



Tower Times

Rock Island District's News Magazine

April-May 2012



Spring arrives early



**US Army Corps
of Engineers®**
Rock Island District

Tower Times

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April-May 2012

ON THE COVER



A red fox kit is held briefly by Chris Pankow, natural resources specialist, Coralville Lake, before being released near its den. The kit's head was briefly stuck in the fence before being cut free by Pankow. The fox family has taken up residence in the administration area at Coralville Lake. See page 15 for more.

Photo by Janet Lewis.

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Tower Times

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A message from....

Colonel Shawn McGinley, District Commander



Maintenance crews work to keep aging infrastructure operational

The Rock Island District operates and maintains nearly 600 miles of navigation channel on the Mississippi and Illinois rivers. It is a mission that consumes a large portion of our annual budget and it is work that is critical to our nation's commerce.

Those of us in the Clock Tower have no doubt noticed that traffic through Locks and Dam 15 has increased recently as the navigation industry enters a busy time of the year. This is true on both the Illinois and Mississippi rivers and the ability to navigate the rivers is almost entirely due to the continued efforts of the folks who work at the locks and those who work on our maintenance crews from both the Mississippi River and Illinois Waterway Projects. While the lock and dam crews work on a daily basis to perform preventive maintenance and repairs, the maintenance crews are called upon to perform large, major repairs of lock and dam infrastructure or other large projects that require the use of cranes or floating plants.

In spite of the dedicated efforts of those at the locks and on the maintenance crews, the lock and dam system on both rivers continues to age and deteriorate. Most of our locks are nearly 80 years old and were built to withstand a design life of 50 years. This means that most of our infrastructure has outlasted its intended life span. The system's longevity is a credit to the maintenance that is carried out year-round.

A closure of any lock on either river is detrimental to the navigation industry and its ability to move goods up and down the river. Luckily, within our District, unscheduled closures due to equipment failure are rare and when they do occur, our crews respond quickly to minimize the length of the closure. Routine, scheduled closures are closely coordinated with our customers far in advance in order to minimize downtime and utilize a time period that has the least impact on the towing industry.

The work being accomplished by the river maintenance crews is extensive. On the Illinois Waterway, crews have responsibility for 268 miles of navigation channel and eight lock and dam sites. They maintain the structures at each lock, whether it's gate repairs or major rehab projects.

For example, at Starved Rock Lock and Dam, the Illinois Waterway maintenance crews have recently removed the upper service miter gates for major rehabilitation. They replaced those gates with emergency gates, keeping the lock operational and open to traffic. Also, at Peoria and LaGrange Locks and Dams, the crews are hard at work repairing the wicket dams. All year long, they tear down worn out wickets, blast and paint old wicket parts, fabricate new wickets and assemble new wickets.

Another recent achievement on the Illinois Waterway involved routine mechanical dredging and strike removal operations. In December 2011 they widened the channel at the new EJ&E railroad bridge just below Dresden Island Lock in Morris, Ill., to match the new 300-foot span between the piers. They worked tirelessly for approximately 18 days straight in concert with the contractor, dredging the new channel while the contractor was still blasting and removing the old piers. This effort minimized impacts to the towing industry and prevented any groundings that may have occurred if they had not widened the channel in such a timely fashion.

These examples of work items are just a small snapshot of what the Illinois Waterway maintenance crews are accomplishing. They are heavily engaged at each site on the Illinois River within our District.

The tempo of operations is mirrored on the Mississippi River. The District's Mississippi River Project is responsible for 314 miles of Mississippi River and 12 lock and dam sites. The structures maintenance crew is currently busy with miter gate repairs for Locks and Dams 12 and 17 at the Mississippi River Project in Pleasant Valley, Iowa. When repairs are complete, they will transport the gates to the



Tim Scranton, Mississippi River Project, paints the #2 miter gate walkway from Lock and Dam 17 at the Mississippi River Project Service Base. The refurbished miter gates are scheduled to be reinstalled in June.

Commander's message continued...

locks and dams and reinstall in two short 12-hour closures previously coordinated with the towing industry. The ability to remove and reinstall miter gates "in-the-wet" and without dewatering a lock is somewhat unique to the Rock Island District and greatly reduces closure times required for gate changes.

Just like the crews on the Illinois, the maintenance crews on the Mississippi work year round to keep our locks and dams operational and the navigation channel open. This summer, the Mississippi River Project maintenance crew will complete dredging of several auxiliary locks that were filled with sediment during last year's flood. This dredging is in addition to their normal task of performing mechanical dredging (also referred to as strike removal) to keep the navigation channel open between annual hydraulic dredging events by the Dredge Goetz. Then, in the fall, the same crew will work on rock placement to complete chevron training structures in Pool 18. These, and many other tasks, will keep the maintenance crews incredibly busy but they can take great pride in knowing their efforts sustain an entire industry, not to mention the recreational and pleasure craft boaters who also benefit from the maintenance effort.




