



# Falls City Engineer

U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Louisville District

January/February 2019

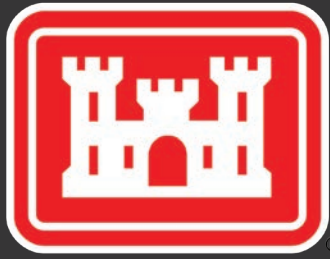
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McAlpine Dam







## Falls City Engineer

Vol. 11, Issue 1

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**On the cover:** Nine barges loaded with coal were pinned against the upper McAlpine Dam on the Ohio River in Louisville, Kentucky following an incident which occurred Tuesday, Dec. 25 when the towing vessel struck the nearby Clark Memorial Bridge causing the barges to break free. (USACE photo by Katie Newton)

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

# Commander's Comments

Team Louisville,

Thank you for returning in 2019 with a renewed spirit as we continue to focus on delivery to our nation. Everyone has a part to play in our success. Delivery is not just about a physical building. It's more than that... it's about ensuring everyone understands their roles and responsibilities; it's about working with our stakeholders, partners and end users to understand their requirements and expectations; it's about ensuring navigation up and down the Ohio River is not impeded by our locks and dam operations; it's about setting the stage with our contractors at the start; it's about helping each other; and ultimately, delivery is about you!

This issue is packed with outstanding stories to spotlight our delivery of the program and pays tribute to the extraordinary contributions throughout the district. We are taking the time to highlight our military, reserves, environmental and veterans affairs programs along with the sharpest park rangers in all of USACE.

Just recently we executed our Louisville District Open House and what an exciting event this turned out to be. I talked with many of our previous and current contractors and several made a point to tell me how much they enjoy working with the Louisville District. That is a testament to the professionalism and dedication of all of you – you should be proud of that! I know I am.

Did you know that an entire week has been designated to celebrate Engineering Professionals? February 17-23, 2019, is National Engineers Week and the only event of its kind. It's as a time to celebrate how engineers make a difference in our world, increase public dialogue about the need for



**Col. Antoinette Gant**  
*Commander and District Engineer*  
Louisville District  
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers

engineers and bring engineering to life for kids, educators and parents. Our vision this year is to make it exciting and one you will never forget.

Finally, the weather has been unpredictable lately throughout the district area. Please be safe, both at home and at work in these conditions.

As always, thank you again for all you do.

**BUILDING STRONG** and Taking Care of People! We are LOUISVILLE PROUD!

*Antoinette R. Gant*

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# Salvage efforts to retrieve sunken barges continue at McAlpine Dam

Katie Newton, public affairs

Salvage operations to retrieve three remaining barges are ongoing at the McAlpine Dam on the Ohio River in Louisville, Kentucky, following a navigation incident on Christmas Day, which left nine barges pinned against the dam.

The Motor Vessel Debbie Graham, a towboat owned by Tennessee Valley Towing, was pushing 15 barges of coal on Dec. 25, 2018, when it struck the Clark Memorial Bridge piers causing the barges to break apart. Nine of those barges moved downstream to the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Louisville District's McAlpine Dam requiring an extensive recovery operation.

The Corps, U.S. Coast Guard, marine surveyors and Tennessee Valley Towing coordinated closely in the immediate response effort and in developing a salvage plan for the rogue barges.

"Close coordination with all parties was essential," said Shawn Kenney, USACE Louisville District assistant operations manager for locks and dams. "We worked closely to ensure that river navigation could resume quickly and that salvage operations would be conducted as safely and efficiently as possible."

Two salvage fleets, McKinney Salvage and Heavy Lift, Inc., out of Baton Rouge, La., and Big River Salvage, out of Vicksburg, Miss., stationed at the Port

of Paducah were quickly en route to Louisville bringing a flat barge, two heavy-lift cranes and a dedicated crew of 10 to conduct the operations.

Before work could begin, the salvage plan had to be accepted by the Corps and the Coast Guard.

Many factors are taken into consideration when accepting a salvage plan such as this, Kenney said.

"Our main priority is always the life safety of the crew," said Kenney. "Beyond that we look for impacts to our infrastructure or operations."

Using a two-phased approach, the salvage crew first focused on three barges on the fixed weir portion of the dam, closest to the Indiana shoreline. The secondary plan of action is focused on salvaging the sunken barges at the gated portion of the dam—including one in the bay of tainter gate five.

When work began Jan. 8 there were seven barges fully or partially submerged and only two still afloat. The fleet attached to a mooring cell anchor point upstream and lowered down to the dam to begin retrieving cargo from the first few barges.

