



# TOWER TIMES

Rock Island District's News Magazine

October-November 2013



## Floodwall complete



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

# Tower Times

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**October-November 2013**

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## *Tower Times*

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A message from....

## Colonel Mark Deschenes, District Commander



# Year coming to an end, time to reflect

As I write this piece, the holiday season approaches which means time with friends and family will be a priority for many people, including me. From a work perspective, this a great time to take a deep breath and look back at the year that was. In that spirit, what follows are of some of the highlights, as I saw them.

After closing out the 2012 calendar year with significant accomplishments related to our support of the Hurricane Sandy unwatering effort, the new year continued a focus on a lingering drought which was devastating the Midwest. In a District which has made a name for itself fighting floods, our professionals were facing a new challenge. I was impressed to watch our coordinated efforts as our Operations Division adapted and overcame. The drought brought our reservoir pools in Iowa to dangerously low levels but our experts remained focused on the appropriate operations of the critical infrastructure.

Of course, the drought didn't last forever and before long this region saw one extreme turn into another. After record periods of dryness, the Upper Mississippi River and Illinois Waterways were hammered by rain in April, bringing record floods to many parts of the Illinois Waterway and near records on the Mississippi.

The Rock Island District was quick to act, standing up Emergency Operations Centers in Peoria and Quincy, Ill. The District distributed 232,200 sandbags, 23 pumps, 213 rolls of sheeting, and 4,950 feet of HESCO Bastion flood-fight barriers. Additionally, 93 employees were fully-engaged providing flood-fighting support. Our flood area engineers were on the ground to assist the affected to communities.

In June, another slightly less intense flood followed the April flooding. From a commander's perspective, I was proud to watch as our team seamlessly carried out the flood fighting activities. It was a

stressful time for many as our District was flooded with requests but I never saw any let down by our employees. They went about their business in the professional manner this region has come to expect of the Rock Island District.

The April flood fight was a busy time for many but it was also the start of a major project that will have ongoing visibility within the District for years to come. During the flooding, an accident at the Marseilles Dam on the Illinois Waterway resulted in extensive damage to the dam structure. The accident itself was certainly not a highlight but the collective response in the aftermath was testament to teamwork and interagency cooperation. A unified team consisting of the Corps, the U.S. Coast Guard and the barge industry, worked hand-in-hand to ensure public safety and mitigate effects to navigation. Once the unified command stood down, the Rock Island District began repairs. The temporary repairs are primarily complete but the long-term repairs will take years depending on funding.

The flooding and the Marseilles Dam emergency were both great examples of our folks performing admirably in less than ideal circumstances. I was proud to be part of the team and applaud all of your efforts.

What has also been impressive is the dedication I have witnessed in some pretty tough times internally. The Rock Island District, under normal operations, has a pretty big workload and vast area of responsibility. It's tough enough to get the job done when fiscal times are good. But, the government has hit some hard times, financially. The year began with many of you under the looming threat of sequestration and possible furloughs. Some of our employees were furloughed in the spring and then again, the same threat was back as the fiscal year ended. Twice, employees of this District were furloughed in one calendar year. And yet, through those

taxing times, I witnessed the mission still being carried out. As a Soldier, I was exempt from any possible furloughs so I can only imagine how stressful it was on many of you and your families. You have my personal admiration for weathering the storm and still getting the job done.

Obviously, as with any year, there were peaks and valleys. We had the damage at Marseilles Dam, but we also saw the completion of the Davenport Flood Risk Management Project. A project nearly 40 years in the making is now complete and providing protection to the water supply for many Quad City communities. The flood wall wouldn't be standing had it not been for the hard work of many Rock Island District employees.

This is my first full calendar year as your commander and if this year represents things to come, I stand ready to face the challenges with you. And there will be challenges. In August, we were lucky to host the Mississippi River Commission on its semi-annual low water inspection trip of the Upper Mississippi. What I learned from that trip is that there are many outstanding things going on up and down the great river. Whether it be environmental projects, flood risk management, or navigation, there are myriad of agencies with vested interest and each of those agencies face challenges ahead.

There are many exciting opportunities on the horizon for the Rock Island District and I feel fortunate to be part of the team. Please take time to enjoy your family and friends. Nothing we do should replace valued time with loved ones. And, last but not least, please enjoy the holiday season with safety in the forefront of your mind. We can't continue providing value to this great nation without everyone being able to do their jobs and arrive to work safely. Thanks again for all you do and continue **BUILDING STRONG®**. 



## ***A project 40 years in the making is now complete***

By Hilary Markin, Editor

**A** ribbon cutting ceremony for the Davenport Flood Risk Management Project was held Oct. 24 in front of the floodwall protecting Iowa American Water's water treatment facility in Davenport, Iowa.

The project provides permanent flood protection to one of the Quad Cities water treatment plants.

"The floodwall will safeguard the water supply of about 131,000 people in Davenport, Bettendorf, Le Claire and parts of rural Scott County," said Honorable Bill Gluba, mayor of Davenport, during the ceremony.

"A 2,000-foot-long floodwall and 140-foot (long) levee will save the Davenport taxpayers from spending money on flood protection measures to protect the water company from Mississippi River flooding," he added.

The Davenport Flood Risk Management Project was first authorized for construction in December 1970 and included the protection of downtown Davenport and the treatment facility. It resurfaced in the 80s but was unsuccessful once again. In 2001, a request to perform a Limited Reevaluation Study was sent forward to adjust the economic justification from the 80s. The report, completed in 2002, justified a project to only protect the water treatment facility.

"You know it's a big stress relief to know there's something in place permanently," said Randy Moore, president of Iowa American Water. "However, that doesn't mean we let our guards down."

In addition to the floodwall and levee there are also three 20-foot swing gates that fully close the water treatment plant. The project is a bit unique in that there is a Canadian Pacific Railroad track that runs through it which required close coordination with them.

"We worked with the railroad to limit track closures due to the construction but also on the track adjustments that were necessary to complete the floodwall and steel closure gate," said Mark Pratt, construction project engineer.

The \$11 million project was cost shared by the federal government and the City of Davenport through the Iowa American Water. The contract to construct the project was awarded to Valley Construction Co. of Rock Island, Ill., in September 2011.

