

HEARTLAND ENGINEER



MAY 2006

www.nwk.usace.army.mil/pa/HeartlandEngineer.htm



Corps scores "W"
in hurricane relief

FEATURES



At any one time, the Kansas City District has between 10 and 15 personnel deployed to Iraq and Afghanistan. Ted Falcon, a GIS specialist, is currently on his third deployment and is scheduled to return in October. Above, Falcon participates in M-16 familiarization training held March 20 in Gulf Region Division. He was one of 20 civilians to participate. *(Photo provided)*

RISKY BUSINESS _____ 6

Instructors from Fulton Communications came to Kansas City March 28-30 and taught a week-long risk communications class to a group of district employees.

THE MIGHTY CORPS _____ 8

During a deployment for hurricane duty, Lisa Rabbe assisted with debris removal and right of way missions in Gautier, Miss. As a bonus, she coordinated truck movements during a presidential visit and met President George W. Bush.

FROM START TO FINISH _____ 10

A partnership among the Kansas City District, the Kansas Department of Transportation, Union Pacific Railroad and the local government of Marysville, Kan., has led to the completion of a major restructuring of Marysville's railroad and levee systems. Officials say the changes will save money and revitalize a portion of rural eastern Kansas.

18 LAKES _____ 12

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

INSIDE THE HEARTLAND

NEWSWATCH

Newsbriefs from around the District and around the Corps.



PEOPLEPOWER

Bill McFarland and Glenn Tisdale, of the Richard Bolling Federal Building, enjoy building model airplanes from the World War II era.



LASTWORD

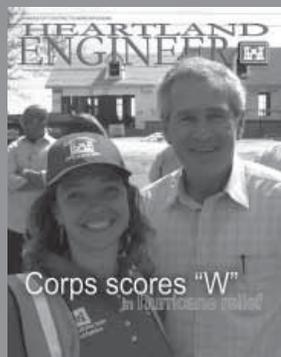
Diana McCoy searches for answers about the road ahead as she faces another of 29 years in the work field.



4

5

15



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ON THE COVER:

Lisa Rabbe worked with presidential staff and special agents to ensure the route was clear of trucks and equipment in Gautier, Miss., where President George W. Bush met with homeowners. President Bush expressed his appreciation for the hard work the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers is accomplishing in Mississippi. *(Photo provided)*



This year I was fortunate to be selected as the Chairman for the Public Employees Recognition Day Committee and host it's annual awards ceremony held here in Kansas City, May 2. I was additionally fortunate to be able to recognize three of Kansas City District's own as recipients of awards during that ceremony. Awards and awards ceremonies are important on a number of levels. First the obvious, they provide the time and forum to publicly recognize outstanding performance or service by truly outstanding individuals. The awardees and nominees are blessed because someone—a peer or supervisor—had to take the time to write up the recommendation. A team gave of their time to evaluate their nomination and put together an appropriate ceremony. And their friends, families, and peers pay them tribute by putting aside the time to witness their big day. And every one of them, the peer, the supervisor, the team, the family and the friends, wouldn't have it any other way. I would like to use my column this month to first congratulate again William Zaner, who received the Federal Distinguished Lifetime Achievement Award, Bunnie Watkins, who received the Distinguished Technical Service Award, and William C. Allen, Jr., who received the Distinguished Trade/Craft Service Award. I would also like to extend my appreciation to the entire district for all that you do.

From top to bottom: Bill Zaner, Bunnie Watkins, William Allen
 Photos provided

GSA ISSUES GUIDANCE ON "EARLY BIRD" CONFERENCE REGISTRATIONS

The General Services Administration published guidance April 26 clarifying the rules governing how employees are reimbursed for "early bird" conference registration fees, in a push to eliminate a perceived reluctance to take advantage of such offers.

According to the *Federal Register* notice, many federal employees do not take advantage of early reduced conference registration fees because they believe they cannot obtain reimbursement until the event is over and they file a claim.

The notice stated that agencies may authorize employees to charge "early bird" registration fees to government-sponsored travel cards and claim reimbursement as soon as attendance at the conference is approved.

The amendment to the Federal Travel Regulation, which took effect April 26, lets advance payments of discounted conference fees to be treated as an allowable travel advance.

The notice also addressed situations when an employee fails to attend a conference for which he or she already has been reimbursed.

Under the new rule, if an employee fails to attend a pre-paid conference for reasons deemed inexcusable by the agency, and is unable to obtain a refund, the employee must repay the agency for the conference registration fee.

But if the employee was unable to attend the event because of an agency decision or for reasons beyond his or her control, such as a sickness or an emergency, and a refund is not available, the agency must absorb the costs.

In February, Sen. Tom Coburn, R-Okla., chairman of the Senate Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs Subcommittee on Federal Financial Management, Government Information and International Security, criticized spending on agency work-related trips and underwriting events. He called a 70 percent increase in such expenses at 14 agencies from fiscal 2000 to fiscal 2005 "astounding."

