

TOWER TIMES

May/June 2023



FLOOD FIGHT 2023

INSPIRING STEWARDSHIP

GROUNDBREAKINGS

AROUND THE
DISTRICT



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

Mission

The Rock Island District's mission is to deliver vital engineering and water resource solutions in collaboration with our partners to secure our Nation, reduce disaster risk and enhance quality of life, providing value to the region and Nation.

Vision

A premier public service, engineering organization of trusted, talented professionals delivering innovative and sustainable solutions to the region and Nation.

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Disclaimer

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Leadership from the USACE Rock Island District and Mississippi Valley Division join U.S. Rep. Eric Sorenson of Illinois and Iowa Department of Transportation Director Scott Marler in shoveling sand into a mock mooring cell during a groundbreaking ceremony at Locks and Dam 14. *Photo by Kelcy Hanson*

View on the web: www.mvr.usace.army.mil/Media/Publications/TowerTimes.aspx

Teamwork with a Purpose



Col. Jesse T. Curry
District Commander

Greetings once again from the Rock Island District Executive Office. As always, it is an absolute privilege to be a member of this amazing team and is my great honor to serve you as the Commander and District Engineer. In this edition of the Tower Times, I wanted to highlight the most recent demonstrations of what an amazing team we all get to be a part of. This example is certainly only one of many from across the District and we should be proud of each and every one and what we can accomplish together.

On April 10, 2023, I approved activation of the Rock Island District Emergency Operations Center (EOC) to begin preparations for the flood waters to return to our region once again. The team immediately came together and started following the developed and rehearsed duty assignments for team members from across the District, and their collective impact got us off to a tremendous start. As the snows melted in Minnesota and Wisconsin and the river began to rise, the EOC continued to grow with volunteers who put their daily duties on hold to respond to the building emergency. At the peak of the flood, the EOC reached just over 100 team members all “rowing” hard to ensure our local and regional levee partners had what they needed to best protect homes, property and lives. In short, it was amazing to watch this team come together.

Throughout the course of the flood response, this team conducted assessments in four states, visiting 52 counties, and supporting 30 communities. Those inspecting levees physically walked or rode over 628 miles of levee, assessing conditions and helping levee sponsors and community leaders understand and respond to vulnerabilities in the system. The Rock Island District went big early, and it was absolutely noticed by our partners who need to have confidence that when the floods come, WE will be there with them. This flood event could have been catastrophic. It wasn't catastrophic largely because of the tremendous work that the team has completed to help prepare levee districts over the last few years, the quick reactions during the flood (like commandeering the District Engineer vehicle to run a sandbag machine up to Sabula, Illinois, when they needed it most), and our commitment to stand shoulder to shoulder with our community partners and remain ready for anything.

I also MUST mention the amazing work done by many from the Rock Island District Operations Division. The lock crews that could put a NASCAR pit crew to shame with how quickly and efficiently they safeguard the lock for high water and then work to get it back open once the flood waters recede. Their expertise not only protects our infrastructure and equipment from damages, but also minimized the amount of time the locks were closed and the traffic, essential to our national economy, was unable to move off the river. I'll also mention and say thank you to the Natural Resources leaders and teams who have been working around the clock to return the river recreation sites to the beautiful and safe places in record time.

As stated at the beginning, these are just a few of the amazing examples of teamwork found every single day in the Rock Island District. Most importantly, it is TEAMWORK WITH A PURPOSE. It embodies what we all want this district to continue to be. A district that works together to make the greatest positive difference we can with the time and resources we are given while making it possible for EVERYONE with a desire serve to join us in something greater than ourselves.

That's what GREAT teams do, and we are all part of a GREAT team.

As always, my door (physical door, phone, email, text, etc.) is always open to the members of the Rock Island District and their families. Thank you for all that YOU do for your team, the entire Rock Island District, and all those who we serve together. WE ARE ONE DISTRICT and along with the rest of the Mississippi Valley Division and the Corps, we will CONTINUE BUILDING STRONG! 🇺🇸

Appreciate You,


COL Jesse T. Curry
50th Commander of the Rock Island District
US Army Corps of Engineers

GROUNDBREAKING CEREMONY AT LOCKS AND DAM 14 CONSTRUCTION START FOR MOORING CELL

By Kelcy Hanson, Editor



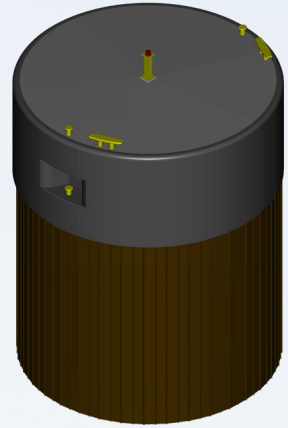
The Rock Island District hosted a groundbreaking ceremony, April 12, in Pleasant Valley, Iowa, to celebrate the start of construction for the Locks and Dam 14 mooring cell. The 30-foot-wide concrete cell is the first small-scale navigation efficiency improvement project to be constructed in the Rock Island District as part of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers' Navigation and Ecosystem Sustainability Program (NESP). Its purpose is to create transportation time savings for commercial vessels by serving as a staging area for up-bound traffic to safely moor (tie up) in the river while waiting to lock through Lock 14.

