



US Army Corps
of Engineers ®

TOWER TIMES

Rock Island District's News Magazine

February 2015



Bald Eagles Soar into Rock Island District



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

TOWER TIMES

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February 2015

On the Cover



An adult bald eagle flies above Locks and Dam 15 in Rock Island, Illinois, in search of fish from the Mississippi River. In the background the Rock Island District Headquarter's Clock Tower Building sits across the street from the Locks and Dam.
Photo by Samantha Heilig

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Tower Times

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A message from....

Colonel Mark Deschenes, District Commander



The State of Our District is Strong

The start of a new calendar year is a good time to reflect and take stock in what the coming months may mean for our organization – a state of the District, so to speak. From my perspective, I see 2015 as a year for the Rock Island District to execute its mission and to take advantage of opportunities.

There is a lot going on throughout the District in all facets of what we do. Our project management portfolio is quite robust. On the Illinois Waterway we have several projects that will highlight 2015 activities. At Brandon Road Lock and Dam we are teaming up with our sister District in Chicago to address the Asian carp problem. The study our team is conducting there will identify key measures to reduce risks presented by this invasive species.

Further south on the river, permanent repairs to the Marseilles Dam will begin as soon as weather permits. The Marseilles Dam emergency has been a feather in our cap, from the initial response to the incident, to the months of hard work of putting temporary repairs in place and planing the permanent repairs.

Those projects I mentioned are highlights but really only skim the surface. There is ongoing rehabilitation work in Lockport and near Des Moines where work is being done to replace a gate at the Saylorville Diversion Dam. Also in Des Moines, we are conducting two extensive studies related to flows on the Des Moines River. One study will assess whether there is need to modify or improve existing flood risk management structures in the city of Des Moines. The other study is reviewing our dam regulation to see if we can better manage flows for flood risk management at Saylorville and Lake Red.

All of this coupled with the day-to-day efforts ranging from the operations and maintenance of the infrastructure throughout our District, to the environmental efforts we continue to carry out through the Upper Mississippi River Restoration program, postures the Rock Island District for a busy 2015.

Of course, all of that work is only accomplished as a result of a highly skilled workforce. Our teammates have been through a lot over the past couple of years. We survived a furlough and budget restraints that restricted our ability to bring on new employees. But things are looking up. After overcoming a hiring backlog, we are still in the hiring business. More than 40 positions are pending action which is a good thing because like any

organization, turnover challenges this District. Several retirements in the coming months will mean the loss of a vast amount of experience and expertise. But ancillary to the challenge of turnover is the opportunity it can represent. Bringing on new employees is certainly a focus but as retirements occur, the chance to step up and lead becomes apparent. Our Leadership Development Program just initiated a new class and those participants will gain valuable insight and mentoring, shaping them to become the future leaders of our District.

I have said before that our workforce is certainly our most valuable resource. As we work to reinforce and bolster our team we are also making efforts to keep employee morale high. Although delayed, monetary awards for this past year have now been approved and are being dispersed. We are also remaining focused on employee safety and risk analysis to ensure your work place presents an environment that is conducive to getting the job done without injury.

From my seat, as your commander, the state of the District is solid. Our annual funding continues to be on the upswing and the locks and dams we are charged with maintaining are getting higher levels of investment due to great work in areas like asset management. Furthermore, our mission is expanding in a time when many organizations are seeing declines. The Rock Island District has one of the highest densities of infrastructure in the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. The infrastructure is critical to not only our national security but the global economy as well. That is why what all of you do is so important – it is work that is truly valuable to the nation.

The state of the District is solid, not because we have critical infrastructure or an expanding mission, but because we have an outstanding workforce filled with professional expertise that is rivaled by few. I would argue that our expanding mission and ever-increasing funding is a testament to the Rock Island District team. Our country's leaders see the value in what all of you bring to the table and that is why those leaders continue to place trust in the Rock Island District. You all have my trust and more succinctly, my gratitude. I appreciate you making my job easy and I look forward to seeing what you will accomplish in 2015. Thanks for everything you do and **CONTINUE BUILDING STRONG.** 

SAYLORVILLE LAKE COMPLETES REVISED MASTER PLAN

By Samantha Heilig, Editor



After several years of hard work the Saylorville Lake project staff, along with members of the District office, recently completed a revised version of the Saylorville Lake project's Master Plan.