A closer examination of the data revealed that agencies providing conference spending totals to Coburn's office spent less in fiscal 2005 than in the previous year, however.

Coburn's office did not respond to a request for comment.

GSA also published a Federal Travel Regulation amendment clarifying existing

authority under the 1973 Rehabilitation Act, allowing agencies to reimburse employees with special needs for travel expenses such as the services of an attendant or the renting of a wheelchair while on official trips.

The reimbursement category now qualifies as a "miscellaneous expense item."—*Daniel Pulliam, Govexec.com.*

LAWMAKERS SEEK TO PROTECT 2,000 ARMY CORPS JOBS FROM CONTRACTORS

Replaying a battle fought last year, unions and some legislators are supporting a bill that would prevent the Army Corps of Engineers from outsourcing 2,000 jobs involving work on nearly 200 dams across the country.

The 2006 Federal Locks and Lock and Dam Facilities Act, introduced last week by Reps. Lane Evans, D-Ill., and Ray LaHood, R-Ill., would define as "inherently governmental" the operation and maintenance of locks and dams. That designation would prevent the Corps from conducting a public-private job competition under the rules of the Office of Management and Budget's Circular A-76.

In a letter soliciting support, Evans and LaHood described the nation's inland and intra-coastal waterways -- and the locks and dams that control movement along them -- as critical components of the transportation infrastructure.

"These locks and dams are operated and maintained by skilled federal employees who, each day, exercise their discretion on behalf of the U.S. government," the co-sponsors wrote.

The lock and dam competition, if allowed to go forward, would be the second-largest public-private competition completed under the present A-76 rules, after a 2,300-position contest at the Federal Aviation Administration last year that was won by a contractor.

For the purposes of public-private competition, the Corps has designated lockmasters, the supervisors at some lock and dam facilities, as performing work that is inherently governmental, while the jobs of the operators and mechanics under them are classified as commercial and thus eligible for privatization.

But a coalition of 14 defense unions is arguing that all employees working on the waterways perform inherently governmental work. Not all lock and dam facilities have lockmasters, the coalition says, and most of those that do are in operation around the clock, with the lockmaster present during limited hours. Since operators and mechanics also make locking decisions and direct lock traffic,

they too perform inherently governmental work, the unions have said.

"If operators and mechanics weren't performing the same functions as lockmasters, exercising the same discretion and enforcing the same laws, then the nation's locks literally could not function," the coalition argued in a letter to legislators.

Led by the International Federation of Professional and Technical Engineers and the American Federation of Government Employees, the coalition on April 29 urged legislators to support the Evans-LaHood legislation to permanently remove the lock and dam operations and maintenance positions from competition.

They also encouraged the Energy and Water Appropriations Subcommittee to deny the Corps funding necessary to move forward in the job competition process.

Last year legislators stripped the Corps of \$2 million in funding for its competitive sourcing efforts, leaving behind sufficient funds to continue work on ongoing competitions but not to announce a new lock and dam competition as originally planned, according to Ray Navidi, competitive sourcing program manager for the Corps.

He could not comment on pending legislation, nor on preliminary planning the Corps has done that lays the groundwork for a study on competing the work.

"Certainly, if funding is available, then by all means we're going to revisit that," Navidi said of the planning work already complete. Questioned as to what alternatives the Corps might pursue if Congress blocked the study, Navidi said there is close coordination with authorities within the Army and the larger Defense Department, as well as OMB, and that he would not rule out other kinds of efficiency studies.

In one example of such a study, the Corps has been selected for a Defense Department pilot program to develop its logistics management function into a "high performing organization," said George Halford, an Army Corps spokesman. That essentially entails running just the public side of a public-private competition, in which employees develop a business case to make the work in question more efficient.

Typically, when an A-76 competition is won by the in-house team, the bid presented as the employees' "most efficient organization" includes some staffing reductions. With about 80 percent of competitions being decided in favor of in-house teams over the last three years, OMB has touted the increased efficiency of reorganized in-house performance as a significant benefit of the competitive sourcing process.—*Jenny Mandel, GovExec.com.*



Bill McFarland's World War II model airplanes line the top of the cabinet in his cubicle. The planes are all to the same scale, showing their relative sizes in real life. Story and photos by Eric Craner

Glenn Tisdale displays the fine detail on his model of the early World War II fighter called the Brewster Buffalo. He built the plane's instrumental panel from scratch to achieve maximum detail.

On one flight line, the planes look as though they're ready to be fueled, gleaming in tones of silver, gray or green, with the insignia of the former Army Air Corps, defunct since 1948.

On the other, the aircraft gleam in blue, gray, green and yellow and span the decades from the 1930s to today.

