

GOOD NEWS

● TEAM FAST-TRACKS

● PRAIRIE WORKSHOP

● 18 LAKES

KANSAS CITY DISTRICT'S NEWS MAGAZINE

HEARTLAND ENGINEER



www.nwk.usace.army.mil

SEPTEMBER 2006



BIG RED 1

digs into the Kansas City District

FEATURES



The 2006 Leadership Development Program class graduated in a ceremony Aug. 23 in the Richard Bolling Federal Building. Pictured from left to right: Jonathan Carlisle, David White, Christy Ostrander, Bryan Smith, Christine Hendzlik (class coordinator), Shelley Thomas, Saqib Khan, Robyn Kiefer, Laurie Murhpy (subcontractor to National Seminars), Willem Helms, Karen Turner, Jill Fraley, David Nelson, Eric Shumate, Craig Litteken, Shahir Safi and David Hibbs. Photo provided

GOOD NEWS, BUT A LONG PROCESS _____ 6

Selecting authority favors federal employees over contractor for information management services.

TEAM FAST-TRACKS PROJECT, SETS NEW RECORDS _____ 8

The \$50 million 1st Infantry Division Headquarters project, headed by Bryan Smith, is proof the Corps can accomplish things better, faster and cheaper through construction manager at-risk.

MORE THAN "GRASS AND WEEDS" _____ 10

Corps employees gathered Aug. 15 and 16 to learn about managing prairie ecosystems at the first-ever USACE Prairie Workshop.

18 LAKES _____ 12

This ongoing series outlines the district's 18 lake projects. This month's columns feature Longview Lake and Blue Springs Lake.

INSIDE THE HEARTLAND

NEWSWATCH

Newsbriefs from around the district and around the Corps.



PEOPLEPOWER

Jim Bell, park ranger at Hillsdale Lake, started a berry patch which has become a popular U-pick location for area families.



LASTWORD

Ed Kolodziej, the district's Hispanic employment program manager, shares his views about language.



4

5

15



The **HEARTLAND ENGINEER** is an authorized publication for members of the Kansas City District of the U. S. Army Corps of Engineers. Contents are not necessarily official views of, or endorsed by, the U.S. government, the Department of Defense, Department of the Army or the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. It is published monthly using Adobe InDesign CS and Photoshop using photo-offset reproduction by the district public affairs office. All editorial content of the **HEARTLAND ENGINEER** is prepared, edited, provided and approved by the district public affairs office.

COMMANDER Col. Michael Rossi / michael.a.rossi@usace.army.mil
 DEPUTY COMMANDER Lt. Col. Kelly Butler/kelly.b.butler@usace.army.mil
 PUBLIC AFFAIRS CHIEF Thomas O'Hara / thomas.a.ohara@usace.army.mil
 EDITOR Diana McCoy / diana.mccoy@usace.army.mil
 STAFF WRITER Alicia Embrey / alicia.m.embrey@usace.army.mil
 STAFF WRITER Eric Cramer / eric.w.cramer@usace.army.mil
 DESIGNER Rusty Thomas/ rusty.thomas@usace.army.mil

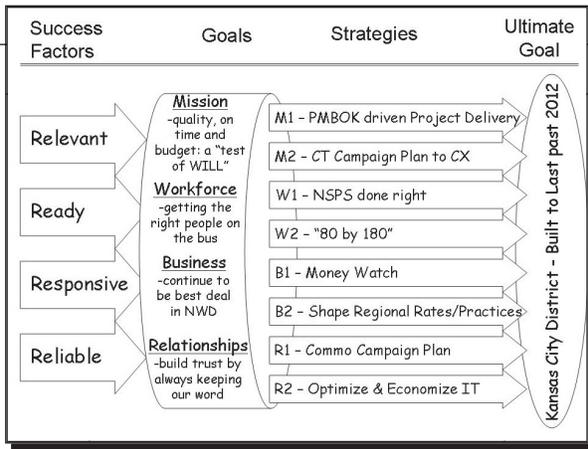
HEARTLAND ENGINEER

SEPTEMBER 2006
VOL. 4, NO. 9

Richard Bolling Federal Building
 601 East 12th Street
 Kansas City, MO 64106
 Phone (816) 389-3486
 Fax (816) 389-2021

ON THE COVER:

A groundbreaking ceremony for the 1st Infantry Division Headquarters at Fort Riley, Kan., was held July 27. Participants include: (from left to right) Col. Ty Smith, garrison commander; Craig Southern, vice president of Federal Contracting Group for M.A. Mortenson Company; Maj. Gen. Dennis Harby, commanding general of the 1st Infantry Division (Mech); Col. Walter Gilliam, 1st Infantry Division Artillery Commander; and Rex Goodnight, Kansas area engineer for the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Kansas City District. Photo by Diana McCoy



COL Michael A. Rossi

As we near the conclusion of the fiscal year, I'd like to offer a public In-Progress-Review of a few of the Strategies put forth in our 2006 OPLAN.

The PMBOK is the Project Management Body of Knowledge. PMBOK-driven project delivery is a strategy of aligning our processes with the world-wide standards of practice. We've made significant strides in this effort. Engineering and PM re-certified their processes and practices by ISO 9001 audit in June 2005 and are certified through June 2008. Construction branch is on the way toward their initial ISO certification. We've also had more than 40 project managers and leaders test for and receive certification as Project Management Professionals from the Project Management Institute. I had the pleasure recently of attending the Air Force Air Combat Command annual Military Construction Leaders Workshop and can report proudly that we've moved from the lower quarter to the number two district in ACC's "Dirt Kicker" rankings. Despite an increased workload, our schedule and cost growth metrics have improved in most every category.

