



US Army Corps  
of Engineers®

# TOWER TIMES

Rock Island District's News Magazine

August/September 2017



**Natural Resource Specialists Deploy  
New Data Collection Technology**



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

# TOWER TIMES

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**August/September 2017**

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Natural Resource Specialist  
Lauren McNeal sets up new data  
collection equipment. *Photo by  
Steve Acuff*

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## *Tower Times*

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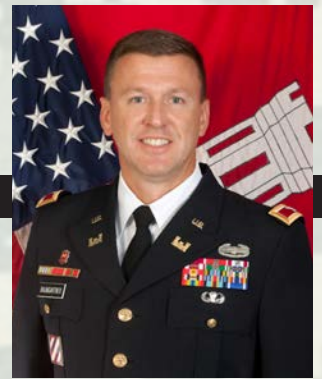
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*A message from....*

**Colonel Craig Baumgartner, District Commander**



## *Our Most Important Organizational Value – People First*

**W**ithin the Rock Island District, our team has an uncanny ability to deliver the mission. Whether it is making good on our promises, meeting milestones or managing our annual allocations, the Rock Island District team is known across the Division and the entire USACE Enterprise as a District that will get the job done. However, our team doesn't achieve success if we don't collectively adhere to our most important organizational value – "People First."

More than a year ago District staff, representing the entirety of our organization, gathered to define our District's values, vision and mission. The diverse group of District employees brought varying backgrounds and skill sets enabling a more inclusive discussion on how to define what the Rock Island District is all about. Over two days, the group came up with six values that complement the Army's values but hold specific meaning to our District. The values include: People First, Professionalism, Technical Excellence, Innovation, Public Service and Stewardship. The first value defined was People First and by making our people our top priority, we embolden and empower our other values. The group then used these values to create our new vision and mission.

Although there is always room for improvement, I believe this District generally does well adhering to our values, especially when it comes to People First. There are many recent examples of our District endeavoring to focus on our people. One such example would be training. A great way of putting our people first is to ensure they have the tools and expertise to carry out their jobs with a high level of confidence and professionalism. Not only does training provide our people with on-the-job knowledge, it can also increase a person's enjoyment of their work.

For many years, our training budget, for all intents and purposes, lagged behind. But, in sticking with our People First value, the District increased its training budget in recent fiscal years. This increase in training funds has enabled us to provide more for our people, expanding their access to career-broadening and enriching experiences to share with our Team.

When considering training, we need to look beyond just job-specific training. Another effort toward putting our people first has been easing the requirements for conference attendance.

Work-related conferences can provide outstanding networking opportunities and give our employees insight outside of their day-to-day duties. Attendance can bolster awareness of bigger picture mission ideas and provide employees with increased job satisfaction. Of course not all conferences are in the best interest of the government from a financial perspective. Being fiscally responsible is always the priority but it has been a nice change of pace to see more valuable conference-like training approved for our teammates.

In keeping with our District's commitment to better training for our people, we volunteered to be a pilot district for the Total Employment Development system. TED, as it is known, streamlines much of the minutia involved with tracking and applying for training. Whether it is your annual mandatory training or a class that will help expand your work expertise, TED is making it a more simple process. The pilot has gone very well, with other Districts contacting Rock Island District for advice on transitioning to TED. Ultimately TED provides more readily available training with less hurdles.

The annual Federal Employment Viewpoint Survey is an excellent tool for gaging what this District does well and, maybe not so well. We deliberately evaluate employee input to FEVS to guide our efforts as we move forward together, with a focus on ways to advance our People First value.

One example, the FEVS indicated that we needed resource supervisor training. We listened to this input and brought in world-renowned experts like Dr. Alan Zimmerman to inspire and enable our supervisors to be better communicators with their employees. And, because some employees felt that critical, high-use information was not readily available, we revamped our District intranet page, giving it a new look that is much more user friendly and provides necessary information and resources at everyone's fingertips.