The fleet began by transloading, or lightering, the coal with a clam shell from the barges into empty hopper barges which were brought onsite. This allowed them to successfully remove the three barges by the Indiana bank. The one furthest upriver had partially sunk and had to be raised with the crane. The two closest to the fixed weir



Katie Newton

On Jan. 9, 2019, the salvage fleet transloads coal with a clam shell from the barges into empty hopper barges, which were brought onsite. Removing the weight of the cargo made it easier to recover the barges.

were grounded as the river level fell, but after the weight of the coal was removed they were pulled out without crane support. A fourth barge, in front of the dam gates, was pinned by another sunken barge and salvage crews cut the end of it off before lifting it clear of the dam with two cranes.

Crews removed a total of five barges by Jan. 22, when work was temporarily suspended due to high river levels.

"River and weather conditions have to be assessed day-by-day to determine whether salvage operations can continue," said Kenney. "It is a dynamic environment and adjustments have to be made along the way. We recognize that no two salvage operations are ever going to be the same, so adaptability is key."

Work resumed briefly in early February and the sixth barge was removed from the gated portion of the dam before the Ohio River's water level rose quickly, suspending operations once again.

"River stages are forecasted to remain high for the next couple weeks and we are entering the spring season when river stages are typically high, so it is uncertain when they will be able to wrap up this entire process," said Kenney.

"The salvage crew has made great strides and the incredible staff at McAlpine have provided tremendous support. We will continue to work closely with them to ensure the remaining salvage operations are conducted as safely and efficiently as possible," said Kenney.



Katie Newton

Nine barges became pinned against the upper McAlpine Dam on the Ohio River following a navigation incident on Christmas Day. At the time salvage operations began, seven barges were fully or partially submerged making recovery operations more difficult.



# summer may be over but the job isn't for our park rangers

Abby Korfhage, public affairs

Often thought of as the face of the Corps of Engineers, park rangers interact with the public quite a bit. Known for hosting summertime events and maintaining the parks, the ranger's responsibilities don't stop when winter arrives.

The summer months are a high demand time for Corps' rangers; they stay busy ensuring the safety of the park visitors, provide educational programs promoting water safety for schools and the local community and they manage wildlife areas stimulating growth of native species and removing invasive plant species.

Winter is considered the offseason for many recreational areas, but that in no way means the rangers take a break.

"The main focus in the winter months are boundary inspections," said Chase Wilson, Upper Wabash area office ranger. "While the vegetation is easier to walk through we try to get as much of the boundary inspected as we can."

At some of the recreational areas, like Brookville Lake in southwest Indiana, this can be extremely treacherous.

"Just imagine bulldozing in a straight line through unmanaged forests full of ravines, creeks and thick cover while trying to carry a bag of four-foot Carsonite posts and a 20 pound steel post pounder," said Spencer Beard, Brookville Lake ranger. "The goal is to protect the fee-owned government land from any disturbances that directly impact the public recreation experience."

Although boundary inspections can be very tough, some rangers say it's what



Dan Taylor

One of Barren River Lake's boundary line waterfall shows a hidden beauty of the lake in Glasgow, Ky.

they look forward to most during their off season.

"It is nice to get outside and walk our boundary to better understand the landscape surrounding our project," Wilson said. "We talk with adjacent land owners and work out any issues that may arise. It is hard work, but I enjoy the challenge of it."

Barren River Lake park ranger Dan Taylor agreed.

"I love doing boundary line maintenance," Taylor said. "There is nothing better than getting paid to go out and inspect our project boundaries and in doing so, see some of the hidden gems of the project."

Boundary inspections aren't the only job duties rangers are responsible for during the winter months. Corps rangers continue operations of the visitor centers;

they provide information and safety tips for hunters; prep and schedule events for the upcoming recreational season; and maintain local prairie ecosystems through prescribed burns and invasive plant removal.

"I really look forward to the prescribed burns and hosting our annual Christmas Bird Count program, which is a national program sponsored by the National Audubon Society," said Jessica Zimmer, Caesar Creek Lake ranger.

Some of the Corps' lakes work with other agencies in recycling Christmas trees.

"We work with Kentucky Fish and Wildlife to make Christmas tree habitats and place them in the lake for our fish," said Priscilla Southwood, Buckhorn Lake ranger.

Corps rangers also attend boat shows and expo events during the winter, which includes setting up booths, handing out water safety materials and talking with guests about all the recreational opportunities available to them at Corps lakes.

"My favorite thing we do in the winter are the boat shows," Beard said. "Every time I go, I meet new people, network with other USACE staff and other federal or state entities, and being a fisherman myself, I love walking around a bit to look at the fish tanks and buy a few things from the booths," Beard said.

Just because summer is over doesn't mean the public can't enjoy Louisville District's lakes. Come see eagles that migrate from the north up close, go for a short hike to see frozen waterfalls or fish for trout in the tailwaters. There is still so much to discover throughout the winter months.



Jessica Zimmer

Lake visitors participate in the 10th Annual Caesar Creek Lake Christmas Bird Count event in Waynesville, Ohio, Dec. 14, 2018. Participants spotted 89 species of birds within the lake boundaries.



