

HEARTLAND ENGINEER

KANSAS CITY DISTRICT'S NEWS MAGAZINE



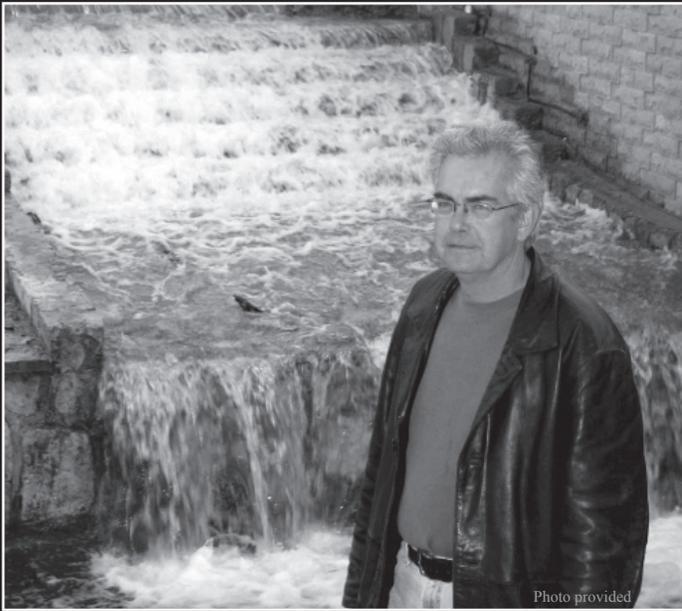
MARCH 2006

A LITTLE BIT ON AED



Slightly more than half-way through his tour in Afghanistan, Kansas City District's Maj. Matthew Little relays his experience as an American engineer helping to build democracy

FEATURES



Arbor Drinkwine, resident engineer with Gulf Region Central District, has two signature projects that overshadow all others he's been involved with during nearly three years in Iraq ... renovating the Baghdad International Airport to bring it up to international standards and rebuilding a system of pumps and canals that keep water flowing into an oasis of lakes at Camp Victory nearby. Drinkwine is a Kansas City District engineer who first took a position in Germany and then went on to Iraq.

EMPLOYEE ASSISTANCE PROGRAM — 6

This little-known program is available to Kansas City District employees and their families at no cost.

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A little more than half way through his tour in Afghanistan, Kansas City District's Maj. Matthew Little relays his experiences as an engineer.

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The historic Turkey Creek Tunnel has weathered storms and protected the Kansas City area for more than 90 years. Renovations to the structure will continue to protect the city in years to come.

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This ongoing series outlines the district's 18 lake projects. This month's columns feature Pomona Lake and Wilson Lake.

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PEOPLEPOWER

James Brown, a natural resource specialist at Harlan County Lake, received the Outstanding Wildlife Conservationist of the year award.



WHAT'S NEW

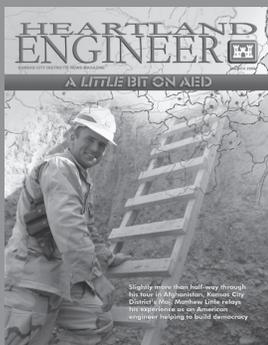
Vincent Marsh, new chief of Contracting, says hello to the Kansas City District and shares his background as well as his vision for the district.



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ON THE COVER:

Maj. Matthew Little inspects form work for a 250 meter deep well. The well will be used to supply water to the Afghan National Army base. (Photo illustration by Rusty Thomas, based on a photograph by Mark Molitor)



COL Michael A. Rossi

Over the past year I've used this column to tell you about change and challenge—USACE 2012, MILCON Transformation, district goals and strategies, increased workload and, most importantly, Project Delivery as our “one thing.” This month, I want to talk to you about “balance.”

We all need balance in mind, body, heart and soul to be healthy and happy. For me, that's balance in work, physical fitness, family and faith. To be honest, in the past when I've overcommitted to one—say work—at the expense of the others, my performance in all began to suffer.

In the months ahead, we've all got an opportunity to introduce a bit of balance into our work lives by preparing for and participating in the Kansas City Corporate Challenge. Last year was my introduction to this annual KC tradition, and it struck me how we, as a district, didn't take better advantage of this great opportunity. KCCC is an opportunity to compete, to get back in a little better shape, to be part of a team, to meet and enjoy new people outside your daily sphere of influence—or maybe “cube of influence.” Last year I met, teamed with, and socialized with folks in this district whom I'd never had the time or chance to know before. It truly helped me find better balance. I made a mental note then that I wanted to do this better in 2006—personally I wanted to participate in more events so I could meet and enjoy the company of more of you, and I wanted to make it a better event for the district.

So, this year I've got a team together that is going to help us. My commander's intent to this PDT follows as per Army doctrine (purpose, method, end state). *Purpose:* to increase participation in KCCC by employees of the Kansas City District. *Method:* First, assign each event a mentor division to encourage participation, performance and attendance as well as help with resources and strategies for performance in those events. Next, set up a competition between the divisions in NWK to encourage and reward both participation and performance during KCCC. Lastly, develop and execute a recruiting and communications plan for KCCC and our internal competition. *End state:* Increase “balance” within the NWK workforce, improve our performance over last year and, if it all works, win Division D.

Last year, the Corps finished in 4th place in Division C. We wrapped-up the competition with a fantastic gold medal performance in the “Tug-of-War” by beating the Marines in the final round. I ask you all to sign-up for KCCC this year to add a little balance to your work-life and to help me balance our great district. I am personally using this year's Corporate Challenge and my commitment to the teams and events I'm signing up for to motivate me to keep the New Year's promises I made regarding diet and exercise. I look forward to seeing you on the field later this spring.

Essayons!

IRAQI ARMY ASSUMES RESPONSIBILITY

The 5th Brigade, 6th Iraqi Army Division, assumed responsibility for areas in central and southern Baghdad during a battle space transfer of authority ceremony from 4th Brigade Combat Team, 4th Infantry Division, at Forward Operating Base Honor Feb. 20.

The ceremony took place after many months of training and combined missions between the two units, in which the Soldiers of the 4th BCT assisted the soldiers of 5th Brigade in preparation to assume the battle space inside and around the International Zone.

