



US Army Corps
of Engineers®

TOWER TIMES

Rock Island District's News Magazine

September 2014



Red Rock Hydroelectric Project Groundbreaking



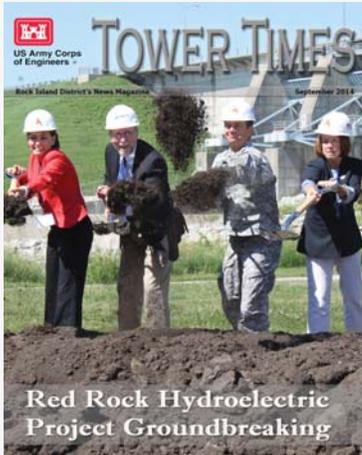
**US Army Corps
of Engineers** ®
Rock Island District

TOWER TIMES

Contents

September 2014

On the Cover



(From left to right) Iowa Lieutenant Governor Kim Reynolds, U.S. Rep. Dave Loebsack, Rock Island District Commander Col. Mark Deschenes and Assistant Secretary of the Army (Civil Works) Jo-Ellen Darcy break ground for the new Red Rock Hydroelectric Project.

Photo by Samantha Heilig

- 3 August - A Month of Milestones**
Col. Mark Deschenes, District Commander
- 4 Searching for Endangered Higgins Eye Mussels**
- 6 District Hosts Chinese Engineering Students**
- 7 Emerging from the Swamp**
- 8 Red Rock Hydroelectric Project Gets Underway**
- 10 Spotlight on the District - Student Lock and Dam Operators**
- 11 Sen. Harkin Visits Lock 19**
- 12 Ribbon Cutting Celebrates Completion of Peoria Upper Island**
- 13 Safety Corner - National Food Safety Month**
- 14 Around the District**
- 15 Support and Sacrifice - Celebration of Sacrifice**

Tower Times

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It is published monthly by the Corporate Communications Office, Rock Island District, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. Articles or photographic submissions are welcome and should be submitted by the 15th of each month preceding publication. Circulation 1,500.

On the web at: www.mvr.usace.army.mil/Media/Publications/TowerTimes.aspx

A message from....

Colonel Mark Deschenes, District Commander



August - A Month of Milestones

At the Rock Island District, our inherent value to the nation can be summed up by the variety of water resources projects we deliver. While a completed project is a statement of our value, it is sometimes hard to see the trees through the forest. It is easy for us to get bogged down in the tedious, day-to-day bureaucracies that are ever present when carrying out an annual budget in the hundreds of millions of dollars. We don't always get to see the fruits of our labors.

That wasn't the case in the month of August. The Rock Island District took part in and hosted three ceremonies celebrating both project completion and start of construction, two milestones that we should be happy to celebrate. During one ribbon cutting ceremony and two ground breaking ceremonies, the men and women of our District got to commemorate the culmination of a great deal of hard work.

We started off the month with a ceremony in Peoria, Ill. For several years, construction had been ongoing to complete an island on the Illinois River near Peoria. On Aug. 1, our District hosted a ribbon cutting ceremony celebrating the completion of the Peoria Upper Island Critical Restoration project.

The nearly \$9 million project is part of the Illinois River Basin Restoration Program and was a partnership between the Corps and the state of Illinois. The purpose of the project was to construct a 24-acre island to protect aquatic habitats and also restore nearly 50 acres of deep water habitat. It is an impressive result from a lot of diligence within this District. After the ribbon cutting ceremony, stakeholders and other interested parties were given the opportunity to board one of our work barges to take a short trip up the Illinois and get a first-hand look at the island. Many of those aboard were surprised to see the maturity of the vegetation that has already taken hold on the island we created.

The Peoria Upper Island project is a perfect example of our critical restoration efforts and it was an exciting day celebrating its completion.

From the Illinois River we moved to our District's largest responsibility – the Mississippi River. At Pool 12 near Galena, Ill., it was time to break ground on another project benefitting the diverse environments we are lucky

to have in the Upper Mississippi River Valley. On Aug. 20, we hosted a groundbreaking ceremony for the Pool 12 Overwintering Habitat Rehabilitation and Enhancement Project.

The Pool 12 project is part of the Upper Mississippi River Restoration Environmental Management Program. UMRR has been in existence for more than 25 years and as the lead District for the program, our team has been carrying out dozens of projects aimed at monitoring, restoring and rehabilitating precious habitats.

The construction at Pool 12 will be carried out in several phases with the first phase occurring at Sunfish Lake. Dredging at Sunfish Lake will help increase depth diversity within the pool and create deep water habitat which will provide overwintering areas for fish. This first phase contract amounts to about \$4 million and several more contracts will be awarded in the coming fiscal years.

