

KANSAS CITY DISTRICT'S NEWS MAGAZINE

HEADLAND ENCOUNTER



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FEBRUARY 2007

FORT RILEY

gets a

Combat Aviation Brigade



A CENTURY OF VISION, ACHIEVEMENT & SERVICE

FEATURES



Corps employees crowd into the new cafeteria conference room to listen to Col. Mike Rossi during his town hall session Feb. 15. During the session, Rossi mentioned several things, to include his communication strategy, several of the district's initiatives for 2007 and the upcoming 100th anniversary celebration. Near the conclusion of the town hall, names of employees who had deployed were drawn for free parking spots for a month. Congratulations to William Empson, Sharon McDonald, Charles Sellmeyer, Vanessa Bauders and Abraham Curry, Jr. CENWK-PA Photo

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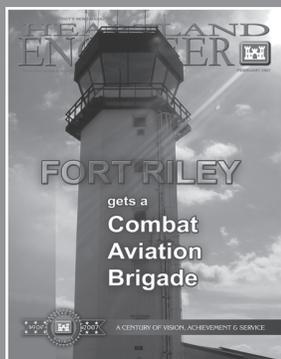
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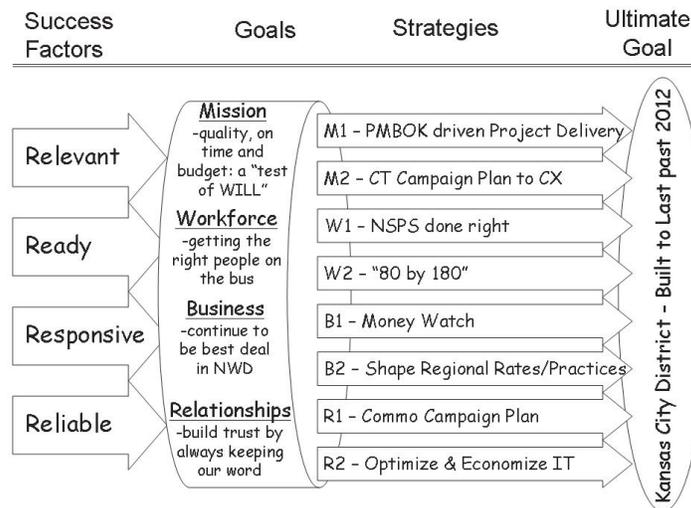
HEARTLAND ENGINEER

FEBRUARY 2007
VOL. 5, NO. 2

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ON THE COVER:

This air traffic control tower located at Marshall Army Airfield at Fort Riley, Kan., will be revamped during construction for the 1st Combat Aviation Brigade which has been relocated from Germany. The first contract for the project was awarded in March. Photo by Kelly Ryan



COL Michael A. Rossi

Part of the duty of a leader is to “make sense of it all” for those he leads. In the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, “all” is a big word. This organization we serve is so complex, the stakeholders so diverse, the missions so vast and the importance of it all to the Nation so strategic, that defining it all defies simple explanations. Are we fundamentally in the “quality of life” business—quality of our waters (Civil Works), quality of our environment (HTRW), and quality of our military installations (Military)? Or are we simply the nation’s handyman—anything, anywhere, anytime (Project Delivery)?

Well, we are actually more than any of the above constructs. This is the challenge for our senior leadership, and this is why there’s so much guidance—three USACE Campaign Goals, eight Enabling Capabilities, seven PMBP Imperatives, seven Environmental Operating Principles, four Civil Works Strategies, to name a few. A big part of the survey feedback I receive laments “there are so many priorities, that everything is a priority!” So, allow me to try to once again to “make sense of it all.”

From “Keeping Score,” by Mark Brown, the following framework shows the nesting of all these seemingly disparate components. Mission & Vision drive Key Success Factors, which in turn drive Performance Metrics. Metrics drive Goals & Objectives. Goals ultimately drive Strategies. So, we’ve relied upon USACE to determine the vision, success factors and metrics, Northwest Division to set the overall goals and objectives, and the district to develop the required strategies to make it all work.

In 2005 Lt. Gen. Carl Strock outlined four key success factors in his Vision for our Corps—Relevant, Ready, Responsive, Reliable. Our skills are Relevant to our Nation. We stand Ready to provide solutions to challenges. We are selfless and Responsive when called upon, in peace and war. Lastly, we are Reliable in delivering on our commitments.

These USACE success factors drive and determine Northwest Division Campaign Plan goals (for fiscal years 2008 through 2012). Those goals are Mission, Workforce, Business and Relationships. Mission gets at Project Delivery and is simply delivering quality projects on-time and on-budget. Workforce is acquiring, shaping, training and rewarding our human capital. Business includes regional budget and accounting practices. Our goal is to continue to be the best deal in NWD and the Corps. Lastly, Relationships are all about trust—trust is gained by a solid track record of keeping our word. Strategies are activities implemented to achieve our goals. For each of the four goals, I’ve laid out two strategies each—again, trying to keep it simple and keep us focused. I’ve assigned a champion and project manager to each strategy to develop a Project Management Plan for each strategy. Each will be writing an article for the Heartland Engineer in this and the coming issues to explain the strategy they are championing. To achieve our Mission Goal, the two strategies are PMBOK-driven Project Delivery and Contracting Campaign Plan to Center of Excellence. For our Workforce Goal, the two strategies are NSPS Done Right and “80 by 180.” To meet our Business Goal, the two strategies are Money and Metrics Matters and standing up a 21st century Records Management Center. For our Relationships Goal, the strategies are to develop and execute a Communications Campaign Plan and to Build and Enhance our Partnerships.