Contracting is part and parcel to everything we do. I submit to you that contracting is a "core competency" for a U.S. Army Corps of Engineers district. We leverage most everything we do through contracts with the private sector. Our Contracting Campaign Plan is based upon three tenets—individual competency, organizational processes, and strategic enablers—all of which will make us a contracting center of expertise in the federal government. On this front, we've also made great progress. In terms of individual competency and organizational processes, we've mapped-out standardized individual development plans and standard procurement processes and are on our way towards our goal of ISO 9001 certification for contracting. For strategic enablers, we've continued to develop and champion the Construction Manager at Risk acquisition strategy—we are the first (and second, and third) and are generating tremendous interest by other districts and customers in this innovation. We've spearheaded Regional Acquisition Plans and Strategies in both MILCON and Hazardous, Toxic and Radioactive Waste. Lastly, our work with the Naval Post-graduate School on the Rapid Ordering System is ending its beta-testing and will significantly benefit our internal and external customers. It is truly faster, better, and cheaper.

Our strategy to get 80 new faces in the district by March 31 was "80 in 180." We didn't quite get there, but the increased attention and drive by leadership to hire great outside talent and promote great inside talent will serve the district well into the future. We didn't take our foot off the gas pedal in March, and we continue to aggressively go after the best and brightest.

Lastly, the Kansas City District has been absolutely central to the Regional Budget Process. In the majority of business lines, NWK division and branch chiefs have been assigned lead positions in their respective communities of practice. We have been super in past years at budget development and execution and have been able to translate and transfer those skills and techniques to the Northwest Division. While as a region, we didn't get it exactly right this first year. We made tremendous progress and can be proud of the overall effort and outcome. Next year, I expect we will once again take the lead as we push for the region to reinvent the budget process in a serious effort to get it right.

Once again, I'm proud of you and all you do for the district and the nation every day. Keep pressing!

Hooah! Col. Mike Rossi

HELPING IRAQI YOUTH 'BEST PART OF MY JOB'

Bettering the lives of Iraqi youngsters is what Peter Debski says is the best part of his job.

He's been involved in overseeing millions of dollars of reconstruction work in and around Baghdad over the past 10 months, including new water and sewer networks, electrical distribution projects, police and fire stations, and primary health care centers. But, he said, "renovating two youth centers and four schools was, most definitely, the most personally rewarding."

"Seeing the joy on the children's faces, knowing we're bringing a little normalcy to their lives, made it all worthwhile," he added.

Debski is a project engineer with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Gulf Region Central District. He said he'll always remember the March 25 celebration to mark the re-opening of Al Huriya Youth Center.

"The United States stands with Iraqis as they attempt to improve their community. The various sporting activities that Iraqi children will engage in here offer several useful and timely lessons," he said. "This center will provide activities for youth of all sects and ethnic groups and teach them the benefit of teamwork. The sports that will be played here encourage children to compete but within an established system of rules. Finally, sports will allow us to succeed or fail, not based on who we are or where we come from, but rather on our merits as individuals."

That \$442,000 project, financed by the 10th Mountain Division's Commander's Emergency Response Program, included upgrading plumbing and electrical systems, installing air conditioners, repairing and replacing floors, and plastering and painting both interior and exterior walls. In addition, a new basketball and volleyball court was built.

About 1,500 young people are involved in various sporting activities, including wrestling, boxing, soccer, weightlifting, basketball, volleyball and judo, at the center on a daily basis. "The youth center project was selected because the community itself identified it as a top priority. They know how important it is to their community," Debski said. "It's a legacy we're leaving behind as Al Huriya families will use that youth center for years to come."

Debski said he's grateful to be part of the Corps of Engineers' mission in Iraq

and for the opportunity to work alongside some incredible Iraqis. "I'm in awe of the courage our Iraqi project engineers demonstrate every day reporting to work and getting the job done," he said. "They're professional, highly educated, care about their work, and know they're making a difference. I admire each and every one of them."

Debski is leaving Iraq this month and will be heading to Jordan to work with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers there. He and his wife, Teresa, have two children, Julia and Matt.

"This has been a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity, a great experience," Debski said. "I've worked for contractors on construction projects in Antarctica, Pacific islands and Europe, but nothing compares to what we're doing here."—*Norris Jones, American Forces Press Service. (Norris Jones is assigned to the Gulf Region Central District of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers.)*

FOREIGN LANGUAGE TRAINING AVAILABLE THROUGH AKO

The Army recently entered into a contract agreement with Fairfield Language Technologies to provide Rosetta Stone® foreign-language training, at no cost, to all active Army, National Guard, Reservists and Department of the Army civilians worldwide via the Army e-Learning portal on the Army Knowledge Online.

The objective of this training tool is to develop a force capable of engaging in basic communications with the populace in the area deployed - and with coalition partners. Rosetta Stone® online training is an immediate, cost effective way to provide a training capability across the force, and is an excellent tool for units preparing to deploy and Soldiers preparing to fill billets outside the United States.

The Army has had much success with Rosetta Stone® on Army e-Learning. More than 12,000 Soldiers and Army civilians have used the online training since it became available on November 7, 2005. The top five courses accessed are: Spanish (Lat Am); German; Arabic; French and Italian.

*Free state-of-the-art language courses through Army e-Learning, include Arabic, Chinese (Mandarin), Danish, Dutch, English, French, Farsi (Persian), German, Greek, Hebrew, Hindi, Indonesian, Italian, Japanese, Korean, Pashto, Polish, Portuguese (Brazil), Russian, Spanish (Latin America), Spanish (Spain), Swahili, Swedish, Thai, Turkish, Vietnamese and

Welsh.