The Pool 12 groundbreaking was not the only ceremony of its kind in August. Another groundbreaking took place at Lake Red Rock and drew some of the highest ranking
(Continued on Page 5)



(Left to right) Carter Newt, Dubuque Barge and Fleeting Service; Col. Mark Deschenes, District commander; Marvin Hubbell, District program manager; Tim Yager, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service; and Mike Steuck, Iowa Department of Natural Resources, break ground for the Pool 12 Overwintering Habitat Rehabilitation and Enhancement Project. Photo by Allen Marshall

SEARCHING FOR ENDANGERED HIGGINS EYE MUSSELS

By Davi Michl and Samantha Heilig, Editor

Digging for federally endangered mussel species in a riverbed can be a lot like looking for the proverbial needle in a haystack, especially when environmental conditions are less than favorable.

This year's heavy summer rains, cooler-than-average temperatures and large sediment drops did not, however, keep a team of more than 40 committed volunteers from showing up for the 2014 Mussel Blitz on the Rock River in Rock Island, Ill. During this event, various agencies conducted an annual survey to assess the condition of mussel beds in the river and looked at the success of relocation efforts of the federally endangered Higgins eye (*Lampsilis higginsii*) mussel.

In 2006, the Rock River was selected as an introduction site for conservationists to reestablish the Higgins eye species whose numbers were nearly decimated by commercial overharvesting for the cultured pearl and the introduction of invasive mussels in the Mississippi River. The Rock River was chosen because at the time it was relatively free of hazardous zebra mussels which are very harmful to the endangered mussel population. The zebra mussels outcompete native species and suffocate them by attaching to the shells by the thousands and cut off their supply of oxygen and nutrients. The Rock River was just one of several relocation sites throughout Iowa and Illinois chosen as part of an effort to propagate and release Higgins eye mussels.

This year's Mussel Blitz involved representatives from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (Rock Island and St. Paul Districts), U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Illinois and Iowa Department of Natural Resources, Illinois Natural History Survey, the Environmental Protection Agency, Augustana College, and the Exelon Nuclear Facility.

"Folks traveled from a four-state area to help out with this endeavor," said Joe Jordan a biologist with the Rock Island District. "This is a big commitment by a lot of busy people and I do appreciate it. I think our annual mussel survey and cleaning efforts will positively contribute to the Upper Mississippi River mussel community knowledge and will help us make good decisions in the future."

On the cool, cloudy morning of August 6, volunteers gathered for the Mussel Blitz at Sunset Marina near the mouth of the Rock River to partake in "pollywogging" for mussels. Pollywogging is the art of shuffling ones hands or feet through the bottom of the river in search of freshwater mussels.

Groups of volunteers split into several boats and conducted timed interval surveys along designated portions of the Rock River where the Higgins eye mussel had been previously introduced. Pollywogging is not glamorous work and often relies on touch, rather than sight, digging through cloudy water and muck trying to differentiate between mussel shell and rock.



Members from nine different agencies worked together for the 2014 Mussel Blitz on the Rock River near Rock Island, Ill., in search of the endangered Higgins eye mussel. Photos by Samantha Heilig

August - A Month of Milestones *(Continued)*

members of leadership, to include the Assistant Secretary of the Army (Civil Works), Ms. JoEllen Darcy. The ASA(CW), and other distinguished visitors to include Rep. Dave Loebsack, gathered at Lake Red Rock to celebrate the start of construction on the Red Rock Hydroelectric Project. Although this event was hosted by the Missouri River Energy Service, which awarded the construction contract for this project, the Rock Island District played a critical role in bringing the project to fruition. Ms. Darcy's attendance at the ceremony was indicative of the importance the Corps has placed on this project.

Upon its completion, the Red Rock Hydroelectric Project will bring clean, affordable energy to thousands of homes. It will be the second largest of its kind in Iowa and our involvement underscores the commitment we have to using our vast resources efficiently and wisely.

August was certainly a month for us to celebrate tangible accomplishments. Possibly one of my biggest takeaways from the ceremonies resulted from my interaction with the people who attended. They all had considerable interest in what we are doing and that reminded me of our value. The projects we completed and began will have incalculable benefits for the citizens who live within our area of operations. I was very proud to be part of the ceremonies but at the same time I knew that my role was nowhere near as significant as those of you who put in the long hours on these projects to afford the opportunity for ribbon cutting and groundbreaking ceremonies. I appreciate and applaud all that you do. CONTINUE BUILDING STRONG. 

Training Tidbits

Just a reminder... District-wide mandatory training is due by the end of September. This includes Active Shooter Training, No Fear, Antiterrorism, Information Assurance Awareness, Personally Identifiable Information, SETA, SHARP, and Suicide Prevention.

Did you know... FY15 Leadership Development Program (LDP) Level II class will be starting in October. Visit the District LDP site for detailed information and how to apply. https://team.usace.army.mil/sites/MVR/trng/SitePages/Leadership_Training.aspx More information regarding Civilian Leader Development, Competitive Development and Career Program Training can be found through the following link: <http://www.civiliantraining.army.mil/Pages/Homepage.aspx>



Young Higgins eye mussels were released in 2006 with a distinctive mark placed on their shells for monitoring in later years. U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service photo

Seasoned pollywoggers like Dan Kelner of the Corps of Engineers' St. Paul District can expertly discern mussel species before they are even pulled out of the water. One of the great finds of the day came during the first timed interval: a knowing grin spread across Kelner's face as he shouted, "Higgins eye!" before bringing it to the surface. Sure enough, the specimen had the distinctive mark placed on its shell from the 2006 introduction. Though it was an encouraging start to the day, overall conditions made for very difficult mussel surveying. Out of the 500 Higgins eye mussels that were placed in the area in 2006, only two were found at the relocation site during this day's survey. This was disappointing for those who commit themselves to the successful recovery of the species.

