



Investing In Our People

Around the District

Water Safety Newsletter Mailed

On Feb. 24, 90 copies of the Illinois Waterway Water Safety Newsletter were mailed out. These went to local marinas, boat clubs, agencies, and boat owners that have asked to be on the mailing list. Included in the newsletter were the results of a recent survey of lock staff along the waterway.

One of the questions on the survey... What was the most common problem with recreation boaters last year?

The answer?

Recreation boaters don't know the proper procedures for locking through. So, the newsletter included instructions as well.

Learning Center Available for Use

The finishing touches were put on the Saylorville Lake Learning Center and Audubon Office and should now be available.

The transformation of the building from a construction office to its present condition is nothing short of remarkable. New walls, windows, doors and flooring, a new restroom facility and improved access have made the building more functional and inviting. New tables and chairs have been ordered for the learning center that will make the building functional as an environmental educational center and meeting facility. The learning center staff looks forward to the presence and involvement of the Audubon Society who will be managing the center under a Cooperating Association Agreement with the Project.

Recruitment for Rangers Starting at Early Age

The vacancy list for natural resource jobs available to the 290 Iowa State University Animal Ecology students this year included 2,375 positions. Only nine of those students applied for eight positions advertised by the Iowa Department of Natural Resources.

There was likewise barely enough interest in Student Temporary Excepted Positions at Saylorville Lake this summer. A current effort of the Saylorville Lake Project to stimulate interest among younger students and to increase interest among minorities will be to participate in a YMCA Young Naturalist Camp this summer for fifth and sixth-grade students.

It is important to target this age so when "baby-boomers" retire from positions in the field, there will be an adequate supply of eager, young candidates to fill the vacancies.

Howell Station Opens

Gate attendant training was conducted March 20 through 22, for Lake Red Rock's new Howell Station gate attendants.

The new updated '99 version of the Park Office software was installed March 21 and had all the reservations taken to date downloaded onto the Howell Station computer. It looks like all the major holiday time periods are fully booked for the season.

A pre-work meeting was also held on March 21, for the new Howell Station custodians, which began work March 22.

E-Mail, Popular Channel for Public Comment

Since the establishment of the Saylorville Lake Project web site and the listing of an address for public comment, the use of e-mail is becoming a popular means of exchanging ideas and information with the public. Replies have been quick and complete and there have been several compliments returned for fast and thorough responses.

"Bald Eagle Days" Attracts Over 3,000 Visitors at Lake Red Rock

On Feb. 25 and 26, Lake Red Rock hosted the 12th annual "Bald Eagle Days," a special event to celebrate America's symbol and its successful comeback from the brink of extinction.

Indoor programs were held at the Pella Community Center, and featured a live eagle and other birds of prey. Staff and volunteers were also on hand below the dam to help visitors view eagles in the wild. The first day of the event was targeted specifically to area schools, and attracted more than 1,800 students and teachers. The second day, which was open to the general public, attracted almost 1,400 visitors.

Congrats...

Congratulations to Larry and Jill Owens, Information Management, on the birth of a new son, Noah Michael, on Jan. 29, 2000. He weighed 7 pounds and was 19 inches.

Winter Energy Days Successful

Lake Red Rock interpretive staff and the Marion County naturalist presented programs for area seventh graders during "Winter Energy Days," an annual event coordinated with Pella Middle School.

Students rotated between five programs: Birds and Energy Strategies, Cold Water Survival, Plant and Animal Winter Adaptations, the "Enviroscope" Watershed program, and a Predator/Prey activity. Approximately 150 students participated in the daylong event.

Radio Personality Comes to Visitor Center

On Jan. 29, the Heritage Corridor Visitors Bureau sponsored an appearance by WGN Radio's Spike O'Dell at the Visitor Center. This was part of the station's Flock to the Rock promotion. The appearance brought 600 people to the Visitor Center in about three hours.

Flock to the Rock was built around the Visitor Center Eagle Watch as a way to attract visitors to the Starved Rock area during the winter. Flock now includes the eagle watches, a cross-country ski weekend, pipe organ concerts and other special events.

Speakers Bureau

By Justine Dodge, Public Affairs

Jerry Skalak, from Planning, Programs and Project Management Division, spoke with more than 15 members of the Quad City Society of Environmental Professionals in Davenport, Iowa, on Jan. 4. The topic of his discussion was the Environmental Management Program.

On Jan. 13, **Donna Jones**, from Regulatory Division, spoke to attendees of the Illinois Association of Drainage District's annual meeting. The organization's mission is to improve land and water management and the topic of Jones' speech was Rock Island District regulatory policies. The meeting was held in Bloomington, Ill.

Don Bardole, from Operations

Locking it Up

William Hallam, Lock and Dam 17, presented an educational unit to the Challenge class at New Central School, Havana, Ill., March 14. Hallam, and his daughter Kim, a teacher at Warren School, Havana, Ill., have developed an educational unit about towboats, locks and dams, and rivers and have displayed the unit to several schools.

During the New Central School presentation, information on towboat locations were checked each day on the Internet. The students drew boat names and had a race to see which boat would reach St. Paul, Minn., first this spring.

The class is planning to tour the Peoria Lock and Dam this spring.

Bielenberg Graduates From Auction College

Earning the honorary title of "Colonel," Richard Bielenberg, Contracting Division, recently graduated from the World Wide College of Auctioneering, Mason City, Iowa.

Bielenberg successfully completed the course of instruction and training covering all phases of auctioneering taught by 20 professional instructors at the college. During the training program, Bielenberg also received the real-life experience of calling a public auction sale.



Construction Representative of the Year

Paul Burnett has been selected as the Construction Representative of the Year for the Rock Island District. This is an annual Construction Division award for exceptional work as a construction quality assurance representative.

Nearly everyone in the District has had an opportunity to see the renovations of the Clock Tower Building. As the Quality Assurance Representative on this construction project, Burnett has played a key part in the success of the project.

The quality of the work has been exceptionally good and the residents of the Clock Tower have only experienced minimal impacts. The completion of the work on time, the efficient relocation of employees, and the quality of work have all resulted from Burnett's efforts.

Division, spoke with more than 40 members of the High 12 Club on Jan. 18 in Davenport, Iowa. His speech discussed Locks and Dam 15.

On Jan. 27, **Steve Vacek**, from Operations Division, spoke to seniors at the Bettendorf Public Library, about eagles. His presentation was well received by the more than 30 seniors in attendance.

Members of Decatur Transportation Club, a group of transportation professionals, spoke with **Paul Soyke**, from Planning, Programs and Project Management Division, on Feb. 8 in Decatur, Ill. The topic of his presentation was navigation.

Kevin Ewbank, Operations Division, gave a presentation on the Illinois Waterway to more than 50 members of the National Association of Retired Federal Employees. The presentation was given on Feb. 15 in Peoria, Ill.

Vacek entertained seniors on Feb. 9 with his "Visitor from the Past" presentation. The presentation was given to more than 30 seniors at the Iowa Masonic Nursing Home.

Cory Delong, **John Behrens** and **Tom Mack**, all from Engineering Division, judged a science fair at Aldrin Junior High School on Feb. 18 in Barstow, Ill. More than 80 students participated in the fair.