There are countless other examples of our District placing people first. Our leaders are engaged and are working hard to improve vertical communication throughout the organization. We have initiatives like monthly lunch and learn events and equal employment observances that are helping to keep our people informed on a variety of topics. We have made safety a top priority which is imperative to a People First culture. And, in order to recognize our teammates, we host monthly

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awards ceremonies. Those ceremonies along with our annual employee appreciation events like Corps Day and the holiday party, are indicative of the organization-wide commitment to placing our People First.

Having served as your commander for more than two years, it is my assessment that we are generally living our People First value. I encourage all of you to seek new ways

to prioritize your teammates and those who work for you. By making our people a top priority, we will ensure future successes. Nothing we accomplish as a District is possible without people. I know that you will all continue to live our People First value. Thank you for all you do each and every day. CONTINUE BUILDING STRONG! 

## April Employee of the Month...

### Congratulations to LySanias Broyles Employee of the Month

The water level data manually entered by the lock and dam personnel, and automatically retrieved from Lock Performance Monitoring System (LPMS) by water management, are critical to USACE water managers and National Weather Service (NWS) forecasters for managing and forecasting water levels on the Mississippi, Illinois, and Ohio Rivers. From April 5-28, the District's servers lost contact with the database. LySanias Broyles is the primary water management employee throughout USACE with access to the LPMS database. He coordinated efforts with ACE-IT to resolve connectivity issues and developed an alternative method of retrieving the data. Broyles' actions saved numerous man hours for USACE and NWS personnel whom would have otherwise had to manually enter the data for reports, forecasting models, and dissemination to the public. Broyles is a true professional whose outstanding performance of duty is in keeping with the highest traditions of civil service and brings great credit upon himself, the Rock Island District, and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers.



Can you name where the photo to the left was taken?

If so, send your answer to [Samantha.A.Heilig@usace.army.mil](mailto:Samantha.A.Heilig@usace.army.mil) to be entered for a prize and be featured in the next issue of the Tower Times.



**June/July**

**Answer:** Roller gate machinery at Lock 15.

**Winner:** John Behrens

# GIRLS' DAY AT THE MUSEUM: STUDENTS LEARN ABOUT ENGINEERING THROUGH CREATIVITY

By Katherine Rosario, Editor

**D**istrict engineers Melissa Brown and Kaileigh Scott volunteered their time on July 28 to teach girls in grades four through eight what it's like to be an engineer for a day.

In partnership with the Putnam Museum in Davenport, Iowa, and hosted by the Iowa State University College of Engineering, Iowa State Engineering Kids camp allows elementary and middle school students the chance to learn about science, technology and engineering in a fun, hands on environment.

Brown, an engineering technician for the District, has volunteered at the camp for the last five years.

"I have always volunteered to be an assistant activity coordinator because that involves staying with the same group of girls all day, moving them from activity to activity, and helping them with the activities," Brown said.

Spending all day with the same group of girls gives her the chance to get to know them better and understand their strengths and how they learn best, she said.

"A couple of the girls come every year and it's nice to catch up with them, hear how they are doing in school, and see what their new interests are this year," she said.

Brown has watched the camp grow in popularity over the years and said she is amazed at how many girls participated this year.

"There was only about 50 girls the first year I

volunteered," Brown said. "This year there was 90."

Brown spent the day assisting the girls with a Rube Goldberg project, which involves creating a pathway for a marble to travel from one end to another, all while passing through a maze of objects.

"It's always interesting to me to see how the different age groups approach a problem or activity," she said. "The younger girls usually want to try multiple options before coming up with a solution, while the older girls seem to want to plan out a solution on paper or in discussion before trying it."

Scott, a civil engineer for the District, said she enjoyed helping the girls through the problem-solving process at each activity. This was her first year volunteering.

For the first activity of the day, she helped the girls come up with an engineering-based solution to a problem involving imaginary toxic sludge in an activity called Toxic Town.

"A camp like this is important because kids from all backgrounds should have the opportunity to learn about science and engineering," she said.

Greta Brus, 10, said her favorite part about the day was learning how to use the tools provided to solve the problem.

She said she knows a little about engineering because her family owns a farm.

