

# Falls City Engineer

U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Louisville District

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Emergency Operations team partners with FEMA,  
Oregon for debris removal following wildfires







## Falls City Engineer

Vol. 13, Issue 3

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**On the cover:** Wildfires devastated Oregon in the summer of 2020. The fire, which damaged approximately 4,000 structures and one million acres, became the largest disaster in the state's history. (Photo courtesy of George Minges)

# Commander's Comments

Team Louisville,

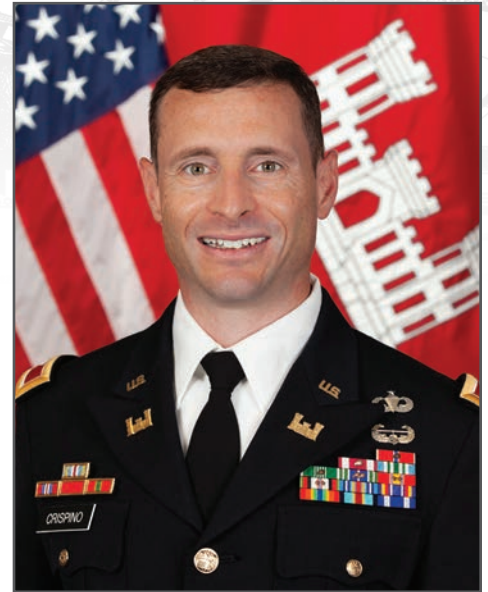
I cannot believe we are half-way through June - the year is flying by. As things slowly return to normal in our lives, I hope you are all able to do some of the activities you may have put on pause over the last year. As you enjoy time with your family and friends, whether at home or on summer vacation, be sure to look out for one another.

June is National Safety Month. As Lt. Gen. Spellmon, USACE Chief of Engineers, said, the USACE goal is no loss of life to any civilian, Soldier, or family member. Remember, every single one of you is a safety officer empowered to address and correct any safety hazard you see both on and off duty. Safety starts with you!

This month, we held our first ever Louisville District Career Week, and what a success it was. This virtual event was designed to share career development tips and opportunities with the workforce, and I found the presentations to be very informative and beneficial. I hope everyone had the chance to take part in the event.

We have been very busy, and this issue of the Falls City Engineer is jam-packed with great stories of your successes from the last few months. This edition highlights our emergency operations efforts in Oregon, Nike CD-78 environmental restoration efforts, project successes at Scott Air Force Base, a spotlight on two of our outstanding office administrators in the Upper Kentucky Area, and so much more. We continue to do great things here at the Louisville District and are proud to showcase the efforts of our team.

As we enter the summer months and recreation season, remember to keep safety in mind, whether you are enjoying some outdoor



**Col. Eric Crispino**  
Commander and District Engineer  
Louisville District  
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers

recreation activities or traveling, remember to assess and mitigate risks in your activities. Please be safe as you get out and have fun this summer.

As my one-year anniversary with the Louisville District nears, I want to reiterate how proud I am to be your commander. Thank you again for your teamwork and unwavering dedication to delivering our mission. Have a well-deserved and safe summer season.

Building Strong! Louisville Proud!


*Eric D Crispino*

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BUILDING STRONG®

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 **Please conserve:**  
**Think before you print.**

# Deputy commander makes first visit to project field sites

Abby Korfhage, public affairs

Louisville District Deputy Commander Lt. Col. Latoya Manzey has been with the Louisville District since August 2020 and was welcomed with a national pandemic, downtown civil unrest and a lot of work that required her to be on her computer for district communication efforts, leaving very little time to visit field sites – a priority for district leadership.

That changed April 28-29, when Manzey visited the Louisville District's Miami River Area lake projects: West Fork, Brookville, C.J. Brown Dam and Reservoir, Caesar Creek, and William Harsha lakes.

Manzey said she was excited to meet the lake staff, tour the project facilities and become more familiar with the project's personnel and programs.

"I would like to thank all of our team members in the Miami River Area for your hospitality during my visits," Manzey said. "It was great to get out, meet more of our team face-to-face and experience more of our district."

During her visits, Manzey learned a lot about each of the projects' history, employees and ongoing initiatives.

"West Fork Lake recently completed the emergency spillway work," said Jim O'Boyle, project manager of Caesar Creek and West Fork lakes, during an overview brief to Manzey about ongoing work at the project.

Manzey was also able to observe the progress of the routine dam improvements at Brookville Lake.