None of these planes can fly, as they are models that adorn "flight lines" above the storage spaces of engineers Bill McFarland and Glenn Tisdale where they work in the Richard Bolling Federal building.

McFarland focused his modeling efforts on the aircraft used by the Army Air Corps before the creation of the modern Air Force in 1948. His collection represents the aircraft used in the European and Pacific theaters during World War II. It includes fighter planes, the P-40 Warhawk, P-38 Lightning, the P-47 Thunderbolt, and P-51 Mustang; tactical bombers such as the B-24, B-26 and B-25; and strategic bombers, the B-17 Flying Fortress and the B-29 Superfortress.

"I sort of consider it a tribute to the men and women who built and flew these planes and depended on them for their missions and their lives during World War II," McFarland said.

He said he started building models as a child, in part because his older brother built model cars.

"I was always more interested in airplanes," he said. "Working for a military organization, it just seemed to make sense, and I've always had a passion for flying."

McFarland said he has never flown in a World War II-vintage aircraft.

"I've been kicking myself for a long time, because I had the chance to fly in a P-51 and didn't take it. It's something I'll do some day," he said.

McFarland's model collection is all 1/48 scale, allowing a comparison between the different sizes of

airplanes, especially the large difference between bombers and fighter aircraft.

"I started with the bombers. The B-25 was the plane Jimmy Doolittle and his raiders flew off the deck of the USS Hornet," he said. "When I finished the bombers, I was running out of room and started on the fighters."

McFarland said he gave away his last two models, a C-47 transport plane and a Navy Corsair. He said life events caused him to put modeling on hold.

"I should have built the C-47—the military version of the famous Douglas DC-3 transport plane," McFarland said. "I saw some film of the D-Day invasion, and they were everywhere."

Tisdale's collection spans a longer time frame, pre-dating World War II, and extending into the modern era. It includes pre-war biplane fighters.

Although much of Tisdale's collection focuses on vintage aircraft from before World War II and during that conflict, he also has the Marine CH-47 Chinook helicopter among his display of warbirds.

Tisdale models with the goal of incredible detail and historical accuracy, frequently taking months to

PEOPLEPOWER

People Power is a monthly column designed to highlight the outstanding accomplishments or human interests 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.ohara@usace.army.mil

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Sandy Martinez points out the negative emotions that can influence members of the public with whom the Corps may interact. Martinez said many members of the public are driven by emotions, agendas and misperceptions of risk.

Story and photos by Eric Cramer



Course provides Corps employees with the tools for risk communications

Sometimes, it seems inevitable that the day will come to any given project – unhappy local citizens will call the local news media making allegations or expressing concerns, or show up at public meetings making accusations and airing worries, and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineer experts at the project will have to respond.

Dealing with that response, planning for it and then communicating, was the goal for 24 students from the Kansas City District who attended the course “Introductory Risk Communication: Building Skills for Interacting with Stakeholders,” March 28-30 at the Richard Bolling Federal Building in Kansas City.

Keith Fulton and Sandy Martinez, the husband-and-wife instructing team from Fulton Communications, were instructors for the training. Fulton said risk communications, crisis communications, are increasingly important in and outside the government.

“We’re here to give you the hands-on practical tools to help you do your job,” Fulton said.

The course is interactive, with Martinez and Fulton providing numerous examples of risk communications in the real world and asking students, or teams of students, to respond to the situation. It emphasizes role playing and giving students a chance to practice the techniques they learn in the class.

“I think every project manager should take the course,” said Cathi Sanders, a lawyer in the district’s Office of Counsel. “It’s a good class

“The non-verbals are important. It’s not what you say as much as it is how you say it, and non-verbals are a big part of that.”

Environmental Division project manager - Robin Wankum

for anyone who has to present issues to the public. It teaches some critical skills, like how to deal with people who are angry or frightened.”

Empathy, learning to understand where people are coming from and why, was a key tenet of Fulton and Martinez’s instruction.

“There are three basic areas people come from,” Fulton said. “They can have genuine negative emotions such as anger and fear, they can have agendas such as personal, political, economic or social, or they can have misperception of risk largely due to lack of knowledge of the science, data and facts.”

Martinez said it is important to know which of these three areas is the source a question or statement because the communications skills required are different for each of the three.

“Some people have agendas, and you can recognize that if you listen and watch closely while they are speaking. Other people are just angry or scared and you have to understand their concerns to communicate with them effectively,” Martinez said.

Students all learn that non-verbal communications, how we communicate our emotional state is a critical part of this field. This includes body language, including space, voice (how things are said), as well as dress and barriers. Students were taught how to tune up both their non-verbal self awareness and non verbal observation skills.

“The non-verbals are important. It’s not what you say as much as it is how you say it, and non-verbals are a big part of that,” Robin Wankum, a project manager in the Environmental Division said.

Debra Snodgrass, an environmental health scientist with the Environmental Division, said the course was very “real world” in its approach.