# Consistency is key in delivering world-class Reserve program



*The Fort Hunter Liggett Operational Readiness Training Complex in Monterey County, California, serves as an example of the types of projects the Louisville District delivers for our nation's Soldiers*

*Katie Newton, public affairs*

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Louisville District manages a \$280 million dollar per year Reserve Construction Program building facilities across the United States and Puerto Rico. To ensure quality facilities for the nation's Army and Air Force Reserves, the district provides centralized management of design, procurement, and construction services to deliver the program.

"Being the center of standardization means that the Army Reserve and Air Force Reserves have acknowledged the value of having one district within our agency managing their entire construction program," Hans Probst, chief, reserve branch, construction division said.

The Louisville District Construction Division Reserve Branch plays a unique part in the process of delivering the robust program, because they are responsible for managing construction nationwide—far beyond the district's typical five-state military construction footprint. The 14-member construction team in Louisville, which functions like a "mega area engineer office," oversaw construction of nearly 60 Army and Air Force Reserve projects in fiscal year 2018 with another 49 new contracts underway in fiscal year 2019.

"The level of commitment and professionalism cannot be understated," said Terry Durham, construction division reserve section chief, of the daily service his staff provides. "We owe our stakeholders a high level of quality and consistency in the delivery of these facilities so that it is indistinguishable

to them whether we are constructing a reserve center in Los Alamitos, California, or a corrosion control/fuels systems maintenance hangar in Pittsburgh."

The Louisville District maintains contractual authority and oversight of the current workload being completed at 32 field offices across 17 geographic districts. Geographic districts provide on-site construction contract administration and quality assurance.

"Our centralized approach relieves the Reserve program sponsors of the burden of trying to control a broad range of geographically-dispersed project management, design project engineers, design architect/engineers, contracting and construction personnel," Probst said. "With projects spread across the country, you can imagine the additional personnel that would be needed to execute those projects throughout the activities in the acquisition cycle. Our centralized model economizes the human resources necessary from program sponsors project officers, USACE project managers, design project engineers, architect/engineers and contracting personnel."

This one-stop-shop for construction management services allows for a more cost-effective, streamlined, and expedited delivery.

"We're saving a huge amount of effort for our program sponsor clients. The beauty of this is that we have this core group of people here that create consistency between the field offices and the rest of the project delivery team because we speak construction," said Probst.

The construction reserve branch serving as the liaison between the construction field staff and the rest of the PDT is integral to the success of the program.

"Our multi-discipline project delivery team includes project management, engineering, contracting and construction division, all working together executing the program, Probst said. "Being the center of standardization simplifies the entire process."

Sharon Raque, chief, planning, programs and project management, reserve branch echoed that sentiment. "We couldn't execute this massive workload and deliver these state-of-the-art facilities without the construction division's expertise and oversight," Raque said. "Often times they are our eyes on the ground making sure we are turning over quality facilities."

"The importance of the PDT working together from floor-to-floor and coast-to-coast in one fluid motion is often misunderstood and frequently understated," Carl Lindsay, quality assurance representative said.

Quality and consistency are key in delivering a world-class program.

"This team here is as strong and capable as we've ever been," said Probst, who has worked with the district's reserve program for more than 15 years, serving as the chief of the construction reserve branch

*Continued on next page*



*U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Louisville District Construction Control Representative Lorenzo Lora performs a walk-through inspection at Camp Parks in Dublin, Calif. Construction Division Reserve Branch staff manage construction efforts at nearly 60 Army and Air Force Reserve projects across the United States.*



Continued from previous page

for the last five. “We have adjusted our organizational structure to accommodate the needs of the program.”

One key change is having a designated senior quality assurance Representative on staff who travels frequently across the country to visit the projects, conduct site inspections and provides training and coaching to local field office staff.

“I need those boots on the ground,”

said Probst. “That’s where Carl Lindsay, our Louisville District Construction personnel, and the geographic construction district contract administration and quality assurance personnel come in. In Carl’s case, he serves as our senior QA representative focused on problem avoidance and is a troubleshooter and coach of field personnel.”

Lindsay, who spent the majority of his

month at projects in Maryland, Colorado and California said the amount of great things this team is doing across the country is almost overwhelming.

“The level of support we are providing to help deliver this nationwide program is outstanding, and I am proud to be part of this team who is committed to delivering the program with world-class excellence.”

## Environmental Installation Restoration Program plays vital role in Soldier training

*Shatara Riis, public affairs*

The Army’s Installation Restoration Program is designed to address contamination from past activities and restore Army lands to useable conditions.

The Louisville District’s IRP primarily supports the U.S. Army Environmental Command by investigating and remediating sites at active installations.

