

KANSAS CITY DISTRICT'S NEWS MAGAZINE

# HEARTLAND ENGINEER



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APRIL - JUNE 2013

## POWERING *through the 21st century*



# INSIDE THE HEARTLAND

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Jim Dickerson at the Go Outdoors Event on May 26.  
Photo by Diana McCoy

## Where I fit in the OPLAN 2013

### *My Part of the Plan:*

*Action 1.c.: Establish a plan to reduce water based fatalities.*

Item 6 of the OPLAN is to develop and implement a water safety strategic plan. As part of the plan to increase water safety awareness, park rangers like Jim Dickerson attend community outreach events to talk to the public about water safety. Dickerson has been a park ranger at Longview-Blue Springs Lakes since he began as a summer hire in 1987.

Dickerson enjoys working for the Corps because there is always something new and different that needs to be done. He also enjoys participating in school programs to help raise awareness of water safety with kids. "If you can get the message about water safety out and reach kids at an early age, it will be easier for them to continue being safe as adults," said Dickerson.



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### ON THE COVER:

The tower assembly which included the runner and the head covers was removed at the Stockton Power House on Mar. 29. The new runner is scheduled to be placed back into the power house late 2013. Photo by Bob Schoen

# *People and Mission:* Our Cornerstones for **Success**



COL Anthony Hofmann

**K**ansas City District: First and foremost, I want to personally thank each and every one in our Heartland Engineer workforce for your dedicated Service to the nation. Your contributions allow the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to continue to provide a unique Value to the Nation as the world's largest public engineering agency. You make a difference in the daily lives of people worldwide, making the world a better place.

I want to compliment each of you for your unrelenting focus on the cornerstones of our organization: people and mission. I had the privilege to chat with many of you during our recent Organizational Day held on our Army's 238th birthday (with 640 attendees) at Longview Lake. Your passion for these cornerstones could not have been more evident—to include district retirees who established the strong culture our district demonstrates and a legacy you model so very well. The focus on people and mission is embedded in our organizational culture.

Why does this matter? Because a district lacking focus on each will ultimately fail. As current fiscal conditions fluctuate and the environment continually shifts, organizations like ours that have the ability to stay focused on people and mission will be able to adapt to any challenge. You've repeatedly shown this by delivering for our nation during unforeseen circumstances (Joplin tornado recovery, Missouri River Flooding, and post-Superstorm Sandy recovery are good examples). I commend each of you for supporting each other as well as our partners/customers/stakeholders.

Since our inception in 1907, these cornerstones for success have allowed the district to respond to the nation's toughest engineering challenges, often when results were needed the most. This is evident in what we are passionate about: Taming the Mighty Missouri River by providing a navigable waterway; Providing the public with the finest recreational facilities as well as clean, renewable energy; Constructing a power projection platform for the world's most powerful military; Cleaning up the nation's most toxic waste sites; Mitigating, recovering and restoring ecosystems of national significance; and Protecting the public and infrastructure during natural disasters. Maintaining the emphasis on people and mission will allow us to adapt to whatever our Nation asks us to do in the future as conditions change.

As I end my tour and Army career in the Kansas City District, I want to thank you for having the distinct privilege of being your district commander. On a personal note, working shoulder to shoulder with you has been, by far, the highlight of my career. I'm extremely proud of your professionalism, motivation, competency, loyalty and ability to deliver under the most challenging conditions. Your reputation within and outside of our organization is exceptional. I will continue to stay apprised of the vital mission the Nation entrusts you with and promise to be an advocate for what the Heartland Engineers do. Simply put—you are exceptional! My personal best to each of you as you remain focused on the cornerstones for success: people and mission.

Very respectfully,

*Anthony J. Hofmann*

# Construction on the Stockton turbine begins



*By Cara Christianson-Riley*

History is being made for the Kansas City District at the Stockton Power Plant. The plant has been in an outage since February 12, 2013, as the dam prepares to receive a new turbine and several upgrades.

Located on the Sac River, Stockton's hydroelectric power plant was placed into service back in 1973 to be used as a peaking plant – to supplement the spikes in energy use during the day. This plant can be remotely operated from the Harry S. Truman Power Plant. On average, the Stockton plant produces 55 million kilowatt hours a year for businesses and residences in southwest Missouri.

The Stockton Turbine Replacement Project began back in February 2009 when a 9,000-pound blade from the runner of the turbine broke off and settled in the draft tube. The breakdown was a very expensive one. The shutdown of the Stockton plant cost an estimated \$7.6 million in energy benefits in just 18 months.

As fortune would have it for the district, President Obama signed the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 in February. The ARRA was signed into law with the purposes of saving and creating jobs, providing temporary recession relief, and to invest in infrastructure, education, health, and “green” energy.

“We were very lucky that when we lost the blade, the

Stimulus Act was signed. This granted us the ability to repair and update our aging plant,” said Robin Wankum, project manager.

Pete Hentschel, hydropower business line manager for the Kansas City District's Operations Division, submitted a proposal for ARRA funding to repair the turbine blade at Stockton as well as much needed hydraulic structure upgrades to the plant. Over \$42 million was awarded to the district for the Stockton project. Several contracts were awarded for the multiple upgrades to the plant. The contracts contained detailed plans for numerous activities including: hydraulic steel structure repair; in-place blade repair; electrical systems upgrades; 50-megawatt turbine runner replacement; 161-kV transformer replacement; hydraulic governor, excitation system, and emergency diesel generator replacement; rotor and stator winding refurbishment; and asbestos abatement and lead paint removal.

Once the money from the ARRA was in place, blade repair was able to commence. A complex plan was developed to repair the turbine. A team of divers were sent to the draft tube to retrieve displaced blade #4 and bring it to the surface for repairs. Once the blade was restored, divers returned it to welding crews at the

Right: On Mar. 29, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers personnel and construction workers from Voith Hydro removed the tower assembly. The assembly weighed approximately 320 tons. Photo by Bob Schoen

Left: Members of the Stockton turbine replacement project team pose together in front of the tower assembly that was removed on Mar. 29. Photo by Bob Schoen



Construction workers from Voith Hydro prepare the Stockton turbine tower assembly which included the runner and the head covers for removal on Mar. 29. This was a major milestone at the Stockton Power House. Photo by Amy Phillips

turbine for 'in place' reattachment. The Stockton plant was once again able to generate power on September 3, 2010.