“They are great communicators and they were able to bring up examples that relate to our projects,” Snodgrass said. “I was extremely impressed. They also used humor to make points, and humor always captures attention and makes a course more enjoyable.”

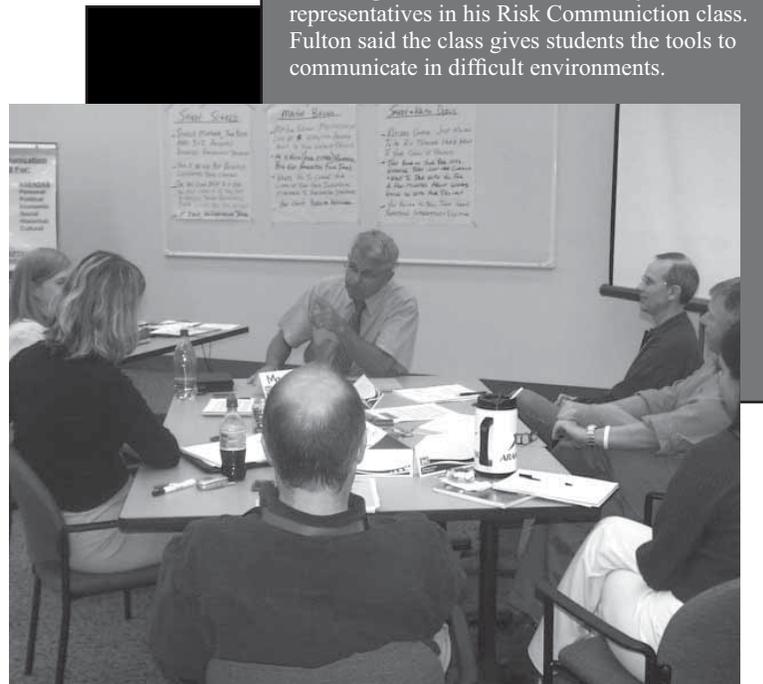
Brad Eaton, a project manager with the Environmental Division, said the course is important for those dealing with the public.

“The key thing I took away from the course was that you have to be honest about what you’re going to present, and be aware of how listeners perceive what you say,” he said. “With as much public interaction as we have in the Corps, it’s a valuable course. Whether we like it or not, we’re all the face of the Corps.”



Above, Mary Lyle and Garth Anderson, work on a drill during a portion of the risk communication class. The class encourages role-playing and interaction as means of teaching communication skills.

Portraying a local mayor with an agenda, Keith Fulton (center with light shirt) conducts a meeting with a team of Kansas City District representatives in his Risk Communication class. Fulton said the class gives students the tools to communicate in difficult environments.



The mighty

Corps of Engineers

Story by Diana McCoy



Lisa Rabbe deployed in response to the Hurricane Katrina cleanup effort. Rabbe was at this site for 13 hours working to restore power and utilities. *Photo provided*

Hard work turned into a rewarding experience for one environmental resource specialist with the Kansas City District, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers when she deployed in response to Task Force Hope.

Lisa Rabbe, who has worked for the Corps for 11 years, deployed for 60 days to Gautier, Miss.

“I served as a quality assurance supervisor, and my first job was to coordinate and motivate my quality assurance specialists and contractors to get the job done—always keeping the homeowner’s concerns in mind,” Rabbe said.

During her deployment, Rabbe and her team completed about 550 rights of entry, which included 170 demolitions. She also finished the right of way missions for the city, which amounted to 90,000 cubic yards of debris.

“When I first arrived to Gautier, the devastation was still very obvious along the coast line,” Rabbe said. “There were windblown items in the trees, and there was debris and litter all along the roads and in the yards.”

Rabbe said the experience was one she’ll never forget—particularly the day she helped an elderly man and his family who were affected by the storm.

“His name was Charles White, and he and his family had lived in a 1970s mobile home which had been destroyed during Hurricane Katrina,” Rabbe said. “They were housed in some temporary trailers furnished by the Federal Emergency Management Agency, which were located near the mobile home.”

The task ahead of Rabbe was considered a huge one. Her team’s mission was to move the FEMA trailers, demolish the mobile home, move the FEMA trailers back to where they were and then get the utilities going again.

“My quality assurance team and the contractor were instrumental in coordinating the activities that would take place and relaying the information to Mr. White,” Rabbe

said. “He didn’t understand the process we had to go through with FEMA to get his property taken care of, and it was a little difficult to explain, but we made everything work in the end.”

After all the arrangements had been made and all the paperwork had been filled out, the day had come to actually set “boots on ground” and get the work done. This was the day Rabbe was especially touched.

“Mr. White stood there talking to me when the crew came in with their equipment and started tearing down the old home,” Rabbe said. “I really felt for him, so I put my arm around him and told him he didn’t have to watch if he didn’t want to.”

