

HEARTLAND ENGINEER

KANSAS CITY DISTRICT'S NEWS MAGAZINE

JANUARY 2005



FAIL

-SAFE



ENGINEERS SET TO BEGIN LARGEST DAM MODIFICATION IN HISTORY AT TUTTLE CREEK

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ON THE COVER: Work begins on the Tuttle Cove Campground at Tuttle Creek, Kans., in preparation for nearby dam modifications.

BUILDING RELATIONSHIPS

COL Michael A. Rossi



As I look over my personal notes from the Northwest Division Commanders' Conference and the USACE Commanders' Conference—both held in January—a few recurring themes from our leadership stand out. First is that People, Process, and Communication are enablers to the Corps' five primary missions: Warfighting (providing full-spectrum engineering and contingency support), Homeland Security (responding to local, national and global disasters), Environment (restoring, managing and enhancing ecosystems, local and regional), Infrastructure (building and sustaining the critical facilities for military installations and the public), and Water Resources (creating synergy between water resources development and the environment). Second is to embrace the concept of “regionalization,” as envisioned by USACE 2012. Simply put, the Corps is moving from district-centric business centers, to region-centric business centers. Lastly, focus on “relationships.” While I understandably took notes on many other emphasis areas, these three continually rose to the top. My comments this month will expand on the notion of “relationships.”

First, there are a number of dimensions to the concept of relationships. We have personal and professional relationships. We have internal and external relationships—internal to our branch, division, and the District; external to our higher headquarters and sister districts, as well as federal, state, and local agencies and stakeholders. The point to be made here is that the personal and professional courtesy we extend each other is as important to our internal relationships as the extra effort we make on behalf of our military or civil works partners is to our external relationships. But, it goes deeper than professional courtesy.

What does *relationship* mean to me? What does it mean to us as an organization? To me the currency, the lifeblood of relationships is TRUST—the relationship between husband and wife, between parents and children and between best friends is based upon

trust, not upon some cost-benefit equations or ratios.

Can I depend on you to keep your word through thick and thin? If I tell you I'm going to be somewhere or do something, you can take it to the bank. In a true relationship, there's no need for a written commitment between parties; my word is my bond. It really comes down to “deeds” versus “words.” Strong relationships and true partnerships manifest themselves with action, not empty promises or post-failure excuses.

So, what do *relationships* mean in regards to our “One Thing”—Project Delivery? I submit to you that it means everything to project delivery. Do you trust the other members of the team to make the meetings, to conduct timely reviews, to deliver their product on time and to standard? Do our customers—whether military, civil, or HTRW—trust us to finish our studies or projects on time, on budget and with high quality? Again, to me it's a deeds not words proposition. The singular act of habitually handing them the keys when we promised does more relationship building (and reputation-building, and trust-building) than a dozen briefings, meetings and charrettes.

Each of us has a part to play in strengthening relationships, internal and external, by developing that trust. Each of us represents a critical link in the chain of project delivery. We've all got to deliver our small parts on time; we owe it to each other and to our customers. As a District, we are defined by our ability to deliver projects when (time) and how (cost and quality) we promised.

REACHING OUT

Maj. Kimberly Walter, Military Project Manager with the Kansas City District, traveled to Kenya to give a helping hand to the children of the Rehema House Orphanage.

Service didn't stop at country for one project manager who spent eight days in November on a mission trip to Nairobi, Kenya reaching out to a couple with 41 children.

Maj. Kimberly Walter, a military project manager for the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers in Kansas City, traveled with a group of five individuals from New York Nov. 12-20 to assist at Rehema Home, an orphanage founded by Irvin and Ruth Schwandt.

Rehema Home, meaning 'mercy' in Swahili, was founded in 1997.

"The Schwandts began the orphanage with three children," Walter said. "Now they care for 41 children ranging from newborn to eight years of age.

"Many of the children have been abused and have contracted HIV from their parents, and one child has full blown AIDS," she said.

Despite the illnesses the children have, everyone at Rehema Home is treated equally. Walter said the only time she could tell who had AIDS was before bedtime when the children took their medicine.

