

Crosscurrents

Serving the St. Paul District since 1977

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Botz steps up
to serve his
community during
disaster response
Pages 4-5



**US Army Corps
of Engineers®**

St. Paul District

(cover) Joel Zietz, maintenance and repair coordinator at Baldhill Dam, and Chris Botz, park ranger at Baldhill Dam, adjust the dam gates at Baldhill Dam, near Valley City, North Dakota, to increase the outflow and create storage capacity within Lake Ashtabula, April 26. USACE photo by Patrick Moes



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Articles and photography submissions are welcome. Submissions may be mailed or emailed. Submissions should be in Microsoft Word format. Photos should be at least 5 in. x 7 in. at 300 dpi.

The mission of *Crosscurrents* is to support the commander's internal information program for the St. Paul District and its stakeholders. *Crosscurrents* also serves as the commander's primary communication tool for accurately transmitting policies and command philosophy to the St. Paul District community and its customers.

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Contents

Comments From The Top: A message from Col. Karl Jansen	3
Botz steps up to serve his community during disaster response	4
Kopka selected for national diversity award	6
Corps celebrates two restoration projects on the Upper Mississippi River	7
Corps of Engineers hosts ribbon cutting at Lake Ashtabula visitor center	8
St. Paul District finds win-win solution is maintaining navigation	9
Agency partnership provides housing relief efforts	11
Parks get upgrades for environmental sustainability	12
Atkins returns to St. Paul District as deputy chief of operations	13
Wolf takes over deputy chief position in engineering and construction	14
Citizen Airmen recognized for top Air Force engineer team award	15
Civil Servants of the Year announced	16
Recognizing our Employees of the Month: the MVPs of MVP	18
News and Notes	19



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Comments From The Top: A message from Col. Karl Jansen

Team MVP,

My time with St. Paul District is quickly wrapping up and this is my final Crosscurrents entry. It has been an honor serving as the district's 66th commander. I remain in awe of the caliber, character and commitment of the people who humbly serve our organization, fellow citizens and the environment. It is amazing what you collectively accomplish, and the trust-building way you do it. Thank you for welcoming me for this brief time, showing genuine care and interest in my family and inspiring me to try my very best.

At the end of July, we'll welcome Col. Eric Swenson as our next commander, and the district will be in very capable hands. Col. Swenson is coming to us from an assignment at the United States Military Academy. He has a diverse professional background and will surely bring fresh perspectives, positive energy and enthusiasm to this duty position. I'm confident he will recognize, as I have, that our people, mission, region and partners are a joy to work with and his time with St. Paul District will be an assignment of a lifetime.

There has never been a dull moment these past three years! Our people met every challenge, from hurricane response to exceptional drought, record flooding, social unrest, the COVID-19 pandemic, strained tribal relations, record civil works appropriations and workload growth, atop an already demanding civil works program with ingenuity and a positive, can-do attitude.

Through and through you have lived up to our mantra of M-V-P...Mission (working hard and doing a good job), Value (striking to always make things better), and People (taking care of one another and those we proudly serve).

I'm especially proud of our outstanding safety record – the way our people and leaders put safety first in all settings, especially related to work that is inherently dangerous in, on, or next to water, underscores how we treat safety as a core value. Keep this up!

I'm also proud of the way we rebounded from the tragedy of George Floyd's death and the community trauma that followed to reinvigorate our Special Emphasis Program and

renew our commitment and focus on the ideals of diversity, equity and inclusion. Our work will never be done in this area – keep raising the bar! The COVID-19 pandemic, upcoming district office move and a highly competitive job market will drive a revolution in our work environment. There is a big adjustment period around the corner as we transition to a post-pandemic hybrid work model, striving for an individual and organizational win-win. Be patient, practice frequent two-way communication, set clear expectations, be accountable for your results and stay focused on delivering our program to a high standard, and all will be okay!

Helping others win is a foundational trait of the St. Paul District which fosters strong partnerships with our valued customers across all our program areas: tribal nations; international nations; sister districts; communities; and local, state and federal agencies. Being a team player for the public good assures long-term relevance and positive results. Keep investing in our valued relationships!

I'm convinced that our secret recipe is our cohesion and culture, 156 years in the making, outlined by our



twelve MVP Guiding Principles. Stick with exemplifying these principles and consistently teaching them to our future new teammates, and the St. Paul District will have a very bright future!

Thanks for all you do, I wish each of you continued success and well-being. I will always be cheering for you!

Best Regards,
Col. Karl Jansen

Botz steps up to serve his community during disaster response

Story by Patrick Moes

When it comes to disaster response missions, Chris Botz has seen a few during his 28-year career with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, St. Paul District.

As a park ranger at Baldhill Dam, located a few miles northeast of Valley City, North Dakota, Botz spends most of his time working shoreline management issues, ensuring campers have everything they need, and adjusting the gates at the dam to regulate Lake Ashtabula water levels.

