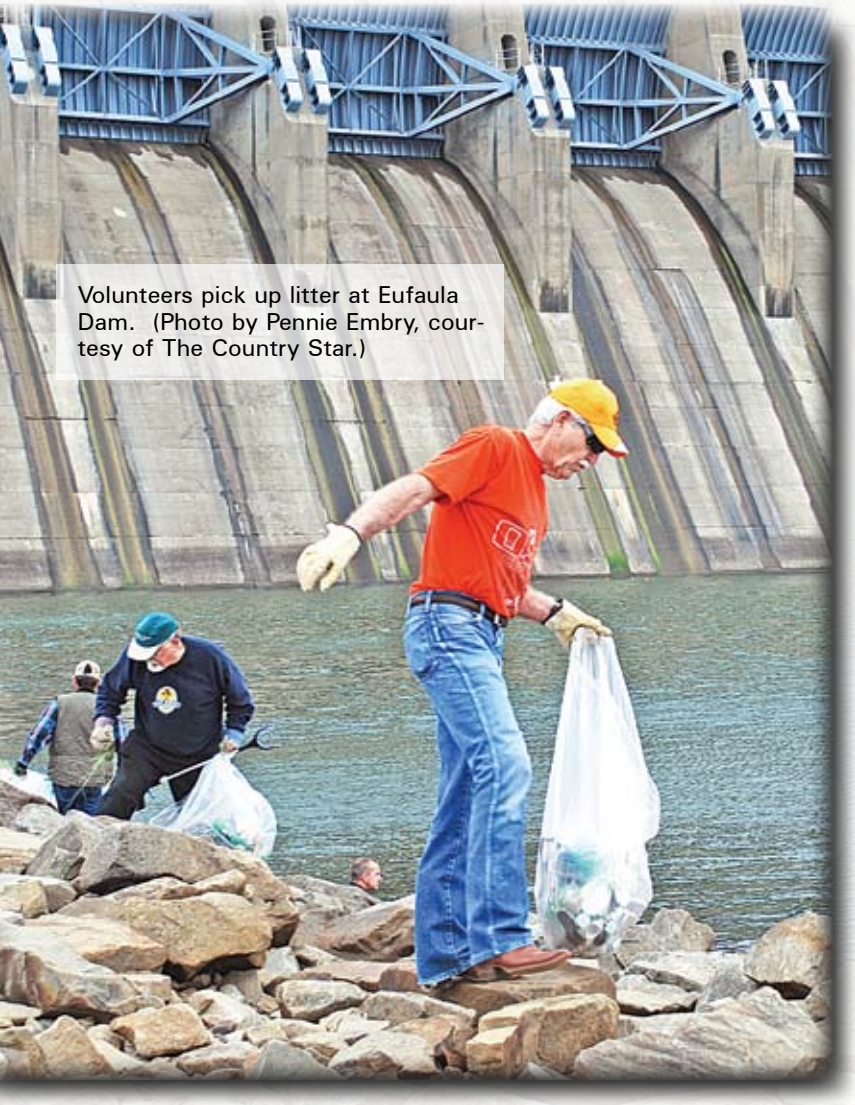
Remember safety comes first!

Photo by Donna Pearce, courtesy of Eufaula Indian Journal.

Keeping the land grand

Pennie Embry, Staff Writer
The Country Star

(Editor's Note: The following is an excerpt from a front page story which ran in The Country Star March 12, 2009.)



Volunteers pick up litter at Eufaula Dam. (Photo by Pennie Embry, courtesy of The Country Star.)

"Did you ever read that book, "The Trash Man Cometh?" joked Mike Dumford, park ranger for the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers.

It was overcast and windy Saturday morning at (Tulsa's) Lake Eufaula dam. Dumford and fellow park ranger Ed Sands were hoisting large garbage bags full of trash into the back of a pickup truck. Behind the rangers, just below the dam, dozens of volunteers scrambled along the steep rocks, picking up broken glass, aluminum cans, assorted trash and fishing line. Lots and lots of fishing line.

"I'll bet there's two miles of line stuck in these rocks right here," said one man as he worked with wire cutters and gloved hands to untangle the snarled line from brush and rocks in the area he was cleaning.

"I'll bet there's two miles of line stuck in these rocks right here," said one man as he worked with wire cutters and gloved hands ...

The rangers and volunteers – mostly middle school and high school students from Eufaula – were picking up trash on both sides of the river below the dam, as well as along a section of state Highway 71 south of the dam. Old and young alike, from toddlers to seniors, plucked trash from rocks, sand and tall grass, and then bagged up the litter for rangers to haul to nearby dumpsters.

"Every dumpster on both sides of the park is full to overflowing now," said Sands as the morning wound down. "We even had to take bags of trash to the dumpsters at the project office, and we have a couple of trucks we haven't emptied yet."

Rangers estimated that volunteers picked up two tons of trash near the dam on Saturday.

"It's a good start," said Karen Weldin, president of Save Our Water and a driving force behind the Lake Eufaula anti-littering coalition, Team Up to Clean Up. . . .

Celebrate accomplishments, prepare for hurricanes

Col. David C. Weston
Commander, Galveston District

Last month I wrote extensively about the project workload in the Galveston District, one which includes normal project planning and execution as well as repairs of hurricane damage to many projects. It remains an incredibly busy time, and it is destined to get even busier. As of this writing, we are still awaiting the list of approved projects for work under the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act, and expect to get revved up for those projects as soon as that list is released.

In the meantime, let me point out some recent great accomplishments by the Galveston District. Last month, we restored the mouth of the San Bernard River to the Gulf of Mexico, taking care of a hazard to navigation at the Brazos River Flood Gates, while making the local community and local and state officials very, very happy with and appreciative of the Corps of Engineers. That's not always an easy feat.

We renourished the beaches on South Padre Island, an area impacted by Hurricane Dolly, providing a great benefit to the community there as part of our emergency dredging of the Brownsville and Port Isabel areas.

Also in March, we signed a permit to allow the widening of the Freeport Harbor Navigation Channel, where traffic has increased substantially in recent years with the opening of the Freeport LNG facility as well as growth in such areas as windmill components. We held a public meeting in Port Arthur to inform the public about repairs to the Port Arthur levee as a result of Hurricane Ike.

And soon we expect to award contracts to repair Hurricane Ike damage to two other vital projects: the Texas City levee, which protected the population and the petrochemical industry from Hurricane Ike; and the Galveston Seawall, which protected the island from wave actions and storm surge and reinforced the long and historic partnership with the Corps of Engineers and Galveston.

As we repair damage from the last hurricane season, whether for Dolly or Ike, Eduard or Gustav, we definitely won't soon forget Ike. It was the third most destructive hurricane to ever make landfall in the United States. When the eye came ashore over the east end of Galveston Island at 2:10 a.m. Sept. 13, it may have been the first hurricane eye to actually pass over the Jadwin Building, but it wasn't the first hurricane to hit the island. Nor will it be the last.