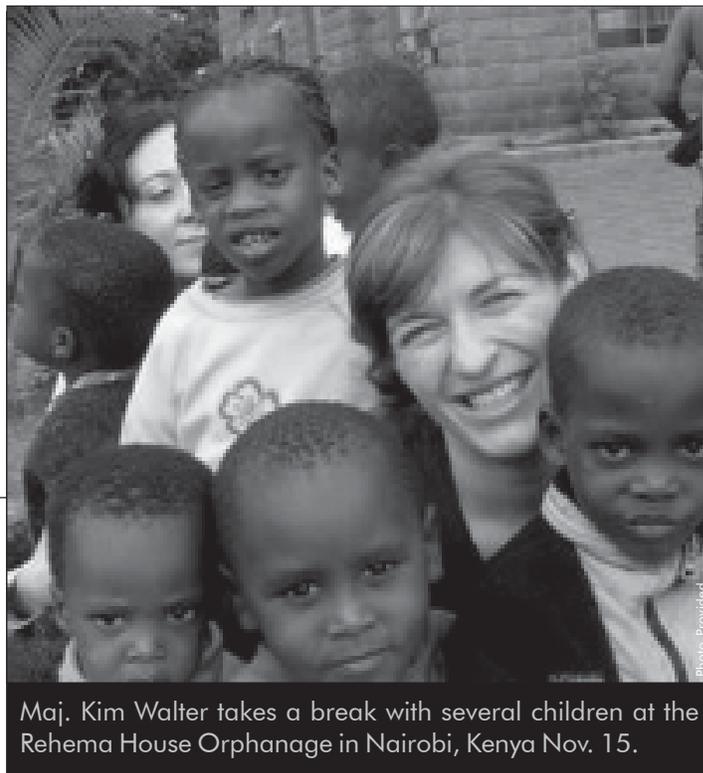
"Sadly, none of these children will ever be adopted because of their illnesses," Walter said. "Many of the children have seen their parents die, and those who have parents rarely ever see them."

When the children became old enough to attend school, the Schwandts began a two-room schoolhouse on their property because they couldn't afford to send the children to the local school everyday. Walter said one teacher is paid to educate the 31 children who are old enough to attend. The rest of the children are free to play.

In the evening, the children have playtime before doing devotions. During devotions one evening, the children put on a play for Walter and her group of friends. The children reenacted the story of Noah's Ark using couch cushions to build the Ark.

"The children are very good at using their creativity because they have so little," Walter said.

"I went there to help paint and organize clothes donations," Walter said, "but I enjoyed playing with the children the most."



Maj. Kim Walter takes a break with several children at the Rehema House Orphanage in Nairobi, Kenya Nov. 15.

Playing with the children who had serious illnesses made Walter face the idea of possible contracting the HIV virus.

"I was a little skeptical at first, but I knew that I wasn't going to be doing anything risky enough to pick up the disease," said Walter who mentioned she spoke to a doctor before leaving for her trip. "You can't contract it from just being around someone with HIV."

The Schwandt's rely on donations to pay for medicine, clothing and food. They are hoping to receive enough money in donations to buy the land adjacent to their property in order to build another schoolhouse. Walter said currently, 17 children share one bedroom, making for extremely cramped quarters.

When asked about the living conditions outside of Rehema, Walter said it was rudimentary at best.

"We visited Kabeira one day," Walter said. "It is the largest slum in East Africa with 300,000 people living there.

"All we could see was tin shack after tin shack. They had water, but no plumbing, paved streets or lights," Walter said.

The roads in Kenya were different than what one would find in the United States. Traveling between the airport in Nairobi and Rehema Home, Walter experienced rugged terrain. The roads were paved and modern in some areas and primitive in other areas.

"Their lives are so simple," Walter said. "But there is so much love there. They don't notice what they're missing."

They are missing things that Americans often take for granted, Walter said.

She got the chance to speak to Kenyans about things that were important to them.

"They mostly wanted to discuss political issues such as education and government," Walter said from her Kansas City Office. "Because the old administration in

Continued on Page 14

Corps to deploy new personnel system

Kansas City District employees will be among the first 300,000 Defense Department employees to be part of the new National Security Personnel System.

Specific dates for deployment of the system to the Heartland are projected for early 2006.

This first group of approximately 300,000 DoD employees is contained in Spiral 1; the first of the system's three spiral deployment for General Schedule, General Manager and Acquisition.

Spiral 1 consists of three increments that will spread over an 18-month period, beginning with Spiral 1.1, which is scheduled to deploy no earlier than July 2005.

Approximately six months after the initial deployment, the second group of employees will move into NSPS in Spiral 1.2. Six to nine months later, Spiral 1.3 brings in the remaining group of employees selected for Spiral 1.

Corps employees in the Mississippi River Division, Southwest Division and South Pacific Division will be among the first 24,000 Army employees to come under the system in July 2005. Employees of the Civilian Human Resources Command will also deploy the system in July.

In early 2006, Kansas City District employees will be among the next 24,500 Army employees to come under the new system. Employees in the Corps' Northwestern Division, South Atlantic Division and Army Engineering and Support Center in Huntsville, Ala., will also participate in this phase of deployment.

The remainder of the Corps' U.S.-based personnel will come under the new system in late 2006 or early 2007.

Each phase will include an assessment process with appropriate adjustments made, if needed. Following the performance management determination, Spiral 2 implementation will begin. It will include the remainder of the Army workforce, with the exception of the exempted (until Fiscal Year 2008) Laboratory Demonstration Projects identified in the 2004 National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA). Spiral 3 will consist of the Laboratory Demonstration Projects.

The NSPS law limits the number of employees who can be covered by NSPS to no more than 300,000 until the Secretary of Defense and the Director, Office of Personnel Management determine that the department has developed a performance management system that meets the requirements established by law.

