

HEARTLAND ENGINEER



KANSAS CITY DISTRICT'S NEWS MAGAZINE

JANUARY 2008



Taking off on another year
of changes and challenges

FEATURES

21st CENTURY AND BEYOND ————— 6

When Mike Murphy joined the Kansas City District as the chief of information management, he made some changes to the organization which allowed them to be prepared for new technology.

THE BIG MOVE ————— 8

The Kansas City District is relocating to the fourth, fifth and sixth floors of the Richard Bolling Federal Building. This is an opportunity for an improved work environment.

CORPS' ANNUAL HUNT ————— 10

Every year, the Kansas City District sponsors deer hunts for the physically challenged at Smithville, Stockton, Truman and Milford Lakes. It gives participants a rare opportunity.



Bill Zaner, chief of Engineering Construction, presents his predecessor, Glen Davis, a copy of the final pay to the NQ Wastewater Treatment Plant. Davis retired from the district in 1996 with 126 construction contracts needing to be fiscally closed out. Davis has stayed in contact with the district to ensure the contracts, started under his watch, were properly closed out in a timely manner. After nine and a half years, the task was accomplished with the completion of the work at the Sunflower Army Ammunition Plant in De Soto, Kan., Davis said he is doing well and enjoying his retirement. (Photo provided)

COLUMNS

NEWSWATCH

Newsbriefs from around the District and around the Corps.



PEOPLEPOWER

Florentine Gilkey spent her holiday season deployed to Gulfport, Miss., to help the ongoing hurricane relief effort.



LASTWORD

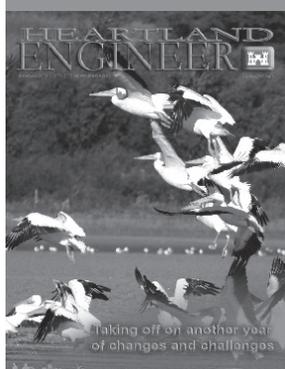
Tom O'Hara reflects about the Corps as family during his trips between Omaha and Kansas City.



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ON THE COVER:

White pelicans rest and feed in the upper end of Kanopolis Lake in Marquette, Kan., during their migration south for the winter. Kanopolis Lake was the first lake built for the Kansas City District. (Photo by Mike Watkins)

Last November, in this column, I wrote to you about the four key success factors Lt. Gen. Carl Strock outlined in his Vision for our Corps—*Relevant, Ready, Responsive, Reliable*. Our skills are *Relevant* to our Nation, we stand *Ready* to provide solutions, selfless and *Responsive* when called upon, and *Reliable* in delivering on our commitments.

I also wrote to you about four goals to focus our efforts this year. Those goals are *Mission, Workforce, Business, and Relationships*. *Mission* gets at project delivery, our “one thing,” and is simply delivering quality projects, on time and on budget. In my mind, it comes down to a test of WILL on the part of each and every one of us. *Workforce* is getting the right people on the bus. We’ve got superb, yet evolving *Business* practices in this district and our goal is to continue to be the best deal in NWD and the Corps. Lastly, *Relationships* are all about trust—trust is gained by a solid track record of keeping our word. I ended by promising to discuss the strategies we’d employ to meet these success factor-driven goals. For each of the four goals, I’ve laid out two strategies—too many and we truly lack focus.

To achieve our *Mission* goal—quality projects delivered on time and on budget: at test of WILL—the two strategies are PMBOK-driven Project Delivery and Contracting Campaign Plan to Center of Excellence. PMBOK (Project Management Body of Knowledge) driven Project Delivery is a strategy of aligning our processes exactly with the recognized worldwide standards of practice, to include PMP certification of our staffs. Contracting is part and parcel to everything we do. We’ve got a campaign plan based upon three tenets—individual training, organizational processes, and strategic enablers—which will make us a contracting center of expertise throughout the federal government.

For our *Workforce* goal—getting the right people on the bus—the two strategies are NSPS Done Right and “80 by 180.” NSPS represents a major change in our personnel system—how we’re hired and fired, rewarded and punished, paid, graded and evaluated. We’ve got to be thoughtful, insightful, and focus to get this right from the very start. “80 by 180,” is a strategy to get 80 new faces in the District by midyear, 31 March 2006. Understaffing is the top issue in our end-of-year AAR. Our workload is doubling from 2004, and we’re currently short 50 personnel from our authorized strength. We’re going to get you the human resources you need to accomplish your mission.

To meet our *Business* goal—continuing to be the best deal in the division—the two strategies are Money Watch and Shaping Regional Rates and Practices. Money Watch is a carryover strategy from past years and dictates the business and management processes we use to manage our finances. Its working great so all we need to do is fine tune. As the Division regionalizes RM and business functions as part of USACE 2012, we’ve got to have a seat at the table and be an advocate of Money Watch techniques in order to Shape Regional Rates and Practices.

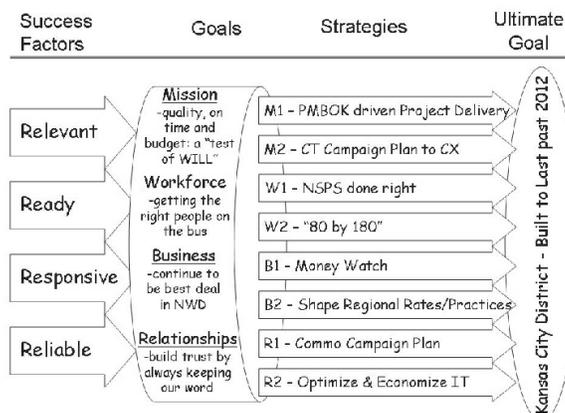
For our *Relationships* goal—to build trust by always keeping our word—the strategies are to develop and execute a Communications Campaign Plan and to Optimize and Economize our information technology. Focus this year is to develop a comprehensive plan to share our story with our workforce, tell our story to the public, and get feedback from our strategic customers and stakeholders we can use. That “story” has to be one of *Reliability*—always delivering on time and keeping our word. Information Technology continues evolve at breakneck pace. “Moore’s Law” claims that

technology doubles in speed/performance every 18 months. There are many efficiencies we can capitalize upon as we look anew at our IT systems—how we communicate with each other, how we save, store and file data, and when upgrading begins to have diminishing returns on our substantial investment.