"Our goal with revising the Master Plan was to guide efficient and cost-effective management, development, and use of project lands and waters while continuing to provide outdoor recreation opportunities that appeal to the public's interests," said Lake Operations Project Manager, Jeff Rose. "We also aim to protect and manage natural and cultural resources through sustainable stewardship programs."

The project's Master Plan conceptually establishes and guides the development, administration, maintenance, preservation, enhancement and management of all natural, cultural and recreational resources within the project.

The last revision of Saylorville Lake's Master Plan occurred in 1984. Since that time, many things in and around the Saylorville Lake area have changed. The team worked for three years to complete the revision which involved looking at the projects land-use management as well as operations and maintenance of the existing project.

(Continued on Page 5)

(Above) A view of the control tower at Saylorville Lake in Johnston, Iowa, during sunset. (Below) Saylorville Lake offers many outdoor recreational opportunities including sailing. Photos by Tyler Hill



USACE AWARDS NEW FIVE-YEAR ENTERPRISE INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY CONTRACT

Information provided by USACE Public Affairs Office

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers' use of information management and information technology support services continues to evolve to adapt to mission changes. On Aug. 15, 2014, USACE officially announced the award of its \$517 million Army Corps of Engineers Information Technology (ACE-IT) Information Management and Information Technology Services (AIES) contract to Vectrus Systems Corporation. After evaluating a protest, the General Accounting Office denied the protest in its entirety on Dec. 11, 2014. This award represents the end of a journey that began more than three years ago, the culmination of the time and effort invested enterprise-wide by many ACE-IT teammates, USACE customers and industry.

Next-Generation Contract Vehicle

AIES is USACE's next-generation contract vehicle for acquiring information management and information technology support services. The contract is for one year, with four one-year options that, if used, will extend the contract through 2019. The contract will enable USACE to continue adapting and leveraging advances in the delivery and support of information technology, while maintaining benefits and efficiencies from an enterprise-based model.

Transition

- Final notice to proceed was given Jan. 26 which begins the 180-day transition period.
- USACE Information Technology Chiefs are providing briefings and information sessions at their local sites. A standard briefing with links to the original AIES solicitation documents and frequently asked questions, has been posted at <https://aceit.usace.army.mil/aboutus/Pages/AIES.asp>.
- A cross-functional transition team is assisting with the transition. The team will ensure that the mission of USACE continues uninterrupted.
- For additional information on the transition process visit <http://1.usa.gov/1EZ9iCj>.



Saylorville Lake is a multipurpose project built for flood risk management but also offers fish and wildlife management, recreation and water supply storage.

Photo by Jonathan Wuebker

The Lake's Master Plan does not however include items like water management or operations of associated facilities such as the dam, gates, powerhouses and spillway.

Many factors went into the revision of the new Master Plan including significant growth and urbanization of the Des Moines, Iowa, area and multiple changes to project resources. A demographic change to the region, a need for more frequent storage of flood waters, the addition of water supply as a mission and the possible addition of hydropower were also factors involved in the revision process.

"As demand for outdoor recreation increases and interests shift to more and varied types of outdoor experiences, the recreation facilities built more than 35 years ago and habitat plans developed in the 1960s were no longer providing what the Des Moines area needed," said Rose. "The revised Master Plan will help meet current and future public needs, new ecosystem management guidelines and updated environmental laws and regulations."

District Commander, Col. Mark Deschenes, approved the revision of the Master Plan in mid January which allowed it to become operational. Rose said, "The new Master Plan can now serve as a vital tool for responsible stewardship and sustainability of project resources for present and future generations."

To view the final approved Saylorville Lake Master Plan visit Saylorville's website at <http://www.mvr.usace.army.mil/Missions/Recreation/SaylorvilleLake.aspx> and click on the Master Plan icon in the lower right-hand corner of the screen. 

NEW AGREEMENT SIGNED WITH AMERICAN FEDERATION OF GOVERNMENT EMPLOYEES

By Samantha Heilig, Editor

On Dec. 17, 2014, the Rock Island District signed a new negotiated agreement with the American Federation of Government Employees (AFGE) Local 584. The purpose of the union agreement is to foster cooperative and constructive working relationships among people in the District and to create a quality work environment that empowers employees to identify problems and craft solutions to aid in accomplishing the District's mission. The AFGE is the largest federal employee union and supports workers in virtually all functions of government.