Again, each of these strategies will be detailed in future articles to help you better understand the Kansas City District’s priorities (it still is fundamentally, Project Delivery) and our particular focus in the USACE big picture. If we do it right, we’ll have built the Kansas City District to last well past 2012.

Hooah! Col.
Mike Rossi

The second decade of the *Kansas City District*



By Eric Cramer

World Events

1918

- ~The U.S. Congress establishes time zones and approves daylight saving time
- ~World War I ends

1919

- ~Einstein's theory of general relativity is tested/confirmed
- ~The U.S. Congress approves the 19th Amendment to the United States Constitution, which would guarantee suffrage to women, and sends it to the U.S. states for ratification.

1920

- ~Prohibition begins in the United States
- ~The first game of the Negro National League baseball is played

1921

- ~Communist Party of China is officially founded
- ~During an Armistice Day ceremony at Arlington National Cemetery, the Tomb of the Unknown is dedicated by President Warren G. Harding.

1922

- ~First successful insulin treatment of diabetes occurred
- ~The British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) begins radio service in the United Kingdom.

1923

- ~*Time Magazine* hits newsstands for the first time.
- ~The Walt Disney Company is founded

1924

- ~Great fire in London harbor occurred
- ~The 1924 Winter Olympics open in France, inaugurating the Winter Olympic Games.

1925

- ~The Chrysler Corporation is founded by Walter Percy Chrysler.
- ~Charles Jenkins achieves the first synchronized transmission of pictures and sound

1926

- ~Gertrude Ederle becomes the first woman to swim the English Channel from France to England
- ~U.S. Route 66 was established.

1927

- ~The first transatlantic telephone call was placed from New York City to London
- ~The Great Mississippi Flood affects 700,000 people in the greatest national disaster in US history

The riverboat Molly B, seen in 1959, shows the evolution of the movement of freight on the Missouri River following the days of the paddlewheel steamboats. Creating a navigational channel on the Missouri River was the primary mission of the Kansas City District in its early years. Photo provided

It is said March “comes in like a lion and goes out like a lamb,” and much the same can be said about operations in the Kansas City District during the 1920s.

The beginning of the period was a time when many national interests were opposed to further development on the river, and many defense resources had been reduced in support of World War I.

In 1918, the federal government had commandeered the Missouri fleet of boats and barges to support the war effort on the Mississippi River, which was seen as a better river “highway” than the Missouri.

As result of these and many other factors, the river’s navigational channel deteriorated. According to “Soundings-100 years of the Missouri River Navigation Project” by John Ferrell, only 35 percent of the proposed six-foot-deep channel project was complete by 1921. The Kansas City District could only report a dependable (low water) depth of 4.5 feet on its improved area downstream of Kansas City.

At a nationwide level, interest in navigation on the Missouri River was at a low point. It was an area where the commander of the Kansas City District disagreed with local political interests. The commander, Maj. Gilbert Wilkes recommended suspending all work on the river except maintenance.

The political organization known as the Mississippi Valley Association didn’t agree, and was successful in

gaining \$1.2 million appropriated in 1923. Work on restoring the channel in the lower reach of the river began again.

By 1925, a new local organization devoted to river navigation had formed.

The Missouri River Navigation Association held a Missouri River Improvement Conference in October 1925. Its keynote speaker was future president Herbert Hoover, who was then serving as the Secretary of Commerce. Hoover may have been readying for the presidential campaign which saw him elected in 1932. During his visit to Kansas City, he also addressed an association of carbonated beverage bottlers and met with Walter Simpson Dickey, owner of the Kansas City Journal-Post newspaper, according to his daily appointment calendar for 1925.

Hoover told the convention his vision of the Missouri River included a nine-foot-deep navigational channel extending to Sioux City, Iowa.

Hoover wasn’t the only prominent citizen involved with the Missouri River Navigation Association. Its vice president was real estate magnate J.C. Nichols, famous for founding Kansas City’s Country Club Plaza shopping district.

By 1926, the Kansas City District’s new commander, Maj. Cleveland C. Gee, recommended a plan based on a four-year study by the district. His plan said the six-foot channel to Sioux City was possible, and he recommended a six-foot channel at least to Omaha, Neb. Gen. Harry Taylor, chief of engineers, rejected the project as economically unjustifiable.

Congress preferred a revised version of the more ambitious plan outlined by Hoover, authoring the extension of the navigation channel to Sioux City and appropriating \$12 million for the project. The method to provide the channel was the same originally proposed in the 1880s by Maj. Charles Suter of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers—forcing the river to scour its own channels by positioning structures to both guide the current and to trap silt.