NESP is a long-term program of navigation improvements and ecosystem restoration for the Upper Mississippi River System. The primary goals of the program are to increase the capacity and improve the reliability of the inland navigation system while restoring, protecting, and enhancing the environment through implementation of an integrated, dual-purpose plan to ensure the economic and environmental sustainability of the Upper Mississippi River System. 



What is a mooring cell?

A mooring cell is a large, solid structure, typically constructed of concrete, that is placed in a body of water for barges and other vessels to tie up to while waiting to lock through. This best practice is time-saving, environmentally friendly and saves barges from having to push into river banks or tie up to trees along the shore.



Leadership from the USACE Rock Island District and Mississippi Valley Division join U.S. Rep. Eric Sorenson of Illinois and Iowa Department of Transportation Director Scott Marler in shoveling sand into a mock mooring cell during a groundbreaking ceremony at Locks and Dam 14. *Photo by Kelcy Hanson*

USACE TEAM BRINGS SUPPORT DURING 2023 FLOOD

By Kelcy Hanson, Editor

Prior to 2023, the last major flood USACE Rock Island District battled was in 2019, a year many in the Quad City area remember vividly due to a temporary barrier failure that caused flood waters to rush into downtown Davenport, Iowa. Although flood fighting appears to be the same process each time, a number of things were done differently this year to improve response and preparedness.

Flooding this spring was primarily caused by melting snowpack in the northern portion of the river basin. It is believed that the last snowmelt-driven flood in the Rock Island District happened in 1965 and was a major flood of record. The flood of 2023 however progressed differently due to drought in the upper Midwest and allowed the predictions for the flood, by the National Weather Service, to be more accurate because no significant rain events needed to be factored in.

"The District had essentially a week to 10 days to prepare for the flood, as predicted," said Anthony Heddlesten, lead Flood Area Engineer for the

Rockford Area, which includes the Quad Cities. "The flood crest prediction was somewhere between 21 and 23 feet at Rock Island and the crest was right in that area."

According to Heddlesten, several positive outcomes came from the flood fight in 2023. "Every flood is slightly different and all of them are growth opportunities for future planning."

Bringing in an expert to assist communities with proper installation of the widely used HESCO gabion basket barriers was a major benefit.

"The HESCO expert immediately hopped right in (literally and figuratively) to help install the temporary barriers correctly and ensure our communities had the best knowledge and layouts to be successful," said Heddlesten.

The use of new equipment such as inflatable culvert plugs and unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs) was also a big plus.

"Culvert plugs were a huge relief to local sponsors in terms of how much they had to pump," said



Rock Island District Commander Col. Jesse Curry, stands with a team of District Flood Area Engineers (FAEs) along the banks of the Mississippi River as they visited communities during spring flooding. Photo by Kelcy Hanson

Heddlesten. “And using UAV (drones) to see issues from an aerial view, that were not apparent on the ground, was very useful.”

Heddlesten also noted that new technologies played a major role in support of the flood fight this spring.

“The UAVs, used for getting aerial views, had the ability to do thermal imaging, and new electrical resistivity testing equipment helped us search for voids and issues in levee and flood control structures.”


Increased training and improved outreach and communications with communities served also provided a positive outcome during the flood fight this year.

“USACE had more time to prepare and train new employees this year because of the accurate projection on when flooding would occur,” said Heddlesten. “We also had better engagement with levee districts active in the PL84-99 program and the counties and communities along the river to keep them informed of all the support we could offer.”

Flood fighting isn’t a primary role for most of the flood area engineers in the District but when the

Emergency Operations Center activates, those who are properly trained are ready to take on the collateral duty assignment and assist.

According to Sarah Jones, Emergency Management Chief, “our FAEs are successful because they have developed strong relationships with public sponsors through the Continued Eligibility Inspection Program. Their knowledge of the levee system features, local flood fight plans, and flood fight techniques make them invaluable to the levee sponsors and local communities they serve. Many of our flood team members have served for decades. That tells you something about the mission, and their servant hearts. It’s one of my favorite parts about this job.”

When you feel like you’re just walking down the block, your presence as a member of the USACE team brings a level of trust, confidence, a feeling of safety to the people around you, said Heddlesten. “It just really makes you proud to be a part of the team and even though having to respond to a disaster is not something you want to do, it’s a very rewarding experience being able to bring that help to our neighbors.” 



(Left) District Flood Area Engineers (FAEs) meet with local levee sponsors to inspect levees and search for concerning boils that might appear further away from the Mississippi river. (Right) Rock Island District Commander, Col. Jesse Curry, meets with local officials in Davenport, Iowa, to discuss the progress of putting up HESCO barriers. Photos by Kelcy Hanson


CEDAR RAPIDS CELEBRATES RIBBON CUTTING

By Jim Finn, Public Affairs Specialist



The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Rock Island District, and the city of Cedar Rapids hosted a ribbon cutting ceremony Tuesday, April 11, at 10:30 a.m. to celebrate completion of the 1st Ave. East Floodgate.

USACE Rock Island District Commander Col. Jesse Curry, U.S. Rep. Ashley Hinson of Iowa, and Mayor Tiffany O'Donnell joined Assistant Secretary of the Army for Civil Works the Honorable Michael Connor and USACE Mississippi Valley Division Commander Maj. Gen. Diana Holland, and City Manager Jeff Pomeranz for the momentous occasion.