Recently, the Stockton Power Plant shut down in February 2013 for disassembly of the generator and turbine unit. The Voith Hydro contracting crew had to remove the thrust bracket and rotor. The plant power house does not allow for much space to store the large components of the generator and the turbine, so the project team had to strategically stack them along the power house floor to make room for the turbine removal.

The extraction was completed on March 28, 2013, with the big hoist of the turbine. Several onlookers from the district and Voith Hydro gathered as the plant's turbine surfaced from its 40-plus year resting place. The turbine removal was calculated to have just an inch of wall clearance on any side of the 23-foot wide runner. During the final extraction of the turbine, the Voith crew even had to temporarily remove some cable brackets in order for the crane and turbine to clear the first wall.

To further complicate the extraction of the final piece, the plant's crane would have to be operating at near maximum weight capacity. The turbine was estimated to weigh 319 tons while the crane's maximum

lift capacity was 325 tons. The old turbine will be cleaned up and placed on permanent display near the Stockton Power Plant switchyard.

While the project team awaits the new turbine, contractors are continuing to work at the hydroelectric plant with the asbestos abatement and lead paint removal from areas around the plant. In addition, crews are working on the main power transformer replacement.

The new turbine runner is being assembled by Voith Hydro crews in York, Pa., to assure that all the components fit properly and will function as predicted. Once the new runner is inspected, it will be shipped via rail to Springfield, Mo., in August of this year. According to Robin Wankum, a 19-axle trailer will then transport it to its home in the Stockton Dam. Voith crews will then assemble the new turbine and the generator.

Work on the Stockton Hydroelectric Power Plant is estimated to be completed in February 2014, just one year after shutting down. The hard work and coordination from the project team will keep this plant producing clean energy for another 50 years.



# Preventing invasive species at our lakes

By Amy Phillips

The Kansas City District has 18 lakes and recreation areas. Currently, seven of our lakes have zebra mussels and one is listed as exposed. As we approach the summer months of recreation and fun, it is time to keep invasive species in mind.

Zebra mussels remain the main aquatic invasive species at our lakes. "They are our top concern because once you have them, you have them. There is no control," said Mike Watkins, wildlife biologist.

We have zebra mussels in Perry, Milford, Wilson, Melvern, Smithville, Rathbun and Kanopolis lakes, and Truman Lake has been exposed. With zebra mussels, the district wants to make sure that they are not transported to other bodies of water that have not been exposed.

It is also important to have awareness of other species that could become a problem in the future. Quagga mussels have not been identified at any of our lakes but are still a concern. Transported like the zebra mussels, they are even worse. They are found deeper in lakes and adapt easier to environmental conditions.

**"Quagga mussels are like zebra mussels on steroids," said Watkins.**

Another aquatic nuisance species that has been rising across the United States is the Asian carp. They are filter feeders like the zebra mussels.

Asian carp exist in the Missouri and the Kansas rivers and include the silver, big head and grass carp. They filter the good plankton out of the water leaving little for bait fish to eat.

"We currently cannot confirm any silver carp in our lakes but they are below several of the dams," said Watkins.

"They improve water clarity in the lake and make conditions more favorable for algae blooms and cause other issues," said Watkins.

Insect invasive species are also a concern at our lake projects. The emerald ash bore is found in firewood and can infest ash trees. The best way to prevent the spread of this invasive species is to buy firewood locally.

"There is a ban on transporting firewood from a portion of the Kansas City area because of quarantine due to an Emerald Ash Bore infestation. If you were to bring firewood to our lake projects from the quarantined area, you could bring the bore with you and infect the local trees without even knowing it," said Watkins.

"Buy it where you burn it" has become the slogan to encourage campers to get their firewood once they arrive at the area they will be camping in.

The key, as with our other invasive species, is prevention.

"If found right away, it might be easier to contain than some of the other invasive species but the chances of identifying every tree that gets infested would be difficult," said Watkins.

We also have a couple of plant species in the areas that can invade

Zebra mussels are an invasive species which can be transported from lake to lake by attaching to boats. This picture shows several zebra mussels on a boat propeller at Wilson Lake. Photo by Mike Watkins.

the native prairie grass. These are the sericea lespediza and the musk thistle. The district spends thousands each year in weed control at the lakes.

"Sericea lespediza can be controlled but not eradicated. It is necessary to spray year after year. It can be dormant for years and may not germinate until scarified from things like a fire or tillage when the soil is disturbed and it will come back," Watkins said.

And prevention is what is important. The lakes put informational flyers on windshields of visitors to the lakes, especially during busy holiday weekends. We also put information out through signage at the lakes informing visitors about zebra mussels. And we have educational booths at boat shows and other public events.

"We have a good program to promote prevention. We have a big education program; we have signs to identify if a lake is infested with zebra mussels and one for prevention at all of our lakes," said Watkins.

The main things to prevent the spread of zebra mussels are to remove all mud and plants, clean, drain and dry all equipment that comes into contact with the water including ropes, anchors, and fishing equipment as well as boats and personal water craft. Drying is the important part allowing five to seven days before going to a different lake.

"Treat every body of water as if it is infested," said Watkins.

# Turkey Creek Project

## reaches new milestone

By Amy Phillips

The Kansas City District made a major step in the Turkey Creek program by moving forward with the Turkey Creek Cherokee Interceptor project.

Cherokee Interceptor, the first of three interceptor projects, broke through under the railroad on March 22, reaching a significant milestone in the project.

“The purpose of the project is to collect hillside drainage from the landside of the levee to prevent flooding in the area of Southwest Boulevard and direct that hillside runoff into Turkey Creek,” said Scott Mensing, project manager.

The need for the flood risk reduction project was identified during the 1998 Turkey Creek feasibility study. The Kansas City District was authorized from the study to do work to reduce the risk of flooding along Southwest Boulevard.

The \$2.8 million construction project was awarded to Kissick Construction in the fall of 2012. The project captures the 25-year storm event from the nearby hillsides and conveys the storm water to Turkey Creek via a 78-inch reinforced concrete pipe that is located through a historic residential and business district. In order to connect the hillsides to Turkey Creek, the 78-inch RCP needed to cross beneath four existing and active Burlington Northern Sante Fe railroad tracks.

“The machine is hydraulically jacked forward and includes a cutter head that drills into the subsurface soils while continuously placing pipe behind the machine. Spoils from the operation are taken from the cutter head back through the pipe and then removed at the jacking pit,” said Mensing.

When the project is complete, approximately 600 cubic feet per second of stormwater will drain from the adjacent hillside and flow through the pipes.

