



Thad Fukushima, a civil engineer with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Los Angeles District, left, assists a small business contractor, right, with information about how to do business with the Corps during the March 8 Business Opportunities Open House in Rosemead, California.

Small, large businesses network, gain knowledge about working with the Corps during open house

STORY AND PHOTOS BY DENA O'DELL
LOS ANGELES DISTRICT PUBLIC AFFAIRS

ROSEMEAD, Calif. — About 280 people attended the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Los Angeles District's Business Opportunities Open House March 8 in Rosemead.

The open house is a signature event for the Corps' LA District, for both small and large businesses. It allows direct dialogue with senior leaders, project managers and those looking to do business with the Corps of Engineers and the federal government.

The event also emphasizes discussion, networking, and building and strengthening business relationships.

"The Business Opportunities Open House today has been insane," said Eric Ravelli, deputy director of the Small Business Program for the Corps' LA District. "There's been so many people here. I think there's about 280 folks that showed up today – both large businesses and small businesses, women-owned, (Historically Underutilized Business Zones), 8A (small, disadvantaged businesses) — they're all here."

One of those participants was Tevin Campbell, who said he heard about the open house on LinkedIn.

He was at the event representing LA Construction Management, a small business located in Camarillo, California; however, he also

owns TD Campbell Industries and is a third-generation roofing contractor.

"I came here to gain knowledge and network," he said, adding his main interests were learning about the military construction and contracting process.

Four members of another small business, Innovative Project Solutions, traveled from San Francisco to attend the open house.

"We're here for the opportunity to meet with contract analysts and contracting officers face-to-face to have the opportunity to talk about our business, our capabilities and

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Serving veterans



Photos by Robert DeDeaux

TOP: Col. Julie Balten, Los Angeles District commander, right of center, joins David Van Dorpe, South Pacific Division DVA Project Execution Office chief, to talk with employees working on the South Pacific Division's program supporting the Department of Veterans Affairs at a March 15 meeting in Phoenix. The Corps is collaborating with the VA to design and construct quality care facilities that serve our nation's veterans. The Corps' DVA program in the region includes nine major projects and an investment of more than \$5.8 billion throughout the Pacific Southwest.

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Women's History Month: Celebrating women who tell our stories

Hello, SPL Team!

March is Women's History Month, and this year's theme is "Celebrating Women Who Tell Our Stories."

The Army is replete with stories of courage, sacrifice, determination, honor and integrity from women who have made a lasting impact on our military and our nation.

These are women like Dr. Mary Walker, who earned the Medal of Honor for her immense selfless service and personal courage as an unpaid volunteer surgeon during the Civil War; like Lt. Col. Charity Adams, who served as the first black commander of a black female battalion to go to overseas during World War II; and Army wife Julia Moore, whose important work with the American Red Cross in the wake of the Vietnam War to advocate for truly vital support, services and programs for military families improved the quality of life for millions of military families since then.

These women's stories have made such an incredibly important and lasting impact on our nation that their names are slated to be memorialized in the upcoming renaming of three



COL. JULIE A. BALTEN
LA DISTRICT COMMANDER

Army posts. It's important to note it didn't matter that not all of these trailblazers wore the Army uniform; they still found ways to demonstrate the Army values of loyalty, duty, respect, selfless service, honor, integrity and personal courage.

Those values, along with qualities like grit, conscientiousness, strength, empathy, intelligence, creativity, compassion, decisiveness, flexibility and resilience that inhabited the spirits of Walker, Adams and Moore are still alive in the women serving in and with today's Army, regardless of whether you wear a uniform, serve as a Department of the Army civilian or are a family member.

Every year's observance has its own theme, but I think this year's theme is special because it gives us an opportunity not only to hear what women have done to make a difference in a historical context, but it also gives us a chance to hear women's unique stories, perspectives, challenges and successes in their own words and in the present day.

And, you don't have to look far to find these stories. In fact, this issue of the NewsCastle features a Q-and-A section featuring women leaders with the Corps' South Pacific Division

and the mighty Los Angeles District. A huge shoutout goes out to Hiliary Innerbichler, chairperson of the Federal Women's Employment Program at the LA District, who serves as a secretary with the district's Contracting Division, as well as Leanne Van Tuyl, who serves as the deputy chief of our district's Mega Projects Division.

Each of us has a story. Some of us may have hundreds of pages, dozens of different sections, and, in some cases, even several volumes that make up our stories — while others are still writing their first few chapters. No matter where you are in your life and career, remember there is no one else who has or who will ever have your exact story. Yet, through these stories we find so much in common with one another, and we all have the power to influence, inspire and shape the lives of others as we tell them.

Please continue doing great things and adding to the pages of your own story. As we continue writing, we all help shape our nation's destiny, just as Walker, Adams and Moore did before us.

Sincerely,

Col. Julie A. Balten

Around the District

"I enjoy knowing that I get the opportunity to help people. As a veteran, I joined the military to serve this nation to the best of my ability. I thought I lost that once I left the Army. USACE has given that opportunity back to me."

Louis recently returned from the Hurricane Ian Relief Operation, where he served as an action officer. He is from Lima, Ohio, and has worked with USACE for about 10 years.



Louis Clementz
Project Engineer





A crane is prepped before the installation of a 19-ton floodgate March 10 on the Alcoa Dike, alongside the Temescal Wash in Corona, California.

New floodgate to help protect Corona community

STORY AND PHOTOS BY STEPHEN BAACK
LA DISTRICT PUBLIC AFFAIRS

CORONA, Calif — The Los Angeles District completed the installation of a 19-ton floodgate March 10 on the Alcoa Dike alongside the Temescal Wash in Corona, California.



Col. Julie Balten, LA District commander, right, joins Derek Walker, project manager with the LA District, left, and Travis Tutka, acting Dam and Levee Branch chief for the Corps' headquarters in Washington D.C., center, to watch the emplacement of a 19-ton floodgate March 10 on the Alcoa Dike, alongside the Temescal Wash in Corona, California.

The new floodgate bisects Auburndale Street about two and a half miles northeast of the Prado Dam and Spillway and is designed to help keep water within the flood basin and prevent flooding of the street and nearby structures — all while accommodating through traffic during normal conditions.

The gate and adjoining concrete floodwall will be integrated into the three-quarter-mile-long Alcoa Dike, which runs parallel to Temescal Wash — a tributary of the Santa Ana River. Auburndale Street is one of three street crossings on the dike embankment, and the floodgate is the only one in use in the system.

“There are different options of how you navigate those crossings: You either need to create a new road to go around, you need to have a road that would go over top of the dike or you would have to have a floodgate that would allow cars or water to pass through the dike if you’re going to keep the same roads open for infrastructure,” said Capt. Sean Hutchison, project engineer for the Alcoa Dike Phase 2 project and deputy project manager for Prado Spillway.

“As part of this project, we actually are doing all three,” he said.

For the other two dike crossings, Hutchison

said the Corps rerouted part of Rincon Street to go up and over the top of the embankment for the second crossing and, for the third, built a new thoroughfare called Butterfield Connector Road to go around the dike.

Throughout the project, Hutchison said, the LA District has been in close coordination with community partners like the City of Corona, including attending city council meetings to provide quarterly updates about project progress and how the work is anticipated to affect community members’ daily lives, as well as distributing informational fliers to residents and local businesses.

“We focus on partnership here in the Corps,” Hutchison added. “There’s always challenges, and there are people who live in the community and use this road to get to work. This road over here, Rincon, is very popular, driven from people coming from Norco, East Vail or Chino to get over here to this neck of the woods.”