"Brookville Lake is in the process of riprap work on the dam," said Stephanie



Louisville District's Russell Curtis, Jim O'Boyle, Deputy Commander Lt. Col. Latoya Manzey, Brian Menker and Todd Jennings pose in front of the control tower at C.J. Brown Dam and Reservoir during a tour of the project site.

Ison, Brookville Lake Project Manager.

"And we are currently planning for retreat channel riprap work, as well."

While at Caesar Creek Lake in Waynesville, Ohio, Manzey toured the Great Lakes and Ohio River Division Regional Visitor Center, which is the division centerpiece for communicating the Corps' mission to the public.

"We have an average of 70,000 people come here every year and about 30,000 are students," said Kim Baker, Caesar Creek park ranger. "We about tripled our visitors during COVID."

The deputy commander took this face-to-face time to recognize several employees with Louisville District coins.

Jason Harper, Brookville Lake

maintenance mechanic was presented a commander's coin for his work in refurbishing the maintenance building at Brookville Lake. O'Boyle and Caesar Creek Lake Lead Park Ranger Matthew Palmer were recognized for their work in the realignment of West Fork Lake.

"Just like there are no two districts that are the same in USACE, the same can be said for our lake projects," Manzey said. "However, they are all very similar in their professionalism, passion, and expertise - and their investment in their respective projects is the embodiment of Louisville Proud!"

Manzey is looking forward to visiting other district field sites in the coming months.



Louisville District Deputy Commander Lt. Col. Latoya Manzey observes as Todd Jennings, Operations Division Management Support Branch chief, tests out the new interactive augmented reality sandbox in William H. Harsha Lake's visitor center in Batavia, Ohio.



Brookville Lake Maintenance Mechanic Jason Harper is presented a Commander's Coin during the Deputy Commander's site visits, April 28.



# Corps' regulatory program protects the nation's aquatic environment

Katie Newton, public affairs

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Louisville District's regulatory program is dedicated to providing strong protection to the nation's aquatic environment including wetlands and navigation, while allowing for reasonable development through fair and balanced decisions.

On May 25, 2021, Louisville District Commander Col. Eric Crispino, headed to Southwest Indiana with regulatory personnel to see first-hand how the district's regulatory program serves the nation.

The Regulatory Division, composed of 31 personnel, spread across the district headquarters and three field sites in Indiana and Kentucky, is responsible for administering the regulatory program in the majority of Indiana and Kentucky, the southeastern portion of Illinois, and the Ohio River to southwestern Ohio.

Crispino sat down with field staff at the Newburgh Regulatory Office in Newburgh, Indiana, to discuss mitigation efforts and permitting and compliance issues.

"It's an amazing mission we have in the Corps of Engineers," said Crispino. "I really like to hear about what you all do."

The Department of the Army Regulatory Program is one of the oldest in the Federal Government. Initially it served a simple, straightforward purpose: to protect and maintain the navigable capacity of the nation's waters. Time, changing public needs, evolving policy, case law, and new statutory mandates have changed the complexion of the program, adding to its breadth, complexity and authority.

The Regulatory Division evaluates



Katie Newton

*The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Louisville District's regulatory program is dedicated to providing strong protection of the nation's aquatic environment including wetlands such as this one near Elberfeld, Indiana.*

permit applications for essentially all work that occurs in "waters of the United States" that are regulated by the Corps pursuant to Section 10 of the Rivers and Harbors Act and Section 404 of the Clean Water Act. Some examples of areas that may be within the jurisdiction of the Corps include marshes, swamps, streams, creeks, rivers, ponds, lakes, seasonally saturated forested and non-forested wetlands.

Additionally, USACE monitors for compliance on issued permits and mitigation sites and initiates enforcement actions for violations of the Clean Water Act and the Rivers and Harbors Act.

"When violations occur, and when they are repeated, we act on them," said Mike Ricketts, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Louisville District Regulatory Division Chief, "Our staff go out and investigate

those impacts."

Monitoring those sites proves a heavy workload for the six staff in the Newburgh Regulatory Office, who are responsible for 72 counties across three states.

"It's a challenge. It's a lot coming at us in this office," said Jarrod Bonnicks, regulatory project manager.

"But this work is important work to make sure we're getting our aquatic resources back. We try to do the right thing by getting our resources back. That's the mission."

While on-site, the commander recognized Tre Barron, George Delancey, Sam Werner, and Jarrod Bonnicks for their efforts.

