



After One Year: Success and Results

By Col. William Bayles, District Engineer

As I look back over my first year of serving with you, there are several strong impressions sticking in my mind.

First, is the dedication and professionalism of the Corps' people. I am truly amazed at the things we can do, both individually and collectively. Let me cite some examples:

- Lock 15 continues to add to a 28-year perfect safety record.
- The Mississippi River Project repair crew pounded through the river ice with the repair fleet during New Year's week to assist St. Louis District with repairs at Mel Price Locks.
- Engineering Division redesigned critical features of the Loves Park Flood Protection Project to reduce the real estate needs, thus helping the city resolve a real estate impasse that threatened to delay the project.
- Collectively, we exceeded two of our three major program execution goals at the end of last year.
- As a team, we served our neighbors during a major flood.
- Together, we won recognition from the Lincoln Foundation for Business Excellence.

You can be very proud of what you have done over the past year.

Let me return to the flood fighting efforts for just a moment. I join with many others to salute the manner in which you serve our neighbors in the region. When floodwaters rose, no one complained about longer hours or more work as we performed our emergency responsibilities or prepared our facilities for flooding.

Our neighbors were grateful for our expertise and the flood-fighting materials we provided. Since that time, congressmen from Illinois, Iowa and Missouri have gone out of their way to thank the District for our service to their constituents. Now that the waters have receded, our Mississippi River Project crews still battle the floods' aftermath.

Finally, I am challenged by the work ahead of us. Here's where I ask for your special efforts this summer:

- Keep projects slated for construction this season on track — Gardner Division, East Peoria Flood Control, Bellevue Streambank Protection, Lock 12 Rehabilitation — to name a few. On-time delivery is crucial to satisfied customers!

- Stretch the operations and maintenance budget as much as you can. This not only involves Operations Division employees, but the many others who support Operations Division. Please do your best to make every dollar bring useful products to our customers. In this way, ensuring that our project managers can better serve our customers on the rivers and reservoirs.
- Stay safe. A moment's inattention can lead to tragedy. As we move full swing into construction season and a busy navigation season, the potential for accidents increases. That doesn't mean accidents have to increase. I expect you to keep your "head in the game" and use protective equipment — be safe.

The accomplishments I listed - and a myriad others - belong to you. You made them happen. Years ago, Gen. George Patton remarked, "Wars are fought by armies, but they are won by men..." In a similar way, we face challenges every day that are overcome by people - the dedicated men and women of the Rock Island District. 🇺🇸

Corps Stresses Boating Safety

Kevin Ewbank, Illinois Waterway Visitor Center, contributed to this article.

Living in a country bordered by oceans and blessed with abundant lakes and rivers, Americans have made recreational boating one of our nation's most popular pastimes. Each year, more than 74 million Americans take to the water with family and friends to relax and enjoy the beauty of the natural world.

But each year, for too many Americans, boating ends in tragedy. Most boating-related injuries and deaths are the result of human error and poor judgment caused, for example, by excessive speed, failure to follow safe navigation rules, and drinking or taking drugs while operating watercraft. Using common sense and making safety the first priority could easily prevent these injuries.

The Corps stresses boating safety to the public and continuously reeducates its employees on the most up-to-date safety issues.

Kevin Ewbank, lead park ranger at the Illinois Waterway Visitor Center, recently attended the International Boating and Water Safety Summit in Nashville, Tenn. Boating and water-safety professionals from across the country and around the world attended the event.

The summit was a combination of the annual meetings for two separate organizations, the National Water Safety Congress and the National Safe Boating Council.

"This was the fifth year the two have hosted a combined conference and the third one I have attended," said Ewbank. "The summit is an outstanding opportunity to network with other water-safety professionals, learn new methods, and recharge your enthusiasm for encouraging safe use of our nation's waters."