This year, we can expect possible visits from Ana or Danny, Fred or Kate, Larry or Rose or Wanda. Our preparations last year ensured that our people were safe and that we had emergency operations in place, laying the groundwork for a successful recovery. While we all hope and pray that this hurricane season will not bring a repeat, we must prepare for that very thing. That's a price we pay for being a coastal district.

So brush off your Personal Evacuation Plans, replenish your hurricane kit, check out evacuation routes, and work out details with your family. Just in case we get a visit from one of the names mentioned above. I know together we will make it through whatever lies ahead. Essayons!

April Pools Day

Galveston District, in partnership with Safe Kids Greater Houston Water Safety Coalition, participated in a water safety media event, April Pools Day, April 1, at the Alanza Brook Apartments in Houston. Phil Steffen of the Texas Parks and Wildlife, along with Bobber the Corps water safety mascot (William Krampe), explained the importance of water safety during a press conference.

April Pools Day, hosted by the Harris County Public and Environmental Services, is conducted each year by a joint task force of both private and public organizations and agencies which strive to inform the public about the dangers of water and the importance of drowning prevention. The water safety team encourages organizations to plan and conduct water safety awareness events in their own communities. (Photo provided by Galveston.)

This maintenance squadron building was completed by Little Rock District's military construction team Feb. 24, and it was released to Little Rock Air Force Base for occupancy along with two other facilities that same week. Another building was completed and released to the Army at Fort Chaffee March 2. (Photo by Mitch Eggburn)

Four facilities released in same week

By Cheri Dragos-Pritchard
Pacesetter Staff

With what well may be a first here, Little Rock District's Military Construction teams turned over four military buildings to two different installations during one week.

Three buildings were constructed by the district on Little Rock Air Force Base and one facility was built on Fort Chaffee.

The district completed the Air Force facilities first, Little Rock District's Resident Engineer at LRAFB Mitch Eggburn said.

"One will be a maintenance squadron facility, one is an aircraft corrosion control hangar and the other will house a flying operations squadron," Eggburn said. "Originally the maintenance squadron building was designated as a Wing Headquarters for Air Mobility Command, but now with some recent reorganization taking place on the base, it will accommodate a maintenance squadron."

All three contracts for the base buildings were awarded April 20, 2007.

"The completion dates were a coincidence," Eggburn explained. "Two buildings were actually completed a little behind schedule and the third was completed ahead of schedule."

The cost for the facilities ranged from $5 million to $11 million. The cost for the construction of the maintenance building was $5.79 million, the hangar construction was $9.76 million and the operations squadron building was $11.68 million.

"We've received numerous comments from the hangar user about this hangar being one of the nicest hangars they've ever seen," Eggburn said. "The users for the maintenance and operations squadrons have also commented on the high quality of the facilities as well. We're really pleased that they appreciate and like the facilities."

The building at Fort Chaffee was turned over to the installation March 2.

"The building, the Fort Chaffee Maneuver Training Center, is approximately 103,000 square feet," Paul Weeks, the district's resident engineer at Ft. Chaffee, said. "The project provided a training facility with administrative rooms, educational rooms, an assembly hall, library, learning center, weapons simulator and a vault for the Arkansas Army National Guard and the U.S. Army Reserve. It's definitely a multi-unit facility."

Construction began in July 2007, and the cost for the center came to more than $18.5 million.

"We've heard plenty of positive feedback on the facility," Weeks stated. "They're planning for a big ceremony sometime this summer, to include congressmen and other high-ranking officials to celebrate the opening of this important center."

Little Rock AFB officials have tentatively set a ribbon cutting ceremony date of April 16 for the maintenance squadron building. At press time the base did not have any set opening plans for the two remaining buildings.

Memorial Day Weekend begins the "101 Critical Days of Summer"
Click here for more information.

Division welcomes new Director, Human Resources

Hazel Fernandez joined the Southwestern Division headquarters staff as Director, Human Resources, March 23. She comes to SWD from Corps headquarters where she served as Chief, Employment and Compensation Management Division.

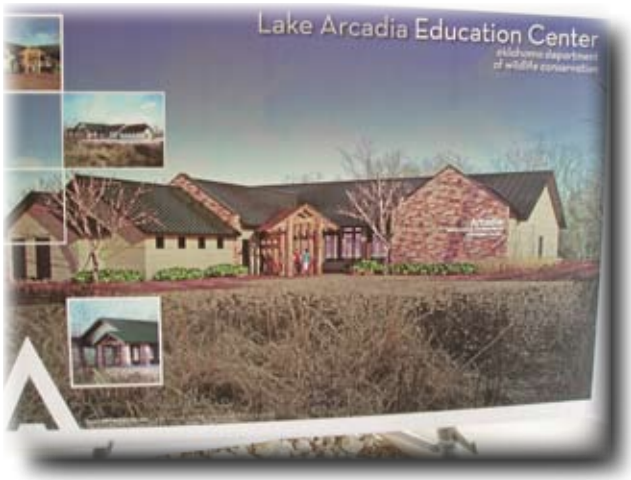
She joined the Corps in June 2006 to lead the Employment and Benefits Team. As such, she was instrumental in deploying the National Security Personnel System throughout the Corps. She also worked with the Strategic Sourcing Office on the IM/IT A-76 and Logistics High Performing Organization initiatives, as well as working with the Gulf Region Division and Afghanistan Engineer District on contingency related matters.

Prior to joining the Corps she served as the U.S. Army's Director, Human Resources, in Italy, where she oversaw the Civilian Personnel Advisory Centers in both Vicenza and Livorno. She was a member of the Tri-Services Labor Relations and Wage and Classification Subcommittees and served as the Army's primary labor advisor concerning Italian labor issues. She also assisted with deployments of Civilians to both Iraq and Afghanistan.

Fernandez began her federal career with the Atomic Energy Commission, Los Alamos, N.M., and then worked for the National Aeronautics and Space Administration in Washington, D.C. She subsequently transferred to the Department of the Navy where she served in various positions at the Long Beach Naval Shipyard in California, and the Naval Support Activity in Naples, Italy. She has also served as a Staff Advisor to the Department of Defense Dependent School System, Mediterranean Region, providing guidance and assistance to school administrators, District Superintendents, and to Army, Air Force and Navy Civilian Personnel Offices throughout Spain, Italy, Portugal, Greece, Turkey, and Bahrain.

She has held many other prestigious positions around the world, including, in part: Human Resources Director for the U.S. Navy in Puerto Rico; Force Labor/Human Resources Deputy Director for the Commander, U.S. Navy Region Far East; Human Resources Manager for the Navy and DOD Commands in Kyushu, Japan; Civilian Personnel Officer, Camp Darby, Italy, where she was instrumental in deployment of personnel during Desert Shield/Desert Storm; and, Division Chief, Position Management/Classification and Compensation, U.S. Army Southern European Task Force and 5th Tactical Area Command, where she led reorganization initiatives and base closure of installations in Greece and Turkey.

Born in Santa Fe, N.M., Fernandez holds a bachelor's degree in Business and Financial Management from New Mexico Highlands University. She and her husband, Costantino Cucciniello, have one daughter, Angelic, and are the proud grandparents of a 14-month old granddaughter, Railey Jade. She loves to spoil her granddaughter, read, garden, ski, scuba dive, paint, camp, and travel.