"I am extremely proud of all of our regulatory personnel. They are so patient with the everchanging program and challenging budget along with the always present demanding workload," said Ricketts. "Regardless of these challenges, they continue to deliver. They fulfill Regulatory's mission statement."

The commander and staff also toured a local mitigation site and participated in a pre-application meeting for a proposed permit near Elberfeld, Indiana.

"Col. Crispino has a very good understanding of the regulatory program, but to see the resources in person and how the program is applied, brings a greater meaning and understanding," said Ricketts. "It's like the saying, 'a picture is worth a thousand words.'"

"We are thankful for the opportunity to show him some of our area of responsibility and look forward to introducing other areas."



Katie Newton

*The commander and regulatory personnel participate in a pre-application meeting for a proposed permit near Elberfeld, Indiana.*



# Louisville District team completes Scott Air Force Base swing space project



The Scott Air Force Base Air Mobility Command swing space project included the construction of a 55,000 square foot, two-story, steel-frame office building intended to house 450 personnel. The project finished on time with less than 0.5 percent modifications.

*Abby Korfhage, public affairs*

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Louisville District recently completed the Scott Air Force Base Air Mobility Command, also known as AMC, swing space project for the future AMC Headquarters Renovation project.

The project included the construction of a 55,000 square foot, two-story, steel-frame office building intended to house the personnel.

“The purpose of the building is to provide a ‘swing space’ to allow 450 personnel from 375th Air Mobility Command to continue working during the construction of the larger Building 1600 Renovation,” said Louisville District Project Engineer Jeremy Heinemann.

The project finished on time with less than 0.5 percent modifications. This means cost growth was kept to under 0.5 percent, according to Heinemann.

“I think there are two things that made this project a big success; the first one being that the contractor finished ahead of schedule as the contract-required completion date was April 1, and this project was considered substantially complete March 29,” said Heinemann. “The other thing that made this a success was our ability to keep modifications to a minimum. The base contract was awarded for \$14,793,000 and there was only \$30,166 added to the original contract.”

Although the project was a success, that does not mean there were not challenges the team had to overcome.

“The biggest challenge was providing a finished product in a short period of time while adding the complexities of COVID,” said Heinemann. “For example, the prime contractor experienced significant delays in receiving 3-inch by 8-inch lumber, which was critical to prefabricating the floor and roof systems.”

The project was to be completed in 300 calendar days, and the team only

added seven days due to unforeseen site conditions.

Louisville District construction division leadership said the project was a success due to efforts by the project delivery team, close coordination with the stakeholders on base, and a very motivated contractor.

“Jeremy’s efforts on this project was one of the biggest reasons this project was successful,” said Jay Fowler, Illinois area engineer.

The 375th Air Mobility Command accepted the facility for use, April 1, 2021.



The Louisville District completed the Scott Air Force Base Air Mobility Command, also known as AMC, swing space project for the future AMC Headquarters Renovation project, March 29.



# Louisville District furnishes new DoDEA school in Guantanamo Bay

Katie Newton, public affairs

The new W.T. Sampson Elementary-High School on Guantanamo Bay Naval Base in Cuba opened its doors to approximately 275 students this spring, thanks in part to the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Louisville District.

Jared Korfhage, USACE Louisville District project manager within the Planning, Programs, and Project Management Division's Reserve Support Branch, who focuses on the furniture program in support of the Department of Defense Education Activity, recently led the successful outfitting of the new school. The project included over \$3.5 million in Furniture, Fixtures and Equipment (FF&E), Audio/Video (AV) equipment and security contracts.

"These schools have a huge impact on military families and the local communities," said Korfhage. "Knowing that the furniture will be utilized in a learning environment by students and staff on base for many years to come is very fulfilling."

The combined elementary, middle, and high school showcases the team's efforts to provide furniture with the attributes required for the 21st Century style of learning used by DoDEA.

Kristian Jolly, interior designer for the USACE Louisville District says designing a 21st learning environment is about creating a space that supports collaboration,



The information center at W.T. Sampson Elementary-High School on Guantanamo Bay Naval Base in Cuba. The USACE Louisville District led the successful outfitting of the new school.

flexibility and interactive learning.

"Furniture selections do a lot to support these design principles. Some of the furnishings you will see in a 21st century learning environment are quite a departure from the stationary forward-facing classrooms of the past," said Jolly. "We utilize a lot of mobile furnishings to allow students and teachers to easily reconfigure a furniture layout to fit their needs. You will see various levels of seating to support different activities and learning styles."

