



US Army Corps  
of Engineers®

# TOWER TIMES

Rock Island District's News Magazine

March 2015



## Introducing Engineering to the Next Generation





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

# TOWER TIMES

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**March 2015**

## On the Cover



Rock Island District, Engineering Technician, Missi Brown assists attendees at the Introduce a Girl to Engineering Day event with design ideas for their water containment project.

*Photo by Samantha Heilig*

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## ***Tower Times***

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*A message from....*

Colonel Mark Deschenes, District Commander



## *Sharing our District's Missions with Congressional Leadership*

Recently a cadre of our leaders made the semi-annual trip to Washington, D.C., to meet with congressional delegates at Capitol Hill. These trips are our chance to share the status of our projects with the people charged with appropriating funds to carry out our missions. It's also a chance to hear from our District's various congressional representatives.

For me, these visits provide a reminder of the extraordinarily vast amount of work this District is tackling. It's a reminder that the leadership within the Corps of Engineers has placed a great deal of trust in our capabilities and that trust transcends to the top levels of our legislative branch.

The Rock Island District is growing and that is something we were able to convey to our congressional leadership. From our expanding appropriations to our increased responsibility in project management at places like Brandon Road Lock and Dam, this District is on an upswing.

The 2015 Omnibus Appropriations Bill provided \$400,000 for Investigation, \$33.17 million for Construction and \$107.6 million for Operations and Maintenance. The Investigation funding is for work related to our Illinois River Restoration program and the Construction money is mostly for the Upper Mississippi River Restoration program (UMRR/EMP). The O&M money is for the constant upkeep of our aging infrastructure. These appropriations were mostly what we expected to receive. The recently released 2015 Corps Work Plan augmented some of those figures and provided us some much-needed funding capabilities.

The work plan called for an additional \$500,000 for Investigations. That money provides an extra \$200,000 for the Illinois River Restoration program and provides \$300,000 to start the Des Moines Levees Systems General Re-evaluation Report, a critical study to address flood risk in the Des Moines area.

Our O&M budget is never sufficient to fully address our needs as we have hundreds of millions of dollars in backlog maintenance. But, the work plan did flush an extra \$17.4 million into our O&M account which was greatly needed.

With that additional funding we will be able to provide \$800,000 for emergency pump repairs at Saylorville Lake. More than \$13 million will go to miter gate replacement, rehabilitation evaluation reports and bulkhead slot replacement on our infrastructure on both the Illinois and Mississippi rivers. The work plan even provided \$425,000 to develop master plans at our Red Rock and Coralville Lake projects which is imperative to ensure efficient operation at those locations.

The work plan was chock full of good news and the President's Fiscal Year 2016 Budget continues that trend. The President's 2016 Budget calls for an increase of \$700,000 for Investigations and an increase of \$38 million to our Operations and Maintenance budget. Both are significant increases. The President's Budget does cut our construction funding by about \$13 million but that represents a return to more typical levels of funding for the UMRR/EMP program.

The President's Budget increased Investigations funding shows a commitment by the administration in evaluating flood risk management on the Des Moines levee systems. The increase in O&M funding represents an acknowledgement by the administration that investing in our waterway infrastructure is critical to our nation's economy and well being.

The dollars and cents portray a healthy bottom line for the District but symbolize only a small part of the big picture. As I mentioned in the opening of this column, we have recently expanded our project management responsibility to a new endeavor. The Brandon Road Lock and Dam is the latest focus area to stem the upstream transfer of aquatic nuisance species to the Great Lakes. The Corps of Engineers is carrying out efforts to institute measures that will stop the Asian carp from migrating to Lake Michigan which could potentially devastate the fish population and, in conjunction, greatly affect the fishing industry. This is an issue with high levels of national attention involving many states. Our teammates at the Chicago District are leading the efforts but project management has transitioned to Rock Island District, a vote of confidence we should feel proud of.

*(Continued on page 5)*



# CELEBRATING NATIONAL ENGINEERS WEEK

By Samantha Heilig, Editor

**N**ational Engineers Week, which was started more than 60 years ago by the National Society of Professional Engineers, began as a way to increase public awareness about the need for engineers. Over the years, this week-long celebration, held near the end of February, has evolved into more than just a public awareness campaign and now includes special events nationwide that encourage youth to explore the many careers that engineering has to offer.

Each year, members of the Rock Island District recognize National Engineers Week by taking part in special outreach events designed to bring engineering to life for students and educators and focus on the importance of engineering in our world today. During this year's Engineering Week, employees from the District volunteered their time and expertise at three separate events.