Breaking ground for education

Tulsa Commander Col. Anthony Funkhouser and other Oklahoma notables attended a groundbreaking ceremony in February for an Oklahoma Department of Wildlife Conservation outdoor education complex at Arcadia Lake in Edmond, Okla.

"It's really a unique opportunity for us," said Nels Rodefeld, chief of information and education at ODWC, who said the department expects it to be one of the premier outdoor education centers in the region.

The 7,000-square-foot center (architect's picture above) is in addition to the 4,000-square-foot research center built in 2006. The education center is expected to be finished by January 2010.

SWL maintenance crews reconstruct damaged levee

Jim Smith Lake project completed

By Tammy L. Moody
Pacesetter Staff

In January, through a highly coordinated team effort, Little Rock's Arkansas River Fleet out of the Russellville Project Office and the Pine Bluff Marine Terminal and Marine Fleet reconstructed a levee structure damaged by high water in January 2005 at the south end of Jim Smith Lake.

Jim Smith Lake is located between the Arkansas and White Rivers, about six miles from the Mississippi River. This structure reduced, by an estimated 50 percent, the risk of a connecting river channel forming between the Arkansas and White rivers in southeast Arkansas.

Throughout the years Little Rock has constructed a system of levees between the two rivers to prevent a channel – or cutoff – from forming, but the structures have required continuous repair from erosion to reduce that possibility.

In 2004, two structures were constructed in Jim Smith Lake; one at the north end and the other at the south end. Both were significantly damaged by high water in 2005, but the north structure was repaired later that year.

"The damage occurred because the White River flooded its banks and flowed into the Arkansas, about one-and-a-half miles away," Project Manager Greg Yada said. "Since the Arkansas is usually lower than the White and because of the short distance, overland erosion called headcutting would eventually create a channel between the rivers if left unattended."

He explained further that significant dredging, dangerous cross-flows, and potentially 110 days of intermittent lost navigation along the 445 miles of the McClellan-Kerr Arkansas River Navigation System would result if a cutoff developed.

Mike Bagley, captain of the Arkansas River Fleet's Motor Vessel Shorty Baird said that Allen Best, captain of the M/V Ted Cook; the Arkansas River Fleet, and the Pine Bluff Marine Terminal crews coordinated an outstanding team effort to repair the upper structure in 2005-2006, and they have now completed the lower structure as well.

"Throughout both projects, the crews punched in haul roads, hauled in sand and rock, excavated earthen beds, layered C-stone, sand, and SB2 gravel coated with environmental cloth, and then paved the two structures with tons of A-stone," Bagley said. "In December 2008 alone, the crews worked seven days a week, 12 hours a day, taking 10 days to complete the first 12 barge loads of A-stone. Each barge carried 1,400 tons of stone."

Before completing the project in January, there were many more barges and long days ahead.

Yada explained that the construction was done during prime hunting season, and although the area encompasses some private land, it primarily includes the Trusten Holder Wildlife Management Area and the White River National Wildlife Refuge.

"The project was sensitive in nature due to the value of the land for hunting, wetlands and bottomland hardwoods," he said. "The construction crew did an excellent job of community involvement and taking care of stakeholder needs such as maintaining access roads."

He added that the crews sacrificed their own hunting season and time with their families by working overtime. On top of all this, the construction work was made more difficult due to the mud made by rain.

"We didn't estimate the cost of constructing this work by contractor, but the in-house work probably saved at least half a million dollars, which is going to allow us to do some more investigations in the area to prepare for more work the area needs," Yada concluded.

One of many barges carrying 1,400 tons of stone used for reconstructing the southern most levee on Jim Smith Lake. (Photo by Mike Bagley.)

Keystone holds meet and greet

Kent Dunlap discusses law enforcement issues with T. J. Jorgensen of Kansas State Parks and Capt. Bill Bass of Tulsa County at the Meet and Greet. (Photo provided by Tulsa.)

By Billy Griffin
Park Ranger, Keystone Lake

Trailers are getting de-winterized, tents are being aired out, and fishing poles are getting new line. The busy time of the year is almost upon us. To help prepare, Tulsa District's Keystone Lake staff held a Meet and Greet March 25 for local and state law enforcement agencies. At the event, lake staff and law enforcement personnel talked about ways to ease through the spring and summer with no serious problems.

The main point of the meeting was to get to know each other and the ways the agencies can work together to make district parks and land-use areas safe and fun for public use.

Each person attending introduced themselves and their agency and gave a detailed message of their capabilities and responsibilities when working with each other.

Subjects discussed included search and rescue operations, drowning response protocol, felony enforcement, illegal trash dumping and disaster relief on Keystone Lake.

The meeting ended with hand shakes, pats on backs and a general feeling that this will be a good recreation season. Let's hope it is.

USACE attends Phoenix 6

Phoenix 6 attendees work on after-action reports on the historic border fence project. (Photo by Karen Scheffer, Fort Worth.)

More than 70 people gathered in San Antonio last month to mark the beginning of the end of the historic border fence project.

The March 24-25 conference, dubbed Phoenix 6, brought together key players in the program for a partnering session and After Action Review.

Participants from the USACE Engineering and Construction Support Office, USACE employees from districts across the border region, Department of Homeland Security and others active in the project hashed out mistakes made and celebrated achievements delivered.

Out of the lessons learned will come guidance for how to better deliver such a sprawling construction project under such an accelerated deadline.

With more than 90 percent of the border fence complete – more than 610 miles now stands along the southern border – the session took on a bit of a celebratory air. Awards were presented to USACE and DHS employees who had played significant roles in the project's success.

ECSO Director Eric Verwers said Phoenix 6 is the last in the series whose sole focus was PF 225 pedestrian fence and VF 300 vehicle fence programs. Future conferences will focus on the entire range of ECSO's mission, embracing both facilities and infrastructure work dedicated to serve its principal customer, U.S. Customs and Border Protection.

Buckle Up for Summer studies at Table Rock Lake

Two young lake-goers wear life jackets as they play on the lake shore. Boat Use and Life Jacket Wear Study Surveys are set to take place at Table Rock Lake, located in southwest Missouri and northwest Arkansas, during the 2009 recreation season to get feedback from visitors about the lake, see what visitor boating habits are and document the use of life jackets.

By Cheri Dragos-Pritchard
Pacesetter Staff

During the 2009 recreation season, Boat Use and Life Jacket Wear Studies will be conducted at Table Rock Lake, located in southwest Missouri and northwest Arkansas, to get feedback from visitors about the lake, their boating habits and to see if they are wearing life jackets.

The Boat Use Study will focus on visitors' perception of the lake, whether they think it's too congested or too dangerous for swimmers or boaters and what their preferences are. The Life Jacket Wear Study focuses on whether visitors are using a life jacket while in boats at the lake. Both studies have been approved by the Office of Management and Budget.