"It is rewarding to work on these projects knowing the impact they can have on a

child's education experience," she added.

Korfhage agrees and said he would have liked to go to a school like this when he was younger.

"The newly constructed state-of-the-art DoDEA schools are truly incredible, and I feel like furniture is the final piece in making them complete and usable," said Korfhage.

Since 2014, the Louisville District has partnered with DoDEA providing furniture and equipment for schools around the world—in more than seven countries—but working in Cuba presented a new set of challenges.

Korfhage said the project faced many logistical challenges including limited shipment and transportation to the island, strict access requirements for contractors, and a required two-week quarantine period for all personnel due to the COVID-19 Pandemic.

"GTMO is very different than a lot of other military bases. For travel, the only way to fly to GTMO is on the military rotator flight that has limited capacity. For deliveries, there is a barge that departs from Jacksonville, Florida once every two weeks and there is no guarantee the product would not be bumped for more critical base items," said Korfhage. "Once you actually make it to the base, the only way off is the departing flight. So, during the install if the installation team needs an extra tool or supply, there is no hardware store off base to visit."



A learning hub in the new W.T. Sampson Elementary-High School on Guantanamo Bay Naval Base in Cuba shows the 21st Century style of learning used by DoDEA.

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COVID-19 added additional complexities for the project delivery team.

“On top of all that, the Base Commander instituted a mandatory 14-day restriction of movement for all personnel arriving at the base. The contracted furniture and AV installers had to complete their quarantine in on-base lodging before any work could begin on site.”

“Those were the biggest obstacles on

this project, but I think it just made the team work together more,” said Korfhage.

Korfhage held numerous meeting and worked closely with school and DoDEA personnel, Naval Facilities Engineering Command (NAVFAC), Louisville District team members, and contractors to successfully award and install the outfitting packages to meet the school’s requirements and needs.

“There was a lot of communication from everyone to make sure questions were answered and issues were addressed. I was proud to see this project come through as a success considering all the added challenges in such a restrictive area.”

The school opened successfully in April 2021 as planned following their week-long spring break.

## Emergency Operations

# Emergency Operations team partners with FEMA, Oregon for debris removal following wildfires

*Abby Korfhage, public affairs*

Wildfires devastated Oregon in the summer of 2020. The fire, which damaged approximately 4,000 structures and one million acres, became the largest disaster in the state’s history.

Following the disaster, the State of Oregon began working with federal, state and local partners for efficient and safe cleanup of the devastation left behind.

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Louisville District Emergency Operations Debris Team was tasked with leading the debris mission as part of the Oregon Wildfire Debris Management Task Force, led by the Oregon Department of Transportation, Environmental Quality and Emergency Management.

According to the Federal Emergency Management Agency’s, also known as

FEMA’s report, from September through November 2020, wildfires damaged trees, residences and public property throughout western Oregon. An estimated 350,000 trees, located on the Oregon Department of Transportation rights-of-ways also posed an imminent threat to public facilities, public infrastructure and public safety.

Personnel from the Louisville District first deployed to Oregon in September 2020, and additional team members were sent in February 2021 to provide technical monitoring for FEMA.

Although most of the deployed personnel assisting with this mission are from USACE, Northwestern Division, leadership and oversight has remained with the Louisville District.

Louisville District employees who have deployed for this mission include

George Minges, Justin Branham, Justin Bates and Bryan Whitler. Currently there are 15 USACE personnel onsite including Roy Stone, Louisville District security specialist, as a team lead. Jeff Brooks, emergency management specialist, will be backfilling Stone after his tour is complete. Minges is currently working in a reach back status in Louisville, Kentucky, deploying periodically back to Oregon for key activities.

“Louisville District personnel have been involved since the planning stages for the mission as Subject Matter Experts,” said George Minges, Louisville District Emergency Operations chief and debris mission lead SME. “During the planning, federal, state, and local partners

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Wildfires devastated Oregon in the summer of 2020. The fire, which damaged approximately 4,000 structures and one million acres, became the largest disaster in the state’s history.



coordinated with each other to determine the roles and responsibilities for all parties involved. Now that we are in the cleanup, the SME's are leading the mission and providing information collected from the team leads and reporting the progress of the mission to FEMA."

In addition to SMEs, Louisville District personnel were also deployed as team leads.