**Civil engineer, Rebecca Laugen, helps students Katelynn Pruett (left) and Jade Hunter (right) with their design for a device that will keep a cup of water from spilling when dropped from a second-story balcony at Introduce a Girl to Engineering Day. Photo by Samantha Heilig**

The first, held at Saint Ambrose University, was an Introduce a Girl to Engineering & Science Night. Engineering staff, Missi Brown, Tom Gambucci, Rebecca Laugen, Rick Nickel and Kimberly Pinkston, represented the District by demonstrating the engineering behind handling stormwater runoff. By using a floodplain model, the group demonstrated how different land uses such as a wetland, a paved parking lot, and a paved parking lot with a retention basin work to reduce flood risk. Their interactive presentation was one of 20 exhibits showcased for the more than 340 pre-school through 7th grade girls in attendance.

Two days later, Missi Brown and Rebecca Laugen participated in a second Introduce a Girl to Engineering event at the Putnam Museum. This event hosted 140 girls from around the Quad City area and got them involved in hands-on engineering and design activities. Brown and Laugen assisted small groups of girls with developing and constructing several items throughout the day including a water containment device that when dropped from a second-story balcony would prevent a cup of water from spilling. These activities allowed the girls to not only see how engineering concepts are used but also reinforced the idea of team work and collaboration.

"I enjoy being part of an event that allows girls



**Engineers, Rebecca Laugen and Tom Gambucci use a floodplain model to demonstrate the engineering that goes into handling stormwater runoff for girls attending the Introduce a Girl to Engineering event during National Engineers Week. Photo by Rick Nickel**

to explore the engineering field,” said Brown, a civil engineering technician for the District. “I think it’s important to show them options at a young age and to let them know that the engineering field is open to both girls and boys.”


Although Brown now works in the engineering field, it was a decision she made late in her education. She hopes that by volunteering at events like these, young people will be exposed to career options early on and it will help them to make better choices towards attaining those careers.

The last event for the week focused on boys in engineering at the annual Boy Scouts Engineering Merit Badge Clinic. Deputy Commander, Lt. Col. Dan Segura and his son Daniel, attended the day-long event along with current District employees Dean Cerny, Anthony Heddlesten, Tom Heinold, Fred Joers, Roger Perk and Riley Post and former employee Mark Hoague.

While at the event, the engineers assisted scouts with a variety of hands-on engineering projects including building hovercrafts with basic household materials and using catapults to study leverage. These interactive activities

partnered with learning sessions about engineering in the world today gave the boys all the necessary information to complete the merit badge. By the end of the day, a total of 61 boys completed the workshop and received their engineering merit badge.

Roger Perk, assistant chief of the Rock Island District Engineering and Construction Division says he enjoys taking part in outreach events such as these and sees these events as an important way to get young people interested in the field of engineering.


“We as professionals and the Corps as an engineering organization have an obligation to the engineering community to help young people understand how engineering affects their everyday life,” said Perk. “It’s important that kids see at an early age that simple things like running water in their homes and roofs over their heads are a direct result of the engineering field.” 



**Engineer Riley Post conducts a soil test with Scouts at the Engineering Merit Badge Clinic. The discussion detailed how soil conditions play a role in the design and construction process. Photo by Darryl Cross courtesy of DavenportToday.com**

## *Sharing our District's Missions (Continued)*

At the opposite ends of our District boundaries, the Des Moines River is undergoing a unique collaboration of which Rock Island District is lucky to join. A funding proposal has been approved by our District leadership to become part of the Sustainable Rivers Project (SRP). The project’s goal is to use a collaborative process, to gain environmental benefits associated with Corps’ water management in the Des Moines River Basin while continuing to meet or improve other authorized Saylorville Lake and Lake Red Rock projects’ benefits. This is another example of our District’s expanding roles and our commitment to the environment.

Visiting our congressional leaders is an excellent opportunity to spread the word about the Rock Island District. It gave me great pride to be able to express to our nation’s leaders the great hard work all of you do on a daily basis. It’s my responsibility to be your representative to higher headquarters and congressional representatives. You make that part of my job easy and I remain inspired by your efforts on a daily basis. Thanks for all you do and CONTINUE BUILDING STRONG. 



# DISTRICT STEM VOLUNTEERS RECOGNIZED



During the District's annual Engineers Week Ceremony, Denny Lundberg (back left), chief of Engineering and Construction Division recognized (left to right) Eric Johnson, Andrew Goodall, Terri Kirkeeng, Rick Nickel, Amanda Geddes, Heather Bishop, Roger Less, Garrett Mattila, Riley Post, Harlan Justice and Kirk Atwater for their outreach efforts with the science, technology, engineering and math (STEM) program. Also recognized were Missi Brown, Elizabeth Bruns, Scott Bullock, Josh Cackley, Tom Gambucci, Josh Hendrix, Fred Joers, Rebecca Laugen, Barb Lester, Julie Millhollin, Kara Mitvalsky, Brad Palmer, Roger Perk, Kim Pinkston and Adam Ziegler.

