



US Army Corps  
of Engineers ®

# TOWER TIMES

Rock Island District's News Magazine

May 2015



**Mobile Technology Improves  
Field Data Collection Process**



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

# TOWER TIMES

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**May 2015**

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Peoria Lead Flood Area Engineer, Anthony Heddlesten (right), trains Rock Island County Zoning Investigator, Doug Moslehi, on the use of the Mobile Information Collection Application. This device improves field data collection and assists with flood risk management issues across the state of Illinois.

*Photo by Samantha Heilig*

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## *Tower Times*

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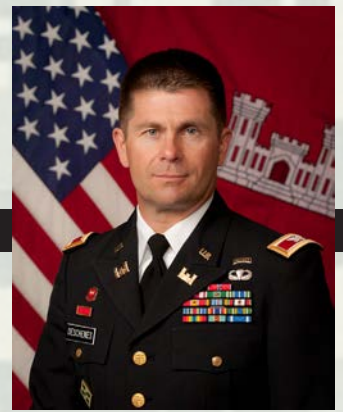
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*A message from....*

Colonel Mark Deschenes, District Commander



## *Sustaining Excellence in a Time of Change*

Spring is the proverbial season of change. While that expression literally refers to the weather and outdoor changes, the Rock Island District has and will experience change in the form of arriving and departing key leaders.

Turnover and transition challenges every organization whether it is government or private. The Army and other military branches certainly experience high rates of turnover as part of normal operations. An organization like the Rock Island District, although part of the Army, is lucky to recruit and maintain a high level of civilian expertise with many professionals spending an entire career in the Clock Tower complex or our field sites.

The real challenge is presented when those life-long professionals end their time with the District, whether through retirement or a move to another assignment. How do you replace those years of experience?

This year alone, the District is saying farewell to several leaders who take with them a lifetime of knowledge.

Roger Less, chief of our of Engineering Design Branch, who has served for more than 31 years, retires at the end of April. Roger takes with him a career's worth of hands-on flood risk management skills which we leaned on heavily. He was instrumental in our Task Force Unwatering efforts in addition to his duties in the Design Branch.

Denny Lundberg will soon relinquish his duties as Chief of Engineering and Construction Division and become the Director of the Inland Navigation Design Center (INDC). Denny is one of our most senior civilians and continues to dedicate his career to the betterment of the Rock Island District. He takes with him a lifetime of engineering expertise not to mention the irreplaceable institutional leadership he provided for more than 35 years.

So, how do you replace those years of experience? The answer is -- you don't. It would be impossible to replace Denny and Roger but the silver lining is that both have imparted their skills and knowledge to the next generation, those within the District who have trained and learned under their tutelage. Change is always a challenge but it is also an opportunity to sustain excellence and bring in a new generation of professional expertise. That is something the Rock Island District excels at.

For example, at the beginning of this year the District saw the retirement of Tom Hodgini, who had been the Assistant Deputy for Programs and Project Management, as well as filling several other roles within the District. Not only did Tom have his civilian experience but he was also a retired colonel who had commanded the St. Louis District. Tom had a very unique insight into our operations and it was tough to lose him. But, we recovered by giving a rising star an opportunity. Andy Barnes has since filled that position and is doing so effectively. Andy had been an outstanding program manager for our District for years, leading high-profile projects like the Marseilles Dam emergency response. He was deserving of the promotion and is one example of our District sustaining excellence during change.

There are other examples. Rob Germann, who is the Chief of Mississippi River Project, in charge of quite possibly the most robust mission within the District, is leaving for another position. Rob's skills will be sorely missed but someone will rise to meet the challenge.

Lt. Col. Todd Reed left the District in January. As deputy commander he was my eyes and ears and a conduit to the workforce. He provided outstanding leadership but luckily his departure also meant the arrival of Lt. Col. Dan Segura. Lt. Col. Segura has hit the ground running and he has been an invaluable resource for me and members of the senior staff.

Larry Reeve, Lockmaster at Lock and Dam 20, has dedicated more than 37 years to federal service. He, along with many others, take years of experience with them when they go but leave the District in good hands as they pass their knowledge on to others who continue to serve.

These examples only name a few. The Rock Island District seems to weather change with great flexibility. That's a credit to a great work force lead by experienced professionals who know how to create the next generation of leaders.