We completed this project ahead of schedule and with no lost time accidents, said Greg Hass, vice president of Valley Construction Co.

The Corps worked hand-in-hand with all of the different partners who were a part of this project.

"Davenport is so fortunate to have the district office of the United States Corps of Engineers here in Rock Island, for it is these government workers who over the years have done all the engineering, planning and oversight of this flood control project," said Gluba. 



**Valley Construction Co. workers work on the Davenport Flood Risk Management Project protecting the Iowa American's water treatment facility.**

# Students graduate LDP Level I

By Hilary Markin, Editor

October marked the end of the most recent Level I Leadership Development Program in the Rock Island District. Twenty-nine participants successfully completed the program which included 10 individual training modules about subjects ranging from self awareness to problem solving to conflict management. Participants were also paired with a mentor who helped guide them through the program.

"This program has proven to be valuable to both the individuals and the District. LDP graduates are equipped with the skills and tools to further advance them in their careers and in carrying out the District's missions," said Sara Paxson, professional development specialist.

There were quite a few changes to this year's program thanks to the Level II Leadership Development Program participants. Without them taking it on as part of their team project, there wouldn't have been a program.

"We revamped it quite a bit," said Erica Stephens, who was part of the LDP Level II team and a graduate of LDP I. "A lot of us had taken it last year so the ideas for improvement were fresh in our minds."

The first challenge was where to house the information given the changes to the public website and intranet where the curriculum had previously been located. The team quickly learned SharePoint and created a sub-site under the Training Team site specifically for the program.

"Through the use of SharePoint, the 2013 LDP I class had a central location from which to work on their curriculum, ask questions and offer suggestions on the discussion board, and even view their individual progression through the program's duration," said John Hayes, LDP Level II graduate and the main point of contact for the LDP Level I SharePoint site. "This technology gave us the opportunity to instantly improve the accessibility of training, communication between participants and facilitators and overall accountability within the program."

The program was officially launched April 15 with a kick-off meeting that brought all of the participants to the District office for a face-to-face meeting with both the program leaders and their mentors.

"We felt that the face-to-face interaction with the mentors was important, and we got a lot of positive feedback on it too," said Stephens.

A midpoint meeting was held July 11 bringing participants together to discuss the program and help the LDP Level II Team formulate the FY 14 program based on their suggestions.

"It would have been impossible to make beneficial changes to the program without the input of the 2013 LDP I class. Leadership is all about the advancement of others - by providing valuable feedback, the graduating LDP I participants have helped pave the way for a much improved program going forward," said Hayes.

As the students progressed through the program their progress was tracked on the LDP Level 1 SharePoint site. This helped them and their mentors ensure they were on target to complete the program by Sept. 15.

Something else new was the creation of a Mentoring page in SharePoint complete with talking points and resources for the mentee and mentors.

"We found these to be extremely helpful even from those who had been mentors before. It really assisted them in structuring their mentoring sessions," said Stephens.

The planned 2014 Leadership Development Level I program will be a one-year program and will incorporate the Civilian Education System (CES) Foundation Course, along with portions of the current curriculum.

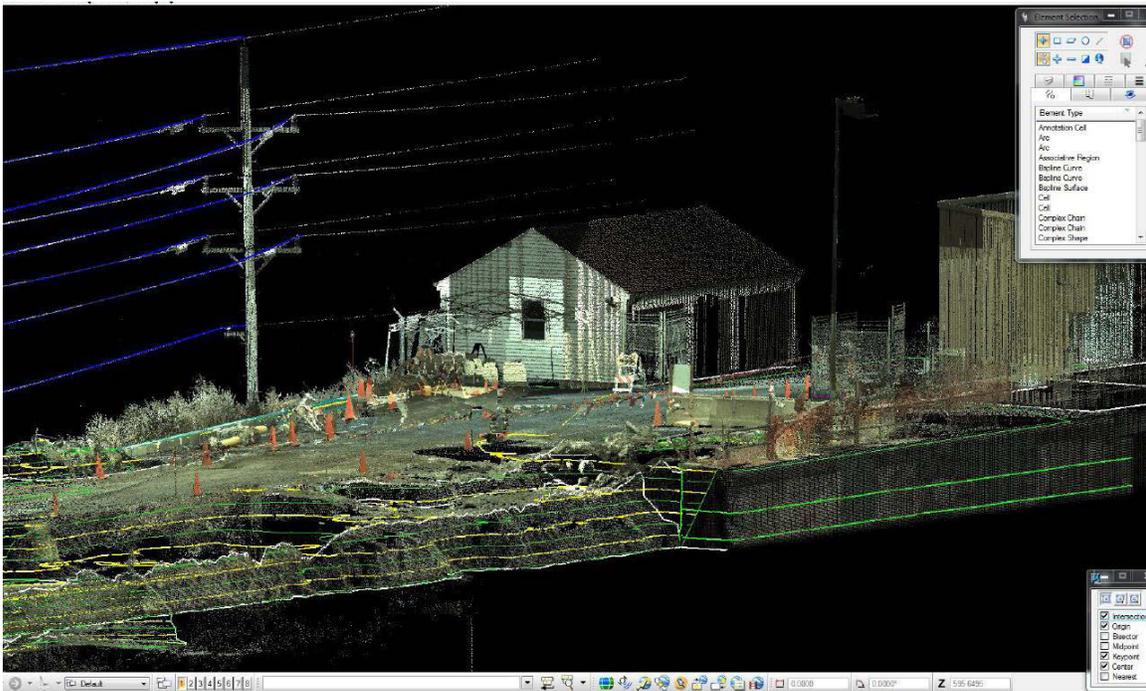
"After speaking with LDP I members, it was evident that the benefit of each topic varied from one person to the next. In 2014 and beyond, the curriculum will be more dynamic so that participants can choose what subject matter will provide the greatest value within their personal career path," said Hayes.

The 2014 Level I Leadership Development Program will be launching soon, stay tuned for more information. 