*Photo by Samantha Heilig*

## Rock Island District Engineering & Construction Division Professional Registration

### PROFESSIONAL ENGINEER (P.E.)

Dan Arends  
Amanda Geddes  
Erica Stephens  
Riley Post  
Mark Jacobson

### ENGINEER IN TRAINING (E.I.T.)

Amanda Patterson  
Alex Campbell  
Kim Pinkston


### DEFENSE ACQUISITION WORKFORCE IMPROVEMENT ACT (DAWIA) LEVEL II CONTRACTING CERTIFICATION

Charles Bauer  
Dean Cerny  
Tom Mack  
Rich Busch  
Barb Lester  
Ray Martin  
Mark Pratt  
Jeff Scukanec  
Joanne Traicoff

## RECOGNITION CEREMONY HELD

By Samantha Heilig, Editor

The District's Engineering and Construction (EC) Division Professional Registration Board recognizes employees who have completed the professional engineer exam, are new to the EC Division or have received a professional certification during the course of their career. This year during National Engineers Week a ceremony was held to honor the employees who were added to the board. Denny Lundberg, chief Engineering and Construction Division, congratulated each of the members as the new board was unveiled.

"Engineers who acquire the Professional Engineer (P.E.) certification help the District to retain its title of having the highest percentage of P.E.'s per eligible population in the Mississippi Valley Division," said Lundberg. 

# SAFETY CORNER

## MAKING A HABIT OF EATING HEALTHY

By Troy Larson, Chief Safety Officer

All the exercise in the world will not balance a poor diet. Eating well is one of the most important parts of living a healthy life with a healthy weight. One way to help get into a healthy eating habit is to plan ahead. People who maintain a healthy weight often plan out their diet the day before and pack meals and snacks to make sure they stick to their food plan. Here are some ideas for packing a healthy snack:

Choose three of these snacks per day with a portion size no bigger than the palm of your hand.

- Unsalted nuts or seeds
- Sliced high fiber fruit with soy/peanut butter
- Sliced dark green vegetables with hummus
- Air popped popcorn with hot pepper flakes - Pour 1/4 cup of popcorn kernels into a brown paper lunch bag, fold over 3-4 times, microwave on high for 3 minutes or until the pops slow to once every 3-4 seconds.
- Frozen red or green grapes or watermelon slices
- Brown rice cakes or oatmeal

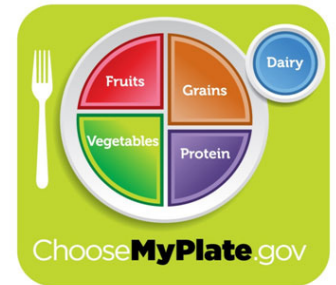
The Body Mass Index (BMI) is a useful measure of overweight and obesity. It is calculated from your height and weight. BMI is an estimate of body fat and a good gauge of your risk for diseases that can occur with more body fat. The higher your BMI, the higher your risk for certain diseases. To find your BMI visit: [http://www.nhlbi.nih.gov/health/educational/lose\\_wt/BMI/bmicalc.htm](http://www.nhlbi.nih.gov/health/educational/lose_wt/BMI/bmicalc.htm)

To achieve a healthy weight, it's important to make lifestyle changes that focus on reducing calories from food and beverages as well as developing an eating plan that includes proper portion control. Here are some general guidelines on what to eat and how much food is considered healthy.

### WHAT TO EAT

It is recommended that people should eat 3-4 meals per day that include:

- 1/2 plate - vegetables and fruits
- 1/4 plate - whole wheat grains including breads, pastas and brown rice
- 1/4 plate - Healthy Protein like nuts, fish, chicken and beans
- One serving per day of dairy such as yogurt, milk, cheeses and soy
- Use healthy oils such as olive or canola and limit butter and margarine
- Avoid sugary beverages and drink water instead, or non-sugar flavored drinks or powders




Once you are eating the right types of food, the next thing to do is to eat the correct portions of those foods.

### FOOD PORTIONS

Use your hand as a guide for the correct portion of foods you should eat:

- Fist of the hand - Whole grain, fruits and veggies
- Palm of the hand - Protein and dairy or soy
- Handful - Healthy snacks
- Thumb of the hand - Peanut butter, condiments and deserts
- Thumb Tip - Sugar and cooking oils

In addition to eating high-quality foods, physical activity can help you reach and maintain a healthy weight. A 30-minute walk, five days a week is all most people need. Start by taking a break and walking four times a day or standing up while reading or talking on the phone. 