Col. Mohammed Wasif, 5th Bde. commander took the reins from Col. Michael Beech, 4th BCT commander, as 5th Bde. became the latest Iraqi unit to gain control of its own area of responsibility.

"This brigade has trained hard, and we are ready for the mission," Wasif said to the crowd of spectators. "We promised God and the government that we would remain loyal soldiers and continue to defend the borders of this country."

"This event sends a clear message to those who wish to disrupt or doubt the future success of Iraq," Beech added. "As our combined forces continue to grow, we will follow the Iraqi lead as they continue to keep the pressure on the enemies of a free Iraq."

Iraqi soldiers of the 5th Iraqi Bde. have been operating independently for months with little or no assistance from 4th BCT, Beech said, and as they take the lead in operations in central and southern Baghdad, both units will continue to work together.

"Our mission remains the same," noted Beech. "We are proud to continue combined operations as Allies and to support the success of the 5th brigade."

Currently, the 6th Iraqi Division is responsible for all the battle space in Baghdad. The 5th Brigade's area of operations covers approximately 50 square kilometers of the city.

The brigade's three battalions will operate inside the International Zone and the Karradah Peninsula. Iraqi security forces will be responsible for running various checkpoints in the area of operations.

"The responsibility of our Army is to protect this country and its people," said Maj. Gen. Mubdar Hatim Hazya Al-Duleimi, commanding general, 6th IAD, "and because of the bravery of our Armed Forces that sacrifice themselves on a daily basis, the amount of insurgent activity will continue to decrease."—*Jason Dangel, Army News Service*

VOLUNTARY LEAVE BANK

The Kansas City District is offering a new opportunity for those employees who wish to participate in the Voluntary Leave Bank Program this year. This special open enrollment period will run March 1 through 31, 2006.

The Voluntary Leave Bank Program was established as a result of the labor-management negotiations and agreed upon as part of the Union contract in 2002. The program enables enrolled members to receive leave from the Leave Bank if the employee experiences a personal or family medical emergency and has exhausted his or her available paid leave. Establishment of the Leave Bank enables employees to have an alternative to the Voluntary Leave Transfer Program that affords them more privacy. Once leave is requested, board members will review the request and notify the employee of the approval or disapproval of the request.

"This voluntary program is in addition to the Leave Share Program that is already available to district employees," said Sharon Fritz, Leave Bank board member. "The Voluntary Leave Bank Program can also be used in conjunction with the Leave Share Program."

"With the Leave Share Program, employees had to request the leave, and then an email would go out listing the employee, along with their medical situation," said Vira Dobbins, President of Federal Employees Union Local No. 29. "With the new program, the e-mail won't go out, and the only people who will know about the employee's medical situation are the three people who sit on the Leave Bank Board and the Leave Bank Administrator."

The current Voluntary Leave Bank Board is made up of Sharon Fritz and Tom Graff, two members representing management, and Vera Murray, representing the Union. Mary Rooker, Kansas City District resource management, is the Leave Bank administrator.

"The maximum amount of leave a member can receive is 80 hours per calendar year," Fritz said, "and you can generally apply only once a calendar year. However, you may apply up to two times per year if you face another medical emergency. After March 31, the next open season will be between Dec. 1, 2006 and Jan. 31, 2007 and then on those dates every year following this."

The local regulation governing the Voluntary Leave Bank Program is available on the Intranet under Administrative Publications. Frequently Asked Questions

and the Membership Application are available on the intranet as well, on the Civilian Personnel Advisory Center web page.

PENTAGON SHIFTS FOCUS TO RESULTS

Employees in the Defense Department will have to demonstrate results to receive pay raises, according to a summary of recent changes to the human resources portion of the department's new personnel system.

"The modified design emphasizes employee results that contribute to the accomplishment of the department's national security mission," a statement posted on the National Security Personnel System Web site Feb. 13 said.

According to the statement, job objectives for each employee will be more focused on results that contribute to organizational goals than the original design called for. Results-based objectives "will serve as the primary basis for employee performance ratings," the update said.

Employees' ratings will determine their share of the annual pay raise pool.

The department made the decision to place a great emphasis on results during a self-imposed delay on training employees on NSPS because officials said the rating system was too confusing. The old rating system rested on whether employees reached benchmarks such as "valued performance" on factors such as "technical proficiency."

Benchmarks and performance factors still "may influence the final rating" in this new system, the announcement stated.

Details of the new job objectives will be released by the end of February, the update said, and are still subject to input from unions. NSPS training is now scheduled to pick back up in March, and the first group to enter the system, downsized to 11,000 employees, will enter April 30.

NSPS is the department's congressionally authorized personnel reform, designed to modernize management by scrapping automatic raises in favor of pay for performance and replacing the General Schedule pay ladder with broad paybands.

The system has come under heavy fire from unions, who fear the performance-based raises will encourage cronyism and that pay pools will become targets for budget cuts. A group of unions sued the department over the system's rules on collective bargaining rights. A judge in the U.S. District Court for the District of Columbia is scheduled to render his decision in that case by March 1. —*Karen Rutzick, Government Executive.*



Natural Resources

James Brown, a natural resources specialist at Harlan County Lake, displays the Outstanding Wildlife Conservationist of the year plaque he received from the Nebraska Department of Game and Parks Commission. Brown earned the award for his efforts in improving habitat for pheasant and other grassland nesting birds.



Photo by Tom Zikmund

In a ceremony Feb. 11, James Brown, a natural resources specialist with Harlan County Lake near Republican City, Neb., was named the Outstanding Wildlife Conservationist of the year by the Nebraska Game and Parks Commission for his efforts in the “Focus on Pheasants” program.

Tim McCoy, a district manager with NGPC, helped prepare Brown’s nomination for the award, which comes from a sponsorship between Nebraska and the Pheasants Forever conservation organization.

“Informally, we call it the ‘bringing off the brood’ award, for people who have gone beyond the call of duty in their efforts,” McCoy said. “Jim’s been doing an incredible job. He’s taken real ownership of the ‘Focus on Pheasants’ program. He gets things done, and he makes certain everyone else gets credit for the work they do. He’s made it very easy for us to work.”