Army launches new resume builder

The Army deployed a new version of Resume Builder and its automated resume response system, ANSWER, Jan. 26 in hopes of shortening the application process.

The new tools combine the resume builder and ANSWER into one application.

Employees must resubmit their resume to the new version of resume builder prior to making changes.

Users with existing resume builder and ANSWER accounts should log on to <http://acpol.army.mil/employment/> as "Registered Users" when first accessing the new applications.

Resumes will not appear in the new builder, but will not be affected in the central Resumix database, according to officials.

OPM cracks down on diploma mills

In an effort to expose diploma mills, the Office of Personnel Management joined the U.S. Department of Education, the Federal Trade Commission and Members of Congress announced in January the availability of new resources to better educate the federal workforce and potential students about fraudulent practices.

"OPM has aggressively tracked and dealt with diploma mill issues since the mid-1980s," said OPM's Stephen Benowitz, Associate Director for Human Resources Products and Services. "Our position has been consistent and clear—there is no place in federal employment for credentials from diploma mills."

OPM has provided ongoing guidance to federal departments and agencies by way of memoranda to their leadership making it clear that so-called "degrees" from diploma mills will not be accepted for purposes of qualifying for federal positions, for student loan repayment and for purposes of paying for employees to obtain college degrees.

In addition, OPM has provided training sessions for federal human resources management and personnel security staff to train them about diploma mills, how they work and how to treat applications claiming degrees from diploma mills.

Corps, Iraqis build border posts

An estimated \$25 million is being spent to construct 100 new border forts along the northern borders of Iraq, as well as rehabilitate and enhance numerous points of entry.

In several northern provinces, 34 forts are currently under construction and 66 others are planned to start in the coming months.

"The Iraqi Interim Government understands the importance of having secure borders," said Lt. Col. Paul Hastings, spokesman for Task Force Olympia. Task Force Olympia serves as the command and control element for multinational forces in the two northern governorates of Iraq—Nineva and Dahok.

"They are demonstrating commitment and resolve to secure the borders for the Iraqi people," he said.

Controlling the borders is a primary tenet of Iraq's internal security plan, explained Carol Hewes, program manager for the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers' Northern District's Security and Justice Sector.

"The border forts provide a base of operation for the border police, who act as the eyes in remote areas away from the central points of entry. The points of entry are similar to our border crossings in the States. They provide a staging area for all pedestrian and vehicular traffic entering and exiting Iraq."

More than \$2 million is being spent to upgrade and renovate existing border points of entry.

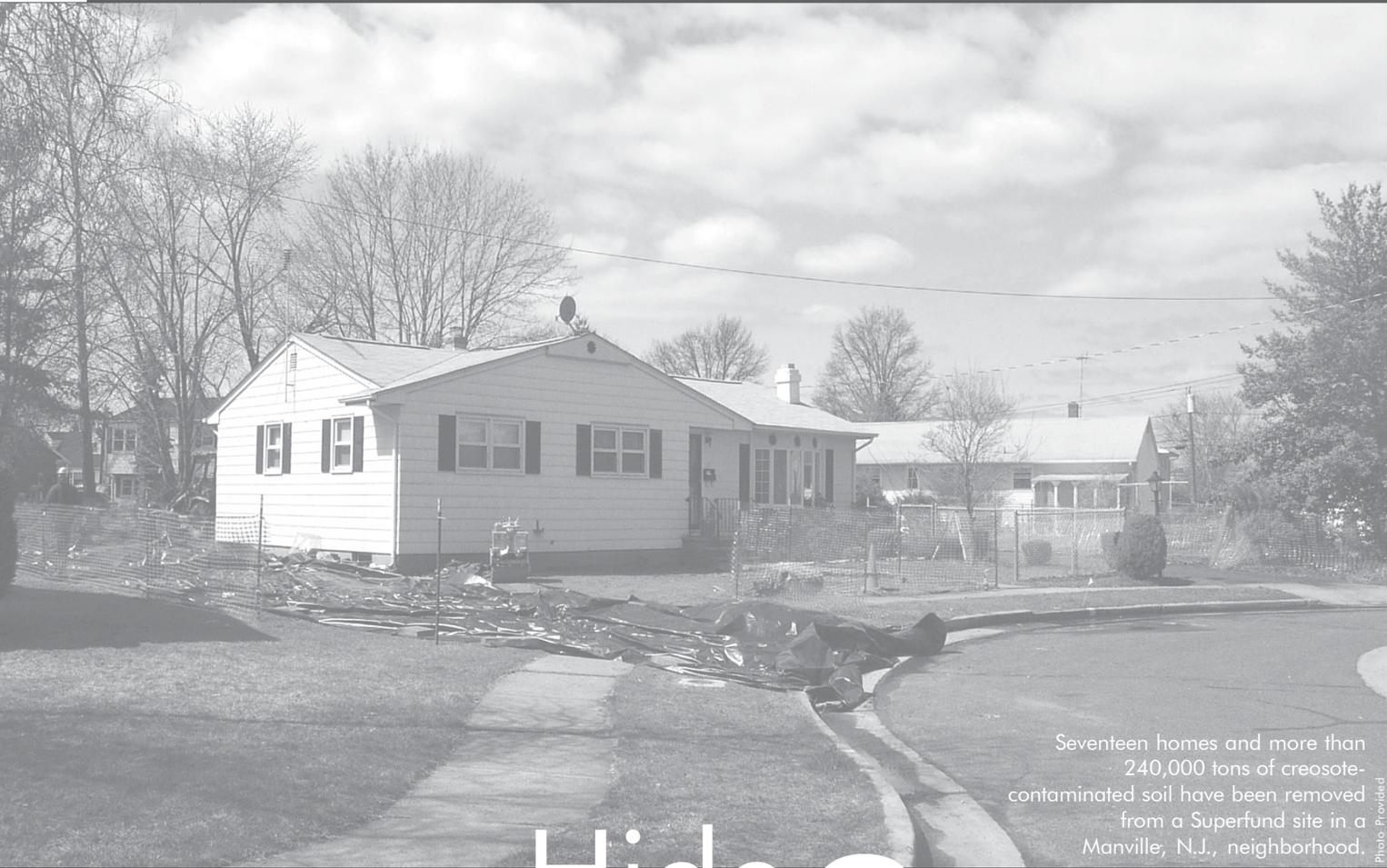
The upgrades include vehicle staging and inspection areas, seizure and storage areas, a banking facility for currency exchange, guard posts, a customs facility and an immigration facility.