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From left: Anna Weinberger, 10; Melissa Tilden, 10; Greta Brus, 10; and Ashanti Kolvey, 10; watch as Rock Island District engineer Kaileigh Scott explains how different materials can be used to solve an engineering problem. Photo by Katherine Rosario



The girls test out their plan to move the cup filled with blocks into the empty bowl, without using their hands, during engineering camp at the Putnam Museum on July 28. Photo by Katherine Rosario

# LOUISVILLE DISTRICT CONSTRUCTING NEW HOMES ON ROCK ISLAND ARSENAL

By Katherine Rosario, Editor

Sunlight pours through the large picture windows as a boat glides along the Mississippi River. Pelicans bob in the water and a light breeze floats through the house. This isn't a vacation home with a fantastic view. Soon military families assigned to the Rock Island Arsenal will be able to enjoy these views in their new homes built by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Louisville District.

Thirty-three new single-family homes are currently under construction along the Mississippi River between the Col. Davenport House and Quarters One. Construction on the subdivision's 21 three-bedroom and 12 four-bedroom homes started Dec. 1, 2016, and is expected to near completion by spring of next year, said Donald Peterson,

resident engineer for the Louisville District. The \$22.8 million contract includes new underground utilities for the site, new streets, a walking trail, playground, bus stop and basketball court.

On the other side of the island, new homes are replacing the older family housing units from the 1960s. The family housing townhomes, located on Rodman Ave. near the Moline gate, were torn down last year and are being replaced with 15 duplexes and eight single-family homes. Construction on the 10 three-bedroom and 28 four-bedroom homes is expected to be completed by summer of next year. The \$23.3 million contract includes bus stops, playgrounds, walking trails and a basketball court.



Large picture windows overlooking the Mississippi River are one of the many features found in the new homes being constructed between the Col. Davenport House and Quarters One on Rock Island Arsenal. The new community will house 31 families and include a basketball court, running trails and a bus stop. *Photo by Katherine Rosario*

All the homes will be Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) Silver certified. This certification is a contract requirement, Peterson said, and is also mandated by the Department of the Army.

“The LEED standards include a multitude of items, the most important of which, in my opinion, is energy efficiency,” he said.

All of the homes are made of wood frame construction with fiber cement board siding, brick veneer and vinyl windows. Every home has one room with reinforced walls that acts as a storm shelter.

Home sizes range from 1,630 to 2,510 square feet. Depending on the model, the flooring includes vinyl, porcelain and carpet. The kitchen comes with built-in appliances and quartz countertops.

“There are eight different types of single-family homes and five different types of duplexes being built,” Peterson said, adding that all homes will have a two-car garage. “There are various color schemes and finishes being used so they will not all be the same.”

Currently, the Louisville District has nine employees working at their Rock Island Resident Office managing the contract changes, communication, schedule management and coordination, Peterson said.

The most rewarding part of the project, he said, is “seeing new housing being constructed that our soldiers and families can eventually consider as home.” 



**Louisville District Project Engineer Gerald Zerphey, far left, explains the importance of the reinforced metal between the studs during a site tour for the District’s visiting cadets. Each home is equipped with a safe room to help protect residents during bad weather.** *Photo by Katherine Rosario*



**Fifteen duplexes will replace the original family housing townhomes along Rodman Ave. Five different models will be constructed, each with a two-car garage and three to four bedrooms. The community includes a bus stop, playground, basketball court and walking trails.** *Photo by Katherine Rosario*

# Training Tidbits

By Sara Paxson, District Training Officer

LDP1 is open and accepting applications for the upcoming October program. Those interested should contact their office training coordinator to apply. Additional info can be found at: [https://team.usace.army.mil/sites/MVR/trng/SitePages/Leadership\\_Training.aspx](https://team.usace.army.mil/sites/MVR/trng/SitePages/Leadership_Training.aspx).

Interested in other leadership development opportunities? The Army's Civilian Education System provides leadership development. CES offers online and resident training classes. Additional info for CES can be found at: [http://cpol.army.mil/library/train/acteds/CP\\_20/CP20-AppG.pdf](http://cpol.army.mil/library/train/acteds/CP_20/CP20-AppG.pdf).

Have you had a chance to check out our new training management system Total Employee Development (TED)? Additional guidance and tools will be communicated in the next few months as we dive deeper into this robust system. Employees are encouraged to utilize the system especially for setting up short and long term goals on the Individual Development Plan. Office training coordinators can help with questions.