These are thumbnail sketches of the eight strategies. All are really directed on the helping us accomplish our one thing—Project Delivery. If we can be the absolute best at Project Delivery, we’ll have built the Kansas City District to last well past 2012. Hooah!



COL Michael A. Rossi



BUSH APPROVES 3.1 PERCENT RAISE

President Bush issued an executive order formally granting white-collar federal employees a 3.1 percent average pay raise in 2006.

The pay increase, which goes into effect in the first pay period of the new year, consists of a 2.1 percent across-the-board pay raise coupled with an average 1 percent adjustment varying by locality. In the Washington area, for example, employees will receive a total raise of 3.44 percent.

The locality pay rates issued in connection with the order follow recommendations issued by the Federal Salary Council earlier this year. To see the 2006 pay tables, including locality pay differentials, visit www.opm.gov/oca/06tables/index.asp.

The 3.1 percent raise was included in the fiscal 2006 Transportation-Treasury appropriations measure H.R. 3058, which Bush signed into law on Nov. 30.

The president had initially proposed a 2.3 percent civilian increase in his fiscal 2006 budget, but as in years past, acquiesced to a congressional push for pay parity between civilian federal workers and military service members.

In a policy statement issued this summer, the White House said it strongly opposed the 3.1 percent raise for civilians because it would cost almost \$1 billion more than the president's proposal.

Locality-based raises became a fixture of federal pay in 1994, following implementation of the 1990 Federal Employees Pay Comparability Act. The act's proponents identified a gap between public and private sector salaries of about 30 percent. The act was designed to close the gap to about 5 percent, but raises under the law have never been fully funded.—*Karen Rutzick, GovExec.com.*

U.S. FORCES TO TAKE ON DIFFERENT ROLE IN IRAQ, OFFICIALS SAY

As Iraqi security forces grow and develop increased combat capabilities, U.S. forces will shift from a focus on combat operations to a focus on supporting the Iraqis as they take the lead in operations, two Defense Department officials said at a Pentagon news briefing.

American units already are partnering with Iraqi units, helping them with training, logistics, and other combat support operations, said Marine Lt. Gen. James T. Conway, operations director on the Joint Staff. This partnering will

continue, with an increased focus on developing the Iraqis' combat support capabilities so they eventually will be able to function independently, he said.

Transition teams that assist Iraqi units will increasingly be made up of senior noncommissioned officers and officers who are more technically oriented and can provide the Iraqis with specific training, Conway said.

"They also are assigned responsibilities for the continued maturation and professionalism of the Iraqis, so that as they become more and more capable, we are then able to bring our units home," he said.

As the Iraqis develop these capabilities, more U.S. engineer and logistics units will deploy instead of combat units to help the Iraqi units function, said Larry Di Rita, principal deputy undersecretary of defense for public affairs.

The Iraqi units, meanwhile, will take on more routine combat duties, such as cordon-and-knock operations, patrols and sweeps, Conway said. The first example of this new Iraqi-U.S. relationship was during the operations in Tal Afar in November, he said, when Iraqi troops outnumbered coalition troops and took the lead in operations.—*Sgt. Sara Wood, American Forces Press Service.*

KATRINA EMERGENCY LEAVE TRANSFER PROGRAM

Individuals interested in donating leave to Department of the Army employees affected by Hurricane Katrina should submit a completed OPM form 1638, "Request to Donate Annual Leave under the Emergency Leave Transfer Program" to the CPAC office. The form is available at http://www.opm.gov/Forms/pdf_fill/opm1638.pdf.

The information requested on the form is self-explanatory except block 8, where donors should enter "Hurricane Katrina."

Donors may only donate annual leave. The maximum amount of leave an employee may donate is one-half his/her annual leave that will accrue during a leave year. The minimum amount is 1 hour.

For more information, contact Denise Murrugarra at (816) 983-3782.

MILEAGE REIMBURSEMENT RATE TO DROP FOUR CENTS

The General Services Administration announced a new mileage reimbursement rate Jan. 6, lowering it 4 cents to 44.5 cents

per mile for 2006.

The rate, which applies to employees who use personal vehicles for government business, is retroactive for all official travel performed on or after Jan. 1, 2006, a draft of an announcement signed by acting GSA administrator David Bibb on Dec. 21, 2005, stated. The document will be published in the *Federal Register* Friday, according to GSA.

The 44.5-cent rate still exceeds the 2004 reimbursement level of 40.5 cents. After the gas price spike in September, the Internal Revenue Service made a special one-time adjustment, bringing the mileage rate from 40.5 cents per mile to 48.5 cents. GSA followed the IRS' lead less than a week later.

The rate notice follows a December announcement from the IRS saying the rate would drop 4 cents per mile on January 1.

GSA's reimbursement rate generally matches the annual rate established by the IRS and by law (41 CFR part 301-10) cannot be higher than the IRS rate. In recent years, GSA has matched the IRS.

The IRS based its rate on a study of the costs of operating vehicles, which include gas prices, oil, tires and general maintenance costs.

According to federal travel regulations, employees may use personal vehicles for official travel if they obtain permission from their agency. The reimbursement rate applies only to authorized means of travel.

The federal government also will reimburse employees for approved use of personal motorcycles and airplanes for government business.

The 44.5-cent rate will cover only automobiles. GSA is still working on updating the rate for airplanes and motorcycles. — *Daniel Pulliam, GovExec.com.*

CALL TO RETIREES

The Heartland Engineer is now available online. It can be accessed at www.nwk.usace.army.mil. Click on "Organization," then "Public Affairs," then "Heartland Engineer."

In an effort to improve our retiree database by adding email addresses to alert retirees of unique opportunities, please contact the Public Affairs Office. Also, if you would like to be taken off the mailing list and receive a notification by email each month when the newest issue is published, please contact Diana McCoy in Public Affairs at (816) 983-3485 or e-mail her at diana.mccoy@usace.army.mil.