In previous years there has been encouraging signs indicating the presence of the endangered species in the area, despite the group's inability to locate them this year. In 2012, a group of Western Illinois University biology students located eight unmarked Higgins eye mussels in just a small stretch of Mill Creek which is a tributary of the Rock River. These unmarked specimens show that reproduction is occurring and that the species is moving to areas where conditions suit them well.

Though this year's Mussel Blitz on the Rock may have come up short on Higgins eye, it was rich in camaraderie and cooperation between agencies; a testament to the strong partnership that has been built over the years. Summing up the day's events, Kelner said, "It's good news that we've now found ten healthy Higgins eye and also good news that we did not find any dead ones. We will continue to monitor. This takes time ... and dedication." 

DISTRICT HOSTS CHINESE ENGINEERING STUDENTS



Col. Mark Deschenes talks with Chinese engineering students from the University of Wisconsin about navigation on the Mississippi River. Photo by Steve Caudle

By Samantha Heilig, Editor

The Rock Island District hosted a group of 30 Chinese foreign engineering students on July 31 in Dubuque, Iowa, to introduce them to Corps projects and programs along the Mississippi River. Dr. Jae K. Park, professor of civil and environmental engineering from the University of Wisconsin - Madison, coordinated the visit with engineer Anthony Heddlesten from the District's Engineering and Construction Division. Heddlesten, a previous student of Dr. Park's engineering program said he enjoyed the opportunity to help the foreign students better understand the Corps' goals in managing such a large river.

The visit started at Eagle Point Park where the group got an elevated look at the river and could see just how big of a task management of the Mississippi River would be. District Commander Col. Mark Deschenes spoke with the group about the Corps' missions and how the Rock Island District uses a resource like the Mississippi River to accomplish many goals at once. He also discussed how projects created in the U.S. were similar to some of those in China.

After the stop at Eagle Point Park, the group traveled to Lock and Dam 11 where assistant lockmaster, Jon James, provided a tour of the facility. The group was unable to view any commercial traffic passing through the locks but did get to see a recreational craft pass through which allowed them to see and better understand the process.

"The group had a lot of questions about the leaking auxiliary gates and why they were in such disrepair," said James. "I explained that routine maintenance and repairs of the locks is an ongoing process and that it takes an act of Congress to get funding to support major rehabilitation."

After touring the lock and dam, the group boarded a bus and traveled through downtown Dubuque to view riverfront development and flood risk management projects. Ken

McClellan from the Dubuque Public Works Department provided insight to how the city has benefited from flood risk management and working with the Corps. During the tour, the students also saw firsthand the connection the city has with the Mississippi and the importance of the river from a recreational standpoint.

Recreation was also the focus of the group's lunch break which included a tour of the Mississippi River Museum and Aquarium. This tour gave the students a chance to learn about a wide variety of topics relating to the river and gave them another example of how the river supports the city's economic development by attracting visitors.

The last stop for the day was to Sunfish Lake, south of Dubuque and across the river in Jo Daviess, Co., Ill. This lake is part of an overwintering habitat rehabilitation and enhancement project that the Corps has been working on in Pool 12 of the Mississippi River. Heddlesten provided an overview of the project and explained how the Corps uses environmental engineering to restore and protect aquatic habitat and diversify the forested areas along the river.

"Since the group was made up entirely of engineering students, they had a lot of questions about why the Corps made such alterations to the river," said Heddlesten. "I explained that in many cases it's not about changing the river but more about helping the river to do what we need it to do."

The overall visit was a great opportunity for the Corps to demonstrate how navigation, recreation, flood risk management and environmental stewardship can work together to achieve a greater goal of efficient use of the Mississippi River. Dr. Park hopes to continue the connection between the University of Wisconsin and the Rock Island District so he may offer engineering diversity to future international students. 

EMERGING FROM THE SWAMP

By BreAnn Nesteby, Park Ranger

For the last 27 years, Dr. Fred Janzen and his team of graduate and undergraduate students from Iowa State University have made their annual trek to Thomson Causeway Recreation Area in Thomson, Ill., to document nesting behaviors of local turtles. Once they arrive at Thomson, they set up tents and camp for nearly six weeks battling the wind, rain, mosquitoes, flooding and anything else nature has to throw at them.

Dr. Luke Hoekstra; Ph.D candidates Sarah Mitchell, Daniela Flores, Brooke Bodensteiner, and Rebecca Polich; and undergraduates Mitchell Barazowski, Julie Wiemerslage, Shekinah Cosby, and Kamie Voves, made up this year's Turtle Camp. They also had some assistance from a group called TREE (Turtle Camp Research and Education in Ecology) who are high school students interested in learning more about ecology and research.