Finally, there is one other change in leadership that is quite personal for me. I will be relinquishing command of this District in June. It is a bitter sweet time for me as I look forward to the challenges that lie ahead in my next assignment but will leave with a heavy heart as I have

*(Continued on page 7)*

# MOBILE APPLICATION IMPROVES DATA COLLECTION FOR FLOOD RISK MANAGEMENT

By Samantha Heilig, Editor

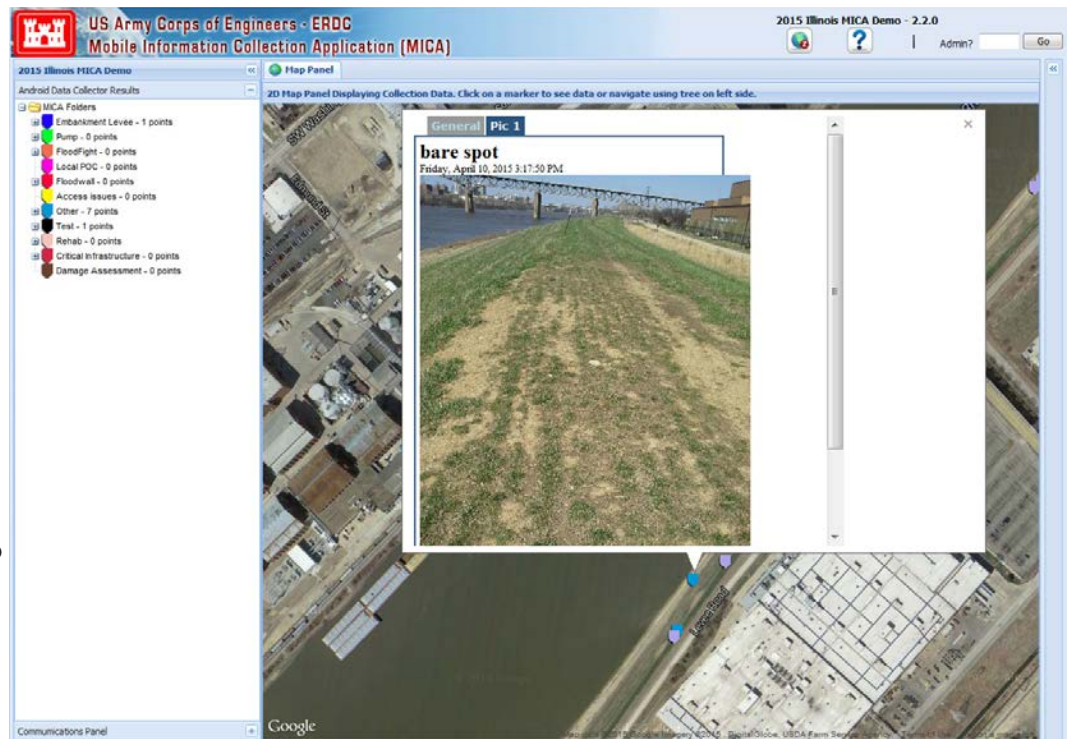
For the first time in the Rock Island District, a new pilot program is being deployed to agencies outside the Corps to help better prepare communities in Illinois for flood risk management.

The program, known as the Mobile Information Collection Application (MICA) Demonstration Project, uses mobile tablets, loaded with the online application, MICA, to gather flood risk data from around the state. This information will then be used to reduce flood risk and improve life safety.

“Time is precious during flood events and other types of natural disasters,” said Anthony Heddlesten, Peoria Lead Flood Area Engineer for the Rock Island District. “This demonstration project will have the necessary components to identify lead times, evacuation plans, quantities, equipment, materials, and personnel needed to respond which will allow us to shift limited resources from planning to implementation.”

MICA was developed by the Corps’ Information Technology Lab at the Engineer Research and Development Center in Vicksburg, Mississippi, as part of the flood fight of 2011. It was created to streamline the field data collection process which traditionally requires a wide variety of equipment, including paper forms, clipboards, digital cameras, GPS units, Wi-Fi access and computer processing capabilities. As an all-in-one field data collection system, MICA eliminates the need to carry all of the necessary equipment for field data collection as separate devices.