McCoy said Brown’s efforts include managing grassland habitat to benefit pheasant and other species, and has innovated the use of products such as Monsanto’s Roundup™ to manage non-native grasses such as smooth brome.

“That whole office at Harlan County has been very active in getting the conservation and habitat work ‘on the ground,’” McCoy said.

Brown said his efforts are to return the habitat to the diversity that existed before humans and agriculture were major players on the grasslands.

“When grasslands age, they tend to turn into a monoculture, an area with a single type of plant,” Brown said. “What we’re trying to do is create diversity by managing certain grass species – one way to think of it is that we’re trying to replace the bison herds that used to graze throughout the plains and create patches of different prairie species. The diversity is good for pheasants, but it’s

also good for songbirds and grassland nesting birds.”

He said managing smooth brome, a non-native grass introduced for agricultural purposes that has gone on to push native species out of their areas, is a big part of the job.

“We found that by working with our lessees to hay a given piece of property, and then applying Roundup™ after the native grass goes dormant, we could get results as good as the light disking which is a recognized practice in Conservation Reserve Program grasslands – and it’s a lot less expensive to spray the property than to disc it,” he said.

For his part, Brown said he was extremely surprised to receive the award.

“The recognition is just – just to be named with these superstars of conservation is a real honor,” he said. “But I wish they’d given the award to the office. There are also a lot of people in the state and local organizations – you name it. I just happen to be the point of the spear.”

When it comes to the habitat work itself, Brown said that will continue.

“There’s never going to be an end point,” he said. “It’s something that has to keep going.”

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

Employee Assistance Program

Your single source for support, resources & information

The world's largest provider of employee assistance programs is available, totally free, to Kansas City District employees.

ComPsych is a confidential, no-cost employee assistance program meant to help address personal issues of employees and their dependents.

"EAP provided by ComPsych is a program that offers employees and their family members several things," said Denise Murrugarra, administrative program specialist for the district. "EAP provides referrals to different areas such as child or elder care, financial services, retirement services and counseling services."

Murrugarra said EAP is a very beneficial program to all employees whether they are looking for counseling or just wondering where to put their money. Employees get three free visits with a counselor per issue.

"What the three free visits will do is at least give users a start," Murrugarra said. "Employees are responsible to pay for anything after the third visit."

Murrugarra said the great thing about EAP is it has its finger in a lot of different community services.

"The employees I've talked to regarding EAP are under a really big misconception," Murrugarra said. "They think their boss has access to EAP's counseling visits. This is not true. Unless someone comes up to me and says, 'I called EAP,' we have no idea who uses it. The only thing EAP provides us with is statistical data, but it doesn't list the person's name or what department the employee works in or what job they hold."

ComPsych has been providing EAP since 1984, and it's not new to the Kansas City District, however, Murrugarra said there is little awareness of the program, since only four employees used it in 2005.

"We're not sure if employees aren't using it because they don't like the service EAP provides or if they aren't aware of it. We would love to have feedback because we really want to provide the best product to the employees," Murrugarra said, suggesting employees who have used it drop anonymous notes at her desk.

EAP is available by phone 24 hours a day, seven days a week and is staffed by experienced clinicians. Their phone number is (888) 290-4EAP. They are also available online at <http://guidanceresources.com>. Corps employees must use the district's agency ID of "fedsorce."

"The biggest thing is I want people to realize EAP is there for them," Murrugarra said. "It's free. It's completely confidential, and it's not a negative thing."

To pick up an EAP brochure, please visit the Civilian Personnel Advisory Center on the sixth floor of the Richard Bolling Federal Building.





Photo provided

Maj. Matthew Little recognizes an Afghan National Army soldier in front of his kandak (battalion) while a translator (far left) prepares to interpret. The ceremony took place in the back of a pick-up truck, which was their make-shift reviewing stand.

A Little report from AED

Kansas City District's newest major reports from the U.S. Army's "other" front in the global war on terrorism: Afghanistan.

One thing is certain. I'm not in Kansas anymore. When I learned last fall that I was slated for a tour with the Corps' Afghanistan Engineering District (AED), I didn't know what to expect. Now a little more than midway through my deployment, I feel fortunate to have been asked to relate my experience and relay some of news from the Corps' lesser known front on the global war on terrorism.

The assignment started like many Army tours with a "ramp-up" and preparation at a pre-deployment facility.

I attended the Combat Readiness Course at Fort Benning, Ga. Soldiers deploying with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers attend this course while all civilian personnel deploy through Trans Atlantic Command (TAC) in Virginia. The course had more PowerPoint slides than I care to remember and covered everything from financial benefits, the rules of engagement, first aid, to a brief introduction to Afghan culture. The Army also issued me additional equipment, some of which I didn't expect to use but couldn't refuse. I lugged around four full duffle bags with me, along with a small backpack, which helped make up for the lack of physical fitness training opportunities during the flights.

I linked up with several other U.S. Army Corps of Engineer Soldiers at Fort Benning which made the deployment a little easier. We flew from Fort Benning to Baltimore, Md., then on to Germany, Turkey and finally we stopped at Manas Air Force Base in Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan. The next day we flew to Bagram Airbase, just north of Kabul.

I must admit Afghanistan was not exactly what I expected. I anticipated cold temperatures, maybe even November snow on the surrounding mountains. However, the temperature was a comfortable 70 degrees and no snow was visible anywhere.

I also expected a different atmosphere than the one I encountered. I've served in the Army for just over ten years, but have not been to combat before.

While waiting for my flight out of Bagram I saw eight grizzly American Soldiers in the new digital uniforms. They all had three-week-old beards, mirrored sunglasses and wore no nametags, badges or patches. On closer inspection I saw their uniforms had only a camouflaged American flag on one shoulder and their blood type listed on the other. Each had at least two weapons, a pistol and a rifle with an assortment of high-tech gadgets attached.

They sat on a picnic table, quietly cleaning their weapons. No one approached them but I noticed plenty of people staring at them. Their appearance matched that of Special Forces Soldiers that I met later while working here.