The floodwall, into which the contractor placed the floodgate, will complete the connection between the floodgate and embankment on both sides once the overall dike project is complete. Four different utility lines run beneath the

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project site, something Hutchison said required both significant technical work from the contractor and extensive collaboration with community partners, such as the City of Corona, Orange County and Southern California Edison.

“It looks as if you just see a concrete wall, but it’s actually a lot more than that,” Hutchison said. “Underneath this was an existing, regular road that went through here. Our contractor had to tear it up, put in a new line, a bypass for a sewer system, a domestic water line for the city, and then they had to build up a significant foundation.”

The gate itself swings 180 degrees to open and close and includes a push/pull bar to facilitate manual operation, if needed. Hutchison said it’s only the second floodgate of its kind in the Los Angeles District.

“It’s extremely heavy — it’s 19 feet high, 36 feet wide and about 2-and-a-quarter-feet thick — so it’s quite the feat to put that thing in there,” he said.

“It’s been a fantastic morning to get to wit-

ness our contractors, our partners, install this gate safely and very professionally,” said Col. Julie Balten, LA District commander, who was at the site to watch the gate installation. “We’re here to be able to help protect businesses and communities from potential flood risk. We take pride in the safety of our communities, and we can’t do this alone. It requires the partnership with our contractors to deliver these great projects that we have here in Southern California.”

“Our contractors are great,” Hutchison said. “They’ve been extremely flexible, and they work really hard. They prioritize safety. They prioritize quality. And, there are all the people on the USACE team: We have a great safety team, and we have people working hard for us in engineering, along with the project management team and the construction folks on the ground to make all of this happen.

“I love working for the Corps,” Hutchison added. “It’s an awesome organization. It’s so cool being able to come out here and see the actual changes that we’re making. We’ve had a very wet winter — a lot of water. We’ve seen

a lot of these roads flood out, and there’s a lot of water behind the dam, so, it really brings meaning and purpose to everything we’re doing and working hard for on a regular basis.”

Travis Tutka, acting Dam and Levee Branch chief for the Corps’ headquarters in Washington D.C., who was in town to speak at the Society of American Military Engineers gathering about the Corps’ dam safety and resilience efforts, joined Balten, Hutchison and other LA District leaders, engineers and safety specialists to witness the floodgate emplacement.

“I timed it beautifully to come out here and see this wonderful floodgate get put up today, and it was an impressive sight to see,” Tutka said.

“When it comes to flood risk management, there’s a lot of choices for our communities to figure out how best to deal with what Mother Nature is going to throw at us,” he added. “It takes years of study to look at the options and look at what the hazards are, and one of those options is this wonderful structure and infrastructure like this that can help protect the communities from what comes down the rivers at us.”



Contractors install a 19-ton floodgate March 10 on the Alcoa Dike, alongside the Temescal Wash in Corona, California.



Patricia Fontanet Rodriguez, natural disaster planner with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Sacramento District, writes notes on Public Law 84-99, Emergency Response to Natural Disasters, which gives the Corps the authority to provide emergency assistance to local, state and tribal governments before, during and after flooding events, during a case-study discussion Feb. 28 as part of the Southern California Post-Fire Mitigation, Recovery and Resilience Workshop for Tribes at the Pechanga Reservation near Temecula, California.

Corps hosts tribal workshop, strengthens partnerships

STORY AND PHOTOS BY STEPHEN BAACK
LA DISTRICT PUBLIC AFFAIRS

PECHANGA RESERVATION, Calif. — The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers teamed up with other local, state and federal agencies Feb. 28 to share information about flood-fighting resources with its tribal partners throughout Southern California.

Representatives from about a dozen tribal bands attended the Southern California Post-Fire Mitigation, Recovery and Resilience Workshop for Tribes at the Pechanga Reservation near Temecula, California.

Those participating from the Corps included planners, tribal liaisons and emergency management specialists with the Los Angeles and Sacramento districts, as well as from the South Pacific Division.

During the workshop, representatives from the tribal bands participated in discussions

with agencies that also included the California Governor's Office of Emergency Services, National Weather Service, Bureau of Indian Affairs, Bureau of Reclamation, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, U.S. Geological Survey, San Diego County Flood Control District and more.

"I am really appreciative for today," said John Lavallee, emergency operations center specialist with the Cahuilla Band of Indians. "The program was super informative, the engagement has been very, very good, and I'm very happy to be here."

Lavallee said his goal in attending the workshop was acquiring information and resources, along with building and strengthening partnerships he and his organization can leverage both before and after hazard mitigation.

"For us, mitigation is resilience," he said. "We want to be more resilient and be a more resilient partner for the other tribes, agencies

and jurisdictions around us."

Lavallee added that one big benefit of the event was having the opportunity to engage with the Corps and the Corps' partners on a tribal level.

"I hadn't had an opportunity to do that before, so this is a big deal," he said. "It ties into some other things that are going on. We spoke with the Bureau of Reclamation earlier, and we got tied into an exercise that they're going to do."

"I'm also really interested in those partnerships translating into floodplain mapping and floodplain management for us because we don't yet have a lot of information on that yet," he added. "It's a side tie-in from this meeting, but I think it's going to be beneficial to us."

Lavallee said that, historically, tribes may have been reluctant or too under-resourced to participate in this type of event, but proactive

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Tribal partners participate in a discussion Feb. 28 about requesting direct assistance from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers during the Southern California Post-Fire Mitigation, Recovery and Resilience Workshop for Tribes at the Pechanga Reservation near Temecula, California. During the daylong workshop, the Corps joined local, state and federal agencies to share information about flood-fighting resources with tribal partners.

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engagement from the Corps and other agencies has helped alleviate that.

"We've seen a lot of really positive engagement from federal and state partners recently that makes us stronger and helps make us a better partner, too," Lavallee said. "We know what's out there and what other people are doing. We want to emulate those success stories."

A CASE STUDY

During the workshop, the LA District's Emergency Management Branch invited Terri Honani, administrative assistant with the Office of the Chairman of the Hopi Tribe, to talk about her experiences with requesting direct assistance from the Corps in 2022, when flooding and associated sediment deposits from an unusually strong monsoon season overwhelmed communities in Polacca, Arizona.

The district performs flood-response activities under emergency management authority Public Law 84-99, Emergency Response to Natural Disasters, which gives the Corps the authority to provide emergency assistance to local, state and tribal governments before, during and after flooding events.

As part of the assistance, the LA District built several HESCO barriers to protect Hopi tribal homes Dec. 17–22 after the flooding.

"There's a chapter in there that talks about advance measures, and there's another chapter

that talks about direct-response flood fight," said David Kingston, chief of the LA District's Emergency Management Branch. "We actually did both here. Installation of the HESCOs was under 'Flood Fight.' That's why it got done first."

Honani recalled positive experiences with the assistance the tribe received from the Corps. "When they said they would get to work, they meant it," she said. "We didn't really expect all the help we got. We didn't know Colonel (Julie) Balten would come out and everything."

"It was a long process, and there was a lot of paperwork, but we were never left in the dark," she added. "So many people came to our aid, and they were all available to answer our questions and to clarify anything that we didn't understand. And, they were flexible, too, because there are a lot of cultural sensitivities while working with the tribal nation. They were so flexible and so accommodating for our tribe that we were able to negotiate and get help in the way that we needed help on our reservation."

As part of the case study presentation, the Emergency Management Branch showed a news video to attendees about the assistance to the Hopi Tribe.

"It was a great partnership between the Hopi Tribe and the Army Corps," Honani said. "I know the video doesn't capture everything, but the assistance did have a lot of impact with the relationship we have with the Corps."

FUTURE WORKSHOPS

Chris Stanton, lead planner with the LA District, said he anticipates additional workshops, and this was a good test for how to plan and conduct them.