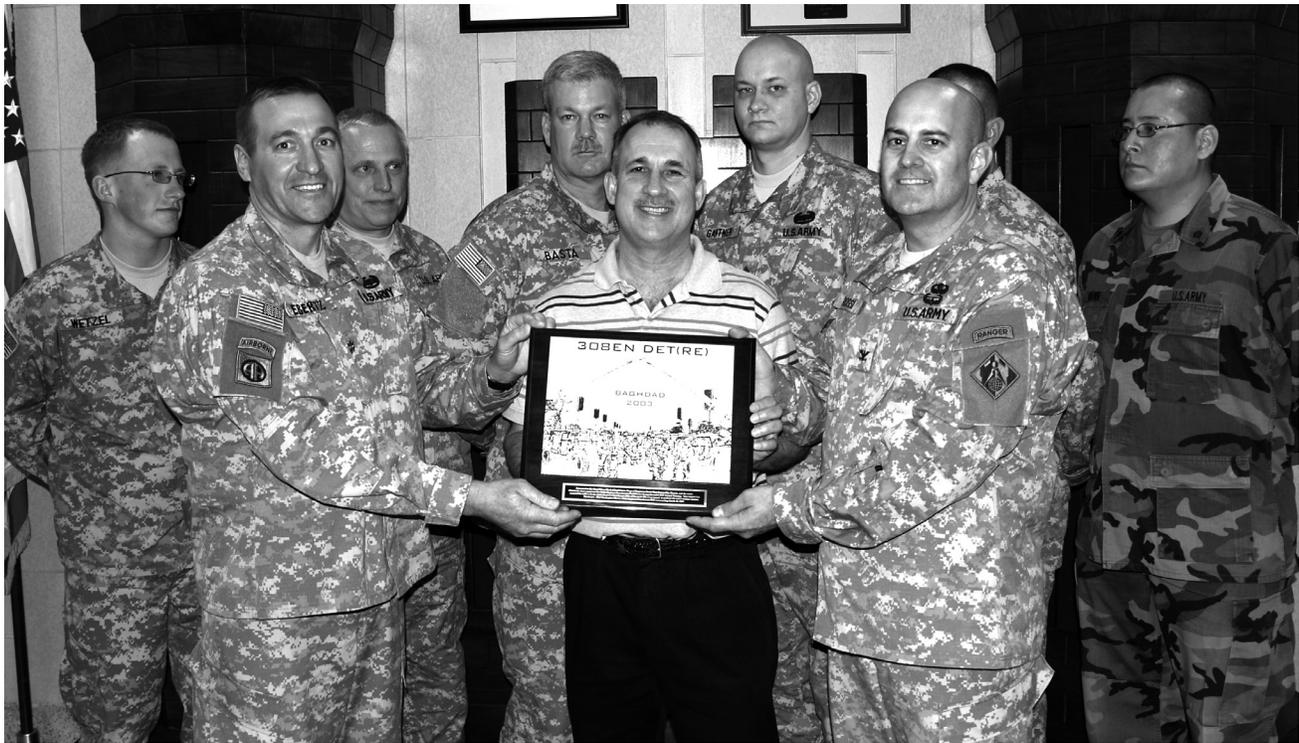
Despite this input, traffic on the river waned throughout the 1920s, going out “like a lamb.” By the next, Depression-wracked decade, the river was little used for navigation. The project did not reach its uniform depth goals for almost 20 years.



The Silver Bow, a “St. Louis and Omaha packet,” (meaning a freight ship that moved between St. Louis and Omaha) is an example of the Missouri River’s freight traffic in the 19th and early 20th centuries. Political leaders felt maintaining such traffic offered competition to railroads and ensured lower prices for farmers shipping grain. Photo provided

Editor’s note: Figures used in this article are taken from the book “Soundings – 100 years of the Missouri River Navigation Project” by John Ferrell.

A look in from the OUTSIDE



The 308th Engineer Detachment spends their annual training with the Kansas City District

By Eric Cramer

Anyone who has ever purchased a house or entered into a long-term lease agreement knows how difficult real estate acquisition can be—but most of them aren't working at the juncture of the military and civilian worlds and frequently in a war zone, as the real estate specialists from the 308th Engineer Detachment, 96th Regional Readiness command frequently must.

Seven members of the unit, based in Bismarck, N.D., spent two weeks of annual training with the Kansas City District, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers this spring, receiving hands-on experience in real estate acquisition.

"We came here to get on-the-job training, hands-on experience in how to lease land and property during deployment overseas," Maj. Christopher Ebertz, unit commander, said.

Ebertz said members of the 308th worked as an assessment team in Iraq before many other assets were on hand in 2003, entering into the Corps' database the former government properties that would be transferred to civilian control following the end of active hostilities.

"Since then we've been to three Contingency Real Estate Support Team certifications," Ebertz said. "We also trained with the Tulsa District last year. One of our key goals is to learn to work closely with the Corps."

Maj. Christopher Ebertz (first row, far left) and the 308th Engineer Detachment (RE) presents Greg Wilson (first row, center) and Col. Mike Rossi (first row, far right) with a plaque to show their appreciation to the Kansas City District. The 308th used its annual training as an opportunity to learn real estate acquisition from the district's Real Estate Division. Second row, left to right: 2nd Lt. Andrew Wetzel, Master Sgt. Danny Funke, Capt. Michael Basta, Staff Sgt. Matthew Gartner, Sgt. Ellis Stevens and Spc. Leland Brown.

Photo by Diana McCoy

He said the unit must work closely with the Corps in the field environment where its members serve to augment CREST specialists in real estate operations.

"One member of the unit is currently with the Afghanistan Engineer District. We see sending that person there is a way to keep our civilians safer while making our Soldiers smarter," he said.

Ebertz said the unit had three training goals this year; familiarization with real estate operations both in CONUS and in "contingency" environments; basic familiarity with the Kansas City District; and hands-on learning about real estate acquisition.

"We had to capture those three goals—I think in the process we learned a lot about the processes and the challenges in working with the Corps. We also had a superb overview of the district by project, personnel and priority of effort."

The learning experience extended beyond just real estate, according to Sgt. Scott Stevens, a real estate specialist with the 308th.

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Four members of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Kansas City District attended the 11th Annual International Boating and Water Safety Summit held recently in San Antonio, Texas.

The purpose of the conference, hosted by the National Water Safety Congress and the National Safe Boating Council, was to provide a forum for the exchange of boating and water safety information. More than 350 professionals from the United States and foreign countries attended the conference.

Gary Foster, one of the district's natural resource management specialists, attended the summit. He is also the head of the district's public safety committee.

"Every year we get together with the purpose of sharing information on water safety and the different programs that have been developed by various agencies," Foster said. "In conjunction with that, several presentations were made by various agencies on how they are promoting water safety through their organizations."