Be on the lookout for training opportunities focused on the new performance management system called Defense Performance Management and Appraisal Program (DPMAP). Two days of training is required for all employees and will take place in the first and second quarter of Fiscal year 2018.



**District Commander Col. Craig S. Baumgartner welcomes employees from Rock Island, St. Paul and Chicago Districts for the kick off of the Leadership Development Program Level 2. Employees will spend the next few months learning about themselves and enhancing their personal and professional leadership skills.** *Photo by Katherine Rosario*

*(continued from page 5)*



**Melissa Brown, engineering technician for the District, watches Lorna Calleja, 12, test out her Rube Goldberg model during engineering kids camp on July 28.**

*Photo by Katherine Rosario*

"I want to be an agricultural engineer when I grow up," she said.


Anna Weinberger, 10, said she learned that an idea about how to solve a problem may not always work the first time, but that doesn't mean there isn't a solution.

"You get to learn how an engineer works, and you can work with other people, so as you get to know them better you can work better next time," she said.

Scott said her favorite part of the day was

watching the girls work together.

"I liked that the program really stressed facilitating the problem-solving process," she said. "The volunteers were encouraged to ask leading questions and not give solutions when a team was struggling.

"A camp like this is important because kids from all backgrounds should have the opportunity to learn about science and engineering," she said. 

## Fun Fact:

Rube Goldberg is the only person ever to be listed in the Merriam Webster Dictionary as an adjective.



# NATURAL RESOURCE SPECIALISTS DEPLOY NEW DATA COLLECTION TECHNOLOGY

By Katherine Rosario, Editor

**R**ock Island District natural resource specialists have a lot of ground to cover, about 60,000 acres. Their assessment of the forests, river banks and islands is important in understanding how the landscape changes over time. To better help them understand the ever-changing environment, the District's Enterprise Geospatial Information System (EGIS) Office equipped them with new, high-tech gear.

For the past 10 years, the District's EGIS office has worked on a program that standardizes data collection, uploads it to a central server, and makes uniform data sets available across the enterprise. This spring, natural resource specialists started testing the new GPS equipment and have come to rely on it for its comprehensive, fast and efficient methods of data collection.

In the early 1980s, they would go



**Pathways Intern Steve Acuff measures the diameter of a tree to be used in a data set. Various trees are measured within a variable radius plot as part of the data collection. Photo by Lauren McNeal**

out into the field and map forestry data by hand; drawing out a specific location and coloring in where the trees were located, said Joseph Lundh, Supervisory Natural Resource Specialist.

"They'd take a few plots and summarize that data to determine what types of trees were in the area and how big the trees were in diameter," he said. "The database originally was just paper sheets drawn on by hand with a grease pencil, and that was filed in a large cabinet in someone's office."

Because of this storage method, accessing the data could be difficult. In the early 1990s those paper images were digitized but still weren't readily accessible to others throughout the District. Even if someone could access the data, it often wasn't in a standardized format, Lundh said.

"We needed a way to store and share the data," said Michael Dougherty, senior geographer. "The biggest obstacle was not only finding a data collection system that was easy to use, but also one that allowed the storage of data in a way that was easily accessible to others."

The EGIS team turned to a cloud-based system that allows them to streamline the process of storing and searching for data.

"Our goals for this project are the ease of collecting data, an easy system to upload and store it, reusability across the Corps, and transparency," Dougherty said.

The new cloud-based system is in line with current industry standards, said Chuck Gerdes, EGIS Program Manager, adding that this approach allows other Districts to look at the



**Natural Resource Specialist Lauren McNeal uses a prism to determine which trees to collect data on as she creates a variable radius plot. The data is entered into the handheld device and uploaded through the cloud. Photo by Steve Acuff**

data for use in their own offices.

"Our goal is to look at District data sets that need to be better managed," he said. "When you can standardize format and collection, plus make it easily accessible to all, it then has tremendous value."

Outreach meetings between the EGIS office and the natural resource specialists started about four years ago to better understand their needs and be responsive to their requests, Dougherty said, adding that getting the standardized equipment was a big step to setting up the program.

