



Investing In Our People

Around the District

Farmdale Reservoir Hosts Bike Fest By Todd Ernenputsch, Peoria Project Office

The Peoria Area Mountain Bike Association, a newly organized bicycle club for the Peoria area, held a bike festival at Farmdale Reservoir, Ill., Aug. 19 and 20.

More than 100 racers and spectators participated in the two-day event. The crowd and participants not only ranged in age and gender, but many came from different states.

Activities during the two-day festival included a downhill race, huffy toss, bike limbo, bunny hop, kids race, free-for-all, obstacle course, and a cross-country race.

PAMBA president Terry Carter said, "We are lucky to have a wonderful area to hold the race. A lot of people would not even know this place (Farmdale) was even here if it wasn't for the race."

Opening Day Turnout

Despite the hot, humid weather Sept. 1, visitors turned out in numbers for the reopening of Smith Island Recreation Area at Locks and Dam 14 in LeClaire, Iowa.

"The area has been used by lots of people," said Steve Vacek, park ranger, Mississippi River Project. "When I went through the lot at 11 a.m. (opening day), the parking lot was over 3/4 full of vehicles."

Vacek measured the amount of visitors with a traffic counter, which registered 1,039 hits between the morning of Sept. 1 and 6:30 p.m., Sept. 4.

Congrats ...

Congratulations to the following individuals in Engineering Division who recently earned the Professional Engineer (PE) registration.

Brent Anderson, Brian Anderson, John Behrens, Joe Dziuk, Mike Guldmond, Tom Heinold, Kara Mitvalsky, Rick Nickel, Tom Nock, Joanne Traicoff, Louis Uptmor, and Brad Wernecke.

Recent Retirements ...

Don R. Erickson, Operations Division, Mississippi River Project Office, Maintenance Section, was a motor vehicle operator and retired Oct. 2, after serving 32 years and five months with the federal government.

Sympathy ...



Melford Gilmore, 77, Bettendorf, Iowa, passed away Sept. 13, at Genesis Medical Center-West Campus, Davenport, Iowa. Gilmore was a surveyor with the Survey Maps & Planning Division with the Rock Island District. He began his Corps career in Survey Branch in 1946 and was acting chief in 1979.

He retired in January 1980 after 38 years of federal service.

Gilmore was a 51-year member of Davenport Elks Lodge and was an avid golfer and bowler. During World War II, he served with the Navy in Alaska, the Philippines and Pearl Harbor. He was honorably discharged in 1946.

Speakers Bureau

By Justine Dodge, Public Affairs

Karen Hagerty, Planning, Programs, and Project Management Division, spoke again with the Duck Creek Watershed Partners on Sept. 7 at St. Ambrose College in Davenport, Iowa. The Watershed Partners are a group of more than 30 members of the local community who are working together to restore and improve the Duck Creek Watershed.

On Sept. 20, **Todd Ernenputsch**, Operations Division, spoke with 35 members of the Washington Scottish Rites Club at the Tally Ho restaurant in Washington, Ill. The topic of his discussion was the Illinois Waterway.

Charlene Carmack, Planning, Programs and Project Management Division; **Mike Cummings**, Engineering Division; **Steve Vacek** and **Joe Lundh**, Operations Division; and **Justine Barati**, Public Affairs, participated in Louisa-Muscatine School's River Fair on Oct. 5.

The presenters spoke with more than 100 eighth-grade students about river topics, including discussions on the Environmental Management Program, the Flood of 1993, the history of navigation on the river, eagles, and forestry on the Mississippi River.

More than 65 fourth-grade students at Eisenhower School learned about geology when **Vern Greenwood**, Engineering Division, spoke with them Oct. 6. 🏰

Notes from the Mississippi*

Lock and Dam 11, Dubuque, Iowa

- ✓ Lifeboats cleaned, serviced, and new seats installed.
- ✓ Manhole covers painted.

Lock and Dam 12, Bellevue, Iowa

- ✓ Major holes on lockwall surface patched.
- ✓ New seats on two of the scooters installed.