The project has not come without challenges to the district.

The BNSF main lines out of Kansas City go through this area and average between 10 to 20 trains per day. The pipe jacking effort was subcontracted to EJM and they coordinated with BNSF to make sure that we were not interfering with the train traffic.

“We were allowed to perform the pipe jacking operations with trains actively moving above the pipe,” said Mensing.

The design and construction team also focused

on maintaining minimal impacts to the surrounding community along Southwest Boulevard. There are several businesses and dense residential areas within the project corridor. Due to the age of these developments, numerous existing utilities, including power, communication, gas, water and sewer, are located throughout the entire project limits. The team coordinated closely with each of the respective utility companies to ensure no home or business owners lost utility services during construction. Also, many easements, both temporary and permanent, were obtained from the home and business owners along the project corridor to allow the project to be constructed.

“These types of projects are new to us as far as

working in residential and business areas and having to get all the additional easements to complete the project,” said Mensing.

Several of the buildings in the area are older so they wanted to make sure there were no adverse effects to the buildings or the foundations.

Mensing said, “The team did a lot of upfront work to avoid infringing on the community any more than we had to during construction.”

And one of those potential infringements was open cutting on Southwest Boulevard to facilitate the construction of the storm sewer.

“This is an area with heavy traffic, so to reduce the impact on the community, they were able to work on weekends, and the contractor was able to reduce the work to a week or so instead of the month originally planned,” said Mensing.

The Turkey Creek Cherokee Interceptor project is a cost share project with the Unified Government of Wyandotte County and Kansas City, Kan., and the City of Kansas City, Mo. The government is responsible for 65 percent of the cost of the project and the municipalities the other 35 percent.

“When the project is complete, the entire neighborhood will be revamped with new sidewalks, curb and gutter and asphalt on Cherokee Street and betterment of new asphalt, curb and gutters, and sidewalks on Seminary Street,” said Mensing.

The Unified Government decided to do a betterment, at their expense, but worked it into the district’s contract so that the whole area would have a new look by the end of the project.

The project is estimated to be complete in July.



Scott Mensing, Turkey Creek Cherokee Interceptor project manager, and other Corps employees watch as the first of the three Cherokee Interceptors broke through under the BNSF railroad near Southwest Boulevard in Kansas City, Mo., on March 22. Photo by Amy Phillips

# Safety main focus at lakes



Visitors to Harry S. Truman Lake put life jackets on their children at the life jacket loaner boards. Loaner boards are provided at the lakes to ensure the safety of those visiting. Photo by Amy Phillips

By Amy Phillips

With the recreation season in full swing, the Kansas City District wants the public to stay focused on safety while visiting our 18 lake projects.

The lakes in the district have around 15 million visitors per year and it is important to the district that they are safe while recreating at the lakes.

“One incident is too many,” said Jonathan Carlisle, natural resource management specialist.

That is why the district lakes have partnered with the Brian and Nathan Keese water safety organization. Brian and Nathan Keese were the victims of drowning at Stockton Lake in 2010, and the foundation seeks to raise awareness and prevent other tragedies.

“The life jacket lender boards at the area lakes were one of the contributions to help encourage people to wear their life jacket,” said Scott Rice, natural resource management specialist.

The focus is not just on water safety. With the lakes there are always other activities such as hiking, biking, horse riding, and other fun activities. One activity is all terrain vehicle riding and we have seen an increase in accidents over the past few years said Rice.

Several ways to minimize risks is to stay hydrated, wear a life jacket, don't recreate alone, and take all safety precautions. Make sure someone knows where you are going, what you will be doing, and when you plan to return.

The district also takes part in numerous outreach efforts to increase awareness and educate the public on how to stay safe at the lakes. District personnel attend sporting events and other events and set up a safety awareness booth. One of these events included the Springfield Cardinals baseball game on June 16.

**“Bobber was there to help promote water safety. We worked with Safe Kids Springfield and provided safety information and education materials. We also have PSAs read over the radio at every home game during the season,”** said Carlisle.

The other major event that the district is planning to have a water safety program at is the Country Stampede at Tuttle Creek Lake. The event is June 27 through 30 with over 180,000 visitors.

“The event takes place on Corps property but this will be the first year we're conducting a water safety program for the event,” said Rice.

“Come out, recreate and have a good time but take steps to minimize risks,” said Carlisle.



Jim Dickerson, park ranger, engages with two young children about water safety at the Go Outdoors Event in Olathe, Kan., on May 26. He was assisted by Hannah Rogers, a summer ranger from Smithville Lake. The event was sponsored at Bass Pro stores across the country. Photo by Diana McCoy

*For more information on water safety visit:*  
<http://brianandnathankeesewatersafetyorganization.com/>  
[www.nwk.usace.army.mil/Locations/DistrictLakes/Safety.aspx](http://www.nwk.usace.army.mil/Locations/DistrictLakes/Safety.aspx)

# Hunting modern-day dinosaurs



Marcus L. Miller, biologist for the Kansas City District, holds an adult pallid sturgeon from the Missouri River near Kansas City on April 5, 2013. This was the largest of two pallid sturgeon captured during the collection effort. Photo by Todd R. Gemeinhardt



Kasey Whiteman, Missouri Department of Conservation, takes genetic samples of a possible shovelnose/pallid sturgeon hybrid to be sent to lab to determine the fish's true species. Photo by Amy L. Phillips



Maj. Rachel A. Honderd assists Col. Anthony J. Hofmann in removing a shovelnose sturgeon from a trotline during the Brood Stock Collection Effort. Shovelnose sturgeons have also been placed on the endangered species list because of their similarity to pallid sturgeons. Photo by Diana McCoy

By Diana McCoy

On a sunny morning in early April, several members from the Kansas City District joined the Missouri Department of Conservation in an intensive effort, known as the Brood Stock Collection Effort, to collect an endangered species considered to be a relic of the dinosaur era from the Missouri River.

“We are working with a multi-agency group to collect adult reproductive pallid sturgeon,” said Marcus L. Miller, a biologist for the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Kansas City District. “After [the Missouri Department of Conservation] collect them, they’ll take them back to the hatchery to produce offspring and repopulate back into the river.”

Miller said if the pallid sturgeons are ready to spawn, they will keep them in the hatchery. Once they spawn, the hatchery returns them back to the location they were captured.

This collection effort occurs every year with the goal of capturing the pallids before they spawn—usually when the water temperature hits 55 degrees.