The turtle researchers work daily and sometimes into the night observing turtle nesting behaviors. They keep watch throughout Potter's Marsh, observing and collecting data on nesting turtles. Students are constantly on the lookout for signs of nesting turtles. Once discovered, they will observe the nesting process. When the mother turtle has finished laying eggs she is measured, marked, and has blood drawn. Then her nest is excavated with each egg getting weighed and placed back into the nest. Each nest is also marked with a GPS location so it may be found easily again. Other turtles are captured using hoop nets that have been strategically placed within the marsh collecting mostly snapping turtles and painted turtles. Several research projects are being conducted simultaneously by the Turtle



This Blanding's turtle is just one of the many species being studied at the Thomson Causeway.
Photo by BreAnn Nesteby

Camp students ranging from impacts of climate change to evolutionary genetics.

These researchers have a deep appreciation for any kind of reptile, so it's not unusual to see them in the Thomson Sand Prairie, a U.S. Fish and Wildlife area managed by the State of Illinois, searching for protected species such as ornate box turtles (*Terrapene ornate*), western hognose snakes (*Heterodon nasicus*), six-lined racerunners (*Cnemidophorus sexlineatus*), fox snakes (*Elaphe vulpina*), blue racers (*Coluber constrictor*), bullsnakes (*Pituophis catenifer*), garter snakes (*Thamnophis sirtalis*), water snakes (*Nerodia sipedon*), brown snakes (*Storeria dekayii*), and ringneck snakes (*Diadophis punctatus*).

Sarah Mitchell, the Turtle Camp team leader said, "The species we find in our traps are painted turtle (*Chrysemys picta*), snapping turtle (*Chelydra serpentina*), Blanding's turtle (*Emydoidea blandingii*), common map turtle (*Graptemys geographica*), false map turtle (*G. pseudogeographica*), and Ouachita map turtle (*G. ouachitensis*). Other species in the area include smooth softshell (*Apalone mutica*) and spiny softshell (*Apalone spinifera*). This year we found a new species, the Eastern Mud Turtle (*Sternotherus odoratu*)."

When visiting the Thomson Causeway Recreation Area, help protect the park's turtles and other wildlife by using caution driving across the Causeway road and other park roads, steering clear of the turtles, and by using caution and not disturbing nesting females laying eggs on the park grounds.

More information on publications and research done by the group can be found at <http://www.public.iastate.edu/~fjanzen/homepage.html>. 



Students from Iowa State University study a variety of turtles along the Mississippi River at the Thomson Causeway. Photo by BreAnn Nesteby

RED ROCK HYDROELECTRIC PROJECT GETS UNDERWAY

By Samantha Heilig, Editor

The second-largest hydroelectric plant in Iowa is officially under construction after a ceremonial groundbreaking Aug. 13 at Red Rock Dam near Pella, Iowa. Representatives from the Missouri River Energy Services (MRES) hosted the event to showcase plans for the new facility which is scheduled to be completed in spring 2018.

The groundbreaking featured remarks from Iowa Lieutenant Governor Kim Reynolds, Rep. Dave Loebsack, and Assistant Secretary of the Army (Civil Works) Jo-Ellen Darcy as well as other local leaders.

Lake Red Rock, Iowa's largest lake, is primarily used for flood risk management and recreation however the holding capacity of the reservoir, 15,600 acres of water, makes it a prime candidate for energy production. The Red Rock Hydroelectric Project (RRHP) will involve retrofitting the dam with a turbine and generators to produce an average of 36.4 megawatts of electricity on a regular basis and up to 55 megawatts during peak season. According to MRES, the average energy produced by this project annually will provide enough clean and affordable energy for approximately 18,000 homes.

MRES plans for construction involve building the RRHP facilities adjacent to the existing spillway on the Lake Red Rock Dam. The approach channel and intake structure will be located upstream of the dam. Two penstocks, large tubes that carry water, will run from the intake structure through the dam to the powerhouse. A tailrace channel will then extend from the downstream end of the powerhouse to the existing spillway tailrace which flows back into the Des Moines River.

Darcy said getting this project completed was high on the priority list for President Barack Obama's climate change plan, and the Army Corps of Engineers is proud to contribute.

"This project is on that list because of the fact that climate change is having an impact in a variety of ways on all our natural resources and we have to be ready with



Assistant Secretary of the Army (Civil Works) Jo Ellen Darcy talks with Anthony Heddlesten, Jim Bartek, Roger Less and District Commander Col. Mark Deschenes about the Red Rock Hydroelectric Project.

Photo by Samantha Heilig

water resources and planning and management alternatives in the face of climate change, and hydroelectric power is one way that we can meet that challenge," Darcy said.

One major advantage to the RRHP is that during the time of the year when demand for electricity is high, March through August, flow rates at Red Rock Dam are also typically at their highest. This will enable MRES to produce larger amounts of electricity and meet the needs of their customers while using a resource that is readily available.

"It is great to be here to celebrate the construction of a reliable, affordable and environmentally sustainable source of power for this community," said Darcy. "President Obama's plan to improve upon our permitting and review processes for infrastructure projects highlighted this Red Rock Hydroelectric plant. Today is a big step for this country's hydropower efforts."