Hurricane Holiday

Gilkey spends Holiday season
on Katrina relief



Photo provided

Florentine Gilkey works at her desk at the Vicksburg District's Emergency Field Office, Central, in Gulfport, Miss. Gilkey volunteered to work on hurricane Katrina relief efforts during the holiday season.

As the song says, there's no place like home for the holidays, a philosophy not embraced by Florentine Gilkey during the 2005 holiday season.

Normally the branch secretary for the Kansas City District's Environmental Branch, Gilkey spent most of December and part of January in Gulfport, Miss., working 12-hour days at the Corps' Emergency Field Office, Central, as part of the ongoing hurricane Katrina relief effort.

She knew she was leaving holiday celebrations behind when she volunteered.

"I don't have any immediate family, so I told Emergency Management I'd volunteer during the holidays, so someone else could go home to their family," Gilkey said.

Her mother expressed a little concern about her absence, Gilkey said, but was understanding in the end.

Gilkey replaced Sherry Brooks of the Vicksburg District. Brooks said Gilkey replaced her on Dec. 20 when her assignment ended. She isn't sure if she could have extended the assignment if Gilkey hadn't volunteered.

At the Gulfport EFO, Gilkey uses her administrative skills to help track progress made in cleaning up the area around the nearby town of Pass Christian.

Pass Christian is about 10 miles from Waveland, Miss., where the Katrina's "eye wall," the ring of devastating winds surrounding the center of the storm, came ashore. Many parts of both towns, and the town of Diamondhead, which lies between them, were destroyed by the combination of 130 mile-per-hour winds and waves from the 30-foot storm surge Katrina carried.

The Corps is responsible for removing an estimated 23 million cubic yards of debris from roadways and private properties in the damaged areas of Mississippi.

In practice, this means trucks of debris receive a ticket from a Corps or contract quality assurance inspector. Each ticket documents a specific number of cubic yards of debris removed, based on the capacity of the truck.

"I track the tickets that come in each day, to show how many cubic yards have been removed," Gilkey said. "I have to do an actual count based on the tickets that come in from the field."

She also tracks the activities of 45 employees, and 20 contractors.

"I have to know where they go each day," she said. "That includes the five employees from the [U.S.] Fish and Wildlife Service that are working here."

Gilkey said the people of Mississippi are "resilient." She said two casinos have reopened, important in an area that depends on tourism, just five months after being devastated by the storm.

"The two shopping malls here in Gulfport were just full at Christmas," Gilkey said.

This is Gilkey's second deployment, her first was in Iraq from January through July, 2005. She said that although this deployment is less dangerous, the scenes of devastation are just as profound.

"Some of the area, especially down around Pass Christian – it really looks like a bomb has been dropped there," she said. "Down on the beach, the houses are just shells, and there are people living there now, it's really amazing."

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:
thomas.a.o'hara@usace.army.mil

21st Century

Beyond

Story by Diana McCoy

Big aspirations and a lot of motivation helped one man make his mark on the Kansas City District when he came here more than a year ago, bringing with him his experiences from around the world.

Mike Murphy, chief of Information Management, joined the district in October of 2004. He got his start with the Department of Defense when he joined the Air Force and then transferred to the Army as a Department of Defense civilian in 1992.

“I’ve been working in IM since 1995,” Murphy said. “When I came to Kansas City, I saw some critical information technology initiatives that needed to be implemented in an effort to maximize efficiency and overall capability.”

The Challenges

Murphy said the biggest challenge was the work environment. People worked on two separate floors, and the organization was a mess. As a result, IM

wasn’t respected as were other organizations within the district.

“The environment wasn’t conducive to customer service or co-worker interaction,” he said.

Murphy said the cubicle walls were so high between employees; there wasn’t communication or cross-level training between them in an organization where those functions were necessary.

Overall, Murphy did not feel the employees, nor IM as a whole, was an integral part of a team, which had a huge effect on customer service. The process for getting requests taken care of was too long, which affected turn-around.

“Our mission is customer service,” Murphy said. “We literally touch every single person in the district from a communication



Photo by Diana McCoy

Mike Murphy, chief of Information Management, has implemented many changes which will better prepare the organization as a 21st century IM division.

perspective, whether it's telecommunications, automation, network, performance management, official mail, Freedom of Information Act, visual information services. Our customer service affects everything, which is why IM needed to change."

The Change

Murphy brought IM employees on the eighth floor down to share space with their seventh floor colleagues.

"There's been a lot of big changes we've made with furniture and walls and different things since we've moved down here," said Steve Burns, information technology specialist for IM. "Basically what we did was knock a lot of the walls down."

Burns said they used to be in cubicles so people couldn't overhear other people's phone conversations.

"Now we can hear what other people are talking about, and sometimes it helps solve problems right on the spot because of the different knowledge levels between employees," Burns said.

Murphy also painted the walls, which gave the place a "face-lift." Instead of white or beige walls, IM boasts walls painted in various shades of green and purple with the names of different sections painted in orange along a gray strip near the ceiling.

Burns said another change was the implementation of the help desk system.

"We just installed it, and we're learning how to use it fully," he said. "When somebody new comes in, we're able to send out "jobs" simultaneously so that an e-mail account will be created and a telephone line will be set up and Logistics can prepare a desk."

Another change involved screens.

"The screens are mounted on the walls to allow us to monitor the status of networks and help desk tickets," Burns said. "It helps us be proactive immediately and get things solved as soon as we can."

Murphy's most visual change to the rest of the district includes the shirts he ordered for each person

"We created the shirts as a symbol of unity—one," Murphy said. "We wanted to increase the professionalism within the organization and increase the respect level, and I think that's been accomplished."

Employees can be spotted wearing the shirts made of blue jean material with an IM patch sewn on the right arm and Information Management embroidered above the right breast. The patch is also painted on one of the walls in IM, as a reminder of their mission: customer service.

The Effects

"It's much more open," said Echo Kean, information support specialist. "I think it helps



Photo by Diana McCoy

Steve Burns discusses information management issues with Jennie Wilson (not pictured). Behind Burns is an example of the art work Mike Muphy commissioned throughout IM in his initiative to give the organization a face-lift.

with teamwork a little more because you hear more of what's going on, and if you have an answer for something someone else doesn't, you can help them out."