These front line Soldiers contrasted sharply with another Soldier who arrived on the flight with me. She wore the desert camouflage



Photo by Mark Welliver

Most children, seemingly very enthusiastic and unrestrained in approaching U.S. military personnel, often give the thumbs-up sign, looking for a similar response from the military. The boy on the right is holding a pen, most likely given to him by an American.

uniform and had an Army green ruck sack slung on her back, just like the rest of us. What distinguished her, however, was the enormous fuzzy pink and purple blanket popping out of the top of her ruck. She was still sleepy from the long flight, and had obviously thought ahead to bring gear to make the deployment as comfortable as possible.

Part of me recoiled at what looked like a Soldier with a Disney-themed blanket, I must admit. However, after further thought, I realized that there are all sorts of missions here and they require all sorts of skill sets. During this deployment I've seen USACE park rangers serving as quality assurance representatives, economists running information technology

teams and combat engineers trying to figure out construction projects.

After a few missed flights in Bagram, I finally made it to Mazar-e-Sharif, in north, central Afghanistan. It's about a 10-hour drive northwest of Kabul, at the base of the Hindu Kush mountain range.

The climate here is a bit like Salt Lake City, Utah, with very dry conditions, fairly warm weather, and infrequent rain and snow.

The dust in the summer here is very fine, almost like talcum powder. Some call it moon dust. Ten inches of snow in January interrupted an otherwise very mild winter. The snow quickly melted and turned the roads into muddy messes. All in all, I can't complain about the weather.

Our Corps team at Mazar-e-Sharif includes just three people, including myself. I'm serving as the resident engineer, an Army captain stationed in Turkey is the project engineer, and a Department of Public Works employee from Fort Bragg is our quality assurance representative. This is what you call an "economy of force" effort.

We live on one section of the Afghan National Army base, inside a compound guarded and run by American Soldiers. The rest of the base is secured by ANA soldiers. Our living conditions here are very nice. Of course, this comes from a guy who's used to sleeping on the ground (or a cot, if we're lucky) during most deployments. I live in a 20 foot x 8 foot metal trailer, complete with a bed, wardrobe, telephone, internet connection, toilet, shower and sink. I even have an exit sign over the one and only door, just in case I'm confused in the event of an emergency.

We also have a small kitchen, a laundry room, and a day room with couches and Armed Forces Network



Photo by Matthew Little

television (and a finicky satellite dish). One advantage to being so far away from the flagpole is that we don't receive too many visitors, and therefore, don't do very many PowerPoint presentations. Not to let good equipment go unused, instead of doing briefings, we've converted our projector into a big screen television that's perfect for movie night or early morning football games (the Super Bowl started at 3:45 a.m. here).

There are also about 150 other American service members on the compound. Most of these serve as mentors, or "Embedded Tactical Trainers," to coach the leaders in the Afghan army. This team originally included just Army personnel, but recently has expanded to include Airmen, Sailors and Marines.

Our main project at Mazar-e-Sharif is an Afghan National Army base, designed for 4,000 soldiers. The district is building seven other bases like this across the country, which

Left: Maj. Mark Molitor (left) and Maj. Matthew Little examine formwork for a concrete pad. The pad will be used with an off-post well.



Above: Maj. Matthew Little, Capt. Don Nestor from the Los Angeles District and Maj. Mark Molitor from Honolulu District (left to right) ride around together in an all terrain vehicle conducting work. In Afghanistan, they refer to ATVs as "mules." Left: This donkey wash station is located inside Forward Operating Base at the Mazar-e-Sharif airfield. Donkeys and camels are common creatures in this part of Afghanistan, used to transport both supplies and people.

when completed will support approximately 35,000 ANA soldiers.

The ANA base is a small town including a power plant, waste water treatment, water distribution system, a fifty-bed hospital and the standard set of military buildings such as a dining facility, barracks, training building and maintenance garages. The maintenance garages are actually quite modern, better than the ones I've used in the United States. Each garage has an overhead crane and integrated oil water separators, equipment not present at my last unit. Lt. Col. Brad Eaton, also from the Kansas City District and just returned back to the states, oversaw a similar project and many others during his deployment to Kandahar.

The work on the ANA compound is currently at about 95 percent, with the remaining construction expected to only last another few months. Closing out the contract will be one of the challenges ahead for our team here. Many of the Afghan leaders look at the temporary contractor facilities and see great usable buildings, despite the potential safety problems and upkeep costs.

The other great challenge will be transitioning from construction to operations and maintenance. Most Afghan soldiers are not used to living in facilities with running water and electricity. Soldiers are not used to taking care of their buildings and leaders are not used to coordinating basic repairs. Twenty-five years of warfare have prevented most Afghans from attending high school or college. Few, if any, are prepared to operate the base power plant,

water treatment utilities or the water distribution center. The Corps contracted for a country-wide operations and maintenance contract to perform this work and to train people to run these facilities. Responsibilities will shift from the contractor to local Afghans over the next few years as they become more and more self sufficient.

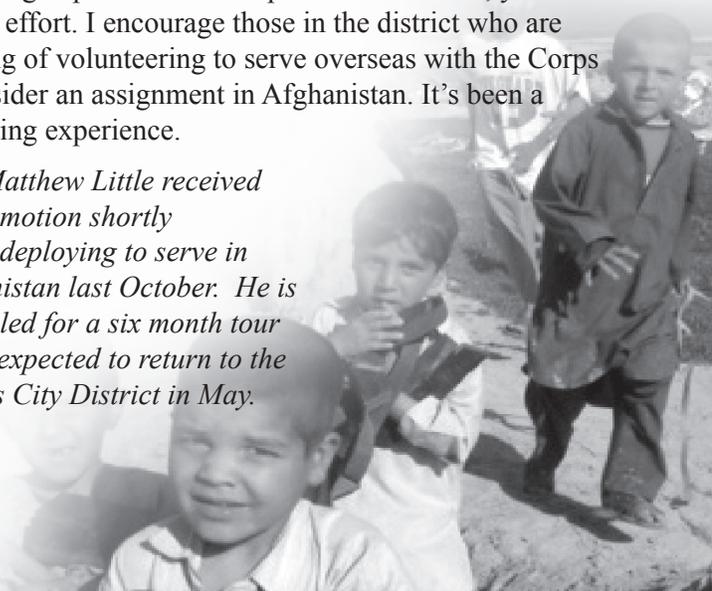
These ANA bases were a significant portion of AED's construction work during the last fiscal year. The district's fiscal year 2005 operating budget was \$525 million, which is large, considering we only have about 160 personnel here. In comparison, the Kansas City District accomplishes a similar level of program with about 850 personnel.