The new safety manual (EM 385-1-1) is now available in digital form online at:

[http://www.publications.usace.army.mil/Portals/76/Publications/EngineerManuals/EM\\_385-1-1.pdf](http://www.publications.usace.army.mil/Portals/76/Publications/EngineerManuals/EM_385-1-1.pdf)

Hardcopy versions are not yet available but the District Safety Office has placed an order and will be notifying offices when they become available. As a reminder, the new hardcopy version has no binding and is designed to be placed in a three ring binder approximately three inches in size. This will allow for easy updating as changes or additions are made.

Multiple presentations highlighting the changes from the previous manual are available from the District's SharePoint site. <https://team.usace.army.mil/sites/MVR/SO/EM%20385%202014%20Significant%20Changes/Forms/AllItems.aspx>



# SIGN SHOP GIVES DISTRICT DIRECTION

By Samantha Heilig, Editor

**T**ucked away behind the main office at the Coralville Lake Reservoir project is a little known area of the maintenance building called the Sign Shop. From the outside, the building looks like a typical garage but inside the tools and equipment being used are not your ordinary shop tools. This facility is one of only a few Corps Sign Shops in the country and is capable of handling all the sign making needs for the District.

At one time, signs used at Corps facilities nationwide were made primarily of wood. These signs were hand routed and painted by staff from whatever District the sign was located in. Each District had its own design, but nationwide even the Corps castle logo differed from site to site. In 1980, in an attempt to resolve this identity issue, the Corps produced a Graphic Standards Manual that changed the way signage was created across the country. This is when the Sign Shop at Coralville Lake was born.

Shay Bevens, who oversees the production of all the signs at the Sign Shop is in charge of making sure that all requested signs are made in accordance with the Corps' National Sign Standards Manual. The Sign Shop supports all areas of the District including recreation sites, locks and dams, project offices, the Clock Tower and Annex buildings by creating informational signs.

Although wooden signs are still permitted by the national sign standards, aluminum signs have become the norm and are more cost effective to create.

"Aluminum signs are easier to make and can include safety features such as reflective lettering and backing material," said Bevens. "After the Corps' Sign Standards came out, the staff at Coralville Lake decided it would be more cost effective to purchase the necessary equipment to make their own aluminum signs rather than contract the work out."



**Justin Lind (left) and Shay Bevens (right) carefully place a sheet of vinyl backing material on an aluminum blank to begin the sign making process at the District's Sign Shop at Coralville Lake. Photo by Samantha Heilig**





**Maintenance mechanic, Shay Bevens, uses tweezers to place a small piece of vinyl lettering on a sign being produced at the Sign Shop.**

*Photo by Samantha Heilig*

The equipment that Coralville Lake purchased in the early 1980s included a squeeze roller that runs on pressurized air which is used for applying the colored backing to the surface of the signs and a very large, 12-foot by 6-foot, heat lamp vacuum applicator that permanently affixes the lettering and images to the signs once they are finished.

Although the Sign Shop is located at Coralville Lake, the shop serves the sign making needs of the entire District by producing an average of 800 to 1,000 signs each winter.

“On a low year we might make as few as 400 signs and on a big year when there has been a lot of flooding, we have made as many as 2,500 signs,” said Bevens. “We have also made signs for District needs abroad like for employees who have been deployed to Afghanistan.”

During the winter months all the signs requested by the District are made by Bevens and a team of support staff from the lake including rangers and maintenance workers. Even the administrative support staff gets involved helping to peel lettering for the signs. In addition to overseeing the Sign Shop, Bevens who also works as a maintenance mechanic, handles all the plumbing needs for Coralville Lake’s recreation facilities. Winter is the only time when he and the other lake staff are available to dedicate so much time to the sign making process.

The types of signs that the Sign Shop produces vary depending on where the sign will be used. Outdoor signs such as the ones at the recreation areas and locks and dams are typically made out of aluminum. These signs are designed to take more wear and tear and be out in the elements. Smaller, plastic signs like the ones seen around the District office in the Clock Tower and Annex buildings are also made by the Sign Shop. These are made for indoor use only.

The first step in making the signs is to layout the lettering in a computer program that tells the printer what to cut. The printer then cuts the lettering on a large roll of adhesive vinyl. After cutting, the surrounding vinyl is then peeled away leaving only the letters behind.