"We're hoping to have more of these face-to-face interactions, which the tribes really appreciate," he said. "Anything we can do to get more boots on the ground, so we can really understand these situations and these issues to bring these resources to the tribes is essential to what we want to do."

"We're bringing in people from all over — different cultures, backgrounds and experiences," Stanton added. "We just want to make sure we are providing a welcoming, open environment, so folks can share their stories, and we can understand their situations."

TRIBAL PARTICIPATION

Tribal representation included the Morongo Band of Mission Indians, Soboba Band of Luiseño Indians, La Jolla Band of Luiseño Indians, Torres-Martinez Desert Cahuilla Indians, Rincon Band of Luiseño Indians, Cahuilla Band of Indians, Pechanga Band of Indians, Pala Band of Mission Indians, Viejas Band of Kumeyaay Indians, Sycuan Band of the Kumeyaay Nation, the Mesa Grande Band of Diegueno Mission Indians of the Mesa Grande Reservation, the Aqua Caliente Band of Cahuilla Indians of the Agua Caliente Indian Reservation, along with a guest speaker from the Hopi Tribe.

Women’s History Month

Celebrating Women who tell our Stories

Each March, the Department of Defense pays tribute to the women who, through their determination and contributions, have shaped America’s history and whose efforts continue to pave the way forward.

This year’s Women’s History Month theme, chosen by the National Women’s History Alliance, is “Celebrating Women Who Tell Our Stories.” The NWHa press release reflects, “From the earliest storytellers through pioneering journalists, our experiences have been captured by a wide variety of artists and teachers. These include authors, songwriters, scholars, playwrights, performers and grandmothers throughout time.”

During Women’s History Month, we honor the women who continue to tell our stories. In this section, we are spotlighting some of our accomplished, trailblazing women who are helping shape our progress, tell our stories here at the Corps in our Women’s Empowerment Spotlight, an inspirational interview series for women about women. The spotlight is designed to bring attention and awareness to the amazing work that women are doing here and to empower and inspire you to live your most brilliant life.

BRIG. GEN. ANTOINETTE “TONI” GANT, PMP
COMMANDING GENERAL, SOUTH PACIFIC DIVISION, U.S. ARMY CORPS OF ENGINEERS

HOW DO YOU EMPOWER YOURSELF AND THE WOMEN AROUND YOU?
(These don’t just apply to women but to anyone):

- Being the example.
- Supporting them in their efforts.
- Providing opportunities.
- Acknowledge when a good job is done.

WHAT MOTIVATED YOU TO BECOME A LEADER IN THE ORGANIZATION?
Other leaders who have come before me like as well as the mission and the people I have had the opportunity to serve with. This is an amazing mission that isn’t for the weak at heart ... there is nothing like it.



WHO INSPIRED YOU TO BE A LEADER AND WHY?
My parents who were extremely involved within our small community. I never thought of it as being a leader, it was more of just wanting to be in a position that helped to make a difference regardless of what it was.

WHAT ARE THE BENEFITS OF HAVING EMPOWERED WOMEN IN THE ORGANIZATION?

- Builds confidence.
- Diversifies teams.
- Opens doors for other opportunities.

WHEN YOU BEGAN YOUR CAREER, DID YOU EVER IMAGINE THAT YOU WOULD HAVE A LEADERSHIP ROLE IN THIS ORGANIZATION?
Of course not! At the beginning of my career, I didn’t even realize these types of positions existed. I am still pinching myself that I have this incredible opportunity to lead, grow and learn from in a myriad of professionals with an amazing skillset.

CHEREE PETERSON, SES
REGIONAL BUSINESS DIRECTOR, SOUTH PACIFIC DIVISION

WHAT DO YOU THINK IS THE MOST SIGNIFICANT BARRIER TO FEMALE EMPOWERMENT?
Not 100 percent sure what you mean or are looking for by “empowerment,” but I think barriers could stem from two things:

- 1) Women being treated differently in the workplace and,
- 2) Women themselves. By being treated differently in the workplace, I am not referencing outright discrimination or harassment (though these exist for sure), I am referencing that women are often not accorded the same respect in a position as their male counterparts.

It is well documented that women have their judgement questioned far more frequently than men and can often be excluded from office talk, even if this is unintentional. By being questioned more frequently and being doubted more, women often feel less empowered to lead. And if they do not have strong office ties with their male counterparts because they are left out of office talk, they are often not as highly considered for promotion or seats at the table.

For my second idea, I have observed and read the data showing that women hinder themselves by devaluing their talents and skills when asked to assess themselves. They often make the decision not to apply for promotions because they don’t think they are qualified. Helping women to have confidence in their skills is key to women moving up the ladder.



HOW DID YOU NAVIGATE POWER STRUCTURES EARLY IN YOUR CAREER VERSUS LATER IN YOUR CAREER WHEN YOU HAD A MORE FORMAL LEADERSHIP ROLE?
In some ways, you find a strategy that works for you early on in your career and then build upon that as you move up. It is important to recognize which strategies/methods are working for you and which ones no longer become effective.

When I began my career at the Office of Management and Budget, the culture was to speak up, ask hard questions and be ready to make hard and potentially unpopular recommendations. I had to balance this

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with my natural inclination to collaborate to find solutions. Trying to meld these early on helped to recognize that it was important to develop my own analytical process for making recommendations, bring others on board to support my recommendations, and then to also be able to determine how to shape my recommendation so that the decision-maker would listen, understand and ultimately support my recommendations. As I moved up in leadership, evolving these two skills was critical, but also had to be coupled owning my seat at the table.

I could make great recommendations and have the right team with me, but if I didn’t sit at the leadership table and speak decisively and strongly, I would not garner the attention of other leaders. Being surrounded by mostly men in leadership, it was critical that I speak up, even interrupting others to be heard. I suppose it is more about demanding attention versus waiting for it to be given. (I hope this answer helps; it was hard to answer because when you are in the midst of it, I was focusing on being heard and respected at each level vs. viewing it as navigating the power structure).

HOW DO YOU ENCOURAGE WOMEN NOT TO GIVE UP?
I understand that women can become frustrated at being treated differently, especially in a STEM organization. We are more likely to have our opinion discounted, our credentials questioned, and face microaggressions.

I have experienced all of these as have likely most of the women in leadership in government, the private sector and the nonprofit sector. To me, being told not to let it bother you or that you are overacting isn’t particularly useful and dismisses the feelings being felt as well as not addressing the inappropriateness of whatever occurred.

Instead, I recommend understanding how you are feeling and have it motivate you to move up or out to find a place where you can influence a cultural change or be better supported. I encourage women to find a network of other women and allies that can support their work/leadership. The workplace is improving, and it is up to us to make sure it continues to improve.

WHAT ADVICE DO YOU HAVE FOR WOMEN WHO WANT TO DO MORE?
My advice for women who want to move up is to first determine why you want to move up and what is important to you about moving up. Is it external influence? Internal influence (i.e. change existing structure/methodology)? Financial? Ability to develop leaders? Being able to be a decision-maker? All of these are legitimate reasons for wanting to move up, but depending upon how a woman answers, I would give her different advice. If you know why and what is important to you, then have confidence in yourself that you can achieve your goal. Own your ambition!

KIRSTEN RONHOLT
CHIEF, OFFICE OF COUNSEL

HOW DO YOU EMPOWER YOURSELF AND THE WOMEN AROUND YOU?
By assuming that everyone is capable, not counting anyone out regardless of gender identity. I am able to use my position to hold open doors behind me for those similarly motivated to step through them and support the training and education to get them to that point.