## FY 13 LDP Level I Graduates

Doug Nelson  
Joshua Iwen  
Kalvin Kalafut  
Brandon Hornung  
Jonathan Wuebker  
Gregory Karlovits  
Keri Diedrich  
Natalie Hernandez  
Emily Libbey  
Chris Reger  
Paul St. Louis  
Riley Post  
Amanda Geddes  
Robert Burick  
Monica Arshad  
Chase Ellsworth  
Donna Hardy  
Elizabeth Bruns  
Adam Ziegler  
Ben DeRoo  
Aaron Heidenreich  
Anthony Heddlesten  
Allen Giger  
Jose Romero  
Steve Marruffo  
Jeff Tripp  
Jeff Nelson  
Nathan Richards  
James Roling



Using the collected scan data, Engineers assessed site conditions and began repair designs for the Lockport Wall failure in the fall of 2011.

# Saving time and money today, capturing data for the future

By Allen Giger, Survey Section

In turbulent economic climates, the requirement to become more efficient in how and what we do has never been as important as it is of late. The use of advanced cutting-edge technologies such as the District’s purchase of a three-dimensional terrestrially based laser scanner three years ago exemplifies this. It allows for exponentially greater data collection rates, reduction of labor and travel costs while providing an in-house capability not previously available within the District.

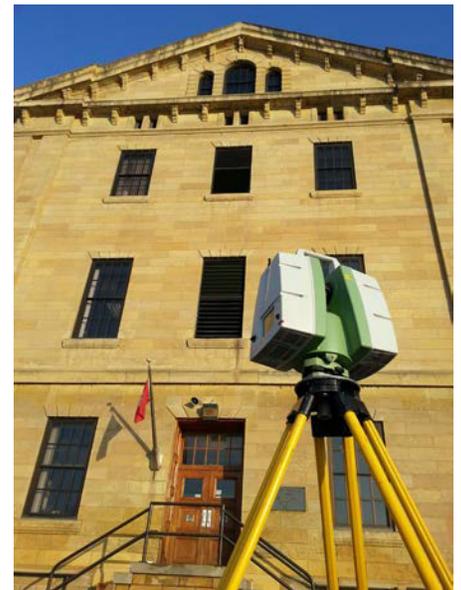
The Leica ScanStation C10 is a high-accuracy, long range, time of flight laser scanner with a 50,000 points per second acquisition rate in a 360x270 degree field of view. This allows the District’s Survey crew to acquire geographically referenced three dimensional “snapshots in time” of a site, a key component to many of the District’s projects.

The average scan usually takes 15 minutes, seven of which are when the scanner autonomously collects its LiDAR

(Light Detection and Ranging) data. With the speed of the new scanners, it’s a boon and a blessing. Field note sketches used to rival the works of the great Michelangelo, now they are stick figures and line drawings like one would see at a local elementary school.

With such high rates of data collection, one of greatest benefits immediately realized is the reduction of return site visits. Once a project site has been “picked up” by the scanner, “returning to” the site is simply a matter of loading the acquisition files. Re-acquisition requests are rare due to the equipments’ data collection density capability which significantly increases structure collection rate probability. Add to that the multiple scan locations during a site visit that generate an overlap of data.

This is especially true for projects that are not within the local area such as one recently completed for the 88th Regional Support Command at the Fitzsimons Army Reserve Center in Aurora, Colo. Using the



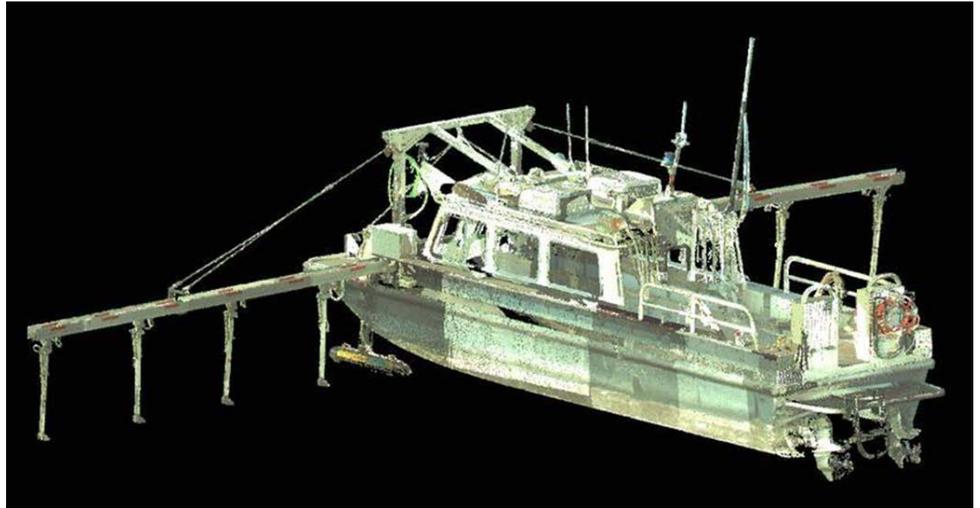
The Leica ScanStation C10 scans the District’s Clock Tower Building.

scanner, complemented by conventional survey data, the project engineer, Alana Ensey, can make more informed decisions reducing the need for costly site visits and potential project delays.

The scanner also assists engineers and contracting officers by producing highly accurate digital models that allow for a myriad of analyses to be completed ensuring “as-built” site conditions conform to design specifications. This was the case when the Survey Section was requested to perform an as-built survey on a riprap project for the St. Paul District in Breckenridge, Minn. Due to the nature of stream and river meandering or flood event, any subsequent surveys will show a highly detailed difference between as-built and the current conditions. Engineers can use the scanning technology to help identify the required steps for reconstruction or potential design changes to reduce future damages.

Having the capability to acquire highly accurate millimeter relative data that is capable of being georeferenced spatially to sub-centimeter accuracies opens doors not before realized. This was the case during the wall collapse at Lockport in the fall of 2011. With unknown wall stability, the Safety Office restricted all personnel from within 50 feet of the collapse inhibiting immediate inspection of the damages. The C10 gave engineers a good look at the site conditions that showed not only the obvious wall failure, but also the skew and displacement of adjoining walls not seen with the unaided eye.

Other projects assisted by the scanner



**This scan of the Motor Vessel Hines allowed the District to obtain offset calculations between the new GPS receivers and the bow-mounted sounding equipment.**

include the documentation of the exterior limestone conditions of the District’s Clock Tower Building. An initial “structure baseline” was derived using the highest collection density to achieve the greatest detail resulting in 11 setups generating over 19.8 million points. For final project completion, an estimated three scans are yet needed to capture the entire building. Once completed, specific areas of concern can be re-scanned in the future providing engineers a way to track changes and plan for repairs if needed to the historic building.