"Before, different field offices bought their own equipment, had to train up on how to use it, and then the equipment wasn't guaranteed to work across the Corps," he said. "Often, that valuable data got stuck on either the device or someone's computer."

The new system deploys the same equipment out to all the field offices with the same training manual for everyone.

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# Spotlight on the District

## GENE SPERRY USACE VOLUNTEER

By Katherine Rosario, Editor

Corps volunteer Gene Sperry has given more than 1,300 hours of his time to the Mississippi River Visitor Center at Locks and Dam 15 since starting in March 2015.

On Aug. 11, the Corps Foundation, a non-profit organization supporting Corps lakes and waterways, recognized Sperry for his service by presenting him a Volunteer Excellence coin.

Gregory A. Miller, chairperson for the Corps of Engineers Natural Resources Education Foundation, wrote in a letter to Sperry, "One of the Corps Foundation's overarching goals is to encourage a well-informed and involved public that contributes to the stewardship of Corps lakes and waterways. In today's tight financial environment, volunteers are a prime example of how a concerned public is helping the Corps to achieve its recreation and environmental stewardship missions and public responsibility in caring for Corps lands, facilities and resources."

Sperry supports the staff at the visitor's center by providing outreach programs to various stakeholders and school groups, helping manage the front desk and gift shop, and leading tours of the locks and dam and Clock Tower. He has represented USACE during several events throughout the Quad Cities, including the Quad City Camping Show, Quad City Sportsman and Outdoor Show,



**Maj. Rachel Honderd, Rock Island District Deputy Commander (left), presents the Corps Foundation's Volunteer Excellence coin to Gene Sperry, a volunteer at the Mississippi River Visitor's Center at Locks and Dam 15 (right), during an award ceremony Aug. 11.**

*Photo by Katherine Rosario*

and Quad City Bald Eagle Days.

"Sperry has been and continues to be a selfless volunteer who has become a great asset to the overall success of the Mississippi River Project's Recreation Program," said Kelly Thomas, chief of the Mississippi River Project Natural Resources Section.

His favorite part of volunteering, Sperry said, is interacting with the visitors.

"I like meeting the public and sharing the history of the island and the Mississippi River," he said. "I like supporting the park rangers and enjoy meeting and working with the wonderful people at the Corps."

Originally from Davenport, Iowa, Sperry now lives in Bettendorf, Iowa, where he enjoys volunteering at his church, woodworking and bass fishing. He served in the Army as an engineer from 1966-1969 and was stationed at the European Command in Stuttgart, Germany. Sperry has a daughter who lives in Davenport, Iowa, a son who lives in Buehler, North Dakota, and eight grandchildren.

His advice to readers is, "It's better to give than to receive. Giving back benefits everyone."

Those interested in becoming a USACE volunteer should contact the Visitors Center at 309-794-5338. 



**USACE volunteer Gene Sperry at the Locks and Dam 15 Visitor's Center. Photo by Samantha Heilig**

# SAYLORVILLE LAKE PARTICIPATES IN OPERATIONAL CONDITION ASSESSMENT

By Katherine Rosario, Editor

More than 250 million people visit the Corps' lake and river projects each year. As visitors utilize the campgrounds, picnic areas and boat ramps, natural resource specialists work hard to maintain the safety and upkeep of the recreation sites.

The upkeep of the Corps' more than 5,000 recreation sites means that proper budget allocation is vital to preserving the outdoor experience visitors have come to expect from a Corps-managed area.

"For years, recreation budget allocation was determined by a data collection and input program, RecBEST, which collected information regarding the performance and condition of a identified recreation area to justify which areas needed more or less money," said Brian Nail, Supervisory Natural Resource Specialist at Saylorville Lake.

Over time, the RecBEST program required additional data, which lead to different people at various projects reporting data without using a standardized tool, Nail said.



**Ryan Hartwig, Natural Resources Program Manager from the South Atlantic Division, views Saylorville Lake's new automated pay machine as part of the Recreation Operational Conditions Assessment. Photo by Brian Nail**

"Inconsistencies were noticed in the program and it was decided that a metric needed to be developed to standardize how data was collected and reported," he said. Nail added that a standardized data set meant all the recreation areas were looked at equally when it came time to allocate money for operation and repairs of recreation assets.