According to USAEC, the Installation Restoration Program is one of two programs established under the Defense Environmental Restoration Program to identify, investigate and clean up hazardous substances, pollutants, and contaminants that pose environmental health and safety risks at active military installations and formerly used defense sites (under the FUDS Program).

“The Louisville District primarily works in soil and groundwater remediation,” said Craig Coombs, Louisville District IRP manager. “We use ex situ and in situ technologies for the remediation process.”

Ex situ treatment like that of thermal remediation method calls for digging up soil, transporting it to an onsite thermal treatment unit, soil treatment, and placing the soil back in its original spot, Coombs explained. Soil remediation requires transporting soil to an offsite landfill and being disposed of.

Whereas in situ treatment, the soil is treated in place by adding amendments, like vegetable oil for example, which enhances bioremediation, Coombs explained.

“This happens frequently with petroleum-type releases – cleaned up this way with (natural degradation occurring in the environment),” Coombs said. “Groundwater can be done in a similar fashion with injections. We try to steer clear of pump and treat, which used to be a big technology issue (pump the water out, treat it and put it back in). It’s not a very

effective technique.”

According to the Federal Remediation Technologies Roundtable, treating soil in place saves the cost of excavating and transporting the soil – a major cost advantage.

IRP ensures that soil and groundwater are safe to use as potable water, irrigation, agriculture or Soldiers’ training.

However, the Corps’ preferred cleanup remedy may face challenges.

“Regulators may not be on board with the remedy we have selected,” Coombs said. “We have found that early engagement and transparent communication build trust within the team and community, which helps with the (restoration project) progression.”

With challenges, there are successes.

“In the past year or two, particularly at Camp James A. Garfield Joint Military Training Center, Ohio, we have had numerous records of decisions signed on the MMRP (Military Munitions Response Program) and a few on the IRP side,”

Coombs said. “We’ve been able to get some sites that were slated for remedial action based on additional investigation to a ‘no further action’ status which allows for unrestricted reuse.”

According to Coombs this is big because this allows the National Guard to use the area for training. Also with Camp James A. Garfield, the Louisville District was able to expedite the cleanup of Winklepeck Burning Grounds allowing the Ohio Army National Guard to proceed with the construction of a Multi-Purpose Machine Gun Range at the installation on schedule without any hindrances.

“It’s important to the Army that we manage our environment and resources effectively, so they can continue to be used,” Coombs said. “We want to continue to have these sites clean so Soldiers can carry on with their training. Our ultimate goal is to support our Soldiers and the Army in managing their environmental compliance,” Coombs concluded.



*This remediation project at Winklepeck Burning Grounds in Ravenna, Ohio, is an example of a Installation Restoration Program project.*



# \$500 million FY19 boost for Military Construction Program



The main entrance to Fort Campbell High School in Fort Campbell, Ky.

*Shatara Riis, public affairs*

The Louisville District's Military Construction Program provides service support to 12 Army installations, five Air Force bases and is responsible for managing future and ongoing projects of the nation's installations and defense systems.

With a robust military mission, the Louisville district's geographic region spans more than 300,000 square miles in Illinois, Indiana, Kentucky, Michigan and Ohio.

The installations, within the five-state geographic area, identify their project requirements. These projects go through different authorization and approval levels. Once approved, the military construction projects come to the district.

Both active Army and Reserve components have a FY19 billion dollar budget said Cristie Mitchell, Military Project Management Branch chief.

"It's a good program – pretty steady. The work ebbs and (flows) with the different installations," Mitchell said.

According to Veronica Rife, military support section chief, the program experienced some lean times before the current boost to the budget.

"Half of this billion dollars is the military program, so we are at \$500 million for FY19 compared to about \$130 million for FY18," Mitchell said.

Ohio's Wright-Patterson Air Force Base has the most projects for the Military Program and will receive a sizable amount of that funding. Some of those projects include, an Air Force research lab at

the National Air and Space Intelligence Center, an Intelligence Production Facility Center and Air Force Materiel Command Headquarters – a three-phased project over the next three fiscal years, Rife said.

Other installations' projects will be considerably smaller.

Due to its unique missions, Fort Campbell has often been a project site for the Corps of Engineers Rife said.

"They received a little extra as a result of BRAC (Base Realignment and Closure) – just because of their unique missions, like Special Forces, which is a large piece and the 101st Airborne Division," Rife explained.

Sibling Fort Knox also garners a lot of the Corps' attention, but for different reasons.

Fort Knox is kind of a quiet installation,

but during BRAC, the Louisville District did a lot of work there to include building a Brigade Combat Team complex. Currently, the Corps is working on construction projects at Scott Middle School and a new medical treatment clinic that will replace the Ireland Army Community Hospital, Rife said.

The military project management branch doesn't just support military projects. It has a "diversified construction project portfolio."

