

Falls City Engineer

U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Louisville District

September/October 2018

Volume 10, Issue 4

www.lrl.usace.army.mil



Meet Breeze: new dog on
bird patrol at Cannelton
Locks, Dam



Commander's Comments

Team Louisville,

Happy New Fiscal Year! I cannot tell you how proud I am of your efforts to bring a very successful FY18 to a close. It just goes to show that all divisions throughout the district are committed to execute until the very end to ensure success.

I have spent most of September and October on the road visiting our field offices. I am continually amazed at our staff's commitment to deliver for our stakeholders and sheer determination to finish strong especially as we closed out FY18.

What a year it was. We provided support to three disaster recovery missions in Texas, Florida and the Caribbean. We supported requirements in Iraq and Afghanistan, created the Veterans Affairs Division and started the construction for several bed down programs for the Air Force and Army Reserve centers across the United States.

Kudos to our operations team who has been busy due to significant high rains from multiple hurricanes that moved inland. Additionally, AJ Fleming and George Minges from Emergency Operations have been in support mode over the past weeks responding to requirements for Hurricane Florence. They used the newest equipment in the Louisville District – our hydraulic sandbag machine to assist with mitigating the flooding.

This issue highlights just a few of the many contributions our team members are making to the nation. We celebrated navigation innovation at the Olmsted Locks and Dam opening dedication ceremony, construction at Canandaigua VA Medical Center, our environmental team using new technology to clean up soil and groundwater, and we welcomed a new team member Breeze, a border collie, to Cannelton Locks and Dam.



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

I am looking forward to fiscal year 2019 as we tackle opportunities that come our way with receiving early funding and executing the supplemental program. Keep working hard, take the lessons learned and apply them as we move forward and finally, don't forget to challenge the status quo. We are LOUISVILLE PROUD!

BUILDING STRONG and Taking Care of People!

Col. G

Contents

America celebrates innovation at Olmsted dedication	3
Meet Breeze: new dog on bird patrol at Cannelton Locks, Dam	5
Construction continues for Canandaigua VA Medical Center	6
Sandbag machine helps fill the gap during Hurricane Florence flood fight	7
New technology vaporizes soil contamination	8
Louisville hosts Officers Professional Development event	8
The Hatch Act: an election year reminder	10



Falls City Engineer

Vol. 10, Issue 4

District Commander
Col. Antoinette Gant
Public Affairs Chief
Todd Hornback

Send articles to Louisville District
Public Affairs office at:
abby.n.korfhage@usace.army.mil

U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
CELRL-PA
P.O. Box 59
Louisville, KY 40201-0059

Falls City Engineer is an unofficial publication under AR 360-1, published bimonthly for Louisville District employees and members of the public by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, CELRL-PA, P.O. Box 59, Louisville, Ky. 40201-0059 under supervision of the Public Affairs Office. Views and opinions expressed are not necessarily those of the Department of the Army or the Corps of Engineers.



On the cover: Breeze, a border collie trained to deter birds, arrives at Cannelton Locks and Dam in Cannelton, Indiana, Sept. 18, 2018. (USACE photo by Abby Korfhage)

Please conserve:
Think before you print.

America celebrates innovation at Olmsted dedication

Michael Izard-Carroll, Buffalo District public affairs

The threat of rain earlier in the week failed to put a damper on the much anticipated ribbon-cutting ceremony to celebrate the opening of the new Olmsted Locks and Dam, Aug. 30, 2018, in Olmsted, Illinois. The event, hosted by U.S. Army Corps of Engineers' Louisville District, was a celebration of the multibillion-dollar project expected to bring reliable navigation to the Ohio River, offering millions of dollars of economic gains annually.

Olmsted Locks and Dam and the Ohio River create a strategic region providing a connection for the Mississippi, Tennessee and Cumberland rivers. According to national inland waterway statistics, more tonnage passes through the region than any other place in America's inland navigation system. More than 1,000 event attendees witnessed the first commercial barge pass through the new lock as a scheduled part of the festivities.