To improve data collection consistency, a national team was formed and the RecBEST program was eliminated.

The new USACE Infrastructure Strategy creates and maintains an accurate inventory of all assets, conducts condition assessment surveys, and determines consequence and associated risks. Each asset receives an overall grade which is rolled up to business line managers to determine what packages should be ranked highest to receive recreation funds.

This national team leverages employees from various Divisions and Districts consisting of a variety of offices to include lake managers, park rangers, asset managers, engineers and landscape architects. In order to keep the evaluation fair and consistent this national team will remain the same until the conclusion of all the pilot studies, Nail said.

"The recreation team needs the Operational Condition Assessment and a list of recreation assets to fairly and uniformly rank assets, so when it comes to budget time, everyone is on the same playing field and monies are allocated fairly," he said.

Each site and its utilities, campgrounds and picnic areas are given an A through F rating based on an extensive survey done every five years.

"The ratings help give justification for money allocation," Nail said.

While the team is on the ground surveying the sites they are able to use their smartphones and tablets to capture pictures of facilities in need of repair and upload the information to a centralized database.

Saylorville Lake was selected for the new pilot program and data collected from the site will help the team learn how the lake's recreation areas compare to others in the country and what work needs to be done.

The Saylorville Lake staff is currently waiting for the final report from the National OCA Team, however, before they departed, the team gave them positive feedback in regard to the overall recreation program, modernization efforts and condition of parks and facilities. 🇺🇸

(continued from page 9)

“The software is easy to use and any Corps employee looking for data can search and access it,” Dougherty said.

Forester Benjamin Vandermyde with the Mississippi River Project Office agrees: the new system is more comprehensive and after practicing with the new tools data can be collected faster and more efficiently, he said.

“It takes about a half hour to get the system up and running and then the office can see the data within 10 minutes of the data being collected,” Vandermyde said, explaining that the

growing season, May to October, is the busiest time for data collection and that efficiency is key to accomplishing their collection goals.

With the cloud-based system, no one has to worry about losing their data.

“If you’re in the field for the week, you don’t have to worry about losing the data because it’s loaded into the cloud as we collect the data,” he said.

The data is more timeless, Lundh said, because it’s collected in the same database format and data collection method, which makes it comparable against other data sets for years to

come.

“If you had different protocols and different data collection times, or maybe different focus, it would be hard to translate that data over time because you wouldn’t be able to show your trends,” Vandermyde said. “The standardization of how data is collected gives us a better understanding of the shifts that happen over time.”

From hand-drawn data sets to cloud-based technology, the District is leveraging new tools to support the Corps’ mission.

## Around the District

### Retirements ...

**Jeffrey Inks**, Natural Resource Specialist at Saylorville Lake, retired July 27, after dedicating more than 29 years of service to the federal government.

**Thomas Reiter**, Brandon Road Lock and Dam Operator, retired July 31, after dedicating more than 27 years of service to the federal government.

**Richard Knoke**, Natural Resource Specialist at Coralville Lake, retired August 19, after dedicating more than 14 years of service to the federal government.

**Robert Ayotte**, Realty Specialist, retired August 31, after dedicating more than 26 years of service to the federal government.

### Sympathy ...



**Holly Jo Alford, 60**, of Blue Grass, Iowa, passed away Aug. 15.

Alford worked for the Rock Island District’s Operations Division and Information Management Office for 27 years before retiring in 2004.



**Richard (Dick) Lemke, 78**, of Bettendorf, Iowa, passed away Aug. 31.

Lemke worked for the Rock Island District as chief of the Construction Division. After retirement, he served several rehired annuitant details for USACE, including assisting the Rock Island New Orleans Support Branch in 2010. Lemke was also a member of the U.S. Army.



**Robbie C. Shoemaker Heitzman, 93**, of Moline, Illinois, passed away Aug. 29.

Shoemaker Heitzman retired from the Rock Island District Contracting Division in 1990. She is the mother of former Operations Division Chief Kenn Shoemaker and grandmother to Joey Shoemaker of the Regulatory Branch. She served in the U.S. Navy in the communication intelligence department as part of the WAVES (Women Accepted for Volunteer Emergency Service) program before her discharge in 1946.