Brett Call, operations manager for Lake Red Rock said he is happy that the RRHP has reached the construction phase. Members of his staff along with District staff have spent countless hours working through the preparatory phase of this project.

Call said, "We are very excited to see the work put in place and look forward to working through the next few years of construction."

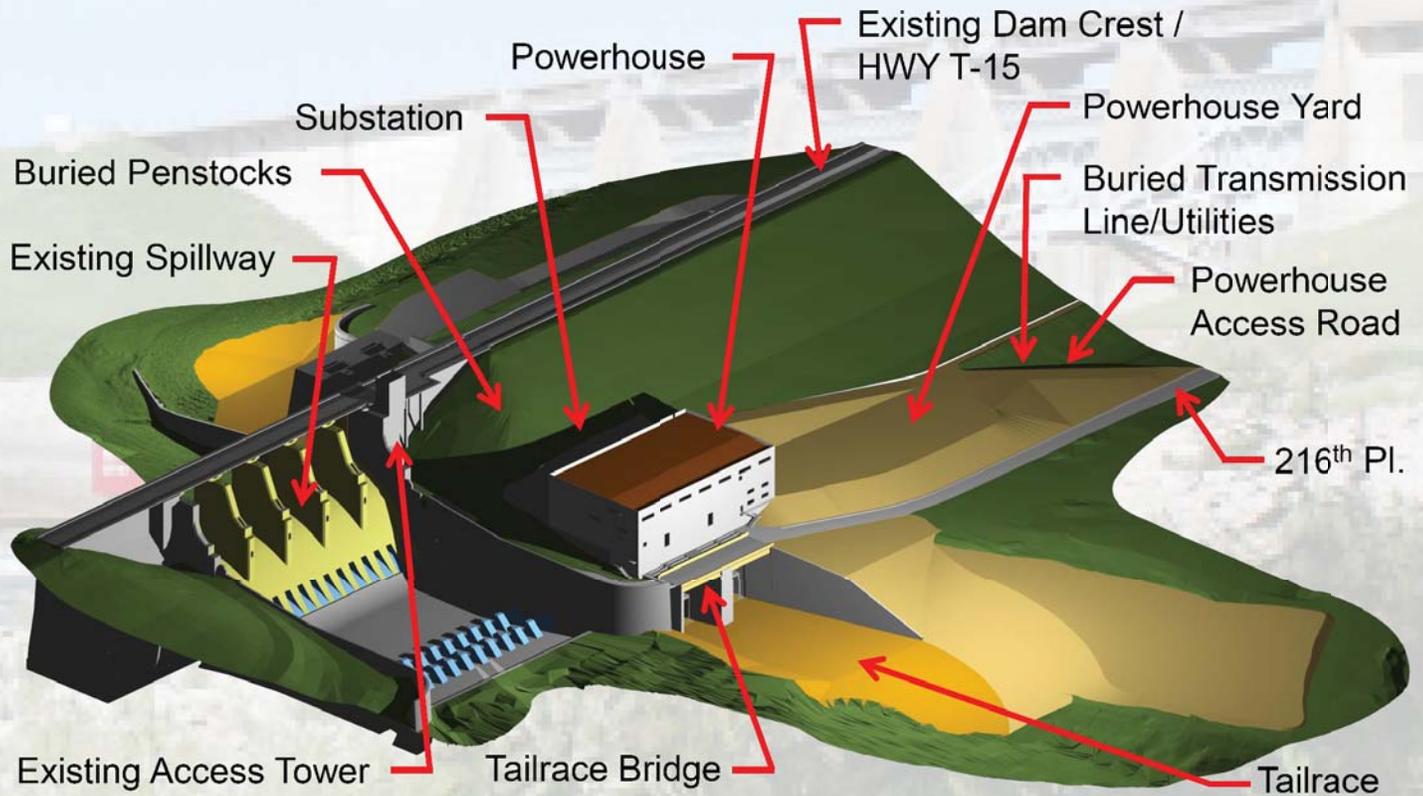
The ground breaking was not the only activity scheduled during Ms. Darcy's visit to the lake. District commander Col. Mark Deschenes along with staff from the Lake Red Rock Project Office took Ms. Darcy and her aid, Lt. Col. Antoinette Gant, on a tour of recently renovated facilities. They visited the new Red Rock Marina site and the North Overlook Beach and Playscape area and discussed plans for the next Playscape set to be installed by community volunteers at the upcoming National Public Lands Day in September.

The group also toured a few of the new recreation features added by MRES as part of a mitigation effort due to impacts to existing recreation areas during construction of the hydropower plant. Features they visited included a 1.5 mile extension of the Volksweg bike trail, a new restroom, picnic shelter and information kiosk at Robert's Creek trailhead, and a new large-event shelter constructed at Cordova Park. This was Darcy's second visit to the Rock Island District during the month as she visited Brandon Road Lock and Dam Aug. 8 to discuss efforts to restrict invasive carp from moving up the Illinois River.

Visit redrockhydroproject.com for information on the Red Rock Hydroelectric Project progress. 