The Illinois MICA Demonstration Project was developed as part of an initiative by the Illinois Silver Jackets team to successfully reduce the risk of flooding and other natural disasters in the state of Illinois. The Silver Jackets team is one of many throughout the country



**The Mobile Information Collection Application (MICA) was created to streamline the field data collection process and allow for instant analysis of information by people not in the field. This online interface allows users of the system to pinpoint exactly where an issue is located and provide documentation with photos, videos, sound and notes.**

working to create a collaborative effort between state and federal agencies for the enhancement of response and recovery efforts.

As part of the Demonstration Program, the Illinois Silver Jackets received funding to lease 15 mobile tablets loaded with the MICA software application installed and ready for use. These tablets were then distributed to personnel who will use them to enter field data into the MICA system in coordination with the Illinois Emergency Management Agency and the Department of Natural Resources, Office of Water Resources.


On April 1, members of the Rock Island District hosted a kickoff meeting to train the new users on the use of the tablets and the MICA application. These users included managers from city public works departments, levee districts, county emergency management coordinators and flood plain zoning managers. As members of the demonstration project, their job will be to use the MICA system to document areas of concern through their



**Lead Flood Area Engineer, Anthony Heddlesten, helps Bennett Johnson from the Peoria, Illinois, Emergency Operations Center, use the Mobile Information Collection Application (MICA) system for field data collection. Photo by Shirley Johnson**

communities that relate to flood risk management. The MICA system allows the users to take photos, record video and sound, draw sketches and take notes about any area of concern. This data is then automatically geotagged with a latitude and longitude to provide exact location information.

“The real benefit to the MICA system is that it allows for immediate analysis of field data by people who are not actually out in the field,” said Shirley Johnson, District hydrologist and member of the Illinois Silver Jackets team. “This allows decision makers back at the office the opportunity to respond in a more efficient manner to the needs of the people in the field.”

The Illinois MICA Demonstration Project is scheduled to continue for the next six months to give the Illinois communities and the Rock Island District a better idea of how the program could be implemented on a larger scale. To learn more about the MICA Demonstration Project visit: <http://www.mvr.usace.army.mil/Missions/FloodRiskManagement/IllinoisMobileInformationCollectionApplication.aspx> To learn more about the Silver Jackets Program and how they are working to reduce flood risk visit: <http://www.nfrmp.us/state/about.cfm> 



**The Rock Island District Emergency Management Division conducted an annual spring flooding exercise with a simulated activation of the Emergency Operations Center, the Crisis Management Team and the Crisis Action Team. The purpose of the exercise was to evaluate the Emergency Operation Center’s readiness and capabilities, to share information with new members of the teams and provide training to the District’s current teams and leadership. Photo by Samantha Heilig**

# HIGH-HAZARD WORKING GROUP ADDRESSES LOAD-HANDLING EQUIPMENT SAFETY

By Samantha Heilig, Editor

**D**uring the first week of April, the Corps of Engineers National Load-Handling Equipment (LHE) High-Hazard Working Group gathered for a meeting at the Rock Island District to discuss a variety of topics related to load-handling equipment safety.

The Working Group, led by a Corps Headquarters Safety Office representative meets quarterly and is made up of representatives from 12 different Corps Districts across the country. There are three members of the Rock Island District currently serving on the LHE Working Group team: Jim Trail, Safety Specialist; Cary Hahn, Mississippi River Project; and Jeff Griffin, Illinois Waterway Project.

Their focus is to provide technical guidance and support to employees regarding occupational standards and governing regulations involving cranes, derricks, hoists, and rigging requirements.

Duties of the LHE Working Group include identifying key issues of concern, performing accident investigations, doing data analysis to resolve issues and providing appropriate guidance for employees working with load-handling equipment. The group also handles the development of programs and training materials that keep employees working with load-handling equipment informed of safety concerns.



There are many jobs throughout the Corps that involve high-hazard working conditions. The National Load-Handling Working Group aims to provide support to employees involved in this work and ensure the best possible safety practices are used in every job. *Rock Island District Photo*

“It was really nice to have the LHE Working Group travel to the Rock Island District for the quarterly meeting this month,” said Jim Trail, Rock Island District Safety Specialist and member of the LHE Working Group. “It gives the members of the group a chance to see our equipment and address our challenges before an audit takes place later this year.”


