



By Col. James Mudd, District Engineer

I can't believe how three years have flown by. It seems like only yesterday that I arrived and was getting acquainted with all the District employees and our projects.

First thing I learned was to be 'mentally' - in numerous places at once. I found myself in court with Iowa over a place called the Turkey River dredge cut; while trying to get extra money for the Chautauqua Environmental Management Program project; find money to finish the 86th Street plan; as well as trying to figure out why the navigation study was behind schedule.

I learned to separate fact from fiction. Our customers told me that the District didn't listen to their needs. This perception is the farthest thing from the truth. What I saw was a group of highly dedicated people working for the Rock Island District Corps of Engineers, working on hard issues that don't necessarily have nice, clean, easy solutions.

With your help, we have turned the Turkey River issue into a battle cry of sorts and used it to put efficiencies and great effectiveness into our Dredge Material Management Plan program. It has caused our state and federal partners to help us get funds and priority to do the job right, and in many cases our foes have become our allies.

We let the first contractor on Chautauqua go, and we awarded a new contract in record time that identified risk, minimized it

for the contractor and the District and brought home a project that was well done, ahead of schedule and has become a show-piece for the Illinois Department of Natural Resources and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. We kind of turned the proverbial cows ear into a silk purse.

With 86th Street – we put about \$80,000 against it, pulled all the documents together into an understandable document, and turned it over to the state for implementation using Department of Transportation dollars. This was a project where we built some unattainable expectations ... we got to the heart of the

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- Col. James Mudd

matter and did the best we could with a project we should not have been involved with.

As far as the navigation study is concerned – where do I start? Suffice to say that we are still at it. Sometimes we get more help than we need, and at other times ... we don't get the timely help and guidance that's really needed. This is the biggest and most encompassing study the Corps has ever done, and continues to be some of the most challenging work in this District's history. If it weren't for the great Corps team working on this project, we wouldn't have made it this far.

Now that I've reflected on my first six months ... the next 2.5 years should be a breeze to write about, but I won't try for lack of space and time.

I'd like to leave you with a few thoughts before I sign off.

The customers we serve, in our five state area, are key to the future of the District. Try to always see their problems from their perspective. Put yourself in their shoes for a minute or two, before we recommend a solution to them.

You have made me feel at home and part of the District family during all my visits to every lock and dam, reservoir and river project. I ask you all to show Col. William Bayles that same courtesy and dedication as he comes in to lead this magnificent District.

Yes, I did keep my promise to visit every site at least twice a year ... my only hope is that I have been an 'added value' to this District and to the great people that work here.

You will always be in my thoughts and prayers.

God bless you all, thank you from the bottom of my heart ... be safe out there. 🇺🇸

Town Hall Reflects on Past Accomplishments

Outgoing District Engineer uses "Town Hall" forum to highlight District's achievements. By Mark Kane, Public Affairs

On July 9, 1997, Col. James V. Mudd took over command of the Rock Island District from then District Engineer Col. Charles S. Cox. That was three years ago and a lot has been accomplished since Mudd became the district engineer to lead the District into a new millennium.

"When I came to this District, I was struck by the level of enthusiasm, ingenuity and dedication that I saw in many of the Rock Island District employees," said Col. James Mudd, District Engineer. "Over the years, I have been impressed by how hard each and every one of you has worked to make this District a thriving success."

That was the beginning of Mudd's last town hall meeting held June 27, 2000. His topics covered the District's budget, recent drought conditions, strategic management, Clock Tower remodeling, and the navigation study.

"There has been a lot press lately questioning the validity of the navigation study, said Mudd. "Rest assured our study is 100 percent on the level. To prove this, we have had multiple agencies and highly respected individuals review our processes and procedures. The National Academy of Sciences - National Research Council - reviewed the Corps' planning procedures and Federal Principles and Guidelines.

"As part of this effort, the navigation study was presented Oct. 23, 1997, to the National Research Council, as well as the Everglades and Missouri River Master Manual.

"The National Research Council agreed with the timeline for the study," said Mudd.

Referring to the navigation study, the council's report stated, "The Corps' planning process is not significantly more time-consuming than the planning of a private-sector water project. Given the many considerations of such planning, the length and cost of the Corps' planning process are generally reasonable."

Mudd also discussed converting numerous District seasonal positions in to permanent, full-time jobs.

"The locks and dams on the Mississippi River will have one seasonal position at each site," said Mudd. "This position will be filled by either one 10- to 11-month seasonal or two six-month seasonal positions. For locks and dams 11 through 19, this will convert one seasonal to permanent, full time.

"The seasonal positions with the Mississippi Maintenance Crew, the Illinois Waterway Structures Maintenance



Photo by Mark Kane, Public Affairs

Congratulations Ollie

Olive "Ollie" Herrmann greets Col. James Mudd while accepting the District Commander's Award for the month of May 2000. Herrmann received the award at the end of the town hall meeting, for saving the life of another District employee on May 10.

Crews, as well as the Peoria and LaGrange seasonal and on-call employees will be converted to permanent, full-time positions.

"The seasonal positions at Saylorville and Lake Red Rock will remain seasonal.

"These changes will result in approximately 45 employees being converted from seasonal to full time. The decision was finalized last week and approved by the union. Management will now be taking action to complete the conversions," said Mudd.

Throughout Mudd's time at the District he has stressed the importance of safety. Although he only had seven more "wake-ups" as he put it, Mudd wrapped up his town hall meeting continuing to push the importance of on the job safety.

"Although we are doing a good job, we must always keep safety in mind," said Mudd. "Safety is everyone's responsibility." 🏠