The Missouri Department of Conservation sets trotlines, a rope containing hooks that is set on the bottom of the river with earthworm bait. The lines are set overnight and retrieved the next day. This is done over the course of three to four weeks. The pallids that are caught are sent to a hatchery until they have captured as many as they can or until the hatchery is full.

“When they pull the fish in, they’ll weigh them and measure them for length,” said Miller. “They’ll also check for any markings for tags.”

If there’s any confusion about whether the fish is a shovelnose sturgeon or a pallid sturgeon, genetic samples are taken and sent in to a lab to verify the fish’s species.

On this particular April morning, MDC found one fish that could possibly be a shovelnose/pallid sturgeon hybrid. The results won’t be known until winter time, though, as samples are collected throughout the year and sent in to the lab at one time.

Other members from the Kansas City District included District Commander Col. Anthony J. Hofmann, Maj. Rachel A. Honderd, Todd R. Gemeinhardt, Dane M. Morris and Scott P. Mensing. Hofmann and Honderd helped out by removing the hooks from the trotlines as they were reeled in.

Though there were many shovelnose sturgeon caught that day, two pallid sturgeons were identified. One was too small and released after measurements were taken, but the other, larger pallid was taken back to MDC’s Blind Pony Hatchery in Sweet Springs, Mo.

Kasey Whiteman and Darby Niswonger, both resource staff scientists with the MDC, explained to Hofmann and Honderd the differences between shovelnose sturgeon and pallid sturgeon. They also gave a little history behind some of the problems the fish have had in the recent past not related to the channelization of the Missouri River.

“A shovelnose’s fleshy barbels generally come down

in a line,” said Whiteman. “A pallid’s will be offset, and you’ll see more of a horseshoe.”

There is also a difference in the shape of the head. A pallid sturgeon’s head is more elongated than a shovelnose, and they are generally more whitish in appearance.

“Shovelnose sturgeons are protected under the Endangered Species Act because of their similarity in appearance to the pallids,” said Whiteman. “That was something enacted a few years ago. From a sport fishing standpoint, they can be collected, but for commercial harvest, it’s illegal.”

Niswonger explained that the shovelnose sturgeons were being sought for their caviar, which is a very lucrative industry.

“They used to allow commercial fishing for shovelnose sturgeon on the Missouri River, and so there were a lot of people coming out here harvesting these fish and making quite a bit of money,” said Niswonger. “They found that commercial fisherman were also harvesting pallids because they’re bigger and usually contain more eggs. They have evidence of dead pallid sturgeons in dumpsters. Once they are harvested for caviar, they’re dead.”

“So what they’ve done now—the Fish and Wildlife Service—is said since the shovelnose and pallids look so similar and commercial fishermen aren’t able to tell the difference, they’re no longer able to harvest the shovelnose throughout the entire Missouri River and the Mississippi River below the confluence with the Missouri.”

Even though the Corps has had success in many areas with pallid sturgeons, Zachary L. White, a project manager for the Missouri River Recovery Program, says there’s not enough science just yet to tell how effective the efforts are.

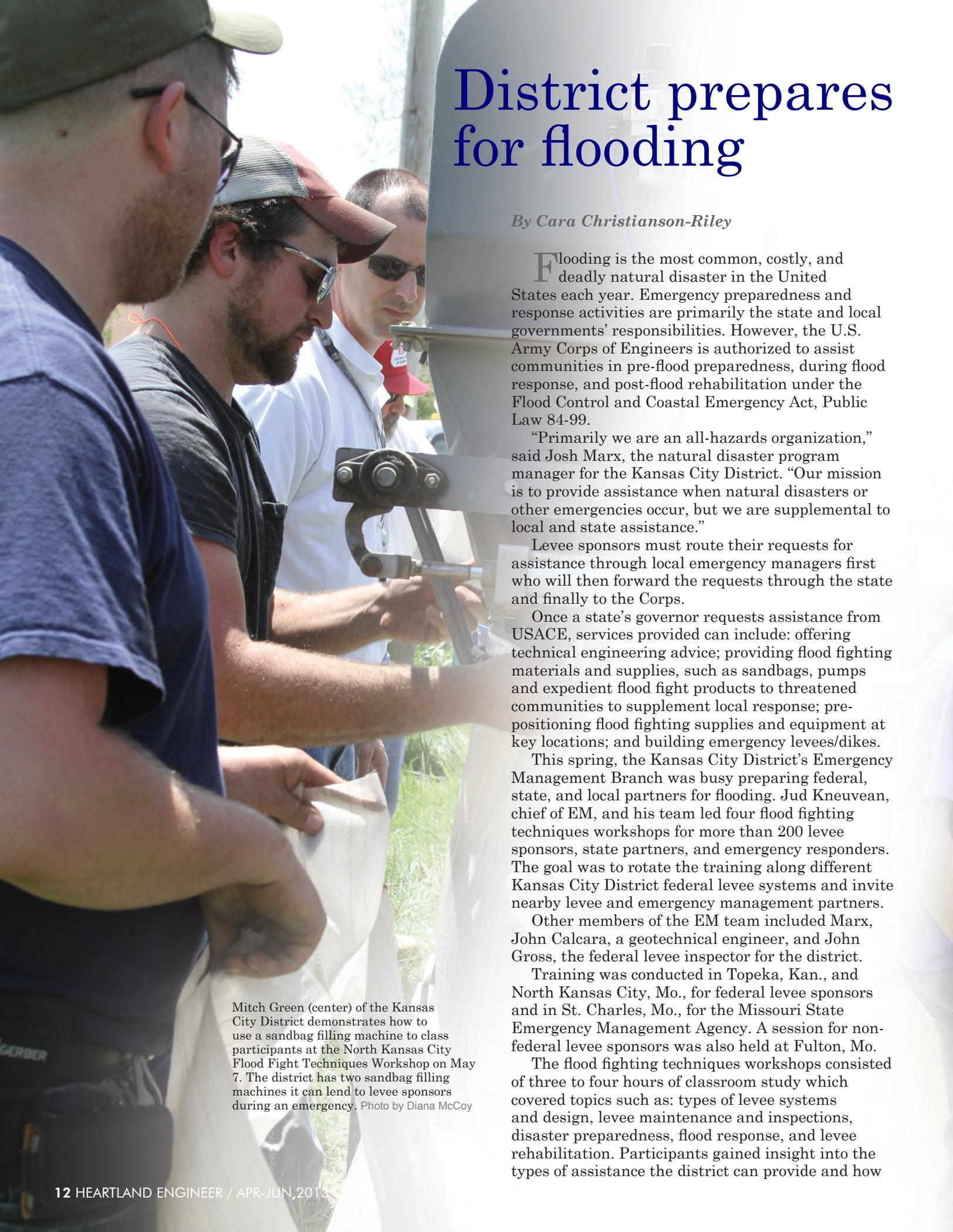
“It takes 10 years for pallids to become sexually mature, and our mitigation project has been going on for about 10 years now,” said White.