Foster said he learned about the most current activities agencies are doing to better educate the public and thinks the information he took away from the conference will help him strengthen the district's public safety plan.

Chris Beaman, the district's chief of Safety and Occupational Health, also attended the conference and said it is a great opportunity to network with people in the water safety community, not only within the Corps but also with outside organizations. He also appreciated the breakout sessions.

"One of the sessions I attended had an interactive panel with six to eight teenagers aged 15 to 17," Beaman said. "The teens told us what does and does not encourage them to wear life jackets. Their answers were interesting and useful to know."

One of the issues that came out of the interactive panel was how peer pressure played a big role with teens in deciding if they were going to wear a life jacket or not.

"The teens also talked about the color and cut of the life jackets, and they said they would rather have people come talk to them face-to-face about water safety," Beaman said.

Karim Williams, a safety specialist in the Safety Office, attended the breakout session with Beaman.

"One of the things I found interesting was when the teens said they would be influenced to wear a life jacket if someone close to them had a fatal accident," Williams said.

Kansas City District employees attend water safety summit



Jewell Welsh (center), commodore of the Topeka Coast Guard Flotilla, accepts the Regional National Water Safety Congress Award from Tom Plante (left), vice president of Region 2, and Arlyn Hendricks (right), president of the National Water Safety Congress, during the awards banquet at the 11th Annual International Boating and Water Safety Summit in San Antonio, Texas. Bunnie Watkins, a natural resource management specialist at Perry Lake, nominated Welsh and his wife for their volunteer efforts. Photo by Bunnie Watkins



The 1st Combat Aviation Brigade on a fast track

Ready or not, here I come . . .



This artist's rendering shows the A-2 hangar from the rear. The hangar is part of the Combat Aviation Brigade Complex being built at Fort Riley, Kan. The first contract to start work on the brigade was awarded to Burns & McDonnell. Rendering provided by Burns & McDonnell

By *Diana McCoy*

This phrase begins the popular children's game of Hide and Seek, but these days, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and officials at Fort Riley are doing a lot of seeking. Why? Because the 1st Combat Aviation Brigade is headed to Fort Riley after a 21-year stint in Germany, and with that move comes the need for buildings and other amenities to house the brigade.

"During the next three fiscal years, we're going to spend about \$307 million in military construction dollars for this Combat Aviation Brigade," said Kelly Ryan, project manager for the Kansas City District. "We are going to revamp the existing Marshall Army Airfield and build everything they need in order to bed down the CAB."

As part of Base Realignment and Closure 2005, the brigade was selected to move to Fort Riley, and in March, the first contract was issued for \$93,884,000 to begin the necessary work.

The project is needed to support the permanent stationing of the brigade, and multiple facilities are required for the additional 2,750 Soldiers. The facilities are needed immediately because the brigade has already arrived from Germany, and it is currently using temporary structures and the existing facilities of other Fort Riley units which are deployed.

"We just completed a project which provided temporary facilities to the CAB," said Ryan, "But this new project involves all permanent facilities, specifically, 56 facilities at four different project locations around the installation."

The project is being funded incrementally, and the fiscal year 07 increment at Marshall Army Airfield includes two battalion headquarters buildings, an aviation unit operations building, three company operations facilities, an aircraft maintenance hangar, aircraft maintenance parking aprons, aviation parking aprons, five barracks, an administrative facility, an aircraft crash rescue station and other primary and supporting facilities.

Some of the challenges the engineers will face while building the project include the fact that the airfield will remain operational during construction.

"We are going to try to work around the helicopters already stationed there, and the numbers are increasing," Ryan said. "So, they are going to have to operate while we're tearing up pavements and building new ones to use."

We don't want to interrupt their operations, so we've got phasing plans in place and we're going to have to communicate really well with the airfield command."

Another challenge for the FY08 portion of the project includes the new Corps Centers of Standardization, in which eight centers of standardization will be responsible for the development and execution of certain facilities. Use of these centers will be incorporated into the next increment of this project.

"The Corps is reinventing the process for MILCON because the legacy standards and processes will not provide timely, cost-effective, quality facilities," said J. Joseph Tyler, the acting deputy director for military programs, at the 10th Annual Small Business Conference in November. "The new processes will provide a greater emphasis on facility planning, standardization of facilities and processes with a greater emphasis on partnering with industry.

Ryan said the Corps Centers of Standardization is a huge topic right now because it means the district's engineers won't be designing many of their own facilities, so transitioning into this new way of doing things is a little hard to swallow.

"There's going to be a shift in FY08," Ryan said. "But we've got the first increment of the airfield awarded already, so that won't really affect the first increment right now," Ryan said.

Ryan and his team will also be utilizing the Model Request For Proposals, an acquisition strategy for Army Transformation. Model RFP sets objectives for time, cost and quality. It establishes aggressive time goals, it reduces costs by 20 percent, and it maximizes quality within time and cost constraints.

"When we first started assembling the procurement packages for the FY07 increment, we hadn't used the Model RFP," Ryan said.

"It only came down when we were about to get started on this project, so our engineers were on a learning curve. And even then, the requirements were continually changing, so we had to constantly check for updates. Overall, I think our PDT did a great job adapting to the changes."

Rex Goodnight, Kansas Area Engineer for the district, also weighed in on the complications of the project.

"We still have to maintain some level of operation while we do the work, and it is going to be a proving ground for how we use the military transformation Model RFP and how we start to integrate and work with the Corps Centers of Standardization," said Goodnight. "This is a daunting task ahead of us, and this is something that is very critical to the needs of the Army."

The entire project is expected to be complete by the end of 2009. Burns & McDonnell in Kansas City, Mo., received the first contract for the project, which entails construction of an airfield runway, pavements and southside facilities.