Next the staff prepares the blank aluminum sheeting by cleaning it with a special solution and covering it with a vinyl backing material. The backing material is like a giant sticker and must be placed perfectly on the blank aluminum or the sign will not be properly covered. When the backing is in place, the sign is then run through a large pressurized roller system to help remove air bubbles and secure the backing material to the sign.

*(Continued on page 11)*



**The District Sign Shop produces an average of 800 to 1,000 signs each winter. The signs are made in all shapes and sizes and are used in a variety of places including recreation areas, locks and dams, and the District office.** *Photo by Samantha Heilig*



# HELPING PRESERVE THE CLOCK TOWER FOR FUTURE GENERATIONS

By Samantha Heilig, Editor

Over the years many people working for the Corps have made the climb to the sixth floor of the Clock Tower just to say they've been there. Some people like the view of the Mississippi River and eagles feeding below the dam. Others climb to get a closer look at the inner workings of the A.S. Hotchkiss clock, that from outside the building can be seen from all four sides of the tower. Some people are just excited to learn more about the building's historical past and see what lies inside the big limestone tower.

For years, park rangers from the Mississippi River Visitor Center have provided tours of the Clock Tower for visitors from outside the Corps. These visitors are often very eager to learn about the building's history and see the sights from the upper levels of the tower.

"People love getting to tour the Clock Tower," said Mike McKean, a park ranger who has been giving tours of the building for five years. "They love the history, the architecture, and in the winter they also love to see the large gathering of bald eagles below the dam."

As the visitors make their way to the top through the refinished original staircase and historical corridor, they learn about the building's past; how it changed from being a Storehouse for the Arsenal to being the headquarters for the Rock Island District.

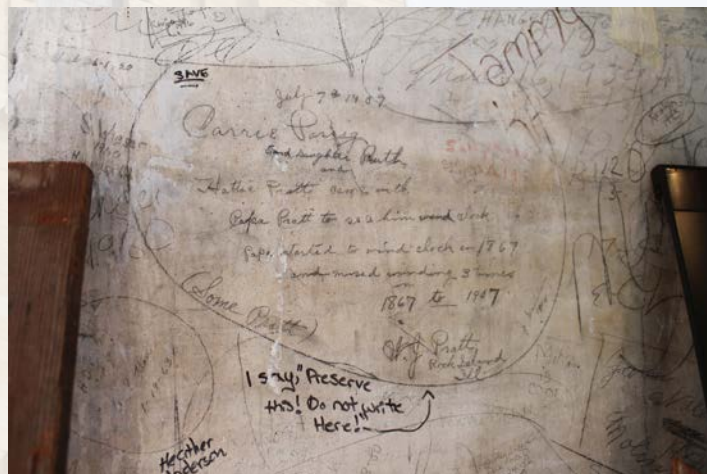
"When guests make it to the top, they are eager to see the inner workings of the clock and take a peek out

the windows for the view," said McKean. "But before I can begin telling them about what they are seeing, questions start pouring in about the writing on the walls."

Commonly referred to as Clock Tower graffiti, the signatures, dates, drawings and symbols present on the walls and wooden framing of

the sixth floor often take visitors by surprise. Some of the markings date back as early as 1872 and were placed on the wall long before the Corps had access to the building. When the Corps did gain access from 1940 through the mid-1970s, the notations on the walls were of records for maintenance and repairs to the building and clock mixed with a few names and dates of people who had access to the tower.

Since the late 1970s, access to the tower has been less restricted and graffiti on the sixth floor has become more prominent. Many names and dates now overlap those from the past. Carvings in the wood have also increased and have covered parts of the stairway, framework and clock enclosure.



**Graffiti in the Clock Tower has been happening for a long time. Many of the older writings like this one from 1907 are nearly covered by newer markings.**

*Photo by Samantha Heilig*

"As part of the tour we point out to the visitors that the Clock Tower Building is listed both on the National Register of Historic Places and as a National Historic Landmark," said McKean. "This makes them wonder why so many people have been allowed to mark on the walls of the historic federal property."