"Once fully operational, Olmsted will provide much-needed reliability and an average annual economic benefit of approximately \$640 million per year," said Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell. "It will be the lynchpin of our country's

incredible inland waterways system."

Given the significance of the locks and dam to the U.S. economy, labor force and industry, some elected officials, labor organizations and industry leaders attended the event, demonstrating the project's huge impact to a broad audience.

According to Sean McGarvey, North America's Building Trades Unions president, the Building Trades' skilled labor boosted the economy of the Ohio River Valley and continues to support the region's middle class by creating millions of jobs that provide family-supporting wages, worker training, protections and benefits.

"From initial project planning all the way through today's final ribbon-cutting ceremony, our members have never wavered in delivering value on display, every day," Garvey said. "For over thirty years, we've deployed the highest skilled workers every day at Olmsted, putting in 45 million work hours to build and maintain this phenomenal infrastructure accomplishment."

The Corps' 54th Chief of Engineers Lt. Gen. Todd Semonite, commanding general, said improving navigation is one of the organization's earliest civil works missions, which dates back to the early 1800s.

"We have relentlessly delivered



54th Chief of Engineers and USACE Commander Lt. Gen. Todd Semonite says improving navigation is one of the Corps' earliest civil works missions.

unmatched reliability for America's farmers, manufacturers, shippers, vessel operators and consumers," Semonite said. "Today, 98 percent of overseas trade, with a value of \$2 trillion, moves through Corps of Engineers projects."

Semonite said that the Olmsted project reflects the Army Corps of Engineers' strategic plan to build structures of this kind more efficiently and less costly while sharing best practices across the Corps enterprise so that every new design adopts only the best aspects of a completed project.

Great Lakes and Ohio River Division commander, Maj. Gen. Mark Toy stated the nation is suffering from the effects of aging infrastructure. Within his division, there are lock and dam facilities that are more than 100 years old. These inland waterway facilities had an expected design lifespan of about 50 years; however, because of the dedication and outstanding work of the lock and dam operators and maintenance crews, Toy said, the Corps has continued to operate these facilities for the nation.

"Thanks to our team, the Olmsted Locks and Dam will ensure the viability of this commercial waterway is so important to our nation's economic security," Toy said.



(Pictured clockwise from left to right) Great Lakes and Ohio River Division commander Maj. Gen. Mark Toy; Waterways Council President Michael Toohey; Senate Minority Whip Richard Durbin; Assistant Secretary of the Army for Civil Works R.D. James; 54th Chief of Engineers and USACE Commander Lt. Gen. Todd Semonite; Secretary of the Army Mark Esper; Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell; Representative (KY-1) James Comer; AECOM Project Director Kevin McLaughlin; Inland Waterways Users Board Chairman Marty Hettel and Louisville District commander Col. Antoinette Gant push the ceremonial Corps button to perform the simultaneous ribbon-cutting and first lockage through the Olmsted Locks and Dam during the ceremony, Aug. 30, in Olmsted, IL.

Continued on next page

“Everything we build; everything we do in USACE is about taking care of people.”

Col. Antoinette Gant, commander Louisville District, echoed Toy’s remarks. Gant, who has led the command of the Louisville District since July 2017, recognized the efforts of past and present members of the team.

“This project reflects the hard work and dedication of an incredible team,” Gant said. “I am proud of the Louisville District employees and contractors who have given of themselves to bring this project to fruition.”

The Corps leadership team recognized the prime contractor, AECOM, for its technical expertise, professionalism and resourcefulness during the formal presentation.

“From the beginning, we knew that safety, innovation, planning, communication and our people would be critical for this project,” said Kevin McLaughlin, AECOM project director. “As a contractor, seldom do you have the opportunity to work on a once-in-a-generation and, for some, a once-in-a-lifetime project like this, where the challenges were met by a united workforce.”

McLaughlin’s statements evoke historical significance, as the project is the largest Corps project since the Panama Canal. A small crowd of Corps retirees attended the ceremony, as many of them had spent the better part of their federal careers watching the Olmsted project evolve and develop over the years.