"Burns & McDonnell have been an important company in Kansas City," Ryan said. "They've completed a lot of designs for us in the past, and this may be our first effort together on the construction side. I'm pretty confident this project will go well."

"This is a large program on a very fast track, so it's going to take a lot of due diligence and a lot of solid timely communication to pull this off," said Goodnight. "But I think we have a great team assembled all the way from the PM to the staff, and we're ready to take it on."



Several existing buildings will be remodeled and expanded in order to accommodate the Combat Aviation Brigade, already on its way to Fort Riley, Kan., from Germany. The project delivery team will have several obstacles to overcome in order to provide the needed facilities within the given timeframe. Photo Provided





Steps to aligning the district's workforce

Experience from personnel demonstration projects points to the need for increased communication between supervisors and employees in order to achieve successful performance management results. As DoD links individual performance to organizational goals and increases performance accountability, it is important to recognize the significant changes involved and to address them.

Transition to NSPS requires:

Increased communication between supervisors and employees, a clear understanding of how to link individual performance to organizational goals, employees understanding their roles and responsibilities and managers, supervisors, and employees, at all levels, being held accountable

Employees and managers are provided with training to prepare, understand and effectively use the new human resources systems and processes. Just-in-time training is provided so that those affected will have the most up-to-date information when they need it most. Implementation of the training also helps assess the readiness of organizations to transition to NSPS.



- An updated Conversion Tool & Estimated WGI Buy-in calculator based on 2007 NSPS pay tables

Added Performance Management information that will help employees define and understand pay pools and their structure, the pay pool process, structure, pay pool panels, mock pay pools, discretionary performance payouts, and self assessments.

Tools and Training for success with NSPS

Training is critical to successful implementation of NSPS. NSPS training is designed to meet the different needs of organizations and employees entering NSPS.

As DoD implements NSPS, training takes on a more prominent role. There are two training tracks:

1. Component-specific training, including soft skill training (communications skills, team building, etc.) prepares employees for the transition to NSPS. Information is available through each component.
2. Operational training provides employees with specific information needed to work within NSPS. Employees will attend classroom training prior to transitioning to NSPS. Information is available through each component.

There will be a significant change-management effort, led by the Components, to precede the implementation of NSPS within the Department's line organizations.

NSPS 101 Updated in January 2007

The Program Executive Office, NSPS, has modified and expanded the NSPS 101 web-based training course. Employees who already completed NSPS 101 are not required to retake the training but may find the updated information helpful. NSPS 101 now includes:

- An updated percentage breakdown of DoD career groups
- Updated rate range information based on 2007 NSPS pay tables

New iSuccess Training Course Helps Employees Write Job Objectives and Self Assessments

The Program Executive Office, NSPS, has developed a web-based training course to assist employees in writing effective job objectives and self assessments. iSuccess is a result of important feedback from Spiral 1.1 employees. Draft job objectives and accomplishments can serve as a starting point for discussions between employees and their supervisors as they work to finalize mission-aligned objectives.

The narrated iSuccess course guides the employee through the writing process using a step-by-step approach. A “virtual coach” and “virtual employees” are added features that provide important tips and techniques for writing, as well as specific examples. iSuccess helps employees:

- Write effective job objectives using the S.M.A.R.T. (Specific, Measurable, Aligned, Realistic/Relevant, Timed) framework
- Select appropriate Contributing Factors that reflect how to accomplish job objectives
- Understand the impact of Performance Indicators on the development of job objectives
- Practice writing a Self Assessment based on accomplishments and achievements

A self-paced tool, iSuccess is useful at any time during the performance management process. The employee can place drafted work into a Word document and save it to the computer desktop for easy access at any time. The employee can also copy and paste these job objectives into the Performance Appraisal Application.

And the Answer Is . . . Answers to your questions

Question: How can an employee’s salary increase within the same pay band?

Answer: Pay progression within the band can be accomplished in a variety of ways and is affected by employee performance and contribution to the organization’s mission.

When an employee changes position within the same or comparable pay band under NSPS, it is considered a reassignment. Employees are no longer bound by narrow work definitions tied to discrete grade levels. NSPS gives employees the flexibility to move more easily to other positions and enhances opportunities for career growth and development. Here are examples of how an employee’s salary can increase within the same pay band:

- Performance-based increase—A performance-based increase is tied to the annual performance rating and is added to base salary. Employees are eligible to receive a performance-based increase if they have a rating of record of Level 3 (Valued Performer) or higher.
- Reassignment—A reassignment occurs when an employee moves, voluntarily or involuntarily, to a different position or set of duties within his/her pay band or to a position in a comparable pay band. A reassignment may result in a pay increase up to 5%. This increase is discretionary and must be administered fairly and within component guidelines.

- Rate Range Adjustment—A rate range adjustment is an increase to the minimum and/or maximum of the pay band that is adjusted based on market drivers. Employees are eligible to receive a rate range adjustment if they have a rating of record of Level 2 (Fair) or higher.
- Local Market Supplement (LMS)—An LMS adjustment is an additional payment to employees in specified local market areas, occupations, specializations, or pay bands. LMSs are added to base salary. Employees are eligible for an LMS adjustment if they have a rating of record of Level 2 (Fair) or higher.
- Accelerated Compensation for Developmental Positions (ACDP)—ACDP may be used to provide an increase to employee base salary, a bonus, or a combination of these. It only applies to employees in Pay Band 1 who are participating in Component developmental programs.
- An updated self assessment with questions that reflect NSPS 101 updates.
- An updated course evaluation with questions that reflect NSPS 101 updates.
- Links to printable versions of the 2007 NSPS pay tables.