* Each user must have an AKO account to register for Army e-Learning.

* To access Army e-Learning, visit AKO at www.us.army.mil and select "My Education" and click Rosetta Stone. If you are already registered for the Army e-Learning, logon and access the Rosetta Stone® courses or select Register to obtain your e-Learning password. All course completions are posted to individual ATRRS records.—*Stand To!*

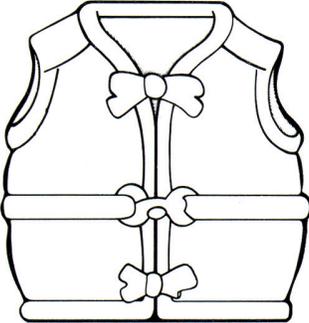
CALL TO RETIREES

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) 389-3485 or e-mail her at diana.mccoy@usace.army.mil.

**DON'T
SWIM
ALONE**



Take Me Along



US Army Corps
of Engineers

Your Safety



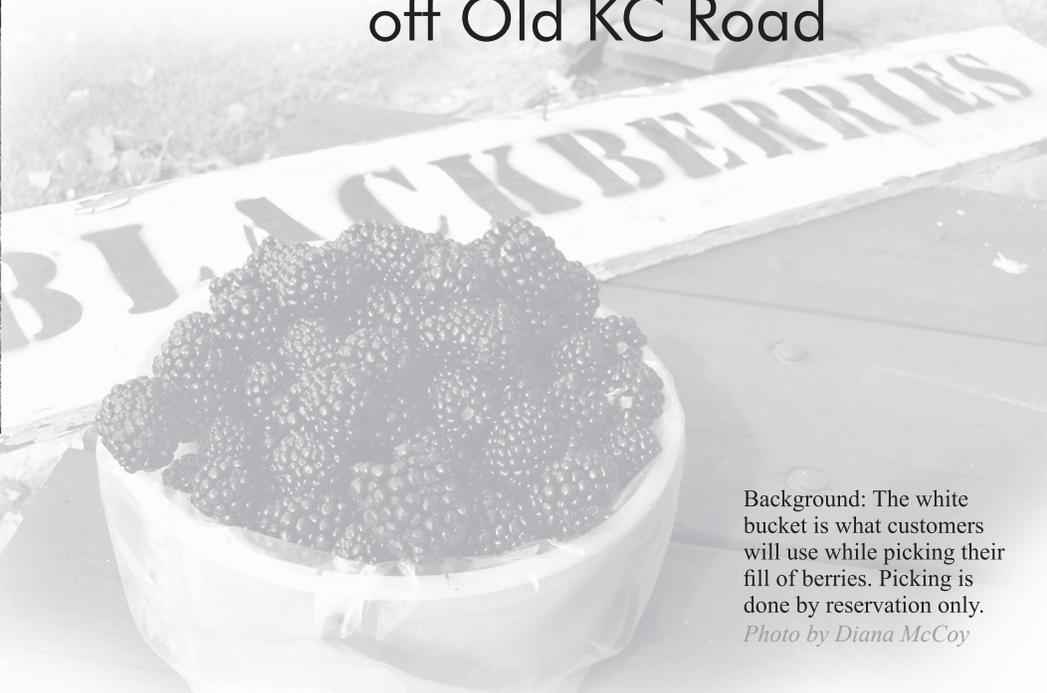
Our Concern



FRESH FRUIT

off Old KC Road

Jim Bell bends down to present his blackberries while his cat looks for a friendly rub. The berries are ready for picking every year in the month of June. The cat is a stray Bell found at Hillsdale Lake. *Photo by Diana McCoy*



Background: The white bucket is what customers will use while picking their fill of berries. Picking is done by reservation only. *Photo by Diana McCoy*

Just off of Old KC Road in the little town of Hillsdale, Kan., a sign hangs in a tree that reads “BLACKBERRIES.”

Passersby will miss the sign if they’re not careful to look for it, and underneath it, a phone number is displayed along with the words “by reservation only.”

Jim Bell, a park ranger at Hillsdale Lake, owns the berry patch and started growing raspberries and blackberries in 1994.

“I got sick of mowing this grass,” Bell said while waving his hands around to indicate his nearly five acres of land. “I started 250 raspberry plants. They did real well, so I decided to add more and also added blackberry rows until I just ran out of room.”

Bell said he initially started the raspberries for his family to enjoy, and when they started getting more berries than they could handle, he decided to turn his garden into a “U-pick.”

“The first few years we just opened up on Saturdays,” Bell said. “I had too many people showing up, and not enough berries for everyone to feel satisfied. So, I decided to go with a reservation system. It helps control the crowds, and it’s a good way of *not* wasting my time or my customers.”

Raspberry plants take a few years to produce a “good” crop. After four or five years of producing berries they “fizzle out.” Bell decided to plant more blackberries, which are sturdier plants.

“The difference between raspberries and blackberries are the raspberries only root between 18 to 24 inches down, and the blackberries will send roots down deep,” Bell said. “This allows you to water them a lot less than raspberries.”

Bell makes use of the creek which flows in the back of his property to water the berries.

“I use raw water from the creek as much as possible,” Bell said. “I pump my own water—as long as there’s water in the creek. I’m always looking for that one or two inches of rain to keep the creek full.”

Blackberry season runs throughout the month of July, and the varieties found in Bell’s garden are Kiowa and Chickasaw.

“They are some of the biggest ones you can grow, and people just love them,” Bell said.