The 1st Ave. East Floodgate is one of many structures being constructed as part of the Cedar River Flood Control System. Its design will help reduce the risk of property damage, health impacts, and economic losses associated with anticipated future flood events. Design and construction of this project was supported through federal funding from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. For more information visit: <https://www.mvr.usace.army.mil/Missions/Flood-Risk-Management/Cedar-Rapids/> or www.cityofcr.com/floodcontrol. 




CLEANUP STARTS AT RECREATION SITES

By Sam Heilig, Public Affairs Specialist

Spring flooding along the Mississippi River is a fairly common occurrence which means natural resource management staff who manage the recreation areas along the river need to have a plan in place for preparing the spaces when water levels rise.

Each recreation area has its own unique set of river level thresholds that indicate when critical elements will be impacted at the site. Once river levels meet these thresholds, park rangers from the Dubuque, Iowa, Thomson, Illinois, and Muscatine, Iowa, ranger stations work to remove infrastructure, prepare facilities and cancel camping reservations for impacted sites. A typical day of flood preparations can include removing electrical components from campsite pedestals, relocation of picnic tables and securing any movable infrastructure that could be washed away such as boat docks.

Once river levels recede, the process is reversed and each recreation area must be brought back into service before visitors can return to the space. Senior Ranger, Jake Kresel from the Mississippi River Project Office in Pleasant Valley, Iowa, oversees operations of the ranger stations along the river and provided some insight as to just how much time flood cleanup can take. 

Once the waters recede, what actions are taken to prepare the areas for public use?

As soon as water levels recede to a point that allows safe access to the area, staff begin to remove flood debris, sediment accumulation on roadways and campsites, and wash/sanitize facilities that were inundated.

Once water has receded off of electrical pedestals, electricians begin to install electrical components and test the electrical systems.

How much time does it take to get recreation areas back up an running after a flood?

This spring, park ranger and maintenance staff worked over 300 hours to open many of the recreation areas. The effort will continue well into June with some repairs being completed through the summer.

The spring flood of 2023 forced closures at 21 recreation areas.

Did flooding make it more difficult for staff to prepare recreation areas for 2023 recreation season?

Flooding adds a great deal of work to the opening of our campgrounds for the recreation season. The delays in opening causes reservation cancellations, which in many cases were made six months in advance. The impacts are felt by staff, volunteers, contractors and visitors. Over the years our staff has gotten very efficient in this process of preparation to cleanup to opening but we are still limited by the size and duration of these flood events.

CELEBRATIONS MARK START OF TWO NAVIGATION ECOSYSTEM SUSTAINABILITY PROJECTS


By Sam Heilig, Public Affairs Specialist

Two milestone events were recently hosted by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers as part of the Navigation and Ecosystem Sustainability Program (NESP). The first was held in the Rock Island District for a Fish Passage Project at Lock and Dam 22, near Hannibal, Missouri, and the second was in the St. Louis District at Lock and Dam 25 where a 1,200-foot lock is scheduled for construction.

The Lock and Dam 22 Fish Passage Project is one of five fish passage projects authorized by Congress as part of NESP. It is the first project of its kind to be funded for construction on the Mississippi River and received \$97.1M to complete design and initiate construction. The project includes construction of a 200-foot-wide rock ramp fishway, an ice/debris barrier, bridge, and stoplogs. When complete, the project will provide the means for fish access to upstream mainstem river and tributary habitats resulting in an increase of size and distribution of native migratory fish populations.

Rock Island District Commander, Col. Jesse Curry, presided over the event at Lock and Dam 22 where the Honorable Mitch Landrieu, Senior Advisor to the President and Infrastructure Coordinator, Honorable Michael Conner, Assistant Secretary of the Army for Civil Works,

Diana Holland, Mississippi Valley Division Commander, and Kirsten Wallace, Executive Director with the Upper Mississippi River Basin Association also spoke. Following remarks, a groundbreaking and fish release were held to commemorate the start of the project.

Later that day, senior leadership traveled to Winfield, Missouri, where the second groundbreaking marked the start of construction for a new 1,200-foot lock chamber at Lock and Dam 25. Like the Fish Passage Project, the new 1,200-foot lock chamber was included in President Biden's Bipartisan Infrastructure Law, which demonstrated the federal government's commitment to providing resiliency to the Inland Waterways Navigation System. 



The groundbreaking ceremony for the Fish Passage located near Hannibal, Missouri was celebrated by HON Mitch Landrieu, Senior Advisor to the President and Infrastructure Coordinator, HON Michael Conner, Assistant Secretary of the Army for Civil Works, Maj. Gen. Diana Holland, Mississippi Valley Division Commander, Col. Jesse Curry, Rock Island District Commander and Kirsten Wallace, Executive Director with the Upper Mississippi River Basin Association.

Photo by Kelcy Hanson



Leadership from the USACE St. Louis District and Mississippi Valley Division join representatives from the navigation industry in the groundbreaking ceremony for the 1,200 ft. lock in Winfield, Missouri. Photo by Kelcy Hanson

KOEHN SELECTED AS RECIPIENT OF PATRIOTIC EMPLOYER AWARD



Tim Koehn, Assistant Lockmaster at Lock and Dam 11, was the recipient of the Patriotic Employer award through the Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve. Former employee and Coast Guard Reservist, Jared Charland, submitted Koehn to be a recipient for his support during activations and deployments. Photo provided by Lock and Dam 11 Staff

LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM 2 GRADUATION



The Rock Island District recently hosted a graduation ceremony for participants of the 2023 Leadership Development Program - Level 2. Employees, Mahmoud Alafif, Mark Bohne, Steven Bothell, Alexander Campbell, Bethany Hoster, Steven Klemme, Micki Meier, Dr. Kelsey Noack-Myers, Matthew Quinn, Anton Stork, Kathleen Sullivan, Heng-Wei (David) Tsai, Jesse Westphal, and Cory Wildermuth were recognized for their successful completion of the program. The ceremony included a leadership briefing from District Commander, Col. Jesse Curry and program facilitators Dr. Randy Richards and Dr. Patrick O'Leary shared a skit and their thoughts on leadership. Graduates then shared their key takeaways before receiving their graduation certificates and a final round of applause from leaders, supervisors, and mentors in the audience. Col. Curry then ended the event with encouraging words for the graduates who will play a role in the success of the District and its missions in the future.