"As team leads, they are responsible for assigning required actions to the technical monitors in their Area of Responsibility and they also ensure that the required mission staffing is met," Minges said. "They are the primary points of contact for mission information to the SMEs. The lead also reports the day's activities in their AOR up to the SME for reporting to FEMA."

The debris mission itself consists of USACE technical monitoring of the Oregon Department of Transportation's contractor efforts that are occurring, and are dispersed, from the Cascade Mountains westward from the northern border to the southern border in the state of Oregon. USACE personnel observe these operations and verify the work is being completed per FEMA regulations and guidelines.

"We continue to partner with federal, state and contractor leads to improve mission understanding and the accuracy of USACE reporting to FEMA," Minges



Northwestern Division Commander Brig. Gen. D. Peter Helmlinger recognizes Louisville District Emergency Operations chief and debris mission lead, George Minges for his efforts during his tour of the ongoing Debris Technical Monitoring Mission in Oregon, April 29.

said. "USACE provides specialized, technical expertise for oversight of fire-related debris operations. These operations include Private Property Debris Removal, Commercial Property Debris Removal and hazardous tree removal."

This year, the Louisville District also provided support in the cleanup of Hurricane Laura in Louisiana by providing technical monitors to the area. According

to Minges, these roles were similar to what is being done in Oregon by monitoring the contractors and reporting up to FEMA. However, Oregon's state-led debris removal mission is the first large mission of 2021 where the Louisville District has been the lead.

Debris operations in Oregon are currently anticipated to be complete in September 2021.



During the months of September through November 2020, wildfires damaged trees, residences and public property throughout western Oregon.



## USACE monitors, treats groundwater at Nike CD-78 FUDS site

Abby Korfhage, public affairs

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers has a diverse Environmental Program and mission that is dedicated to building a strong, sustainable environment for future generations. As part of that mission, the Louisville District manages, designs and executes a full range of cleanup and protection activities such as cleaning up sites contaminated with hazardous, toxic or radioactive waste or ordnance through the Formerly Used Defense Sites program, also known as FUDS.

Nike CD-78 is a formerly used defense site located northwest of Oxford, Ohio, in Butler County and was determined to be eligible for the FUDS program in January 1992. Since 2008 the USACE Louisville District has been monitoring and treating groundwater contamination at the site to protect human health and the environment.

Nike CD-78 was previously owned by the Department of Defense and was used as a Nike-Hercules missile site for the air defense of the nearby Cincinnati and Dayton areas. The facility was constructed in 1959 and was operational as a Nike battery from 1959 until approximately 1970, when it was deactivated.

"The site had eight aboveground structures, a bermed area containing the Former Acid Refueling Station, and three



Project personnel perform groundwater sampling at the a formerly used defense site known as Nike CD-78 located northwest of Oxford, Ohio.

underground missile magazines," said Valerie Doss, Louisville District project manager. "The U.S. Army deactivated the site in 1970 and ownership was transferred to Miami University in Ohio."

Miami University has maintained the site since that time and has been using it as a teaching research facility, a storage area for university property, a small arms firing

range for Miami University and City of Oxford security personnel, and the location of the transmitting antennae for the Miami University radio station, Doss added.

According to Ohio Environmental Protection Agency's website, due to an investigation of all former Nike Missile sites by Law Environment Services, which found high levels of volatile organic compounds in ground water, surface water, and soil around launcher areas, a remedial investigation/feasibility study was carried out for Nike CD-78 to properly identify the specific contaminants present.

Upon completion of the Remedial Investigation in 2002, and Feasibility Study in 2003, it was determined in the 2007 Decision Document that Remedial Action Objectives were necessary for groundwater to prevent ingestion of and skin contact with contaminants of concern in groundwater at concentrations greater than their remedial levels, and to restore the groundwater aquifer to levels below remedial levels for COCs. RAOs were also necessary for the former missile magazines to manage and dispose of impacted magazine water in compliance with all applicable laws and any relevant and appropriate requirements to investigate the magazines as a potential source area for nearby groundwater contamination; to eliminate the potential for the magazines to



Contractors work on drilling at the Nike CD-78 formerly used defense site where, since 2008, the Louisville District has been monitoring and treating groundwater contamination.

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be a source of further contamination; and eliminate the potential of reintroducing and isolating contaminated groundwater in the magazines.

“We completed the Remedial Action-Construction phase in 2007-2008, and the Remedial Action-Operation commenced in 2008 and continues today,” Doss said.

The Louisville District Nike CD-78 project is currently in the RA-O phase of the Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation and Liability Act process.