The Boat Use Study was initially scheduled for the summer of 2008. However, with high water levels during much of 2008 the study was postponed until the 2009 summer season.

"The studies will be conducted starting Memorial Day weekend and ending around Labor Day," Table Rock Park Ranger Malcolm Fortson said. "We will use the data acquired through the Boat Use Study survey as a tool to better manage and plan activities and facilities on the lake, note areas of congestion and document such things as number of boats and boat types."

Little Rock District contracted Cherokee CRC to conduct the study throughout the summer at Table Rock Lake.

"We want to use the publics' input when we update our Master Plan and our Shoreline Management Plan in the future," Table Rock Lake Manager Greg Oller said.

"The studies will be one tool we can use to help accomplish that. The results of the two studies will contribute to updated plans. The last update to the Master Plan was made in the 1970s, and the Shoreline Management Plan hasn't been updated since 1997."

See "Summer Studies" next page

Summer Studies

continued from previous page

He said the studies are not, "an all inclusive fix for the plans, as it is a three-to-four year process that includes the use of many such tools." However, once the data from the surveys is collected and a draft report is presented, Table Rock will then hold public workshops to share the results. The final report on the 2009 studies is scheduled to be available in February 2010.

Oller went on to explain that the boat use surveys would target four different populations.

The first group consists of boaters. The boaters will be asked to participate in the survey upon their exit from the lake, and every tenth boater will be given a more detailed survey to mail back.

The remaining groups are provided with mail back surveys only. The second group consists of 400 annual slip renters at the lake's commercial concessionaires. The third group targets 400 owners of private and community boat dock slips around the lake. The final population consists of 400 landowners who have property adjacent to Corps' property.

To determine congestion on the lake, the contractor will also count the number and types of boats in the water and make note of the locations.

"The Boat Use study will aid in determining how satisfied our visitors are, what their perceptions are on over crowding, any changes they have observed at Table Rock Lake and its effects on their recreation experience, Oller added."

The district also included the Life Jacket Wear Study, and while the contractors are on the water collecting data for the boat count, they will count the number of people wearing life jackets, too.

"The Life Jacket Wear Study is a new approach to provide a matrix for evaluating the effectiveness of the district's Water Safety Program," Little Rock District Outdoor Recreation Planner Chris Smith said. "It is the first step to a possibly more in-depth study in the future."

"The Life Jacket Wear Study survey was developed by the district's Water Safety Team. It will be conducted through observation; no direct contact with boaters will be made," Fortson explained.

"The documentation will consist of the number of passengers in a boat, the number of people wearing life jackets and the number of people not wearing life jackets.

"No such data has been collected before, so the data collected this year will be used as a baseline for the future," Fortson noted. "This information can be used to see if there is a correlation between comprehensive water safety campaigns and public response to wearing life jackets."

Table Rock is one of Little Rock's busiest lakes and has the highest number of water-related fatalities for the district, averaging three deaths per year.

"We'd ultimately like to use this information to make our lakes even better for the public," Oller said. "We'd also like to increase water safety awareness and the proper use of life jackets so that no lives are lost to drowning."

A park ranger talks to boaters about safety. During the 2009 recreation season, contractors will conduct Boat Use and Life Jacket Wear Study Surveys at Table Rock Lake to get feedback from visitors about the lake, see what visitor boating habits are and document the use of life jackets.

Visitors ski and play on innertubes at the lake. Contract workers will be out conducting Boat Use and Life Jacket Wear Study Surveys at Table Rock Lake during the 2009 recreation season. (Courtesy Photos)

A blast from the past

Career comes full circle for one Galveston District engineer

By Isidro Reyna
Pacesetter Staff

A career at the Galveston District came full circle for one engineer at the district's headquarters building.

While in the public affairs office packing the public display to be taken to Prairie View A&M University's Career Fair in February, Clark M. Colquitt, a civil engineer with the Galveston District, stumbled upon photos of himself as a student visiting the Corps building in 1974.

Colquitt noticed the photos and identified himself sporting shades and a plaid-like jacket among a group of his peers from the university.

More than 35 years later, Colquitt finds himself recruiting future engineers from his alma mater the way he was recruited as a student. Ironically, his most memorable moment with the Corps was when he was called from personnel.

"When I was hired, I hit the ceiling," he said. "The corps is a great organization to work for."

With a task to find the best and the brightest engineers to fulfill the district's geotechnical mission, which deals with soil classifications and jetty designs, Colquitt spoke with more than 15 prospective applicants, mostly senior civil engineer majors, at the PVAMU career fair.

Clark M. Colquitt in 1974.

Clark M. Colquitt in 2009.

"Students were knowledgeable about the Corps of Engineers and expressed desires to work here," he said. "Students were also excited to find out I was a Prairie View alum. That gave them an opportunity to open up to me and express their desires to become a professional engineer."

Little Rock selected as finalist

Arkansas Parks and Tourism honored the Little Rock District's Natural Resources Management Section, in conjunction with the Operations Project Managers, as a Henry Award Finalist.

The annual award is named after Henri de Tonti, the man historians consider to be one of the first "Arkansas Travelers." The Henry Award honors Arkansas's historical legacy and today's tourism leaders.

Governor Mike Beebe recognized the Corps for its "Media Support" to Parks and Tourism during the 2008 Spring Flood Event. During the floods, members of the NRMS worked extensively to disseminate information regarding park facilities' availability.

The section initiated a Web page that provided updated park information on a weekly basis. This action was instrumental in coordinating activities with local and state officials and the general public and was integrated with the state's Arkansas.com website.

From left - Little Rock District's Devlin Ridenour, Ron Helton, Andrea Lewis, Arkansas Govenor Mike Beebe and Dale Leggett. (Courtesy Photo)

JPMO competition heats up the kitchen

When an entry named "Haz Mat Chili" wins a chili cook off, you know the competition must have been intense. The contest was held Feb. 13 in San Antonio as a collaborative effort between the Joint Program Management Office and the San Antonio Area Office. The 144-person JPMO and the 37-person SAAO together produced 17 teams who participated in the event.

Peter Abel, a USACE Environmental Engineer, created the winning entry. Bruce Barthold, a program coordinator with Parsons, the JPMO's Architect Engineer Integrator, was runner-up with a recipe dubbed "The Best GOL-DARN Chili You Ever Ate!" Additional entries included "Chili con Mucho Gusto" and two others with construction-appropriate titles: "Change Order Chili" and "Mod Chili."

Event judges included representatives from the JPMO and Fort Worth District headquarters. As further evidence of the seriousness of the competition, they were given a strict set of guidelines to use to assess the offerings. The chili recipes were rated on a scale of 0 to 10 in five categories: color, aroma, consistency, taste and after-taste. After-taste was defined as 'bite,' meaning the heat created by the various types of spices and, or, peppers.

A judge samples USACE Environmental Engineer Peter Abel's winning "Haz Mat" chili. (Photo provided by Brian Dwyer.)

Everyone in the organization had a chance to enjoy all the entries during a luncheon where fun was served with all the food. Creative individuals from the JPMO's IT staff showed a DVD they put together to highlight the ongoing success of the JPMO and SAAO. The video combined a variety of project and staff photos with music and humorous observations for a lighthearted look at the construction progress achieved during the past year.