The Afghanistan Engineer District headquarters in Kabul includes the bulk of the staffing, including the project management team, the engineering division, and contracting department. The engineering division, especially, has a full work load and relies on "reach back" capability to engineers in the TAC in Virginia.

Work here will continue at about the same scale in the next few years but may shift away from the ANA program to other areas. Some facilities will likely be added to the ANA projects, perhaps including a laundry facility or gymnasium, but most work will likely be focused elsewhere. The environment remains dynamic, and although I'm not involved in strategic decisions or long term visions, the shift appears to be towards construction to support the Afghan National Police and counter-narcotic efforts. This will allow future Corps employees to travel to different construction projects to look at smaller sites that support the national and regional police forces.

Many hear about the effort in Iraq and the challenges faced by Corps and multi-national forces there. But the effort here in Afghanistan is no less important nor challenging. It has been a professionally and personally rewarding experience to be a part of this similar, yet lesser known effort. I encourage those in the district who are thinking of volunteering to serve overseas with the Corps to consider an assignment in Afghanistan. It's been a rewarding experience.

Maj. Matthew Little received his promotion shortly before deploying to serve in Afghanistan last October. He is scheduled for a six month tour and is expected to return to the Kansas City District in May.



TURKEY CREEK TUNNEL

Renovation Means Protection Continues



Workers show the scale of the Turkey Creek Tunnel under construction before its completion in 1918. The tunnel provides flood control for a large portion of the south Kansas City metropolitan area.

Photo provided

In 1918, Kansas City had big plans for development in its southeast quarter, but there was a problem. Turkey Creek, which ran through the city, roughly parallel to the state line, frequently flooded the area. To solve the problem, the city built a tunnel, moving a portion of the creek from its traditional bed and directing it into the Kansas River.

After many years, and two smaller repair projects in 1968 and 1975, experts from the governments of Kansas City, Mo., and Wyandotte County, Kan., determined it was time to renovate the tunnel to make certain it is ready for the future. The Kansas City District, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, is supervising the renovation.

Renovation of the Turkey Creek Tunnel will both stabilize the tunnel's liner, and provide a foundation for further repairs to the tunnel, according to Scott Vollink, a geotechnical engineer with the Kansas City District, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers.

The work consists of repairing extensive erosion of the rock along both sidewalls of the tunnel and replacement of the deteriorated liner and invert, or floor, he said.

Improvements to flood control on Turkey Creek are the result of a partnership between the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, the Unified Government of Wyandotte

County, Kan., and the government of Kansas City, Mo.

Business owners in the area have expressed concern that efforts to renovate the tunnel do not address

perceived structural problems throughout its length. Vollink said some of these concerns are unwarranted, and others are being addressed by ongoing work in the tunnel.

He said the current renovations addressed very significant problems when they began. Lack of maintenance on the 90-plus year old tunnel, with other factors including very turbulent flow conditions where the water enters the tunnel, left the tunnel in poor condition.

"The approach channel drops sharply to meet the tunnel mouth resulting in very high water velocities," he said. "Additionally, the channel meets the tunnel at an adverse skew making conditions for erosion even worse."

The erosion was severe. At the upstream entrance to the tunnel, water had washed away a large portion of the liner and cut cavities 30 feet deep on one side of the entry, and 40 feet deep on the other.

Working earlier this year, contractors repaired these

"...the channel meets the tunnel at an adverse skew, making conditions for erosion even worse."
-Scott Vollink

cavities, using “shotcrete,” a pneumatically applied concrete, to fill in the large voids. Vollink said repairs to the liner also include installing rock anchors to support the “crown” of the tunnel in areas where the erosion was encountered. These bolts will stabilize the tunnel liner, preventing any future collapse of the liner.

Additional work is required to repair the liner and the invert further downstream, and those repairs will likely be completed over the next several years depending on funding.

“It’s a horseshoe-shaped tunnel. What we call the ‘invert’ or floor of the tunnel is nearly flat, and the tunnel arches above it. It’s structurally a very strong design,” Vollink said.

He added that the liner’s invert, or floor, is largely washed away throughout its length. Vollink said this is of only small concern because the liner does not support the tunnel’s structure.

He said the tunnel gains its structural support from the surrounding rock, which is strong and shows no sign of collapse other than in the areas of the cavities, which have already been repaired.

The tunnel had an original height of about 28 feet, and a width of 24 feet. It is about 1,250 feet long. The tunnel has an estimated water capacity of 23,000 cubic feet per second.

Vollink said the tunnel was originally constructed using the “drill blast and muck” method through several ledges of shale and limestone. The crown and invert were both in limestone.

“We’re restoring the tunnel liner, and we’re putting in anchors and bolts to stabilize the rock,” he said. “The



Contractors working for the Kansas City District build a cofferdam upstream of the Turkey Creek Tunnel to control the creek’s flow during the tunnel’s renovation. Repairs include filling cavities in the tunnel’s damaged liner.

liner merely protects that rock. That’s why we’re repairing it.”

John Grothaus, chief of the Kansas City District’s planning section, said he understands concerns expressed by area business owners regarding the damage that would occur if the tunnel failed to function.

“I also know that’s extremely unlikely,” Grothaus said. “Nothing in the tunnel’s history has caused an obstruction or kept it from working.”

Vollink said cars have washed through the tunnel and been deposited in the Kansas River in some floods, without keeping the tunnel from draining as it is designed.

“What has led to some flooding is the railroad bridges,” Vollink said.

