

# TOWER TIMES

July/August 2022

WETLAND REGULATORS

INGENUITY LEADS TO SUCCESS

PARKING LOT BUZZ

AROUND THE  
DISTRICT



US Army Corps  
of Engineers®  
Rock Island District

# TOWER TIMES

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#### Mission

The Rock Island District's mission is to deliver vital engineering and water resource solutions in collaboration with our partners to secure our Nation, reduce disaster risk and enhance quality of life, providing value to the region and Nation.

#### Vision

A premier public service, engineering organization of trusted, talented professionals delivering innovative and sustainable solutions to the region and Nation.

**Commander, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Rock Island District**  
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**Deputy Commander, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Rock Island District**  
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#### Disclaimer

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#### On the Cover

Kirk Atwater, Mississippi River Project Maintenance Project Engineer, assists the Mississippi River Project's maintenance crew as they lower a lock miter gate on to newly designed rolling feet to perform maintenance.

*Photo by Kelcy Hanson*

View on the web: [www.mvr.usace.army.mil/Media/Publications/TowerTimes.aspx](http://www.mvr.usace.army.mil/Media/Publications/TowerTimes.aspx)

## Commander reflects on first full year of Command Working as a Team



Col. Jesse T. Curry  
District Commander

**A** District Commander's year in review (already.) It is difficult to comprehend, but my first year as the Commander and District Engineer for the Rock Island District is almost in the books. It has been an absolute joy to learn and lead among what I knew coming in was a District with a tremendous reputation among our partners and throughout the Mississippi Valley Division. If you were to ask me what would be the one thing that I could change to make it better, my answer would be "make time slow down". Unfortunately, that is something out of all our control, so I sincerely appreciate how so many of you make the most of every available minute to make a positive difference.

Over the past twelve months, I've had the privilege to see as close to every corner of the district as possible and attempted to meet every team member performing their mission for the nation. Unfortunately, I am fully aware that there are numerous amazing people within the District that I have yet to meet face to face, but I can say that I have seen the impact of their efforts. Whether face to face, or from a distance, I have been particularly struck by the dedication to selfless service (one of the seven Army Values) that is found in so many in the Rock Island District workforce. What I see reminds me of one of my favorite quotes by President Harry S. Truman. He said, "it is amazing what you can accomplish if you do not care who gets the credit". The Rock Island District has so many who serve in that way and I'm blown away at the difference we make for the nation.

All that said, I think that President Truman's quote is often interpreted to mean that it is admirable to be hidden behind the scenes and we should try to avoid being celebrated for our hard work. I argue that it doesn't mean that at all and just because our amazing people and teams don't do what they do because they care about who gets the credit, that doesn't mean that they don't deserve some recognition. WE should all be proud of our time in the history of the Rock Island District and recognize that this district's service to the nation is something that no matter what part of the district one works in, WE all have a part in something special.

The highlights of where I have seen the impacts of your dedication are too numerous to list all of them, but there are a few that I always enjoy talking about with other USACE leaders, Congressional members, members of other state and federal government agencies, river association representatives, various industry partners, and of course family and friends.


- In my mind, the epitome of "behind the scenes" dependability for the benefit of our nation are the Rock Island District Lock and Dam Crews along with the Maintenance, Repair, Dive, and Dredge Teams that together keep the river open 24/7/365.
- My favorite example of public service is found out at the lakes, campgrounds, and visitor centers wearing a Ranger uniform or a volunteer badge, all ensuring that the public can enjoy our recreation facilities happily and safely in a time when they really, really need it.
- I'm particularly proud of the environmental stewardship, emergency response, and restoration work done by our Regulators, Emergency Managers, Environmental Program Managers, Engineers, and Scientists (of many types). Just last month I was able to tour a beautifully restored segment of the Mississippi in Pool 12 and it was an amazing example of what these teams do throughout the watershed.
- We should all be proud of our Engineers of all types working in Engineering and Construction, Operations Division, and the Inland Navigation Design Center. The hard working "big brains"

*Continued on page 4*

## COMMANDER'S COLUMN (Continued)

continue to drive innovation and enable the construction efforts that have long term regional, national, and global impact. Working hand in hand with our Program Managers to deliver a program that is at record levels and projected to go even higher as we address our nation's infrastructure, natural resource protection, and many other needs.

- And then there is the rest of "the machine" that is made up of those who are too often the unsung heroes of the district who professionally hold up the district from within and make everything I've described possible. From the Administrative Professionals in every office to the major sections and divisions working to keep the computers working, the budgets flowing, the contracts awarding, the real estate ready, the meetings.....meeting, and so much more.
- Finally, I want to highlight the supervisors in the district (from all offices) who go out of their way to make every employee they lead know they are cared for, supported, and valued. I've simply lost count of the supervisors in this district who time and time again go out of their way to build teams that succeed because every member knows the importance of their part and has the leadership and environment they need to perform at their best.