I also support those who don’t want to take on leadership positions

but simply want to do their job well by allowing them the flexibility and grace to drive their own careers and set their own priorities. Being a supervisor means both cultivating the next generation of leaders as well as supporting the team that will carry the water.

WHAT ARE THE BENEFITS OF HAVING EMPOWERED WOMEN IN THE ORGANIZATION?

Diversity is critical to a functional workforce. We are a heterogenous organization, nation and world. Differing perspectives collide and adapt and influence and usually contribute something much more interesting, innovative and novel than any of us could come up with individually.

Empowering women to be part of the conversation at every level of an organization benefits the organization, and having women in positions of leadership helps to ensure that women are welcomed into that conversation.



WHAT ADVICE DO YOU HAVE FOR WOMEN WHO WANT TO DO MORE?
Take chances. Reach out for mentorship, reach out for advice, reach out for connections inside and outside your organization.

Believe that you are qualified and that your hard work will pay off. Expect recognition for your wins and take accountability for your losses, and ask your managers and supervisors to do both.

Apply to the jobs that you don’t feel qualified to apply for because there are a lot of people who are just as or less qualified applying if you don’t.

Lift each other up. Your success takes nothing away from my own.

WHAT MOTIVATED YOU TO BECOME A LEADER IN THE ORGANIZATION?
The desire to see the district, region and enterprise succeed.

I’m a true believer in the mission and vision of the Corps, and find deep personal gratification and fulfillment in supporting our essential services to the nation: navigation, flood-risk management, ecosystem restoration and other critical engineering programs.

I also believe that good government is transparent and legally compliant; we do the right thing the right way, and Office of Counsel is necessary to ensuring we do. I had already taken an informal leadership position within my division, and moving to a leadership position within the organization felt like a natural and necessary next step to support the district.

SALLIE DIEBOLT
CHIEF, REGULATORY DIVISION, ARIZONA BRANCH

WHAT ADVICE DO YOU HAVE FOR WOMEN WHO WANT TO DO MORE?
Try to figure out what is holding you back and what is within your control. Then take action to make changes.

For example, I used to be very nervous speaking in front of groups,

[‘WHM’ continued on Page 10](#)

in meetings and even on the phone. I wanted to be more confident speaking and believed improved speaking skills would help me succeed. I joined Toastmasters, where I gained confidence speaking, which led to success at work.

WHEN YOU BEGAN YOUR CAREER, DID YOU EVER IMAGINE THAT YOU WOULD HAVE A LEADERSHIP ROLE IN THIS ORGANIZATION?

Early on I had a desire to be a leader, so I applied to LDP. I wasn't sure about the exact career path and timing, but I knew I wanted to become a supervisor at some point.



SALLIE DIEBOLT

Lack of self-confidence. I was able to gain confidence by actively seeking experiences outside my comfort zone.

HOW CAN WOMEN DEVELOP THEIR LEADERSHIP SKILLS?

By serving in leadership roles, even outside of work. I served in officer roles in a community organization (Toastmasters), which gave me an opportunity to learn and practice leadership skills. As club president, I led a "staff" of other officers, organized events, led the club in meeting annual goals and learned how to motivate others.

DENA O'DELL
CHIEF, PUBLIC AFFAIRS

The first female chief of Public Affairs for the Los Angeles District

WHO INSPIRED YOU TO BE A LEADER AND WHY?

I have been very fortunate to have a lifetime of people who have inspired me and continue to inspire me to be a leader — both women and men — my family, teachers, former bosses, friends, and current and former colleagues.

My father was a tough man, but he always inspired me with his work ethic and sensible advice — my favorites being, "don't underestimate the 'power of the pen'" (probably where my love of writing came from) and, "Who can you count on? Yourself."

WHAT FACTORS DO YOU BELIEVE IMPACT A WOMAN'S ABILITY TO LEAD OTHERS?

Self-awareness is one of the most important leadership qualities. When women become aware of their motivations, thoughts, emotions and reactions, the more they can lead effectively.

WHAT HAS BEEN THE MOST SIGNIFICANT BARRIER IN YOUR CAREER?

He served in the Army and spent much of his career as a federal service firefighter and fire inspector, while also advocating for other firefighters as a union representative to ensure they had the proper equipment to keep them safe.

WHAT HAS BEEN THE MOST SIGNIFICANT BARRIER IN YOUR CAREER?

Honestly, myself. We are our own worst critics. I had to stop listening to my own negative self-talk; stop listening to "naysayers," believe in my own abilities and take risks. If you don't take risks, you will always fail.

HOW DID YOU NAVIGATE POWER STRUCTURES EARLY IN YOUR CAREER VERSUS LATER IN YOUR CAREER WHEN YOU HAD A MORE FORMAL LEADERSHIP ROLE?

I'm going to use an analogy here. Like Dory in the movie "Finding Nemo" always says: "Just keep swimming."

I can be very stubborn and strong-willed, so when someone tells me I can't do something, I will work that much harder to find ways to prove them wrong. This can be a curse and a blessing.

I am continuously learning — from others and from my mistakes. I may not always get it right, but I've also learned to repeatedly show up. If I'm asking my teammates to do something, I'm generally either in the trenches with them or have done it myself.

The biggest advice I can give is: If you fail, try again. Success isn't built overnight.

HOW DO YOU ENCOURAGE WOMEN TO NOT GIVE UP?

- Have INTEGRITY in everything you do.
- Nothing worth doing is ever easy. If you want something bad enough, be willing to repeatedly show up and put in the work.
- If you don't like your life, change it. To put this into perspective: I was a single mom in my 20s, working three jobs, making under \$20k a year and putting myself through college. We have the power to change our path and our direction at any time. That's the beauty of writing our own story.
- Continue to ALWAYS learn — from others and from your mistakes.
- VALUE constructive criticism, but DON'T PUT VALUE on just criticism.
- When problem solving, always consider several solutions and make a recommendation.
- Write down your short-term and long-term goals and revisit them as often as needed.
- Your personality, your creativeness, your smile, your laugh, your thoughts — those are traits only unique to you. They are your badges. Wear them proudly!

HOW CAN WOMEN DEVELOP THEIR LEADERSHIP SKILLS?

Continue to learn and grow. Take every opportunity you can to hone your craft. Put in for the training to better your career. Volunteer for additional tasks or become an action officer on a project. Develop and grow a network of like-minded people, who can mentor and coach you. Recognize that not everyone's personalities and learning styles are the same. Be willing to adapt to different communication styles to resolve conflicts. Be willing to listen to other people's ideas and share your own. Collaborate and communicate. Makes "to do" lists — work and personal — every day and try to check off half of them. ALWAYS write down short- and long-term goals.

PAMELA LOVASZ, P.G., R.G., P.E.
CHIEF, ENGINEERING DIVISION

The first female chief of the Engineering Division for the LA District



PAMELA LOVASZ

their daily lives when other shows were focused on creating scenarios for entertainment. The changes that she made exhibited true pioneering leadership for television.

I also appreciate the personal courage she exhibits by being transparent with the public eye through her highs and lows. This makes her relatable in my opinion.

WHEN YOU BEGAN YOUR CAREER, DID YOU EVER IMAGINE THAT YOU WOULD HAVE A LEADERSHIP ROLE IN THIS ORGANIZATION?

No. Not necessarily at the beginning of my career. Even while growing into more increasing leadership positions, I would ask myself if leaders could be taught. Now, I do believe they can be taught, but there are fundamental characteristics a person should have to be a good leader.

The obvious ones are authenticity, accountability and know-how. The not-so-obvious ones are curiosity, relatability and self-awareness. If you have some of the fundamental characteristics, I believe you can also be taught. One must take the time to apply for leadership training opportunities to polish off the basic skills you already possess. My advice to those interested in taking leadership training is do a good job at your day job, add value, show your boss you can handle it, and make time for it.