Mississippi River Project mechanical dredge crews work to remove material along the upper approach wall to Lock and Dam 17 this spring.



The Illinois Waterway Structures Maintenance Unit's heavy-lift crane Hercules helped place the new Seatrax Crane onto its pedestal at Ensley Engineer Yard in the Memphis District.

Of course, like with so many other specialties within our District, regional support is a key task for both river maintenance crews. This past September, the Illinois Waterway regionalized the Crane Barge Hercules to assist the Memphis District with placing St. Paul District's new Seatrax Crane onto its pedestal aboard the Crane Barge Leonard. This effort, involving three sister Districts, saved the Mississippi Valley Division time and thousands of dollars by not having to utilize a contractor's crane -- a prime example of regionalization in action. The Mississippi River Project also performs a great deal of regional work and takes pride in the fact that they have had crews and floating plant work and provide support to every other district in the Mississippi Valley Division.

Couple their regional efforts with their year-round work on our District's locks and dams and nearly 600 miles of river and it is easy to see our river maintenance teams are challenged with a significant workload. They meet that challenge professionally and proficiently. The work they do can be inherently dangerous and although accidents have occurred, I have been proud of the safety record during the past couple years. In fact, the Mississippi River Project was recently awarded the Safe Government Group Safety Award for their phenomenal achievement of no lost-time accidents for fiscal year 2011. I have mentioned it before; nothing we do is worth risking a life or injury. Adhering to a strict risk management strategy in everything we do is imperative.

Maintaining the aging infrastructure on our rivers is a tough job and the fruits of those labors have far-reaching effects for so many entities. It's impressive that locks and dams built so long ago are still operational today. Although there is certainly a need to update and modernize the entire system, the capabilities and professionalism displayed by our maintenance crews on both rivers stand as shining examples of what the Rock Island District brings to the table. Continue **BUILDING STRONG®**. 

DISTRICT COMMANDER'S AWARDS

Each month the Rock Island District Incentive Awards Committee selects an employee who has gone above and beyond their normal duties or made a significant accomplishment. All employees are eligible and all employees may nominate someone for an award. The following employees were recognized at the March District Awards Ceremony for their outstanding efforts and achievements that continue **Building Strong®** the Rock Island District.



The end of the year financial closeout can be a crazy, hectic time. **James Frederickson**, Maintenance Section, Mississippi River Project, stepped up to the challenge and frequently went above and beyond his normal duties. During the three months leading up to closeout, he managed and coordinated more than 50 contracts, totalling more than \$1.9 million to successful completion and closeout. These contracts often require intensive coordination with field staff who are often working seven days a week. One noteworthy example was the emergency contract for repairs of the Motor Vessel Bettendorf, which required extensive coordination over several weekends. Frederickson's dedication, attention to detail and willingness to perform outside normal working hours helped him earn the November District Commander's Award.

Setting the bench high is what **Angela Fritz**, Technical Services Branch, Engineering and Construction Division, did in organizing the District's Architect-Engineering Contracting performance evaluation rating process. She was awarded the District Commander's Award for December for making the process more efficient and helping to limit deficiencies. Beginning in April 2011, Fritz coordinated efforts with Assessing Officials throughout Engineering to bring the District's Architect-Engineer Contract Administration Support System evaluations from four complete, nine due, 37 overdue, and 19 contracts currently in progress to 51 complete, zero due, four overdue and 22 contracts currently in progress. Her expertise and dedication improved the District's standing to second best in the Mississippi Valley Division.



Willing to go the extra mile. **Keri Diedrich**, Programs and Project Management Division, received the January District Commander's Award for providing support to staff during the reorganization and realignment of the Rock Island Planning Division to the Regional Planning and Environmental Division North. Diedrich determined new financial and programmatic procedures and worked diligently with St. Paul District staff to make necessary adjustments as part of the reorganization. In addition to these efforts she provided excellent administrative support processing travel documents, printing reports for various levels of review, capturing significant activities for the District and supporting necessary activities for the Deputy Chief of Programs and Project Management.

Good things are happening all over the District - please take a moment to recognize fellow employees who are making a difference and going the extra mile **Building Strong®**. All employees are eligible to nominate fellow employees. If you have questions regarding the criteria or format to submit a nomination please contact the Incentive Awards Committee at (309) 794-5436.



A notch was placed at the far end of the dam across Blackberry Creek this spring to begin preparations for the dam removal later this year. Photos by Anthony Heddlesten.