Dr. John Hope Franklin Photo provided by Duke University Photographic Department

From slavery to freedom: Africans in the Americas

“If the house is to be set in order, one cannot begin with the present; he must begin with the past.”—Dr. John Hope Franklin

The Association for the Study of African American Life and History, founded by Dr. Carter G. Woodson in 1915 to promote the study of black history, selects the theme for Black History Month each year. The theme for Black History Month is selected each year by the Association for the Study of African American Life and History, founded by Dr. Carter G. Woodson in 1915 to promote the study of black history.

The 2007 theme is in honor of Dr. John Hope Franklin, author of “From Slavery to Freedom: a History of Negro Americans,” first published in 1947. It includes scholarship on slavery, the Civil War, the Reconstruction period and the Harlem Renaissance. It also discusses recent developments in African American history—housing issues, justice administration and recent cultural and educational changes. Dr. Franklin’s accomplishments include earning a doctorate from Harvard, first black full professor of history at Brooklyn College, chair of University of Chicago’s history department, John B. Duke Professor at Duke University, head of President Clinton’s Initiative on Race, and 1995 winner of the Presidential Medal of Freedom.

The Kansas City District also honored its own local legend during Black History Month, Sylvester C. Myers, the first black employed by the Kansas City District Engineering Division (now known as the Engineering and Construction Division). On Feb. 26, a brown bag luncheon was conducted for Mr. Myers to share his story returning to the Kansas City District after 40 years. He was employed with the district from 1962 to 1967. During his tenure, he worked within various sections due to promotions. Mr. Myers was also a member of the district’s basketball team which played at the Armourdale Center and during half-time at Kansas City Royals games.

Mr. Myers is currently the president and chief executive officer of S.C. Myers & Associates, Inc., a construction management firm he owns and founded in Washington, D.C. in 1988, after retiring from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers with 25 years of service. He spent his last 11 years serving as the “budget watchdog” of the Corps’ \$20 billion military construction program in Saudi Arabia. Some of his accomplishments include writing his memoir “From Coal Fields to Oil Fields & Beyond, a Life in Pursuit of All I Could Be.” He was also president of the American Association of Cost Engineers International, National Capitol Section. He served as director of ACEI Region II and chairman of the ACEI Government Liaison Committee. He received the 1999 Presidential Citation from the National Association for Equal Opportunity in Higher Education in recognition of exemplary experiences that honor Bluefield State College in West Virginia.

The Equal Employment Opportunity Office also featured a display of John “Buck” O’Neil, longtime Kansas City Monarch and co-founder of and inspiration for the Negro Leagues Baseball Museum. O’Neil also received the Presidential Medal of Freedom. Buck O’Neil represented excellence and determination both on and off the baseball field.” He died in October 2006 at age 94.

Thus, the Kansas City District EEO Office strives to continue to train and educate employees about Special Emphasis Groups by information sharing. I feel it is important to understand and celebrate historical events to gain a mere understanding and to recognize the significance of equal employment opportunity, affirmative employment and diversity and why they are an integral part of the Kansas City District’s mission.

—Natalie Joiner, chief of the Equal Employment Opportunity Office

The **AGGRESSIVE** hiring strategy

At Col. Mike Rossi's town hall on Feb. 15, he discussed all of our corporate strategies for this year. One of those strategies is "80 in 180." As the division chief with more than a third of the district's resources and probably the most hiring actions, I am the champion for this strategy. Chris Prinslow, our chief of Construction Branch, is the project manager for this effort, which, as you know, means he has done all of the work.

So what does the 80 in 180 strategy really mean? You might recall we had a similar strategy last year. In fiscal year '06, it was about hiring 80 people by the 180th day of the fiscal year. How did we do? We were able to hire 35 new people by the end of March 2006. In fact, overall last year, we completed approximately 200 hiring actions, including internal moves and summer staff. While that is good, we also lost 64 permanent people, so we actually ended the year down from our projection.

Given our projected workload, we agreed we needed a similar strategy for this fiscal year. And while we didn't change the strategy name, we did change our approach. Simply stated, this year we will employ an aggressive strategy to recruit and hire personnel in the Kansas City District; the objective being to execute our original manpower and budget staffing plan for FY07.

Why do we need to implement such a strategy? Because we recognize that without adequate staff to accomplish our work, we put undo stress on those of you who are asked to maintain schedules, budgets and still deliver quality products with fewer resources than were planned. We also recognize that our timeliness and quality both can suffer as a result of this. In addition, it impacts our operating budgets if we cannot execute our direct labor budget. All of this adds up to a desire to maintain adequate staffing levels. The desire has never been the issue—it has been the adherence to our staffing execution plan that has suffered. We need to put some management controls on ourselves in order to improve that performance.

So, how will we accomplish this goal? The first thing we did was to lay out our plan for the known recruitment actions for FY07. This plan was based on the anticipated workload for this year. Now, we will follow a scheduled, aggressive hiring effort to obtain the best candidates to fill those vacancies. This will include an over-hire strategy to compensate for the hiring lag we experience when staff leave with little notice or when people simply



change jobs internally. Finally, we will work toward reducing the time it takes to fill a job. It takes us too long from when a supervisor knows a staff member is leaving until the time the new person actually shows up to sit in the chair. We will measure our progress by monitoring our FTE utilization against our plan on a monthly basis and by reporting our execution at our staff meetings.

I would like to take a minute and address the over-hire strategy I mentioned. This strategy is a risk that, in the past, we have sometimes been reluctant to take. With potential downturns in workload due to decreasing civil and O&M budgets as well as initiatives such as MILCON Transformation, we have historically been somewhat conservative in our hiring approach. While we will still maintain an overall conservative hiring philosophy, we do intend to take a bit of a risk and hire some additional staff in potentially critical areas this year as the project funding allows.