The JPMO is a joint military service entity that manages the surge in construction created by the 2005 BRAC process. The JPMO represents a partnership between the Army Corps of Engineers, the Air Force Center for Engineering and the Environment, the Naval Facilities Engineering Command and private sector contractors. The JPMO and SAAO collectively oversee more than $3 billion of BRAC and other military construction projects at four military installations across San Antonio.

Norris retires

Two former Tulsa District commanders visited to help the district send Ruth Norris off in style when she retired Feb. 27.

She had 35 years of service, 10 in Public Affairs and 25 in the Executive Office. The appearance of the two former district engineers and their wives was a total surprise to Norris and a highlight of the retirement ceremony.

Norris left wearing a Bronze de Fleury Medal presented to her by retired colonels Timothy Sanford, (left) and Otis Williams, while current District Commander Col. Anthony Funkhouser, "the last commander Ruth will train," read the citation. (Photo provided by Tulsa.)

When emergencies happen

Some tips to take care of your pets

(Editor's note: This information was developed by the U.S. Department of Homeland Security in consultation with: American Kennel Club, The American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals, American Veterinary Medical Association, and The Humane Society of the U.S.)

If you are like millions of animal owners nationwide, your pet is an important member of your household. The likelihood that you and your animals will survive an emergency such as a fire, flood, tornado or terrorist attack depends largely on emergency planning done today.

From left: Saydee, Ozzie, Krash and Drizzt.

Some of the things you can do to prepare for the unexpected, such as assembling an animal emergency supply kit and developing a pet care buddy system, are the same for any emergency.

Whether you decide to stay put in an emergency or evacuate to a safer location, you will need to make plans in advance for your pets. Keep in mind that what's best for you is typically what's best for your animals.

If you must evacuate, take your pets with you if possible. However, if you are going to a public shelter, it is important to understand that animals may not be allowed inside. Plan in advance for shelter alternatives that will work for both you and your pets.

Make a back-up emergency plan in case you can't care for your animals yourself. Develop a buddy system with neighbors, friends and relatives to make sure that someone is available to care for or evacuate your pets if you are unable to do so. Be prepared to improvise and use what you have on hand to make it on your own for at least three days, maybe longer.

Prepare - Get a Pet Emergency Supply Kit.

Just as you do with your family's emergency supply kit, think first about the basics for survival, particularly food and water. Consider two kits. In a plastic container, put everything you and your pets will need to stay where you are. The other should be a lightweight, smaller version you can take with you if you and your pets have to get away. Plus, be sure to review your kits regularly to ensure their contents, especially foods and medicines, are fresh.

Food: Keep at least three days of food in an airtight, waterproof container. Putting individual feedings into sealable plastic bags will aid proper feeding should your pet be cared for by others.

Water: Store at least three days of water specifically for your pets.

Medicines and medical records: Keep an extra supply of medicines your pet takes on a regular basis in a waterproof container. Some facilities will require you to have medication in original containers.

First aid kit: Talk to your vet about what is most appropriate for your pet's emergency medical needs. Most kits should include cotton bandage rolls, bandage tape and scissors, antibiotic ointment, flea and tick prevention, latex gloves, isopropyl alcohol and saline solution. Include a pet first aid reference book. Many pet retailers have pre-assembled kits.

Collar with ID tag, harness or leash: Your pet should wear a collar with its rabies tag and identification at all times. Include a backup leash, collar and ID tag in your pet's emergency supply kit. In addition, place copies of your pet's registration information, adoption papers, vaccination documents and medical records in a clean plastic bag or waterproof container and also add them to your kit. You should also consider permanent identification such as micro chipping, and enrolling your pet in a recovery database.

See "Emergency pet care tips" next page

Emergency pet care tips

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Crate or other pet carrier: If you need to evacuate in an emergency situation take your pets and animals with you provided it is practical to do so. In many cases, your ability to do so will be aided by having a sturdy, safe, comfortable crate or carrier ready for transporting your pet. The carrier should be large enough for your pet to stand, turn around and lie down.

Sanitation: Include pet litter and litter box if appropriate, newspapers, paper towels, plastic trash bags and household chlorine bleach to provide for your pet's sanitation needs.

A picture of you and your pet together: If you become separated, a picture will help you document ownership and allow others to assist you in identifying your pet.

Familiar items: Put favorite toys, treats or bedding in your kit to help reduce your pet's stress.

Division leadership tours bigger, better Dallas Cowboys stadium

By Melanie Ellis
Pacesetter Staff

With hard hats for helmets and blueprints for playbooks, leadership from the Southwestern Division toured the 2.3 million-square-foot structure that is destined to be as historic as America's team – the new Dallas Cowboys stadium.

The Fort Worth District Regulatory Office has worked with the City of Arlington and the Dallas Cowboys for more than three years, issuing and modifying permits for stadium construction and permits to improve the infrastructure in the area.

"We worked closely with the City of Arlington, which is the permittee, for the new stadium project and road projects, to minimize adverse impacts to Johnson Creek and its tributaries," said Cheryl Jasper, Regulatory Office.

Jasper has worked many of the permits for the stadium and organized the tour.

"The tour of the stadium and immediate vicinity provided an opportunity for Southwestern Division leadership to see one of our high-profile projects that require permits," she said.

The stadium is located in Arlington, Texas, near Johnson Creek - a complex and flood prone area - and other state attrac-

tions like Six Flags over Texas, Hurricane Harbor and the Texas Rangers Ballpark. The tour began by accessing areas that involved permitting actions from the district.

"We issued permits for road projects in the immediate vicinity of the stadium," said Jasper. "These permits authorized the crossing of Johnson Creek and three of its tributaries."

Those permits proved to be critical in the overall scope of the project that includes 14 different approaches from major highways to the stadium grounds.

"The permit we issued for the stadium authorized the placement of fill material into two tributaries of Johnson Creek that facilitated the utilities installation and parking lot construction," said Jasper. "Every permit and proposed modification we evaluate in that area is complex because they have to work together but have independent utility."

Because of the complex nature of the permits, the Regulatory Office had to work closely with the Hydrologic and Hydraulic Design Section to ensure proposed impacts to the creek or its tributaries would not cause greater than minimal impacts to the aquatic environment and hydraulic regime of the creek.

Areas around the stadium have also been enhanced by other construction projects requiring district permitting actions. Barry Osborn, regulatory project manager, issued a restoration, establishment, and enhancement permit along a section of Johnson Creek immediately adjacent to the stadium.

"We worked closely with the City of Arlington and other agencies to preserve part of the creek riparian area, stabilize the creek and enhance portions of the creek with native vegetation plantings," he said. "Once that is established, the aquatic enhancement project should improve the quality of the surrounding developments, including the stadium."

While football fans patiently await kick-off for the 2009 season in the new stadium and prepare for Super Bowl XLV in 2011, the Fort Worth District Regulatory Office continues to work closely with Arlington and the Cowboys to keep the permits in compliance as the construction of the stadium projects progress.