The new forts will provide additional capabilities and staging areas for the Iraqi security forces, Hewes said.

While most Iraqis will never see a fort, due to its remote location, there are direct benefits to the Iraqi people, according to Hewes.

"You hear about the insurgents in Mosul and around the country," she said. "I think if we can continue to take steps to keep them out of Iraq that has a significant impact on people's lives and their security."

"The border forts are the front line defense for Iraq. The border police are cutting down on the number of insurgents and weapons entering the country and that's significant," Hewes said.



Seventeen homes and more than 240,000 tons of creosote-contaminated soil have been removed from a Superfund site in a Manville, N.J., neighborhood.

Photo Provided

Engineers unearth buried waste in New Jersey

Hide & Seek

by Diana Hendricks



Photo Provided

More than 135 homes and a shopping mall were built on the 53-acre site in Manville, N.J., that is now the site of a massive environmental cleanup by the Environmental Protection Agency and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers.

When wide-eyed New Jersey homebuyers rushed to purchase homes in the borough of Manville in the 1960s, they could never have imagined that nearly 50 years later their hamlet would be the site of a massive environmental cleanup.

An initial investigation by the EPA in 1996 found creosote contaminated soil beneath 80 of the homes in the area.

Shortly after making the discovery, EPA concluded the amount of contamination posed an unacceptable threat to the public health and environment, said Todd Daniels, a project manager with the Corps' Kansas City District.

"(The EPA) contacted the Corps to manage the design and cleanup of the 53 acres of contaminated land," Daniels said. "The Corps contracted Severson Environmental Services to conduct the excavation in 2000, and since then we have excavated and disposed of 240,000 tons of contaminated soil from the residential neighborhood."

To date, 17 homes have been demolished, and one more home will soon be added to that list, Daniels said. The owners of the mall have decided to destroy it and have the area cleaned up as well, he said.

Currently, three phases of the six-phase cleanup are complete, and two are currently under construction. The last phase, which is aimed at excavating the contamination at the mall and rebuilding it, is still in the design phase. Construction is slated for completion in March 2006.

"The EPA had promised residents that the work would be done very quickly and in such a manner as to reduce the disruption to the neighborhood," Daniels said. "In order to deliver on this promise, some members of the PDT completed all of the real-estate acquisition and demolition of homes, while the rest of the PDT was finishing the design."

During the design of the excavation work, the PDT developed and implemented a rigorous soil-sampling program that was used to outline separate zones of contamination prior to excavation work, Daniels said.

Highly contaminated soil is incinerated in order to cleanse it from dangerous creosote. Less contaminated soil is sent to a landfill because the difference in cost between incineration and landfill disposal is approximately \$350 per ton. By conducting sampling of the soils to determine the contamination level, Daniels said it saved the project an estimated \$1 million.

"The districts of Kansas City, New York, Philadelphia and Baltimore made up the project delivery team who embraced the concept of 'virtual teaming' very early in the project," Daniels said. "It has continued to put this concept into practice on an almost daily basis."

Although New York District is the lead in executing the construction contract, the project manager and contracting officer are both from the Kansas City District, he said.

This division of authority requires a tremendous amount of communication and trust between the two districts, Daniels said, and it has been the underlying foundation of the PDT's success.

"It's been very easy to work with the Corps on this project," said Rich Puvogel, project manager from the EPA. "They're very proactive and have provided a lot of support in spite of the challenge they face because they're so spread out."

The PDT won an honor award for Environmental in the Chief of Engineers Design and Environmental Awards Program in 2004.