But that wasn’t the case, as Rabbe was about to find out.

“He told me every time the claw came down to take another ‘bite,’ it was like watching a little piece of 20 years get picked up and put in a dump truck,” she said. “I remember getting a lump in my throat and my eyes watering, like I was about to cry right in front of him. Then



Lisa Rabbe worked with presidential staff and special agents to ensure the President's route was clear of trucks and equipment in Gautier, Miss., where President Bush met with the homeowners of properties crews worked on. *Photo provided*



Lisa Rabbe, Charles White and Danny Johnston (left to right) watch as the demolition of White's 1970s mobile home takes place. The complete project took 13 hours. *Photo provided*

he said with a smile, 'God brings you into the world with nothing, and He will take you out with nothing. Those are really just material possessions, so I've been blessed. At least I didn't lose any of my family—now I just couldn't take that.'"

Rabbe said it was then she realized how blessed she was and the purpose to her being deployed to Mississippi.

"I was really touched by that by that conversation," Rabbe said. "For someone who lost nearly everything, it really just put things into perspective for me."

Rabbe was happy to report, in spite of the sizeable project, everyone on her team, including the contractors,

took on the attitude of "get it done today," and 13 hours after the start, the demolition was complete. Mr. White and his family were back in the FEMA trailers with their water, sewer and phone re-installed.

Not everything during Rabbe's deployment was hard work. She also acted as the coordinator for when President Bush came to visit the area. Her job was to ensure the president's route was clear of debris removal trucks and equipment during one of his visits to Mississippi.

"It was really quite a big deal," Rabbe said. "People knew the president was coming—they just didn't know when or exactly what

area he was coming to."

Rabbe said it was tricky keeping the president's route a secret because people wanted to know the "whys" of everything—such as: Why couldn't they work in a particular area at a certain time? Why couldn't they keep their trucks parked there? Why did they have to go the long way instead of using the short way? After a while, Rabbe said people started to figure it out, and street corners were lined with residents wanting to see the motorcade. In the end everything went as planned.

The best compliment for Rabbe was when President Bush saw her in her red emergency management shirt and said "Ah, the mighty Corps of Engineers" and put his arm behind her to pose for a few photos.

"It all happened so fast," she laughed. Flash was going off everywhere. It was very exciting."



Two representatives from the Union Pacific hold the ribbon for Deb Miller, secretary of Transportation. Second from the left to second from the right: Richard Davidson, chairman of the UP, Harold Stone representative from Sen. Pat Roberts office and Lou Edwards, mayor of Marysville, Miller, Representative Jerry Moran and Lt. Col. Kelly Butler applaud the cutting.

Story and photos by Diana McCoy

From start to finish

One Kansas City District engineer says farwell to project

More than 225 people gathered under a bridge April 10, ready to celebrate an event which signified opportunity—to transform their economy, improve their safety and change their style of living.

The event: a ribbon cutting ceremony to signal the completion of the Big Blue River Marysville Levee and Railroad Relocation Project.

“The project began for the Corps in October of 1999 when the Kansas Department of Transportation came to us for help,” said Scott Vollink, Kansas City District project manager. “It was fully funded by KDOT. They had a big project which included grade separation, relocation of mainline rail tracks and construction of a levee. They did not have much experience with design and construction of levees, so they asked us to be responsible for all aspects of the levee component, including design and construction.”

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The venture, vital to the city of Marysville in northeastern Kansas, involved a partnership among KDOT, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, the city of Marysville and the Union Pacific Railroad and solves problems which have plagued the city since the 1870s.

Problems

The first major problem which plagued the city of Marysville was constant traffic from the railroad. With an average of 70 trains passing through the city and blocking traffic for nearly eight hours each day, the railroad posed a major threat to the safety of the city.

“This project was important to the community’s safety in being able to get a fire truck or ambulance from one part of town to the other,” Vollink said. “People would often try to ‘beat’ the trains—sometimes causing fatal accidents, and they would plan their day around the train schedule.”

The main use of the railroad, which has run been in Marysville for 130 years, is to haul coal from Wyoming's Powder River Basin to fuel electric-generating plants across the United States.

The danger of flooding was another threat the city faced without the project. Because one third of Marysville sits in the floodplain of the Big Blue River, the city has observed 16 damaging floods during a period of 65 years, beginning with a flood of record on June 10, 1941.

Benefits

"This project is a showcase for two reasons," said Lt. Col. Kelly Butler, deputy district commander for the Corps. "The first reason is it's a testament to the tenacity and force of will of the members of this strong community. For many decades, the people here knew the status quo was really unacceptable and pushed for a solution to the traffic and flooding problems."

Butler said the second reason was because of the exceptional partnership and cooperation among the public and private entities.

The completion of the project marks new beginnings for the city.