During the three-day meeting, the group’s main focus was to get a better understanding of the recent changes made to the Army Corps of Engineers Safety and Health Requirements Manual (EM 385-1-1) released in November 2014. They discussed Sections 15 (Rigging) and 16 (Load Handling Equipment) and addressed what changes were made and why. After discussion, the group developed training presentations for Sections 15 and 16 to be used in the field for employee training on the 385-1-1 changes.

“We need to make sure that we thoroughly understand the requirements and are able to provide clear and consistent guidance to the field,” said Jerry Balcom, Loss Control Program Manager for the Corps of Engineers Safety Office in Washington, D.C. “It is very important that everyone is on the same page when it comes to high-hazard working conditions.”

The LHE Working Group is also in charge of reviewing all Corps load-handling equipment incidents that occur during the year. As subject matter experts on LHE safety, the group serves as technical support for any crane or rigging accident that occurs either with a Corps employee or contractor of the Corps. A representative of the group will be assigned to assist with any incident that requires review from a formal Board of Investigations.


“In fiscal year 2015 there have already been 34 LHE mishaps Corps wide,” said Balcom. “When we review these incidents it allows us to gather lessons learned from across the organization and implement safety measures and policies that can prevent future mishaps, providing for improved employee safety.”

In addition to addressing the new EM 385-1-1 and reviewing recent incidents, the LHE Working Group also discussed a new system for tracking operator training for employees who use load-handling equipment. On a national level the Corps does not currently have a database used for this type of operator training. The Rock Island District’s Safety Office has developed a system that has been used in recent years and is being considered for wider distribution.

For more information about the Load Handling Equipment High –Hazard Working Group visit: <http://www.usace.army.mil/SafetyandOccupationalHealth/HighHazardWorkingGroups.aspx>. 

## Sustaining Excellence (continued)

been humbled and honored to serve as your commander. The past three years have been exciting and challenging. I arrived at this District with a modicum of knowledge regarding the Corps’ water resource development missions and I leave with a much deeper appreciation and understanding because I got to watch the best carry out those missions.

It will be impossible for me to thank the more than 800 employees of the District personally but rest assured I have been marveled by the professionalism of all of you. I will leave here with a full rucksack of experiences and lessons that will carry on with me the rest of my Army career and after. Col. Craig Baumgartner will take the reins and I will hand over command knowing full well that he is more than capable of filling the shoes I have been privileged to fill since 2012. I will also know that he is in good hands because the outstanding employees of the Rock Island District will ensure his success as you did for me. Thank you for making my job as your commander so easy and, more importantly, thank you for making my job so fulfilling. CONTINUE BUILDING STRONG! 

## Training Tidbits

The Contracting Officer Representative (COR) training, the Civilian Education System (CES) courses and the Supervisor Development Course (SDC) are now available. Supervisors must take the SDC course every three years. Anyone who completed the course in calendar year 2012 will need to complete it again this year. All new supervisors must complete it within 12 months of being appointed to a supervisory position.

April is the month to update your Automated Training Management Program (ATMP) Mission Essential Task Lists (METL) in preparation for FY16 IDP planning in May and June 2015. Speak with your office training coordinator for more information.

If you know of training that would be beneficial to bring onsite in FY16, talk with your supervisor and have them contact our District Training Officer for coordination and planning.



# ***Spotlight on the District***

## **THE ROCK ISLAND DISTRICT WELFARE ASSOCIATION**

By Samantha Heilig, Editor

**F**or more than 50 years the Rock Island District Welfare Association (RIDWA) has been working to support District employees by boosting morale, encouraging wellness and promoting recreation. RIDWA is made up of a group of District employees who volunteer to fill five board member positions and two activity coordinator spots.

Authorized and defined by AR 215-7, RIDWA is a nonappropriated fund instrument that is an integral Department of Defense organizational entity that performs an essential government function. Board members serve two year terms and may be extended if the employees are willing to continue the job. Elections are held every year for half of the available board positions. This allows new members to join the team without having all the positions change out in a single year.