Whiteman said pallid sturgeons don’t spawn every year, and they are very slow growing—about a half an inch every year.

“They are very slow to respond to change one way or another,” Whiteman said. “But since we’ve had this long time of the river being in its current condition, they have responded—pallid sturgeons to the negative, but shovelnose sturgeons seem to be okay.”

Pallid sturgeons can weigh up to 80 pounds and reach lengths of 6 feet, according to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. All the fish’s riverine habitat has been impounded by dams and channelized, changing the river’s hydrograph, temperature and turbidity thereby creating unsuitable habitat.

The pallid sturgeon is said to have originated 70 million years ago and remains essentially unchanged. It’s also been called “one of the ugliest fish in North America,” but to the biologists and scientists on the hunt for them during the Brood Stock Collection, they are a sight for sore eyes.



# District prepares for flooding

By Cara Christianson-Riley

Flooding is the most common, costly, and deadly natural disaster in the United States each year. Emergency preparedness and response activities are primarily the state and local governments' responsibilities. However, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers is authorized to assist communities in pre-flood preparedness, during flood response, and post-flood rehabilitation under the Flood Control and Coastal Emergency Act, Public Law 84-99.

"Primarily we are an all-hazards organization," said Josh Marx, the natural disaster program manager for the Kansas City District. "Our mission is to provide assistance when natural disasters or other emergencies occur, but we are supplemental to local and state assistance."

Levee sponsors must route their requests for assistance through local emergency managers first who will then forward the requests through the state and finally to the Corps.

Once a state's governor requests assistance from USACE, services provided can include: offering technical engineering advice; providing flood fighting materials and supplies, such as sandbags, pumps and expedient flood fight products to threatened communities to supplement local response; pre-positioning flood fighting supplies and equipment at key locations; and building emergency levees/dikes.

This spring, the Kansas City District's Emergency Management Branch was busy preparing federal, state, and local partners for flooding. Jud Kneuvean, chief of EM, and his team led four flood fighting techniques workshops for more than 200 levee sponsors, state partners, and emergency responders. The goal was to rotate the training along different Kansas City District federal levee systems and invite nearby levee and emergency management partners.

Other members of the EM team included Marx, John Calcara, a geotechnical engineer, and John Gross, the federal levee inspector for the district.

Training was conducted in Topeka, Kan., and North Kansas City, Mo., for federal levee sponsors and in St. Charles, Mo., for the Missouri State Emergency Management Agency. A session for non-federal levee sponsors was also held at Fulton, Mo.

The flood fighting techniques workshops consisted of three to four hours of classroom study which covered topics such as: types of levee systems and design, levee maintenance and inspections, disaster preparedness, flood response, and levee rehabilitation. Participants gained insight into the types of assistance the district can provide and how

Mitch Green (center) of the Kansas City District demonstrates how to use a sandbag filling machine to class participants at the North Kansas City Flood Fight Techniques Workshop on May 7. The district has two sandbag filling machines it can lend to levee sponsors during an emergency. Photo by Diana McCoy

to request it. The workshop concluded with about two hours of hands-on training in which participants learned to fill, pass, and position sandbags for the optimal sandbag levee.

“We offer this training at no charge to the levee sponsors because preparing them before a flood ultimately reduces federal expenditures during a future flood response,” said Kneuvean.

In addition to the flood fighting workshops, the Kansas City District hosted the Flood Control and Coastal Emergencies Public Law 84-99 training for the first time in the district’s new room 204. More than 40 USACE participants from across the country gathered in Kansas City from April 30 to May 3 for the Proponent-Sponsored Engineer Corps Training course. The training provided participants with a basic understanding of the emergency management program within USACE.

Participants of the FCCE training course discussed topics such as: funding regulation, levee safety, emergency operation centers, preparedness, response activities, rehabilitation, flood risk management, and the latest emergency operations policy updates. On the second day of the training, the

class boarded two buses to visit the North Kansas City federal levee system at the downtown Kansas City airport and the Rushville Sugar Lake and Bean Lake non-federal levees near Atchison, Kan. Many of the participants were unfamiliar with non-federal levee systems.

Kneuvean and Robin Wankum led the tour, providing historical information, updates from the 2011 flooding in the district, and the intricacies and challenges to emergency management and levee protection in the district.

Kneuvean said flood fighting can be difficult to execute because there is not a one-size-fits-all solution. However, the Kansas City District has taken a proactive approach and has prepared federal, state, and local counterparts on how to apply proven emergency management and flood fighting techniques. Reacting to disasters in a timely manner is essential in protecting the life, safety, and property of the public.

Feedback from the course survey indicated the district’s new conference room was well-received. Kneuvean said they may hold another FCCE PROSPECT course in the district this year.

John Gross (center), the district’s federal levee inspector, assists class participants in building a sandbag ring during the North Kansas City flood fight workshop. Photo by Diana McCoy



# Blaine Naval Ammunition Depot reaches new phase in project

By Amy Phillips

The Kansas City District along with the Seattle District has been involved in the clean-up efforts at the Blaine Naval Ammunition Depot in Hastings, Neb., since 1986 and recently reached an important milestone in the project.

The north groundwater remediation system to include the groundwater treatment plant at the North Plume was completed in February and is now operational.

"The system is actively pumping and treating groundwater but the entire system has to go through a prove-out period of about 3 to 6 months," said Mirek Towster, project manager.

Prove-out is a series of tests and calibrations to ensure that the ground water remediation system is functioning as designed.

"It is functional and working but we are tweaking," said Towster. "In the north system, we have been pumping and treating ground water since the beginning of February."

The completion of the north system and treatment plant by Shaw Environmental is an important step in the process and now Hydro Geologic, Inc. will begin construction on the south plume

system. Handover of the contract from Shaw Environmental to Hydro Geologic, Inc., was completed in February.