Recently, the C10 supported the Chicago District with scanning two of their floodplain modeling projects on the Kishwaukee and Manhattan rivers. The scanner

was used to acquire crossing structure features substantially reducing the amount of time at each location and a greater amount of detail was generated with post processing. Due to the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) data acquisition requirements, one standard structure identification would be one day’s work. Using the scanner, approximately two and a half structures can be captured in one day. The end product from the scans gives the Chicago District and their partners a greater understanding of site conditions when creating their hydraulic models.

In another twist for the C10, Survey supported Operation Division’s Survey crew in scanning the Motor Vessel Hines. They had recently installed new GPS receivers atop the vessel and needed to calculate the offset distances between them and their bow-mounted sounding equipment. While docked for repairs, the vessel was scanned and the results provided them the capability to not only determine the required offsets, but with a bit of creative editing also came up with a few great photos of the vessel and equipment.

The scanner continues to prove to be a valuable tool to the District in executing our missions and the data collected will serve not only as a historical snapshot of the past but assist with the design of tomorrow. 



**The initial high density scan of the front of the Clock Tower Building viewed with Leica Cyclone software.**



**Paddlers enjoy the Red Rock Trail at Lake Red Rock near Knoxville, Iowa. The trail has been officially designated as a National Water Trail by the National Park Service. Photo by Diane Michaud Lowry**

# Red Rock Trail designated as National Water Trail

By Hilary Markin, Editor

**T**he Red Rock Trail at Lake Red Rock, near Knoxville, Iowa, has officially been designated as a National Water Trail by the National Park Service. Joining the Red Rock Trail is The Island Loop Route Water Trail in Michigan and The Missouri National Recreation River Water Trail that flows through South Dakota, Nebraska and Iowa. These three trails join 11 previously dedicated water trails across the country.

“These national water trails provide exemplary close-to-home places for people to explore and enjoy,” said National Park Service Director Jonathan B. Jarvis. “And I am particularly happy to have these trails added to the system. They are cooperatively supported and sustained through the efforts of community, state and federal partners.”

The Red Rock Water Trail is a 36-mile loop on scenic Lake Red Rock. Boaters and paddlers can see rocky cliffs and bluffs, a variety of wildlife, a sea cave and much more. Also along the trail are many historical landmarks and sites of historical events. There are eight access points that are conveniently located near the campgrounds at Lake Red Rock, many of which are class A campgrounds.

“Paddlers are treated to spectacular views of bluffs, hardwood forests, a multitude of wildlife and Iowa’s largest lake,” said Tracy Spry, park ranger at Lake Red Rock. “Amazingly, paddlers are found using the water trail during all months of the year, as long as the lake isn’t frozen.”

The trail is managed by Lake Red Rock in partnership with the Red Rock Lake Association, who is a cooperating association.

National Water Trails are designated by the Secretary of the Interior and are part of the National Trails System, administered by the National Park Service in partnership with a wide range of federal agencies. Designation of national water trails helps to strengthen local efforts for recreation, conservation and restoration of America’s waterways and surrounding lands.

National water trails are the pathways of rivers, lakes and bays, providing a connection for current and future generations to the nature, history and adventure that can be found on the water.

Explore the entire National Water Trails System online through a dynamic collection of videos, stories and pictures at [www.nps.gov/watertrails](http://www.nps.gov/watertrails). 



# “Guiding our Destiny with Heritage and Traditions” November is Native American Indian Heritage Month

By Hilary Markin, Native American/Alaska Native Employment Program Manager

**D**uring November, the nation remembers the legacy of the first Americans and celebrates their vibrant culture and heritage. Since the Revolutionary War, Native Americans and Alaska Natives have played a vital role in our country’s freedom and security. They proudly serve in all departments of the United States government today.

“This month, we celebrate and honor the many ways American Indians and Alaska Natives have enriched our nation, and we renew our commitment to respecting each tribe’s identity while ensuring equal opportunity to pursue the American dream,” said President Barack Obama.

After 100 years of efforts to establish it, National American Indian and Alaska Native Heritage Month is celebrated to recognize native cultures and educate the public about the heritage, history, art, and traditions of the American Indian and Alaska Native people.

The Bureau of Indian Affairs developed the theme for this year’s National American Indian Heritage Month as “Guiding our Destiny with Heritage and Traditions.”

One individual who has dedicated his efforts to honoring and preserving the rich traditions and improving living conditions is Joe Medicine Crow.

Joe Medicine Crow was born Oct. 27, 1913, on the Crow Indian reservation in Montana. Raised by his elders in the tribe’s warrior tradition, Medicine Crow was taught to master his fears, ride bareback, track game and withstand extreme cold. He was

also schooled in the stories of those who had previously distinguished themselves in battle.

Medicine Crow was the first member of his tribe to go to college and was attending graduate school in California when America entered World War II.

He joined the Army and became a scout in the 103rd Infantry Division. He drew on the teachings of his grandfathers, which he credits for giving him the strength to be a warrior.

Before heading into battle, he would paint red stripes on his arms and he carried a sacred eagle feather from a Sun Dance medicine man to shield

him from harm.

During his time in service, he completed the tasks required of a Crow war chief.

Medicine Crow was the last Crow Indian to become a war chief.