He said there are currently two railroad bridges that cross Turkey Creek before the stream reaches the tunnel.

“They tend to act as choke points where the stream gets out of its banks,” Vollink said.

He said when the stream leaves its banks, it attempts to flow through its historic channel, which is now occupied by numerous businesses and modern structures.

“Assuming it stays within its banks, it will flow through the tunnel,” Vollink said.

Water eroded these two cavities on the left and right of the Turkey Creek Tunnel. Following repairs, these cavities are now filled with “shotcrete.” They spanned more than 80 feet in width.



Pomona Lake

Best Kept Secret in Kansas

www.nwk.usace.army.mil/pomona/pomona_home.htm

This is the fifth 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.

Location of Dam: Near Pomona, Kan.
Stream/River: 110 Mile Creek
Miles Above Mouth of River: 8.3
Storage Date: October 18, 1963
Total Acreage: 10,500 acres
Lake Size: 4,000 Acres
Dam Length: 7,750 ft.
Yearly Visitation: 581,091

Story Diana McCoy



Photo by Julie Mueller

Volunteers come out during National Public Lands Day to lay mulch on the nature trail. This event is held every year in September to build trails and bridges and remove trash and invasive plants.

Decades ago, hundreds of settlers passed by the quiet, little stream using the Santa Fe Trail as their highway to the west. Just how many of them actually stopped at 110-Mile Creek is unknown, but it's a part of the heritage that makes up Pomona Lake.

David Green, operations manager for the lake, has the responsibility of keeping the project running and protecting the hundreds of archeological sites, most of which are unregistered.

"The Santa Fe Trail is nearly five miles north of the project, so the development of this area is most likely due to that traffic," Green said. "A lot of the surrounding cities didn't get started until around 1869."

The dam at Pomona Lake was authorized as part of the Flood Control Act of 1944, and after heavy flooding of the Ottawa and Osawatomie areas up and down the Marais des Cygnes River in 1951, the Flood Control Act of 1954 was the primary act which got construction on the dam started.

"Our four purposes are flood control, water quality, recreation and fish and wildlife conservation," Green said. "And what really makes Pomona special is the diversity of the resources we deal with. We're a multi-purpose lake."

Green said a big part of their program is shoreline management, with six subdivisions and 76 private docks on the lake. Staff at Pomona also handles all of the wildlife management on the project, whereas other projects will let the state parks handle that arena.

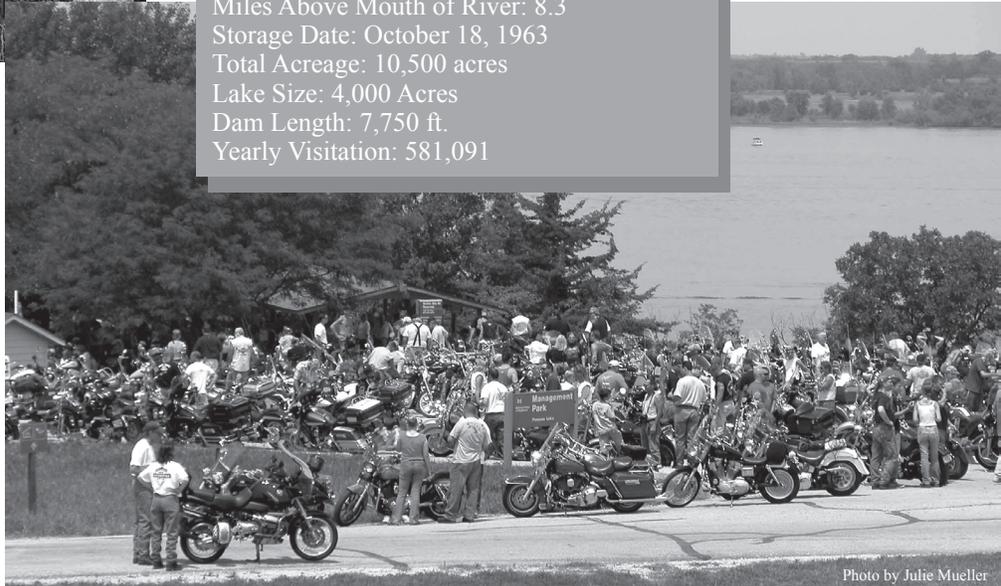


Photo by Julie Mueller

The Northeast Kansas Motorcyclists sponsored a ride for the Muscular Dystrophy Association. The two-hour ride from Topeka to Pomona Lake and back drew nearly 600 people riding on 382 motorcycles and raised \$45,000 for the Muscular Dystrophy Association.

"We're really tied in with Osage County—with Melvern Lake and Pomona Lake being only one of two counties in the whole nation with two federal reservoirs contained within its county boundaries," Green said.

Being so close to Melvern Lake, Pomona still sees its fair share of visitors. The biggest recreational draw to Pomona is the camping.

"We have two group-camp areas," Green said. "In fact, they're basically booked already for this summer all the way through. Folks wanting to camp here really have to plan ahead of time."

Late-comers looking for camping sites during the spring and summer holidays are often turned away due to the early birds who upstage them.

Green said Pomona is a fairly good fishing lake, offering good access for bank fisherman, which is one thing most district lakes can't offer, making it nice for those without boats.

Other recreational opportunities include a Frisbee™

Wilson Lake

The clearest lake in Kansas

www.nwk.usace.army.mil/wilson/wilson_home.htm

Location of Dam: Near Wilson, Kan.
Stream/River: Saline River
Miles: Above Mouth of River: 153.9
Storage Date: December 29, 1964
Total Acreage: 21,770 Acres
Lake Size: 9,000 Acres
Dam Length: 5,600 ft.
Yearly Visitation: 250,000

Story by Diana McCoy

This is the sixth 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.

Clear, blue water. Countless natural sand beaches. Wide-open spaces. These reasons alone are what draw thousands of visitors every year to Wilson Lake in north central Kansas.

Dan Hays, a natural resource manager at Wilson Lake gets to enjoy the beauty of the area daily.

"Our shoreline is natural sand throughout the entire lake, and we're, by far, the clearest lake in Kansas," Hays said. "Many folks are quite taken aback by the wide-open views and the crystal clear water."