Finally, what does it mean to each of you? It means by putting added emphasis on hiring, we can close the staffing gap we have experienced. More staff means more help in delivering projects; more help means better execution in regard to both time and quality; more people means more time to concentrate on the important project details; and more people means reduced stress on everyone. So, now the questions become: will we make it and how are we doing? Well, during the first quarter we had hired 17 new folks compared to losing seven people. That is a good start, but we still have much to do. This is a continual process, and we can never become complacent.

*Bill Zaner is the chief of
Engineering and Construction Division*

POST CARD FROM IRAQ



Braven Dyer (left) meets up with Army Spc. Jack Ramthun, the son of a close friend, during his deployment to Iraq. Photo provided

Small World...

One thing truly unique about working in Iraq is that every employee, contractor and serviceman captures vast and different memories.

The fondest memory I will take with me is being able to visit and get to know Army Spc. Jack Ramthun. Jack's father and I worked together in Kansas and became close friends. Jack's dad, Arde and his mom were very concerned about his deployment. I run into Jack often and share common work goals.

Jack is with the 20th Engineer Battalion and they provide tremendous support to the 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 10th Mountain Division, which is my primary focus as the Resident Engineer for the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Gulf Region Division Central District's Victory South Resident Office. We're building schools, health clinics, outdoor markets, water and sewer projects, electric generation and distribution lines, police stations, paving roads, erecting bridges and renovating Baghdad's International Airport.

When I complete my tour in August, I will take home many memories of challenges, new friends and getting to

know Jack. I hope Jack will remember me as his Iraq Godfather. ~By Braven Dyer, Resident Engineer at the Victory South Resident Office in the Gulf Region Division Central District

REFERRAL BONUS EXTENDED TO ARMY CIVILIANS

WASHINGTON- The Army has expanded its \$2K Referral Bonus program to include civilian employees, making it possible for them to earn \$2,000 while helping the Army boost enlistments.

Until March 15, the recruiting incentive - known as the "\$2K Referral Bonus" program for the regular Army and Army Reserve, and "Every Soldier is a Recruiter" in the National Guard - applied only to Soldiers and Army retirees who referred applicants who enlist, complete basic training and graduate from advanced individual training.

The bonus for referring a prospective applicant who has never served in the armed forces originated in January 2006 with a \$1,000 bonus. It was doubled in November 2006.

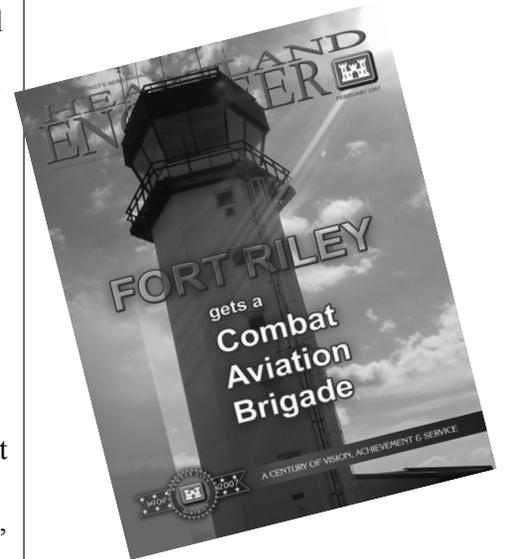
Under the newly expanded program, a Department of the Army civilian who refers a prospective recruit before the applicant meets with a recruiter is eligible for the award. Restrictions preclude the referral of an immediate family member (including an adopted or step-child). Additionally, the referral must be made via the following Web sites, respectively, for active-duty Army prospective recruits and Army National Guard prospective recruits: <https://www.usarec.army.mil/smart/> or www.1800goguard.com/esar.

Referrals for the regular Army and Army Reserve may also be made by calling U.S. Army Recruiting Command's toll-free number: (800) 223-3735. Referrals to the National Guard may be made by calling the

Guard's toll-free number: (866) 566-2472.

"As the Army Civilian Creed notes, Army civilians are dedicated members of the Army team. They support the mission, and they provide stability and continuity during war and peace," said Lt. Gen. Michael Rochelle, the Army's deputy chief of staff for personnel. "I know they are directing deserving youth to recruiters now. This will not only encourage them, but also reward them for their service."

For more information about the referral program, visit <https://www.usarec.army.mil/smart/> or call (800) 223-3735, extension 6-0473. ~By Heike Hasenauer, Army News Service



CALL TO RETIREES

The Heartland Engineer is now available online. It can be accessed at www.nwk.usace.army.mil. Click on the Heartland Engineer magazine on the right side of the page.

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 the Public Affairs at (816) 389-3486.

LOOK IN FROM THE OUTSIDE

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"We had to work along with the Corps and learn the Corps' systems, but the big take-away for me was how good these guys are," he said. "Everyone I met here was smart, knew their job, and knew the job of the person next to them—we need more of that."

He said the enthusiasm of Kansas City District employees was an example of good leadership.

"It's the kind of thing I need to know as an NCO to inspire the same kind of efforts from my troops," he said.

Ebertz said the unit was very pleased with its training, and presented Kansas City District Real Estate Chief Greg Wilson with a plaque depicting Soldiers from the unit in front of the crossed swords of the war memorial in Baghdad.

Wilson said the training provided opportunities for Kansas City District employees to learn from the members of the 308th.

"It was very rewarding. It was a lot of work preparing the training, but doing that allowed us to hone in on our skills, so it was very worthwhile," Wilson said. "We learned a lot from them while they learned from us."