Botz said he loves his day-to-day job, but also enjoys helping people during a disaster response mission. He added that when the call comes for him to switch gears and change his park ranger campaign hat out for his red emergency operations hat, it becomes a job of long hours, but one that he embraces, and he will do whatever is necessary to get the job done.

That willingness to serve is exactly what propelled Botz into action in April as a series of spring storms created severe flooding conditions within North Dakota. Botz said he was there supporting Corps of Engineers flood operations within the Sheyenne River basin from Valley City all the way down to Kindred,

North Dakota, which is about 30 miles from Fargo, North Dakota. The work, he said, was rewarding but required a lot of coordination with local officials, public works directors and local mayors.

While the job can be stressful, Botz said it's important to him because Valley City and the surrounding area are more than the place where he works, it's where he calls home, it's where he is raising his two children and where met his wife. "Valley City is a great place to work and raise a family," said Botz. "It is small enough that you know most of your neighbors, and it comes together in times of need. I am fortunate that I was able to spend most of my career working in a job that I enjoy in a great area to raise a family."

For Botz, a Backus, Minnesota, native, supporting the flood fight is about taking care of the community. With too many disaster response missions under his belt to remember, he said that while his house was safe during this year's flood fight, it was in danger of being flooded during the 2009 and 2011 floods within Valley City. Having went through those events, he said

Story continued on Page 5



Chris Botz, park ranger, discusses temporary levee construction in Valley City, North Dakota, April 26. USACE photo by Patrick Moes

Story continued from Page 4

he could certainly empathize with the stress people in low-lying areas were facing as rising waters threatened their homes this year.

While the water continued to rise, Botz said he and a small team from the Corps of Engineers fought back against Mother Nature and the Sheyenne River. He said the Corps supported the city of Valley City's flood fight efforts by constructing temporary levees and provided technical assistance to help the community and the valley better understand what was needed to reduce the flood risk.

"When you see temporary levees go up in town it brings an uneasy feeling," said Botz. "You know that Mother Nature has sent us a challenge to work with, but it is a reassuring feeling knowing that the town is prepared. We have an excellent public works department and fire department that has gone through this in the past. Once the levees go up, it falls on them to manage all of the water pumping to help keep the community dry."

The temporary levees, built by the Corps' contractor, Strata Corporation from Grand Forks, North Dakota, included eight sections with a combined distance of more than 8,000 feet in length. They were constructed from clay soils 'borrowed' from a field near Valley City. Since

the levees were not engineered to withstand a flood, Botz said the levees required routine monitoring to ensure they were able to hold back the river. He said the city was able to find more than 100 volunteers to monitor the temporary levees as the Sheyenne River slowly rose to the fifth highest flood elevation in recorded history. Volunteers monitored the levees 24-hours a day at the height of the flood and notified Corps of Engineers officials as soon as a vulnerable area was identified. Botz said no serious issues were ever discovered, but the team remained vigilant.

Working 12+ hour days, seven days a week, might be stressful for some, but Botz said it's a small sacrifice if it means the community can continue to go about their daily activities with minimal impact. That sense of selfless service is evident while Botz is driving more than an hour away from his home to check on the small community of Fort Ransom, North Dakota – population of 105 people. While he was coordinating for the delivery of 6,000 sandbags with support from mayors in Valley City and Fargo, Botz said his son was getting ready for his prom in Valley City.



Joel Zietz, maintenance and repair coordinator, and Chris Botz, park ranger, discuss temporary levee construction in Valley City, North Dakota, April 26. USACE photo by Patrick Moes

Kopka selected for national diversity award

Story by Dave Elmstrom

The Federal Asian Pacific American Council awarded Marie Kopka, St. Paul District water resources planner, their 2022 Outstanding Individual Leadership Award from for her work on diversity and inclusion.

Kopka, who works out of Wauwatosa, Wisconsin, co-founded the creation of a national Army Corps of Engineers Asian American, Native Hawaiian, and Pacific Islander, or AANHPI, employee resource group last fall.

"I'm ecstatic that these diversity, equity and inclusion efforts are getting attention," Kopka said. "I'm humbled that the Corps put forth that nomination. It was also very validating, that the Corps is valuing the efforts."

The award is given annually to individuals "who have shown bold leadership and innovative ways in promoting equal employment opportunity, affirmative action, and diversity." The Federal Asian Pacific American Council represents federal employees from all agencies, promoting equal opportunity and inclusion, cultural diversity, mentoring and develop-

ment. Kopka received the award virtually at the organization's 37th National Leadership Training Program May 10-12.

Kopka is a nearly 20-year veteran at with the Corps of Engineers. She started as a park ranger in the Portland, Oregon, area, and spent more than a decade working for the St. Paul District in the regulatory division. She transferred to the regional planning and environment division north in 2021, and currently serves in plan formulation there.

"Marie is not only a great team member here in the St. Paul District, but she is also a great champion of diversity and inclusion across all of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers," said Col. Karl Jansen, St. Paul District commander. "We're so pleased she was recognized with this prestigious award, and it was well deserved."