Photo by Kelcy Hanson

ENVIRONMENTAL STEWARDSHIP IMPACTS START AT A YOUNG AGE

By Frances Candelaria, Public Affairs Specialist

The U.S. Army's Corps of Engineers, Rock Island District, along with U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Port Louisa Division, welcomed a small group of Bettendorf High School students to the Upper Mississippi River Restoration (UMRR) Program's habitat rehabilitation and enhancement project site at Keithsburg, Illinois, in late May. The students, ranging from grades 10-12, were part of an Environmental Science course taught by Spencer Mesick.

Environmental stewardship is an important mission for the Corps of Engineers and its Fish and Wildlife Service partners. The students kayaking field trip was a unique opportunity for stewards of the land and water to pass along their knowledge to potential future custodians.

"Ecosystem restoration is a continually growing field for USACE and remains an important mission," explained Kara Mitvalsky, Environmental Engineer for the USACE Rock Island District. "Sharing the story with our community at large will inspire students to understand and pursue a variety of career paths that could continue to improve the world around us. Providing information and availability of work in our local area could inspire students to remain in the [Quad Cities Area] and potentially work for us in the future."

The high schoolers experienced the Keithsburg HREP up close as they kayaked from the Port Louisa boat ramp through the side channel of water feeding into the Mississippi River. The trip allowed the students to have a one-of-a-kind learning connection.

"We cover a lot of content related to human impacts on the environment," shared Spencer Mesick, science teacher, Bettendorf High School. "Studying the changes we've made to the Mississippi to make it navigable for barges, and the ongoing restoration work that's been improving the Mississippi for wildlife fits perfectly in my class. Getting the opportunity to see what we've been discussing firsthand, while also learning about the careers involved, made this field trip an incredible and memorable learning opportunity."

Mitvalsky added that it is important to educate future generations


about how little steps can lead to a larger journey.

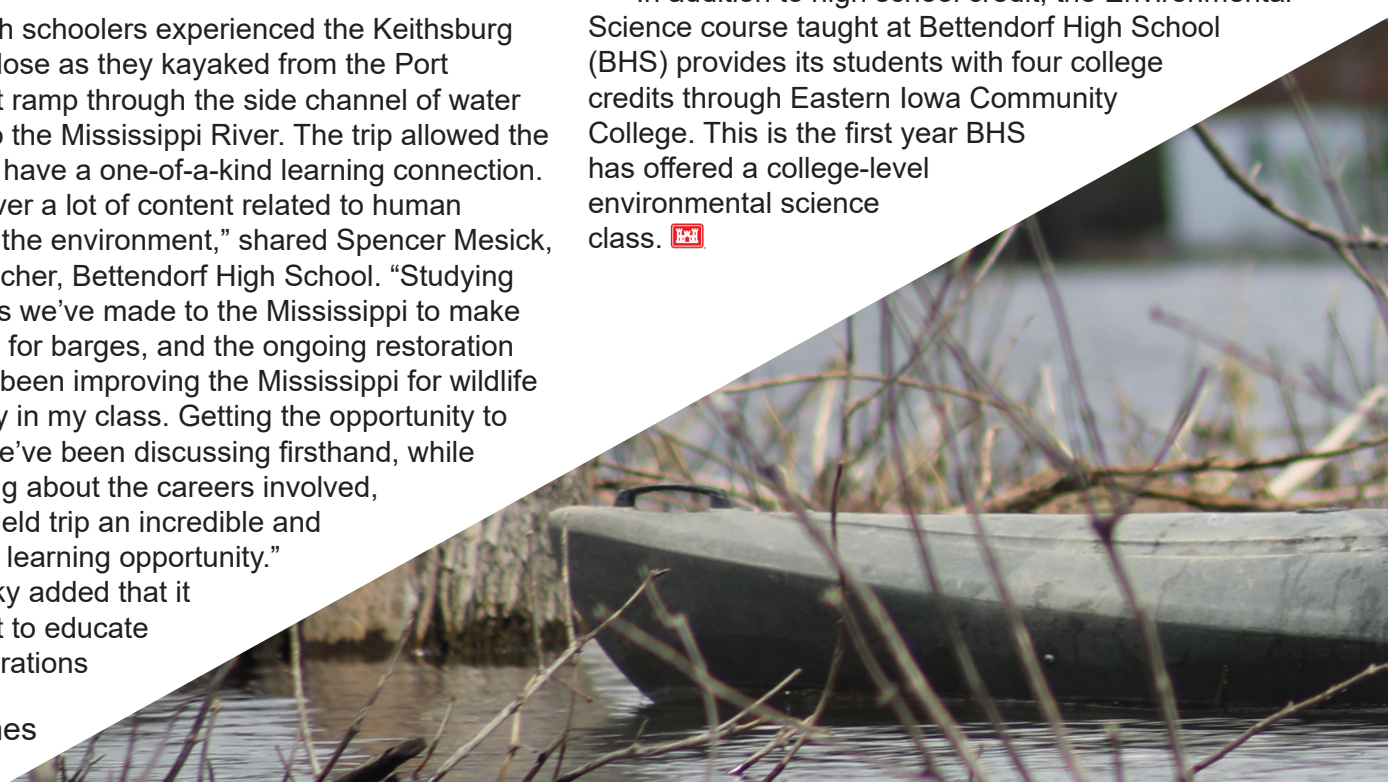
"Providing information about how these relatively small footprint impacts - as observed at HREPS - can have a wide range impact on our world. For example, this 1,400-acre project site provides resting and feeding areas that have an impact on migratory birds that travel from South America to Canada! Now that's an impact!"