WHAT FACTORS DO YOU BELIEVE IMPACT A WOMAN'S ABILITY TO LEAD OTHERS?

When I started my career, I read this book that basically laid out "rules" of how a woman should conduct herself in the workplace.

In hindsight, I would advise the younger me to just be yourself. In other words, get it out of your head that you need to be or act a certain way to lead. You don't have to look a certain way or be 100 percent confident about certain things or sit a certain way at the conference table. You are free to be yourself, and that is what makes you authentic. If one can embrace their authentic self, they can shine brighter and with confidence.

WHAT ADVICE DO YOU HAVE FOR WOMEN WHO WANT TO DO MORE?

Go for it. Squash any guilt you might be hanging on to. It serves

WHO INSPIRED YOU TO BE A LEADER AND WHY?

Oprah Winfrey — talk show host, producer, actress, author and philanthropist. I respect how she decided to reinvent herself and then implemented change on television for the public eye to experience.

Contrary to other people's opinions, she pivoted the approach on how issues were addressed on the show. She wanted to talk about real-life issues that people were dealing with in

nobody any good. Get in over your head. You don't have to know how to do something 100 percent before trying it out. Nothing is permanent and life is short. Why not jump in and see what kind of feedback you get? Listen to the feedback and use it as your superpower.

VICIE GRAVES
DEPUTY CHIEF, CONTRACTING DIVISION



VICIE GRAVES

HOW DO YOU EMPOWER YOURSELF AND THE WOMEN AROUND YOU?

I try to surround myself with positive people and I have learned to lead by example. I set goals for myself to achieve and while doing so, I share my lessons learned along the way.

I have learned to treat others as I want to be treated and ensure they understand their worth. Some women cannot be empowered right away if they lack a sense of worth in who they are and what they want to become in the future. I have learned to get to know the women around me and try to find out what their future goals are and I try to find out how I can help them to become empowered to achieve those goals.

WHAT DO YOU THINK IS THE MOST SIGNIFICANT BARRIER TO FEMALE EMPOWERMENT?

I think the most significant barrier to female empowerment is when a woman feels she can't believe in herself.

You must believe in yourself to empower others and draw strength in sharing those beliefs. You must have a warrior spirit that will not allow you to ever give up, even though you may experience difficulties along the way. You must keep pushing toward your goal and when achieved, remember your lessons learned and share with others.

WHAT ADVICE DO YOU HAVE FOR WOMEN WHO WANT TO DO MORE?

First, you must figure out what is that you want to achieve. I would advise anyone to develop a plan after discovering what it is that you want to achieve. You must follow that plan until you achieve your goal.

It is not uncommon to improvise your plan but it is important to never give up and you must stay on track. If you make a mistake, correct it and try your best to never repeat that mistake. Learning from past experiences is vital in doing more and achieving more in your life.

WHO INSPIRED YOU TO BE A LEADER AND WHY?

I was inspired by my mother because I grew up in the "70s" era. She inspired me as I grew up because I realized she was still dealing with discrimination and unequal treatment for women. But somehow, she was always trying to help others who were in need. She never hesitated to help others and still made time to raise her family with values to live by forever. She worked many hours but still found the time to take care of us and to provide a safe environment for us to grow and learn. She allowed me to believe that I could achieve anything as a child and to always be honest and compassionate to others.



Photo by Dena O'Dell

From left to right, Eric Ravelli, deputy director of the Small Business Program for the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Los Angeles District; Stephanie Parra, Small Business Program specialist for the Corps' Albuquerque District; Michelle Morales, procurement specialist for the Small Business Program with the Corps' Sacramento District; and Vernon Simpkins, deputy for the Small Business Program for the Corps' Sacramento District, pose for a picture following the March 8 Business Opportunities Open House in Rosemead, California.

[Continued from Page 1](#)

how we can work best with them,” said Evlin Prasad, vice president of strategic solutions for Innovative Project Solutions.

The company is a service-disabled, veteran-owned small business and minority firm that offers several services, including integrated project delivery, engineering, design-build and construction management, said Tariq Asefi, professional engineer and principal of the company.

“Our goal is to be in partnership with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers,” he said. “We do a lot of work for the Department of Defense. We do architectural engineering aspects of it and construction, so we want to get involved in a design-build — design side and construction side of things.”

The company has offices in several states, including California, Oregon and Arizona, he added.

Justin Gay, LA District’s deputy district engineer, said what he enjoyed about the open house was connecting the larger architecture

and engineering firms with the small businesses and seeing that interaction play out.

“I found many instances where I was literally able to take one contractor and align them with another to help develop partnerships and build teams that are collaborating to be able to offer on our programs within the district over the next year or two,” he said.

He also said he appreciated how many contractors are interested in working for the federal government, as well as the face-to-face interaction.

“What I really enjoy about the Business Opportunities Open House is how the district can fully appreciate how many contractors within our region are interested in our programs, projects and how to serve the nation through what the Los Angeles District does,” he said. “You get emails, you get phone calls, and you can’t put faces with names, but these are opportunities to help build those relationships and strengthen the ones that already exist on a real level, a human-to-human level that builds and fosters those teams for success.”

The open house was an amazing event, added Ravelli.

“We’ve been able to connect with many businesses across our area of operations,” he said. “It’s an opportunity, not just for the contractors to come and know us, but also the district staff to know them.”

Col. Julie Balten, commander of the LA District, expressed her gratitude for those who attended the open house.

“It was a great collaborative event,” she said, “and, I hope you’ll join us next year as we have our (Business Opportunities Open House) in Arizona.”

In addition to the LA District, Small Business Program representatives with the Corps’ Sacramento and Albuquerque districts also participated in the event to support each other on a regional level.

To learn more about the Business Opportunities Open House or how to work for the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, please visit: <https://www.spl.usace.army.mil/Business-With-Us/Small-Business-Program>.

Meeting with LA deputy mayors



Photo by John Reese

A team from the City of Los Angeles — including Nancy Sutley, deputy mayor for energy and sustainability, and Randall Winston, deputy mayor for infrastructure, center — listen as Mark Cohen, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Los Angeles District operations chief, details points of the recreational and wildlife area of Sepulveda Basin at Sepulveda Dam March 20 near Encino, California. The new deputy mayors toured the basin and met with district partners to update them on the Corps mission protecting downstream residents. The recreational basin is part of Sepulveda Dam’s federal land managed by the LA District and abounds with nesting birds and aquatic animals. Two elementary school classes, armed with notebooks, binoculars and microscopes, learned about local wildlife a few yards away as the city and district teams shared information.

[‘WHM’ continued from Page 11](#)

LEANNE VAN TUYL, PMP
DEPUTY CHIEF, MEGA PROJECTS DIVISION

WHAT ADVICE DO YOU HAVE FOR WOMEN WHO WANT TO DO MORE?

No one is as interested in your future and your career as much as you are. You cannot expect anyone to read your mind, so find your way to speak up.

Communicate early and often with your supervisors and colleagues about what you are interested in accomplishing. Utilize the IDP to help convey your near- and long-term goals. Don’t be afraid to try something new!

When you know yourself, you are empowered; when you accept yourself, you are invincible.



LEANNE VAN TUYL

HOW CAN WOMEN DEVELOP THEIR LEADERSHIP SKILLS?

Do not wait until you are in a formal position to see and accept yourself as a leader. Lead by example and by the Army Core Values of loyalty, duty, respect, selfless service, honor, integrity and personal courage. Know what right is and stay true to yourself. Before anyone else can see

you as a leader, you must first see it in yourself.