Marie Kopka, water resources planner and recipient of the 2022 Outstanding Individual Leadership Award from the Federal Asian Pacific American Council. USACE courtesy photo

Corps celebrates two restoration projects on the Upper Mississippi River

Story by Melanie Peterson

The St. Paul District, in partnership with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, celebrated Earth Day with a ribbon cutting for two of its habitat restoration projects: Harpers Slough and Conway Lake. Both projects are part of the Upper Mississippi River Restoration, or UMRR program.

The \$5.3 million Conway Lake project, just upstream of Highway 82 on the Mississippi River included the construction of floodplain forests and berms created from main channel dredging stockpiles. The project enhanced habitat, improved dissolved oxygen in Conway Lake and improved winter habitat conditions. This project restored 1,170 acres of aquatic and floodplain forest habitat.

The \$2.4 million Harper Slough project, just upstream of Lock and Dam 9, near Lynxville, Wisconsin, protects existing islands and constructed additional islands using material from the backwater and main channel. The project will slow the loss of existing islands, reduce the flow of sediment-laden water into the backwaters, reduce turbidity and increase the

diversity of land and shoreline habitats. Habitat restoration work was completed in 2017, however record flooding in 2018 and 2019 caused erosion and prevented the islands from establishing vegetation. The project restored 1,680 acres of aquatic and island habitat.

"When you are on the ground locally, you get it. It's very clear the cultural, ecological and economic significance of the river and how we coexist to achieve a lot of things. You can feel why it is important to continue to be good stewards of the environment in this area," said Col. Karl Jansen, St. Paul District commander. "This is a terrific program when you look nationwide at things that work well and deliver tremendous results at a value to the taxpayers. The program is 36 years old and has delivered 55 projects from Minneapolis to St. Louis and restored 100,000 acres of floodplain."

Sabrina Chandler, refuge manager for the Upper Mississippi Wildlife Refuge, said in her remarks, "It's a benefit for us to be part of this program, we tremendously

value the partnerships that come from the program and especially the relationships in the community that are built through the contractors and the establishment and the use of these projects."

These projects were made possible through funding from the

UMRR program. This program ensures the coordinated development and enhancement of the Upper Mississippi River system with primary emphasis on habitat restoration projects and resource monitoring.



Col. Karl Jansen, district commander, and partners, cut the ribbon for the Harpers Slough and Conway Lake restoration projects, April 22 in Lansing, Iowa. USACE photo by Melanie Peterson

Corps of Engineers hosts ribbon cutting at Lake Ashtabula visitor center

Story by Melanie Peterson

The St. Paul District celebrated the reopening of its newly renovated visitor center at its Lake Ashtabula Dam and Recreation Area, as well as the site's 70th anniversary, with a ribbon cutting ceremony May 18. Speakers at the event include Col. Karl Jansen, St. Paul District Commander; Valley City Mayor Dave Carlsrud; and Barnes County Commissioner Cindy Schwehr, who also grew up in the area.

"The upgraded visitor center includes many things: the history of the area including its first inhabitants dating back 10-11,000 years; the form, function and operation of the dam; and the history of the people who worked here and cared for the site and showed a lot of stewardship. We hope the public will enjoy this facility," said Jansen in his remarks.

Baldhill Dam was completed in 1951 and was dedicated in 1952. The visitor center was constructed in 1977 and originally housed a park ranger office and some displays related to the flora and fauna of the recreation area. The visitor center was renovated to include interpretive displays

about the site and its relationship with the community.

Today, Baldhill Dam provides municipal water supply, flood risk reduction, recreation, rural water supply and pollution abatement. The Corps operates seven recreation areas at Lake Ashtabula, as well as actively manages 14 separate wildlife areas at Lake Ashtabula.



(above) Scott Tichy, lead natural resources specialist, talks to a member of the public at the reopening of the Ashtabula visitor center in Valley City, North Dakota, May 18. USACE photo by Emily Chavolla



(left) The newly renovated visitor center at Lake Ashtabula in Valley City, North Dakota, May 18. USACE photo by Emily Chavolla

St. Paul District finds win-win solution in maintaining navigation

Story by Patrick Moes

Maintaining the Mississippi River 9-foot Navigation Channel is one of the primary missions for the St. Paul District.

To maintain the channel, the district typically removes around 1 million cubic yards of sand every year. While the sand is a nuisance for the navigation channel and the shippers moving bulk commodities to markets up and down the river, it's a blessing for developers looking for free, clean material to raise land above the flood plain, said Paul Machajewski, St. Paul District dredged material manager.

Machajewski said his team within the district's channels and harbors branch recently worked with the city of La Crosse, Wisconsin, to support their efforts to elevate an area out of the flood plain. "In all, a local contractor removed around 200,000 cubic yards of river sand from our Brownsville, Minnesota, placement site and moved it to a site within La Crosse," said Machajewski.

The La Crosse beneficial use project is a big deal, said Machajewski. "Typically, contractors

will come in and take about 30-40,000 cubic yards of material per year, the contractors for the La Crosse project are taking 3-5 times that amount."