Partnerships restore Blackberry Creek

By Hilary Markin, Editor

Restoring habitat is the goal of many agencies, organizations and individuals...the key to success is leveraging resources and building partnerships to make it happen. Blackberry Creek will soon be the recipient of exactly that.

A project that has been in the works for the past decade is finally happening thanks to the work of the Corps of Engineers, Illinois Department of Natural Resources, Illinois Department of Transportation, Kendall County and City of Yorkville, Ill.

Blackberry Creek has been the source of many watershed planning efforts amongst various local, state and federal agencies over the years. One of the goals identified was improving water quality and stream and wetland restoration. Thorough studies were conducted identifying alternatives and projects to meet the goals. One included the removal of a dam built on the creek in 1834 to operate a mill. Its removal would reconnect the 32-mile-long stream originating north of Elburn, Ill., and draining to the Fox River near Yorkville, allowing fish and other aquatic creatures passage once again.

The partnering agencies had been working together to schedule replacement of a bridge directly below the dam with the removal of the dam in 2014-2015.

However, following heavy rains in 2011 a scour hole formed causing the base of the bridge abutment to slide into the hole and no longer properly support the bridge. For safety reasons the bridge has been closed to vehicular traffic restricting access to a local YMCA camp and other areas.

"This put plans into the fast track," said John Ortlieb, regional technical specialist, Environmental Plan Formulation Branch. "We had been planning on removing the dam when the county replaced the bridge in 2014 or 15."

What started as a Corps dam removal project under Section 519 in coordination with the bridge replacement by the County, is now a project the Illinois Department of Natural Resources can fund through their emergency management program.

"The IDNR was able to take plans and information the Corps had developed over the years to put the project into action," said

Ortlieb.

To start the process, contractors from the IDNR notched a section of the dam to lower the water level to complete wetland mitigation (required by the Corps nationwide permit) and sediment removal above the dam. The remainder of the dam is expected to be removed by the end of the year with final plantings and other work taking place in June 2013.

Once the dam is removed, the Corps will reassess the area to see if a fish passage structure is needed.

"Plans for fish passage on Blackberry Creek became a priority after we (the Corps) completed the project on Waubonsie Creek," said Ortlieb. "Once the dam is removed we will see if there is a need for passage on Blackberry Creek."


"We are unsure what the bedrock level will be once the dam is removed. If fish are still unable to pass upstream we will work to get a ramp built for fish to safely navigate the change in elevation," said Anthony Heddlesten, environmental engineer, Environmental Engineering Section, Engineering and Construction Division.

The ramp will be a rock structure that uses various sized boulders placed strategically to slowly increase the elevation of the stream and allow fish to safely swim up and over the area. The boulders also offer habitat and resting areas for aquatic species.

In addition to the dam removal the IDNR is also placing three riffle structures creating habitat for aquatic species and helping to restore the stream to its natural state.

A public meeting was held on April 3 at the Yorkville-Bristol Sanitary District for residents to see plans for the Blackberry Creek dam removal and watershed mitigation.

"The public in attendance was very receptive to our plan. Attendees ranged from local residents all the way to a gentleman who writes the Waterdog Journal. The biggest concerns were over trees being removed and additional pedestrian traffic in the area," said Heddlesten.

"Collaboration has been the key to making this project a success," said Ortlieb. 



Above, the bridge abutment shows signs of failure. Right, Blackberry Creek flows through the notch placed in the dam to start mitigation for the eventual removal of the dam and replacement of the bridge.



Floodplain benches above the dam on Blackberry Creek became exposed after the water level dropped following the notching of the dam.

Section 519

Blackberry Creek is a project under Section 519 of the Water Resources Development Act of 2000 authorizing: (1) A Comprehensive Plan to develop and implement a restoration program, long-term resource monitoring program, and evaluate new technologies and innovative approaches, and (2) construction of critical restoration projects. Section 519 and the related Illinois River Ecosystem Restoration Feasibility Study, Sec 216, resulted in a joint Comprehensive Plan for the restoration of the basin. These efforts relate to the state's Illinois Rivers 2020 initiative, a proposed 20-year, federal-state effort to restore and enhance the 30,000 square-mile Illinois River Basin. Anticipated benefits include reducing sediment delivered to the Illinois River mainstem and backwaters, reducing streambank erosion, and improving critical habitats for fish, waterfowl, and other aquatic organisms. This project involves four districts (Rock Island, St. Louis, Chicago, and Detroit).



Jim Punkiewicz, a diver for the Rock Island District, talks to students from Wood Intermediate school in Davenport, Iowa, about working for the Corps on the Mississippi River.