"Our slogan should be 'building a new friendly Marysville, located on two main highways and a mainline railroad,'" said Louis Edwards, mayor of Marysville. "We need to rev up our engines and become a trade center, agricultural products center and manufacturing center."

The city will also save money. Without the construction of the levee, residents had to pay for flood insurance policies with a total value of about \$1.5 million.

The scope of the project involved constructing two overpasses, relocating the railroad to the outskirts of the city, the building of an 18-foot tall, 2.9-mile levee and construction of a 60-acre wetland.

"This unusual effort has been recognized by the National Partnership for Highway Quality, which selected it for the Bronze Award for Partnering in 2004," said Deb Miller, Kansas secretary of transportation. "It has also been recognized just last month by the American Public Works Association, Kansas Chapter, which selected it as 'Project of the Year.'"

In 1996, KDOT met with the UP to start a joint railroad relocation feasibility study. This study also addressed flooding problems in Marysville. After the study was completed in 1998, the two entities met with the Corps the following year and asked the Corps to assist with the design and construction of the levee component of the railroad relocation project.

"We completed the design for the levee in June of 2002," Vollink said. "Our job was to do the design work in house and manage the levee construction, which was awarded to Commercial Contractors in Lincoln, Neb."

Vollink has been with the project since the beginning.

"The easiest part of this project was the working relationship we established with our customer, KDOT. They let us do our job, and there was never any issue over money. If we needed it, they gave it to us," Vollink said. "The hardest part was getting all parties together on agreement of how everything was going to work out. Each party had their own interests, but in the end, we all made it work, and the entire Marysville PDT truly deserves a pat on the back."

The project is scheduled to be 100-percent complete by the summer of 2006. Vollink said it appears the project will actually return money to KDOT following construction completion and project closeout.



Scott Vollink, John Brelsford, Dan Ahern, Kathy Lust and Jim Campbell (left to right) pose in front of their safety board. They have had only one lost time injury during 1,292 days worked on the contract with Commercial Contractors.

Displaying the partnering of three organizations, the Kansas Department of Transportation built the bridge, creating an overpass for the railroad tracks which were built by the Union Pacific. The Corps was responsible for contracting the building of the levee (right of the tracks).



Rathbun Lake

Iowa's Ocean

www.nwk.usace.army.mil/rathbun/rathbun_home.htm

Location of Dam: Near Rathbun, Iowa
Stream/River: Chariton River
Miles Above Mouth of River: 142.3
Storage Date: November 21, 1969
Total Acreage: 34,000 Acres
Lake Size: 11,000 Acres
Dam Length: 10,600 ft.
Yearly Visitation: 800,000

Story by Diana McCoy

This is the ninth 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.

At the very same moment two Americans were ariding on the moon in a lunar rover, Rathbun Lake in Centerville, Iowa, was being dedicated by the nation's 37th president.

"Today America is the strongest nation in the world," remarked President Richard M. Nixon on July 31, 1971. "Today America is the richest nation in the world. But in order to remain number one, the first nation in the world in strength and the first nation in the world in wealth, America is going to have to develop all of its resources."

Giving credit to the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, President Nixon stated that the building of Rathbun Lake was just one of the ways the nation needed to revitalize the American countryside and keep "our rural areas and their people right in the American mainstream."

Besides agriculture and new industry, a third element was added to the growing economy with the completion of the project: recreation.

"We serve a lot of different uses," said Bill Duey, operations manager for the lake since 1986. "We're a multipurpose lake project, but water supply has become a



Fishermen prepare to drop a catfish into their live well. Catfish and walleye are raised below the dam in a fish hatchery run by the Iowa Department of Natural Resources. *Photo by Mike Watkins*

very important project purpose. Rathbun Lake is a source for Rathbun Regional Water Association—one of the largest rural water associations in the United States, which serves parts of 17 counties in Iowa and northern Missouri and most of the rural residents in this area and a majority of the municipalities."

Duey said the Corps has a contract to provide 6,680-acre feet of water supply storage space in the lake for RRWA. A request is pending in congress to supply RRWA with an additional 8,320-acre feet of water supply space.

Other missions for the lake include flood damage reduction to protect downstream agriculture—the primary reason the dam was built in the first place—fish and wildlife management, navigation supplementation and recreation.

"Traditionally, we've been a boating, fishing and camping lake," Duey said. "We have excellent fishing—some of the best walleye in the state, and we have the best crappie fishing in the state."