The last negotiated agreement between the District and the AFGE was signed in 2005 and was set to be in place for a three year period. When the three years had passed, the members of the AFGE and the District decided to extend the contract for several more years and did not request a new agreement until January 2012.

"Our goal in renegotiating the agreement was to improve the lot of the workers while not impairing the mission of the Corps," said Mike Ryan, AFGE Local 584 president. "It was a bit of a rocky start but once we got moving we actually accomplished things faster than anyone expected."

Representatives from the District and the AFGE received training from the Federal Mediation and

Conciliation Service which helped the group to set ground rules for arbitration and bargaining. In January 2013, the two parties began working together to come up with a new agreement and were successful in revising all 31 articles of the document in about three weeks. The articles included in the union agreement cover employee labor relation topics such as overtime, travel, training, safety and many more.

Once the agreement was completed, it was presented to the Defense Civilian Personnel Advisory Service for review. This process took around 15 months to complete. Once approved the agreement was presented back to the District and the formal signing was arranged.

"It was amazing to see how everyone came together to get the job done," said Laurie Talley, Labor Relations Specialist for the Civilian Personnel Advisory Center (CPAC). "Arbitration and bargaining can be a very challenging task but in this case everyone put their differences aside and it made the process a lot easier."

The signing of the official certification page in December placed the agreement into effect. Present at the signing were representatives from both the District and the AFGE Local 584. Now that the contract is in place, CPAC will be in charge of making training available to the employees of the District which will cover the changes made since the 2005 contract. 



Present at the signing of the negotiated union agreement with the AFGE Local 584 were (from left) Laurie Talley, Civilian Personnel Advisory Center; Mike Walsh, Lockport Lock and Dam; Col. Mark Deschenes, District Commander; Wayne Granzow, Lockport Lock and Dam; Mike Ryan, AFGE 584 president; Terry Bielser, Illinois Waterway Maintenance Section; and William Cross, LaGrange Lock and Dam. *Photo by Samantha Heilig*

SAFETY CORNER

TAKE CHARGE OF YOUR ELECTRICAL SAFETY



By Jeff McCrery, Safety Officer

The month of February has been declared Electrical Safety Awareness Month by the Consumer Safety Product Commission (CPSC) to reduce electrical accidents in the workplace as well as at home.

According to the CPSC, 600 people each year suffer an electrocution in or around the home. Roughly 205,000 residential fires with electrical origins also cause 1,100 deaths and an estimated 16,300 injuries on an annual basis. These fires have a total estimated property loss of about \$950 million.

When dealing with electricity people should always keep a cautious mindset. If it is not dealt with properly it could result in serious injury or worse. Never test or touch electrical components unless you are properly trained and authorized. Ensure you fully understand the hazards of the equipment you are working with and follow all manufacturer's guidance and recommendations. Call or hire an electrical professional to do the work if it is something outside of your personal capabilities. When working with electricity, you don't often get a chance to make the same mistake twice.

While Americans have become accustomed to the convenience of electric power and electrical appliances, most are unaware of the ways that shocks and burns can occur. Hair dryers falling into bath water account for an estimated 30 electrocution deaths annually with 20 of them being children.

One of the simplest things people can do is to have ground fault circuit interrupters (GFCI) installed in their bathroom, garage and outside circuits. GFCI's help to prevent shock accidents by cutting off the current to a circuit if there is an imbalance in the flow. They detect very small levels of current leakage and work so fast that serious injury can be avoided.

During Electrical Safety Awareness Month, consumers have an opportunity to conduct an electrical safety audit of their homes using a checklist developed by CPSC. Consumers can receive a copy of the audit checklist from the CPSP website at: <http://www.cpsc.gov/PageFiles/118882/513.pdf>

Here are some additional tips on electrical safety for work and home:

- Keep electricity and moisture away from each other. Never touch electrical equipment with wet hands or when standing on a damp surface.
- Report any indications of electrical malfunction. Watch for signs such as flickering lights, radio or television interference when another electrical device is in operation, and electrical equipment that works sometimes and doesn't work the next time.
- Never attempt electrical repairs unless you are qualified and authorized to do so. Do not use electrical equipment altered with makeshift repairs.
- Do not alter plugs by removing the third prong so it can fit into a two-prong outlet. This defeats the safety feature of a ground wire.
- Only use extension cords temporarily. Have wiring upgraded to accommodate new equipment.
- Heed all warning signs about electrical hazards. Stay away from high voltage installations and other posted areas.
- Beware of overhead electrical hazards. Watch for power lines and ceiling fixtures when moving tall items such as ladders or pipes, or operating equipment such as cranes or lifting devices.
- Inspect your home for possible electrical hazards, including overloaded circuits and defective electrical equipment.
- Before you attempt to rescue a victim of electric shock, make sure you are not putting yourself in similar danger. Do not touch the person and do not use a tool to reach the person unless you are sure the power has been disconnected.
- If fire occurs in an energized piece of electrical equipment use a fire extinguisher rated for a Class C fire to put out the fire. Never put water on an electrical fire; the result can be a deadly shock. 

BALD EAGLES SOAR INTO ROCK ISLAND DISTRICT

By Samantha Heilig, Editor

During the winter months, the bald eagle, *Haliaeetus leucocephalus*, can be found gathered along the banks of the Mississippi River in some of the largest groups ever recorded. They can also be found in large numbers near the Illinois river and by the District's three reservoirs on the Iowa and Des Moines rivers. Last year the total eagle count within the District was 30,660, the largest number of bald eagles ever counted during the 36 years of conducting annual winter surveys. Although these numbers make the population look stable today, life for the bald eagle in the U.S. has not always been easy.

During the early 1900s the bald eagle population started to decline as westward expansion and development put limitations on their habitat and food. In 1940 the Bald Eagle Act was passed legally protecting the species. But even with the law in place the numbers continued to fall. Finally, in 1976 the bald eagle population reached a dangerous low. It was then that the bald eagle became an endangered species and was listed by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

Once a species is listed as an endangered species, new laws and monitoring programs are set in place and other agencies start to get involved in helping gather data that could aid in the species recovery. This is when the Rock Island District started counting eagles.

During the winter months, large numbers of bald

eagles migrate from their native habitats in Canada and the northern U.S. to rivers and streams to find food in the turbulent waters below the dams. In 1978, the Environmental Analysis Branch of the Rock Island District started conducting annual winter bald eagle surveys along the Mississippi and Illinois rivers in an attempt to get an overall picture of how many eagles were migrating to the locks and dams each year. The survey process, which has for the most part remained unchanged for 36 years, continues today.

The survey consists of a designated representative from each of the lock and dam sites walking around the facility and counting visible eagles from 8:30 to 9:30 a.m. every Wednesday. Adults and juvenile eagles are counted and environmental factors such as temperature, wind direction and speed, weather, and percentage of ice cover are recorded. Once the data is collected, it is sent to the Environmental Analysis Branch to be compiled into a weekly report. These reports are used for planning and permit activities throughout the District as well as for recreational purposes.

According to the District surveys, the number of eagles



visible at each lock and dam site changes slightly from year to year. Some years, one lock and dam will have a higher concentration and the next year the eagles appear to favor a different location.

“It makes a big difference what kind of weather we are having,” says Mike McKean, a natural resource specialist with the Mississippi River Project who counts eagles each week at Locks and Dam 15. “If it is real cold and nasty outside and there is a lot of ice, we definitely see more eagles sitting in the trees.”

Over the years the number of bald eagles has gradually increased. In 2007, the bald eagle population had grown so large that it was removed from the federal endangered and threatened species list. This population growth has shown in the District’s eagle counts. Despite the fact that bald eagles have now been delisted, they continue to be protected by federal laws including the Bald and Golden Eagle Protection Act, the Migratory Bird Treaty Act and the Lacey Act.

“The eagle surveys from the locks and dams have provided valuable information on eagle behavior as it relates to disturbances such as barges, boaters and people,” said Ken Barr, chief of the Environmental Analysis Branch.

“ Having a continued record going forward will help managers and regulators make informed decisions on things that could affect the bald eagle and its habitat.”

Although the number of bald eagles has grown and the population has recovered, visitors continue to travel from all over the country to see the annual winter gathering on the rivers. Once considered a rare opportunity, eagle watching has now become a popular winter pastime for locals as well as visitors to the area. It is not uncommon for people to see 50, 60 even 100 eagles gathered in the trees below a lock and dam on the Mississippi River. The Corps helps to educate the public on the importance of conservation efforts that have allowed for the recovery of the species. Rangers take part in hosting local eagle watching events where participants can see firsthand the large gatherings of eagles. These educational events also include specially designed programs for schools as well as activities for all ages. Thousands of people attend the events each year and continue to return to see this annual gathering of the nation’s bird, the bald eagle.