Hydroelectric generators inspected, maintained

By Ross Adkins
Pacesetter Staff

What's big, fast, wet, green, and goes nowhere? A hydroelectric generator. Tulsa District has 22 of them located at eight projects. Recently, an inspection was held at Keystone Power Plant where there are two 50-ton turbines attached to 98-ton hydroelectric generators.

"It's all about safety," said Sam Patterson, the veteran power plant supervisor there. "These giants are spinning at 120 rpm. With that kind of stress, we have to make sure they are running smoothly and safely many hours a day to generate electricity," he added.

"Each year, during periods of low power production needs, we completely shut down each generator, give it a thorough inspection, and do routine maintenance. Since these babies were installed in the early 1960s, they do require some care and upkeep."

Because of the huge amount of water that passes over the blades at more than 20 mph, the turbines are susceptible to many stresses. With 50 years of age added to the equation, it is not surprising there is deterioration.

Anyone walking into the building while the turbines are running will immediately feel a low rumbling vibration.

"We're pretty sensitive to vibration. Most of the time, when a problem develops, you will feel a difference in the vibration. If it's sufficiently different, we know to shut it down so we can take a close look," Patterson commented. "That's when we usually find a cracked blade requiring some heavy duty welding."

If necessary, he said a turbine can be quickly shut down anytime for inspection. So far, they have not had to replace an entire turbine unit, but over the years they have repaired some rather sizeable cracks on various parts of the blades.

To give an idea of the stresses imposed on the turbines while operating, John Wagner, the chief of Civil Maintenance for the Tulsa District, pointed out that when generating electricity, water descends nearly 74 feet from a 27-foot opening into a 16-foot turbine chamber at more than 20 mph.

"That's about 45,000 gallons of water per second pushing past those blades," Wagner said.

Each of the turbines has six blades and can generate 35 megawatts of electricity per hour, enough to power nearly 20,000 homes. One primary advantage of hydropower generation is that it comes from a continuously renewable resource, water. Coal- or fossil-powered plants can generate much greater power but hydropower is a quick, renewable source of power during peak electricity needs.

District Commander Col. Anthony Funkhouser, Sam Patterson (middle), and John Wagner of Tulsa District discuss the results of an inspection of a hydropower turbine at Keystone Power Plant, while standing next to the intake. The turbines at Keystone are more than 50 years old, but all Corps generators are inspected at least once a year. (Photo provided by Tulsa.)

"A coal- or fossil-powered generator requires up to five days to reach its peak generating capacity," he said. "Our hydropower generators can, from a standing start, be up and at peak power in 10 minutes. That's why they are so useful for quick additions to the power grid when needed."

It's big, it's wet and it can be up and running fast. "And it is also very green," Wagner concluded.

Command Spanish tested at Trinity Regional

By Melanie Ellis
Pacesetter Staff

Park rangers and staff members in Fort Worth's Trinity Regional Project Office have completed a Command Spanish Course in order to effectively communicate with Spanish-speaking visitors.

The project office is a testing ground for the course that is designed to teach park rangers to talk with Spanish-speaking visitors in their native language.

"The Command Spanish curriculum was developed specifically for park rangers," said Tim MacAllister, a project manager for Trinity.

The training course is taught in five days over a three-week period and instructors are on hand during the class meetings to help the rangers with pronunciation and emphasis, but it is up to the rangers to practice and use this new tool every day to maintain the skill.

Command Spanish is not designed to teach the Spanish language in its entirety but rather to teach the rangers enough conversational Spanish to recognize and respond to Spanish-speaking visitors. So far it has proven to be a success.

Shortly after completing the training course, a park ranger encountered a group of men fishing from an area marked with a sign stating "No fishing." The ranger approached the group and spoke to them in English explaining that fishing in that location was not allowed. All the group members claimed to only speak Spanish and continued to fish. Recognizing the opportunity to use the Command Spanish training, the ranger spoke in Spanish to the group and informed them of the fishing rules. The group spoke fluent English in response to the Spanish commands they were given to stop fishing and left the area.

Prior to taking the Command Spanish course, park rangers were issued a card with Spanish phrases listed on it to interact with Spanish-speaking visitors.

"The card with Spanish phrases on it was a good idea," said Lewisville Lake Site Manager Eric Pedersen, "But if the ranger didn't know Spanish and the visitor didn't respond with something very close to what was on the card, it didn't really serve its purpose and we lost the ability to communicate our message."

For rangers who do not have previous Spanish training from high school or college, the training class was a little tougher. For those with a brief knowledge of the Spanish language it was a good refresher and very helpful.

"Although it has been a few years since I last had a Spanish class, having that background knowledge of the Spanish language played a key role in my ability to actively participate in the course offered here at Lewisville," said Park Ranger Justin Gardner.

As recreation season quickly approaches, the rangers at Lewisville will continue practicing Command Spanish to effectively communicate with lake visitors.

"The most important aspect of the training is that our visitors feel welcome and have a means to communicate with us and visa versa," said Gardner.

Galveston District holds public meeting in Port Arthur

By Isidro Reyna
Pacesetter Staff

Galveston District, in conjunction with the Jefferson County Drainage District #7, held a public meeting March 18, to present information and seek comments regarding emergency repairs to the Port Arthur and Vicinity Federal Hurricane Flood Protection project damaged by Hurricane Ike.

More than 100 interested parties listened to presentations by Jerry Androy, a staff archaeologist with Galveston District, Mark Mazoch, an engineer with URS Corporation and Phil Kelley, manager of the Jefferson County Drainage District #7. Presenters covered maintenance work completed to date on the project, proposed project repairs and alternatives, and an overview of the environmental review and coordination process.

Proposed rehabilitation and repairs to the Port Arthur and Vicinity Hurricane Flood Protection Project include the following:

- Prevention of further erosion along portions of the levee toe, using riprap and stabilizing vegetation;
- Prevention of further erosion along the T-wall by replacing the eroded areas with a concrete

See "Galveston holds meeting" next page

Industry forum held

Over 100 companies attend Little Rock District's special event

By Cheri Dragos-Pritchard
Pacesetter Staff

In an effort to establish relationships, gain market information and share information related to current and upcoming business opportunities, the Little Rock District hosted an Industry Forum Feb. 26 in collaboration with the University of Arkansas at Little Rock's Arkansas Procurement Assistance Center.

The panel of district experts discussed with more than 100 companies in attendance military construction, civil works and International and Interagency Support programs for fiscal year 2009 and what is anticipated based on current trends.

"The Little Rock District planned for the participation of at least 50 companies," District Contract Specialist Darrell Montgomery said. "And yet the attendance far exceeded our expectations in that over 108 companies were represented, three times the number expected to attend."

The forum was used to conduct market research and present the FY09 projected workload for the district. The district's Chief of Contracting Sandra Easter opened the session and extended a welcome to participants, and Project Manager Shirley Bolden-Bruce provided them with an overview of the district's projected work.