Rathbun Lake's 150 miles of shoreline and myriad of wind-protected coves sets it apart as the best fishing and boating lake in Iowa. *continued on page 14*

Rathbun Lake is known to its visitors as the best fishing and boating lake in Iowa because of its 150 miles of shoreline and many wind-protected coves. It is also one of the biggest lakes in Iowa. *Photo by Mike Watkins*



Stockton Lake

Best Kept Secret of the Ozarks

Story Diana McCoy

www.nwk.usace.army.mil/stockton/stockton_home.htm

Location of Dam: Stockton, Mo.
Stream/River: Sac River
Miles Above Mouth of River: 51.4
Storage Date: Dec. 12, 1969
Total Acreage: 81,000 Acres
Lake Size: 24,900 Acres
Dam Length: 5,100 ft.
Yearly Visitation: 1.2 million



Water released through the power plant at Stockton Lake produces electricity which is marketed by the Southwest Power Administration. Stockton's annual revenue is \$417,000 and is second to Truman Lake in the Kansas City District. *Photo provided*

This is the tenth 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.

Touching the lives of people in six different states, this quiet project located in the foothills of the Ozarks has been creating quite a "buzz" since it began storing water in 1969.

Used as a power plant, Stockton Lake in Stockton, Mo., has three 161-kilovolt power lines which send power through the Southwest Power Administration, to Missouri, Kansas, Oklahoma, Texas, Arkansas and Mississippi.

"We're one of two hydropower producing projects within the Kansas City District," said Tom Long, Operations Manager for the lake. "We have one vertical Kaplan turbine which is capable of generating as much as 50 megawatts of peaking power. When we have water, we'll generate nearly \$2 million in revenue to the U.S. Department of Treasury."



Stockton Lake is one of two hydropower-producing projects in the district. Power generated by the project reaches people in six different states across the midwest. *Photo by Mike Watkins*

Other missions for the lake include flood control, supplemental navigation, water supply, fish and wildlife management, and recreation.

Long said recreation is a big issue for that area because of the location of the project.

"Stockton Lake is really pretty, and the water is

extremely clear," Long said. "With the way the project lands were purchased, we don't have houses right along our 298 miles of shoreline. Also, the size of the lake and the way it lays makes it extremely popular for sailboats."

Long said the lake is popular for racing.

"The Lions Club has annual raft races," he said. "The rafts have to be homemade, and they all 'put in' at one location on the lake and race along a designated route to the finish line."

He also said the Governor's Cup, a sailboat race, is held on the lake as well.

As for other events at Stockton, National Public Lands Day has been a big one for both the project and surrounding communities. Donna Butler, the lake's administrative support clerk, organizes the event every year, along with help from other staff members, attracting 150 volunteers in 2005.

"The volunteers come in, and they are assigned an area to clean up or a task like planting trees or flowers," Long said. "At noon, they all come in and we provide them a lunch. Donna works with area merchants, the marinas, Coca-Cola, Lions Club and other service organizations to organize the lunch."

In recent years, Butler has arranged with local groups to provide entertainment during the lunch hour.

Besides planting flowers and trees, efforts for the day are focused on litter and trash removal. Long said they remove a lot of tires from the lake from people who use

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A TRIBUTE IN MINIATURE

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assemble a single model.

"It can take a few months or even a year," he said.

Some models present specific challenges.

"For the Brewster Buffalo—a naval fighter used in the early stages of World War II, I didn't like the instrument panel that came with the kit. I was able to go on the Internet and find pictures of the real instrument panel, and build it from scratch," Tisdale said.

He said he frequently works using a three-power magnifying visor to achieve extra detail. He also uses an airbrush to put finishing paint on his aircraft, using small regular brushes for detail.

Although Tisdale is a veteran of the Army, his display focuses on Navy planes.

"My Dad was in the Navy, and I started building Navy aircraft when I was a kid. There's more variety among the naval aircraft, so I've continued to focus on them," he said.

Both Tisdale and McFarland are protective of their aircraft, moving them to avoid damage by cleaning crews, and working to keep their "squadrons" intact.

Tisdale said the modeling urge can last a lifetime.

"I don't remember a time when I didn't do it," he said.

RATHBUN LAKE

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"We're one of the largest lakes in Iowa and the *only* Kansas City District lake in Iowa," Duey said. "Most of the people who come to visit are from Iowa, western Illinois, Nebraska and Missouri."

In 2005, Rathbun Lake was one of six projects in the nation to receive \$500,000 from Recreational Facility Modernization Funding.

"Our visitation was up 12 percent last year because of the program," Duey said, "which was set up specifically to demonstrate that certain

funding could be used to improve recreation facility and improve visitation and Corps revenues."

He said reservations of campsites are up 11 percent so far for 2006. Money from the grant was used to renovate 150 campsites, install 178 50-amp electric pedestals for campers, install two trailer sanitary stations, construct two playgrounds and relocate a swimming beach.

Aside from the many fishing tournaments and sail boat regattas held throughout the year, the Rathbun Lake Association hosts the annual Summer Splash—to be held this year in conjunction with the lake's 35th anniversary.

"Even though Rathbun went operational in 1970, we hold the anniversaries for the project off the date it was dedicated by President Nixon," Duey said. "This year we're going to have a big car show, rock and roll band, lots of activities for the kids, a fireworks display and a boat, RV and motorcycle chopper display."