Photo Provided



Photo Provided

Engineers remove contamination from homes and soil in Manville, N.J. The area, now a Superfund site, housed a creosote wood treatment plant in the early to mid-1900s.

The tree-lined streets and shopping mall that once drew homebuyers to the area are now a distant memory as engineers and scientists from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and the Environmental Protection Agency work to remove soil contamination left in the wake of a defunct wood treatment plant.

A coal tar wood treatment plant operated from 1911 to the mid-1950s, treating railroad ties with coal tar creosote. During its operation, the plant discharged excess creosote-laden sludge into two unlined lagoons, allowing the chemicals to seep into the ground.

When the plant shut its doors in 1956, federal officials believe the lagoons were filled in, the facility was dismantled, and the land was sold to a developer. During the next 10 years, 137 homes and a shopping mall were built on the former plant grounds.



FAIL SAFE +

ENGINEERS SET TO BEGIN LARGEST DAM MODIFICATION IN HISTORY AT TUTTLE CREEK

BY DIANA HENDRICKS



Work begins on the Tuttle Cove Campground at Tuttle Creek Lake, Kan., to offset the impacts of the up-coming dam modifications. The project to stabilize the dam is the largest dam safety program ever undertaken by the Army Corps of Engineers.

Engineers will begin a \$206 million project this spring at an eastern Kansas dam that could save thousands of downstream residents lives in the rare event of an earthquake.

Work on Tuttle Creek Dam, located 12 miles from Humboldt Fault Zone near Manhattan, Kan., will bring the 42-year-old dam up to current standards for earthquake and flood resistance. “Although the chances of earthquakes with magnitudes greater than 5.7 are low in this area, it is a possibility,” said Bill Empson, project manager for the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. “If an earthquake of that magnitude happened, the dam could fail allowing 13,000 residents as little as two hours to evacuate.”

During construction of the dam which was completed in 1963, engineers believed that earthen dams would survive all but the most massive earthquakes. It wasn’t until the near failure of the Lower San Fernando Dam in California during a 1971 earthquake that engineers realized these dams were prone to more failure during an earthquake than initially thought.

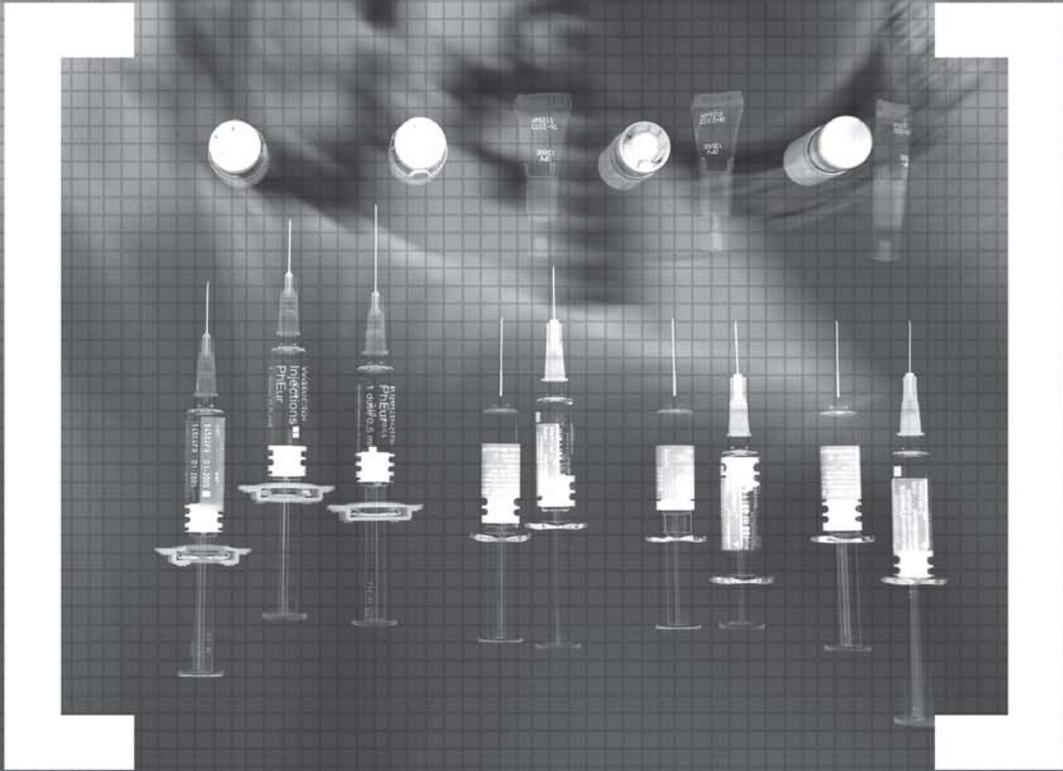
Lessons learned after the failure resulted in the creation of federal guidelines for dam safety in 1979 and prompted the creation of dam safety programs across the nation.