Local Students Interview Mississippi River Project Employees

Story and photo by Allen Marshall, Public Affairs Specialist

Over the next decade, as is true with almost any organization, the faces and names that make up the workforce of the Rock Island District will change. Knowing that turnover is a constant, the search for the next generation of employees is ongoing and laying the groundwork for future recruitment can't start too early. And, future recruitment may have been an ancillary benefit after members of the Mississippi River Project ventured out into the community and interacted with several middle school-aged students, giving the young minds first-hand knowledge of working on the river.

During April, several employees from the Mississippi River Project volunteered their time at three local schools to participate in a program designed to increase students' knowledge of different aspects of their community. The program is a partnership between the Davenport Community School District's Talented and Gifted Department and the Davenport Public Library. Through the program, intermediate students are given the opportunity to interview adult members of the community in order to gain insight into the area they live.

In past years, the program has focused the students' attentions on several different topics ranging from historical aspects of the community to the diversity of the community. Last year the program featured interviews with the farming community. This year's program focused on the Mississippi River. So, when program coordinator Anne Hoeper began canvassing local adults to participate, one of her first stops was the Rock Island District as she knew of the District's extensive involvement on the Mississippi River.

"We had a wide variety of people (from the District) who were referred to us by Bill Gretten," Hoeper said of her coordination


with the Chief of the Mississippi River Project.

Gretten was able to get several of his employees to volunteer time for the interviews conducted at Wood, Smart and Sudlow Intermediate schools. Those employees were: Jim Punkiewicz and Mike Back, divers; Steve Mosley, lock and dam operator; Russ Jennings, tow boat captain; Jay Kankel, marine machinery mechanic; Derrick Glisan, assistant lockmaster; Joe Lundh, forester; Nick Schnerre, lockmaster; and John Knoble, park ranger.

Each employee conducted interviews with the students who had prepared a long list of questions. The questions touched on everything from job responsibilities to favorite aspects of the river. The Mississippi River Project employees brought equipment and show-and-tell materials to share with the students during their interviews. Punkiewicz and Back filled the students' classroom with a variety of dive suits and other diving equipment. Both Punkiewicz and Back shared their experiences working on the river with the Rock Island District, what it took to become a diver and shared advice with the students about future aspirations.


"You need to trust your heart and go with your gut feeling when you are deciding what type of field you want to go into," Punkiewicz said.

Back shared, "It has always been my goal to be the best I can be at whatever I am doing."

Neither Back nor Punkiewicz can continue to do their jobs forever, as is the case for the other Mississippi River Project employees who sat down to be interviewed by the students. But, maybe they have planted a seed of interest in their future replacements. It's never too early to begin recruiting the District's future workforce. 

May is Asian American and Pacific Islander Heritage Month

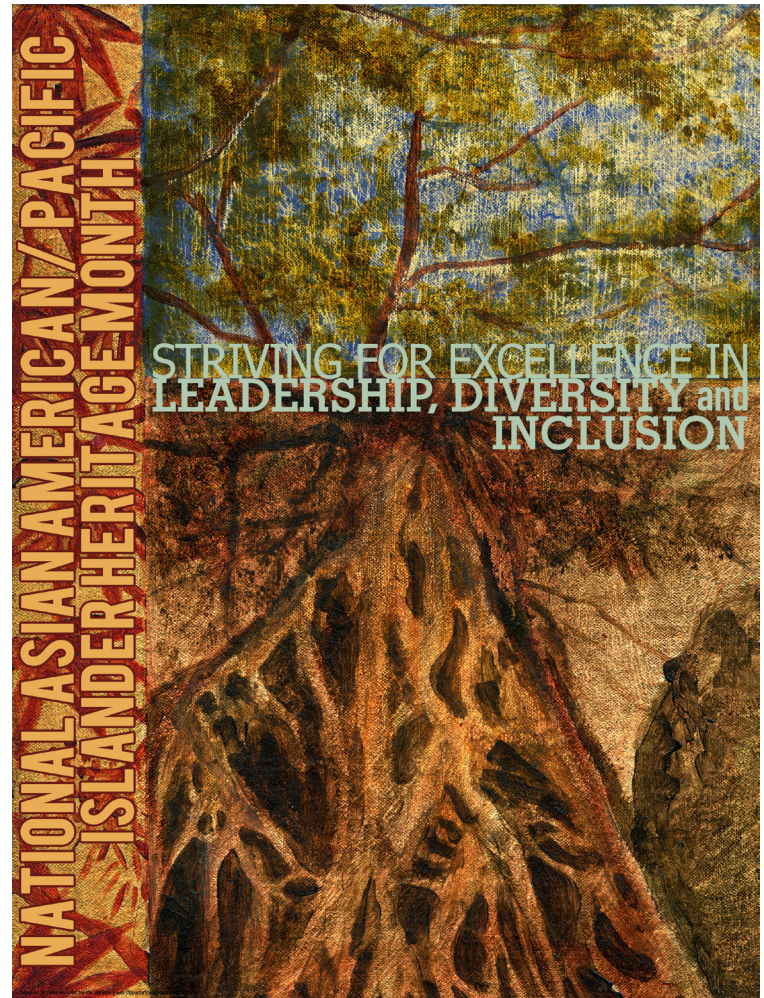
Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders (AAPI) comprise many ethnicities and languages that for generations have helped make America what it is today. They are innovators and entrepreneurs who have started businesses that are some of the most successful in the nation. AAPI men and women are leaders in sports, government, academics, science and industry.