Events and activities supported by RIDWA are financed in a variety of ways. Several fundraising activities throughout the year are held with the help of District volunteers such as bake sales, lunch and learns, barbecues, bagel days and pizza days. The group also manages contracted vending machines and a snack shack that adds additional revenue. In addition to food sales, the group also has a Corps clothing sale twice a year where employees can purchase clothing and other merchandise with the District logo.

"RIDWA programs offer social, fitness, recreational and educational activities that help provide a positive working environment," said Lt. Col. Dan Segura, Deputy Commander. "Having an organization like RIDWA helps to attract and retain a quality civilian workforce for the District."

RIDWA allows for a variety of employee resources that would not otherwise be made available with appropriated funds. Examples of these items include vending machines, a District fitness room, health and wellness classes, flu shots, and equipment rental of sports, cooking and meeting items. The group also supports employees by providing expressions of thoughtfulness, sympathy or condolence to any employee or family member in the event of a serious illness or death.

In addition to the resources made available to employees on a regular basis, RIDWA also sponsors several special events throughout the year like Corps Day, an Adult Easter




**Corps Day is a RIDWA-sponsored event that gives employees and their families a chance to gather together once a year to enjoy food, games and other activities.** *Rock Island District photo*

Egg Hunt, a Family Fall Festival, a Holiday Gala and a District Holiday Party.

"These events help build employee morale and make for an enjoyable break in the everyday routine," said Shalene Calvert, RIDWA fundraising coordinator. "The important thing that employees need to remember is that the more they participate in fundraising events throughout the year, the more we can offer at the special events like Corps Day."

In addition to resources and activities made available during the workday, RIDWA also supports employee organized events outside of work including a softball team, flag football team, a golf league and a disc golf league.

"The goal is to try to reach out to as many employees as possible," said Troy Robbins, RIDWA vice president. "We understand that not everyone in the District can participate in all the activities and events so we try to offer different options for those who work outside of the District headquarters facility."

The current members of the RIDWA team are Ellen Milliron, president, Troy Robbins, vice president, Garrett Mattila, co-custodian, Anne Fleishman, co-custodian, Keri Diedrich, secretary, Eric Hackbarth, wellness coordinator, and Shalene Calvert, fundraising coordinator. For more information about RIDWA or to learn how you can help support their efforts contact any of the members listed above or email [RIDWA@usace.army.mil](mailto:RIDWA@usace.army.mil). 



# SAFETY CORNER

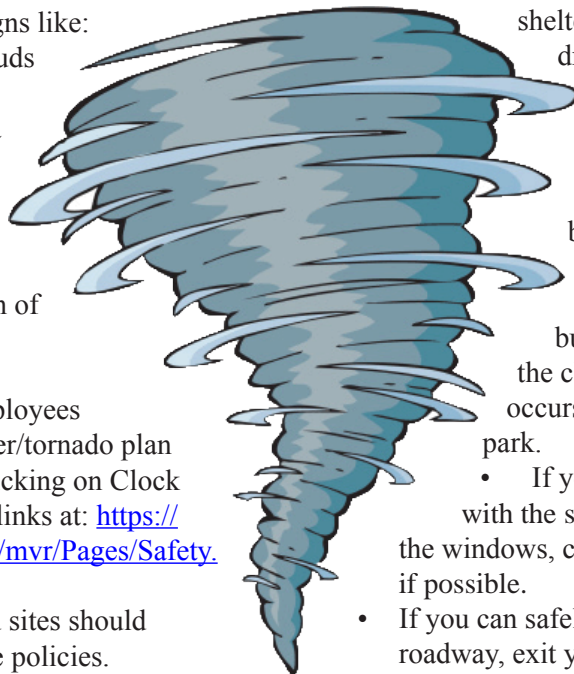
## TORNADO AWARENESS - BE PREPARED

By Troy Larson, Chief Safety Officer

**T**ornadoes are violent by nature. They are capable of completely destroying well-made structures, uprooting trees and hurling objects through the air like deadly missiles. A tornado is a violently rotating column of air extending from the base of a thunderstorm down to the ground and is classified on the Fujita Scale with ratings between F0 (weakest) to F5 (strongest). Although severe tornadoes are more common in the Midwest, tornadoes have been reported in every state.