Getting general construction fill material for free is a win-win for the community and the Corps of Engineers, said Machajewski. The benefits come from the fact that the city doesn't need to use their tax dollars on the sand while also being able to protect an area within their community from future flood threats. In addition to the benefits that the city receives, Machajewski said the Corps of Engineers receives significant benefits, too, by creating additional storage capacity for future dredging needs to maintain the navigation channel. He said he estimates that the La Crosse beneficial use project will generate an additional 4-5 years of future storage capacity.

Dan DeVaney, St. Paul District channel maintenance coordinator, said one of the key parts of the channel maintenance program is placing the material at specific

Story continued on Page 10



Paul Machajewski, dredged material manager, looks on at the dredging near Brownsville, Minnesota, September 24, 2021. USACE photo by Patrick Moes

Story continued from Page 9

upland placement sites, or river sand resource centers, for communities to reuse the sand for a variety of purposes. “The material is ideal for use in winter road maintenance, construction site fill, or even general fill material for the local farming communities as cattle bedding,” said DeVaney.

Corps staff are exploring other options for placing river sand, too. Eric Hanson, St. Paul District senior ecologist and environmental planner, said he is a part of a team that is exploring the possibility of using agricultural fields near the Mississippi River as options for permanently placing river sand removed from the navigation channel. He said they are looking at several methods that would use the river sand to improve the soil structure and function on poorly drained and semi-poorly drained agricultural lands with the end goal of improving overall crop production. Hanson said plans are currently in development, and the team hopes to test the concepts over the next 2-3 years to verify the hypothesis that incorporating river sand would improve agricultural production. “If successful,” Hanson said, “this study would open up tens of thousands and perhaps hundreds of thousands



Dredging operations near La Crosse, Wisconsin, September 24, 2021. USACE photo by Patrick Moes

of acres nationwide not previously considered for the permanent placement of river sand, and provide an eco-friendly, cost-effective and collaborative solution to managing river sand.”

Machajewski said the potential for agricultural field placement is just one area where the team is looking for future solutions to the annual need to place river sand removed from the navigation channel. He said the team contin-

ues exploring opportunities and have started looking at blending it with soils for use around new road construction to improve drainage near roads.

Agency partnership provides housing relief efforts

Story by Elizabeth Stoeckmann and Andy Huffman

Teamwork has a special meaning for a group of employees from the St. Paul District, and employees of the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation, or USBR, who deployed in support of Hurricane Ida recovery efforts in Louisiana last summer.

The St. Paul District's housing planning and response teams received a call to support the recovery efforts following Hurricane Ida's landfall Aug. 29, 2021. A month later, the team departed home station for Baton Rouge and New Orleans. The team's mission manager quickly realized they were going to need assistance to handle the workload assigned to them and reached out to the USBR for assistance.

"A strong partnership like this speaks to the level of support the Corps of Engineers provides in emergency relief efforts with FEMA," said deployed mission manager Andy Huffman.

In November, the bureau deployed a six-person team from across the United States that marked the first of six, 6-month rotations to the deployed location.

"The USBR personnel were a great addition to the housing team and integrated quickly with Corps' team members. Their efforts, along with the other team members' efforts, were vital to the success of this mission," said the St. Paul District Readiness Operations Chief Kristin Kosterman.

Hurricane Ida impacted landfall near Port Fourchon, Louisiana, as an "extremely dangerous" Category 4 storm with sustained winds of 150 mph. Ida then churned inland with a life-threatening storm surge along the coasts of Louisiana, Mississippi, and Alabama, bringing catastrophic winds, heavy rainfall, tornadoes, and flash and urban flooding.

Huffman said the joint USBR and Corps team exceeded expectations. During the six-month deployment, the joint team completed more than 2,200 private-site inspection reports, 140 commercial park-site inspection reports and 1,100 ready for occupancy reports.

The reports are used by FEMA to determine whether a location

is feasible for the placement of a temporary housing unit. Then, if eligible, the homeowner would receive a temporary housing unit on the property, while the homeowner makes necessary repairs to the home.

Wesley Shaw, assigned to the Boulder City Nevada Lower Colorado Region, served as the USBR agency representative for the six-person team, he said that he is always amazed at the bonding the planning and response teams develops during a disaster mission and reminds him of the camaraderie he experienced while in the U.S. Army.

"The temporary housing mission comes in waves," Shaw said. "You always need to be ready to adapt."

Adapting is exactly what the team did, Huffman said. They learned from previous housing missions that you need a lot of equipment to effectively complete the housing mission. These missions often keep the planning and response teams away from their homes for 30 to 60 days. He said the packing list for the extended mission

includes everything from safety equipment, to clothing and tools, because you never know what you might run into.



St. Paul District deployed mission manager Andy Huffman performs a site evaluation. USACE courtesy photo

Parks get upgrades for environmental sustainability

Story by Elizabeth Stoeckmann

When it comes to sustainability, the St. Paul District is working diligently to strengthen the value to the nation by enhancing recreation areas with upgrades that are noticeable and seamless to the general public.