A gathering of adult and juvenile bald eagles roosting in the trees below Locks and Dam 15 on the Mississippi River. Photo by Samantha Heilig



NEXT CLASS OF FUTURE LEADERS PREPARE WITH LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM

By Sara Paxson, Professional Development Specialist

The Rock Island District's Leadership Development Program is a formal development opportunity that allows employees to identify and refine their leadership skills. It also provides a chance for employees to apply those skills through direct interaction with District leadership and participation in management-related functions.

In January, the Leadership Development Program Level 2 (LDP2) kicked off with a successful orientation for the 2015-2016 session. During the orientation, participants learned about what to expect of the program and what will be happening over the next 11 months. Participants, their supervisors and LDP Steering Committee members were all invited to the orientation to ensure that everyone involved was aware of the program's expectations.

LDP2 is a part-time program that includes an analysis of an employee's leadership style, a self-analysis of strengths and weaknesses and guided preparation of an Individual Development Plan. The program also requires attendance at structured training sessions, participation in team projects, visits to field sites, reading assignments, attendance at District meetings, a mentoring relationship, and a utilization assignment following graduation. This year's selected participants are Elizabeth Bruns, Benjamin DeRoo, Bryan Eggers, Dawn Ewan, Amanda Geddes, Cory Haberman, Kalvin Kalafut, Daniel McBride, Riley Post, Jeffrey Tripp, and Matthew Zehr.

The class's next meeting was held in February for an offsite workshop in Dubuque, Iowa, to dive into teambuilding and getting to know themselves and each



Rock Island District Commander, Col. Mark Deschenes, meets with the newest members of the Leadership Development Program Level 2 class and their supervisors to discuss the purpose of the course and to emphasize the importance of leadership development. *Photo by Sara Paxson*

other. The workshop ended with a wrap-up meeting at the District office to discuss what was learned in Dubuque and was followed by mentor/mentee training and goal setting with their mentors and supervisors. To facilitate their growth, contractor Susan Conklin of Evan and Associates Consulting Corporation, is administering the program for a second year.

“We are looking forward to another year in Rock Island,” said Conklin. “We are reviewing feedback from last year’s class and look forward to incorporating minor changes to improve the great program that already exists. Our overall goal is to provide necessary tools and knowledge that will allow employees to expand their leadership potential and learn more about leadership by awareness.”

The curriculum for the program focuses on different topics each month that continue to build upon one another. Participants start by learning about personal development, where they gather information on their own strengths and weaknesses as well as personality types. Then they move on to identify specific traits in others to more effectively communicate and work in team environments. Additional topics that participants will tackle include communication and presentation skills, how to resolve conflict and delegation of responsibilities. Participants will be paired with mentors to guide them along the way, to serve as a resource and sounding board, and to share some of their organizational wisdom.

This year the LDP Steering Committee has a few new members. The committee welcomed newly appointed Rock Island District Deputy Commander, Lt. Col. Dan Segura, as the new Program Champion.

“Leadership training is essential to any organization,” said Segura. “The investment of resources to this training is vital and well worth it in the end.”

Nate Richards, from Planning Division, is also new and serving on the committee for the next two years as a graduate of the 2014 class. His insight and feedback is crucial to the sustainment of this program as he lived through the experience this past year and feedback is still fairly fresh in his mind. The District’s Process Improvement Specialist, Nicole Lynch, has also recently been added to the LDP Steering Committee. Nicole brings her expertise and guidance in process improvement and project timeline, and also will serve as an additional resource for participants while working through the phases of their team project.

As the LDP2 program continues to evolve it remains a key element of the District’s comprehensive employee development plan and supports the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers’ Campaign Plan, the Mississippi Valley Division’s Implementation Plan and the District’s Operations Plan. To learn more about the District’s leadership development programs visit the District’s SharePoint Training Site at: https://team.usace.army.mil/sites/MVR/trng/SitePages/Leadership_Training.aspx 

Training Tidbits

Did you know... the Army has a website that connects you with your career program and advertises training opportunities to you directly? Visit the following website to learn how to register and to find additional information: <http://www.civiliantraining.army.mil/Pages/Army-Career-Tracker.aspx>

Did you know... that the conference policy has been updated in regards to authorized training locations? The updated guidance states if the training facility is owned or operated by a training entity (public, private, non-profit or for-profit) and the facility is generally set up for training on a majority time basis then it is exempt from the conference policy. This is in addition to the current training exemptions which include government-owned facilities as well as educational institutions. Keep this update in mind when scheduling training and considering locations.