Olmsted Locks and Dam will eventually replace the old Ohio River locks and dams 52 and 53, completed in 1929. The existing dams have outlived their 50-year designs,

making it impossible for these structures to meet current-day traffic demands along the river.

The new structure consists of two 110-foot by 1,200-foot locks, which are located adjacent to the Illinois bank, and a dam comprised of five tainter gates, which control the amount of water that flows downstream. Additionally, there are 140 wickets and a fixed weir.

Just like the Panama Canal was considered an engineering marvel of its time, the Olmsted Locks and Dam reflects a new marvel for this generation to look back on for years to come. The structure, which Corps engineers expect to last at least 100 years, will likely outlive all of the hardworking individuals who helped to make it a reality. A new legacy is in the making.

“Within the Corps, we are revolutionizing our culture to responsibly accelerate project delivery, optimize

financing and budgeting, and improve permitting and regulatory activities,” Semonite said. “Olmsted stands as a shining example of what is possible when we all marshal our ingenuity, innovation and investment in a vital public good.”



Sen. Mitch McConnell speaks about the economic benefit the Olmsted Locks and Dam project will provide to the nation.



Spectators listen as speakers provide remarks on the importance of the Olmsted project to America during the opening dedication ceremony Aug. 30, 2018.



Secretary of the Army Mark Esper talks about how the Corps contributions continue to modernize America’s inland waterways.



The color guard, comprised of Louisville District Park Rangers, retires the colors at the Olmsted Locks and Dam Opening Dedication ceremony Aug. 30, 2018.

Meet Breeze: new dog on bird patrol at Cannelton Locks, Dam

Abby Korfhage, public affairs

It's a 'ruff' job, but someone has to do it. Rebecca Gibson from Flyaway Geese, an organization providing professional bird management by dog deterrence, delivered Breeze, a blue merle smooth-coated border collie trained to deter birds, to Cannelton Locks and Dam in Cannelton, Indiana, Sept. 18, 2018.

Breeze will be two years old in January and started her training at eight months old on a farm in North Carolina. She recently gave birth to her first litter of puppies.

"Breeze is a fully-trained bird control dog, so we are excited for what she is going to do out here," Gibson said. "It should be a lot of fun for these guys and a ton of fun for her."

The team will be assessing Breeze for the next three months to determine her effectiveness of deterring vultures which are eating away the expansion joints on the dam. The vultures are most problematic for the facility when drift accumulates on the dam.

"As soon as we replace the expansion joints, the vultures tear them right back out," said Larry Dunning, Cannelton Locks and Dam lockmaster. "We are hoping that if the dog works and the vultures stay away, we will be able to replace all the expansion joints next summer."

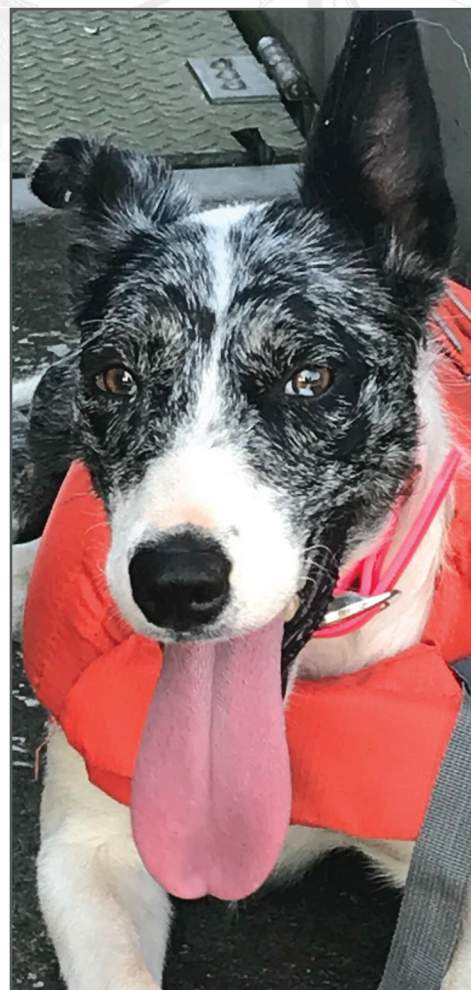
Breeze will also be used to deter the pigeons and geese that continuously cover the project site with their defecation causing health hazards to the employees and visitors.