Murphy said the open atmosphere forces people to interact, which fosters communication.

"It also puts a message out there that everyone's equal and everyone works together as a team," Murphy said. "I'm a believer that if you take care of your people and give them the things they need such as the right tools and training, the customer support piece becomes second nature and will take care of itself."

Burns is a supporter of the changes Murphy has made in the past year.

"We're getting better," Burns said. "We've come a long way, and we're trying to adjust to our new situation and new mode of operation."

Now when customers walk through the door, they know they will be greeted by someone who is ready to help them out with their IM needs. They no longer have to search for someone sitting at their desk.

"We need to know what the customers need before they even know they want it," said Murphy, who has accepted a new position as director of information technology at Yokosuka Naval Base in Japan. "We're always thinking and being imaginative and having a positive attitude, which are things you can't train a person to be."

Murphy feels strongly about the role IM plays in the district.

"IM as a whole is just as important as any engineer in this district," he said. "It's just as important as any other section that usually gets all the accolades. When you hear U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, I don't want to hear 'if you're not an engineer, you're nothing.' If you computer

continued on page 14



The BIG



Move

Photo by Eric Cramer

The Kansas City District will have a new look, and occupy new space, beginning in two years when it starts to move under a GSA plan to renovate the Richard Bolling Federal Building.

District offices currently located on the sixth, seventh and eighth floors will move to floors four, five and six. The plan calls for a certain amount of “shuffling” of office space as the move evolves, said David Glandon, project manager and leader of the delivery team for the move.

“Under the current plan, in 2008, Environmental Programs Branch, Environmental Construction Branch and Operations will all move to the fourth floor, and Human Resources will move from the sixth floor to the seventh,” Glandon said.

“In the spring of 2009, PM and EC move from the eighth and seventh floors to the fifth floor. The Real Estate Division and Information Management Office will temporarily remain on the eighth floor,” Glandon said. “Finally, in the summer of 2009, offices located on the seventh floor, Real Estate and Information Management will move to the sixth floor. Only HR will have to move twice because it moves from the sixth floor to the seventh, and then back down to the sixth.”

Glandon said he has posted a computer graphic, showing blocking diagrams and how this shuffle will take place, on the district’s intranet site.

District Engineer Col. Michael Rossi said the move and renovation is an opportunity for a much-needed upgrade.

“It’s an opportunity to capture and optimize the changes that have taken place in information technology and business practices over the last 20 years,” Rossi said. “With project management business processes and

advanced information systems, this is a chance for us to move forward.”

Rossi said the new office space will also update the district’s appearance.

“We are ambassadors not just for the district, but for the entire Corps,” Rossi said. “When our customers visit us, what they see now is a little bit dated. This gives us the chance to update our offices and give a better first impression.”

That impression is also a reflection of the Corps’ culture. Glandon leads a committee designed to bring that culture, the Corps’ brand, to the design of the new workspace.

Mark Frazier, assistant chief of the Regulatory Branch, sits on that committee. He said its job is to advise the architect, so that the designers can reflect the Corps’ culture in the final plan.

“They’ve used a number of group and individual exercises to help develop those elements. It’s not a quantitative but an investigative-qualitative process,” he said. “For example, our homework from the first meeting was to bring three images reflecting our view of the Corps’ culture to the second meeting, and then everyone put their images on the wall at the second





Linda Glazier, interior designer with Helix Architecture and Design, discusses floor plans with the project delivery team. Floor plans for the Corps can be viewed on the intranet.

Photo by Eric Cramer



Photo by Diana McCoy

Randy Strelluf (second from left), a representative from the Social Security Administration leads a tour on the 16th floor of the Richard Bolling Federal Building. Mary Rooker (left), Ruth Allen and Paul Speckin, all on the essencing study committee, accompanied Strelluf on the tour.



Photo by Diana McCoy

David Glandon (center), chief of Resource Management, hosts a brown bag luncheon to update employees on the district's relocation status.

meeting and discussed the ideas from them.”

He said the architect will use the ideas and concepts gleaned from the exercises to draft designs of the new workspace for presentation to other Corps' committees.

When it comes to which office will locate which spaces on the new floors, Glandon said that has been planned, but could be subject to change.

“At this point, it's a block diagram,” Glandon said. “We're working on the details.”

Glandon said the move means an upgrade for the district's public spaces, and also big changes for office and work spaces.

“The elevator lobbies will be upgraded with wood finishes rather than tile, and there will be improved restroom facilities,” he said. “The heating and cooling that is now in window units will be in the ceiling.”

He said the windows on the district's levels will be replaced with blast mitigating glass to improve the physical security of the offices.

“All the meeting spaces and private offices will be in the core of the building, and the window space will be open to bring more daylight into the work areas,” Glandon said.

That daylight will come into open office spaces with few walls.

“We're planning a total of 515 work stations in open office space, with no wall separating most branches and offices,” Glandon said.

He said the goal of the open design is to facilitate team interactions, improve the flow of foot traffic, provide better ventilation and offer more access to daylight.

Break areas are also part of the new design. Each floor will have a break area containing a sink with a garbage disposal, and a small number of tables and chairs, located near the elevator lobby. In addition, there will be break areas located at each end of each floor. Glandon said these smaller break areas may also contain a sink.

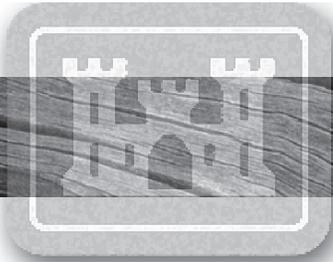
As for individual work stations and how they may look, Glandon said that design isn't final.

“The contractor, Herman Miller, is putting together a proposal of four to eight 'typical' work spaces,” Glandon said. “Our plan is to set up mock-ups for people to look at and see what they're like.”

The primary design contractor for the renovation is Helix Architecture and Design, Inc., and that is the entity most employees will see at work as design of the office space nears completion.