“The current approved remedial action for groundwater impact is Monitored Natural Attenuation,” said Doss. “MNA is a common groundwater remediation technology used for treating dissolved groundwater contaminants.”

In 2015, USACE began a Remedial Optimization Study at the former Nike CD-78 to further assess what other remedies might assist in achieving a more timely Response Complete.

“In addition to MNA, the ROS continues to the present,” said Doss. “The ROS is needed to assist in the evaluation of an alternate remedial technology for impacted ground water at the subject property, and at the impacted western adjoining farm property.”

The team agrees projects like this are important to the Corps of Engineers, local



The Nike CD-78 formerly used defense site project is expected to be completed in 2027 with a remaining estimated cost of approximately \$3.5 million.

residents, and the environment.

“We have an obligation to remediate past Department of Defense contamination,” said Mark Hauser Louisville District environmental engineer and contracting officer’s representative for the project. “It is important to the

community to ensure a safe and healthy environment.”

According to Doss, the project is expected to be completed in 2027 with a remaining estimated cost of approximately \$3.5 million.

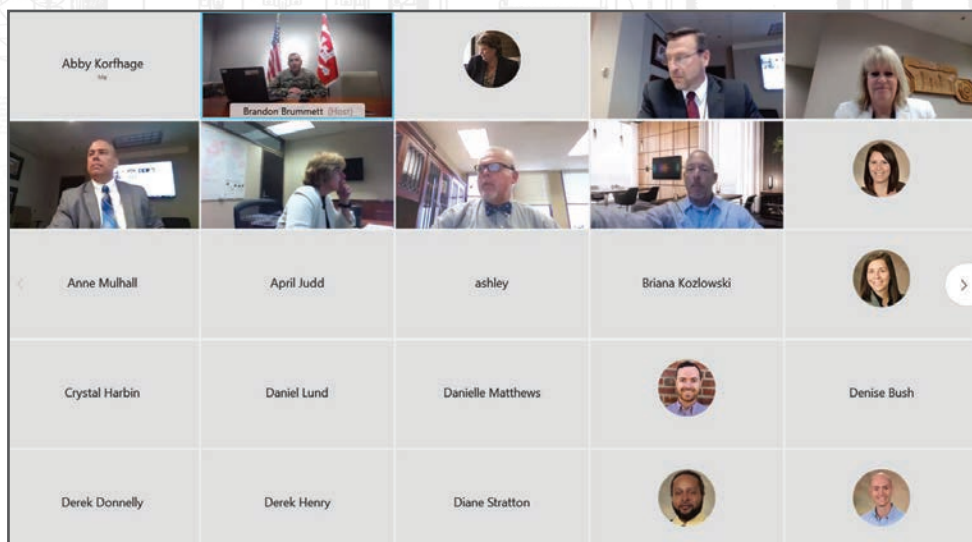
## The Louisville District has been named a World-Class Workplace as part of the Best Places to Work Awards



The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Louisville District received the recognition based on feedback from the 2020 Federal Employee Viewpoint Survey that is administered annually by the U.S. Office of Personnel Management. The Louisville District, which employs more than 1,100 employees, earned the title along with 34 other USACE divisions and districts.



# Career Week provides opportunities for Louisville District employees



The Louisville District held its first ever Career Week, June 7-10. The virtual event, hosted on WebEx, provided employees with tips on career development and job opportunities within the district.

## Abby Korfhage, public affairs

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Louisville District hosted its first ever career week for current employees, June 7-10, 2021.

"This forum will provide opportunities for the entire workforce to learn more about the district, pick up some tips on career development, and learn skills to help you make the most out of your career here in the Louisville District," said Louisville District Commander Col. Eric Crispino. "The comprehensive agenda was developed to include division and office overviews from district senior leaders, sessions to provide valuable career tips, input on resume and interview skills, a CPAC (Civilian Personnel Advisory Center) question and answer panel, and a variety of other sessions on diverse topics relevant to the workforce."

The virtual event was organized and led by Brandon Brummett, Louisville District outreach coordinator.

"This is a great opportunity to find out what specific offices do, what disciplines they hire, any training or requirements that may be needed for those positions, as well as current and upcoming vacancies," Brummett said. "It's a great opportunity to see everything the Louisville District does, and if you are thinking about making a career switch, this will give you some options to look at."

The idea of hosting a career week came out of a strategic planning session last year after feedback from the Federal Employee Viewpoint survey and Command Climate surveys the district could better provide

information on career opportunities to the workforce.