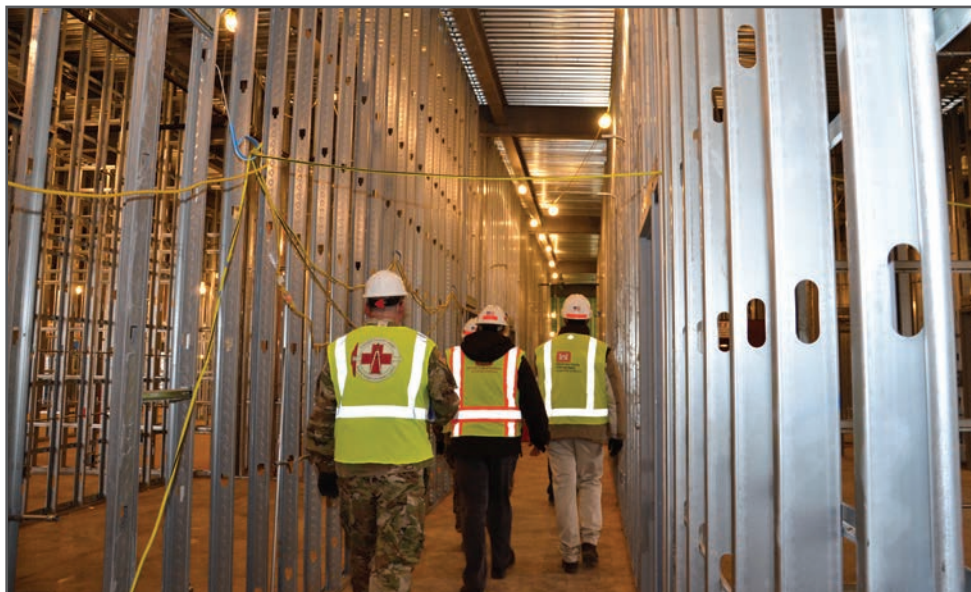
"We have an International/Inter-Agency Support Program – anything that is non-DoD (Department of Defense), like Veterans Affairs, Environmental Protection Agency and Forest Service," Mitchell said.

While the Corps has the military construction mission for the Army and Air Force, military installations may choose another option when executing their operation and maintenance type projects.

"Under the Sustainability Resilience and Maintenance Program, each installation has the option to come to us or go to their own resources," Rife said. "This is what we are seeing at Fort Knox and Fort Campbell."

According to Rife, installations put together their construction project wish list and decide how to direct funds on their project(s) of choice.

"The installation can come to us, either the Corps or district of choice, but they don't have to. So, we have to prove that we can execute and deliver for them (what) they want," Rife said. "It's a constant test for us. If we don't execute, the customer won't come back to us (for future projects)."



The interior construction of the new Fort Knox Medical Clinic in Fort Knox, Ky.



## VA, USACE partner to break ground on clinic at Fort Knox



On Dec. 11, 2018, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Louisville District proudly partnered with the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs to break ground on the new Community Based Outpatient Clinic at Fort Knox. The new health care facility will offer mental health and primary care for veterans to receive the care they need.

*Katie Newton, public affairs*

History was made Dec. 11, 2018, as the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Louisville District proudly partnered with the Department of Veterans Affairs to break ground on the new VA Community Based Outpatient Clinic at Fort Knox, Kentucky—the first stand-alone VA clinic to be located on a Department of Defense Installation.

The \$10.7 million project, which is scheduled to open in spring 2020 will provide outpatient primary care as well as mental health, social work, laboratory, nutrition and telehealth services for Veterans.

“VA and DoD have a long history of partnering together to ensure our Veterans and active duty service members receive the highest level of quality healthcare and services in or around the communities where they live. This venture, between VA and DoD, demonstrates our ongoing commitment to proudly care for all those we serve,” Cynthia Breyfogle, Network Director, VA Midsouth Healthcare Network said during the groundbreaking ceremony.

“We would also like to recognize the Army Corps of Engineers and Semper Tek, Inc., for the actual design and building of this wonderful clinic to serve our Veterans in this community for many years to come.”

The new 18,093 square foot facility will be a modern, convenient and comfortable location for Veterans to receive the care they need.

“This definitely is a means of being able to take care of people and the people that we are taking care of are our Veterans,” Louisville District Commander Col. Antoinette Gant said during her remarks. “I stand in this uniform today as an active duty service member, but one day I will be one of those people who will be able to utilize a facility such as this.”

This project sits on six acres adjacent to the Ireland Army Health Clinic, which is 50 percent complete and scheduled to



Cynthia Breyfogle, Network Director, VA Midsouth Healthcare Network, speaks at the VA Community Based Outpatient Clinic groundbreaking ceremony at Fort Knox, Kentucky, Dec. 11, 2018.

open to the Fort Knox community in early 2020. Both facilities are being constructed to replace the existing Ireland Army Community Hospital on post, which is scheduled for demolition in 2020.