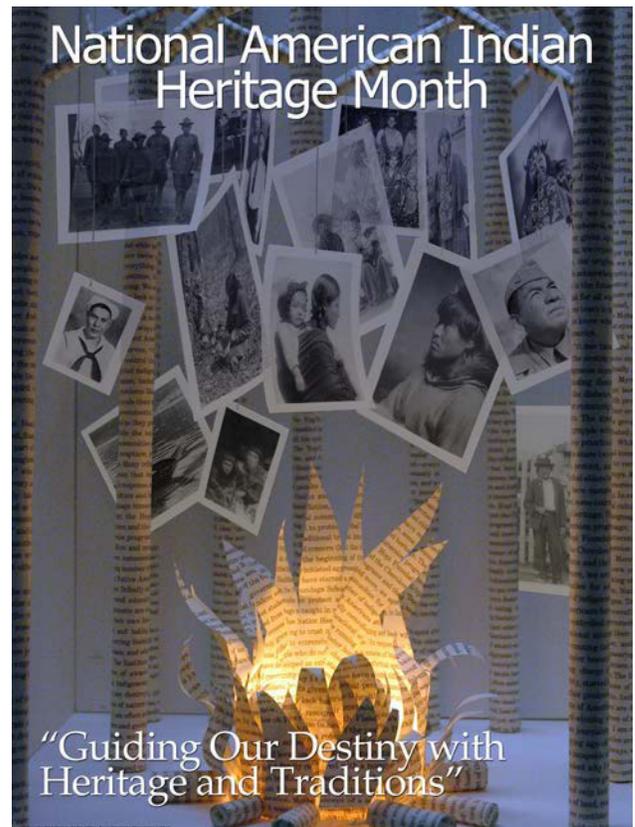
Since returning from war, he has served as the Crow tribal historian for more than 50 years. He has written extensively about Indian history and culture.

He has also gathered numerous oral histories from older generations, preserving a large section of Crow history and stories that otherwise would have been lost forever.

In 2009, he was awarded the Presidential Medal of Freedom, America’s highest civilian honor.

“As a warrior and living legend, history flows through Dr. Joseph Medicine Crow. For his valiant service in World War II, he was awarded the status of Crow War Chief, and his renowned studies of the first Americans and contributions to cultural and historical preservation have been critical to our understanding of America’s history. Joe Medicine Crow is a symbol of strength and survival, and the United States honors him for his dedication to this country and to all Native Americans,” said President Barack Obama. 

*Information from the Defense Equal Opportunity Management Institute*



Defense Equal Opportunity Management Institute



**Joe Medicine Crow was awarded the Presidential Medal of Freedom, America’s highest civilian honor, in 2009. Photo courtesy of the White House**

# Diverse experience opened door to support site visits

By Donna Hardy, Real Estate Division

**M**y career with the Corps started more than 25 years ago as a park ranger in the Rock Island District. I have a parks, recreation and tourism administration degree from Western Illinois University and only recently joined the Real Estate Division in 2010.

I've actually been doing real estate work for a long time. As a shoreline management ranger, I did inspections along 314 river miles of the Mississippi River. I learned a lot working with realty specialists including the process of granting Special Use Licenses for permitted items on land owned by the Corps. I issued the Shoreline Use Permits to cover private boat docks and lifts along the river.

I became involved with the Defense Logistics Agency Program when the Fort Worth District asked Ron Williams in my office who might be available to support their efforts. Through all my years with the Corps I have never volunteered for flood fighting or hurricane duty. This was the first time I raised my hand to volunteer because my kids are old enough now. And I'm glad I did.

Two weeks later I was off to Colorado and Wyoming. I went to Francis E. Warren Air Force Base and Cheyenne Air National Guard in Wyoming and Buckley Air Force Base, Pueblo Chemical Depot and Fort Carson/Pinon Canyon in Colorado. On this first trip, I had no idea what to expect. Brian Riggs from the Fort Worth District was my real estate lead and he was great. He was patient and very knowledgeable in explaining the procedures – taking photos, getting GPS coordinates, assisting in defining what was real property and what was not. All the real estate team was on their first DLA site visit except Brian. There was a lot of learning from the first minute.

When I came back from that first trip, the Fort Worth District wanted some folks to be trained as team leads. Three of us out of the Rock Island office, including Bonnie Tanamor and Jason Appel, joined with Jeff Grow, Ken Peterson and Bob Ayotte from the St. Paul office for the training in Fort Worth. Sharron Montgomery explained from A to Z what our role would be on site visits.

Weather is a typical issue out in the field. You're burning up one minute, the next moment you're in a downpour trying to keep paperwork and equipment dry. You also have to be flexible, open-minded to change and adaptable. While you have to be independent, you also have to work well with others at the same time. As a team lead you have to be able to do an assignment without someone holding your hand. But you also have to work cooperatively with the other assessment teams.

I've supported the DLA Program by assisting on site visits – most of them a week long. The only exception was the two-week trip to Hawaii. I was sent to the Kwajalein Atoll from the "mainland." The most amazing experience on that trip was crossing the International Dateline, landing on such a small island surrounded



**While traveling on a ferry between Cape May, N.J. and Lewes, Del., this spring, Donna Hardy (left), Marjorie Courtright, Fort Worth District, and Marvette Hancock, Pittsburgh District, discuss the next site visit.** Photo by Al Khatena

by the Pacific Ocean and looking out from shore and not seeing anything except water on the horizon.

The New Jersey-Connecticut-Rhode Island assignment was a fun one! That trip was a lot of travel and long days. Six bases in four days! The first day was two bases in New Jersey, and then after working a long day, we had to hop in the car for a five-hour drive, through New York City congestion, to Connecticut. Then after working there, we had to drive on to Rhode Island to inspect three bases before flying home Friday.

While on a trip to San Diego, I was in awe of the Naval ships docked at the piers. You feel so small when you are near them. I am used to seeing towboats with barges, up to 1,200-feet long all the time on the Mississippi River but they didn't compare to the size of the ships in San Diego.

One highlight from my first trip was stopping by the Air Force Academy in Colorado Springs on the way to the airport. I was impressed by the Cadet Chapel. The architecture and design of the building makes it a work of art. It was interesting the way the chapel accommodates numerous faith communities. It was a moving experience.

All in all, the hard work along the way is worth it.

I have been able to see places which I never would have seen before. I have found locales I will return to again during retirement; when I have time to sightsee and enjoy the area. 

*James Frisinger, Fort Worth District contributed to this article.*



**U.S. Air Force Academy Cadet Chapel, Colorado Springs, Colo.** Photo by Donna Hardy

# Development through Mentorship & Leadership Development Program

By Tammy Loose, LDP Level I and II Graduate

Two years ago, I started on my journey with an opportunity to experience leadership training and the building of three mentor-mentee relationships. My three mentors, Sarah Jones, Angie Freyermuth and Linda Doon, were great in giving me advice, support and sharing their experiences.