"I would add that enabling the students and others to realize that we have great natural resources in our own backyard," said Steve Gustafson, Environmental Protection Specialist with the USACE Rock Island District. "Not just areas like Yellowstone Park or the Everglades need protection and restoration, and while local natural resources don't get the attention that more famous areas like the aforementioned do, it does not lessen their importance."

Although school is usually seen as boring to high schoolers, this field trip gave them the rare chance to grasp their education in what felt like more of an entertaining break than a regular day in class.

"I did a poll to get feedback from students about the trip," Mesick commented. "Every student said they would recommend I do this trip again next year. One of my seniors even said it was their favorite thing they've done in high school!"

In addition to high school credit, the Environmental Science course taught at Bettendorf High School (BHS) provides its students with four college credits through Eastern Iowa Community College. This is the first year BHS has offered a college-level environmental science class. 



“Ecosystem restoration is a continually growing field for USACE and remains an important mission...”



WHAT TO DO IN THE EVENT OF A BOMB THREAT

By R. Scott Harbison, Security and Law Enforcement Chief

Telephonic bomb threats happen. Sometimes an angry customer, an angry employee, or an angry student may make a bomb threat call in order to disrupt the work or school day. Sometimes a domestic violent extremist or foreign terrorist organization will make a telephonic bomb threat because the detonation of a bomb in the workplace is imminent. This is why we must take every bomb threat seriously. Whether you work in the District Headquarters, or out in one of our field sites, here is what you should do in the event you are the one that answers the phone and the caller turns out be making a bomb threat:

(1) Remain calm and professional. Gather as much information as possible using the DHS Bomb Threat Data Card available on the District Security Office Sharepoint site.


- Keep the caller on the line as long as possible; do not hang up the phone even if the caller does. If the caller terminates the call, leave the phone off the hook and contact the authorities using a different phone.
- Record the time the call was received and terminated.
- If your telephone has a display screen write down the number the call originates from or any letter and numbers on the display screen.
- Record everything spoken by the caller.
- Ask the caller for information about the explosive device such as where it is located, when it will go off, what will make it go off.
- Ask the caller for personal information such as their name, location, etc.
- Listen for background noises that might indicate the caller's location.

(2) Call the police and give them all of the information you have collect from or about the caller.

(3) Inform your supervisor and the district security office.

(4) Prepare to evacuate, remove CAC from computer, and secure office and any sensitive or classified materials.

(5) Evacuate if safe to do so using designated evacuation / escape routes.

(7) Assemble and perform accountability of all personnel at the designated assembly point. The designated assembly point should be at a safe standoff distance from the facility, away from vehicles or other possible secondary explosive devices. 

BOMB THREAT PROCEDURES

This quick reference checklist is designed to help employees and decision makers of commercial facilities, schools, etc. respond to a bomb threat in an orderly and controlled manner with the first responders and other stakeholders.

Most bomb threats are received by phone. Bomb threats are serious until proven otherwise. Act quickly, but remain calm and obtain information with the checklist on the reverse of this card.

If a bomb threat is received by phone:

1. Remain calm. Keep the caller on the line for as long as possible. DO NOT HANG UP, even if the caller does.
2. Listen carefully. Be polite and show interest.
3. Try to keep the caller talking to learn more information.
4. If possible, write a note to a colleague to call the authorities or, as soon as the caller hangs up, immediately notify them yourself.
5. If your phone has a display, copy the number and/or letters on the window display.
6. Complete the Bomb Threat Checklist immediately. Write down as much detail as you can remember. Try to get exact words.
7. Immediately upon termination of call, DO NOT HANG UP, but from a different phone, contact authorities immediately with information and await instructions.

If a bomb threat is received by handwritten note:

- Call _____
- Handle note as minimally as possible.

If a bomb threat is received by e-mail:

- Call _____
- Do not delete the message.

Signs of a suspicious package:

- No return address
- Excessive postage
- Stains
- Strange odor
- Strange sounds
- Unexpected delivery
- Poorly handwritten
- Misspelled words
- Incorrect titles
- Foreign postage
- Restrictive notes

** Refer to your local bomb threat emergency response plan for evacuation criteria*

DO NOT:

- Use two-way radios or cellular phone. Radio signals have the potential to detonate a bomb.
- Touch or move a suspicious package.