WHAT DO YOU THINK IS THE MOST SIGNIFICANT BARRIER TO FEMALE EMPOWERMENT?

Sadly, I think the biggest barrier is us. Stop apologizing and instead say thank you. I see too often women apologize for things that are not worthy of an apology.

Don’t confuse this — if an apology is warranted, have the intestinal fortitude to be the adult in the room and apologize, but don’t apologize out of habit.

For example, imagine that technology is preventing a meeting from getting started on time. The temptation may be to say, “So sorry everyone, I am trying to get this going ...” but is it your fault? Did you personally cause a server to cease functioning in Vicksburg? When you have the urge to apologize for things out of your control, reprogram your brain to say thank you. “Thank you for your patience while we overcome this technological obstacle.” It is just one small change that can have huge impacts on how women are perceived.

HOW DO YOU ENCOURAGE WOMEN NOT TO GIVE UP?

We all have trying times that test us. When you are feeling beat down, stressed and ready to quit, remember you are not alone. Surround yourself with people that you can talk with and share your trials and tribulations.

There is nothing wrong with admitting you need help. Most likely, what is being experienced, someone else has gone through it and can provide advice to overcome the obstacles.

District leaders discuss future projects at Arizona visit

STORY AND PHOTOS BY
ROBERT DEDEAUX
LA DISTRICT PUBLIC AFFAIRS

PHOENIX — Los Angeles District commander Col. Julie Balten led a team from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to re-view several military and civil works project sites March 14-17 in Arizona.

During the visit, the district met with military commanders and city leaders in Arizona to discuss future projects and promote the district’s engineering and construction capabilities for upcoming projects.

“The Los Angeles District is dedicated to delivering safe and quality projects to our Arizona partners and stakeholders,” Balten said. “This includes visiting with military commanders and city officials to understand their future needs. The entire State of Arizona is a very important part of the district’s footprint in the South-

west, and we are committed to supporting their engineering and construction needs.”

The LA District supports the public and military in Arizona with a wide variety of projects and planning, engineering, construction and environmental services. Projects include flood-risk management, navigation, recreation, and infrastructure and environmental stewardship.

FORT HUACHUCA

The site visits began in Sierra Vista, Arizona. Balten and Fort Huachuca Garrison Command-



Los Angeles District commander Col. Julie Balten joins 355th Mission Support Group commander Air Force Col. Casey Bartholomew and staff March 14 to discuss the possibility of future partnerships during a meeting at Davis-Monthan Air Force Base in Tucson, Arizona. Bartholomew also holds the position of deputy base civil engineer. The Corps is overseeing seven construction and renovation projects at the base.

er Col. Johnny Ives discussed current and future construction projects on the installation. The colonels also discussed maintaining projects in a safe environment.

“Safely delivering quality projects is our number one priority,” Balten said.

The district team also met with the Fort Huachuca Department of Public Works. One of the projects discussed, the Ground Transport Equipment building, will create additional vehicle storage on the installation.

According to Fort Huachuca’s Army homepage, the installation is the largest employer in Cochise County and the largest (single) economic contributor in Arizona. The Arizona Commerce Authority website states that Fort Huachuca accounts for an annual economic impact of \$2.4 billion for the State of Arizona.

DAVIS-MONTHAN AIR FORCE BASE

After leaving Fort Huachuca, Balten and the Corps’ team joined 355th Mission Support Group Commander Air

Force Col. Casey Bartholomew and his engineering and construction experts to discuss the possibility of future partnerships at Davis-Monthan Air Force Base in Tucson.

“The goal in meeting with the military commanders is to understand what their future programs and projects might be,” Balten said. “The more we know and understand our stakeholders’ plans and future needs, the better our district can prepare to support their programs.”

The district has a field office — the Tucson Resident Office — located at the base, which provides administrative and quality assurance oversight to 12 active-construction projects. Of those 12 projects, seven are located at Davis-Monthan AFB and support various U.S. Air Force units.

“The USACE construction program in Tucson and Southern Arizona is vital in providing modernized facilities and infrastructure that supports our nation’s defense and homeland security,” said Richard Fontanilla, LA District area engineer for the Tucson Resident Office.

The total contract value of these projects is about \$70.7 million.

RIO DE FLAG IN FLAGSTAFF

Two days and 250 miles later, Balten and the Corps’ team met with City of Flagstaff leaders to discuss the Rio de Flag Flood-Risk Management project.

[‘ARIZONA’ continued on Page 15](#)



Los Angeles District commander Col. Julie Balten and Fort Huachuca garrison commander Col. Johnny Ives discuss construction projects at the installation March 14 near Sierra Vista, Arizona. One of the projects discussed, the Ground Transport Equipment building, will create additional vehicle storage at the installation.

‘ARIZONA’ continued from Page 14

“It will help save our homes and businesses,” said Flagstaff Emergency Management Director Stacey Brechler-Knaggs, in a fall meeting with Corps representatives and city leaders. “It will save our entire economy — the downtown corridor, hotels, restaurants and our regional hospital.”

After severe fires, the city and surrounding area have been subject to flooding from the Rio de Flag and Clay Avenue Wash tributaries. The plan for the project consists of channel modifications, bridge enhancements, and detention basin and floodwall construction.

“Colonel Balten has been a tremendous leader for this entire project,” said Bob Holmes, City of Flagstaff consultant. “We are thankful to the whole Corps’ team. Their dedication and expertise are going to help delivery of this project in a timely and efficient fashion and can keep us within budget.”

The LA District has been allocated \$79 million in federal funds for the Rio de Flag project, and plans are to award the first construction contract for the Lower Rio de Flag and Clay Avenue Wash reaches in 2023.



Jim McCarthy, Flagstaff city councilman, and U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Los Angeles District Deputy Engineer Justin Gay discuss the Rio de Flag Flood Control Project March 17 in Flagstaff, Arizona. According to McCarthy, the project will prevent flooding of important downtown, residential and Northern Arizona University property.



The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Los Angeles District command team and City of Flagstaff leaders and consultants meet at Rio de Flag after a meeting discussing the project March 17 in Flagstaff, Arizona.



Phil Serpa, right, and Richard Lee, both with the Los Angeles District Operations Division, explain the Prado Dam spillway modification project to Travis Tutka, senior Dam and Levee Safety Branch program manager, using an overview photo of the site March 9 in Corona, California.

Senior dam safety program manager visits Prado Dam

STORY AND PHOTO BY JOHN REESE
LA DISTRICT PUBLIC AFFAIRS

CORONA, Calif. — To get a first-hand look at Prado Dam and better understand upcoming modifications to its spillway, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers’ senior Dam and Levee Safety Branch program manager toured the spillway, exterior and deep interior of the dam, March 9, at Corona, California.

“Seeing presentations of the project never do it justice to see the scale of the economy and residences downstream,” said Travis Tutka, acting chief of the Dam and Levee Safety Branch at the Corps’ Headquarters, adding his visit was to “truly understand the consequences associated and the scale of this impressive project.”

Tutka was updated on future safety improvements to the Prado Dam spillway by Los Angeles District engineers, project managers and district engineering chief Pamela Lovasz, as they viewed the dam and its basin.

Normally, the Prado Dam basin is a dry, wooded area; however, currently, hundreds of acres of trees are submerged within the basin following recent heavy winter storms.

Using visual displays, Richard Lee, Nirav Patel and Phil Serpa, employees with the Corps’ Los Angeles District Operations Division, and Kirsten Bedolla, deputy lead engineer for the Prado spillway modifications project, explained the changes in store for Prado Dam, while also pointing out where spillway improvements will be implemented, from on top of the dam. To date, the dam has never seen water flow over the spillway; however, it could happen in an extreme weather event.