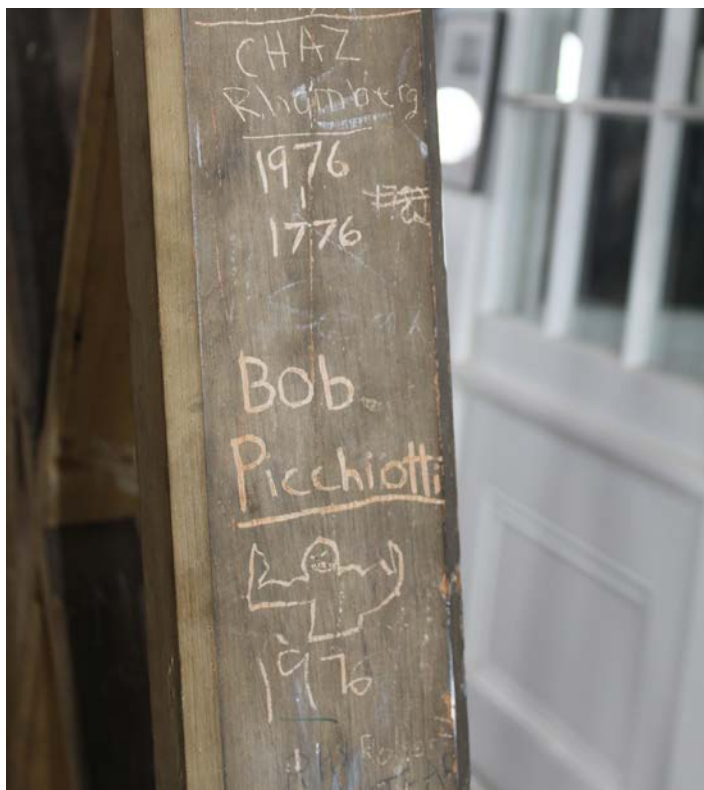
Guests attending the tours are reminded that it is against the law to write on the walls of the building and instead are asked to sign the guestbook if they want to leave their mark on the space. New signs were also installed this past winter, in the stairwell, reminding all who enter the tower that physical damage including writing or carving words, dates,



**In earlier years, maintenance records were often written on the walls of the Clock Tower.**

*Photo by Samantha Heilig*





**Carvings like these can be seen on many surfaces in the tower. Physical damage to the structure including writing or carving on any part of the building is a federal offense and is not permitted by the District.**

*Photo by Samantha Heilig*

or images on any part of the building is a federal offense and can be punishable by a substantial fine, imprisonment, or both.

Since Sept. 11, 1941, when the Ordnance Department permanently transferred ownership of the Clock Tower Building from the Arsenal to the Corps, it has been up to the people of the District to take care of this piece of American history. In the 1940s, Rock Island was one of only two Districts in the country that owned their buildings. Today there are still only 11 Corps Districts that own and maintain their facilities.

“Maintaining a structure built in the mid 1800s is a real challenge some days,” said Dan Simon, Logistics Manager for the Rock Island District. “What helps the most is when employees have a sense of ownership to the space and can help report issues or concerns to us as they see them.”

For employees working within its walls today, the historic structure serves as an important part of daily operations of the District. For others, the building represents a significant time in our country’s history. It is up to both the people visiting the Clock Tower Building and the employees of the District to continue to respect the structure for its historical significance and help to preserve it for future generations to come. 🇺🇸

## SIGN SHOP (CONTINUED)

After the backing material is secured, the sign is ready for lettering. The Corps’ Sign Manual provides very specific guidance on the spacing of each row of lettering on each sign. To ensure the guidelines are followed precisely, all measurements are marked directly on the sign before any lettering is placed.

“It is very common for us to make six of the same sign,” said Bevans. “To make the measuring process a little quicker we mark the spacing on long strips of tape on the edges of the sign that we can then peel and place on the next sign.”

Once the measurements are marked, each row of lettering is applied using spacing tape. This special tape allows staff to remove the letters from the backing and place them on the sign while keeping intact the spacing of each individual letter.

The time needed to make each sign varies depending on the size of the sign and the amount of lettering used. Small signs can be made in about 15 minutes and larger signs with lots of lettering take closer to an hour. Dee Goldman, Coralville Lake Operations Manager, says he would love to see the Sign Shop expanded but with the current resources available to the project there would need to be some changes made.

“We currently support the District by providing a cost effective way of producing signs for all areas of the District,” said Goldman. “If we were going to support the needs of other Districts or Divisions, we would need to take a look at upgrading our current process by adding new updated equipment and possibly add more staff that could support the sign making work year round.”

Dave Reynolds, Operations Division, Technical Branch serves as the District’s sign program manager and oversees sign requests made to the Sign Shop. The process of requesting signs can vary depending on what part of the District the signs will be used in. Recreation projects and lock and dam facilities order hundreds of signs each year and have a specific process that must be followed in order to get enough supplies to make all the requested signs. District offices within the Clock Tower and Annex building can request smaller sign orders using ServiceTrak by requesting Visual Information services. 🇺🇸



# ***Spotlight on the District***

## THE ROCK ISLAND DISTRICT'S RIVER BEND BRASS

By Samantha Heilig, Editor

**T**he music ensemble now known as River Bend Brass began about 10 years ago when former employee, Bob Riebe, who was leading the District Christmas carolers at the time, walked into former employee Dave Hays' office and noticed a euphonium mug sitting on his desk.