Completion of the design is actually getting close, Glandon said, as the contractor must release design documents in summer 2006 so that contractors can bid on construction.

“GSA is planning to have a construction contract by March of 2007,” he said.



Corps'

Annual Hunt Nets Deer,

Story and Photos by
Michael A. Watkins

Creates Memories

The brisk Sunday morning air of mid-November stung as the huge buck followed a doe into a cornfield at Smithville Lake in Missouri. A muzzle blast cracked the silence of the early morning air, and the huge buck immediately dropped to the ground.

It was the second morning of the 16th annual Smithville Lake managed deer hunt for the physically challenged, and Eric Will had just harvested the largest deer ever taken in the history of the special hunt.

Will suffered a broken spine while diving into the Current River two weeks before his 17th birthday. He has been a quadriplegic ever since that day in 1983 with minimal movement in his arms and no movement in his hands or fingers.

His special electric gun mount, which fastens to his wheel chair, allows him to pursue his boyhood passion for hunting. All Will has to do is maneuver his rifle with a joystick connected to an electric motor until the crosshairs of its scope are positioned just behind the buck's shoulders. Then he sucks air from fish tank tubing which activates a

series of steps that results in pulling the trigger of his .270 caliber rifle.

Will has participated in the Smithville Lake managed deer hunt since its inception in 1990. As he and his volunteer guide, brother-in law Ted Nash, approached the huge buck, they stared in disbelief at its massive antlers then "all hell broke loose" Will said. It took several minutes for the whooping and hollering to subside.

"We knew it was a good deer when I shot, but we had no idea it was this big," he said.

Although the antlers have yet to be officially measured, it is possible that after the 60-day mandatory drying period, Will's buck will qualify for the Boone and Crockett World Record Book.

Lloyd Fosdick, from Cameron, Mo., has enjoyed the benefits from hunting at Smithville for 15 years. His volunteer guide, Kathy Meier is one of 70 to 80 women who usually volunteer.



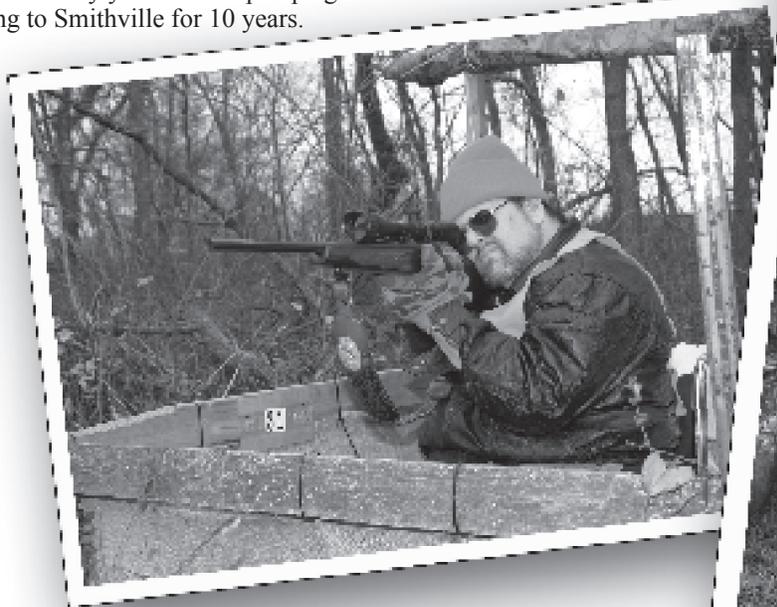
Check-in for the hunt starts at 4 a.m. and usually lasts until 5:30 a.m. A special breakfast is prepared for the hunters by local Boy Scouts, and the Kiwanis Club prepares a lunch of chili.

Each year, the Kansas City District sponsors managed deer hunts for the physically challenged at Smithville, Stockton and Truman Lakes in Missouri and Milford Lake in Kansas. The special hunts originally evolved out of a need to harvest excess deer in non-hunting areas such as parks and wildlife refuges. At their inception, it was determined that an excellent target hunter audience would be people with disabilities; those with limited ability to go to the field to hunt deer.

Over the years, local communities have embraced



Gary Montgomery is one of 65 hunters who usually participate in the hunt every year. He is a paraplegic who has been returning to Smithville for 10 years.



Bill Cumpston, a paraplegic, has been hunting at Smithville for 10 years. His volunteer guide, Bob Rice, has been involved with the hunt for three years.

these special hunts and their participants. In 2005, more than 60 local sponsors and Corps partners provided a variety of goods and services, ranging from cooking meals for the hunters to providing materials for the construction of hunting blinds and door prizes.

One of the most valuable partnerships has been forged with the Paralyzed Veterans of America. In the early years, they helped locate paralyzed individuals that liked or wanted to try deer hunting. More recently, they have assisted by donating funds to local service groups who support this activity.

“Volunteers are the backbone of this event,” said Bruce Clark, operations manager at Smithville Lake. “We simply couldn’t do it without them.”

Will agreed with Clark’s assessment of the volunteers who provide an endless number of services including shuttling the hunters to the field and staying with them throughout the day. They field-dress the deer and assist with transporting the game to locker plants if necessary.

“They are absolutely fantastic,” Will stated. “If you need any kind of assistance, there is always someone there to help,” he said.

More than 180 individuals volunteered more than 2,500 hours to help make these four special hunts a success in 2005.

“One of the main objectives of the event is to provide a quality outdoor experience for the hunters,” Clark said. “Each year, with the aid of volunteers, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers prepares blinds that will accommodate the hunters and their guides comfortably.”

There are three criteria which must be satisfied

before a blind is constructed in a given location.

“Hunter safety is the number one priority,” Clark said. “Each blind must have a safe shooting zone with land and/or timber protecting it from other hunters.”

In addition, the blinds must be accessible to allow vehicles within a few feet and must be located in an area where the hunter will have a reasonable chance of harvesting a deer.

The overall hunter success rate has been phenomenal, especially for disabled hunters.

In 2005, the four events provided hunting opportunities for 110 physically challenged individuals, most of who are confined to wheelchairs, and they harvested 122 deer. This computes to a hunter success rate of over 100 percent, which far exceeds that of the general deer hunting population in Kansas and Missouri.