Specifically, the Eau Galle Reservoir and Blackhawk Park have seen positive sustainable changes through the years that will continue in the future – inspiring people and creating lasting experiences, said Mississippi River Recreation and Eau Galle section chief Kevin Berg. “For example, pedestrians will experience a floating pedestrian bridge in the near future,” Berg said.

Current funding for the floating bridge structure will cross the Eau Galle River in the main day use area to the northwest day use area, providing quicker access from the Highland Ridge Campground to the beach and related day use facilities for campers. Currently users need to drive from the campground to the main day use area to use the facilities. However, now they will be able to walk from the campground to the day use area, thereby saving

time and money as less fuel will be consumed by the users, and less impact to the environment to drive around the park (approximately 13 miles one way). This project is currently being worked on for acquisition of the bridge structure.

In 2021, a solar system installation at the Eau Galle Project was also funded for the main office building. This project is currently in its construction stage, so no cost savings data is available but will eventually provide additional energy and dollars savings at this location.

As the district’s first sustainability funded project of 2016, the Eau Galle office building installed a geothermal system to provide energy and cost savings over the long term for heating and cooling the office building.

“To date, there’s been a significant savings 500-1000 gallons of LP gas a year to heat offices and reduce energy consumption,” Berg said. “As time goes on, it will provide even better energy savings regarding the geothermal system.”

Eau Galle Reservoir isn’t alone in recent upgrades.

In 2021, Blackhawk Park, the largest public use facility in Pool 9 of the mighty Mississippi River, located north of De Soto, Wisconsin, secured an electric utility type vehicle, or UTV, for the park ranger’s use. The UTV will provide dollar savings in fuel consumption as it enables the park to reduce their government vehicle fleet by one, thereby eliminating that annual cost as well.

This year, the park received funding for replacement of an underground septic tank at a volunteer fee contractor campsite, solar installations at the park office and the campground shower facility

and replacement furnaces and hot water heaters at the main park office and shower facility.

“These new upgrades will save tax dollars through energy savings, efficiencies in energy consumptions and reduce potential impacts to the environment,” Berg added.

It is the district’s responsibility to apply principles of good environmental stewardship to the natural resources located on Corps administered lands. The district has received approximately \$3.2 million in assisting the parks with 74 projects focused on recreation and flood risk management.



Solar system installed at the Eau Galle Recreation Area in 2021. USACE courtesy photo.

Atkins returns to St. Paul District as deputy chief of operations

Story by Dave Elmstrom

Growing up in Eastern Arkansas near the Mississippi River, Christopher Atkins had an early appreciation for the river and the Army Corps of Engineers. He's now nearing his 20th year in his Corps' career, and recently returned to the St. Paul District as the deputy chief of operations.

"From a relatively early age, I had a basic understanding of what the Corps' mission was," he said. "I had some family members who worked for the Corps. I always found those kinds of things fascinating, especially the things we did on the river."

Atkins, who formerly worked as chief of physical support branch and chief of the locks and dams section here in the St. Paul District, departed for Nashville in 2015 to become the chief of the technical support branch there. Returning to St. Paul "was a good opportunity for me, and I knew most of the folks in the program, so it was an easy transition."

As deputy chief of operations, he helps oversee a large portfolio of projects and activities, including project management, safety and

labor relations issues, and basically addressing big issues that arise, or as he terms it "anything that's hot."

"There's always something going on in operations," said Atkins.

Atkins has three degrees from Washington University in St. Louis: a bachelor's in structural/civil engineering, a master's in structural engineering, and a master's in international finance and project management. "I think in my work in the Corps, I use all of those things," said Atkins.

In his spare time, Atkins owns a 300-acre cattle farm in Northwest Arkansas. His parents run the day-to-day operations, while he takes care of finances and general management remotely. He tries to get down there as often as he can. "It's something I really enjoy," said Atkins.



Chris Atkins, deputy chief of operations. USACE courtesy photo

Wolf takes over deputy chief position in engineering and construction

Story by Dave Elmstrom

Longtime St. Paul District engineer Gary Wolf has been promoted to deputy chief of engineering and construction, a position he took over in January.

Wolf spent nearly the past nine years as the chief of the civil, site and surveys section, and has been with the St. Paul District since coming here as an intern in 2000.

He takes on the new position as the division's design branch is restructuring from three sections to six sections. Wolf has been busy with a variety of efforts to help fill the new supervisory positions.

"It's a big effort to execute a reorganization of this size," he said. Wolf has also been involved in recruitment actions for civil engineers in the new civil-site section, as well as attending career fairs to hire recent grads for intern positions.

Hiring has been a big focus for his new position. "We've got a lot of work coming our way," Wolf said. "So one of my primary focuses is hiring. Because we need

to staff up to execute the mission that we have."

In addition to assisting in execution of many of the district's big projects like Fargo, Wolf is also the quality manager in engineering and construction. In this role, Wolf develops and updates quality guidance, and assures that project teams are properly following and documenting their quality processes.