Col. Mark Deschenes and Rep. Dave Loeb sack get ready to break ground on the Red Rock Hydroelectric Project. *Photo by Samantha Heilig*



This image shows the downstream features of the Red Rock Hydroelectric plant. Water from within Lake Red Rock will pass through buried tunnels called penstocks which carry water to the turbines to produce electricity. *Image provided by Missouri River Energy Services*



Spotlight on the District

STUDENT

LOCK AND DAM OPERATORS

By Samantha Heilig, Editor

For many years, the Rock Island District has used student employment programs to help maintain a workforce that is well trained and prepared to do a wide variety of jobs. Although these programs have been successful in the past, recent changes to the hiring process are creating new obstacles for managers of the locks and dams.

The Student Lock and Dam Operator (LDO) Program, developed in the District more than 10 years ago, allowed students to be employed on a temporary basis to work at a navigation facility within the District. In the past, students would apply for these positions in-person and often worked with lock and dam managers to attend classes specific to the jobs they were looking to fill.

This has changed with the introduction of the new Pathways Intern Program which has a different set of requirements and an online-only application process. Combined, this resulted in minimal qualified applicants to the program this year. The Pathways Program replaced the Student Career Experience Program (SCEP) and the Student Temporary Employment Program (STEP) which had been used in the past.

Student LDOs work at the locks and dams just like permanent employees. Work they perform includes operation and maintenance of lock gates, control valves and dam gates as well as manually operated wicket gates at sites where they exist.

Students also help perform maintenance and repair of other site structures and facilities such as lock buildings and lighting systems and help with grounds maintenance. Participants in the program work under very close supervision and assignments are continually monitored to assure safety is paramount and training progresses.

To qualify for the program, students have to be enrolled or accepted for enrollment into a degree or certificate-seeking program. They are required to be taking at least a half-time academic load and be in good

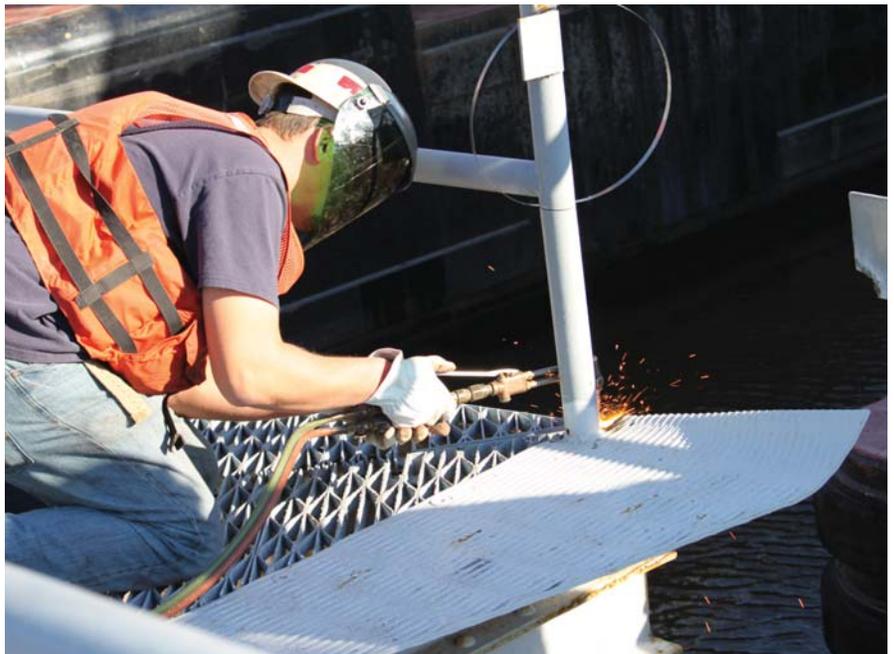
academic standing. Qualifications also include a health physical and drug test and they must complete 640 hours of career-related work. Once these hours are completed and the degree or certificate is obtained, the student has 120 calendar days to find a permanent position.

Not all students find permanent jobs but the Rock Island District has been successful in the past in finding participants permanent work. With so many locks and dams within the District it can be beneficial if a participant is willing to move around to find placement. Jon James, assistant lockmaster at Lock and Dam 11 in Dubuque, Iowa, is an example of the success of the Student LDO Program.

James started as a student at Lock and Dam 16 in Muscatine, Iowa, and once he completed the program, was able to join the Mississippi River Project as a permanent employee at that location.

“Nothing was guaranteed, but I was confident if I met or

(Continued on Page 11)



Student lock and dam operators receive training in all aspects of lock operations and maintenance including skills in welding.

Rock Island District photo

SENATOR HARKIN VISITS LOCK 19



Mississippi River Project Operations Manager Rob Germann, speaks with Sen. Tom Harkin during a visit to Lock 19 in Keokuk, Iowa, on Aug. 14 to assess the critical importance of the navigation system on the Mississippi River and reflect on the multipurpose roles the navigation structures provide to the nation. Lock staff provided an in-depth discussion on lock techniques and allowed Harkin to lock a motor vessel through the lock. Rock Island District Commander Col. Mark Deschenes, also gave an overview of the system and discussed the historical importance of Lock 19 and the joint operations with Ameren and the Keokuk Power Plant who operate the hydroelectric dam adjacent to the lock.