Using the new guidelines, engineers began evaluating Tuttle Creek Dam in 1983. Studies on the dam continued through the early ‘90s, but an effort in 2000 transitioned the project from studies to construction.

“We knew the dam could fail if we have an earthquake with a magnitude greater than 5.7,” he said. “So in order to stabilize the dam, we’re going to drill 35,000 holes into the foundation of the dam to a depth of up to 200 feet and inject cement into them,”

“Another way to see it is that we’re using a total of six million sacks of cement,” he said.

Nearly \$175 million is earmarked for work on the dam itself, making the effort the largest dam safety program the Army Corps of Engineers has undertaken and the largest ground modification of any of its kind in the world. *Continued on Page 14*



DRUG TESTING

Kansas City District will begin testing select employees in February.

BY DIANA HENDRICKS

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Civilian Drug Testing Program is slated to begin in February for the Kansas City District in order to ensure a drug-free workplace.

The Corpswide program, initiated by Executive Order 12564, will affect those who hold a Testing Designated Position, or those who volunteer.

"A TDP refers to positions with critical safety or security responsibilities related to the District's mission," said Harry Diesel, the drug program coordinator for the District. "Employees in TDPs are subject to unannounced random testing."

In April 2001, Lt. Gen. Robert Flowers, then Chief of Engineers, signed a memorandum holding each Corps employee responsible for maintaining a drug-free workplace.

Everyone selected to take the test will be notified during the first quarter of the year, and testing should be completed by the end of March. Six different types of drug testing will be included in the new program. They include reasonable suspicion testing, accident or unsafe practice, voluntary testing, follow-up testing, applicant testing (for a TDP only) and quarterly random testing (for a TDP only). "Reasonable suspicion testing applies to any Corps employee who is

suspected of using illegal drugs," Diesel said. "The employee's supervisor must document the suspicion before requesting the employee be tested."

The commander will authorize accident or unsafe practice testing if any civilian Corps employee is involved in an accident which results in death, immediate hospitalization or incurs damages that exceeds \$10,000.

Employees may volunteer to be randomly tested in order to show their commitment to a drug-free workplace, however, if they test positive for illegal drugs, they are subject to the same discipline as an employee in a TDP who also tests positive.

"Those who have successfully completed rehabilitation for illegal use are subject to follow up testing for up to 12 months," Diesel said.

Anyone applying for a TDP must submit a negative test before an appointment to that position. The TDPs in the Kansas City District include key drivers, employees with a top secret security clearance or have access to sensitive compartmented information, key boat crew members or those in charge of operating gates that release water from a lake.

"Some employees may be called more than once, and others may not be called at all," Diesel said.

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Army Corps of Engineers Photo

The Solution

More than a decade after flood waters ravaged the Midwest, the Army Corps of Engineers nears completion of an \$80 million levee in the north Kansas City suburb of Riverside.

BY DIANA HENDRICKS

After being involved with one project for nearly four decades, a Riverside man will soon see his hard work pay off. For the past 36 years, Bob Gieseke, president of the Riverside-Quindaro Levee District, has worked to make a levee possible in the Kansas City suburb of Riverside by coordinating with a host of officials from utilities and government.

Construction of the six-mile long, \$80 million levee began in April 2002. Slated for completion in early February, the levee will protect several industrial businesses worth millions of dollars, a priceless archeological site and 1,200 acres of farmland.



Photo Provided

The Red X General Store in Riverside was engulfed in flood waters for the fourth time in 1993. Efforts by the local levee district and the City of Riverside partnered the team with the Corps to build a 6-mile levee to protect the area.

While weather has been a major factor in the need for a levee, having produced two floods since Gieseke's time spent on the project, it doesn't compare to the storms he has faced trying to turn his dreams into reality.

"We always knew there was a need for a levee in this area," Gieseke said. "There was a pretty good flood in 1973, and this just confirmed our belief."

Finding a local sponsor to help finance the project was a big obstacle in getting it started, but Gieseke said it only strengthened his resolve to see the levee built.

Argosy Gaming Company decided to build a casino in Riverside after the flood of '93, boosting the need to provide additional flood protection to the area.

"This kicked a lot of money into Riverside and was the catalyst in making the levee possible," Gieseke said.

Missouri River Levee System Unit L-385, the official name for the levee, referring to the levee being constructed on the left bank of the Missouri River and 385 miles from the mouth in St. Louis, has the city's 2,900 residents planning to expand economic development in Riverside.

"[The City of Riverside] is looking forward to many, many years of prosperity in the area," Gieseke said.

There are more than 900 acres still to be developed, and the city is hoping to woo enterprising developers. Plans for development include a mix of 40 percent retail, 40 percent light industrial and 20 percent commercial.

The city is calling this the Riverside Horizon project, and is planned to total more than \$800 million. Upon completion, it will bring many new opportunities to the small community.

"The city has a development plan to increase 1,200 jobs over a 25-year period," Dimmitt said as he carefully warned that this was not the reason why the Corps got involved with the project.