Today, more and more Asian Pacific Americans are seeking the American dream and leading a life bound by the American ideals of life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. The U.S. Census 2010 data indicated that there are more than 17.3 million residents of Asian origin, comprising about five percent of the total population. Census projections expect the number to increase to more than 40.6 million by 2050. As the population expands, new communities are being developed and they are forming organizations like the Iowa Asian Alliance, and the Filipino-American Association where they are fostering economic growth, community development, and cultural diversity. 

Upcoming Event

Filipino Heritage Festival 2012

An exciting evening of cultural dances, music, fine arts, dinner-dance, prizes
Quad Cities Waterfront Convention Center in Bettendorf, Iowa
Saturday, August 18, at 6 p.m.
<http://on.fb.me/phildanceqc>



Famous Asian Amerians

Can you identify the famous Asian Americans listed below?

Test
your
knowledge

- | | | |
|--------------------|-------|---|
| 1. Eugene Chung | _____ | a. architect, designed Vietnam Memorial in Washington, D.C. |
| 2. Young Oak Kim | _____ | b. cellist with more than 12 Grammy Awards |
| 3. Duke Kahanmoku | _____ | c. astronaut |
| 4. Maya Lin | _____ | d. U.S. Army combat veteran of World War II and Korean War |
| 5. Amy Tan | _____ | e. news reporter |
| 6. Michelle Kwan | _____ | f. Olympic figure skater |
| 7. Ellison Onizuka | _____ | g. Olympic swimmer, "Father of Surfing" |
| 8. Jerry Yang | _____ | h. NFL player |
| 9. Connie Chung | _____ | i. writer, published The Joy Luck Club |
| 10. Yo Yo Ma | _____ | j. co-creator of Yahoo! |

Answers: 1. h, 2. d, 3. g, 4. a, 5. i, 6. f, 7. c, 8. j, 9. e, 10. b

SAFETY CORNER

Lawn Mower Safety

It's that time of year again. The lawn begins to green up which means you need to mow. Every summer, 30 million power lawn mowers are in use in the United States. The U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) data shows that each year about 400,000 people are treated in hospital emergency rooms for injuries from lawn tools. Children under the age of 14 and adults over the age of 44 are most prone to injury.

Since nearly all mower accidents are a result of human error, it is important to recognize potential mowing hazards before they happen. A few simple precautions may help you enjoy your time spent outdoors, and help you get your work completed more efficiently.

- Review the operator's manual that comes with the mower. You should become familiar with the mower's safety features, including how to stop the mower quickly in case of an emergency.
- Keep all safety shields and mower shut-off mechanisms in place. These are provided by the manufacturer to ensure your safety.
- Fill your gas tank before you start, while the engine is still cold. Wipe up all spills. And never smoke near gasoline.
- Clear the area of rocks, branches, wires and other objects.
- Dress properly. Slippery shoes and loose or dangling clothing can be dangerous.
- Use eye protection and hearing protection devices.
- Don't allow children near the mower; you'll prevent the possibility of their getting injured by flying objects.
- Keep your hands and feet away from the mower's blades. Never reach under the mower for any reason while the mower is in operation. Make all adjustments with the motor off.
- Do not pull the mower backward or mow in reverse unless absolutely necessary, and carefully look for children behind you when you mow in reverse.
- Just as you shouldn't drink and drive, you shouldn't drink and mow. Don't operate a mower when your reflexes are impaired by any substance.
- Drink plenty of liquids and take occasional breaks while mowing on unseasonably hot days to help avoid heat illness.

Did you know...

"Grasscycling," or leaving the lawn clippings, doesn't cause thatch build up—but makes lawns healthier. Soil organisms recycle the clippings into free fertilizer, saving you from bagging. Modern mulching lawn mowers make "grasscycling" even easier and reduce mowing time by 30 to 40 percent by not having to bag clippings.