“These projects will enable the history of expert medical care at Fort Knox to continue for years to come,” said Louisville District Project Manager Steve Farkus. “We are honored to help deliver these projects alongside the VA to serve Veterans and their families.”



U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Louisville District Commander Col. Antoinette Gant provides remarks at the groundbreaking ceremony for the VA Community Based Outpatient Clinic at Fort Knox, Kentucky, Dec. 11, 2018.



# Senior Advisory Group meeting held for Canandaigua VA center

Louisville District staff tour the ongoing construction of the Canandaigua VA Medical Center during a Senior Advisory Group meeting held Dec. 14, 2018.

The project, which is being delivered in partnership between the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs and the Louisville and Buffalo Districts of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, will provide state-of-the-art healthcare facilities for about 65,000 veterans living near the greater Canandaigua, New York area.

“Executing a project of this size and complexity on an active VA medical facility is a unique challenge,” said Melody Thompsen, DVA program manager. “But the dedication we have from the team, and the support we have from our senior leaders ensures we have the resources to be successful.”



## Spotlight

# Employee receives critical fire protection license

*Abby Korfhage, public affairs*

After years of dedication, Louisville District Mechanical Engineer Vu Nguyen recently received his Fire Protection Professional Engineer license in December 2018, after passing an intense 8-hour exam with 80 questions.

Nguyen spent years practicing for the exam, took numerous training courses and spent many months studying for the exam, which has a pass rate of 56 percent, according to the National Council of Examiners for Engineering and Surveying website.

“This is an outstanding accomplishment and truly reflective of Vu’s dedication to his profession and colleagues,” said Mike Braden, engineering design branch chief. “For those of us who are fortunate enough to work with him every day, it comes as no surprise as he has never been intimidated by the prospect of hard work to help deliver our mission.”

Nguyen is currently the second fire protection engineer in the Louisville District and soon to be the only one, following Mark Robertson’s retirement. The district is required to have a designated fire protection engineer on staff, so this was a critical need for the district since the only FPE is eligible for retirement.

“Fire protection engineering is a very specialized field and licensed fire protection engineers are relatively rare,” Nguyen said.

Nguyen had an interest in fire suppression system design for many years.

He discovered his interest for the license during his time in the district’s Leadership Development Program. He knew it would help the Louisville District while also potentially advancing his career.

“For several years, I worked with the engineering division leadership to receive the necessary training and developmental assignments to build competency in the field,” Nguyen said. “I began studying for the license itself in January 2018, working on it for one to two hours per day through July. From July to October, I took the Society of Fire Protection Engineering exam review course, and then the last two months prior to the exam date, I took three weeks of annual leave to study.”

Fire protection engineers ensure that the materials of construction; layout of a facility; and fire suppression, detection and alarm systems are designed and constructed to result in a safe building for the occupants.

“Any designs we produce must be designed or reviewed by a qualified FPE,” said Brandon Martin, engineering division’s mechanical section chief. “There are less than 50 FPEs in all of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers.”

According to Nguyen, This type of certification is needed for the building construction and building renovation for almost all vertical construction projects. For the district’s in-house design projects, the FPE will work with each engineering discipline and architects to design facilities



to meet life safety and fire protection requirements. For Architect-Engineer designed projects, the FPE will either be the life safety/fire protection reviewer or lead a fire team in the review. The FPE will also be the ‘go-to’ engineer to handle fire protection problems during construction or for existing building assessments.

“Having the fire protection engineering license will allow the district to maintain its ability to meet the design and construction mission in compliance with life safety and fire protection mandates, help the district deliver safe buildings, and gives stakeholders confidence in our ability to do those things,” Nguyen said.



# Louisville District leadership holds annual open house

Abby Korfhage, public affairs

The Army Corps of Engineers Louisville District held an open house Jan. 31 at the Marriott Hotel, downtown Louisville.

The event included presentations by district leaders followed by an open networking session where attendees could talk individually to the district's contracting officials and senior staff.

Louisville District Deputy Commander Lt. Col. Kevin Lewis welcomed the group which included contractors who could potentially do work to support the Louisville District missions.

Louisville District Commander Col. Antoinette Gant was the first presenter and shared the vision and mission of USACE and discussed the importance of collaboration and partnering.

"The Corps' foundation is strong, and the vision is clear, but we need our stakeholders and contractors as partners in the collective mission of not only the



Crystal Harbin, Louisville District deputy for small business, talks with contractors at the open house Jan. 31 in Louisville, Ky.



A crowd of approximately 300 attended the open house hosted by the Louisville District Jan. 31, 2019.

Louisville District, but also the Great Lakes and Ohio River Division and the Corps worldwide," Gant said.