On May 23, 2018, Danielle D'Amato, Engineer Research and Development Center research biologist, came to consult, advise staff and assess the damage and hazards posed by birds. D'Amato visited field sites to determine suitability for using and housing a dog, and educated the lockmasters and employees on the benefits of using dogs to deter birds. It was concluded that several species of birds have created an unhealthy and unsightly working environment and have damaged USACE facilities.

Nuisance bird behavior is costly to the projects, consuming funding and labor hours, and using dogs like USACE's first dam dog, Ellie, to deter birds has already proved successful at projects in the Tulsa and Chicago districts. Dogs are natural predators whose presence can be a deterrent to birds. The dogs are trained to actively deter birds by patrolling specific areas of a project. Using a dog can be substantially less costly than conventional deterrence methods like baiting or trapping.

"This will be the second dog that the Corps of Engineers has," said Todd Kimery Louisville District assistant operations manager. "Right now the initial thought is that we would split her time between two locks and dams since the facilities are close in distance."

Other locks and dams with bird issues are John T. Myers, Mt. Vernon, Indiana; Markland, Warsaw, Kentucky and McAlpine, Louisville, Kentucky.



Abby Korfhage

Breeze arrived at Cannelton Locks and Dam Sept. 18, 2018. She is a blue merle smooth-coated border collie trained to deter birds. The acidic droppings, nesting activity and feeding behavior of these birds cause damage to equipment, vehicles and facility structures.



Breeze, Cannelton Locks and Dam's newest addition, gets acclimated to her new surroundings in Cannelton, Indiana, Sept. 18, 2018.



Abby Korfhage

Vultures eat out the expansion joints on the Cannelton dam, compromising safety.

Construction continues for Canandaigua VA Medical Center



Personnel from USACE's contractor, Pike-P.J. Dick, prepare to encase electrical conduits in concrete to deliver power to the future outpatient clinic and temporary kitchen, May 18, 2018.

Courtesy of Buffalo District

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and the Department of Veterans Affairs are partners in delivering the Canandaigua VA Medical Center mega project, providing a state-of-the-art medical facility and health care service infrastructure to approximately 65,000 veterans living in and around the greater Canandaigua, New York area.

"We are forever grateful to our men and women in uniform," said Lt. Col. Jason Toth, USACE Buffalo District commander. "Updating the Canandaigua Medical Center is essential to making sure that New York's veterans have access to the best medical care possible."

The project is directly managed by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Buffalo District in concert with the VA Office of Construction and Facilities Management and the Canandaigua VA Medical Center.

"The major construction project at the Canandaigua VA Medical Center provides much needed updates to a campus that is more than 80 years old," said Kenneth P. Piazza, Acting Medical Center director as of Aug. 16, 2018.

A primary goal of the project is efficient delivery of healthcare services. Accordingly, the project will minimize recurring maintenance costs for underutilized buildings and improve areas such as safety/compliance requirements, patient privacy standards, and security and access points.

The project contains two phases. The Corps of Engineers successfully initiated

Phase I (Outpatient Clinic) in January 2018 with an anticipated completion date in the spring of 2022. As of August 2018, Phase II (Community Living Center) was in the project assessment and acceptance phase. Phase II future milestones are based upon FY19 Congressional budget approval.

Phase I work includes renovation of the administration building, demolition of the dining room and kitchen, as well as construction of a chiller/emergency generator plant and outpatient clinic.

Phase II work includes constructing a community living center, renovations to existing buildings, and utility system upgrades to support the new and renovated spaces.

"In order to execute the project, we



Personnel continue construction at Canandaigua VA Medical Center Sept. 4, 2018.

formed a regional project delivery team comprised of subject matter experts from the Buffalo and Louisville districts, as well as the USACE Medical Center of Expertise," said Gerald DiPaola, Buffalo District project manager.

"USACE brings a wealth of knowledge and expertise to the project," Piazza said. "Both the Veterans Health Administration and USACE have approached the process by placing a high emphasis on partnering and sharing of information."