Wolf has a B.S. in civil engineering with a focus on environmental engineering from Southern Illinois University at Edwardsville. When he is not working for the Corps, Wolf enjoys hiking and mountain biking with his 11th-grade son, and also serving as a volunteer baseball coach in Roseville.



Gary Wolf, deputy chief of engineering and construction. USACE courtesy photo

Citizen Airmen recognized for top Air Force engineer team award

Story by Elizabeth Stoeckmann

St. Paul District Hastings resident engineer and commander of the 934th Civil Engineering Squadron stands proud of his fellow Airmen who received an Air Force top level award for their efforts.

“These part-time Airmen are motivated and determined to prove that they are the best in their field,” said Air Force Maj. Ben Rhoda. “The power of their motivation is impressive – take their technical expertise and that motivation into account, and they can accomplish anything – and that’s exactly what they did,” he said.

Rhoda welcomed 33 civil engineers home armed with the Air Force Brig. Gen. William T. Meredith trophy as the “Best of the Best Team” following the April 2022 Readiness Challenge held at Tyndall Air Force Base, Florida.

“I’m beyond ecstatic for the men and women of the 934th Civil Engineering Squadron,” he said. “This challenge is a capstone event for our career field that validates that the training program is preparing us for our wartime duty. Headquarters made it into a competition which makes it really fun!”

Competing with more than 300 fellow total force civil engineers, the team did not know the tasks they would be executing until they arrived on site. Instructors evaluated the teams’ performance using a scoring rubric, with the single winner announced at an award’s ceremony.

“It always great to learn about the wonderful things are teammates are doing beyond our organization in service to the nation,” said St. Paul District Commander Army Col. Karl Jansen.

A 16-year Air Force veteran, Rhoda said his unit was poised and ready for the challenge. “The functional called and said this is the team we want to represent the Air Force Reserve based on their reputation in the command.”

Following the readiness challenge, top leaders recognized the 934th civil engineers as the highest level of readiness for the Air Force civil engineers.



St. Paul District Hastings resident engineer Ben Rhoda (not pictured) welcomes home 33 civil engineers armed with the Air Force Brig. Gen. William T. Meredith trophy as the “Best of the Best Team” following the April 2022 Readiness Challenge held at Tyndall Air Force Base, Florida. USACE courtesy photo

Civil Servants of the Year announced



Renee McGarvey
engineering and construction

EXCELLENCE BEYOND EXPECTATIONS

McGarvey is exceptionally skilled at providing technical leadership for the St. Paul District's most challenging projects while

remaining calm and supportive to her team. She has extraordinary technical design skills and uses these skills to mentor others in their professional development of design documentation.

"I love what I do, and the folks I work with are awesome! These past few years have really been challenging, and we should all be proud of everything we have accomplished. I am very thankful to work for such a great organization."

Position title: Civil-site section chief

Total Years with St. Paul District: 15 years

Previous positions/employment: Landscape architect at SRF Consulting Group and landscape architect in the site development unit at MnDOT

Education: B.S. in Biology at the University of Wisconsin, Stevens Point; M.L.A. at the University of Arizona

Hobbies: Watching my kids' sports, yoga and any kind of boating

Residence: St. Louis Park, Minnesota



Rich Schueneman
operations

LEADERSHIP

Schueneman serves out of Baldhill Dam / Lake Ashtabula office near Valley City, North Dakota. Schueneman is consistently recognized as one of the best operations project

managers in the St. Paul District, successfully managing numerous unique and challenging recreation, environmental stewardship, and flood-risk management projects, as well as his personal commitment to volunteer activities in the community.

"I feel humbled to have even been nominated for this award and honored to be recognized by the St. Paul District leadership and the Federal Executive Board."

Position title: North Dakota flood control project section supervisor

Total Years with St. Paul District: 30 years

Previous positions/employment: Valley City Parks and Recreation District

Education: B.S., Resource Management, Minnesota State University.

Hobbies: Hunting, photography, travel, grilling and cooking.

Residence: Valley City, North Dakota



Terry Zien
programs and project management

CUSTOMER SERVICE

Zien serves as a senior program manager, involved with flood plain management services and the Silver Jackets Program. He is

nationally recognized for his engineering and flood-risk reduction expertise. Over the years, Zien has conducted dozens of emergency action plan workshops throughout the country. Through these efforts, he has promoted relationships between local, tribal, and county government officials.

"It was a total surprise and very much appreciated since a large component of my job is outreach and sponsor contact. That contact is what makes the job so special."

Position title: Senior program manager

Total Years with St. Paul District: 34 years

Previous positions/employment: Spent 3 years at a very small consulting engineering company

Education: B.S., Geology, M.S., Civil Engineering, both from the University of Minnesota, Twin Cities.