"Most people don't even know what a euphonium is let alone know how to play one," said Riebe. "When I found out Dave owned one, I knew he was a 'serious' musician."

Riebe had been looking for a way to jazz up the District Christmas party by adding music for the carolers and thought a brass band would be a nice addition. Hays agreed and began to compile a list of other brass players that he knew of in the District. A short while later, several agreed to give it a try and the River Bend Brass was born.

Since its beginning, the group has played at every Corps Christmas party as well as several other special District events. In 2012 they played for the Change of Command Ceremony for the arrival of District Commander Col. Mark Deschenes and in 2014 they played on the lockwall of Locks and Dam 15 for the promotion of Captain Matthew



**River Bend Brass members Bob Riebe, Eric Johnson and Matt Zager play during their weekly practice in the 5th floor conference room. Photo by Samantha Heilig**

McKeehan. The River Bend Brass has also performed at other events such as Corps Day and the Chili Cook-off and some non-Corps functions like the Optimists Club Christmas party, dinner parties and even weddings.

"We must do okay as we had to audition for one gig and we got it anyway," said Riebe.



**The River Bend Brass ensemble entertaining staff at the 2014 Christmas party. The group has performed for District employees at every Christmas party for the last 10 years. Photo by Samantha Heilig**





**The River Bend Brass playing outside of the District for a local Optimists Club Christmas Party.**

*Photo provided by Barb Lester*

Current members of the band include two structural engineers, Alex Campbell and Eric Johnson; two hydraulic engineers, Matt Zager and Tom Gambucci; an electrical engineer, Kent Rockow; a construction chief, Barb Lester; an assistant chief of engineering and construction, Roger Perk; a labor/management and employee relations specialist Laurie Talley; and three retired Corps employees, Bob Riebe, Bill Riebe and Dave Hays.


The members of the band play a variety of instruments including trumpets, trombones, euphoniums, a French

horn and a tuba. Some members have decided to change instruments over the years. Both euphonium players were originally trumpet players, but decided to try the larger instrument which resembles a baritone. Occasionally they still revert back to playing trumpet parts but now on their euphoniums. Some of the instruments the group members play have more age than the members themselves.

"My trumpet is older than eight members of the band," said Riebe. "And Roger's tuba is even older than I am; it's over 100."

Although the band was originally formed for recreational purposes, the group still maintains a weekly practice. Each week they assemble at 12:15 p.m. on Friday in the 5th floor Clock Tower conference room.

"We have many multi-talented players in the band," said Kent Rockow, who plays trumpet with the group. "I am personally convinced that the reason for the amazing time-keeping we have is because we rehearse in close proximity to the pendulum in the Clock Tower."

Over the years people have come and gone and members of the band have changed but that hasn't changed the group's interest in music. They like to have fun, they enjoy playing music and they are always looking for new members to join in the fun. Anyone interested in learning more about the River Bend Brass can contact any member of the band to learn more about joining the group. 



### **February Answer:**

Coralville Lake as seen from the web cam.

**Winner:** Shay Bevans



**Can you name where this is?**

If so, send your answer to [samantha.a.heilig@usace.army.mil](mailto:samantha.a.heilig@usace.army.mil). Correct answers will result in your name being entered to receive a special prize and be recognized in the next Tower Times.

# Around the District



## Sympathy ...

**Bruce Schmitt**, 59, of Knoxville, Iowa, passed away March 1.

Schmitt was employed for the Rock Island District as an administrative clerk at Lake Red Rock since 1999. Prior to working for the Rock Island District Schmitt served 26 years with the U.S. Marine Corps and was stationed in many different places including two tours in Okinawa, Japan. Schmitt also served in Operation Desert Storm during the Gulf War.

## Have something you would like to share?

If you have something you would like to submit for the Around the District section of the Tower Times please send it to [samantha.a.heilig@usace.army.mil](mailto:samantha.a.heilig@usace.army.mil)



## EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT HOSTS OUTREACH MEETING FOR RIVER COMMUNITIES

By Samantha Heilig, Editor

In preparation for spring, the Rock Island District conducted a 2015 Flood Risk Management and Levee Safety Program Informational Outreach Meeting on March 17. The meeting provided information to emergency managers, levee owners, sponsors, and local, state and federal emergency personnel about the latest National Weather Service Spring Flood Outlook and gave updated information about the Corps' Levee Safety and Emergency Management Program. The Rock Island District provides flood-fighting technical assistance and supplies to communities within a 78,000 square-mile area covering the eastern two-thirds of Iowa, the northern half of Illinois and corners of Minnesota, Missouri and Wisconsin. *Photo by Samantha Heilig*