WHO TO CONTACT (Select One)

- 911
- Follow your local guidelines

For more information about this form contact the Office for Bombing Prevention at: OBP@cisa.dhs.gov



V2

BOMB THREAT CHECKLIST

DATE:

TIME:

TIME CALLER
HUNG UP:

PHONE NUMBER WHERE
CALL RECEIVED:

Ask Caller:

- Where is the bomb located?
(building, floor, room, etc.)

- When will it go off?

- What does it look like?

- What kind of bomb is it?

- What will make it explode?

- Did you place the bomb? Yes No

- Why?

- What is your name?

Exact Words of Threat:

Information About Caller:

- Where is the caller located?
(background/level of noise)

- Estimated age:

- Is voice familiar? If so, who does it sound like?

- Other points:

Caller's Voice

- ☐ Female
- ☐ Male
- ☐ Accent
- ☐ Angry
- ☐ Calm
- ☐ Clearing throat
- ☐ Coughing
- ☐ Cracking Voice
- ☐ Crying
- ☐ Deep
- ☐ Deep breathing
- ☐ Disguised
- ☐ Distinct
- ☐ Excited
- ☐ Laughter
- ☐ Lip
- ☐ Loud
- ☐ Nasal
- ☐ Normal
- ☐ Ragged
- ☐ Rapid
- ☐ Raspy
- ☐ Slow
- ☐ Stuttered
- ☐ Soft
- ☐ Stutter

Background Sounds

- ☐ Animal noises
- ☐ House noises
- ☐ Kitchen noises
- ☐ Street noises
- ☐ Booth
- ☐ PA system
- ☐ Conversation
- ☐ Music
- ☐ Motor
- ☐ Clear
- ☐ Static
- ☐ Office machinery
- ☐ Factory machinery
- ☐ Local
- ☐ Long distance

Threat Language

- ☐ Incoherent
- ☐ Message read
- ☐ Taped message
- ☐ Irrational
- ☐ Profane
- ☐ Well-spoken

Other Information:

YOUR MENTAL HEALTH MATTERS

By Nate Gorham, Safety Manager

Assuring employees' physical safety is always a top priority in MVR, but what about psychological safety?

When an employee doesn't receive adequate support to navigate mental health challenges, they can become a safety hazard.

For example, we have many employees who regularly operate large, dangerous equipment. If the operator is struggling with mental health issues, the ability to focus and concentrate could be affected, or an employee could be so fatigued by depression or anxiety that memory and judgment could be impaired.

We cannot ignore our employees' mental health or the negative effects mental health challenges can have on employees' and organization's safety. Normally the employee carries the mental health burden individually, but the employer (Supervisors) should be involved with securing their employees' mental wellness.

About one year ago, MVR took a big step toward improving how we support our employees' mental health by refining our Employee Assistance Program (EAP). The District pays an annual fee per employee

in our District, allowing our employees and their family free access to numerous benefits such as:

- Counseling In-person, telephonically, or virtual 24/7/365

- Life Coaching to help you and your household members meet your personal and professional goals

- Legal and Financial Consultation
- Medical Advocacy to help you interpret medical information related to claims, coverage, and medical diagnosis
- Child and Elder Care Resources
- And much more.

Even if you're not looking for counseling, I encouraged you to take time to explore what this program has to offer. It's as simple as following the link,

or use the QR code and enter our company code: USACEEAP <https://myassistanceprogram.com/fei/>

Psychological safety and wellness are just as important as physical safety, so please make mental health a priority in your office or at your site. If you or some you know is struggling with mental health, the EAP or CISM team is here to help. 🏠



Scan above for more information about USACE EAP program!



Last Issue's Winner



Answer : Lock and Dam 14
Winner: Christopher Purdy

Can you name where this photo was taken?

If so, send your answer to Kelcy.C.Hanson@usace.army.mil to be featured in the next issue of the Tower Times.

EMPLOYEE SPOTLIGHT

By Kelcy Hanson, Editor

Nic Patterson Project Engineer



Nic Patterson started working for the Rock Island District in January 2015. Working with levee systems was a primary factor when Patterson was looking for employment and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers seemed like a good fit. Experience gained while working in the Rock Island District's Hydrology and Hydraulics Branch and Civil and Environmental Engineering Section now assists Patterson with their current position as project engineer and technical lead for a variety of projects.

While working as a project engineer, Patterson is responsible for leading teams that produce project deliverables such as plans, specifications and cost estimates that will be used to award a construction contract. Once awarded, they follow the project through construction and work with the contractor to review submittals and respond to requests for information. If the project is for a levee system, Patterson also works with other departments to get necessary documents, such as operations and maintenance manuals, updated after the project is complete.



One of the most memorable projects Patterson has worked on, was the floor stabilization and relief well project at Lock and Dam 18 on the Mississippi River. The floor of the lock was not stable enough to allow dewatering for the scheduled lock rehabilitation so they had to design a way to stabilize the floor with relief wells that could be installed without dewatering the lock. The dive team had to be involved in the installation and normal barge traffic also had to be factored in.

"I enjoy the different projects I get to work on and being able to come up with solutions to unique problems," said Patterson when asked what they enjoy most about their job. "I like the options to explore different offices and find the position that fits, as well as the opportunity to be on a flood team to meet the local sponsors and become familiar with levees."

As a child, Patterson lived in a floodplain, so floods and sandbagging was a normal part of growing up. Working with flood related projects and levees has always been an interest so becoming a Flood Area Engineer (FAE) for the District only made sense. This gave them the opportunity to work with levee sponsors, help monitor systems during a flood, and help communities better

prepare for floods in the future.