Hobbies: Antique pocket watches, amateur high-power rocketry, visiting and hiking our national parks

Residence City: Mendota Heights, Minnesota

Civil Servants of the Year announced, continued



Jim Rand, *operations*

UNSUNG HERO

Rand works tirelessly to ensure that the navigation industry and recreating public have timely and safe transit through our lock and dam facilities that are vital to the economy of the region and the nation. His dedication ensured that despite major impacts from COVID-19 to the economy and local communities, the navigation mission seamlessly continued to

sustain requirements through adversity, creativity and innovative thinking. He commands respect through his outstanding character, extensive subject matter expertise, and goodwill earned through years of service.

“I was shocked and speechless when the commander notified me. I try to do my best every day, locks and dams is a 24/7 operation and our team experiences challenges few others in St. Paul District encounter. Having been promoted through the ranks gives me an awareness of those challenges and the resources to mitigate them. The lock and dam team is at the forefront of every decision I make.”

Position title: Former chief of locks and dams, chief of emergency management

Total federal service: 25 years, 21 Corps of Engineers, 4 U.S. Marine Corps

Previous positions/employment: Lock and dam operator at lock and dams 6 and 7, head lock and dam operator at locks 5 and 6 and lockmaster at Lock 8

Education: University of Wisconsin, Stout

Hobbies: Anything outdoors with family

Residence City: Trempealeau, Wisconsin



Fountain City Service Base project delivery team

TEAM AWARD

The Fountain City Service Base project delivery team was selected for the Team Award. The Fountain City Service Base supports the Mississippi River lock and dam system and navigation channel transporting 16 million tons of goods annually. In fiscal year 2021, the team awarded two contracts. Phase I was a design

and construction contract to replace infrastructure securing vessels (mooring dolphins). In Phase II, the team along with a consultant, developed a design and contracting documents resulting in a seldom used design-build contract for a vertical straight-line mooring surface, horizontal base leveling and other improvements. The safety and operational efficiency of the Fountain City Service Base will be significantly improved.



Recognizing our Employees of the Month: The MVPs of MVP



February
Alan VanGuilder
Operations



March
Kraig Berberich
Operations



April
Adam Howard
*Engineering and
Construction*



May
Nicole Baker
Operations



News and Notes

New hires

Marianna Aho, student trainee, programs and project management, St. Paul, Minnesota

Eric Alfonso, park ranger, operations, Grand Rapids, Minnesota

Daniel Anderson, mechanical engineer, engineering and construction, St. Paul, Minnesota

Calvin Aulwes, lock and dam operator, operations, Eastman, Wisconsin

John Biederman, lock and operator, operations, Red Wing, Minnesota

Matthew Bieniek, electrical engineer, engineering and construction, St. Paul, Minnesota

Chase Bladow, park ranger, operations, Valley City, North Dakota

Trevor Blake, lock and dam operator, operations, Alma, Wisconsin

Valorie Bohl, park ranger, operations, Crosslake, Minnesota

John Boyle, small craft operator, operations, Fountain City, Wisconsin

Cameron Brock, regulatory specialist, regulatory, Green Bay, Wisconsin,

Mark Buringa, student trainee, engineering and construction, Winona, Minnesota

Darcy Calabria, archeologist, regulatory, St. Paul, Minnesota

Cheyenne Carlin, hydrologic technician, engineering and construction, St. Paul, Minnesota

James Cook, civil engineer, engineering and construction, St. Paul, Minnesota

Mariah Deyo, park ranger, operations, De Soto, Wisconsin

Kaleb Doerr, deckhand, operations, Fountain City, Wisconsin

Daniel Dzwonkowski, lock and dam operator, operations, Winona, Minnesota

Noah Edlin, park ranger, operations, Spring Valley, Wisconsin

Jason Ellefson, cook, operations, Fountain City, Wisconsin

David Elmstrom, public affairs specialist, public affairs, St. Paul, Minnesota

Tyler Fabian, lock and dam operator, operations, Red Wing, Minnesota

Justin Fisher, biologist, programs and project management, Fargo, North Dakota

Jordan Fluekiger, deckhand, operations, Fountain City, Wisconsin

Darian Foster, laborer, operations, Federal Dam Minnesota

Ty Fountain, laborer, operations, Valley City, North Dakota

Levi Gieseke, lock and dam operator, operations, Guttenberg, Iowa

Eric Gunderson, park ranger, operations, Grand Rapids, Minnesota

Landon Hill, park ranger operations, Valley City, North Dakota

Brett Hoff, lock and dam operator, operations, Trempealeau, Wisconsin

Gage Jaeger, student trainee, engineering and construction, Fargo, North Dakota

Jacob Jandl, deckhand, operations, Fountain City, Wisconsin

Ryan Kalal, park ranger, operations, Brainerd, Minnesota

Keith Kirkey, welder, operations, Fountain City, Wisconsin

Samantha Kitchen, biologist, regulatory, Brookfield, Wisconsin

David Klocker, civil engineer, engineering and construction, St. Paul, Minnesota

Kevi Kriesel, lock and dam operator, operations, Winona, Minnesota

Benjamin Lacount, biologist, regulatory, Green Bay, Wisconsin

Steven Lee, civil engineer, engineering and construction, St. Paul, Minnesota

Kaden Lisowski, deckhand, operations, Fountain City, Wisconsin

Thomas Loechler, deckhand, operations, Fountain City, Wisconsin

William Long, hydrologic technician, engineering and construction, St. Paul, Minnesota