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

continued on page 14



Good news, but a long process

*Selecting authority favors federal employees
over contractor for IM services*

By Eric Cramer

On Aug. 17, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers decided for a second time to retain information technology and management work as part of its government function rather than having those services provided by a private contractor.

The decision denied a July 5 appeal by Northrop-Grumman Corp., the private-sector bidder seeking to perform the Corps' IT functions. The Corps' decision opened a 10-day window for Northrop-Grumman to appeal to either the Court of Federal Claims or to the Government Accountability Office. The 10-day appeals period was slated to end on Aug. 28. Northrop-Grumman had not yet sought an appeal as this article went to press.

Although the decision on that appeal is still pending, Kansas City District Commander Col. Michael Rossi says whatever the decision, the district will continue to look after its employees. The appeals process required an announcement of a decision regarding the appeal be issued within 35 days.

"We obviously always have a view to taking care of

our own folks," Rossi said.

In a town-hall meeting June 21, Rossi told employees of the Kansas City District's Information Management Division that information management would continue to be done by government employees rather than contractors, as a result of the initial decision reached at the end of the study.

Although the initial decision favored having information provided by the government, Rossi told the IM employees then the Corps faced a long process before final resolution.

If no protest had been made, the selecting authority was set to make a final decision by July, and implementation of the Most Efficient Organization would have begun later the same month, with numerous entities receiving final notification, and a letter of obligation

setting forth the MEO sent to Congress.

If the appeal is denied officials estimate the final performance decision will be made in December, with implementation to follow.

Rossi said if a protest is filed and upheld by the Corps or by the GAO the directed actions included in that

"It's going to be
a long process,
but we will
always look after
our people."

- Col. Michael Rossi



The Information Management seal in the Kansas City District defines the IM missions within the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. Corps officials announced in August the Corps will retain IM as a government function rather than hiring contractors for the mission. Appeal of that decision was pending. *Photo by Eric Cramer*



The modern and open workspace of the Information Management Office in the Kansas City District will remain the home of government employees rather than contractors after an August announcement by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. Northrop-Grumman, a contractor seeking to provide the services, had not yet determined if it would appeal the decision as this article went to press. *Photo by Eric Cramer*

decision must be implemented.

Information from the Corps' Strategic Sourcing Program office indicates implementation will take time to phase in, whether the final decision is for MEO or for a protesting contractor. Once the letter of obligation is issued to either service provider, a one-year phase-in process begins. During the first six months the service provider will begin to stand up its organization, hire some employees, conduct site visits, equipment inventories and prepare a transition plan.

During the second six months, the organization will continue to grow, hiring the rest of its employees and implementing its transition plan. One year after the letter of obligation, or award of contract, the provider becomes fully responsible for performing all the requirements in the performance work statement.

Rossi said that once a final decision is reached, if it favors providing the service by the government, IM employees will reapply for their positions. Although that step is a long way off, Rossi said the Civilian Personnel Action Center will implement a Human Resources Plan under which some employees will remain with the continuing government organization, others with the MEO, and placement assistance will be provided to those who do not go to work for either organization.

"It's going to be a long process, but we will always look after our people," Rossi said.

Team fast-tracks project,

sets new records



Maj. Gen. Dennis Hardy (right), commanding general of the 1st Infantry Division (Mech) greets Rex Goodnight, Kansas area engineer for the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Kansas City District before the groundbreaking ceremony at Fort Riley, Kan., July 27. The 135,860-square-foot headquarters building is scheduled for completion for November 2007 and is slated to cost \$50 million.

Photo by Diana McCoy

By *Diana McCoy*

Officials from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, M.A. Mortenson Company and Fort Riley Public Works broke ground July 27 on the new \$50 million 1st Infantry Division Headquarters at Fort Riley, Kan.

The accelerated development of the project is the first of its kind for Fort Riley and the Kansas City District.

“The thing that makes this project special for the district is that they need it fast,” said Col. Michael Rossi, district commander. “We are proponents of a new and unique contracting method for the Corps with construction manager at-risk (CM@Risk). We’ve done it at Fort Leavenworth and Tuttle Creek, and we think it’s a great way to get a building fast, and it also offered us an opportunity to design it ourselves and prove we can do things faster and cheaper with our internal staff.”

CM@Risk holds the contractor responsible for keeping the project within the agreed upon budget, and it holds the Corps responsible for keeping the project within the design parameters. Even though this contracting method has been used in other projects, the district is doing something new with this project—using an in-house design team rather than contracting the design to an outside architectural engineering firm.

The project, slated for completion in November 2007, proves the Kansas City District can do it better, faster and cheaper using a new contracting method.

A team came together and looked over the requirements of the facility after the district got wind of the project June 2005. Program requirements were submitted through Fort Riley to the Army Chief of Staff of Installation Management, and now the project is part of the Base Realignment and Closure (BRAC) 2005 program.

“We were not authorized to start designing the project until March of this year,” said Bryan Smith, project manager. “So as soon as we were given the ‘okay,’ we took off running. Because we knew the 1st ID needed a move-in date of November 2007, we had to be creative to get it designed and constructed quickly.”

Rossi is enthusiastic about the method the team is using in order to accomplish the November deadline.

“These guys are doing this project unbelievably fast,” Rossi said. “It’s almost impossibly fast, especially if you look at the fact that they got permission in March, had a charrette in April, and broke ground in July.”

“A typical project of this size, from design authorization to construction award, normally takes between 12 to 18 months,” Smith said.