"By building the levee, the current businesses in Riverside will be protected from 500-year floods, which means that a flood with that magnitude has only a .02 percent chance of occurring in any given year,"

Dimmitt said. "The Corps builds levees to protect what's already there not what is planned for the future."

What is already there includes a famed historical business that has seen a total of four floods since it was built in 1948. Red-X General Store was nearly engulfed in floodwater during the '93 flood when floodwaters reached a height of 11 feet, but floods, along with a fire which completely destroyed the Red-X building in 1957, caused the owner who was then 80-years old to come up with a motto for his business: "Home of high water, hot fires and low prices."

High waters didn't stop owners Ed and Kathy Rule from building one of the most popular restaurants in Riverside. The parking lot at Corner Café is always full, regardless of the time of day due to the many awards it has won for its roadhouse-style comfort food, providing an escape for engineers who shared many meals together during the planning and construction phase of the levee.

"Many plans for the levee were discussed at Corner Café," said Dimmitt, who helped with the construction of the levee. "If you ever wanted to know about the progress of the levee or what was going on with it, you just had to eat lunch there because that's where most of the plans were discussed."

While Gieseke has nothing more to lose from flood damage after he and his wife moved from Riverside after the '93 flood destroyed their property, his dream of seeing the project to completion will soon be a reality.

"Building the levee has been a special part of me for a long, long time," Gieseke said, reminiscing about his 58 years spent in Riverside. "But it's been a great experience for me because I've been able to work with so many great people, especially those from the Corps who have helped to make all of my hard work possible."

REACHING OUT

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Nairobi was corrupt, citizens have a positive sense of hope that things will get better with the new government.”

Even though Kenyans could be seen as impoverished compared to American standards, their hospitality was surprising to Walter, who said she expected to serve them while she was there.

“Their lives are so simple, but there is so much love. They don’t notice what they’re missing.”

- Kim Walter

“The people at Rehema Home are so kind,” Walter said. “I went there to serve, but they ended up serving me.”

Feeling blessed by her experience, Walter said she was amazed at the supportiveness of everyone from the District. She credited co-workers for bringing school supplies and toys for the children.

“Without them, we wouldn’t be the great District that we are today,” Walter said.

PEOPLEPOWER

People Power is a monthly column designed to highlight the outstanding accomplishments of a district employee. Supervisors and peers are encouraged to nominate team members to be featured in an upcoming issue of *Heartland Engineer*.

Nominations should include a brief summary of the nominee’s accomplishment and contact information for the person submitting the nomination. Nominations should be submitted by the 15th of the month for consideration for the next issue.

Nominations should be sent to:

PEOPLEPOWER
c/o Public Affairs Office
700 Federal Building
601 East 12th Street
Kansas City, Missouri 64106
or e-mailed to:
mitch.frazier@us.army.mil

FAIL SAFE

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Since construction of the dam will take nearly 10 years, engineers have employed technology to create a comprehensive alert system to warn downstream residents and emergency responders in the event of dam failure.

The \$4 million system, a high-tech network of computer controlled ground sensors and video surveillance, is capable of sounding six sirens throughout the area as well as automatically calling local, state and federal emergency responders.

The brains of the network, the critical systems building near the dam, houses key components of the network, which allows for 24-hour monitoring of seismic conditions and links to the Corps’ District headquarters in Kansas City, Mo, nearly 125 miles from the site.

“The system not only allows us to alert downstream residents in the event of dam failure, but it also allows county officials to notify residents during tornados,” Empson said. “By using our six speakers, the county is able to alert an area that didn’t have siren coverage in the past.”

The system was at the heart of an exercise in October that brought together more than 100 emergency responders from 13 agencies including Federal Emergency Management Agency, Kansas Division of Emergency Management and Riley County Emergency Management.

During the exercise, teams simulated failure of the dam and worked through responses to the disaster.

“It was a valuable learning opportunity for everyone involved,” Empson said. “We learned a lot about communication, and now we are better prepared with even more opportunity for improvement.”

That opportunity for improvement taught emergency responders how to work with and communicate with different agencies and their systems during a disaster, McNulty said.

“It was very helpful because we learned things here, in practice, instead of during a real emergency,” McNulty said.

While work on the dam is slated to begin later this year, work has already started at nearby campgrounds in hopes of reducing the impact of the massive dam rehabilitation project.

The Corps has issued a \$1.5 million contract to Kansas Wildlife and Parks to build 50 new campsites at South Shore Campground. The Corps and its contractors are slated to build 40 new sites at Tuttle Creek Cove.

DRUG TESTS

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DoD requires testing be conducted at a 50 percent rate, which refers to the number of testing positions in the District. If the District has 100 testing positions, then 50 tests will be conducted annually, he said.

Employees will be notified in writing by their supervisor at least 30 days before random testing begins. The notice will explain that random drug testing is a condition of employment and give the test procedures.

“It will outline the consequences of illegal drug use and where to get help with the drug problem. Employees must sign the notification, and the supervisor will give it to me,” Diesel said.