Here are just a few of the benefits I experienced:

- Communicating intentionally and gaining rapport with my supervisor, mentors and other co-workers, visibility amongst senior leaders
- Growing and developing my strengths, skills and competencies
- More personal satisfaction with work and personal life
- More clarity, certainty and confidence in completing tasks and making decisions
- Producing intended results with fewer errors
- Experiencing team dynamics, engagement and leading team meetings

While in the Leadership Development Program (LDP) Level I and II I worked with my mentors to go through and discuss the leadership modules, including issues and challenges. For LDP I my mentor, Sarah Jones, had many of the same character traits that I have and was a great match. I had two mentors while I was in LDP Level II. My formal mentor was Angie Freyermuth. She was helping me find a mentor when we both realized that she was a great match having an Information Technology background. The mentorship was meant to be. ACE-IT co-worker, Linda Doon was my informal mentor. Her input was invaluable. She spent time coaching me on ACE-IT and LDP challenges.

I worked with my LDP II mentors to create my individual developmental (IDP) goals including what I've accomplished so far, what I still needed to accomplish, my detailed action plan in attaining those goals and indicators of success. My three IDP goals were:

1. Interpersonal skills, getting to know people, learn their names and their stories
2. Communication skills, pursuing Toastmaster's (TM) Competent Communicator (Which I did complete!)
3. Team lead skills, attaining my TM Competent Leader and team lead experience

Through my experiences, I gained confidence in completing tasks and working with others, including my supervisor Ida May. I developed my communication skills in working with my LDP teammates, Toastmasters and the LDP book presentations. I networked with the LDP team to complete team projects and presentations. I learned about accountability and responsibility in getting tasks completed. I learned about needing to engage team members, taking care not to disengage individuals too. My management and leadership skills were strengthened and I learned how to manage others and myself in working through my goals.

I would highly recommend that you participate in any type of mentorship (formal or informal) to grow, expand and strengthen your knowledge, skills, relationships and gain rapport with others. If you have the chance to participate in leadership development with Army E-Learning or a local District program, it is a great opportunity to develop and expand your leadership skills. 



## Changes to the Tower Times

The Tower Times will now be a bimonthly publication produced by the Corporate Communications office of the Rock Island District. This change allows employees to focus their efforts on other missions that have recently been added to the office.

The August-September Tower Times was only published electronically due to the government shutdown. It can be read at <http://www.mvr.usace.army.mil/Portals/48/docs/CC/TowerTimes/2013/August-SeptemberTT-Compressed.pdf>.

If you would like to be on the electronic mailing list for the Tower Times please send an email to [cemvr-cc@usace.army.mil](mailto:cemvr-cc@usace.army.mil). Receiving the Tower Times via email saves the District on printing costs and you receive your copy sooner.

Another recent change is the availability of past issues of the Tower Times. Issues dating back to 1978 to the present are now available on the USACE Digital Library at <http://cdm16021.contentdm.oclc.org/cdm/compoundobject/collection/p16021coll8/id/874>. 



Find this month's Where's This online at <http://www.mvr.usace.army.mil/Media/Publications/TowerTimes/WheresThis.aspx>



# Spotlight on the District

## Patti Behr

Occupational Health Program Manager  
Safety Office

Teaching others is a passion of one of the District's newest teammates. Registered Nurse Patti Behr is the new Occupational Health Program Manager working from the Safety and Occupational Health Office supporting initiatives to ensure the health and safety of the District's employees.

She is currently working to revise the District's medical surveillance program. Medical surveillance refers to medical and work histories, physical assessments and biological testing. One part of this includes collecting employee surveys and establishing hazards associated with certain District job activities. These activities and hazards will then be entered into a database and used for the medical surveillance process.

Many job activities within the District require annual medical surveillance; Behr currently is in the process of re-organizing all of the required physicals and ensuring employees potentially exposed have the proper physical for their current position and work activities as required. She is also assisting the Safety and Occupational Health Office by pursuing her passion of teaching health and safety. She has already been to some of the field sites teaching blood-borne pathogens, the importance of hearing conservation, respirator use and the like.

"I am also reviewing physicals and ensuring any work restrictions are communicated back to the supervisors," said Behr. "It's all about the health and safety of the employees."

Prior to coming to work at the District, Behr worked in Concentra's clinic in Davenport, Iowa, for more than 13 years. The clinic is a walk-in type clinic mainly for occupational medicine focused on supporting area employers in maintaining a healthy and safe workforce. Behr is still an employee with Concentra which is whom the District's contract is with.

Prior to that, Behr managed the Emergency Room at Hammond-Henry Hospital in Geneseo, Ill., for two years. She also

worked as an Emergency Room nurse for seventeen years. She has been a nurse for more than 36 years and is certified in Occupational Health Medicine and was a certified Trauma Nurse Specialist.

"This is my dream job," said Behr. "I am getting towards the end of my career and this job allows me to combine my experience and passion to teach others and help them be safe in their jobs."

Before coming to work for the Corps, Behr assisted Corps employees at the Davenport Clinic.

"I knew there was a need for someone to help organize and promote occupational safety in the District and it was a perfect fit for me," said Behr.

She is hoping to visit all of the field sites before the end of the year. She enjoys working with employees and educating them about the importance of maintaining their health and staying safe both on the job and off.

Outside of work, Behr and her husband, who recently retired from Rock Island Arsenal, enjoy traveling and spending time with their Schipperke puppy. They reside in Sherrard, Ill.

She has a goal of traveling to all 50 states and is currently about halfway there. They have also traveled to a lot of places outside the country including Ireland, the entire Caribbean and spent time in Germany when her husband was in the service.

When asked about advice she shared this, "I am really passionate about educating the public and encouraging others to continue their education to learn all that they can; and first and foremost stay healthy." 



### National Diabetes Month 2013



### Diabetes is a Family Affair

 National Diabetes Education Program  
A program of the National Institutes of Health and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

### When it Comes to Diabetes, Family Support is Critical to Staying Healthy

Diabetes affects nearly 26 million Americans and an estimated 79 million people are at risk for developing the disease. November is National Diabetes Month and for people living with diabetes or at risk for type 2 diabetes, family support is critical to staying healthy.

Diabetes is a challenging disease that affects the entire family in many ways. For people with diabetes and their families, it's important to work together to manage diabetes and prevent serious health problems such as heart disease, stroke, blindness, kidney disease and nerve damage that can lead to amputation. People with diabetes who have a strong family support system are better able to cope with the day-to-day challenges associated with the disease.