"This is an amazing place for opportunities, and there is so much in the Louisville District to do," Crispino said during his opening remarks of the event. "This will help broaden your horizon and show you the full array of career opportunities."

Several sessions had more than 100 employees online participating in the discussions and asking questions. One of the most well-attended sessions was the senior leader panel, where district leaders provided resume and interview tips.

"You interview every day for your next job," said John Bock, Engineering Division chief.

Deputy District Engineer Linda Murphy

also provided insight into what she takes into consideration when hiring new employees.

"The three things I take into consideration is the resume, interview and first-hand knowledge of that employee's work," Murphy said.

The Great Lakes and Ohio River Division directors Mr. Stephen Durrett, Programs Director, and Mr. Joseph Savage, Business Director, also joined the event and shared their personal career tips.

"You really need to have mentors," Durrett said. "It doesn't have to be formal and you can have more than one as I had several during my career."

Savage reinforced the sentiment.

"Mentorship is absolutely critical," Savage said. "You should take advantage of many of them throughout your career and listen to what they have to say. Seek out the wisdom that those folks have."

Durrett also emphasized the importance of having actual face-time and gaining experience from those type of interactions. According to Durrett, although the region is being more flexible with telework after the last 15 months of this new virtual environment there are advantages of being in-person in the workplace.

"I will tell you that face-time is extremely important in your career. It is important in learning how to interact with people," Durrett said. "You need to get that visibility out there."

Other sessions included office briefings, a CPAC question and answer panel, diversity initiatives and an interpersonal skills/emotional intelligence discussion.



Louisville District Commander Col. Eric Crispino, Engineering Division Chief John Bock and Veterans Affairs Division Chief Matt Lowe participate in a senior leader panel during career week.



# Long-time co-workers more like sisters after 23 years



Donna Bowling, Carr Creek Lake office administrator, hugs long time co-worker and friend, Patty Cockrell, Upper Kentucky Area office administrator, after sharing their story of how they found employment together with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineer Louisville District.

*Katie Newton, public affairs*

If life is more fun when your co-workers are your friends, then office administrators Patty Cockrell and Donna Bowling have hit the jackpot. The pair of long-time friends have been by each other's side through hardships and triumphs, all of which led them to find fulfilling careers with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Louisville District.

For 23 years, the pair have worked together, first in the private sector, and for the last decade in the Upper Kentucky Area in Sassafras, Kentucky. Cockrell serves as the Office Administrator for the Upper Kentucky Area Office, and in an office merely steps away, Bowling, serves as the Office Administrator for Carr Creek Lake.

Both women were working together in a private industry factory when it shut down without notice. Cockrell, employed there as a machine operator for more than 14 years, and Bowling, an auditor for 13 years, felt lost.

When it seemed they had no options, a community program for displaced workers provided the pair with hope.

"It was an opportunity to get my college degree," said Cockrell. "My husband told me it was an opportunity I couldn't pass up." Looking back now, she says it was one of the best decisions she ever made.

Without looking back, they enrolled

in Hazard Community College in Hazard, Kentucky, in pursuit of business degrees.

Cockrell, who had been out of school for 38 years, and Bowling, for 35, were intimidated, but determined.

"We didn't know what college later in life would look like," said Bowling. "We were determined though, to graduate and find jobs. Patty would come to the house and we would study for our exams. We got through it together."

Cockrell recounts that even when Bowling had a back injury, she wasn't going to let her fail. "I grabbed her pillow and pulled her books and made sure she didn't miss her final exams."

"We had all of the same classes together, and we were each other's biggest cheerleaders," said Bowling.



Their co-workers say this is symbolic of how the pair has always been—there for each other and devoted to the mission set before them.

Both women excelled at college, making the dean's list every semester and graduating with 3.8+ GPAs. They were also each the first in their families to graduate from college.

As they were finishing their last semester of college in 2011, the nearby USACE area office was in search of two new administrative officers. When USACE personnel contacted the local college for potential candidates, instructors there pointed to Cockrell and Bowling and recommended they apply for the vacant positions.

"I was in the right place at the right time when this came along," said Cockrell.

"We were in a motel together in Cincinnati, Ohio, when we both got the call. She got the call first, and 10 minutes later I got the call," said Bowling. Immediately the pair started jumping up and down.

"It all worked out, and all it fell right into our laps," said Cockrell.

They have been thankful for the opportunity to work for USACE ever since.