The Corps of Engineers was well represented at the summit. The National Water Safety Congress President is Steve Fairbanks from Saylorville Lake. In addition, the past president, treasurer and secretary are Corps employees from other districts. More than 500 people attended the summit, and at least one quarter of them were Corps employees.

Ewbank attended sessions including Quiet Death on the Lake - Boat Related Carbon Monoxide Poisonings, Water Safety in School Curriculum, Contingency Plans for Marine Events,

Downstream Warning Systems - What's Working, and Boat-Based Victim Recovery System.

He said some of the more exciting things he learned were about new personal-floatation devices.

"There is now a Type I automatic inflatable PFD that is U.S. Coast Guard approved for work conditions," said Ewbank.

"Corps of Engineers Headquarters Safety Office knows about them and has been asked if they would be authorized for Corps of Engineers wear.

"There are also inflatable PFDs for kids that have been approved by the USCG. Look for them coming soon to a lake or river near you."

Next year's summit is scheduled for April 28 - May 1.

"I encourage any Corps employee involved with promoting water safety to register and attend the summit," said Ewbank.

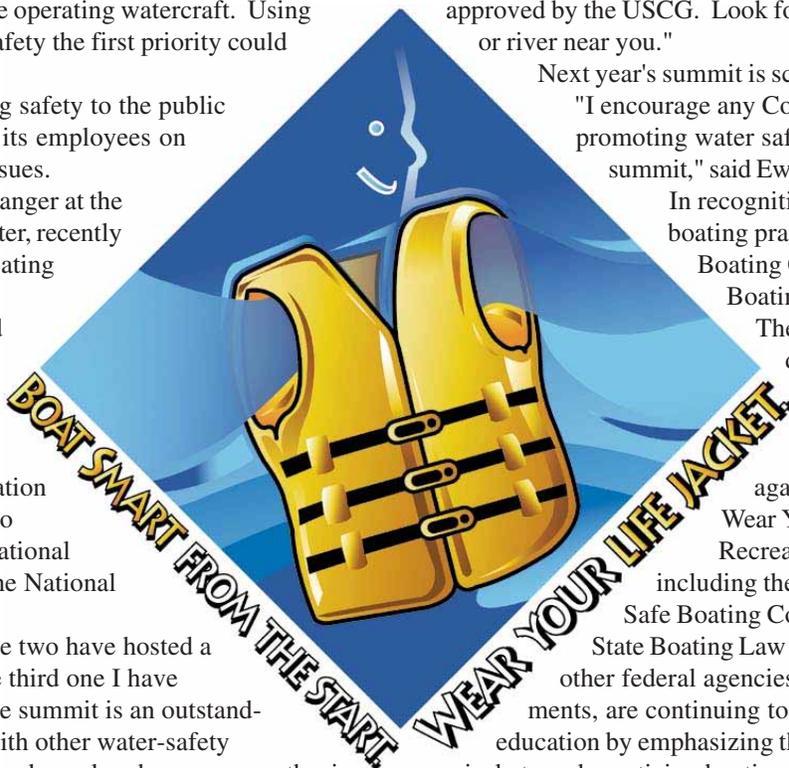
In recognition of the importance of safe boating practices, the National Safe Boating Council hosted National Safe Boating Week, held May 19 - 25.

The annual observance is designed to educate boaters about the importance of wearing life jackets.

This year's theme was once again "Boat Smart from the Start! Wear Your Life Jacket!"

Recreational boating organizations, including the Corps of Engineers, National Safe Boating Council, National Association of State Boating Law Administrators, the USCG, other federal agencies, and state and local governments, are continuing to promote safety through education by emphasizing the importance of wearing life jackets and practicing boating and water safety.

Boating accidents can occur at any time -- whether the water is smooth or turbulent and whether the boater is experienced or a novice. One of the best ways to make a recreational boating experience safe and enjoyable is to ensure that everyone on board always wears a life jacket. 🚢



On the 'Net

www.safeboatingcouncil.org