This November, the National Diabetes Education Program wants to remind you that diabetes is a family affair and provide you with resources that you can use with individuals, families and communities to take action in the fight against diabetes. Visit [www.YourDiabetesInfo.org/DiabetesMonth2013](http://www.YourDiabetesInfo.org/DiabetesMonth2013) to learn more. 

# SAFETY CORNER

## Autumn Safety

Autumn brings one of the most beautiful times of the year with colorful leaves and pumpkins littering the ground. The season also brings up safety issues for the entire family. Nature presents beautiful displays in the form of fall leaves that welcome hikers and adventurers outdoors. Maintenance tasks also need attention during fall. Preparing for the changing weather will ensure that your family is both happy and healthy all season long.

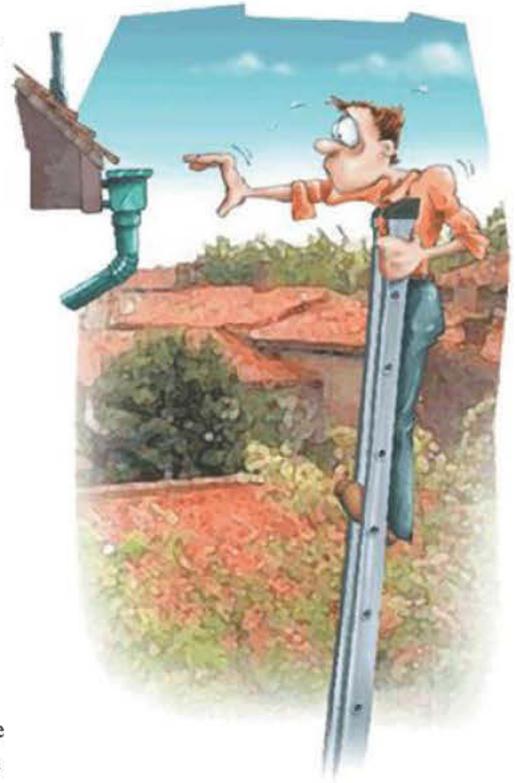
Some helpful autumn safety practices:

- **Driving Safety.** Fall driving safety keeps you and passengers safe. Leaves on roadways might become slick, especially after rain. Use caution when driving and braking on leaf-covered roads. The bright sun glaring into your windshield makes it difficult to see during fall driving. Wear sunglasses to minimize the glare and slow down if you cannot see well. You might also face frost or dew on the vehicle windows and roadways on fall mornings.
- **Weather Safety.** Summer often comes to mind when you think of sunscreen, but you should also apply it during fall to protect your skin from the sun. When hiking or camping, be aware of quickly-changing weather conditions, especially during late fall. Bring along plenty of warm clothing and blankets on a camping trip.
- **Home Safety.** Gutter-cleaning and other outdoor home maintenance projects present the risk of falls. Secure your ladder before removing debris from your gutters or handling other repairs on or near your roof. Tools should be in proper working order and put away as soon as you are finished to prevent injuries. Some homeowners burn leaves or have bonfires in the backyard during the fall months. Avoid burning on windy, dry days. A water source nearby helps prevent the fire from spreading if it goes outside of the burning area. Children need to understand the basics of fire safety if they are outdoors during this time.
- **Nature Safety.** Fall nature experiences also present dangers, especially in areas where hunting is allowed. Hiking outdoors near hunting grounds leaves you at risk for being mistaken for an animal. Brightly colored clothing helps hunters distinguish you from animals. Calling out to hunters to identify your location or simply avoiding areas that allow hunting also keep you safe.
- **Child Safety.** A pile full of leaves gives kids a way to enjoy fall, but the leaves also present a safety concern. Piling leaves on the street invites children to play near traffic, leaving them at risk for getting hit by cars. A driver might not realize a child is present if she is buried in a pile of leaves on the street. Keep leaves in the yard and put rakes away when you are finished to prevent child injuries.



- **Stay Healthy.** Always get a flu vaccination. While it's not pleasant, it's much better than coming down with the flu, which can linger for weeks, and in some cases it can even be fatal. If you do get sick, don't go to work unless you absolutely have to. A cold or flu can spread around the workplace quickly, ruining productivity. Always wash your hands carefully. One of the best ways to avoid a cold or the flu is to wash your hands regularly. Make sure the water is hot, use plenty of soap, and keep hands under the water for at least 30 seconds.

*Following autumn safety practices gives you piece of mind that you are taking the proper precautions to keep you safe as you enjoy this special time of year.* 



# Around the District

## Retirements ...

**Danny Helmers**, engineering equipment operator, Mississippi River Project, Operations Division, retired Oct. 30 after dedicating nearly 29 years to the federal government.

**Bonnie Bernat**, program analyst, Engineering and Construction Division, retired Oct. 5 after dedicating 17 years to the federal government.

## Sympathy ...



**George E. Johnson**, 80, of Davenport, Iowa, passed away Oct. 12 at the Bettendorf Healthcare Center, Bettendorf, Iowa.

Johnson retired in 1998 as the chief of the Hydrologic and Hydraulics Branch after more than 40 years of service.

He also served in the U.S. Marine Corps.

## Congrats ...



Congratulations to **Andrew Goodall**, and his wife, on the birth of a baby boy Sept. 20. Harrison Blake weighed six pounds nine ounces.



Congratulations to **Josh Voss**, and his wife Vanessa, on the birth of a baby girl Sept. 21. Vivyan Marie weighed eight and a half pounds and was 20 inches long.



**Lyle K. Davis**, 82, of Dubuque, Iowa, passed away Oct. 24 at home surrounded by his family.

Davis retired in 1986 as the assistant lockmaster at Lock and Dam 11 in Dubuque, Iowa, after 33 years of service.

He also served in the U.S. Navy during the Korean War.

## Combined Federal Campaign Update

The Office of Personnel Management has approved the extension of the Combined Federal Campaign (CFC) to January 15, 2014. This has been a tough year, but please consider donating to CFC. There are so many charities that need our help and so many to choose from that there is something for everyone.