"This industry forum is a unique opportunity to help us shape acquisition strategies for various pools of contractors in support of Regional Multiple Award Task Order Contracts for the district's FY09 workload," Little Rock District Engineer Col. Ed Jackson said. "Entering into these long-term contracts will ensure sufficient capacity in the region to execute an unprecedented workload over the next several years."

The district followed corporate guidance with regard to discussions on the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (Stimulus) opportunities, but still used the opportunity to help ensure a better quality of bidders.

"This was a significant event since one of our major concerns in the district has been the lack of qualified bidders for the work we execute in SWL," Easter said. "Participants in the forum this week spanned markets all across the Southeast and Midwest, representing a variety of business interests, small business categories and levels of experience in executing government work. We expect this event to greatly improve district bid quality and deliver a higher quality product to our customer base."

One industry representative provided positive feedback to the panel.

"Thanks to the Little Rock District for the great Industry Day. The feedback I heard from the attendees was extremely complimentary to the district for taking the initiative to keep the architect, engineering and construction industry informed and engaged," retired Col. Scott Morris of WH Pacific of Weddington, N.C., said. "The secondary effect of such low-cost meetings is better communications. Hopefully, it also produces better responses on sources-sought actions and industry feedback. A positive dialog with the industry is always good for Corps business and Little Rock is doing well with events such as this one."

Galveston holds meeting

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"scour pad" in accordance with new guidance developed post-Hurricane Katrina;

• Repairs of cover stone damage using various methods depending on the type of damage in each location – including use of riprap in place of cover stone;

• Repair of the Taylors Bayou slope failure by removing and improving the soil at slope failure areas.

The public was also invited to view displays featuring proposed repairs to the project during an open house session held before and after the presentations. Attendees expressed gratitude for the protection provided by the levee during Hurricane Ike. Others primarily sought information on how the actual project would be repaired.

Attendees were encouraged to complete comment cards expressing their views, opinions and recommendations concerning the proposed project. Those who were unable to attend the meeting but wish to submit comments may do so on or before April 16.

Galveston District participates in Reed Academy career fair

Byron Williams, a civil engineer with Galveston District (second from right), and Paul Cox, a civil engineer technician (second from left), spoke to students at Aldine Independent School District's Ruby Reed Academy for Engineering during their 16th Annual Career Day in February. Galveston District employees joined more than 29 other professionals including law enforcement officers, media professionals, nurses, educators, mental health practitioners, accountants and private investigators, sharing information regarding their respective fields. (Photo provided by Galveston.)

Beyond the Front

Fort Worth employees take Suicide Prevention Training

By Melanie Ellis
Pacesetter Staff

Fort Worth District employees participated in the Army wide suicide prevention training over the course of several days in the district and field offices.

The training is an interactive training program created by the U.S. Army in response to a sudden increase in suicides from Soldiers recently returned from deployment.

"It's not just Army or military folks affected by this," said Madeline Morgan, the chief of the Safety and Occupational Health Office. "This affects everyone – teenagers, the elderly, parents or siblings."

"We especially have to be aware of the signs of post traumatic stress disorder with our deployments. They are short and intense and we have to take the time to reintegrate our employees with their normal environment."

The training encouraged group interaction by presenting a scenario and letting the group decide which way to proceed in approaching the problem and situation. Discussions were held between group members about the way to proceed that allowed the rest of the group to learn from their experience and knowledge.

"This is good training because it lets us discuss how to respond to different situations," Morgan said. "Everyone has a different take on it."

One of the areas that group members thought differently on were the signs of depression. Some members were able to see through the behaviors of the character trying to play off a negative statement or action. Others thought it was normal and decided not to question the situation. As the video pointed out sometimes you don't get a second chance to ask.

"It's important to notice the signs of depression, like a difference in behavior, appearance, or withdrawal from friends and family," said Morgan. "You never know how people are going to react to stress and other events in their life."

The ACE program was introduced during the training. ACE stands for: Ask your buddy if they are thinking of hurting themselves; Care for your buddy by removing any means of harm; and Escort

See "Suicide prevention training" next page

Vandersand inducted into Distinguished Civilian Employees

By Melanie Ellis
Pacesetter Staff

Friends, family and co-workers of James D. Vandersand gathered at the Petroleum Club in downtown Fort Worth where he was inducted into the Gallery of Distinguished Civilian Employees April 1.

Vandersand is the 55th inductee to the Gallery that recognizes the significant contributions of employees exemplifying the highest order of professional competence and exceptional stature during their employment.

A number of current and retired district employees joined District Commander Col. Christopher W. Martin in reflecting on Vandersand's contributions to the district and reminisced on past experiences with him as a co-worker. Several touched on his ability to remain calm while making critical decisions on several sizeable and fast-paced projects. Others remarked that his people skills were extraordinary.

"This annual reception keeps the Fort Worth District family together," said Martin. "Today, we are honoring a very worthy person, Jim Vandersand."

Vandersand, who currently works for the district as a contractor, began his federal career in the Little Rock District with a stop in St. Louis District before heading to Fort Worth. In 1972, he moved to Fort Worth where he was assigned to the Construction Division in the Reports and Controls Section, working on civil and military projects.

He became an Engineering Project Manager in 1973, responsible for military programs at Air Force installations from design authority to award of construction contracts. During this time, he co-authored the first Corps of Engineers A-E Contracting Procedures Negotiations Guide and taught the course worldwide.

In 1975, he accepted a position in Livorno, Italy, as an engineering project manager, followed by a move to Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, in 1976 where he was the engineering liaison. In 1978, Vandersand returned to the district as an engineering project manager in the Army Section, and became the chief of Specifications Section in 1979. In 1982, he was selected as the chief of Military Branch, responsible for soliciting, selecting, negotiating and managing architect-engineer contracts with an extensive program in excess of $250 million of annual construction.

In 1984, he was assigned as chief of Program Management Section, Military Branch, Southwestern Division Office, returning to Fort Worth in 1987 as the chief of Design Branch, where he was responsible for the technical sufficiency of designs, plans and specifications prepared by government personnel and contracted architect-engineer firms for military and civil works programs.

He managed eight sections and 142 team members with a design workload exceeding $400 million annually. He became assistant chief, Engineering Division, in 1990, and after serving a year as chief of Military Branch, Programs and Project Management Division, he retired in 1999 with 33 years service with the Corps of Engineers.

Suicide prevention training

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your buddy to someone that can assist them like a counselor.

One effort the Corps offers is the Employee Assistance Program. Through EAP employees can get help in a number of areas all day, every day. Some of the services provided are help with problems such as emotional, relationship, family, alcohol, financial or job concerns.

"The Employee Assistance Program is a great program the Corps offers that is free to all employees," said Morgan. "It offers several services that can be of benefit to all of our employees."

To end the training session the groups discussed the importance of talking to friends and family about events that have affected their lives.

"It's a proven fact that women attempt suicide more than men," she said. "Men are more successful. Their families are often shocked because unlike women they have not talked to anyone about how they were feeling."

For more information about the EAP call 1-800-222-0364 or visit www.foh4you.com.