“It’s important for headquarters to see our projects in person, so they know the challenges we face,” Bedolla said.

Patel echoed the importance of Tutka’s visit. “It’s nice to let management know what we’re doing out here and how we’re benefitting the public,” Patel said.

ABOUT PRADO DAM

Prado Dam is a flood-risk management project and a major feature of the ongoing Santa Ana River Mainstem project. It was designed in the 1930s, constructed in 1941 and is located on the Santa Ana River in the City of Corona in Riverside County. It is operated and maintained by the Corps’ Los Angeles District and is in the

process of being modified as part of the larger Santa Ana River Mainstem project.

Prado Dam reduces flood risk to more than 1.3 million people working in four counties and more than \$80 billion in property. The reservoir is typically dry, but it has the capacity to store large volumes of water, resulting in an estimated \$207 million in annual flood damage reduction benefits.

Modification of the dam began in 2002 to provide additional capacity for storage of floodwaters and sediment by enlarging the existing Prado Dam and reservoir, which included raising the main dam embankment, replacing the outlet works, constructing other embankments, also known as dikes, and improving the downstream channel. Modification of the spillway is the last feature of the project to be constructed, which includes raising the spillway by 20 feet.

Although the dam is undergoing improvements, it continues to be fully functional and operable during storm events. Corps’ staff are routinely on site at Prado Dam to operate and monitor the dam during rain events.

Prado Dam is receiving \$655 million for construction under the president’s fiscal year 2024 budget for the U.S. Army Civil Works program.

Corps removes 144 tons of debris from San Gabriel River

STORY AND PHOTOS BY JOHN REESE
LA DISTRICT PUBLIC AFFAIRS

AZUSA, Calif. — In a continuing project to improve the health of the San Gabriel River and reduce risk to the public, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Los Angeles District cleared 144 tons of litter and debris March 6-13 from a stretch of riverbed near Azusa.

The land along the river is maintained by the LA District for flood-risk management.

Local communities requested assistance in removing trash from abandoned homeless encampments on Corps-managed land near the riverbed.

Representatives with the LA District’s Operations Division and the Corps’ LA District park rangers partnered with the Los Angeles Homeless Services Authority, Azusa Police Department and LA County Animal Care and Control’s Major Case Unit to conduct a final safety inspection, ensuring the encampment was unoccupied — including pets — and to document its remnants.

The use of the Corps’ project lands for homeless encampments is prohibited by the agency’s regulations and Los Angeles County, as it presents a health and safety hazard to homeless individuals, residents, the environment and wildlife.

Any remaining unhoused individuals were given a 72-hour notice before work began. Assistance to the homeless within the debris field along the San Gabriel River was offered by Los Angeles Homeless Services Authority in the days preceding the cleanup.

“We strive to protect the lives and safety of those homeless during these cleanups,” said LA



The first of 18 dumpsters of trash and debris brought up from the San Gabriel River begins loading by workers contracted by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Los Angeles District March 6 near Azusa, California.

District project manager Trevor Snyder.

Contracted workers descended into the riverbed near San Gabriel River Reach 12 early March 6 to fill large dumpsters of trash by hand, along with significant debris washed downstream from recent heavy rains. Aerosol paint cans, propane tanks, gasoline cans and other items that can explode during wildfires were removed from the site. One of the more difficult large items dragged out of the river was a soggy king-sized waterbed.

“Over an area of 68 acres, the Army Corps filled 18 40-cubic yard dumpsters, totaling 144 tons of trash and debris,” Snyder said. “While the focus is on removing floatable debris from the flood-risk management project and decreasing associated fire risks that these camps bring to our local communi-

ties, it is important to note that illegally domiciling in a river is very dangerous.”

An atmospheric river dumped record amounts of rain and snow before, during and immediately following the cleanup, resulting in eight people and eight dogs being rescued from the San Gabriel River March 13 in Azusa, after they were swept away by fast-moving waters, according to the Los Angeles County Fire Department.

Once the debris was out of the riverbed, a tracked skid helped the workers fill the 18 roll-off dumpsters. No heavy equipment was used in the riverbed, so as not to disturb bird-nesting season, Snyder added.

Much of the cleanup centered around the former Puente Largo Railway Bridge, which was built in 1907. The rail bridge was converted to a pedestrian and bicycle bridge spanning the wide riverbed in 1989.

The 58-mile San Gabriel River flows southward through Los Angeles and Orange counties — from the San Gabriel Mountains to the heavily populated San Gabriel Valley, and a significant part of the Los Angeles coastal plain — before emptying into the Pacific Ocean between the cities of Long Beach and Seal Beach.



Reach 12 of the wide San Gabriel River is seen from its west side March 6 near Azusa, California. The river, normally a shallow trickle, was flowing after multiple atmospheric rivers dumped heavy rain and snowmelt across the San Gabriel Mountains. A section of the riverbed at SGR Reach 12 was cleaned up March 6-13 by members of the Los Angeles District.

LA District builds community ties to share career opportunities, recruit new talent

STORY AND PHOTOS BY STEPHEN BAACK
LA DISTRICT PUBLIC AFFAIRS

LOS ANGELES — Two U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Los Angeles District leaders met with community members, military partners, educators and local elected leaders March 7 at Bob Hope Patriotic Hall in downtown LA for the U.S. Army Recruiting Battalion Los Angeles’ Community Partners Meeting.

Lt. Col. Jeffrey Beeman, LA District deputy commander, joined Funke Ojuri, the chief of the LA District’s Design Branch, to attend the event as part of the Corps’ effort to better reach potential recruits and future employees, and to strengthen alliances with agencies, such as the Army Recruiting Command, Army Cadet Command, U.S. Army Recruiting Los Angeles and the LA Strategic Officer Recruiting Detachment in that endeavor.

“If we can team up even more with them, we can also spread our message about the Army Corps — letting people know that the Army Corps is an option, both for those in uniform and those who want to serve their country as Department of the Army civilians,” Beeman said.

The keynote speaker at the event was Gen. Gary Brito, commanding general of U.S. Army Training and Doctrine Command, which is headquartered at Fort Eustis, Virginia. Brito is responsible for developing, managing and executing manpower and personnel plans, programs and policies for the entire Army.

Brito, who spent the week in California meeting with a wide range of fellow leaders, educators, students, recruits, Soldiers and other professionals, started his visit in LA to share what opportunities the Army offers.

“I’m proud and humbled to have benefited from these opportunities,” Brito said. “I went through ROTC, as many have, and I was one of those young men, who didn’t know what he wanted to do initially. I came from a blue-collar family, on a good day, as are many in this community and others. If you underscore that, it talks to the equity and inclusivity that the Army has. Notice I didn’t say any specific demographic — it’s an opportunity for all.”

Also speaking at the event was Patrick Baker, director of the U.S. Army Combat Capabilities Development Command’s Army Research Laboratory. Much like the



Lt. Col. Jeffrey Beeman, Los Angeles District deputy commander, right, joins Funke Ojuri, the chief of the LA District’s Design Branch, left, to meet and pose for a photo with Gen. Gary Brito, commanding general of U.S. Army Training and Doctrine Command, during the March 7 Community Partners Meeting in downtown LA.

Corps, ARL offers career pathways and internships for recent college graduates specializing in the science, technology, engineering and mathematics domains.

“I was a kid in Baltimore where you’d basically follow your parents who were working at the plant, but because someone suggested I do an internship with the Army, I’ve now seen 11 different countries, I’ve had the opportunity to work all over this country with great industrial partners, academic partners, and Soldiers and civilians to take science and put it out into the field and actually save lives and deter our adversaries.

“That was an opportunity for me 39 years ago,” he added. “Now there are many, many more opportunities in the Army.”