"Here's how great these people are to work for: the day I was on my way here for the interview my mom passed away," said Bowling. "The crew here was so thoughtful from those very first moments and told me they would do the interview two weeks later."

They claim it is the people in the Upper Kentucky Area that have made it feel like home for the last decade. "We're just like family," said Bowling. We're all here for each other."

Cockrell echoed that sentiment. "We've been through some doozies, and we've

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been through them all together,” said Cockrell. “It’s a great place to work, and I would recommend it to anybody.”

“Not to mention the Corps offers so many opportunities,” said Bowling. “The benefits of a job with USACE are countless. Beyond a doubt it’s the best job I’ve ever encountered,” said Bowling.

Cockrell says she enjoys working for USACE because of what it represents. “We have such a diverse mission that even some people that live around here don’t understand what all we do.”

“It’s just a pleasure working here,” said Cockrell. “It’s not a job where you get up and want to come to work. It makes your mindset different coming to work here.”

As administrative officers, both have similar, yet different duties. Cockrell serves the entire Upper Kentucky Area, often supporting the other lakes such as Cave Run, Buckhorn, and Taylorsville lakes.

Bowling serves as the dedicated office administrator for Carr Creek Lake and says the first thing she does each morning is start a pot of coffee for the team.

Project Manager Jesse Saylor, who has been at Carr Creek Lake for more than 22 years laughed from across the office and said, “Don’t let her fool you. She answers every phone call, she greets every visitor, she simply does it all.”

“The place doesn’t run right without them,” Saylor said.

And, nobody is quite sure how it will feel without the two working together as Cockrell will retire at the end of the year to spend more time with her three children, eight grandchildren, and 17 great grandchildren.

While Cockrell has enough to keep busy, Bowling isn’t ready to face the thought of her friend not being there by her side.

“It’s going to be heartbreaking. I don’t even want to think about it,” said Bowling. “Shoot, it’s been 23 years we’ve been side-by-side working together. It’s going to be so tough.”

Upper Kentucky Area Manager Willie Whitaker sums it up best saying, “We have been through a lot together these past very quick ten years, we have laughed a lot and cried a little; we have been through births and deaths, comforted each other in times of sorrow and found humor in the most intense deadline driven mission requirements. I would proudly say that our administrators are not only the backbone of the agency but the driving force in which all things revolve. My toughest days on the job are when Patty and Donna are off that day. If you want something talked about give it to Management—if you want something accomplished give it to an administrator.”

## Peeples takes command of Great Lakes and Ohio River Division



Great Lakes and Ohio River Division  
News Release

Col. Kimberly A. Peeples took command of the Great Lakes and Ohio River Division, June 11, during a ceremony presided over by Lt. Gen. Scott A. Spellmon, 55th chief of engineers and commanding general of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers.

Peeples, who previously served as commander for the Joint Base Myer-Henderson Hall and Fort McNair located in Arlington, Virginia, assumed command from Maj. Gen. Robert F. Whittle Jr. Whittle is slated to become the next deputy commanding general of U.S. Army North located in San Antonio, Texas.

As the new division commander, Peeples is responsible for directing

federal water resource development in the Great Lakes and Ohio River basins with infrastructure valued at over \$80 billion through seven engineer districts totaling over 4,200 people operating through a seventeen-state area.

Col. Peeples’ previous staff and command positions include engineer bridge platoon leader in the 74th Engineer Company; vertical construction platoon leader in Alpha Company; executive officer of the 74th Engineer Company, 62nd Engineer Battalion (Combat Heavy) at Fort Hood, Texas; Executive Officer of the 74th Engineer Company, Commander of Bravo Company, 864th Engineer Company at Fort Lewis, Washington; project engineer at Fort Leonard Wood, Missouri; program manager for the U.S. Army Corps of



Engineers at the Kansas City District, Kansas City, Missouri; brigade engineer of the 4th Brigade, 3rd Infantry Division, Fort Stewart, Georgia; program manager in the White House Military Office; commander of the U.S. Army Garrison Carlisle Barracks, Pennsylvania; and deputy director for Operations for the U.S. Army Assistant Chief of Staff for Installation Management HQDA G9 at the Pentagon.

Peeples, a native of Akron, Ohio, graduated from the U.S. Army Military Academy, West Point, New York, and was commissioned into the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers in 1994. She holds a master’s degree in Construction Management from the University of Washington in Seattle and a master’s degree from the U.S. Army War College in Strategic Studies.