The wide-open views can be credited to the limited number of trees and the unlimited amount of grassland the project has to offer. With uncultivated ground, the lake has little silt and sediment loading, giving the water its "clear" appearance.

"Wind is another thing we have here in abundance," Hays said. "Because of it, hang gliding was quite popular back in the '80s, and then wind surfing, but now it's flying



Photo by Mike Watkins

Stone fenceposts made of limestone can be found across the project. They attract visitors from across the county who like to photograph them and study the structure of the rock.

remote controlled airplanes."

Lucas Park at Wilson ranks in the top five of scale model glider airplane parks, and it has seen visitors from every state in the U.S., including many from abroad.

"Visitors from Canada are not uncommon," Hays said, "and I've been told people from as far away as Japan have flown in just to fly their models."

When asked about other recreational uses, Hays said a fairly substantial amount of visitors come to hunt pheasants or study the post rock found across the project.

"Back when the settlers came to this area, they realized there was a lack of trees, and in order to build, they quarried the limestone to build their houses, fence posts and other structures," Hays said. "It was very labor-intensive to quarry the stone, and I think it shows the settlers' ingenuity and determination."

Hays said a number of people come from out of state just to take photos and study the structure of the rocks which stand as a testament to the early settlers' back-breaking labor.

"Fishing is another big draw to Wilson," Hays said. "We are the state record holder of a 52-pound striped bass, which is here in abundance along with walleye."

Recreation isn't the only draw to Wilson Lake. Every year, several events are held on or around the project, such as an annual Earth Day, which kicks off the recreation season at Wilson in April.

Earth Day is a co-hosted event with the Kansas Department of Wildlife and Parks, and it's an opportunity for fifth grade children to come out and learn about various portions of the lake and also the careers of the staff.

Costing \$20 million when it was completed in 1964, Wilson Lake Dam has saved \$1.4 billion in property losses by preventing downstream flood damages to farmlands and developed areas.

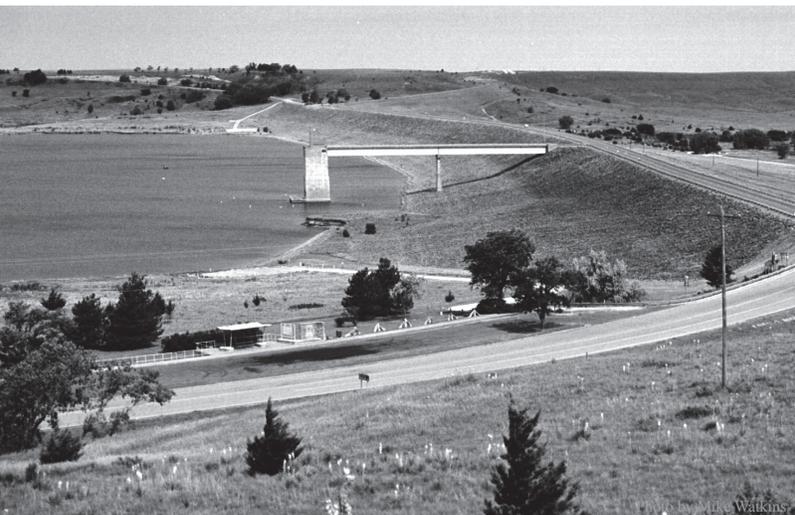


Photo by Mike Watkins

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POMONA LAKE

continued from page 12

golf course, a nature trail and an all-terrain vehicular access area, which is leased to the Kansas ATV Association. Green said they do a good job managing the area and keeping its users safety-conscious.

"We also have Pomona Lake Ski Club on our lake, and they hold a ski show on the holidays," Green said of the nationally known organization who has been cited as having one of the best children's water skiing programs in the U.S.

Another unique fact about Pomona—it is the only project in the district having what they call "life jacket loaner boards," which are bulletin-type boards holding life jackets visitors can borrow in case they find themselves short.

Annual events at the project include an annual Fourth of July fireworks show with thousands in attendance, and an open house where the public is given the opportunity to come in and ask questions or volunteer suggestions.

A children's fishing derby is held at the lake every year, too, which gives local volunteers the chance to get involved with the community.

"We usually get about 20 to 25 kids, usually campers, between the ages of five and 12," Green said. "We have a few volunteers who really like to get involved and will search all year for prizes like tackle boxes, rods and reels, life jackets and fishing lures to give away to participants. We've never had a child leave without a prize."

Green said the most popular annual event at Pomona is National Public Lands Day, the nation's largest, hands-on volunteer effort to improve and enhance U.S. public lands.

"We get a variety of volunteers out here who want to help improve the project," Green said. "And we try to pick a project every year instead of having people pick up trash, because they like to see results and feel like they really made a contribution."

With all the work to be done at Pomona, handling the agricultural leasing and shoreline and natural resource management, the staff still finds the time to help elsewhere. Five

of them deployed to other areas within the Corps in 2005.

"We've got a very good staff here that work very hard and are very proud of the project they work at," Green said. "We get along, and we work side-by-side with each other."

WILSON LAKE

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"We have water safety education presented by one of our park rangers, and it's a one-day event with nearly 300 school kids in attendance," Hays said.

The Kansas City Barbeque Association hosts a competition every year on Father's Day, with a substantial amount of prize money awarded for the best-tasting course.

A fireworks display is also held every Fourth of July at a subdivision on the east side of the lake, and Hays said it is probably the largest display within 30 miles.

"The lake association here is very active, and they hold an annual fundraiser on the water and call it a poker run," Hays said. "Whoever wants to participate has to pay a registration fee, and they pay based on however many poker hands they want. Participants have to travel by boat to different parts of the lake to draw their cards and then to a final location to show their cards."

Hays estimates last year there was a total of 500 participants with 150 boats on the water, and funds raised are used to promote Wilson Lake and the surrounding area.

An After Harvest-Czech Fest is another annual event held at nearby Wilson, the town for which the lake was named. Many visitors to the festival also visit the lake or even camp there as an alternative to staying in a hotel.