USACE's partnership with the Department of Veterans Affairs resulted in formal agreements for design and construction oversight of thirteen major medical facilities valued at approximately \$6 billion. One such facility, the Rocky Mountain Regional Medical Center in Aurora, Colorado, opened in August 2018.

"Investment in the facility demonstrates federal government support for veteran care at the medical center as well as support for local employment," Piazza said. "It gives me a sense of pride in knowing that we will continue to provide the best possible care to veterans that seek medical care here."

"For myself, this project serves as a reminder of my own service in the U.S. Army," DiPaola said. "I look forward to seeing our veterans' lives and their families' lives improved by these state-of-the-art facilities, in an environment that promotes healing and honors veterans' service."

"The history of the Corps of Engineers is linked to our armed forces and our veterans," said Toth. "We're proud to deliver solutions for the challenges they face, now and into the future."

Courtesy of the Department of Veterans Affairs

Courtesy of Buffalo District Public Affairs

Emergency Operations

Sandbag machine helps fill the gap during Hurricane Florence flood fight

Edward Johnson, South Atlantic Division public affairs

When it comes to disaster response, one of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers' top priorities is supporting immediate life-saving and public safety efforts in partnership with FEMA, state and local emergency management officials.

Meeting this priority often includes providing sandbags and other resources to protect vital roadways and critical infrastructure during a flood event.

Following the impact of Hurricane Florence, this priority was met, in part, by rapidly deploying the latest emergency management equipment on-hand in the USACE inventory.

One such piece of equipment, known as a hydraulic sandbag filler, made its way to South Carolina from the USACE Louisville District while the storm was still raging across the region.

"Once called upon to deploy, we literally packed our bags and hit the road with the sandbag filler in tow," said George Minges, Louisville District's Emergency Operations Manager. "Since arriving here we've been helping produce sandbags around-the-clock at multiple locations."

Between their work supporting the coastal counties of Horry and Georgetown, South Carolina, Minges' team filled more than 25,000 bags working hand-in-hand with members of the South Carolina National Guard, as well as state, county and municipal personnel.



Edward Johnson

Emergency Operations Planner Andrew Fleming operates a hydraulic sandbag filler in Horry County, South Carolina, in support of Hurricane Florence flood risk management efforts across the region, Sept. 16, 2018.

Under normal conditions the machine can fill up to 500 bags per hour, but during this mission the sandbagging machine crew often exceeded that capacity.

"Our goal was to fill more than 6,000 sandbags for the Georgetown municipality," Minges said. "We were getting really good numbers there, and at one point were filling just under 700 sandbags per hour with the help of our local and state partners."

Minges went on to say he was happy to be a part of this flood mitigation effort and proud of the work he and his team did

to help local municipalities impacted by flooding.

Readiness Contingency Operations chief, Jud Kneuvean, deployed to Horry County, South Carolina from the USACE Kansas District, echoes that sentiment.

"The hydraulic sandbag filling machine greatly increased our ability to serve the public," Kneuvean said. "With this capability we can reduce the need for personnel on the front end, which is the most labor intensive, and focus on getting sandbags to where they are needed as quickly as possible."

A photograph of a flooded road. A speed limit sign for 40 is visible. A large green arrow points to the left, indicating a turn. The text "TURN AROUND, DON'T DROWN." is overlaid on the image, with "DON'T DROWN." in a blue box. At the bottom, there are logos for NOAA, the National Weather Service, and the Ready campaign, along with the website address www.ready.gov/floods.

**TURN AROUND,
DON'T DROWN.®**

www.READY.GOV/FLOODS

New technology vaporizes soil contamination

Abby Korfhage, public affairs

At the request of the Environmental Protection Agency, the Louisville District environmental team has been providing field oversight of a soil and groundwater remediation system installation at a Superfund Site in Zionsville, Indiana.

The innovative technology is called Electrical Resistivity Heating. It is an environmental remediation method that uses electricity to heat soil and groundwater. Once the system is turned on it will superheat the ground to vaporize and drive off volatile organic compounds from the impacted soil and groundwater thus cleaning the areas. The volatile contaminants are then captured in a vapor recovery system and filtered through air and/or water carbon filtration systems.