Larry Magill is a seven-year veteran of the Smithville hunt. Magill has been confined to a wheel chair since 1993 due to complications from polio, which he had as a child. He lives in Sunrise Beach, Mo., and travels more than 400 miles round-trip to attend the hunt.

“I was apprehensive at first,” Magill said, “but once I got here, I just couldn’t believe the setup. I remember thinking ‘this is just too good to be true!’ For the two days of this hunt, my physical impairments become totally irrelevant.”

Magill had a very successful hunt in 2005; he managed to

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Kanopolis Lake

First Lake in the Kansas City District

www.nwk.usace.army.mil/kanopolis/kanopolis_home.htm



Photo provided

Visitors getting close enough to Indian Rock can view the many petroglyphs carved into it long ago.

Location of Dam: Near Ellsworth, Kan.
Stream/River: Smoky Hill River
Miles Above Mouth of Mo. River: 183.7
Storage Date: February 17, 1948
Total Acreage: 22,007
Lake Size: 3,400 Acres
Dam Length: 15,360 ft.
Yearly Visitation: .25 million

Story by Diana McCoy

This is the first lake to appear in a series which will outline Kansas City District's 18 lake projects. All projects will appear in chronological order from the date they first stored water.

Four horse thieves stole quietly back into a canyon, proud of the livestock they considered loot. It was a remote area, and anyone waking up to discover their horses

missing would have a hard time tracing them.

Except this time.

Later, those thieves were hanged in that same canyon (so the legend goes) for a crime considered unforgivable during a time when settlers took the law into their own hands and punished the offenders as they saw fit. Their hideaway, a natural box canyon, is now called Horse Thief Canyon, and it can be found at Kanopolis Lake in Marquette, Kan.

Kanopolis Lake is the first lake completed in the Kansas City District and is full of many charming stories of the famous people of long ago. Names like Gen. George Armstrong Custer, Buffalo Bill Cody, Wild Bill Hickok and Wyatt Earp roamed the area, eager to escape to the land of adventure.

"Many of them were attracted by the military and the cow towns," said Ken Nelson, operations project manager for the lake. "Some of them were crooks and criminals. Guys like Wyatt Earp had a somewhat shady background in some cases."

There were a lot of military troops (at times as many as 6,000 at Fort Harker), and the further west the forts went, the settlers weren't far behind them.

"In some cases, the settlers came first, got into trouble, and the Soldiers had to bail them out," Nelson said.

With all those people around, flood control became a large issue, as well as the water quality of the Smoky Hill River, a tributary of the Kansas River, which is a tributary of the Missouri River.

"The lake was started as part of the overall program for the Missouri River," Nelson said. "It was the first one only by coincidence. Harlan County Lake was started about the same time, but I guess it was just 'luck o' the draw.' Maybe it was easier to buy property out here because the local base was very pro flood control."

Construction on the dam started in 1940, but was discontinued in 1942 because of World War II. With a majority of the man-power focused on the war effort, it left little time or money for other concerns.

Construction continued in 1946 and was completed in 1948, dedicated on Decoration Day—the day so named because that's when people would make a point to go to the cemeteries and decorate the graves. It's now known as Memorial Day.

"They used captured German prisoners to clear the weeds off the dam," Nelson said. "There was a big camp here, Camp Phillips, where they were prisoners and loaned out to the local farmers who used them for help."

When the project was completed and the lake became available to the public, it was another wonder of the world to them.

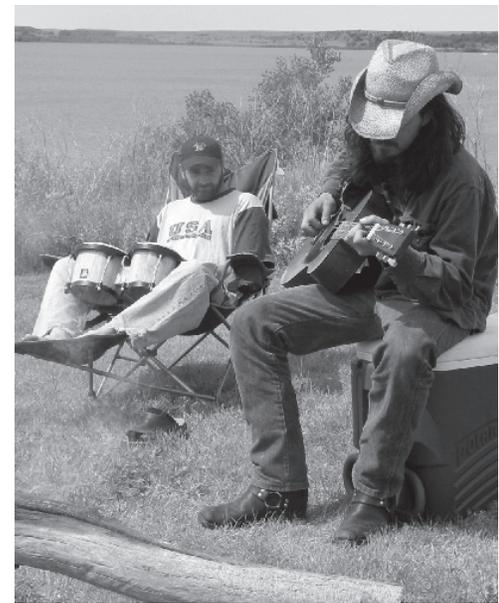


Photo by Jason Hurley

Visitors enjoy summer weather while basking in the quiet surroundings of Kanopolis Lake.

Harlan County Lake

Second Largest Lake in Nebraska

www.nwk.usace.army.mil/haco/harlan_home.htm



Photo provided

Staff at Harlan County Lake dredge Patterson Harbor to make it easier for recreation seekers to use. Dredging, a project that requires hours of work and support from the staff, has been done twice at Methodist Cove, Patterson Harbor and Gremlin Cove in the past five years.

Harlan County Lake, the Kansas City District's only Nebraska lake, came to be as a result of the 1935 Republican River flood which killed more than 100 people, sweeping away bridges and farm buildings and opening the eyes of the nation's leaders as to the need for flood control in the valley.

Staff at the lake in Republican City, Neb., the second oldest flood control project in the district, has been applying creative solutions to unique circumstances in recent years. These solutions include grassland renovation projects, low water levels, dredging coves and harbors to keep public access to marinas open, installing new boat ramps or fixing old ones and changes in visitor usage patterns.

"We've embraced the idea that cooperative efforts are the key to our future survival and overall success," said Jim Brown, a natural resource management specialist at the lake.

An example of a successful joint venture has been the Focus on Pheasants program which demonstrates possible ways to increase the wildlife habitat potential of grasslands throughout the Nebraska.

"Over the past four years, we've received more than \$85,000 for grassland improvement, and we've leveraged that money with other tools like the Agricultural Lease program to make it go further," Brown said.

Harlan County Lake is one of four statewide demonstration areas and has played a critical role in the success of this program.