“Through the CM@Risk method, we have the ability to keep the design in-house and also have the design team work with the contractor and weigh all the advantages and disadvantages of the decisions the project delivery team is making,” Smith said. “The really unique thing is we have the ability to start construction on specific design features without the overall comprehensive design complete yet.”

The design charrette began April 10, during which time the design team, contractor and customer worked together to hash out design concepts. A record-breaking 81 days afterwards, on June 30, the Corps awarded construction to M.A. Mortenson Company. At the time of the award, the civil site work design, structural steel design and structural foundation design was complete.

“We never have the contractor attend design charrettes,” Smith said. “So, that was a unique aspect of this project, and a smart aspect of any project.”

One of the benefits for the Corps to use CM@Risk is the ability to keep ownership of the design work.



Artist rendering of the 1st Infantry Division Headquarters at Fort Riley, Kan. The 135,830-square-foot building will hold up to 622 people and will be made from limestone cut from Manhattan, Kan. The building will be viewable from the historic area inside Fort Riley, and is designed to fit in with the overall feel of the area.

“The fact that we can make our designers better by doing this kind of project is great,” Rossi said. “We have a duty and responsibility to maintain a technical expertise. One of the ways in which we can do that is to design jobs ourselves rather than just review somebody else’s work. This allows us to groom and grow our staff.”

The 1st ID project is the first time Smith has used the CM@Risk method, and he says it allows him to use the contractor in a new way.

“What we have been able to do is bring the contractor in before the designing starts with the intent of the contractor offering us pre-construction services,” Smith said. “This essentially means they offer us their expertise as far as construction techniques, scheduling and advantages of using one construction material versus another.”

Smith explained the contractor was able to alert the team of important time-saving techniques during the design charrette.

“We didn’t realize there was a 22-week lead requirement for steel,” Smith said. “We were able to get the structural steel design work done, and the contractor was able to put the order in right away, and that saved us a bunch of time on the overall schedule.”

With pre-construction services,

the team was able to put together an aggressive schedule which will allow them to finish the project by the deadline.

At completion, the project will be a three-story, 135,850 square-foot facility. The building will have a large atrium at its entrance, and the exterior facade will primarily consist of cut limestone which will come from Manhattan, Kan.

“The idea is that this building will sit up on a hill, and you’ll be able to see it from the historic area of Fort Riley,” Smith said. “They wanted the building to blend in, while at the same time be comparable to a headquarters of a private corporation.”

Rossi said the project is a signature project because it is a division headquarters, and the Army only has 10 divisions.

“What we’re doing is designing and constructing an administration-type building with a lot of office space, some secure areas and some communication areas,” Smith said. “Then there’s a Joint Operations Center which is going to resemble a ‘space command’-type room.”

The JOC is actually a two-story, stadium-style seating room with a 70-foot

wide screen and a balcony.

“This building will be as high-tech as we’ve got right now,” said Maj. Gen. Dennis Hardy, commanding general of the 24th Infantry Division (Mechanized) at Fort Riley. “I think ‘Star Wars’ is an apt description, but what’s important is what it’s going to enable us to do, which is give us the capability to project power overseas.”

“I’m super proud of the team that’s handling this project,” Rossi said. “They’re doing this within the budget, so we’re showing the Corps we can be cheaper and faster with in-house labor.”



Maj. Bill Moen, deputy Kansas area engineer, addresses a crowd of onlookers at the groundbreaking ceremony for the 1st Infantry Division Headquarters building. The 1st ID will be welcomed back to Fort Riley, Kan., from Germany in 2007. *Photo by Diana McCoy*





Buffalo were among the native species, both plant and animal, of the Konza Prairie viewed by Corps prairie managers at the Prairie Workshop held in Manhattan, Kan. The Corps manages nearly 800,000 acres of prairie land, including 600,000 in the Northwestern Division. *Photo by Mike Watkins*

More than “grass and weeds”:

Prairies a focus of Corps workshop

By Eric Cramer

More than 40 U.S. Army Corps of Engineers natural resource specialists gathered in Manhattan, Kan., Aug. 15 and 16 to compare notes and study the best methods for managing America’s rare prairie ecosystems at the first-ever USACE Prairie Workshop, sponsored by the Corps’ Environmental Laboratory, Engineer Research and Development Center and the Kansas City District.

The workshop, a product of the Corps’ Ecosystem Restoration and Management Research Program, included 14 presentations by experts inside and outside the Corps and site visits to several prairie environments within the Kansas City District.

Chester Martin, a research wildlife biologist with the Environmental Laboratory, said the Corps-wide conference served as a forum for those responsible for managing hundreds of thousands of acres of prairies on Corps projects.

“We see this as an informal event, because we want to encourage interaction so that natural resource managers can learn from each other,” Martin told those attending the event.

He said prairies are among the most endangered ecosystems in the United States.

Martin said a “prairie data call” of the Corps showed about 800,000 acres of prairie falling under the Corps’ jurisdiction. The largest portion of that is in the



Jim Brown, natural resource specialist at Harlan County Lake, describes prairie management practices at a site on the north end of the lake during the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Prairie Workshop held at Manhattan, Kan. The workshop gave resource managers the chance to learn from each other and compare prairie management methods. *Photo by Eric Cramer*

Northwestern Division, which contains about 600,000 acres.

Paul Peloquin, a senior wildlife biologist with the Northwestern Division, said “prairie is a significant resource that is not protected by law.”