Four types of power lawn mower accidents cause the majority of injuries:

- Contact with rotating blade.
- Propelled objects. Rocks, glass and wire are hurled at initial speeds above 170 miles per hour. Objects may be thrown 50 feet or more.
- Overturning. This occurs primarily when riding mowers are used on steep slopes or embankments. Victims may be pinned under the mower or come into contact with the blade.
- Riding mowers running over the victim. Accidents occur if the operator fails to look when backing a riding mower, children playing are seriously injured, or an operator pulls a power mower backward over his or her foot.

Other Hazards

- The muffler and cylinder head heat up during operation, and remain hot for some time after the engine has been turned off and can cause burns.
- Most mowers are powered by gasoline-driven combustion engines. Gasoline is a very explosive and flammable material that should be treated with respect. Gasoline is flammable because it vaporizes with air to form a mixture that ignites easily. Vaporization can occur in temperatures as low as zero degrees.

Other items to remember if you have an electric lawn mower:

- Don't use on wet grass.
- Use an extension cord designed for outdoor use and rated for the power needs of your mower.
- Reduce the risk of cutting the cord while you're mowing by starting to mow in the area nearest the electrical outlet, then mow away from the outlet so the power cord will be behind.
- If you do hit a foreign object or have a mower malfunction, remember to turn off the mower and disconnect the power cord before inspecting for damage. 



RIDWA Updates

The mission of the Rock Island District Welfare Association (RIDWA) is to provide a program for activities which promote morale, recreation, and welfare of Rock Island District employees.

New Clothing Supplier

RIDWA has a new clothing supplier and launched the first order in March. EmbroidMe of Davenport, Iowa, provides a variety of options to make it convenient for employees to make orders, customize them and has a larger variety. Ordering can be done online anytime at <http://usarmycorps.promoshop.com/>, you can also stop by in person to view the items. Some new things include home delivery (you pay shipping), higher quality clothing, American made items, embroidery for items except t-shirts, and you can track your order on their Web site. You can also return items if there is an issue relating to quality or workmanship.

Payment methods have also changed a bit – checks can be made to RIDWA and turned in to RIDWA board members or you can pay online or in person at the store.

The next order will close on June 30. You can order anytime between now and then. RIDWA will also have a hard-copy order form available and will distribute them to the field sites.

If you need a hard copy order form and haven't received one, call (309) 794-5886 or e-mail RIDWA@usace.army.mil

A diagonal banner with a red-to-blue gradient background. The words "Corps Day" are written in a white, stylized, sans-serif font.

June 14, 2012

10:30 a.m. - 3 p.m.

Memorial Field, Rock Island Arsenal

Awards • Food • Fun

1st Corps Day Engineering Olympics

Teams of four can sign-up to compete in the strongest bridge and tallest tower competitions. Competition details and rules will be forth coming. A trophy will be awarded to the winning team. Register your team by e-mailing RIDWA@usace.army.mil, subject: Engineer Olympics.



River Bandits vs. Kane County Cougars June 14 @ 7 p.m.

RIDWA has arranged for tickets to the River Bandits baseball game on June 14. You can reserve your tickets for the game by e-mailing RIDWA@usace.army.mil or calling (309) 794-5886. Employees will be allowed two tickets per person and they will be available on a first-come, first-served basis. If you would like additional tickets please include that information with your reservation. Extra tickets will be distributed accordingly after reservations end on June 7. If you want to be assured additional tickets, you can purchase them from RIDWA at the discounted price of \$3 per ticket. Tickets are only for employees, spouses, children and accompanying guests and may not be sold. All tickets must be used on June 14.

This is not a Corps-sponsored event. It is an activity provided by RIDWA to promote morale, recreation and welfare of Rock Island District employees.

Questions? Call (309) 794-5886 or e-mail RIDWA@usace.army.mil

Corps Day is brought to you by RIDWA and the Corps Day Committee. Fundraisers are held throughout the year to fund the event, additional donations are always welcome.



Spotlight on the District

Camie Knollenberg

**Chief, Rock Island Plan Formulation Section
Plan Formulation Branch, Regional Planning and
Environmental Division, North**

A great time to be a planner if you like change

By Hilary Markin, Editor

Winding the roads of a career you try to find a job that best matches your skills – when you find it, it might not be the job you once dreamed of but could offer even more.

Camie Knollenberg first came to the Rock Island District in the late 1980s as a student aide in the Geotechnical Branch while studying geology at Augustana College in Rock Island, Ill. Not finding a job that suited her upon graduation, Knollenberg pursued a graduate degree. As a result she went on to earn a master's degree from the University of Indiana in geology with an emphasis on soils.

She then returned to Rock Island District in 1992 to work temporarily as an engineering technician. Two years later she was hired permanently as a Geologist in Geotechnical Branch and started her formal career with the Rock Island District.