Pacesetter Points

Congratulations
Customer care winner

Russell Wyckoff, a hydraulic engineer in the Water Control Section, Engineering and Construction Division, was named Tulsa District's first quarter Customer Care Employee. Wyckoff was nominated for his work finalizing the geographic information system database for the district's levee inspection system. The database needed to be ready to begin fiscal year 2009 inspections on the district's 20 levee systems.

In the first quarter of FY09, Wyckoff completed inputting a record number four levee systems, 12 levee segments within a week's period of time so that inspections would not be delayed and inspection schedules would not be compromised.

In late December, just before the holidays, Wyckoff, working with the levee safety program manager, was requested on short notice to compile a complete database of the district levee segments and systems so it could be sent to Headquarters Corps of Engineers for preparation of the National Levee Database. He completed the task over the holidays and had the database ready for submittal in a short period of time.

Little Rock's Operations Division has selected **Alyson Parker** from Wilmington District as the temporary supervisory operations project manager at Millwood Tri-Lakes Project Office. She will be here until June 27 when Steve Spicer returns from his temporary assignment.

Christopher Wrbas departed Galveston District's Regulatory Branch March 2 to work in an Albuquerque District field office in Durango, Colorado.

Steven Walls joined the Galveston District March 3 as a project manager in Regulatory where he's responsible for reviewing wetland permits, delineations and other environmental documents.

James Worthington joined the Galveston District March 30 as a project manager in the project management branch.

Julie Bentley recently joined the Readiness and Operations Center at Southwestern Division headquarters as a staff administrative assistant and Family Readiness Program coordinator.

Little Rock's **Greg Mattson** was selected as a new project manager in the military programs branch April 2.

Little Rock welcomed new employee **Troy Morris** to the operations technical support branch, natural resources section as the district forester April 7.

Ernest Burford joined the Southwestern Division Headquarters Office of Counsel April 13. He comes to the division from the U.S. Attorney's Office, Houston, Texas.

Retirements

Atlan Citzler of Fort Worth District retired Jan. 3 with 36 years of federal service.

Janie Connor of Fort Worth District retired Jan. 3 after 33 years of federal service.

Rhonda Sanders of Fort Worth District retired Jan. 3 with more than 36 years of federal service.

Barbara Hastings of Fort Worth District retired Jan. 3 with 27 years of service.

Ruby Greer of Fort Worth District retired Jan. 28 with 41 years of federal service.

Fort Worth's **Michael Owen** retired Jan. 30 with more than 35 years of federal service.

Ray Shuler of Fort Worth retired Jan. 31 with 27 years of federal service.

Patricia Monschke of Fort Worth District retired Feb. 27 with 31 years of service.

Fort Worth's **James Sears** retired Feb. 27 after 42 years of federal service.

Little Rock's **Judith Hartley**, administrative assistant at Table Rock Lake Project Office, retired March 31 after 23 years of service.

Little Rock's **Denver Gillespie**, power plant senior electrician, retired April 1 after 34 years of service.

Continued on next page

Little Rock's **John Kielczewski**, hydraulic engineer, retires April 30 after 36 years of service.

Condolences

Retired Little Rock Park Ranger **David Small** lost his fight with cancer March 6. He was a long-time summer ranger at Nimrod-Blue Mountain. He exemplified bravery and perseverance after being shot by prison escapees in 1977, where he was left for dead. He recovered and testified three times in the capital murder trials of Paul Ruiz and Earl Van Denton.

Cleo Fay King, mother to **Dale King** of Fort Worth District, passed away Oct. 14, 2008.

Mike Baker, senior power plant operator at Sam Rayburn Power Plant in Fort Worth District, passed away Oct. 30, 2008.

Retiree **William Bobby Lanier** of Fort Worth District passed away Nov. 4, 2008.

Burton Raymond "Burt" Gannon, father to **Jerry Gannon** of Fort Worth District, passed away Nov. 15, 2008.

Dana Lynn Huston, mother-in-law to **Stacye Castillo** of Fort Worth District, passed away Dec. 1, 2008.

Barbara Grayson, mother-in-law to **Mike McInnis** of Fort Worth District, passed away Dec. 8, 2008.

Retiree **Leonard Ingalls** of Fort Worth District passed away Dec. 9, 2008.

Retiree **Jose Canto** of Fort Worth District passed away Dec. 22, 2008.

Genaro Paredes, father to Fort Worth retiree **Raquel Paredes**, passed away Jan. 3.

Retiree **Jack Becker** of Fort Worth District passed away Jan. 6.

Retiree **George Culpepper** of Fort Worth passed away Jan. 11.

Stella Melonson, mother-in-law to **Don Walker** of Fort Worth District, passed away Jan. 16.

Geraldine Elaine McDonald, mother of **Bobbi Ferrell**, Engineering and Construction Division of Fort Worth District, passed away Jan. 23. McDonald retired from the district in 1996.

William Shutt, uncle to **Mike McInnis** of the Operations Division in Fort Worth District, passed away Jan. 27.

Walter Gossom, father to Little Rock's **Diane Rhoden** in Contracting, died Feb. 22.

Gary Carter, brother to Little Rock's **Lisa Owens** of the Nimrod-Blue Mountain Project Office, died Feb. 19.

Albert George Rein Sr., father to Little Rock's **Al Rein** of the Project Management Office, passed away Feb. 20.

Retiree **F. Gordon Steer** of Fort Worth District passed away March 2.

Albert Doles, father to **Peggy Grubbs** of Fort Worth District, passed away March 14.

Retiree **Bill Shockley** of Fort Worth District passed away March 22.

Joseph Black, father to Little Rock's **Mike Black** of Reservoir Control, passed away March 26.

Retiree **Judy Anderson**'s husband, Bruce Anderson, passed away April 3.

Family Matters

Misty Gaines, the oldest daughter of Little Rock's Executive Secretary **Terri Shrum**, graduates from the University of Mississippi in May with a Bachelor's Degree in Nursing. She is in the Who's Who of Nursing for 2009 and will be inducted into the National Honor's Society of Nursing. Shrum's youngest daughter, Brittany Bales, will graduate from Northwest Rankin High School in Mississippi in May and plans to attend Mississippi State University in the fall.

Dr. Russell Blumer and Christine Johnson Blumer, daughter to Little Rock's **Julia Smethurst** of Planning Division, welcomed Ansley Marie Blumer into the family March 10. She was born in Toronto, Canada, and weighed 9 pounds, 1 ounce.

Little Rock's **Cathy Funkhouser** of the Hydrology and Hydraulics Office and her husband, Jaysson, welcomed Jaydon Ellis into the world April 4. He weighed 8 pounds, 8 ounces.

Larry Buck, Fort Worth District, welcomed his granddaughter Rylie Buck on Dec. 2, 2008.

Linda Bullock, Fort Worth District, welcomed her granddaughter, Amya Lynn Bullock Catron, on Dec. 18, 2008.

James Chambers, Fort Worth District, welcomed a son, Keller Wesley Chambers, on Feb. 18.

Pam Denny, Fort Worth District, welcomed her grandson, Bruce Kent, on Feb. 5.