KANSAS CITY DISTRICT EMPLOYEES ATTEND WATER SAFETY SUMMIT

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"I would encourage anyone involved with water safety to attend this conference, or conferences like these in the future," Foster said. "The chief of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers has said we need to reduce the fatalities at our lake projects by 40 percent. Currently, the four major causes of drowning are failure to wear a life jacket, abuse of alcohol, lack of sufficient swimming skills and hypothermia, and those are the areas we need to educate the public about."

Award

Bunnie Watkins, a naturalist resource management specialist at Perry Lake, also attended the conference and said she gathered a lot of good water safety ideas for messaging and programming to use at the lake.

"I actually attended the conference because I nominated the Perry Lake Flotilla for the Regional National Water Safety Congress Award for its exemplary water safety efforts, and they won it," Watkins said. "The Coast Guard Auxiliary is a completely volunteer force. They buy their own uniforms and use their own equipment, and they are here every weekend to educate the public and perform courtesy boat inspections. They go above and beyond, and their efforts really do make a difference."

The regional award covers a 10-state area. Six are presented annually to an individual, organization, firm or agency that has contributed the most to water safety issues or programs within a region or, as a minimum, within a multi-state area.

USACE KANSAS CITY DISTRICT RETIREES CLUB

Dear Retiree,

Yes, that is your new title! You have joined a select group of people who have served with distinction as a member of a select organization, the Kansas City District, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers.

Now it is time to relax, pursue personal interests, and begin to enjoy life without the distractions associated with a full time job! It is difficult to all of a sudden one day sever all connections with your past and let friends and co-workers with whom you have mutual interests disappear from your life forever.

You don't have to do that. There is a way to maintain contact and meet with many of your friends and associates who have retired before you. Simply join the Kansas City District's Retirees Club and become an active member!

The Club meets four times a year at an informal luncheon where we catch up on what each other is doing... maybe even hear a few tall tales! Sometimes we schedule special activities, and we always have a good time!

Our membership numbers around 200, give or take a few. We have a full slate of officers to help keep everything organized. Our dues are \$3 a year or \$10 for four years. That will insure you are placed on our mailing list to receive the membership roster and our quarterly newsletter. You will also be made aware of our planned activities.

Please take the time to fill out the form below, detach and mail it along with your check made out to the Kansas City District's Retirees Club, and join us for a million memories and great fellowship! Mail your form and check to: Doris Durst, 402 N. River, Independence, MO 64050.



Yes, I want to become a member of the Kansas City District's Retirees Club!

Enclosed is my check for (please circle one): \$3 for one year \$10 for four years

Name: _____

Spouses Name: _____

Phone Number (with area code): _____

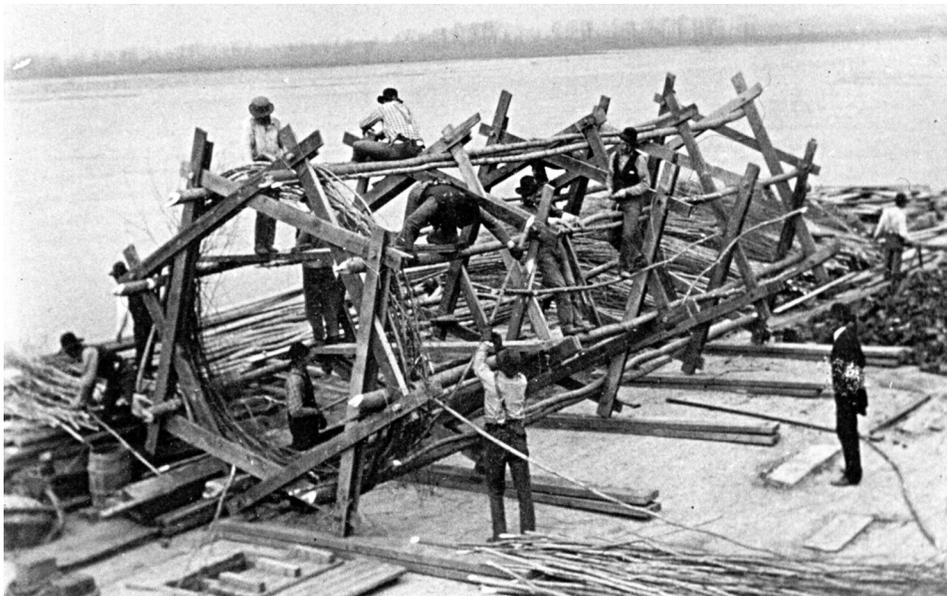
Mailing Address: _____



Gabion burs were used historically within streams or rivers for bank stabilization and were placed parallel or diagonal to flows. The gabion burs pictured (below) were built for the Missouri River below Kansas City in 1899. *Photo provided*

Kansas City District History

- ~1918 - Kansas City Navigation Company sells all its boats and barges to a Congressionally created federal barge line, which was authorized to operate between St. Louis and New Orleans.
- ~1923 - Congress appropriates \$1.2 million for channel improvements.
- ~1925 - Development advocates create the Missouri River Navigator Association. Secretary of Commerce Herbert Hoover keynotes initial meeting and describes his vision of a Mississippi Valley system of inland water, which included a nine-foot channel into the heartland with further improvements extending to Sioux City.
- ~1925 - Congress authorizes and directs the Secretary of War and the Federal Power Commission to prepare an estimate of costs to do studies of the nation's navigable streams with a view to planning mutually beneficial combinations of navigation, hydroelectric, flood control and irrigation works.
- ~1926 - Congress authorizes the extension of the navigation channel to Sioux City and authorized to be appropriated \$12 million.



This gabion burr was built for use at Howard Bend near St. Louis Missouri in 1899. *Photo provided*