"I worked a lot in the field taking borings, looking at project sites, and working in the lab," said Knollenberg. "I got to see the District's structures, the levees and reservoirs. That experience has meshed very well with where I am now."

In 2000 when budgets were tight in Engineering and Construction, Knollenberg took a temporary assignment in Planning and hasn't looked back.

"I was always interested in ecosystem restoration and the detail gave me exposure on how the Corps plans and completes these types of projects," said Knollenberg.

Knollenberg pursued a fulltime position in Planning and was hired as a Plan Formulator and Project Manager working mainly on environmental restoration studies.

Early projects she worked on included the Pleasant Creek Environmental Management Program project and Milan Bottoms, a small environmental restoration project. Both projects have been constructed.

"As a planner, you become invested in your projects almost like they are your baby," said Knollenberg. "I was lucky enough to see both of these projects completed early in my planning career. It's a good mental recharge when that happens."

The Corps has recently implemented the requirement for Monitoring and Adaptive Management Plans on all environmental restoration projects. This means that after construction is complete, site visits are routinely conducted with the sponsor to



ensure the project is doing what it was intended to do.

"This process will ensure that the customer is fully satisfied and if something is not working the way it should, the Corps can help find a solution," said Knollenberg. "This fits in well with a planner's natural tendency to want to stay involved. It also helps us learn what works and what doesn't. And it gives us a reason to celebrate successes."

Planners have also been documenting the lessons learned throughout the planning process capturing as much as possible to ensure the next project is successful.

"In the future there will be many retirements, not just within planning but also within the Corps," said Knollenberg. "We are working to capture that expertise before it walks out the door."

Not only is Knollenberg striving to make a difference in the Mississippi Valley Division (MVD), she is also working on a national level to help the Planning Community.

She is part of a Planning Community of Practice Tiger Team that has been working on revamping the training courses for planners. Traditionally, there have been seven classes for planners to take. It is usually not feasible for new planners to take all the courses due to limited training budgets and heavy workloads.

The team has not only been looking at course content but also how people learn and the multi-generational workforce we work in.

"We are looking at options for self-directed learning courses, taking the key information and providing it in a way that works for everyone, including shorter classes," said Knollenberg.

Rock Island District and MVD have been ahead of the curve with regard to training. A need for this type of change was recognized and MVD lead the way to make it happen.

"We hired four people at once in Rock Island and other districts in MVD were facing the same situation," said Knollenberg. "It was evident that a change was needed to get them all up to speed quickly to accommodate the heavy planning workload."

USACE has also been working on an initiative to modernize the state of practice for planning. Steve Stockton, director of Civil Works, selected 18 people from across the Corps to revitalize the planning process to make it faster, cheaper and better.

For the last two years, Knollenberg and team has worked closely with Headquarters and others across the Corps to streamline the process.

"This is an exciting time to be a planner as we work to make the process more efficient," said Knollenberg. "Headquarters has issued what is called the 3 by 3 by 3 directive that will force us to plan smarter."

This Corps directive is the culmination of the modernization effort which requires teams to complete planning studies within 3 years, for no more than \$3 million, and incorporates all 3 levels of the Corps team (District, Major Subordinate Command, and Headquarters). As a fourth "3" senior leaders would like the re-

ports to be less than 3 inches thick. Learn more at <http://planning.usace.army.mil/toolbox/>.

"Now we can get creative and find ways to make it happen," said Knollenberg in response to the modernization efforts.

In addition to the changes in the planning process at the national level, changes in MVD's planning offices have come in the form of regionalization. Rock Island and St. Louis District planning offices have combined with St. Paul District's to form the Regional Planning and Environmental Division, North.

"The most noticeable change has been with administrative tasks," said Knollenberg. "But as work load changes, we may start relying on each other a lot more."

Working in a virtual environment has presented challenges. It has brought on a new type of networking via social media and getting to know each other through e-mail and Web meetings rather than face-to-face communication.


Change is something Knollenberg welcomes and steps up to the challenge of finding creative solutions.

In addition to changes in the workplace, Knollenberg continues to challenge herself. She is a Leadership Development Program (LDP) graduate and currently a mentor for an LDP Level I participant.

"I generally have fun coming to work because of the people," she said. "Every day is different and all my experiences and education have come together to where I am in my career."

Knollenberg is married and will be celebrating her 20th wedding anniversary this year. She and her husband also have two wonderful teenagers who keep them busy.

In her spare time she enjoys reading, photography, gardening, baking and just relaxing. Despite busy schedules, her family makes sure to set aside time to just be together.

Her advice is to "Have fun and to never underestimate the power of being a good listener." She is also a firm believer in, and supports her staff, to "Bloom where you are planted." 



National Safe Boating Week May 19-25

"Ready, Set, Wear It!"