Before this technique came along, the Superfund trustees attempted to remediate the site using other environmental technologies.

“The other technologies were not effective due to the tight, clay-rich soils, so the trustees were required by the EPA to find an alternate remedial action to clean the site,” said Mark Nichter, Louisville



Superfund site in Zionsville, Indiana, has an electrical resistivity heating system installed to vaporize the volatile organic compounds from the impacted soil and groundwater.

USACE

District geologist and technical manager for the project.

The trustees selected Electrical Resistivity Heating treatment which is typically more expensive, but is also more effective in remediating the site.

The USACE team has reviewed the treatment system design plans and

are now completing oversight of the system installation. This project uses personnel from the Louisville District’s environmental branch, the Indianapolis field office and the Huntington District. USACE’s Environmental and Munitions Center of Expertise in Omaha, Nebraska, assisted in the system design review.

Spotlight

Louisville hosts Officers Professional Development event

Abby Korfhage, public affairs

The Louisville District welcomed officers from within the Great Lakes and Ohio River Division as they hosted the first Officers Professional Development event in Louisville, Kentucky, Sept. 4-6, 2018.

The three-day event, which included several briefings and off-site activities, was



Louisville District Commander Col. Antoinette Gant gives opening remarks at the Officers Professional Development event Sept. 4, 2018.

Abby Korfhage

designed to equip the officers within the division with skills and knowledge they will need to better serve and impact their home districts as well as develop them for their continued career within the Army.

The first day started with a briefing from Great Lakes and Ohio River Division commander Maj. Gen. Mark Toy.

“I’ve been wanting to do this event for a long time,” Toy said. “We want to be able to talk about your career path and professionalism.”

Toy explained how officers should think about the future and what was next in their careers, whether it be within the Army or not. He encouraged the junior officers to talk to other district commanders because they could be resources for mentorship.

“I thought it was very valuable to get the chance to talk with my peers about their experiences and what they have learned so far while working in USACE,” said Capt. Diana Bojoquez, who joined the Louisville District Sept. 4, 2018. “I also enjoyed that Maj. Gen. Toy encouraged

discussion throughout the event and how he encouraged our senior officers to speak about their career paths.”

During Toy’s presentation, he also spoke about his regional motto - taking care of people - and how leaders can accomplish that goal through DRIVE. DRIVE is an acronym Toy created to help his team remember the elements of taking care of people: D – Develop future talent; R - Refine internal management; I - Improve regional processes; V – Value open communication; E – Empower multidisciplinary teams.

“Not everyone understands but that motto is so important from a regional perspective of where I am trying to go with vision,” Toy reiterated. “It’s about the people - that’s been my experience with the Corps, and these initiatives are how you take care of people.”

Following the presentations, Louisville District Assistant Operations Manager Shawn Kenney and McAlpine Lockmaster Dewey Takacy conducted a tour of

Continued on next page

the McAlpine Locks and Dam for the participants and their spouses. The group then visited and toured the Louisville Repair Station.

The second day started at the downtown YMCA with a group physical training event.

“I really enjoyed testing out the new PT test and getting a feel for the new standards we will have to meet,” said 1st Lt. Tori Amato, Louisville District architect. “Doing each of the events before the new test is put in place helped us figure out what our weaknesses are so we can work on them.”

At the end of the physical training session the group had a relay contest among the districts.

“What a fun way to end the training session,” Amato said. “I love a good competition.”

Afterwards the group attended an engineering branch brief, had career focused one-on-one sit downs and visited veterans at Louisville’s Robley Rex VA Medical Center.

“My favorite part of the event was hearing from the Engineer branch officers and the one-on-one sessions,” said 1st Lt. Shakeel Harper-Hernandez, a Louisville District engineer. “It gave a clear view on what is going on for my year group and helped me understand what I can do now as a junior leader to properly map out my



Jack Sweeney

Shawn Kenney, Louisville District assistant operations manager, briefs officers and their spouses before the McAlpine Lock and Dam tour Sept. 4, 2018, Louisville, Kentucky.

career progression.”