Included in this program has been the renovation of Harlan County Lake's grassland areas.

"A lot of our grasslands have deteriorated to a state where we have a lot of invasive species and not enough money to address the problem," said Tom Zikmund, one of two natural resource management specialists at the lake.

Location of Dam: Near Republican City, Neb.
Stream/River: Republican River
Miles Above Mouth of Mo. River: 232.3
Storage Date: November 14, 1952
Total Acreage: 31,000
Lake Size: 7,000 Acres
Dam Length: 11,380
Yearly Visitation: .5 million

Story Harlan County Lake Staff

"To address the issue, we began tying in grassland conversion work with our agricultural lease program."

This renewal process started with the leasing of more than 400 acres of cropland and hundreds of acres of hay land for the high bid of \$1.51 per lease. At the end of the lease, staff removed some 300 acres of the ground from the Ag Lease rotation and replanted native grassland species using newly discovered techniques, seed, and equipment provided by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. Cost savings to the Corps in renovating grassland on these sites was calculated to be \$190 per acre, or \$57,000 total. The leases, which required out-of-the-box thinking, are just a part of an unconventional plan at Harlan County Lake to restore its

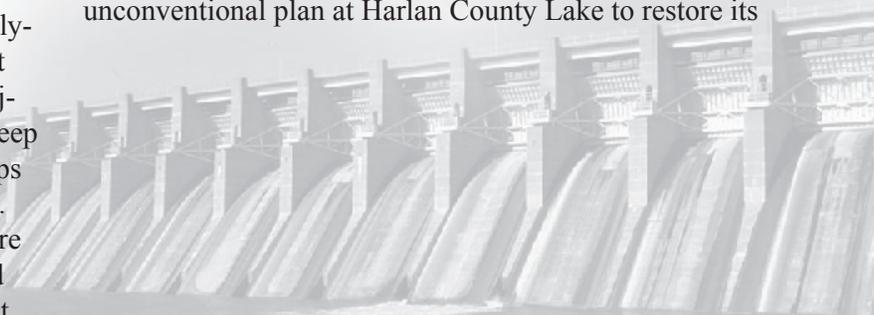


Photo provided

A sluice gate releases water for irrigation when the lake is at normal levels. Water has not been released since 2003 due to extremely low lake levels.

grasslands.

Aside from these, the project leases more than 10,000 acres to local farmers, bringing in more than \$130,000 annually, of which 75 percent goes to support county programs and local schools

Brown, who said Harlan County Lake is unique for its large Ag Lease program, also identified another one-of-a-kind feature for Harlan County Lake management.

"Wildlife management is solely taken care of out of this office," Brown said. "Other projects lease out sections of

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This is the second lake to appear in a series which will outline Kansas City District's 18 lake projects. All projects will appear in chronological order from the date they first stored water.

ANNUAL HUNT

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bag two deer.

"While it is nice to have fresh venison in the freezer, the meat will soon be gone," he explained. "However, the friendships and memories I made and the inspiration I received from the Smithville hunt will be with me for a lifetime."

Editor's Note: *Watkins is a Wildlife Biologist with the Kansas City District of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers in Kansas City, Mo.*

KANOPOLIS LAKE

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"You look at some of the old brochures, and they say 'Kanopolis Lake, playground of the prairie,'" said Nolan Fisher, natural resource management specialist at the project. "People would drive hundreds of miles because this was 'IT.' This was big water to them."

Nelson agreed with Fisher, adding that people would routinely haul their power boats out here from Kansas City, Topeka and Wichita for the first five to 10 years of the lake's existence.

"As time went by, the bloom kind of went off the rose," Nelson said. "The Tuttle Creeks and Pomonas and the Melverns all came on board. Most people don't stumble across us. They know they want to come out here because it's quiet, and there's not that hustle and bustle of the other parks."

Currently, the outflow is averaging about 10 cubic feet a second, and the inflow is less than that, but Nelson hopes to see the inflows increase this spring.

"We're pretty low right now," he said. "We're currently in a drought scenario, but everybody is in a drought scenario."

Not to worry. There are still plenty of things the lake has to offer. A trout fishery can be found below the dam. Diverse hunting is available with upland game and deer. Horse trails run throughout the property, and the project has a large agricultural base.

"We have the largest agricultural program in the district, as far as leases," Nelson said. "The money generated from those leases probably exceeds most of the revenues generated by some of our recreational lakes back east."

The annual budget for the project falls right around \$1 million, and annual events, although small in size, attract visitors from

around the United States.

"We have a local fireworks celebration out here on the 4th of July," Nelson said. "The North American Trail Ride Conference has an annual national event out here where they utilize the horse trails and bring in riders from all across the country."

The Prairie Long Rifles, a group of early west fur trader re-enactors hold events at Kanopolis periodically as well, choosing the area because of its "out-of-the-way" location.

With the lake's unique topography of unbroken, flat prairie and canyon lands, visitors can spend hours roaming the project and studying the caves and the Indian Cliff, named because of the petroglyphs carved into it.

"Kanopolis is an old, comfortable project," Nelson said. "There's not a lot of bells and whistles, but there's a lot of history, and you could spend weeks and weeks out here studying it."

21ST CENTURY AND BEYOND

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goes down, you need somebody to fix it. We're clearly an integral part, and we are here to support the people."

Some of Murphy's ideas can be credited to his experiences around the world.

"I've been fortunate that I've had a very diverse past as far as working environments go," he said. "I brought with me some ideas I knew would work, I received a lot of support from [Col. Michael Rossi]. He was an integral part in saying 'I'll give you a shot,' and it's worked out extremely well."

Murphy's goal was to set the environment up for a 21st century information management division, and he feels that it has been accomplished.

HARLAN COUNTY

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their wildlife areas to state agencies, but we don't have any state wildlife areas or parks on our property."

Brown pointed out that another unique and challenging feature is that water released from the lake is used for irrigation in Kansas and Nebraska—a use that no other lake in the district can claim. Currently, the project is going into its fifth year of drought, which is another source of creative solutions for the staff.

"Typically, we have about 13,000 acres

of water," Brown said "but due to drought, our lake size is down to 7,000 acres which not only affects our downstream irrigators, but recreational users as well."