As a lead FAE, Patterson serves as a main point of contact for all the levee districts, cities and county emergency management offices in the Burlington Flood Area which starts downstream of Andalusia,

Illinois, on the Mississippi River and extends down river to Keokuk, Iowa. Assisting with levee inspections and providing technical support are their primary roles but they also aid levee districts with submissions for levee modifications and repairs when needed.

During a flood season, lead FAEs, like Patterson, spend a significant amount of time in the field with levee sponsors and city officials helping to ensure their flood protection systems are prepared. They also organize teams that go out and inspect systems for issues or concerns and provide technical assistance as needed.

Although the flood fight in the Burlington Flood Area this year was not as significant, Patterson says the river levels were high enough that all the levee systems enacted flood fighting measures and USACE FAE teams were prepared to assist. "It is very satisfying to be able to help the sponsors successfully prevent damage from a flood event." 🏠



(Top) Nic Patterson, Lead Flood Area Engineer, speaks with Sarah Jones, Emergency Operations Chief about the projected flood levels along the Mississippi River. (Bottom) Nic Patterson, Lead Flood Area Engineer geo-references points into their mobile device software to document conditions caused by the 2023 flood. Photos by Kelcy Hanson



TRAINING TIDBITS

Training Links

TED: [Total Employee Development](#)
Training Opportunities: [Training - Training Opportunities](#)
Leadership Development Training: [Training - Leadership Training](#)
DAU: [DAU Home](#)
ALMS: [EAMS-A Single Sign-On](#)
CES: [CHRTAS](#)
Army eLearning: [Skillsoft - US Army Login \(skillport.com\)](#)
PROSPECT: [ULC Course Schedule](#)

Free Training Opportunity

Creating the account is super easy! Visit this website <https://armyciv.udemy.com> and enter your USACE email. It will send a verification email with a link to set a password. Once you have the password set, you can access from work or a personal device or network.

FY24 Training Plans

- FY24 training plans development will begin mid May and continue through the budget timeline for FY24 (typically finalized by mid JUL)
- Office training coordinators will guide employees through the process and add any classes to TED as requested by employees during the training plan development
- FY24 training plans should include all anticipated technical and leader development training

Office training coordinators are always the first point of contact for employee training and development needs.

Mandatory Training for all employees is due by 30 JUN 2023.

The date in TED reflects end of FY to allow new employees coming onboard access to the courses through end of FY.

NEW EMPLOYEE TRAINING SCHEDULE

Sexual Harassment/Assault Response Prevention (SHARP)

June 28, 2023	1-2 p.m. <i>Central Time</i>
July 26, 2023	1-2 p.m. <i>Central Time</i>
August 30, 2023	1-2 p.m. <i>Central Time</i>
September 27, 2023	1-2 p.m. <i>Central Time</i>

To participate, new employees should log into their TED account and request the following course and vendor:

Course #: MAN-SHARP-NE-23
Vendor: USACE MVR Mandatory

Supervisors Corner

Supervisor Resources located here:

[Supervisor Resources \(dps.mil\)](#)

Supervisor Development Course (SDC)

- » Supervisors should now be auto enrolled and receive an email on how to access the training

New Supervisor 101 Course

- » Supervisors should be auto enrolled in this new mandated course at 8 months in their supervisory role. Supervisors will then have 4 months to complete the 10-hour online course.

Academic Degree Training: Process guidance can be found here.

[FY22 Training - All Documents \(army.mil\)](#)



AROUND THE DISTRICT

RETIREMENTS

Terry Bielser, Master Derrickboat Operator, retired Feb. 28, after dedicating over 23 years of service to the federal government.

Scott Orrico, Marine Mechanic, retired March 25, after dedicating over 26 years of service to the federal government.

Julie Chamberlin, Budget Analyst, retired March 31, after dedicating nearly 25 years of service to the federal government.

CONGRATULATIONS



Congratulations to Feyi and Eunice Aduroja on the birth of their daughter, Oyinlola Aduroja, on April 10. Oyinlola weighed in at 7 pounds, 11 ounces.



Congratulations to Missi and Michael Manternach on the birth of their son, Mack Lee Manternach, on June 2. Mack weighed in at 8 pounds, 5 ounces and 20 inches long.

SYMPATHY



Thomas Crane, 90, of Davenport, Iowa passed away Dec. 29, 2022. Crane retired from the Clocktower, as a District counsel employee.



Williadean Ineichen, 74, of Norwood, Missouri passed away Feb. 12. Ineichen was a Navy veteran and retired as a contract specialist.



Beverly Rice, 69, of Moline, Illinois passed away April 12. Rice worked for the Gas and Electric Credit Union, located in the Clocktower.

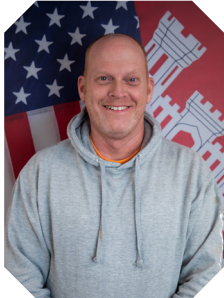


James Dixon, 78, of Rock Island, Illinois passed away May 16. Dixon was a Navy veteran and retired from Lock and Dam 15, as an assistant lockmaster.



Charlie LoVell, 75, of Bettendorf, Iowa passed away May 21. LoVell was an Army veteran and retired after 30 years of working in the Structures Maintenance Division.