Peloquin said “the prairies, like an endangered species, could become an endangered resource. The prairie is dwindling in both quantity and quality. A

About 40 U.S. Army Corps of Engineers manager tour a prairie site near Tuttle Creek Lake. This site, along with the Konza Prairie and prairie space at Fort Riley, Kan., provided a backdrop for the discussion of prairie management practices at the Prairie Workshop held in Manhattan, Kan. *Photo by Eric Cramer*



major problem affecting the quality of Corps-administered prairies are invasive plant species. These terrestrial invasive species are as big a problem as the aquatic invasive species known as the zebra mussel, a shellfish known for damaging environments where it has been introduced.”

“It’s important for the natural resource manager to realize they can have input into making Corps prairie policy,” Peloquin said. “We’re working to address critical areas of national importance to the Environmental Stewardship Business Line through the development of Regulations, Budget Engineering Circulars, the Stewardship Advisory Team membership, task forces and the execution of the program at all levels from the project through the district to HQUSACE.”

Of the six performance measures of importance to the Natural Resources Manager in managing Corps lands and waters; prairies are best represented by the Healthy and Sustainable Lands and Waters measure.

“Each and every one of you is

important, and each must contribute where he or she can if we’re to be successful in the management of Corps prairie,” Peloquin said.

In addition to presentations by Martin and Peloquin, the first day of the conference contained presentations from Corps prairie experts and visits to prairie areas at Tuttle Creek and Milford Lake projects and at Fort Riley, Kan. The second day consisted of additional presentations, a visit to the internationally acclaimed Konza Prairie and prairie management areas on Fort Riley and a group discussion and wrap-up session.

Jim Brown, wildlife resource specialist for Harlan County Lake described the methods he used for converting areas covered in non-native brome grass to native species of prairie grass, in part to improve habitat for upland bird species, including pheasants.

Brown said Harlan County Lake’s lands include 7,900 acres of grasslands.

He said that initially, the Corps required farmers using Corps property as part of agricultural lease programs

to leave 100-foot strips of grass between their crop fields, some of the grass being smooth brome.

“By the mid 1990s, we’d shifted priorities to grasslands management,” Brown said.

He said he worked closely with the Nebraska Game and Parks Commission and other organizations to create a statewide grasslands improvement program known as “Focus on Pheasants,” an economic and wildlife program that initially received a \$100,000 earmark from Nebraska’s state government as well as generous funding from outside sources.

This funding led to the establishment of three public demonstration areas throughout the state – one at Harlan County Lake. Some results of the program include wider grass strips; “blocks” of grass, preferably at least 40 acres which Brown said is best for pheasants, the conversion of crop to grassland and other measures.

“We created a new haying paradigm where the hay is harvested once every five years or when

continued on page 14

Longview Lake The Deepest Lake in the District



Turkey and other wildlife make Longview Lake their home. Many of the wildlife are emboldened by the hunting restrictions and can be viewed along busy roads. *Photo by Diana McCoy*

Location of Dam: Kansas City, Mo.
Stream/River: Little Blue River
Miles Above Mouth of River: 42.9
Storage Date: September 16, 1985
Total Acreage: 4,762 Acres
Lake Size: 930 Acres
Dam Length: 1,900 ft.
Yearly Visitation: 1.2 million

www.nwk.usace.army.mil/longview/longview.html



This mansion, built by Robert A. Long in 1912, was part of Longview Farm which included five barns and 42 buildings on 2,950 acres. After his death in 1934, the estate was sold, and now part of it lies under Longview Lake.

Photo by Diana McCoy

This is the 17th 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.

By *Diana McCoy*

Once known as the “world’s most beautiful farm” when it opened in 1914, the Longview Mansion sat on a 1,780-acre tract of land which also housed 50 farm structures and employed 175 farm workers. Owned by Robert A. Long, his farm was known for its horses, its pure bred Jersey dairy cattle and its prize-winning roses.

“R.A. Long donated a lot of his money to charity, and he was one of the founding fathers of Kansas City,” said Jim Dickerson, park ranger at Longview Lake. “He donated so much of his money that when he died, his fortune didn’t continue on. His daughters had to sell some of his properties to pay his debts. Then, in the 1970s, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers acquired part of the land to build Longview Lake.”

Buildings from his farm are still utilized today, such as the horse stable, which is now Longview Farm Elementary School.

“The Corps owns a few of the farm buildings, too,” said Bruce Clark, operations manager for the lake. “Because of the way the land laid, part of the farm was in the flood pool, which was inundated when we reached full pool.”

Now there are subdivisions surrounding the lake project and a development, New Longview, is being built which will include shopping, single family homes and apartments.

“There’s also a college on the banks of the lake,” Clark said. “Longview Community College lies adjacent to the lake on the southeast side.”

The missions at Longview Lake are flood control, recreation and water quality, and as a cost-shared lake, Jackson County Parks and Recreation is the partner who manages the recreation.

Blue Springs Lake Newest Lake in the District

Location of Dam: Kansas City, Mo.
Stream/River: East Fork Little Blue River
Miles Above Mouth of River: 28.8
Storage Date: September 27, 1988
Total Acreage: 2,705 Acres
Lake Size: 720 Acres
Dam Length: 2,500 ft.
Yearly Visitation: 633,000

www.nwk.usace.army.mil/longview/longview.html



This is the 18th 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.

The Blue Springs Lake Marina is visible from one of the picnic shelters which lies close to the lake. Because of the hilly and wooded terrain of the project, campgrounds were not built within viewing distance of the lake. *Photo by Diana McCoy*

"There's fishing, camping, boating, water skiing, swimming, bicycle trails, horseback riding and a full-service marina at the lake," Dickerson said. "There's also a golf course and a flying field for radio-controlled airplanes."

As for annual events, Dickerson said various marathons and triathlons are held at the lake, along with a Federal Lands Day cleanup. Jackson County holds a lake festival every year, as well, but the largest event held at Longview Lake is Christmas in the Park.