The Naval Ammunition Depot was built in the early 1940s as an active "load, assemble, and pack" ammunition facility during WWII and the Korean Conflict. The depot was responsible for producing nearly one-half of the ordnance that was used by the Navy during that period of time.

Following decommissioning of the depot in the early 1960s, various individuals, businesses, municipalities and other government agencies purchased land in the area and there are currently over 60 different property owners at the former depot.

Back in the 80s, over seven square miles of contaminated groundwater were identified at the site. The project was placed on the national priority list in 1986 and environmental investigations by the Kansas City District began soon after.

Work will continue on the south system which is estimated to be complete by the summer of 2014. Once completed, there will be a

series of calibrations like the ones on the north system. Then the whole system will be operational and actively treating groundwater for several years.

"We will actively extract, treat and discharge at the site for about 30 years," said Towster.

After that period of time, the site will be monitored for an additional 50 to 60 years. During that time, the monitoring wells will be checked to ensure that the natural attenuation process continues to address the residual contamination.

Towster has been working on this project off and on since 1994. There was a period of time that he worked on other projects but said that projects like this are rewarding.

"When you look at a project that has been going on for a number of years, with several different people involved over the duration, it is a good feeling to reach such an important milestone," Towster said. "Everyone will be glad to see the construction phase of the project completed."

Contractors from Shaw Environmental along with district staff gather to mark a milestone in the Blaine Naval Ammunition Depot project in Hastings, Neb., as a major portion of the groundwater treatment system became operational in February. Photo by Steve Schmidt



# National Dam Safety Awareness Day

## Dam Safety is a Shared Responsibility

By Doug Crum and Diana McCoy

May 31 was recognized as National Dam Safety Awareness Day in commemoration of the devastation that occurred in 1889 at the South Fork Dam in Johnstown, Pa. The dam failed, killing 2,209 people, leaving thousands homeless. The Johnstown disaster was the worst dam failure in the United States.

The focus of National Dam Safety Awareness Day observance is to sustain the public's involvement over time, and to sustain the public's interest in becoming active partners in local emergency management. Citizens need to be empowered since they are the primary stakeholders in safe dams.

Lessons from devastating disasters show that there is no substitute for pre-disaster planning. Dam safety organizations encourage people who live downstream of dams to be aware of and understand risks associated with dams, and that effective evacuation plans are in place. The American Society of Engineer's Report Card for America's Infrastructure shows that dams require investment and many dams are in need of repairs.

The Corps encourages the public to urge their policymakers to take measures to prevent catastrophic dam failures. While good planning and improved dam safety programs at all levels of government have dramatically reduced the loss of life resulting from dam failures, ongoing attention and investment are necessary to protect lives and property, and preserve the valuable benefits that dams provide. State and

federal policymakers can increase the safety of dams by providing strong laws and resources for continued safety programs.

Dams provide several benefits to communities around them to include the storage of water for drinking, hydroelectric generation, flood control and recreation. They can provide a reliable water source for farmers and provide wildlife habitat and food for migrating birds.

### Key things to keep in mind:

- Dams require maintenance and monitoring. This effort is dependent on the dam condition and downstream hazards.
- Dams have many benefits, such as water supply storage, recreation, fish & wildlife habitat, agriculture, hydropower and navigation. Flood control dams reduce risks for downstream flooding.
- Dam Safety is a shared responsibility. Know your risk, know your role and take action. Encourage dam owners and elected officials to make sound flood risk management decisions.
- Dams and levees are potentially hazardous. There are many historic dam failures where downstream flooding was catastrophic.
- There are over 83,000 inventoried dams in the U.S. About 14,000 of these are high hazard dams that would likely cause loss of life if they failed.



Doug Crum, safety program manager, is interviewed by Clark Davis from the Vindicator on May 31 during the National Dam Safety Awareness Day at Perry Lake project office. Photo by Kenny Wade

# 2013 Youth Fishing Tournament at Truman Lake

By Koi Henderson

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers along with the Missouri Department of Conservation hosted the 2013 Kid's Fishing Day on May 6 at the Missouri Department of Conservation office in Clinton, Mo.

Approximately 75 children from four area schools participated in the day's events including; fish and fishing techniques, a casting contest, pellet rifle and archery shooting, water safety, and of course fishing! This event has been very popular with children and teachers alike for 13 years now.

MDC fisheries biologist Mike Bayless ensured the pond was freshly stocked with channel catfish and hybrid sunfish, and the children tried to catch as many as they could in the allotted 30 minutes. The biggest fish caught was a 13.5-inch channel cat. The most fish caught was three by four different students. Future Farmers of America Students from Clinton High School

assisted the participants with the catch and release and measuring of the fish for the tournament portion of the event. The total number of fish caught during the event was 58.

Greg Pennington taught the "Fish and Fishing Techniques" portion of the outdoor education event. Conservation officers Kevin Dixon and Andy Bullock along with Mark Miller gave children instruction in pellet gun and archery shooting. Corps of Engineers park ranger Erin Cordrey taught water safety, and ranger Bradley Pearson taught a casting contest. New to this year's event was Tony Edgar. Tony is the host of Season to Season Outdoors and was excited to be a part of the event. KMOS, a public broadcasting station in Warrensburg, Mo., filmed the event that will air later this summer on Season to Season Outdoors.

The event goals are to teach

children about fishing, water safety, shooting sports and outdoor recreation. This tournament is exciting and educational, not just for the children but also for event coordinators, educators, and sponsors. Having a chance to interact with the children and watch them catch their first fish or shoot a bow and arrow is an unforgettable experience.

A trophy and a rod and reel were awarded to the person catching the biggest fish. Also, a rod and reel and a trophy were awarded for the most fish caught. A life jacket was awarded to the student showing the best water safety skills. Because of the generosity of the sponsors, every child went home with multiple door prizes.

The children gave their thanks to numerous sponsors for generously supporting the event.

Kids enjoy fishing at the 2013 Kid's Fishing Day event at Missouri Department of Conservation office in Clinton, Mo., on May 6. There were approximately 75 children from four area schools participating in this year's event. Photo by Phillip Mecum



# MSO

provides support to the district



*By the MSO staff*

Believe it or not the Mission Support Office (MSO) has now been in existence for over four years. We thought it was time to update everyone on exactly what MSO does and what we can do for you. To provide a little background, in 2008 the District Commander and Senior Leaders formulated a plan to establish a new office that could fill several apparent voids to include a person to oversee the growing task of developing the District Operations Plan (OPLAN).