### How to Prepare for a Tornado

- Listen to local news or a weather radio to stay informed about tornado watches and warnings.
- Know your community's warning system.
- Pick a safe room in your home and workplace where everyone can gather during a tornado. This should be a basement, storm cellar or an interior room on the lowest floor with no windows.
- Practice periodic tornado drills so that everyone knows what to do if a tornado is approaching.
- Prepare for high winds by removing diseased and damaged limbs from trees.
- Move or secure lawn furniture, trash cans, hanging plants or anything else that may be picked up by the wind and become a projectile.
- Watch for tornado danger signs like:
  - \* Dark, often greenish clouds
  - \* Wall cloud – an isolated lowering of the base of a thunderstorm
  - \* Cloud of debris
  - \* Large hail
  - \* Funnel cloud – a visible rotating extension of the cloud base
  - \* Roaring noise
- Clock Tower and Annex employees can review the severe weather/tornado plan on the District intranet by clicking on Clock Tower Info under the safety links at: <https://intranet.usace.army.mil/mvd/mvr/Pages/Safety.aspx>.
- Other Corps offices and field sites should review their individual office policies.




### Know the Difference

*Tornado Watch* - Tornadoes are possible in and near the watch area. Review and discuss your emergency plans, and check supplies and your safe room. Be ready to act quickly if a warning is issued or you suspect a tornado is approaching. Acting early helps to save lives.

*Tornado Warning* - A tornado has been sighted or indicated by weather radar. Tornado warnings indicate imminent danger to life and property. Go immediately underground to a basement, storm cellar or an interior room (closet, hallway or bathroom).

### What to Do During a Tornado

- The safest place to be is an underground shelter, basement or safe room.
- If no underground shelter or safe room is available, a small, windowless interior room or hallway on the lowest level of a sturdy building is the safest alternative.
- Mobile homes are not safe during tornadoes or other severe winds. Do not seek shelter in a hallway or bathroom of a mobile home. If you have access to a sturdy shelter or a vehicle, abandon your mobile home immediately.
  - Go to the nearest sturdy building or shelter immediately, using your seat belt if driving.
  - Do not wait until you see the tornado.
  - If you are caught outdoors, seek shelter in a basement, shelter or sturdy building.
  - If you cannot quickly get to a shelter, immediately get into a vehicle, buckle your seat belt and try to drive to the closest sturdy shelter. If flying debris occurs while you are driving, pull over and park.
  - If you are caught in your car, stay in the car with the seat belt on. Put your head down below the windows, covering with your hands and a blanket if possible.
- If you can safely get lower than the level of the roadway, exit your car and lie in that area, covering your head with your hands 

# Around the District

## Retirements ...

**John Miller**, a lead lock operator at Marseilles Lock and Dam on the Illinois Waterway, retired March 31, after dedicating more than 37 years of service to the federal government.

**Gregory Reyes**, a maintenance worker for the Mississippi River Maintenance Section, retired April 1, after dedicating 40 years of service to the federal government.

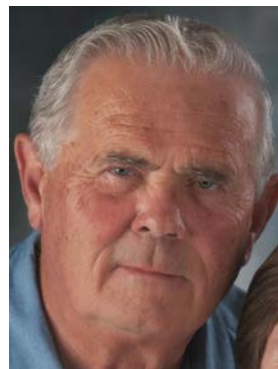
**Joanne Lieving**, who worked for the Real Estate Division, retired April 3, after dedicating more than 34 years of service to the federal government.

## Sympathy ...



**Jon Jones**, 59, of East Moline, Illinois, passed away March 23.

Jones was previously employed by the Rock Island District as a quality assurance specialist (ammunition surveillance) until 2004. After leaving the District he worked for the Rock Island Arsenal as a quality assurance specialist.



**Richard Gosney Sr.**, 74, of The Villages, Florida, passed away April 12.

Gosney worked for the Rock Island District as a civil engineering technician from 1960 until his retirement in 1996.