Following Gant's presentation, Cristie Mitchell, Military Project Management Branch chief, gave an overview of the district's military programs including project updates, programmatic funding outlook and future contracting opportunities. Mitchell also talked about investing in each other to create relationships and build a partnership.

"Delivering on our commitments is just so important," Mitchell said. "We are excited to partner with you to deliver these projects."

Deputy for Small Business Crystal Harbin and other presenters emphasized that doing business with the Corps requires pre-planning and provided tips for contractors.

"Tailor your proposal for the project you are putting in for," said Contracting Reserve Branch Chief, Chris Brackett.

"When places have industry days - go,"

Harbin said. "Networking is so important."

Although projects are advertised on the Federal Business Opportunities website, Harbin also explained all active contracts are listed on the Louisville District website, which is a great resource when searching for potential subcontracting opportunities.

Other presentations included veteran affairs, operations, civil works and architect-engineering opportunities.

"I look forward to our open house every year," said Harbin. "It's a great opportunity to network with firms that have current contracts with us and make connections with new firms that are pursuing work. Being able to provide information on our upcoming opportunities allows us to partner with industry earlier in the acquisition process which has proven to be a win-win situation for everyone. Delivering the program is vital and events such as this ensure we stay on the path towards success."

Approximately 300 businesspeople attended the event.

## CE-SOHMS: moving safety from a checklist to a culture

Todd Hornback, public affairs

The Corps of Engineers Safety and Occupational Health Management System, known as CE-SOHMS, is a Corps-wide program focusing on employee safety that Louisville District is working to incorporate into each employee's everyday work processes.

John Bock, chief, engineering division, serves as the CE-SOHMS champion. His role includes facilitating efforts and assisting with the implementation plan, ensuring resources are adequately allocated, serving to track and highlight implementation efforts while monitoring progress, outcomes and sustainment.

"The safety and occupational health management system is essentially a means of managing risk and assuring the effectiveness of the identified control measures," Bock said. "As champion, I want to encourage employee support while assuring the district has the resources needed to make the program successful. It is about the safety of our employees with an emphasis in continuing a safety culture."

Tim Fudge, chief, operations division agreed.

"We're trying to make it a proactive, safety change—to make it part of the culture," Fudge said. "It is not to be looked at as just the district; it is part of a much

larger program."

The larger program involves every district member. Chad Shultz and John Hovis, maintenance mechanics and collateral duty safety officers at Monroe Lake near Bloomington, Indiana, reinforced that safety is not new to the Corps, but CE-SOHMS has some benefits for networking and exchange of information.

"We were already tasked that each employee leave with the same number of fingers at the end of each day," Hovis said. He added, that CE-SOHMS, "keeps everyone involved in the safety program."

This involvement includes the

*Continued on next page*





consolidation of safety records and documentation in the Qualtrax system. Under this scenario, safety plans and after action reports can be shared and made site specific. According to Hovis, networking is made easier through the system. Before, emails could be sent to district CDSOs, but with Qualtrax, the email lists are built within the system.

For example, employees can easily share information on successful corrective actions for slips, trips and falls among the four lakes in the Middle Wabash Area.

The safety emphasis involves employees at field locations and the Mazzoli Federal Building.

“Employees in the building really do not think about the safety program. They think it applies to people in the field and at construction sites,” said Denise Bush, chief, contracting division. “This brings it from the field and into the building site.”

Josh Gitchel, contract specialist and collateral duty safety officer, serves on the CDSO Committee, and focuses on safety for contracting division employees. Gitchel brings his experience as an Emergency Medical Technician into the office. Bush noted Gitchel as a shining example of how the CE-SOHMS philosophy promotes sharing information—a standard where employees can bring safety ideas to supervisors in an open and forthright

discussion.

For example, Gitchel reported that fire extinguishers in the Mazzoli Federal Building hallways were expired. Although the building’s General Services Administration oversees the building, the concern is noted and shared.

The example drives the message that safety is each employee’s responsibility such as cleaning up or reporting a spill to avoid a potential slip or fall.

Any employee can report hazards in the field and in the Mazzoli Federal Building by clicking the “Report a Hazard” icon on the Louisville District Intranet or using this link:

<https://team.usace.army.mil/sites/LRL/SO/Lists/SafetyIssues/NewForm.aspx>.

CE-SOHMS follows in the safety shoes of several programs including the Voluntary Protection Program, known as VPP, and the Seven Castle Five Star program—where Louisville District offices have received accreditation and awards. The Wright-Patterson Area Office garnered the recognition for one of the first Corps offices within USACE to be accredited in VPP.

“This program, if embraced by employees and supervisors, should reduce the costs of employee mishaps,” John Hearn, quality assurance lead for WPAFB resident office and LRL CDSO chairman, said. “When a self-evaluation program is

in place, we come up with best practices and solutions to correct problems. We as an organization need to consistently train employees on CESOHMS. As safety advocates, we need to assure our employees are safe. It goes hand in hand with the processes we do.”