Lock and Dam 13, Clinton, Iowa

- ✓ Safety fence on Iowa side repaired.
- ✓ Passenger vessel "Mark Twain" with Vice President Gore on board locked through.

Locks and Dam 14, Le Claire, Iowa

- ✓ Security fence around lock site installed.
- ✓ Entrance gate at auxiliary lock installed.

Locks and Dam 15, Rock Island, Ill.

- ✓ Safety block covers and bullnoses painted.
- ✓ New trailer guides constructed and installed.

Lock and Dam 16, Muscatine, Iowa

- ✓ Rungs on lower I-wall navigation stand ladder repaired.
- ✓ Lock-wall gate latch repaired.
- ✓ Cable on upper haulage unit replaced.

Lock and Dam 17, New Boston, Ill.

- ✓ Electrical cables on pontoon repaired.
- ✓ Moisture from gate-and valve-gear cases vacuumed.

Lock and Dam 18, Burlington, Iowa

- ✓ Bulkheads in #6 roller gate installed.
- ✓ Moisture stops on miter-gate gear-boxes installed.
- ✓ Siding on upper garage installed.

Lock and Dam 19, Keokuk, Iowa

- ✓ Broken bolts in the lower #2 valve-bearing cap replaced.
- ✓ Water lines on the lower lock wall painted.

Lock and Dam 20, Canton, Mo.

- ✓ Crack in armor plating in lower guide-cell repaired.
- ✓ Sector pin in #2 miter gate repaired.

Lock and Dam 21, Quincy, Ill.

- ✓ Two broken timbers, one on #2 gate and one on #4 gate, replaced.
- ✓ Lower lifeboat davit hoist motor removed, repaired and reinstalled.

Lock and Dam 22, Saverton, Mo.

- ✓ Upper haulage-unit clutch disks and thrust washer removed and replaced.
- ✓ Spare motor on #2 miter gate installed.

*This is a small sample of work completed at District Locks and Dams throughout the month.

MONEY IN YOUR POCKET

By Vicki Kohl and Gretchen Leigh, Civilian Personnel Advisory Center

How would you like to make more money on payday? Maybe that's a stupid question, but it's exactly what's going to happen if you have Federal Employees Health Benefits premiums withheld from your pay.

A new program from the Office of Personnel Management will increase your paycheck beginning this month.

You may have heard of "premium conversion." It is a "pre-tax" arrangement, meaning that the part of your salary that goes for health insurance premiums will become non-taxable. This means that you save on federal income tax and Federal Insurance Contribution Act taxes (Social Security and Medicare taxes). In most cases, you'll also save on state income tax and local income tax.

How much? You save a percentage of your premium. If your annual premium is \$1,800, and you pay 35 percent in taxes

on that amount of salary, you save 35 percent of \$1,800. That's \$630 or \$24.23 every two weeks.

Signing up is easy, in fact you don't have to lift a finger. The payroll office will make the switch automatically. You don't need to fill out a form, but you do have a choice to waive premium conversion. It's a personal decision.

If you want to waive the premium conversion, you must fill out a waiver form and provide the form to the Civilian Personnel Advisory Center. These forms are available from the CPAC.

The initial period to waive the conversion ended Oct. 4. The next chance to submit a waiver will be during the next FEHB Open Season, Nov. 13 - Dec. 11, or within the specified time period after a Qualifying Life Event. Some examples of a QLE are: change in marital status, change in family status, loss of coverage

under spouse's non-federal plan.

The premium conversion will continue indefinitely unless you later submit a new election/waiver form to change the tax treatment of your FEHB contributions.

To find out more detailed information regarding the premium conversion, the following websites are available:

www.opm.gov/insure/health/pretaxfehb/

www.abc.army.mil/ABCHealth/Information/ItsMoneyInYourPocket.htm/

You may direct your questions to Vicki Kohl at (309) 794-5566 or Gretchen Leigh at (309) 794-5345. 