"Our final annual event is held in the fall," Hays said. "We work with the state parks to host an environmental scholastic challenge for high school students who compete in four events, two of which are tests set up at college graduate level, so it's very difficult."

Hays said the recreational uses for Wilson Lake and the annual events held there are a big draw to the area, which depends on yearly visitation

at the lake to pump up the local economy. Thanks to a comprehensive plan for flood control on the Missouri River, Wilson Lake has saved \$1.4 million in property losses by preventing downstream flood damages to farmland and developed areas.

When it was completed in 1964, Wilson Lake was meant for flood control, water quality and wildlife management. Now, recreation and natural resource management are a large part of the program, which takes up the time of the full-time staff of seven.

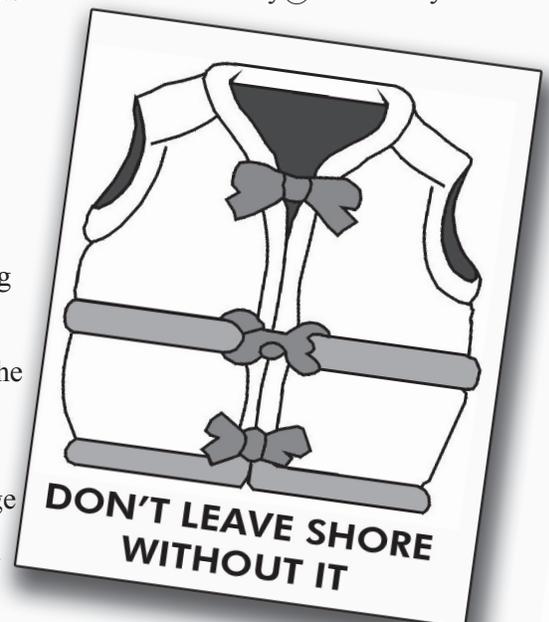
"Between the seven of us, we're pretty busy managing our 21,770 acres of land and water," Hays said. "And that's the way we like it."

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.



Meet Vincent Marsh



Vincent Marsh, new chief of Contracting, says hello to the Kansas City District and shares his background as well as his vision for the district.

I join the Kansas City District from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Huntsville Center, and I'd like to share a bit about my background, which involves contracting in both the military and civilian realm.

My contracting career began in 1982 when I joined the Air Force and toured in Texas and Germany. Then, I worked in Europe as a procurement analyst for an Army headquarters element providing a "contingency contracting" perspective for operations such as Bosnia and Kosovo. Later, I moved to Denver, Colo., and worked for Housing and Urban Development. This experience provided me an opportunity to work with city government and understand some of the issues that go on behind the scenes. After that, I joined the TRICARE team and administered health care contracts—some very complex contracting vehicles. This gave me a real appreciation of cost and price analysts. I was rewarded with another assignment to Germany just prior to assuming my position in Huntsville.

During my career, I've touched just about every type of contracting vehicle and procured or administered a variety of goods, services and construction throughout the world.

Being selected as chief of Contracting for the Kansas City District is the highlight of my career. It affords me the opportunity to apply the skills and knowledge that I've gathered during my career and make a difference. Our team of contracting professionals is dedicated to your mission.

My vision is to provide you a responsive and interactive force that focuses on how to achieve the desired end result. Follow-through and accountability is our key to meeting timelines and customer expectations. Quality improvement and customer care shall be my primary focus. This will be accomplished through the standardization of contracting processes and providing the

customer what they need.

My goal is for Contracting to exemplify the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers motto of "One Team: Relevant, Ready, Responsive and Reliable. Proudly serving the Armed Forces and the Nation now and in the future." I'm excited to be a part of this team and look forward to the future success of Contracting.

"Being selected as chief of Contracting for the Kansas City District is the highlight of my career."

-Vincent Marsh

Kansas City Corporate Challenge...

... promoting employee fitness and recreation within the Kansas City business community



The Kansas City District U.S. Army Corps of Engineers is set to participate in the first, and one of the largest, corporate games in the country, beginning in May and running throughout the month of June.

The district has been involved with Kansas City Corporate Challenge since 1990, which attracts more than 20,000 participants and 152 companies from the Kansas City metropolitan area every year since its inception in 1980.

"It's a great way to meet people outside of your division and network with people outside of the Corps while improving your personal fitness," said Mike Watkins, a wildlife biologist with the district who has been involved with Corporate Challenge since the beginning.

Watkins has seen the district go all the way from 15th place to first place in its division. In 2005, the district placed fourth, with only 161 participants. Not everyone in the district is eligible to participate. The address of an eligible participant's office must fall inside the Kansas City metropolitan area.

"If you're eligible to participate and you want to get involved, you have to get online and sign an electronic waiver," said Carol Adams, a program analyst. "You can sign the electronic waiver and sign up for events until March 22."

Adams said one of the best things about Corporate Challenge is it offers a diverse range of sporting activities from darts, horseshoes and fishing to softball, volleyball, swimming and track.

"They even have a non-competitive walk, which gives everyone a reason to get involved," Adams said.

To sign the electronic waiver and access the sign up list for events, visit the intranet, click on the KCCC logo under the "What's New" section and click on the "KCCC, Sign-up, Schedule and Results" link. This will take you to Challenge Manager, where participants can create a profile using the Kansas City District's password of "usace1."

"Because of my participation, I have gotten to know people from different division within the district that I otherwise would not have met," Watkins said. "Besides being a great fitness activity, I think Corporate Challenge makes the district more effective and efficient because of the networking of employees."

For more information about KCCC, visit their website at <http://kccorporatechallenge.com>, or call Mike Watkins at (816) 983-3651 or Carol Adams at (816) 983-3624.



Photos by Mike Watkins

Carol Adams prepares to dive into the pool for the Women's 200 Yard Freestyle event. She placed second for her age group and scored 18 meet points out of the total of 489 points which placed the Corps in fourth place in its division in 2005.



Amia Schreiner, a Corps executive board member for the 2005 Kansas City Corporate Challenge gets a push-start during the bike time trail event at the Kansas Speedway. Schreiner, competing in six events, won the Golden Studette Award.