That vision resulted in establishing the MSO with the intent of also transferring the oversight of some of the small offices from the deputy to the MSO chief in order to provide the district deputy additional time to work higher level taskings. In January 2009, Susan Pippin, a career Army civilian with 34 years of experience, was chosen to stand up the MSO and make the vision a reality. Initially tasked with the duties of strategic planner and oversight of the district small offices, Public Affairs, Security and Safety, she also serves as district liaison with ACE-IT and Logistics. The MSO currently consists of six employees, which includes the Files Processing Center and District Library.

In the bigger picture, the MSO benefits the entire district in a multitude of ways. For example, MSO conducts New Employee Orientation and oversees in-and-out-processing for all district employees. They also provide training for all incoming staff to include all mandatory training required to obtain security passes and computer access, an area that Pippin takes particular pride in.

“When I first arrived at the district, there were horror stories of it taking weeks, sometimes even months, to get a new employee up to speed and actually doing the job they were brought in to do. Accurately submitting the necessary ACE-IT forms and completing the required training for a new employee had become labor intensive for supervisors. I am proud to say that now we can typically have a new employee completely functional in approximately two days,” said Pippin.

Here is an extensive list of some of the services that the MSO provides:

- Training Program for the District
- Awards Program for the District
- Annual Senior Leaders Strategic Planning Meeting
- Annual District Organization Day
- Out-Processing of District employees
- Human Capital Management Coordinator
- Quarterly Award Ceremony
- Drug Testing Program
- Conference room/AV equipment oversight
- Parking program oversight
- Command Climate Survey administration
- District directories and staff professional certification maintenance
- Change of Command Ceremony Support
- Command visit support
- Administrative SOP's
- District Special Events
- Service Pin recognition
- Traveling Road Show Coordinator
- GSA Tenant Board Committee representative

This is just a small taste of the vast responsibilities of the office. MSO addresses various issues and problems that arise on a daily basis and thus the list continues to grow.

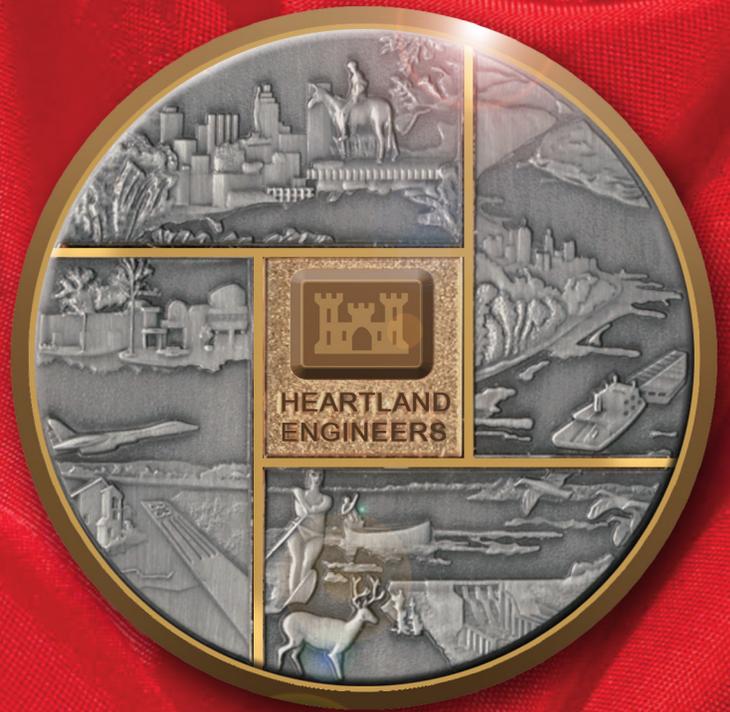
MSO is also the lead for the Health and Wellness program. The H&W Committee, made up of volunteers from the district, meets monthly to strategically plan events and workshops to promote health and wellness within the district. There is also a Health and Wellness Corner located off the lobby on the 6th Floor where valuable articles, information and a topic of the month are displayed to educate and obtain knowledge of certain key health and wellness subjects. Monthly Health and Wellness Workshops are offered to the district with key subjects of interest. As a supplement to the H&W Program there is an intranet-based website created to provide information and important links to other sites with regard to personal health and well being.

With many of these functions being apparent to district employees, the function as district strategic planner is probably much more transparent. Pippin works very closely with the command and senior leaders in shaping the district's future through the development of the district's OPLAN which serves as the roadmap for the district and although constantly evolving, nonetheless defines the very future of what we do as a district every day.

But after all that, the MSO really exists for a couple of simple reasons: to assist in shaping the future of the district and to make the present day efforts of district staff easier and more productive.

As Pippin stated, “My staff is dedicated to doing all that they can to ensure that others in the district don't become bogged down with minutiae. Hopefully, we can enable everyone to operate in a more efficient manner and alleviate some of the issues that can become unnecessary distractions. We truly encourage district staff to look to us to find solutions to their problems. We're here to support the district mission whenever and however we can. Our goal is to find ways to turn challenges into opportunities.”

# New District coin unveiled



*By Larry "Essayons" Myers*

The military tradition of challenge coins has a very long history and has been known by a number of different names, including unit coins, commander's coins, military coins and more. Regardless of the name, the coin identifies the bearer as a unit member and is a symbol of pride, respect and fellowship.

Today, almost every military unit creates its own coin. The military history of using the coins or medallions for recognition or identification tells many stories. In the Roman Empire, coins were presented to reward achievements, much in the way medals are now.

There are longstanding customs that surround the challenge coins. Once endowed with possession of the Canons of the Dawg Challenge Coin, you are bound by rules and customs. If you don't comply with the longstanding customs or deviate from the rules in any way, you will bring great disgrace and loss of respect to yourself and it may be grounds for revocation of the titles and privileges that the coin carries. The most popular rule of today is if a person is coin checked and cannot produce the coin, they must purchase a drink for the bearer of the coin.

The Kansas City District also has a long history of coins during its rich 106-year history. The district has had seven coins and the latest was introduced at Organization Day. The new coin depicts the district seal which was designed as the district's insignia by three former district employees; Charles Stegner, Beth Knott and Larry Crump. Charles and Beth are former employees in the graphic arts department and Larry a former employee of the Public Affairs Office.