Stephanie Mann, mechanical engineer, engineering and construction, St. Paul, Minnesota

News and Notes, continued

Dylan McCullick, lock and dam operator, operations, Alma, Wisconsin

Ashley McKittrick, park ranger, operations, Valley City, North Dakota
Thanri Meyers, civil engineer (geotechnical), engineering and construction, St. Paul, Minnesota

Timothy Moenck, lock and dam operator, operations, Genoa, Wisconsin

Ferdinand Mussenden, civil engineer, engineering and construction, St. Paul, Minnesota

J Mark Nesvig, supervisory facilities operations specialist, operations, Watson, Minnesota

Bryce Pellock, lock and dam operator, operations, Genoa, Wisconsin

Marie Petersen, park ranger, operations, De Soto, Wisconsin

Hannah Richardson, student trainee, regulatory, St. Paul, Minnesota

Donald Strittmater, lock and dam operator, operations, La Crescent, Minnesota

Nikita Sumbry, cook, operations, Fountain City, Wisconsin

Cynthia Ward, civil engineer, engineering and construction, Hastings, Minnesota

Caroline Weston, civil engineer, (structural) engineering and construction, League City, Texas

Promotions

Noah Andow, engineering equipment operator, operations, Fountain City, Wisconsin

Mark Angelo, civil engineer, engineering and construction, St. Paul, Minnesota

Jasmine Austin, civil engineer (geotechnical), engineering and construction, St. Paul, Minnesota

Wendi Baker, administrative support assistant, operations, Fountain City, Wisconsin

Kyle Bales, biologist, regional planning and environment division north, Rock Island, Illinois

Matthew Buchacker, natural resources specialist, operations, Federal Dam, Minnesota

Katherine Clark, program analyst, resource management, St. Paul, Minnesota

Samantha Coungeris, biologist, regulatory, St. Paul, Minnesota

Kevin Denn, civil engineer, engineering and construction, St. Paul, Minnesota

Tyler Fabian, lock and dam operator, operations, Red Wing, Minnesota

Daniel Fasching, civil engineer (hydraulics) engineering and construction, St. Paul, Minnesota

Matthew Groshek, biologist, regulatory, Brookfield, Wisconsin

Theodore Hecht, contract specialist, contracting, St. Paul, Minnesota

Channing Helgeson, engineering equipment operator, operations, Fountain City, Wisconsin

John Henderson, civil engineer, engineering and construction, Winona, Minnesota

Kelsey Hoffmann, biologist, regional planning and environment division north, Moline, Illinois

Adam Kiedrowski, marine machinery mechanic, operations, Fountain City, Wisconsin

Michael Kouba, heavy mobile and marine equipment mechanic, operations, Fountain City, Wisconsin

Leslie Lakey, lock and dam operator, operations, Red Wing, Minnesota

Katie Leslie, archeologist, regional planning and environment division north, St. Paul, Minnesota

Renee McGarvey, landscape architect, engineering and construction, St. Paul, Minnesota

Matthew Mohlke, engineering equipment operator, operations, Fountain City, Wisconsin

Duane Perkins, civil engineer, engineering and construction, St. Paul, Minnesota

Matthew Platteter, leverman, operations, Fountain City, Wisconsin

News and Notes, continued

Lane Richter, wildlife biologist, regional planning and environment division north, St. Louis, Missouri

Rachel Steiger, wildlife biologist, regional planning and environment division north, St. Louis, Missouri

Timothy Sullivan, lock and dam operator, operations, Red Wing, Minnesota

Eduardo Bonano-Torrens, supervisory civil engineer, engineering and construction, St. Paul, Minnesota

Jennie Tyrell, civil engineer, engineering and construction, St. Paul, Minnesota

Helen Walz, civil engineer, engineering and construction, St. Paul, Minnesota

Robyn Yliniemi, safety and occupational health specialist, engineering and construction, Fargo, North Dakota

Retirements

Brian Gray, lockmaster, Hastings, Minnesota, retired after 20 years of service

Congratulations

Trevor Cyphers, regional planning and environment division north, and wife Hannah welcomed new baby Amber Mae on Feb. 9



The St. Paul District and Ames Construction were honored with the Dan W. Renfro Partnering Award by the Mississippi Valley Branch Associated General Contractors of America for work performed on the Fargo-Moorhead Area Diversion Project.

Taps

George Kletzke Jr. worked out of Fountain City on the Dredge William A. Thompson as chief of hydrographic surveys and channel maintenance coordinator, he passed away March 11, 2022.

Lois Pream worked in contracting in the 1980s and 1990s. She passed away April 4, 2022.

Delores Sudeith was Chief of OAS during the 1970s and 1980s. She passed away May 25, 2022.