# Auditor's Corner - Government Purchase Card Use

By Michael Roarty, Chief, Internal Review



As the District's auditor, I conduct reviews of Government Purchase Cards (GPC). Ann Marie McCrery, GPC coordinator in Contracting, is responsible for auditing all GPC purchases. I assist with the review concerning split purchases. One of the biggest misuses/fraud involving the GPC is

split purchases. Split purchases using the GPC constitutes a misuse of the card. Depending on the severity of the misuse, disciplinary action may be involved. Here are some tips to avoid a split purchase:

## Single Purchase limits:

- Supply \$3,500 (office supplies, mulch, tools)
- Service \$2,500 (repairs, inspections, maintenance)
- Construction \$2,000

Examples of split purchases or split requirements include the following:

1. A single cardholder making multiple purchases from the same merchant on the same day, the total of which exceeds the single purchase limit and the total requirement was known at the time of the first purchase.

Example: Purchase decking lumber from a home improvement store on Monday in the amount of \$2,000 to build a deck, and then purchase spindles and lumber for stairs from the same store on the same day in the amount of \$2,000 for the same deck.

2. A single cardholder purchasing the same or similar item(s) from multiple merchants on the same day, the total of which exceeds the single purchase limit and the total was known at the time of the first purchase.

Example: Purchase decking lumber from a home improvement store on Monday in the amount of \$2,400 to build a deck, and then purchase spindles and lumber for stairs from another local lumber yard on the same day in the amount of \$2,000 for the same deck.


3. A single cardholder making multiple purchases of similar items from the same or multiple merchants over a period of time when the total requirement was known at time of the first purchase and the value exceeds the single purchase limit.

Example: You are aware that you need playground equipment: Six swings, four monkey bars and two slides totaling \$5,000. So you buy three swings, and the slides from Menards for \$3,500 and two weeks later three swings and the monkey bars from Playground Bonanza for \$1,500.

4. Multiple cardholders under the same supervision or billing officials purchasing the same or similar item(s) the same day or in a compressed timeframe when the total requirement is known at a given time and exceeds the single purchase limit.

Example: You are aware that you need 6,000 pounds of rock for a parking area in the amount of \$4,000. One CH puts \$2,000 on their card for 3,000 pounds being delivered this week, and another CH puts the remaining \$2,000 on their card for the 3,000 pounds to be delivered next week.

5. Requirements exceeding the micro-purchase threshold. (i.e. yearly requirement where the monthly recurring services are less than the micro-purchase threshold but the known yearly total exceed the micro-purchase threshold.)

Example: Authorized \$2,500 for the year, which comes out to \$208 a month. A monthly bill that exceeds \$208 should go through contracting. Required annual inspection that exceed threshold should go through contracting. 

## Definitions:

**Split Purchase:** Splitting is the intentional breaking down of a known requirement such as annual inspections, electrical/plumbing/lumber/paint/concrete on construction or repair to stay within a cardholder's single purchase limit to avoid other procurement methods or competition requirements.

# SAFETY CORNER

## DISTRICT DEMONSTRATES IT'S READY FOR NEW SAFETY MANAGEMENT SYSTEM

By Troy Larson, Chief of Safety and Occupational Health

The Rock Island District underwent a Stage 1 baseline assessment in preparation for beginning the Corps of Engineers Safety Occupational Health Management System (CE-SOHMS). During a weeklong review of current safety policies, safety processes and field practices by the Department of Defense Center of Safety Management Excellence (DoD-SMCX), the District demonstrated it is 96 percent ready to move to the next step, Stage 2. According to the DoD-SMCX, the District demonstrated the highest level readiness ever achieved during a baseline assessment.

Now the District can focus on putting best practices to use and getting all employees engaged in safety management. The goal is to ensure all employees know, understand and follow current safety and occupational health (SOH) processes and practices.

Now is the time to put these baseline SOH tools to good use and work together to implement them in a manner that ensures employees, supervisors and management engage to reshape our safety culture in everything we do.