The seal is circular with the U.S. Army Engineer's Insignia in the center serving as the hub with the district's missions as the spokes depicted in images of those missions; Navigation and Flood Control, Recreation and Environmental Resources and Military Construction. Also, shown in the seal are the Kansas City Scout and the skyline of the city in the background. The seal is presented to departing district employees that served the district and the nation admirably during their tenure. The other side of the coin depicts the district's area of responsibility and boundaries which includes Colorado, Iowa, Kansas, Missouri and Nebraska. The coin is awarded for excellence by the district commander.



**MR. AUGUST SPALLO  
GALLERY OF DISTINGUISHED  
EMPLOYEES AWARD**

Mr. August Spallo was the 2013 recipient of the Gallery of Distinguished Employees Award, which was presented at the Organization Day on June 14. He was joined by his wife, Clarine, and family. Photo by Scott Robben



**MELISSA CORKILL  
2013 KCIC BRICK-BY-BRICK  
AWARD**

The Kansas City Industrial Council awarded the KCIC Brick-by-Brick award to Melissa Corkill for her contribution to improving Kansas City's industrial core and infrastructure needs for the work done at Turkey Creek. Photo provided

**JACKIE THOMAS  
GLADYS DAVIES ADMINISTRATIVE  
PROFESSIONAL AWARD**

Jackie Thomas was awarded the Gladys Davies Award for Administrative Excellence by Col. Anthony Hofmann, district commander at the quarterly awards ceremony on April 29. Photo by Jennie Wilson



**TAMMY GILMORE  
DISTINGUISHED PUBLIC  
SAFETY AWARD**

Lt. Col. Jason A. Evers presents Tammy Gilmore with a commander's coin after she was given the Distinguished Public Safety award at the Federal Executive Board's Public Employees Recognition Day on May 7. Photo by Jennie Wilson



Jackie was chosen as the Gladys Davies Administrative Professional for this year. She is an employee at the Missouri River Area Office and was recommended for the award by her supervisor, James Rudy.

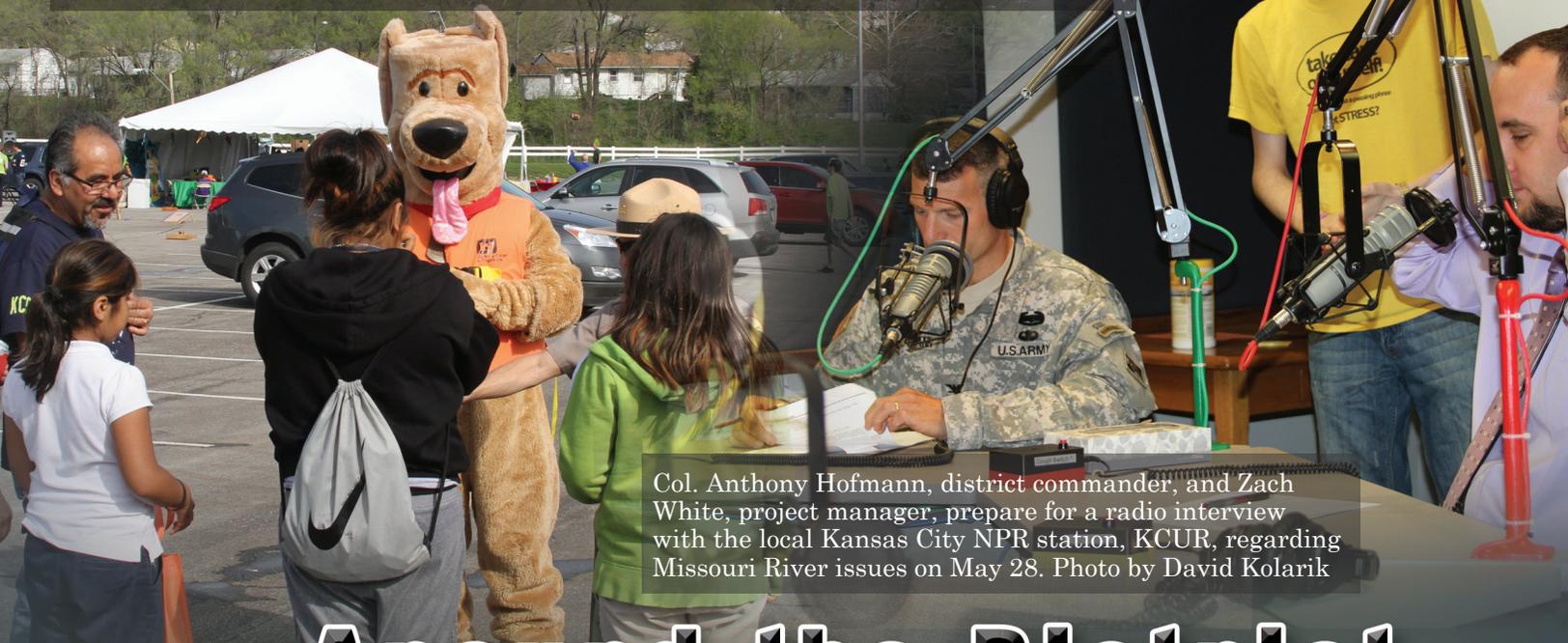
"We have such an awesome team. When we have a mission, we all pitch in and work together to make it happen," said Thomas.

Thomas says that she is thankful to have been offered the great opportunity to work for the Missouri River area office. "My supervisor has empowered me and the staff to excel and take initiative," Thomas said.

"I am grateful to have been selected for the Gladys Davies award," said Thomas. "I was totally surprised and completely caught off guard. It is an honor to join the ranks of other selectees."

Thomas says that she will continue to strive to make the Missouri River Area Office and the Kansas City District a great organization.

Bobber the water safety dog visits attendees at the Kansas City Corporate Challenge Kick-off event at the Truman Sports Complex on April 25. Photo by Diana McCoy



Col. Anthony Hofmann, district commander, and Zach White, project manager, prepare for a radio interview with the local Kansas City NPR station, KCUR, regarding Missouri River issues on May 28. Photo by David Kolarik

# Around the District

Bunnie Watkins, natural resource manager at Perry Lake, holds a newly-banded juvenile bald eagle on April 26. The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers assisted the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service during a two-day effort to band 12 eagles from six nests at Clinton and Perry lakes. Photo by Mike Watkins



*Farewell to Col. Anthony Hofmann, District Commander 2010-2013. Thank you for your leadership.*



Col. Anthony J. Hofmann, along with Bill Zaner and Shannan Worley cut the cake in celebration of the Army's 238th birthday at the Organization Day on June 14. Photo by Scott Robben.