Army Learning Management System Issues... Many people have been experiencing problems when trying to take courses through the Army Learning Management System (ALMS). The issues are affecting the Civilian Education System Foundation Course and the Supervisor Development Course. The system is not allowing users to register for training classes for the current year, if they have registered for them in past fiscal years. Log into the Civilian Human Resources Training Application System (CHRTAS) website, <https://atrrs.army.mil/channels/chrtas/>, and look under announcements for the latest updates on the ALMS issues.



Spotlight on the District

BETH CRUTCHER **PROGRAM ANALYST**

By Samantha Heilig, Editor

Elizabeth (Beth) Crutcher has been working for the District for the last nine years for the Emergency Management (EM) Division. When she started in EM she worked as an EM assistant, then becoming an emergency operations specialist and finally landing as a program analyst. As a program analyst she formulates EM's annual operating budget and keeps the chief of EM, Rodney Delp, informed of funding status and recommends corrective actions. Programs she regularly provides budgeting for include Flood Control and Coastal Emergencies, the National Emergency Preparedness Program, Inspection of Completed Works and all reimbursable funds for EM. During emergency situations, Crutcher serves as a member of the District's Emergency Response team and coordinates and administers daily activities of the Emergency Operations Center. In addition to her work as a program analyst she also administers the District's deployment program, responsible for recruitment and preparation of volunteers for deployment supporting military and civil contingencies.

Although Crutcher enjoys her job in EM now, she started working with the District more than 16 years ago as a student aide in Engineering and Construction. She spent four years as a student aide before leaving federal service for a few years to finish her degree from North Central College in Naperville, Illinois, and to start a family.

In 2005, Crutcher returned to the District, with a completed bachelor's degree in finance and business management and began working for EM. She said that after looking into similar jobs with other agencies, she was pleased to find a position available with the Corps. She liked the fact that the Corps was involved in a variety of mission areas and she already knew many of the people within the District which made for an easier transition back to the working world.

"The Corps is involved in so many different things, that it makes working in EM more interesting," said Crutcher. "I also like the fact that I get to help Flood Area Engineers during emergencies get supplies and equipment they need to get their jobs done."

As a program analyst, Crutcher is heavily involved in formulating fiscal budgets for the Division and works



Emergency Management Program Analyst, Beth Crutcher, is helping other USACE Districts and Divisions by facilitating classes on formulating budget requests. Photo by Samantha Heilig

closely with the chief of EM to ensure that flood money is expended properly. Recently she also got started helping other Districts and Divisions create their fiscal year budget requests.

"I've been working with a Project Delivery Team from USACE Headquarters to create an Engineering Pamphlet that will assist Districts and Divisions in EM Budget Execution," said Crutcher. "During one of the meetings with the team, I was asked to help facilitate a class on creating budget requests."

Since November 2014, Crutcher and other members of the Budget Execution team have been providing training to Districts and Divisions across the country in developing their upcoming budgets. By May 2015 the training will have been offered to five Divisions including South Pacific, Pacific Ocean, Great Lakes and Ohio River, Southwestern, and North Atlantic.

While taking part in facilitating the classes, Crutcher says she is enjoying seeing the wide range of EM programs that exist throughout the Corps. She also has had the chance to meet many new people and learn about the Corps involvement across the country.

In the future, Crutcher looks to continue her work in EM and help to keep the District prepared for when the next emergency occurs. 

FEDERAL FUND RAISER COMPLETES SUCCESSFUL 2014 CAMPAIGN



By Linda Loebach, Joint Munitions Command, Public Affairs Specialist

This past year, federal, military and postal employees, donated a total of \$374,214 to local, national and international charities through the 2014 Illowa Bi-State Combined Federal Campaign which ran from October 9 through December 31, 2014.