The final day consisted of a group run at the Louisville Waterfront’s Big Four Bridge and a tour of the supporting infrastructure for the Metropolitan Sewer District.

There were a total of 39 military officers and five spouses in attendance representing all division districts which include Louisville, Buffalo, Chicago, Detroit, Huntington, Nashville and Pittsburgh.

“The event served as an opportunity to build camaraderie amongst the geographically separated districts,” said Capt. Kyle Brinks, Louisville District project manager and event coordinator.

There were several social events that focused on the unique culture of Louisville,

including a tour of Churchill Downs, a tour and meal at Kentucky Peerless Distilling, and dinner at Louisville’s Sports and Social Club.

“Being geographically separated, it’s important for the officers of the Great Lakes and Ohio River Division to maximize the limited time we are able to spend together,” said Louisville District deputy commander Lt. Col. Kevin Lewis. “From learning about the Louisville District to seeing the local sights, the officers who participated were able to gain a better understanding of our mission and the environment in which we execute. It was a great success and something we will definitely replicate at other locations in the future.”



Louisville District 1st Lt. Tori Amato races down the court during the Lakes and Rivers division competition closing out the physical training activity Sept. 5, 2018.



Jack Sweeney

Louisville District 1st Lt. Shakeel Harper-Hernandez dead lifts more than 300 pounds as part of the physical training activity Sept. 5, 2018.



Officers from the Great Lakes and Ohio River Division participate in a city infrastructure tour given by Louisville’s Metropolitan Sewer District Sept. 6, 2018.

The Hatch Act: an election year reminder

With election season around the corner, it is important to remember the rules under the Hatch Act. The Hatch Act is a U.S. federal law passed in 1939 that restricts political activity of government employees. Government employees may not engage in political activity while on duty (including telework); in the federal workplace (including break rooms, conference rooms, and the building's gym and cafeteria); wearing a government uniform or badge; or operating a government vehicle. Additionally, federal employees may never solicit, accept, or receive a political contribution; be candidates in partisan elections; solicit or discourage the political activity of a person with business before their agency; or use their official authority or influence to affect the outcome of an election.

The U.S. Office of Special Counsel, which enforces the Hatch Act, defines political activity as any activity directed at the success or failure of a political party, partisan political group or candidate for a partisan political office.

Generally, there is a lot of confusion about the Hatch Act and what a USACE employee can and cannot do. Federal employees are allowed to express their personal views or opinions about events, issues or matters at any time, including when they are at work or on duty. They just may not express their personal opinions on such events/issues if such views also are a political activity. For example, a federal employee at work can express



their opinion; "I agree with the healthcare reform." However, they cannot do so if it is tied to a political party, candidate for partisan office or partisan political group; "If you agree with healthcare reform you should support candidate X."

So what does this have to do with social media? Social media enables users to create and share information, ideas, opinions and interests. It is a form of expression and communication. These platforms are easily accessible to most federal employees while working via computers, smartphones or other devices. E-mailing, blogging, tweeting or posting content violating the Hatch Act to social media, is prohibited. Even if using a personal device or email account; even if sharing or forwarding content which was authored by others; even

if sharing or forwarding to friends or like-minded coworkers. Therefore, it is very easy for employees to violate the Hatch Act through social media. Employees should know what is acceptable and what is not to avoid this.

The Hatch Act is in place to protect federal employees. According to the Office of Special Counsel, the law's purpose is to ensure that federal programs are administered in a nonpartisan fashion, to protect federal employees from political coercion in the workplace, and to ensure that federal employees are advanced based on merit and not based on political affiliation.

Office of Special Counsel resources may be found at: <https://osc.gov/pages/hatchact.aspx>.



Deployment and Family Readiness



Under Deployment and Family Readiness, our Emergency Operations team follows a process to support deployed employees and their families. Taking care of employees means also taking care of employee's family. The program includes checking in with the families left behind when employees deploy, sending care packages to our deployed employees and their families; and setting up VTC chat times so family members can stay connected.