A U.S. Army Recruiting Command shoulder sleeve insignia is visible during the March 7 Community Partners Meeting in downtown Los Angeles.

The same is true of the Corps and its LA District, Beeman said, adding there’s no shortage of ways subject-matter experts throughout the district can engage with the community to spread the word to future U.S. Army Corps of Engineers’ professionals about these opportunities.

“We can participate in high school and college STEM events; provide tours of some of our large dam projects, like Sepulveda, Prado and Whittier Narrows dams; large construction projects, like the \$140-million VA Long Beach hospital project; and the ports and harbors, where we do dredging, from San Diego all the way to Morrow Bay,” Beeman said. “There are a lot of areas where we can help each other — they can assist with access to high schools and colleges, and we can assist with promoting STEM by making our Corps’ facilities, lands and properties accessible to them as well.”

In the last year, Beeman and other LA District professionals have performed outreach, including visiting ROTC cadets at Cal Poly Pomona, speaking with students at Southeast Academy High School in Norwalk, California, and attending events, such as the American Indian Science and Engineering Society Conference in Phoenix and the Great Minds in STEM conference in Pasadena, California.

“There are so many pipelines of talented candidates in LA,” Beeman said, “and I am starting to feel some serious momentum in better establishing those ties to increase awareness of the Los Angeles District as an employer of choice.”

Safety Tip Three points of contact: Remember it as the ‘Triangle of Life’

COURTESY OF THE PORTLAND DISTRICT

Falls remain the top cause of death in the construction industry and a leading cause of injuries, but one basic, often-overlooked rule can help prevent them: the “three points of contact” rule. OSHA requires three points of contact when climbing up and down ladders, but the rule applies in several other situations as well.

What is three points of contact?

Maintaining three points of contact means keeping either two hands and one foot or one hand and two feet on the ladder you’re climbing or the vehicle or piece of equipment you’re mounting or dismounting. These three parts of your body will form a small triangle. The smaller the triangle, the better.

Following the three points of contact rule helps prevent falls from ladders, falls from equipment and trucks and slips, trips and falls on stairs.

It’s an easy rule to break, especially if you’re

in a hurry or if other workers are waiting behind you. In fact, complying with it often requires a deliberate effort. But avoiding a fall that takes you out of commission saves time — and perhaps a trip to the ER — in the end.

Three points of contact on forklifts, heavy equipment and trucks

Many equipment operators get into some bad habits, including stepping onto tires or forklift tines to mount or dismount the vehicle. But falls from equipment are more common than you might think. To help prevent them:

- Clear your boots and the steps or running board of any mud, snow or grease.
- Keep your hands free; don’t carry anything.
- Face the equipment whenever you mount and dismount.
- Maintain three points of contact with support bars/rails, steps or platforms until you sit in the cab or stand on the ground. Check the

owner’s manual for the best points of contact.

- Never jump off or mount the vehicle via tines, tires or other surfaces not intended for stepping on.

It may be tempting to hop straight to the ground from the cab, but the impact can hurt your ankles, knees or lower back, especially if you do it repeatedly.

Before dismounting equipment, check the ground for mud and check the surroundings for moving vehicles. If you’ve maintained three points of contact, you’ll be able to pull yourself back onto the equipment in a hurry, if necessary.

A note about forklift tines in particular: Tines may support your weight, but they are optimized for pallets, not feet, so stay off them to avoid an accident.

If you have a Safety Tip suggestion, contact your local Safety Office representative and help us build the safest workplace possible!



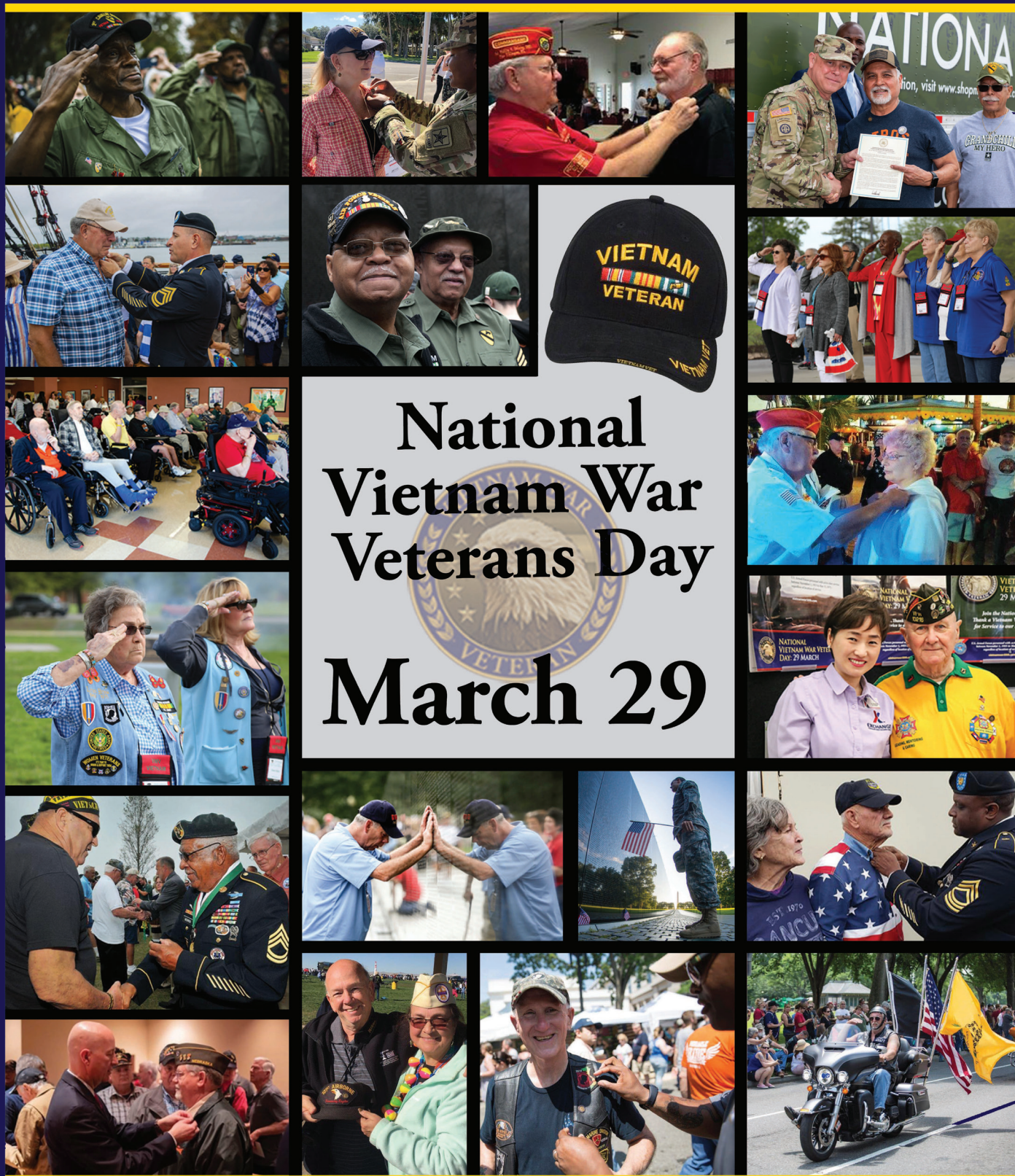
U.S. Army file photo by Kerry Solan

A roofer, hired by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers for Operation Blue Roof, climbs a ladder to install a blue roof Oct. 1, 2017, on an eligible home in Sebring, Florida. The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers’ Operation Blue Roof uses fiber-reinforced plastic sheeting to cover Hurricane Irma-damaged roofs.



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