"About two or three hundred thousand people show up every year for this event," Clark said. "Sponsored by a local radio station, they put Christmas lights up in the campground, and people give a donation to drive through the park. If you're in your car, you can turn on the radio and listen to the music which is orchestrated with the fireworks they set off on Thanksgiving night."

Christmas in the Park lasts through New Years.

Another event is Lollapalooza, which is a smaller scale event featuring local talent. The lake is also utilized by the Kansas City District every year for the annual Engineer Day picnic, where Corps employees come out to celebrate in the summer with friends and family.

"Another unique aspect of Longview Lake is that we have 54-inch dual sewer lines running underneath the dam," said Don Clever, project manager for the lake. "Longview was the first in the nation to have a large sewer line going underneath the dam at the time it was

built, and it was built to accommodate all the sewage in the basin area. There are other dams now with large sewer lines, but we're the only lake in the district—along with Blue Springs Lake that has a sewer line underneath the dam."

Blue Springs Lake, the newest lake in the district, is considered a satellite lake with Smithville Lake. Clark, who is the operations manager for Smithville and Longview, is also the operations manager for Blue Springs Lake. Clever is the park manager for all three lakes, and Dickerson is a park ranger at all three lakes, spending most of his time between Longview and Blue Springs.

"Longview and Blue Springs lakes kind of seem to come in a packaged deal," Clark said. "Part of that is because Jackson County Parks and Recreation operates all the recreation aspects on both of the lakes, so we always seem to say them in the same breath. Jackson County is the only partner for these two parks."

Blue Springs also has a dual sewer line running underneath the dam. And in case of a rupture in the line, a manhole was installed underneath the lake for inspections.

Background: Hundreds of carp live around the marina, waiting for their next meals. The marina sells bags of food for visitors to feed the carp, who scramble over each other just to get a bite.

Photo by Diana McCoy

continued on page 14

FRESH FRUIT

continued from page 5

"I'll make blackberry wine with a lot of the berries I end the year with."

Strawberries are Bell's latest addition. He planted them during the fall of 2005 and received a small harvest from them this spring. Bell said the strawberry plants are now established and will produce a healthy crop next June.

"I used to advertise, but I don't do that anymore," Bell said. "People just know. They'll usually start calling me in June, when things are ripening. I try to grow the earliest varieties in the season because people are looking for home-grown fruit."

MORE THAN "GRASS AND WEEDS"

continued from page 11

needed," Brown said. "This provides the ability to provide quality habitat, allows local farmers to acquire quality hay, and give the Corps the ability to utilize innovative techniques to control invasive species."

He said the project's program continues to evolve and will work towards the elimination of non-native species, including smooth brome and Kentucky bluegrass and stands of red cedar trees.

Dan Hays, natural resource manager for Wilson Lake, described his projects efforts to preserve unbroken native prairie when he worked at Kanopolis Lake. He said one challenge for project managers was disagreement between Corps officials and state wildlife managers on the best methods of prairie maintenance.

Carey Weber, of the Fort Worth District addressed the workshop on the Granger Prairie Project near Granger Lake.

Weber and his co-workers created a "gene bank" of local clones of rare or endangered prairie plants.

Other presentations at the workshop were:

*Kansas Endangered Plant Species,

Jennifer Delisle, Kansas Natural Heritage Inventory, Kansas Biological Survey.

*Helping Help the Land, Richard Wynia, of the Manhattan Plant Materials Center, Manhattan, Kan.

*Overview of Kansas Field Sites, a visit to several area prairie lands, Mike Watkins, Kansas City District.

*Tuttle Creek Lake Premier Prairie Project, Paul Weidhaas and Brent Logan, Kansas City District

*Tallgrass Legacy Alliance, James Minnerath, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

*Partnerships with Rural Volunteer Fire Department to Conduct Safe Prescribed Burns, Matthew Beckman, Kansas City District

*Wet Meadow Restoration at the Baker Wetlands, Roger Boyd, Baker University.

*Willamette Valley Prairie Management, Wes Messinger, Corps Willamette Valley Projects, Portland District.

*Managing Native Prairies at Lewisville and Grapevine Lakes, Don Wiese, Fort Worth District.

*Management of the Saratoga Blackland Prairie at Millwood Lake and Glade management on the White River Projects, Randall Becker, Little Rock District.

Weber said prairies suffer from an image problem in preservation efforts.

"You stand there and look at a prairie, and all it looks like to most people is 'grass and weeds,'" he said. "They don't realize all the different forms of life that are in there."

Delisle praised the workshop's intent. "This is the sort of interaction we need to see," she said.

Weber said the Prairie Workshop is a valuable endeavor as it gives managers a chance to learn what is going on in other areas of the Corps.

"We have the chance to find some commonalities, what goes right and what doesn't go right," he said.

Peloquin agreed.

"It's always the technical exchange of information," he said. "You get to know the other people and we can reach a consensus on doing business."

18 LAKES

continued from page 13

"They designed it so they could put a tube over the manhole and pump water out of it and free it up for some one to go 30 feet down into it," Clever said. "But we've never tested that."

Clever said in his opinion, the unique aspect of both lakes is their location.

"We're in the heart of the city," Clever said. "We have a lot of public coming to us. We have extremely high visitation, and the private land around the lakes is being developed. We have a lot of real estate licenses that have to be issued, and we also have a railroad and airport going through the property."

Activities that can be enjoyed at Blue Springs Lake are the usual—camping, boating, water skiing, swimming and fishing. Some of the popular fish to catch are hybrid striped bass, bluegill, largemouth bass, carp and catfish.