The CE-SHOMS program will have three stages of implementation:

Stage 1: Groundwork for the safety program including the establishment of processes documentation with regards to current safety programs.

Stage 2: Implementation and communication of guidance

Stage 3: Continuing and constant improvements and feedback.

CE-SOHMS is a program intended for Corps of Engineers employees, but can easily support site-specific work with our contractors to improve safety for employees and contractors alike.

Metrics for the program include continuing current processes while focusing on communicating the program to all levels of the workforce.

“CE-SOHMS provides a framework for our existing programs,” Bryan Ammon, safety and occupational health specialist, Louisville District, said. “The expectation is that safety should be instinctive, but that’s not necessarily the case. It’s unrealistic for any one person to know everything about safety; the expectation is that they know where to find the resources to be successful.”

So what is expected of district employees?

- Share information and lessons learned
- Support the program
- Be vigilant
- When announced, volunteer for the

Employee Safety Committee

The district is planning to establish an Executive Safety Council and an Employee Safety Committee. The employee safety committee will be comprised of volunteers who want to assist in molding the safety culture throughout the district by addressing new and unique challenges associated with integrating a safety and occupational health management system into daily activities.

“Safety needs to be instilled into our culture; not just an afterthought,” Louisville District Commander Col. Antoinette Gant said. “To continue to be Louisville Proud and building strong, safety for our employees at the district office, construction sites and projects must be paramount.”



# USACE's first female brigadier general talks leadership with district staff



Retired Brig. Gen. Margaret Burcham, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers first female brigadier general, brainstorms with district branch chiefs, supervisors and personnel in the Leadership Development Program on important skills a leader should have.

*Shatara Riis, public affairs*

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers' first female general officer, retired Brig. Gen. Margaret Burcham spoke at a professional development session for leaders, where she talked authority, communication, effectiveness, influence, rapport, skill and values with the Louisville District staff Jan. 29 in the Mazzoli Federal Building.

This engagement allowed personnel to learn more about becoming leaders and developing the workforce.

A 1982 West Point graduate, Congress appointed Burcham to the rank of brigadier general in 2011, and she pinned on one-star in January of 2012.

This opportunity bloomed from a relationship cultivated when a young leader was inspired and reached out.

"This was huge, especially for someone like me," said Col. Antoinette Gant, Louisville District commander, as a part of her introduction of Burcham. "... I just wrote this letter, and I said, 'Hey ma'am, I know we have never met, but I think it is an honor for you to be the first female engineer general officer. Thank you for what you are doing.'"

Burcham responded and the relationship developed as Burcham returned an interest in Gant's military career as well.

According to Burcham leveraging the expertise of others is important to building relationships and is a vital component of leadership.

"Immediately build a relationship with your people," Burcham said. "Understand who people are, their values, and why we care. There is no one who is unimportant."

As a part of the interaction, the

group discussed 10 key skills or traits a good leader should have, and Burcham focused the conversation on three: values, communication and relationship building, and then she and other leaders around the room proffered the things they've learned in their years as leaders.

"Values guide my personal conduct ... trusting someone solves half the problem," Burcham said. "If you hire the right people, they'll run your company for you."

Using good communication skills helps to build relationships, too and creates a welcoming environment for coaching, teaching and mentoring.

With communication, leaders should be slow to speak and quick to listen in order to understand, added Chris Karem, environmental branch chief. For it's

important to listen first, get understanding, and then respond.

A contract specialist with the district, April Judd expressed that there is a lot to be gained from both receiving and giving mentorship; in fact, this is one of her Leadership Development Program II goals.

"I truly leave each of my mentor sessions with a sense of accomplishment and motivation," Judd said. "My mentor assures me that our time together is mutually beneficial, and as I grow in my career I hope that others will continue to allow me the opportunity to mentor them."

Louisville District deputy commander, Lt. Col. Kevin Lewis agreed and added that good leaders use their personal stumbling blocks as path stones for those that follow.

"Lift as we climb – that is my personal mantra," Lewis said. "I have several mentees, and one of my main goals is to help them achieve their full potential. Another aim is to help them avoid some of the many mistakes that I made."

Leaders come with different styles and aptitudes, but Burcham said everyone must work to become better.

"You've got to practice leadership – it is a skill," Burcham said. "You can learn it, but it's going to take work. It's something I have to work at all the time."

Lewis agreed and added that the work put into leadership pays in dividends.

"Strong leadership is essential to any organization functioning efficiently and effectively," Lewis said. "It's an on-going process."



Retired Brig. Gen. Margaret Burcham, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers first female brigadier general, speaks with Chris Karem, Environmental Branch chief, following a district leadership engagement in the Mazzoli Federal Building held Jan. 29.