Make a commitment to choose a life jacket that you WILL wear all the time.

When shopping for one choose the best quality and best fitting life jacket that you can possibly afford. In the event of an emergency - it'll be the best money you ever spent. You may even want to own more than one type and style of life jacket depending on the activity and time of year. A life jacket is very cheap LIFE insurance that buys you peace of mind for yourself, your loved ones, your friends and coworkers.

Have a fun and safe boating season and remember to WEAR IT!!



Around the District

Sympathy ...



Lester Lee Higgins Jr., 64, of La Grange, Mo., passed away March 15 at Hannibal Regional Hospital in Hannibal, Mo.

Lester worked for the Corps of Engineers at Lock and Dam 20 in Canton, Mo. He retired after 20 years of service due to ill health.

He was also a U.S. Army veteran.



Barb Hansen, of Meza, Az., passed away April 13.

Hansen was the chief of the Revolving Fund Section of the Resource Management Office, Finance and Accounting Branch. She retired in 1995.

Retirements ...

Ronald Cameron, engineering equipment operator, Maintenance Section, Mississippi River Project, Operations Division, retired March 31, after dedicating 13 years and three months to the federal government.

Wen Tsau, civil engineer (structural), Structural Section, Design Branch, Engineering and Construction Division, retired March 31, after dedicating 27 years to the federal government.

Dale Ernst, lock and dam operator, Lock and Dam 12, Mississippi River Project, Operations Division, retired March 31, after dedicating 25 years and one month to the federal government.

Susan Peters, construction management assistant, Eastern Area Office, Construction Branch, Engineering and Construction Division, retired April 21 after dedicating 22 years to the federal government.



Can you name where this is? If so, send your answer to Hilary.R.Markin@usace.army.mil. The first correct answer will receive a special prize and be recognized in the next Tower Times.



March Answer - Lake Red Rock shoreline below the Visitor Center

Winner - George Hardison, Operations Division

Support & Sacrifice for Corps

Thanks to our employees who are deployed to the Afghanistan Engineer District - North (AEN) and the Afghanistan Engineer District - South (AES)!



Andrew Barnett, AEN



Mark Hoague, AEN



Celeste Iverson, AEN



Brian Lane, AEN



Mark Miller, AEN



Kurt Reppe, AEN



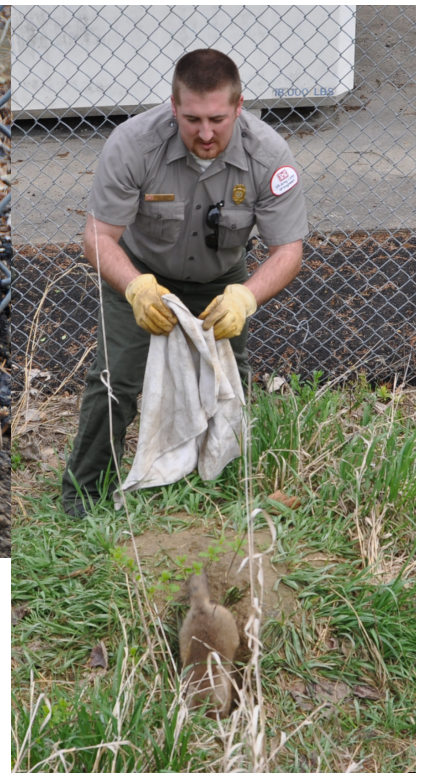
Gordon Rush, AEN



Richard Rupert, AES



A fox kit somehow got its head stuck in the maintenance yard fence at Coralville Lake in March. Natural Resources Specialist Chris Pankow along with the assistance of fellow employees were able to cut the fence enough to release the kit and return it to the burrow only a few feet away from the fence. *Photos by Janet Lewis.*




Suspicious Activity Reporting

If you see something suspicious, report it to 911.

Activities to report include, but are not limited to:

- * Anyone drawing or measuring important buildings
- * Strangers asking questions about security procedures
- * Any suspicious packages left unattended
- * Cars or trucks left in no parking zones in front of Arsenal or Corps buildings
- * Intruders found in secure areas
- * Chemical smells or fumes that worry you
- * A person wearing clothes that are bulky and/or too hot for the weather

Information to report:

1. Date and time
2. Where it happened
3. What you witnessed
4. A description of who was involved
 - * Male or female
 - * How tall
 - * Build
 - * Hair color, skin color, age
 - * English speaking or another language
5. Was there a car or truck; note the license plate number
6. Have you seen this activity in your area before 



Trust your instincts ... if it doesn't look right report it.

Remember, See Something ... Say Something! Report all suspicious activity to 911.

For questions or concerns contact the Rock Island District Security Office at 309-794-5747 or 309-794-5820.