A Combined Federal Campaign (CFC) awards ceremony was held at the Rock Island Arsenal on Jan. 15. Maj. Gen. Kevin G. O'Connell, commanding general of Army Sustainment Command, and honorary chairperson of the local CFC, presented Rick Widdel, principal combined fund organization representative, with a check for donations made by federal employees to hundreds of charities.

The CFC is the only authorized solicitation of federal and postal employees in the workplace on behalf of charitable organizations. Employees donate to CFC charities to make a lasting difference in people's lives in the Quad City area and beyond. The 2014 slogan was "Give for Good."

Representatives from several charities that benefit from CFC donations spoke at the ceremony including the American Red Cross, Habitat for Humanity Quad Cities, Quad City Animal Welfare Center, Ronald McDonald House, and United Way of the Quad City Area.

"I'm thrilled that we were able to contribute more than \$374,000 this year to CFC charities," said Rebecca Freeman, Illowa Bi-State CFC co-chair. "And, of course, our goal is to raise even more next year."

With 42 percent of donations staying in the Quad City area, 11 percent of federal and postal workers in the 37-county bi-state area made donations.

Aimee Vermeulen, Corps of Engineers, Rock Island District chairperson for the 2014 CFC campaign, noted that the District raised more than \$22,265 this past year and that 16 percent of the employees participated. The District won first place for the Organizational Participation Award for medium-sized organizations. District staff who played a particular role in making this year's campaign a success were Annette Bealer, Kirsten Brown, Diane DeMeyer, Karen Hagerty, Aimee Vermeulen and Natalie Werthmann. Jody Schmitz also assisted with the campaign by organizing and overseeing the annual chili cook-off event which donated all the proceeds to CFC.

Award-winning organizations recognized at the Rock Island Arsenal CFC ceremony included:

- Highest Average Gift – First U.S. Army
- Organizational Participation Awards
 - » Small: Rock Island Arsenal U.S. Army Garrison - Employees donated \$29,944
 - » Medium: U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Rock Island District - Employees donated \$22,265
 - » Large: U.S. Army Sustainment Command - Employees donated \$57,373

More information on the Illowa Bi-State Combined Federal Campaign is available at <http://illowacfc.org/>. General information on the national campaign is available on the U.S. Office of Personnel Management's website, at www.opm.gov/cfc.

HELP IMPROVE THE ROCK ISLAND DISTRICT

In an effort to allow the District workforce to be better heard and provide input for making solutions, a new anonymous feedback icon has been added to the District's Intranet homepage. This link allows anyone in the District to anonymously submit work-related comments and feedback directly to Deputy Commander, Lt. Col. Dan Segura, for review. This link provides an additional avenue for employees to express concerns without fear of reprisal.



Submit your anonymous, work-related feedback to the Deputy Commander

https://intranet.usace.army.mil/mvd/mvr/Lists/feedback_box/NewForm.aspx?

Around the District

Retirements ...

Thomas Hodgini, assistant chief of Programs and Project Management, retired Dec. 31, after dedicating 40 years of service to the federal government. He served 11 years with the Rock Island District. Prior to his civilian service he served more than 28 years with the United States Army including serving as the commander of the St. Louis District.

William Hainstock, lockmaster from Lock and Dam 12, retired Dec. 31, after dedicating more than 26 years of service to the federal government.

John Hanssen, lock and dam operator from LaGrange Lock and Dam, retired Jan. 1, after dedicating more than 33 years of service to the federal government.

Steve Felderman, lockmaster from Locks and Dam 15, retired Jan. 2, after dedicating more than 41 years of service to the federal government.

David Bierl, supervisory hydrologist, retired Jan. 2, after dedicating more than 31 years of service to the federal government.

Mary Winston, realty specialist, retired Jan. 2, after dedicating more than 33 years of service to the federal government.

Larry Melaas, civil engineer, retired Jan. 2, after dedicating more than 32 years of service to the federal government.

Willis Graham, civil engineering technician and Illinois Waterway dredging coordinator, retired Jan. 2, after dedicating more than 33 years of service to the federal government.

Rowland Fraser, hydraulic engineer, retired Jan. 2, after dedicating more than 35 years of service to the federal government.

Michael Garvis, from the Mississippi River Maintenance Section, retired Jan. 3, after dedicating more than 39 years of service to the federal government.

Katharine Higdon, park ranger with the Illinois Waterway Project, retired Jan. 31, after dedicating more than 36 years of service to the federal government.