Student Lock and Dam Operators *(Continued)*

exceeded the expectations, someone would find a home for me, so I rolled the dice,” said James.

After working for the Corps for 10 years, James has developed many skills and abilities and worked at several different lock and dam locations, landing as the assistant lockmaster at Lock and Dam 11.

In addition to working at the locks, students may also choose to work on one of the river maintenance crews where they repair lock miter gates, maintain wing dams, maintain the river’s navigation channel and work on or around floating barges, boats and cranes.

The District is dedicated to helping students complete the necessary requirements to become qualified lock and dam operators and maintenance workers to meet the needs of the Corps. Moving forward, the Operations managers will continue to work with the Civilian Personnel Advisory Center (CPAC) team to find ways to make the student employment program work best for the District.

For additional information on the Pathways Programs overall, please visit: <https://www.usajobs.gov/StudentsAndGrads>. 

RIBBON CUTTING CELEBRATES COMPLETION OF PEORIA UPPER ISLAND

By Allen Marshall, Public Affairs Specialist



Anthony Heddlesten, environmental engineer, holds the ribbon while District Commander Col. Mark Deschenes and Russ Crawford from the Central Illinois Economic Development District make the cut to signify the completion of the Peoria Upper Island Critical Restoration Project. Also pictured are Stacie Barton Hackler representing Sen. Richard Durbin, and Randy Pollard, representing Sen. Mark Kirk. Photo by Derrick Heddlesten

The Rock Island District, and its partner, the Illinois Department of Natural Resources, celebrated the completion of the Peoria Upper Island Critical Restoration Project with a ribbon cutting ceremony Aug. 1 in Peoria, Ill.

“Everyone within my organization, to include me, really enjoys days like this – days when we get to celebrate the culmination of a lot of hard work,” said Col. Mark Deschenes, Rock Island District commander. “Today we get to see the fruits of our labor and celebrate completing a very important project.”

The nearly \$8 million dollar restoration project is part of the Illinois River Basin Restoration Program, which is a partnership between the U.S Army Corps of Engineers and the State of Illinois. Since its initiation in 2002, the Program has completed the Illinois River Basin Restoration Comprehensive Plan as well as site specific feasibility studies at seven other restoration sites within the basin. Completion of the Peoria Upper Island Project is in addition to the previously completed Waubonsie and Blackberry Creek Fish Passage Critical Restoration Projects.

The Peoria Upper Island Critical Restoration Project enhances aquatic habitats through the restoration of depth and reduction of sediment, according to Andrew Leichty,

project manager. Leichty said the project has additional benefits for recreational boating and fishing.

“The fish and birds benefit but so do people,” Deschenes said. “Recreational boaters and fisherman will see ancillary benefits due to this project’s construction. All-in-all, this project provides for much needed environmental restoration in an area that was in true need of that restoration.”

In carrying out this project a contractor dredged 374,000 cubic yards of sediment from the Illinois River to restore 49.6 acres of aquatic habitat used by fish and migrating waterfowl. The dredged sediment was used to create a 24-acre island which provides additional wildlife habitat and a buffer to normal sedimentation rates for the restored aquatic habitat area. 



The new Peoria Upper Island provides much needed habitat for a variety of species along the river.

Photo by Anthony Heddlesten

SAFETY CORNER

NATIONAL FOOD SAFETY MONTH

Food Safety in the Workplace

By Samantha Heilig, Editor

September has been designated as Food Safety Education Month. To prevent food-related illnesses, you have to keep hot foods hot and cold foods cold. This advice is even more important in warm summer months, when foods at room temperature can spoil even more rapidly.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) estimates that each year:

- Approximately one in six Americans or 48 million people get sick from foodborne illnesses.
- 128,000 people are hospitalized from foodborne illnesses.
- 3,000 people die of foodborne diseases.

Think about what you brought for lunch today and where it has been stored prior to your lunch break. If it's a sandwich made with meat and cheese or a salad with creamy homemade dressing, it shouldn't be sitting in your warm vehicle or next to you on the desk. Storage of food in the workplace can be a contributing factor for many types of common illness. Storage is not the only factor in keeping food safe however. Washing your hands and cleaning food preparation surfaces, containers and utensils can also help stop the spread of foodborne illnesses.

The CDC recommends these four easy steps to help prevent harmful bacteria from making you and your family sick.

COOK: Meat, poultry and eggs thoroughly

- Using a food thermometer to measure the internal temperature of meat is a good way to be sure that it is cooked sufficiently to kill bacteria.
- Eggs should be cooked until the yolk is firm.

SEPARATE: Don't cross-contaminate foods

- Avoid cross-contaminating foods by washing hands, utensils, and cutting boards after they have been in contact with raw meat or poultry and before they touch another food.
- Put cooked meat on a clean platter, rather back on one that held the raw meat.