Currently in the works to boost Rathbun's visitation even higher is the \$48 million Honey Creek Destination State Park, with more than half of the park located on Corps property.

"The purpose of the park is to provide recreational opportunities with high quality overnight lodging and to do it in a unique park setting," Duey said. "Seven different organizations have come together to work on this, including the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, the Iowa Department of Natural Resources and the Indian Hills Community College."

The facility includes a 108-room lodge, conference center, indoor aquatic center, 18-hole golf course and more than 30 family and group cabins.

This project is an example that still today, work is being done which supports President Nixon's dedication of the project—to "revitalize the American countryside...by [restoring] the farmer to his rightful place of prosperous production and a fair share of America's increasing prosperity."

"I think the most unique thing about Rathbun Lake is the strong local support," Duey said. "We have a number of partnerships in place

and organizations and groups that really support the lake. We are able to accomplish a lot more with that strong support in place, and none of it could happen without key support from local leaders and organizations."

STOCKTON LAKE

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them to "dock" their boats along the rocky shore.

"Dive teams from the Midwest Dive Club volunteer their time to come to help us out with that portion," Long said. "Other groups that help out with the activities include the Girl Scouts, Boy Scouts, Student Council, area church groups and the Future Farmers of America."

Another popular event, dependent on weather, is Eagle Days. The staff at Stockton Lake takes visitors out on boats, in cooperation with the Stockton Lake Association and the marinas, to view the eagles. Long said they have anywhere from 40-80 people.

"When it's real cold out, we won't get very many visitors—even though it's the best time to view the eagles," Long said.

Other things for visitors to enjoy are swimming at the lake's five beaches, camping, a 12-mile equestrian trail, boating, hunting and fishing.

"There are numerous bass tournaments held out here," Long said. "In fact, we are the current state record holder for the Missouri small mouth bass."

Aside from the stir caused by recreation and local activities, another phenomenon causing excitement is an archeological dig just north of the project.

The Big Eddy Dig site, one of the oldest sites of human habitation in the Western Hemisphere, has helped rewrite the prehistory of Missouri. Most of the funding for the dig (\$1.3 million) has come from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, which has financed five seasons of digging in addition to reports and research for the site.

"There's something for everyone out here," Long said. "I believe we're the best kept secret of the Ozarks."

GROWING Pains



Photos by Jennie Wilson

As I enter the last stretch of my first year as a federal employee, it's beginning to hit me: I am reminded of just how young I am, and how long the road is ahead of me. One year down (well, almost). Twenty-nine years to go—and that's *if* I retire at 55 (okay, so for those of you who don't want to do the math, I'm 26).

So, armed with this information, I have some questions I need to ask myself. How the heck did they do it?? I'm supposed to work longer than I've been alive, and I look with envy at those who have already put in their 30, 35—and in a few cases, 40 years!

I've been told, "Oh, don't worry. It goes by quickly." Yeah, right. Things always seem to have gone by quickly when you're reflecting. But then I look back at the past year. Come to think of it, this year wasn't so bad, but what about the next 29?

Hanging at my desk is the ENG FORM 5055R, otherwise known as the Five-Year Individual Development Plan. It has been glaring at me for the past three weeks, and so far, the only things I have filled out are the obvious answers: name, social security number and position title/grade. Everything else is a mystery (and for the record, I would like to point out that I am NOT procrastinating—just focusing my energies elsewhere).

What are my short-term objectives? And even worse, what are my long-term objectives? How am I supposed to know? At this point, I'm just glad I have a job that pays enough for me to get by.

I realize that at some point very soon, I'm going to have to really focus on where I want to go and what I want for myself during these next 29 years. Do I really want to stay in my current job for the rest of my career? Am I good at it—and more importantly, am I truly happy with what I'm doing? And is happiness really a necessary factor? This is where I turn to the experts—those folks who have been there, done that.

I know the people who are retiring and on their way to bigger, better things are a hidden wealth of information. If only I could know just one-tenth of what they learned during their career. How did they decide to take the path they followed? How did they balance and prioritize work, family and self-improvement?

So, from someone who definitely does NOT have all the answers, my mission is to learn from those who have at least some of them.

In the meantime, I'll come to work every day. I'll do the best job I can do, and then I'll go home every night and love my family the best I can. And somewhere in between I'll find room for that self-improvement.

It's worked so far for one year. Let's see where it will take me during the next 29.



Prescribed burns play a necessary part in protecting Corps property

Nolan Fisher, natural resource management specialist at Kanopolis Lake in Marquette, Kan., works a prescribed burn of switchgrass. President Bush mentioned research towards using switch grass as means of efficient energy in his State of the Union Address Jan. 28. This photo is an example of the fuel capacity of switch grass.