Marsha Dolan, public involvement specialist, retired Jan. 31, after dedicating more than 27 years of service to the federal government.

Congrats ...



Congratulations to **Chris Hawes** and his wife, Rachel, on the birth of a baby girl on Dec. 6. Rowan Elizabeth weighed six pounds, nine ounces and was 18½ inches long.

Sympathy ...



Robert Albracht, 71, of Rock Island, Ill., passed away Feb. 6.

Albracht worked for the Rock Island District as a civil engineer for more than 20 years before leaving in 2001 for a job with the Drug Enforcement Administration. He also served an extended tour of duty with the U.S. Army during Vietnam.



John Wayne, 63, of Alexis, Ill., passed away Feb. 1.

Wayne retired after working for more than 37 years as a Maintenance Foreman for the Mississippi River Project and also as a member of the dive crew. He also served in the U.S. Army 173rd Airborne Division, serving three tours in Vietnam.



Jere Wilford, 86, of Venice, Florida, passed away Dec. 16.

Wilford retired from the Rock Island District in 1986 after working as a civil engineer. He also served in the U.S. Army during the Korean War and was awarded a Bronze Star.

Have something you would like to share?

If you have something you would like to submit for the Around the District section of the Tower Times please send it to samantha.a.heilig@usace.army.mil

DEPUTY COMMANDER LT. COL. TODD REED SAYS FAREWELL TO ROCK ISLAND

By Samantha Heilig, Editor

Lt. Col. Todd Reed served as the Deputy Commander for the Rock Island District, from May 2012 to Jan. 2015. As Deputy Commander, he coordinated administrative activities for the support of all District employees executing the Corps' civil works mission. During his last week, Reed presented the employees of the District with a special military tab called the "Reed Cares" tab. This tab originated in Ramadi, Iraq, while the 478th Engineer Battalion out of Fort Thomas, Kentucky, was deployed in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom. The tab was created by Maj. Mike Walton as a result of a speech that then Maj. Todd Reed gave to the Battalion at Fort McCoy, Wisconsin, prior to the deployment. The speech emphasized being disciplined and taking care of one another. Maj. Reed told the soldiers it would truly take a team effort in order for everyone to return home safely. Then he stated that "Reed Cares."

Little did Maj. Reed know that this simple phrase would go viral; being written in porta potties at Fort McCoy; bathroom stalls in Kuwait; benches and buses, vehicles and chalk boards throughout Iraq. An entire platoon decided to order the tabs and then wore them under the left sleeve of their Army Combat Uniform. Maj. Reed then purchased 150 tabs to recognize deserving soldiers that displayed a caring attitude and went above the call of duty.

Up until now, this patch has only been given to deserving soldiers in a combat zone overseas but the



District Commander, Col. Mark Deschenes, accepts the award of the Reed Cares tab from outgoing Deputy Commander, Lt. Col. Todd Reed, on behalf of the employees of the District. Photo by Samantha Heilig

tradition will now carry on in the United States. During Lt. Col. Reed's farewell ceremony he thanked all the District employees for their dedication, professionalism, and service. As a token of his appreciation for their support he presented the District workforce with a Reed Cares tab. 

Can you name where this is?

If so, send your answer to samantha.a.heilig@usace.army.mil. Correct answers will result in your name being entered to receive a special prize and be recognized in the next Tower Times.



Winter Answer: The galley of the M/V Rock Island

Winner: Ben Domingez



STAY SAFE

Public safety is the number-one priority of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, and the Rock Island District urges anyone planning to be on or around water to practice boating and water safety.

Be prepared if you plan to be outdoors near or on the water. Dress appropriately for the water temperature rather than the air temperature because accidents happen and you never know when you might end up in cold water and unable to swim. It takes a very short amount of time for muscles to stop working and for you to lose the ability to rescue yourself. Hypothermia is a major concern and can be fatal if not taken seriously. It is a condition in which the body loses heat faster than it can produce it. Violent shivering develops which may give way to confusion and a loss of body movement. 



COLD WATER KILLS ARE YOU NEXT?

Cold water causes an involuntary gasp (or torso) reflex

Cold Water Shock - 1 Min
Cold Incapacitation - 10 mins
Hypothermia - 1 Hour

Falls are involved in 19% of all water-related fatalities

It takes less than 1/2 cup of water in your lungs to drown

Life Jackets Save Lives Please Wear It

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