"The full-service marina at Blue Springs Lake sells bags of dry cat food to feed the carp which hang around the marina," Dickerson said. "It's quite a show to see hundreds of huge carp fight over the food."

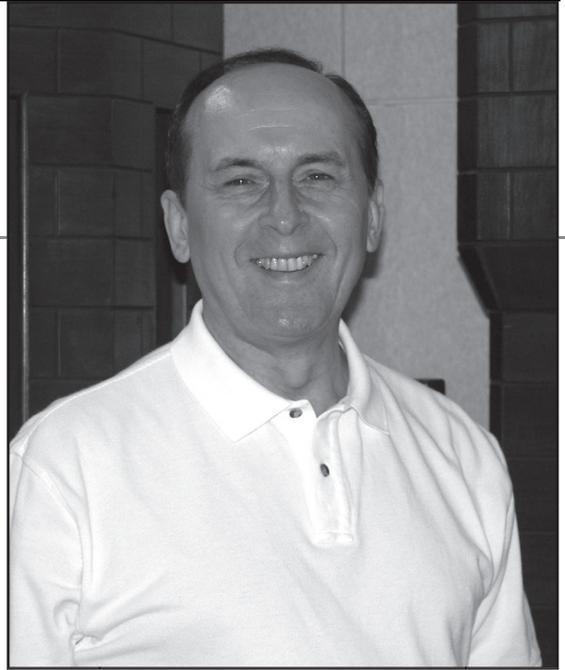
Dickerson has been working at Blue Springs Lake since before the lake was filled.

"I think it's neat that I got to see it as dry land," Dickerson said. "I was one of the people who put the main drawdown bulk head in when they started impounding water, so I feel like I have a special relationship with the project. It's definitely one of the prettiest lakes I've seen. There's very little flat land by it—you can't even see water from the campgrounds because there wasn't enough flat land around the lake to put the campgrounds."

With the amount of visitation both lakes receive, Clark said Jackson County does a great job developing the recreation aspects of the projects.

"Like Smithville Lake, this is not a destination lake," Dickerson said. "People come here because they live near here. They get off at five o'clock and are on the water by 6:30. It's a way of life for the people who live here."

Last Word by **Ed Kolodziej**



While growing up during the 1950s and 1960s in South Chicago, an urban industrial area at the Southwestern tip of Lake Michigan, it was an everyday experience to hear people speak in English with the accents of many other languages. Good-hearted people such as Mrs. Mareck, the enterprising bakery owner, greeted customers in English with a Polish accent. At the newspaper agency, Mr. Wallman, a concentration camp survivor and my first employer, spoke in English with a thick German accent when he encouraged newspaper delivery kids to solicit new subscriptions and win a trip to the Seattle Space Needle. And, with no predictable schedule, a nameless and very mysterious looking Gypsy man walked the neighborhood sidewalks selling scarves in English with a very thick Romany accent. The examples continue with Joe, the pizzeria owner, who made a lasting impression when he called an order to the kitchen in English with an Italian tenor accent. At the paint store, my second employer, Mr. Heiferman explained in English some of the more difficult sounds of the Hebrew language. At times, an African-American man, on his way to the steel mill, stopped at the house to talk with my father; the co-worker spoke in a dialect of English that, at my young and uninformed age, I mistook as an accent of another language. Another memorable person is Danny, the grocery store owner, who shouted, in English with a Greek accent, that I was too young to buy cigarettes. Lastly, I recall my playmates Ernesto and Hector who explained the piñata, Mexico and their grandmother's ethnic cooking, in English with a Spanish accent.

The people I mentioned, and many more like them, spoke English as best as possible. Too often though, their speech was characterized as "broken English," but there was nothing broken about it—it worked. They all communicated in English to the community at large, while retaining their native language or dialect, and cultural identity.

During that time, however, an anglicization movement appeared in the neighborhood. The movement

advocated English-only and forced assimilation into the American culture. The results were mostly negative. Anglicization found its way into the home. It caused people to feel embarrassed about their native language and other aspects of their cultural heritage. To speak the language of their parents suddenly was not acceptable, inside or outside the home. Many families adopted English pronunciations of their surnames or anglicized them to hide their ethnic origin. Anglicization also found its way into the school. On an unforgettable day, the school administration meekly bent to an implied threat of losing accreditation. With no fanfare, all foreign language books were collected, boxed, and taken away. No one objected. It was English-only in the parish elementary and high school for many years after. By the 1970s, the anglicization movement lost influence and a resurgence in language studies made it possible for students, such as my youngest sister, to learn Spanish and Polish in addition to English in the same elementary school that I attended.

Left alone to take its course, the free and natural process of cultural assimilation will ensure that English remains the common language of choice for communicating with all our neighbors. And, since English is firmly established in our country, legislating it as the official language is unnecessary.

The real issues today are not with language, but with barriers to immigration, education, citizenship and employment.



Ed Kolodziej is the Kansas City District Hispanic Employment Manager.



Bald eagle production was at an all-time high in 2006 at Kansas City District lake projects. The district fledged 56 eaglets from 31 nests at nine lake projects. “Fledged” means to leave or fly from the nest for the first time. Biologists always refer to the number of birds fledged because some eaglets are occasionally lost to storms, wildfires and other accidents. In short, the number of eggs hatched doesn’t always equal the number of young eagles to leave the nest alive. Harry S. Truman Dam and Reservoir was the largest producer of fledged eaglets with 34 from 19 nests. *Photo by Mike Watkins, wildlife biologist*