New this year is donating directly through MyPay. You can also make a cash donation or donate on a pledge form. For more information, visit the CFC website at [www.illowacfc.org](http://www.illowacfc.org) or contact the CFC Chair at (309) 794-5311.

We will also be having our annual on-line auction in early December. For information on the auction contact the auction coordinator at (309) 794-5351. 

FEDERAL BENEFITS  
**OPEN SEASON**

November 11 - December 9

[www.opm/insure/openseason](http://www.opm/insure/openseason)

It's the Federal Benefits Open Season!

# Support & Sacrifice for the Corps

*Thanks to the employees who are deployed to the Transatlantic District - Afghanistan (TAA)!*



## Paul C. Holcomb receives Bronze Order of the de Fleury Medal

By Alice Embrey, Transatlantic Division

**P**aul C. Holcomb was awarded the Bronze Order of the de Fleury Medal by U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Transatlantic Division Commander Maj. Gen. Michael Eyre during an awards ceremony Sept. 26 at Engineer Village, Camp Phoenix, Kabul, Afghanistan.

On behalf of the Engineer Regiment, Maj. Gen. Eyre presented Holcomb the medal in recognition of his exceptionally meritorious service and support while serving as the Kabul North Area Office, Afghanistan Area Engineer and for his 24-year civil servant career.

Holcomb has proudly served the Engineer Regiment and the Federal Government serving at Charleston Naval Shipyard, USACE Savannah District, U.S. Agency for International Development, USACE Gulf Region North-Iraq, USACE Rock Island District, USACE South Atlantic Division and USACE Afghanistan Engineer District-Afghanistan.

Throughout his career, while in positions of increasing responsibility, Holcomb has rendered significant service or support to more than one element of the Engineer Regiment. His consistent willingness to step forward and accept difficult and demanding assignments, whether located in the United States or in austere forward deployment environments, clearly set high standards

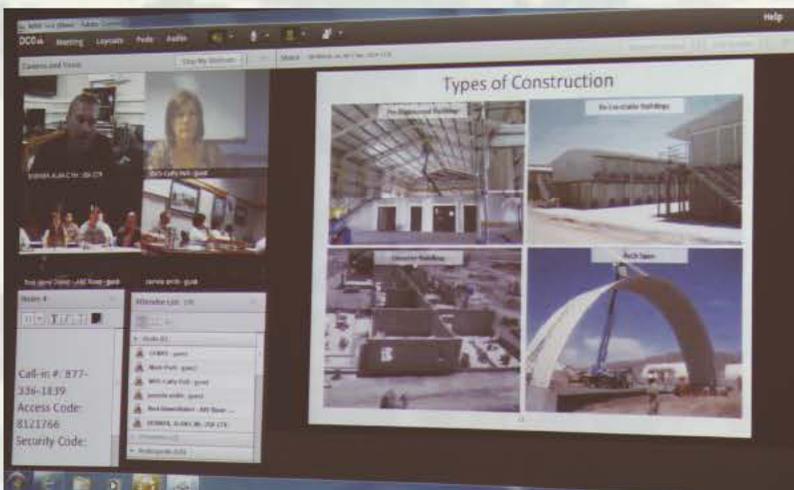
Holcomb's leadership, professionalism and technical competence are in keeping with the finest traditions of service and reflect great credit upon him, the Transatlantic Afghanistan District, the Transatlantic Division, the Engineer Regiment, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and the U.S. Army.

*The Army Engineer Association on behalf of the Engineer Regiment awards the medal to honor individuals who have provided significant contributions to Army engineering. There are four levels of the de Fleury: Steel, Bronze, Silver and Gold. The Engineer Regiment adopted the de Fleury Medal as an award because of the values demonstrated by the man for whom it was struck -- French Engineer Francois Louis Tesseidre de Fleury, who in 1777 volunteered to serve with the American Army in its fight for independence from Britain.*



**Paul C. Holcomb was awarded the Bronze Order of the de Fleury Medal by U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Transatlantic Division Commander Maj. Gen. Michael Eyre during an awards ceremony Sept. 26, 2013, at Engineer Village, Camp Phoenix, Kabul, Afghanistan.**

*Photo by Alicia Embrey*



Paul Holcomb presented an informational briefing to District and Division employees Sept. 26 via live webinar from Afghanistan. During the presentation he described the current operating posture and the construction priorities in Afghanistan. He shared what he does on a day-to-day basis and information about the types of projects he is involved with. Security and safety was also discussed as well as living conditions at Camp Phoenix. A question and answer period followed the presentation allowing employees considering deployment to ask questions.

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## Retiree's Corner

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*This is a new section of the Tower Times to share information relating to retirees, where they are now, and the like. If you have ideas for articles or information you would like to see please email the editor at [cemvr-cc@usace.army.mil](mailto:cemvr-cc@usace.army.mil) or call 309-794-5730. Also if you would like to receive the Tower Time electronically please send an email to [cemvr-cc@usace.army.mil](mailto:cemvr-cc@usace.army.mil).*

**T**he Office of Personnel Management has a dedicated website for retirees or family members to help answer questions and shares online tools that are available. You can visit the site by going to <http://www.opm.gov/retirement-services/retirees-or-family-members/>. From there select the topic you are interested such as Death of Annuitant/Survivor, Family Benefits, CSRS Disability Benefits, New Retirees, Life Events, and many more. This page is a great resource to help you get answers to your questions.

There is also a Retirement Info Center, here you will find the most up-to-date information on changes, events and other issues that may affect your federal retirement benefits go to [www.opm.gov/Blogs/Retire/](http://www.opm.gov/Blogs/Retire/). The latest posting - Cost of Living increase of 1.5 percent effective Dec. 1, 2013.

Open Season for federal employee health benefits is Nov. 11 - Dec. 9. If you are considering changing health benefit plans visit <https://retireefhb.opm.gov>. To access the website, you must register with your CSA/CSF claim number and the last four digits of your social security number and then create a user id and password. You can also dial the toll-free Open Season Express number (interactive voice response system) at (800) 332-9798. 



The annual retirees luncheon was held Sept. 4 at the Quad City Botanical Center in Rock Island, Ill. In attendance were 67 Rock Island District retirees who enjoyed food, fellowship and an update from the District Commander, Col. Mark Deschenes.