CHILL: Refrigerate leftovers promptly

- Bacteria can grow quickly at room temperature, so refrigerate leftover foods if they are not going to be eaten within 4 hours.
- Large volumes of food will cool more quickly if they are divided into several shallow containers for refrigeration.

CLEAN: Wash produce

- Rinse fresh fruits and vegetables in running tap water to remove visible dirt and grime.
- Remove and discard the outermost leaves of a head of lettuce or cabbage.
- Because bacteria can grow well on the cut surface of fruit or vegetable, be careful not to contaminate these foods while slicing them up on the cutting board, and avoid leaving cut produce at room temperature for many hours.
- Don't be a source of foodborne illness yourself. Wash your hands with soap and water before preparing food.

For more information on food safety and how you can prevent the spread of foodborne illnesses visit <http://www.cdc.gov/foodsafety/cdc-and-food-safety.html> 

Around the District

Retirements ...

Curtis Norby who worked for the maintenance section of the Mississippi River Project retired July 31, after dedicating more than 33 years of service to the federal government.

Jacqueline Young, chief equal employment opportunity officer, retired August 30, after dedicating more than 28 years of service to the federal government.

Congrats ...



Congratulations to **Eric Butz** and his wife Tia, on the birth of a baby girl on Aug. 11. Payton LeAnne weighed seven pounds, six ounces and was 19 and a half inches long. Payton has one sister, Ryan and two brothers, Kolby and Korbin.



Can you name where this is? If so, send your answer to Samantha.A.Heilig@usace.army.mil. The first correct answer will receive a special prize and be recognized in the next Tower Times.

Sympathy ...



Leonard Ringle, 81, of Aledo, Ill., passed away May 13.

Ringle worked as lockmaster at Lock and Dam 17 on the Mississippi River and retired in 1988 after 33 years of service. He also served in the U.S. Army during the Korean War.



James (Jim) Teeters, 68, of Dumas, Mo., passed away June 10.

Teeters worked for the Rock Island District at Lock 19 for 30 years.



Dorothy Rowley, 82, of Eldridge, Iowa, passed away Aug. 11.

Rowley retired from the Rock Island District in 1992 after more than 20 years of service.

August Answer -
Lock and Dam 20,
Canton, Missouri.

Winner - Jim Piper,
Lock and Dam 11,
Dubuque, Iowa.





Graduates of the 2014 Leadership Development Program (LDP) Level II class completed their project on Aug. 19 and received certificates of completion from District Commander Col. Mark Deshenes and Deputy Commander Lt. Col. Todd Reed. Participants included (front) Col. Mark Deshenes, Rachel Deahl, Eric Johnson, Anthony Heddlesten, Adam Ziegler, Josh Cackley, (back) Lt. Col. Todd Reed, Chris Reger, Paul St. Louis, Jonathan Wuebker, Nathan Richards, Brad Palmer and Chad Weuste. Also included in the photo (far right) are Sue Conklin (front), program facilitator from Evans and Assoc. consulting and Sara Paxson (back), LDP manager.

Photo by Samantha Heilig

SUPPORT & SACRIFICE FOR THE CORPS

CELEBRATION OF SACRIFICE

All employees are invited to join in a celebration to thank all of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Rock Island District employees that have served outside the continental United States in support of the Corps missions.



September 11
1-3 p.m.
ABC Conference Room



Light refreshments will be served

RETIREES CORNER...

Robert (Bob) William and Bonnie June (Thomson) Shaw will be celebrating their 67th wedding anniversary on Sept. 2. They were married in 1947 in Astoria, Ill., and lived in Davenport, Iowa, for 44 years. Bob was a member of Local 150 Operating Engineers and also worked for the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Rock Island District. The couple moved to Lindale, Texas, in 2004 after Bob retired from the Corps.

The couple has one daughter, Rosemary (Shaw) Anderson and husband Keith who live in Emory, Texas.

Bob and Bonnie would enjoy hearing from relatives and friends as they celebrate their anniversary. Contact the Tower Times editor at 309-794-5730 or samantha.a.heilig@usace.army.mil for Bob and Bonnie's address.



Wear It, Wear It Right Life Jackets Save Lives!

- # 1

CHECK THE LABEL

The label will tell you:

 - Whether the life jacket is Coast Guard approved
 - The size of the jacket
 - How the jacket can be used

Sizes run from infant to extra extra large. Adult life jackets will not work for children until they weigh about 90 pounds. Children's life jackets should have a loop on the collar and a strap between the legs.
- # 2

CHECK FOR DAMAGE

Check that there are no broken parts and no mold or rips in the fabric.
- # 3

FASTEN UP

Fasten up all buckles, zippers and straps. Adjust straps so that the jacket fits snugly.
- # 4

CHECK FOR PROPER FIT
 - Lift the shoulders of the life jacket
 - Make sure it does not slip above the chin or ears
 - It should feel snug, yet comfortable. A properly fitted life jacket keeps your head and shoulders above water. You will be able to swim with it, too.
- # 5

WEAR IT!

A life jacket only works if it's worn. Take the time to be prepared. Make sure you have and wear the right life jacket before you go out in the water.

WS-101 <http://watersafety.usace.army.mil>