“Some employees may be called more than once for random testing, and others may not be called at all.”

- Harry Diesel

The employee will go to a local clinic where they will give a urine sample to be tested. When they turn in the sample, the clinic will conduct a test which will give instant results.

The test looks for a number of major substances. If the test turns up negative for illegal substances, the employee is told no further testing is required. If the test is positive, the employee is alerted and the urine sample is sent to a laboratory.

“The employee will find out the result of the second test within two days, and the employee will be the first to be notified of a positive test result,” Diesel said. “Human resources and the employee’s supervisor will then refer the employee to the Employee Assistance Program for help with rehabilitation.”

Regardless of the reason for test, whether it occurs because of an accident or because an employee holds a TDP, the process is the same, Diesel said.

“The program should have been in place a long time ago, and I’m glad we’re finally getting around to it,” Diesel said. “But I would be amazed if we had anyone test positive. We have a wonderful District full of great employees dedicated to accomplishing the mission.”

TED FALCON

Falcon is an Engineering Technician assigned to the Army Corps of Engineers Kansas City District. He served as a Geographic Information Systems Specialist with the Corps' Gulf Region Division in Baghdad, Iraq from September to December 2004.

Photo Provided



Never serving in the military and enjoying pursuing challenges of all types, I felt compelled to volunteer for Operation Iraqi Freedom as an engineering technician in Baghdad assigned to the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers' Gulf Region Division.

I spent my first two weeks in the International Zone, and it did not take long for the reality of war to rear its ugly head and put in perspective the mission at hand for the Corps. After overcoming fear, I became motivated to learn all I could about the country and work procedures of the Gulf Region Division and anything I could do to help. After two weeks in the zone shadowing another employee and working with some really talented engineers, I was transferred to the Division's Central District at nearby Camp Victory.

Col. Richard Thompson, the commander of the Central District, had a vision of a project battlefield style maps that would give commanders a quick status of the country's projects without having to thumb through hundreds of pages of spreadsheets. Some thought Col. Thompson was crazy, but he believed it could be done. He had a lieutenant colonel that believed it could be done as well, and after many cups of coffee and some sleepless nights, Lt. Col. Stephen Burk and I were able to massage the massive database into something that could be sorted and placed on maps. With the help of many team-orientated Corps employees who spent many late nights entering grid coordinates for the project sites, we were able to flip the switch on Col. Thompson's vision of a project battlefield style map. The maps not only plotted the projects, but also showed project percentage of complete, project type and the significant attacks in the area all on one map.

Brig. Gen.(P) Thomas P. Bostick, the commander of the Gulf Region Division, was in Camp Victory on a routine visit, when Col. Thompson hosted an impromptu demonstration of his brainchild that had developed into a comprehensive map. Brig. Gen. Bostick liked what he saw so much, he arranged for Col. Thompson, Lt. Col. Burk and I to travel to the International Zone and give the demo to senior general officers and reconstruction officials managers. He viewed this as a solution to the reconstruction team's project status problem. The group liked the map so much they decided to make it the standard for the multi-agency reconstruction effort. Through secure email I was able to provide these project maps to engineers all over the country in different camps that were used to brief Army and Marine commanders daily.

Another phase of my mission was tracking significant attacks and assisting Lt. Col. Burk brief the security teams that moved Corps employees from one project to another. I developed a request form, revamped the tracking board, used the radio and made maps of the routes that were used to move Corps teams. Lt. Col. Burk's attention to detail and battlefield knowledge from his previous deployment to Iraq made the security team briefings an extraordinary event every day. He helped instill a sense of pride when putting together maps for our security teams that helped keep our Corps team safe as they traveled across the country.

Other miscellaneous tasks included helping with sandbagging, getting water, burning trash, and general computer and technical support for the District staff.

This experience helped instill a sense of patriotism I have never felt before and a greater understanding of the front line Soldier who took it on the chin every day to help accomplish the mission of Operation Iraqi Freedom. "Hoahh!"

The unfortunate side of this was the lack of press on the rebuilding effort in Iraq. Electricity was reaching places it has never reached before; cities were no longer having raw sewage in the streets thanks to new sewer lines. Schools, hospitals, police stations were being built at record pace. Clean water was being provided, yet every night when I watched the news all I saw was explosions.

I was fortunate to receive the Superior Civilian Service Award and want to give a big thanks to the lead by example attitude of the following people; Col. Thompson, Lt. Col. Randy Westfall, Lt. Col. Charles Klinge, Lt. Col. Burk, Sgt. Maj. Jeff Koontz, our Erynis security team, Ed Basille, Tim Pinner, Mary Moore, Dave Snyder, Marsha Smith, Larry Myers and especially my wife who held our family together while I was gone.

I am proud to be an Army Corps of Engineer employee who was fortunate enough to serve with Soldiers and civilians alike who were able to adapt and overcome any obstacle that was put in front of them and live by the corps motto of "Essayons."

LIFE JACKETS

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