# JOIN THE CLOCK TOWER DISC GOLF LEAGUE

By Joe Nobiling, ACE-IT Visual Information Specialist

The Clock Tower Disc Golf League is a loosely organized group of District employees who get together once a week for an hour and a half to two hours to play a round of disc golf at one of the twelve Quad City courses. The league meets on Thursday nights starting around 4:30 or 5 p.m. from April through October. The courses played include West Lake, Eastern Avenue, Credit Island and Slattery Park in Davenport, Iowa; Devil's Glen and Middle Parks in Bettendorf, Iowa; Scott Community College in Pleasant Valley, Iowa; the two courses at Camden Park in Milan, Illinois; Longview Park in Rock Island, Illinois; Prospect Park in Moline, Illinois; and Butterworth Park in East Moline, Illinois. Occasionally a venture to DeWitt, Geneseo, Galesburg, Muscatine or some other nearby destination may occur on a weekend or holiday by this intrepid group of "plastic addicts."

Disc golf is a sport that started in the early 1900s when some youths were throwing Frisbee pie pans at targets to score points. This sport evolved from pie pans to plastic Frisbees which were produced by a company called Wham-O in the 1960s in California.

Today the sport has a Professional Disc Golf Association (PDGA) with thousands of members and thousands of tournaments that take place around the world on an annual basis. Players today have a choice of highly engineered plastic golf discs offered from a wide variety of manufacturers. And, just as in ball golf, disc golf discs come in distance drivers, fairway drivers, mid-range, approach discs, and putters.


Disc golf is played in a very similar manner to ball golf. There are tees which are called pads, fairways, and instead of greens with a hole in it, you have a metal basket attached to a metal pole that "catches" the disc. The distance of a disc golf fairway is measured in feet as opposed to yards in ball golf. This is due to the fact that a player is throwing a plastic disc as opposed to hitting a small white ball with a club. Most all courses are traversed entirely by foot. As in ball golf, the objective is to get the lowest score possible. Many of the terms cross over from ball golf. Terms such as lie, bogey, eagle, double bogey, hole-in-one, fairway, etc. Just like a ball golfer, a disc golfer gets to see parts of a community they'd probably never see before by playing this game as the courses may be almost exclusively in the woods; part woods, part clearing, etc., with trees, undergrowth, gullies and water hazards to challenge the best players.

A major difference between ball golf and disc golf is cost. A set of beginner discs can cost between \$15 and \$25 where a set of golf clubs easily exceeds that price. Plus there are no greens fees as Quad City area disc golf courses are all free to play. Incidentally, Iowa has one of the greatest number of courses in the United States. Rock Island District's Coralville Lake has two disc golf courses; Turkey Hollow and Sugar Bottom.

The Clock Tower league has been in existence close to five years now. Felix Castro (now with the Galveston District) and I co-founded the league. The league is open to all interested individuals. You don't have to buy anything to try the sport out as we have a putter and driver to share with you. We'll also share what we know about how to play the game, but remember we are still learning ourselves!

The only costs that may come up during the season would be for any special events that we might participate in such as buying a Bag Tag or participation in a Two and Done event where the cost goes towards a pair of discs the players use to play the event and keep. Such events also are likely to have a Close to Pin contest where there's a prize won by a person who gets his or her disc closest to the basket on the first throw at a specific hole.

District employees that have played on the league include: myself, Felix Castro, Tom Lafrenz, Cory Haberman, Eric Johnson, Holly Hintzke, Dennis Hamilton, Bonnie Tanamor, Gary Meden, Kalvin Kalafut, Jeff Tripp, Yogi Patel and Jotham Povich. From time-to-time other employees from Rock Island Arsenal have also joined in on a round or two as well as family members of the league's membership.

This group of men and women are of various skill levels and welcome any and all who wish to join in on a "walk through the park." Though we may talk a little smack to each other while throwing those discs, we're in it for a good time! It's all in good fun for as the sports founder, "Steady" Ed Headrick stated many years ago, "The most fun wins!" To find out more about where and when our next meeting will be held contact me at (309) 794-5671. We would be happy to have you join in the fun. 



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During the first weekend in March, Saylorville Lake Natural Resource Specialists along with U.S. Coast Guard Auxiliary volunteers staffed the Water Safety Booth during the annual KidsFest event in Des Moines, Iowa. KidsFest takes place at the Iowa State Fairgrounds and is a kid-centered fundraiser with activities, games and entertainment for kids of all ages and their families. All of the proceeds from the festival go to helping at-risk children and families in the state of Iowa.