To combat the drought, the staff operates a cutter-head dredge to maintain access to marinas and boat ramps. Dredging, a labor intensive task, has called for the staff to come together.

"We've spent hundreds of thousands of dollars on dredging," Zikmund said. "Because staff size has dwindled, the maintenance and ranger staff really have to work together to get the dredging operations done."

Also as a result of the low water, permanent boat ramps on Harlan County Lake have been left high and dry. Through cooperative efforts a low water boat ramp, parking lot, and roadway have been installed on the North side of Harlan County Lake's exposed mudflat area. This ramp project has allowed boaters to continue to access the lake.

Even though the lake has reduced in size due to the drought, there are plenty of other things for recreation seekers to indulge in.

"Harlan County has become one of the biggest all terrain vehicle recreation spots in Nebraska," Zikmund said. "To offset the drop in water based recreation use, the Corps has allowed off road vehicle use on the exposed mudflats."

Annual events include Nebraska's biggest walleye tournament—the Governor's Cup, Women's Wilderness Weekend teaching outdoor skills to women throughout the state and the Water Jamboree, which brings more than 600 fifth-grade students to the lake each spring to learn about the importance of conserving water and natural resources.

"The local economy has really grown to depend on us," Zikmund said. "Being rurally located, the staff is aware the lake and the local communities are tied together."

The close proximity of Alma and Republican City, Neb., has encouraged the development of tourism based businesses. Convenience stores, hotels, and restaurants derive a significant portion of their income from tourism.

"All businesses can see the effect of the tourism, in the good years and bad," Zikmund said. "We know that the choices made in this office are going to affect a large number of people, so we do our best to make the most beneficial decisions for everyone."



Diary of an I-29 Road Warrior

They say you can't go home again. And when you return to a place where you've never really lived, it's a stretch to call it home.

But while driving the 200 miles between Omaha District and the Kansas City District weekly during my TDY assignment as interim chief of Public Affairs last fall (my second stint at this in a three year period), as well as on trips these months since taking the position permanently, I've had time to reflect on the two districts, the assignment and the decision to pick up stakes for good and move to Omaha's southern sister district.

A few revelations:

*It is true that the Corps is family. When I served here in 2003 I had to abruptly return to Omaha after the passing of my mother. The genuine support I received from this district then, as a relative newcomer, and the continued interest three years later reaffirmed what I already knew: Corps folk are good people.

*In Omaha we have the farm team for the Kansas City Royals, and after watching the big league club blow a 7-2 ninth inning lead to lose 13-7 last fall here in Kansas City, I figured I'd be seeing many of the players currently in Rosenblatt make it to Kaufmann pretty soon. At least the baseball would seem familiar (as a Cubs fan for 20 years, believe me, I recognize bad baseball when I see it).

*Good pies at the diner off Exit 110 in Missouri.

*Although 35,000 strong, if you allow yourself to experience the challenge of deployments within the Corps, you'll be surprised the number of friends and contacts you develop and how "small" the Corps really is. You also realize friendships forged in deployments tend to be stronger than the average passer-by in the hallway. Great to see Kim, Greg, Larry, Bill, Doug, Dave, Trudy, Sharon, Chris and the many, many others in Kansas City who I first met in Iraq.

*P2 is a four letter word no matter where you serve in the Corps. You know it's bad when a new system makes you wish it operated "as well as CEFMS." But like CEFMS – we can and will make it work.

*When you travel between districts you become aware of what you thought your former district did "by regulation" was simply "by tradition." If you truly allow yourself to learn from each other and develop a better understanding of better ways of doing business – then occasional "cross pollination" is a good thing.

*That said, even if cross pollination is a good thing, after awhile you get tired of hearing yourself saying, "Well, back in Omaha..."

*While being raised in Nebraska pretty much conditions you to be a Husker (and proud of it) it struck me that I was fortunate the local professional team's colors would allow me to stretch my collection of Big Red wardrobe into a whole new venue. Also, tailgating in Arrowhead more than makes up missed tailgating in Lincoln!

And finally

*In college they taught me $d = rt$. But what I did not realize is that $t = f(\text{bladder volume})$ and when $\text{COFFEE}_{in} = 2$, and $d_0 = \text{Omaha}$, then $d_1 = \text{Exit 10 off I-29 in Iowa}$.

Kansas City District, I'm glad to have this second opportunity to come here and serve as your chief of public affairs.

It's good to be home.



Photo by Jennie Wilson

Changing Leaves

“If I can see further than those who came before, it is only because I stand on the shoulders of giants,” Butler said, a quote from Sir Isaac Newton.

Also attending the ceremony were her parents, John and Lois O’Rourke, and long-time friends Mark and Joanne Roncoli and their daughter Christine.

Following the ceremony, guests formed a line to congratulate Butler and her family, and refreshments were provided.

In a ceremony held Jan. 6 in the Richard Bolling Federal Building, Kelly Butler was promoted to the rank of lieutenant colonel while family members and district employees watched with smiles.

Butler is the Deputy District Engineer for Kansas City, joining the district July 15 after completing an assignment at Schofield Barracks, Hawaii.

“Lt. Col. Butler has been in the Army for 16 years, and when I heard she was coming to the Kansas City District to be my deputy, it took all of three seconds to ask how quickly she could get here,” said Col. Michael Rossi.

Rossi explained that Lt. Col. Butler would go on to receive a command position in 2007 and then invited her husband, Lt. Col. Jeff Butler, to stand on her left side, because that is the side of her heart, and help him pin on her shoulder rank.

Butler thanked guests for coming and said she’s been blessed to be able to work with some great people. She also thanked her husband for his support, saying that he is the “best officer I have ever known.”

Eagle Days

Phoenix, a bald eagle from Dickerson Park Zoo in Springfield, Mo., watches a crowd of onlookers at the Harry S. Truman Visitor Center as part of the 6th Annual Eagle Day events. Cheryl Briggs, a docent, holds Phoenix and takes care not to make eye contact, as Phoenix would take that as a sign of aggression.



Photo by Diana McCoy