Welcome NEW EMPLOYEES



William Brackemyer
Maintenance Worker



Robert Murphy
Engineering
Technician



Jake Anderson
Contract Specialist



Brennan Broder
Student Trainee
(General)



Jacob Wells
Biologist



Bobbi Boeh
Student Trainee
(General)



Michael Melton
Student Trainee
(Eng. & Architecture)



William Altemeier
Operator Derrickboat



Jeffrey Ortnier
Air Conditioning
Equipment Mechanic



Lolly Wynja
Facility Services
Assistant



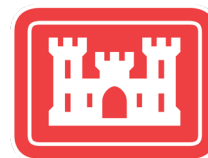
William Moellenbeck
Student Trainee
(General)



Samuel Perez
Lock and Dam
Operator



Justin Eshleman
Civil Engineer



Isaac Caron
Park Ranger



Ryan Thompson
Heavy Mobile
Equipment Mechanic



Chase Talbert
Park Ranger



Michael Hoxie
Lock and Dam
Operator



Joseph Ziegler
Student Trainee
(Eng. & Architecture)



Deloris Drendel
Student Trainee
(General)



Kacee Hamor
Civil Engineer

Visit our careers page for available opportunities :

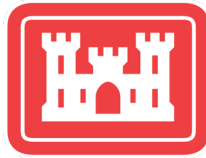
<https://www.mvr.usace.army.mil/Careers/>



Joshua Conrad
*Construction Control
Representative*



Stacia Greene
Biologist



Jacob Shoppa
*Student Trainee
(General)*



Troy Larson
Biologist



Cory Haan
*Lock and Dam
Operator*



Lindsay Reams
*Construction Man-
agement Assistant*



Cole Brinkmeier
*Lock and Dam
Operator*



Megan Rose
*Student Trainee
(General)*



Ethan Bigger
*Lock and Dam
Operator*



Joseph Dailing
*Lock and Dam
Repairer*



Alaina Pfenning-
Butterworth
Biologist



Austin Lange
*Lock and Dam
Equipment Mechanic*



Mitchel Benhart
Park Ranger



Paul Sundberg
Mechanical Engineer

Annual Retirees' Luncheon

Friday, Sept. 8, 2023
11:30 a.m.

*Reservations due by Aug. 4.
Please email Jerry at
jerryskalak@gmail.com.*

Quad Cities Botanical Center



Grant Ganpat
Student Trainee
(Eng. & Architecture)



Logan Cole
Student Trainee
(Eng. & Architecture)



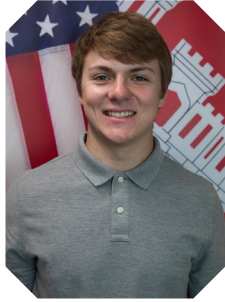
Hannah Camerer
Student Trainee
(Eng. & Architecture)



Brandon Cathcart
Student Trainee
(Eng. & Architecture)



John Sanford
Student Trainee
(Eng. & Architecture)



Sawyer Weinert
Student Trainee
(Eng. & Architecture)



Hally Michaelis
Student Trainee
(Eng. & Architecture)



Joseph Morehead
Project Scheduler



Matthew Allen
Maintenance Worker
Helper



Mikala Warner
Student Trainee
(Admin Office Support)



Ava Alford
Regulatory Specialist



Scott Wallace
Lock and Dam
Repairer Helper



Jeremy
Manderscheid
Lock and Dam Operator



Easton Glynn
Engineering Tech



David Elston
Lock and Dam
Operator



Noah Mitvalsky
Student Trainee
(Eng. & Architecture)



Elena Brooks
Student Trainee
(Eng. & Architecture)



Autumn Walker
Construction
Management Assist.



Hunter Crist
Engineering
Technician

Employees Of The Month

JANUARY

Juanita Heald



Juanita is awarded for her exemplary customer service. She constantly assists with financial challenges in a timely manner and with a polite and helpful attitude. Because of her wealth of knowledge and helpful demeanor, she is the go-to contact for help with financial challenges.

FEBRUARY

Cameron Shotton



Cameron's efforts as a cartographer in the real estate division have resulted in the continuity of the department during a time of need, while still delivering the necessary products to meet the mission. He has most recently supported mapping efforts at LaGrange Lock and Dam while continuing to complete his normal duties.

MARCH

Steve Bothell



Steve is recognized for development of training materials and hosting the training session for the EC QM Training for Military Projects Construction Preconstruction, Engineering, and Design. Bothell's diligent efforts to create and deliver a superior training program will help ensure Military Projects are designed with the highest level of quality and adherence to program requirements.

APRIL

Colin Ewan



Colin is recognized for his tireless efforts to make the groundbreaking ceremony for the Mooring Cell downstream of Lock and Dam 14 a reality. The groundbreaking ceremony was the first of a kind for the Navigation and Ecosystem Sustainability Program, so Colin and his team had little to work with in terms of examples or templates.

2023 Lockmaster Meeting



Front Row (L-R): Jerry Snyder, Nichole Traver, Justin Carter, Jeffery Tripp, Robert Castro, Thomas Heinold, Col. Curry, Aaron Dunlop, Douglas Morgan, Jeff Scukanec, Scott Cooper, John Mueller

Back Row (L-R) Matthew Whitley, Matthew Traver, James McKeon, Michael Bielser, James McDaniel, Perry Jones, Brad Hank, Christopher Rush, Joshua Hathaway, Gary Kilburg, John Williams, Steven Moseley, James Knight, Bret Ludwig, Jeffery Gibbs, Jon James.