**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.



**March Answer:**  
Lock and Dam 11,  
Dubuque, Iowa.

**Winner:** Alyssa  
Kling

## 2015 FEDERAL EMPLOYEE VIEWPOINT SURVEY COMING SOON

To provide employees an opportunity to share their opinions regarding their jobs and the Rock Island District work environment, the Office of Personnel Management (OPM) is preparing to launch the 2015 Federal Employee Viewpoint Survey (FEVS). This web-based survey lets you share your opinions on topics such as professional development opportunities, recognition and rewards, performance review processes, and work environment. OPM will launch the survey the week of May 4, 2015 to randomly selected employees. If you are selected to participate, you will receive an e-mail with instructions on how to complete the survey from [EVAC@opm.gov](mailto:EVAC@opm.gov). The FEVS feedback helps the Rock Island District shape the future of our organization as a great place to work.

### 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)

# MISSISSIPPI RIVER PROJECT HOSTS ANNUAL LOCKMASTER WORKSHOP

By Samantha Heilig, Editor

During the last week in March, the Mississippi River Project Office in Pleasant Valley, Iowa, hosted the District's Annual Lockmaster Workshop. This workshop is an opportunity for both the Mississippi River and the Illinois Waterway to gather and discuss various topics that affect all locks and dams throughout the District.


"The most important thing is having both rivers in attendance," said Dennis Shannon, chief Mississippi River Project Locks and Dam Section. "We all work for the same District with the same mission and it really helps to have everyone in the same room."

Subjects discussed included job safety, energy conservation, recreational boats, knowledge retention, site improvements, training, the Facility Equipment Maintenance (FEM) System, employee communications,

winter work, flood preparations, the Lock Performance Monitoring System (LPMS), lock dewaterings, and dive team work.

One major aspect of the workshop was a half-day session spent with representatives from the navigation industry and the U.S. Coast Guard.

"These are our customers," said Shannon. "It is important that we keep the lines of communication open to provide better service to all."

In addition to addressing issues and concerns at the workshop, they also looked at ways to improve. A few of the lockmasters had a chance to provide presentations about work being done at their facility. Lessons learned were then shared among the group to help inform on useful projects and improvements. 



## Attendees of the 2015 Lockmaster Workshop.

Front Row: Breanna Carr, Mississippi River Project Navigation Project Assistant; Dennis Shannon, Chief Mississippi River Project Locks and Dam Section; Aaron Dunlop, Acting Mississippi River Project Operations Manager; Mike Cox, Chief Operations Division; Col. Mark Deschenes, District Commander; Mike Zerbonia, Illinois Waterway Project Operations Manager; Craig Hess, Chief Illinois Waterway Locks and Dam Section; Margaret Rush, Illinois Waterway Project Navigation Project Assistant.

Second Row: James McDaniel, L/D 21 Lockmaster; William Poulter, Lock 19 Lockmaster; Nicholas Schnerre, L/D 16 Lockmaster; Larry Reeve, L/D 20 Lockmaster; Derrick Glisan, L/D 15 Lockmaster; Mark P. Witalka, Starved Rock L/D Lockmaster; William Cross, LaGrange L/D Lockmaster; Perry Jones III, Brandon Road L/D Lockmaster.

Third Row: Jon James, L/D 13 Lockmaster; John Mueller, L/D 12 Lockmaster; C.J. Brooks, Mississippi River Project L/D Civil Engineer; Alan Dickerson, L/D 18 Lockmaster; David Schipper, L/D 22 Lockmaster; Bradley Hank, L/D 14 Lockmaster.

Fourth Row: Scott Cooper, L/D 17 Lockmaster; J. Shane Iwen, Marseilles L/D Lockmaster; Michael Walsh, Lockport L/D Lockmaster; Larry Hibler, Dresden L/D Lockmaster; Robert Balamut, T.J. O'Brien L/D Lockmaster; Jason Brown, Illinois Waterway L/D Engineering Technician; Greg Patridge, Peoria L/D Lockmaster; James Piper, L/D11 Lockmaster.

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# BOBBER MAKES WATER SAFETY FUN



**B**obber the Water Safety Dog made an appearance at the Passport to Safety event in Moline, Illinois, on April 18. The event was hosted by local police and fire departments along with several other agencies to help promote child safety topics including water safety, bike safety, fire safety and many more. Park ranger Abby Steele from the Mississippi River Project assisted Bobber with stamping passports for hundreds of kids who visited the booth and learned about the Corps' mission of promoting water safety. [View Photos](#)

*Photos by Samantha Heilig and Abby Steele*