The assessment team conducted reviews on five standard SOH areas:

- Management, leadership and personnel participation
- Investigating and reporting of mishaps, incidents and illnesses



**Maj. Rachel Honderd, deputy commander; and Col. Craig S. Baumgartner, District commander, are briefed by DOD Safety Management Center for Excellence representatives during the CE-SOHMS Stage 1 baseline assessment on July 18.** *Photo by Katherine Rosario*




**Troy Larson, chief of Safety and Occupational Health, reviews the areas of excellence with senior leaders during the CE-SOHMS outbrief on July 20.** *Photo by Katherine Rosario*

- Conducting SOH training and promotion
- Conducting inspections and assessments
- Conducting hazard analysis and countermeasures

The District scored 100 percent on three out of five areas, with Inspections and Assessments scoring 87 percent and Hazard Analysis and Countermeasures scoring 90 percent.

Our District team has developed the tools necessary to implement the CE-SOHMS program successfully due in large part to the teamwork of our collateral duty safety officers, leadership support and field site engagement with District employees.

We will continue to work with team members to document and update safety processes to ensure our data reporting is standardized. The DoD-SMCX also suggested that we look for alternative ways to increase participation of non-safety personnel in safety activities. To do so, the District selected two employees as CE-SOHMS Champions to ensure all District employees are engaged. Tom Heinold (Operations Division Champ) and Barb Lester (Engineering and Construction Co-Champ) will be heading a project delivery team to get the District ready for the next step Stage 2 assessments in summer 2018.

Thank you to everyone in the District who has put effort toward developing safety plans, attending safety meetings and being part of the safety solution. We look forward to building upon these programs and working with everyone to achieve a safer workplace. 

# CADETS TOUR DISTRICT PROJECTS, LEARN ABOUT CORPS' MANY MISSIONS

By Katherine Rosario, Editor

Although the Rock Island District is made up mainly of civilian employees, the Corps has a large active-duty military presence throughout the world. For young soldiers interested in pursuing a career with the Corps, USACE hosts the Cadet District Engineer Program, which gives cadets the opportunity to explore different career paths within the Corps.

This summer the District hosted two cadets to give them a behind-the-scenes look at how the Rock Island District manages its recreation and project sites.

Cadet Maximilion Rawls was one of the cadets who spent a month with the District touring locks and dams, recreation sites and construction projects. A student at Texas A&M University, Rawls will graduate in 2020 with a degree in engineering.

During his time at the District he toured the Louisville District's new housing construction and the Joint Manufacturing and Technology Center on Rock Island Arsenal. He also visited the District's lake projects and locks and dams.

"I enjoyed the variety of experiences I got to partake in, anything from construction site visits to being on a boat on the river looking at environmental projects," he said. "This range of involvement made every day exciting and new, as well as providing information for any interest I might have had."

His favorite part, he said, was touring Lake Red Rock's construction project and the reservoir dam.

"The scale of both was something I had never seen before and I was extremely interested in the process




**1st Lt Carley Vernon, project engineer, and Cadet Maximilion Rawls review the names and images of the fossils found at Coralville Lake's Devonian Fossil Gorge, which were first discovered during the Floods of 1993 and 2008. The fossils date back more than 300 million years. Photo by Katherine Rosario**

behind operating and constructing both," Rawls said.

Before spending time at the District, Rawls said he thought the Corps' main mission was public waterway infrastructure.

"I was surprised by the extent of environmental work and preservation the Corps was involved in but experiencing departments like Regulatory I realized the Corps does a lot with maintaining the health of America's waterways," he said.

As the end of his four weeks with the District, Rawls said he has a new outlook on what the Corps does and how it supports the Army's missions.

"My experience was extremely positive. Not only did I learn a lot about the Corps missions and capabilities, I also received some information on how the Army works as a whole and with the civilian world," he said. 



**1st Lt Carley Vernon, project engineer, explains the importance of controlling the water level of Coralville Lake as Cadet Maximilion Rawls watches the water exiting the reservoir gates. Rawls spent a month touring different District project sites to learn more about the Corps' mission. Photo by Katherine Rosario**

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