The bottom line is that if I've witnessed anything over the last year, it is that the Rock Island District is TRULY ONE TEAM that together should be VERY PROUD of what it has accomplished, is accomplishing, and will accomplish in the years to come. Furthermore, you should be proud of how you are accomplishing it in challenging times. Every member of the team deserves the credit, especially when they do not care whether or not they get it. With that in mind, let me conclude by saying THANK YOU. Thank you for fighting through the challenges of the past year and helping your teammates everywhere you could along the way to deliver our mission while we cared for each other and our families. THANK YOU for providing me the privilege to be a member of this team and I remain 100% at your service, fighting to keep the Rock Island District a place where we all love to serve our Nation together. 

COL Jesse T. Curry  
50th Commander of the Rock Island District  
US Army Corps of Engineers




**District Commander, Col. Jesse Curry ceremoniously cut a ribbon to celebrate the completion of Pool 12 Overwintering Habitat Rehabilitation and Enhancement Project. The ceremony was attended by many partners of the Upper Mississippi River Restoration Program. Photo by Sam Heilig**



# BUZZ IN THE PARKING LOT



By Kelcy Hanson, Editor




It's not every day one gets to witness a swarm of bees creating a buzz in the parking lot but that's just what happened to Anthony Heddlesten, Civil and Environmental Engineering Section Chief, when he was leaving the Rock Island District headquarters complex a few months back. A swarm of bees had gathered on a bollard in the parking lot on the south side of the annex building near the Geotechnical Branch office.

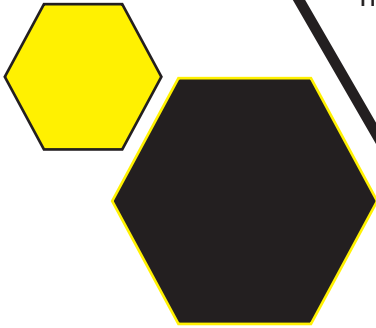
"I called our office of apiary experts and Jim Homann was available to go look at them and take them to a hive," said Heddlesten. Homann is one of at least three beekeepers working for the Rock Island District. He currently has about seven beehives at home and does beekeeping as a hobby.

A swarming hive is the natural way for a beehive to reproduce. Typically, a hive will generate a new queen and prior to the new queen hatching, the old queen and about half of the hive will congregate at a location outside the hive and a few worker bees will begin scouting flights. Generally, the swarm will not stay at a spot for more than several hours before they fly away. Homann says bees in the swarm are not typically aggressive so they are easier to work with.

"In the case of the hive on the bollard, I simply took a piece of cardboard and scraped them off and put them in the hive," said Homann. "After a few minutes those that are flying around will end up flying into the hive box as well. Then it is a matter of sealing it up for transport."

Unfortunately, the swarm of bees found at the headquarters complex did not end up producing brood, young larva, so Homann combined the bees with one of his existing hives.

Homann says the best thing to do if you comes across a swarm of bees, is contact a local beekeeper. If available, most will come and collect them for you. Otherwise, leave them alone and they will likely leave in a day or so. 



# INGENUITY LEADS TO SUCCESSFUL REPAIR

By Kelcy Hanson, Editor

Miter gate repairs were recently needed at Lock and Dam 14 on the Mississippi River in Pleasant Valley, Iowa. Ideally, repairs are done during the winter months to minimize impacts to the commercial navigation industry but due to one miter gate being extensively damaged during a recent incident at the lock, the repairs to the miter gate could no longer wait.

Miter gates are critical to the operation of a lock. At each end of the chamber, a set of miter gates is needed to allow vessels to pass. Over the last several years, miter gates at Rock Island District locks and dams have been getting upgraded to better handle situations such as these, when damages arise. The new gates are more maintenance friendly, with bolted connections rather than being fully welded together. Bolted connections allow the maintenance department to quickly remove and replace damaged components rather than needing to use torches to disassemble the gate. This approach minimizes downtime since replacement components can be fabricated and painted before the gate is lifted.

The new miter gates were also designed to be repaired in a flat, horizontal position rather than having the gate standing upright. Rolling feet are needed to minimize the risk of inadvertently damaging the gate while it is laid on its side. Depending on the lock, these gates can weigh anywhere from 150,000 to 400,000 pounds, so any unexpected movement or shifting of the gate could cause additional damage or a threat to those working on the structure. Given the custom nature of the Corps' hydraulic steel structures, damaged components are not readily available, or quick to fabricate, so it is critical to prevent damaging them in the first place.

The damaged miter gate at Lock and Dam 14

was the first time one of the newer, maintenance friendly gates needed repair. Mississippi River Project Maintenance Project Engineer, Kirk Atwater, took the opportunity to use his ingenuity to design and engineer rolling feet for the miter gate so the repairs could be done in the ideal, horizontal position.

"There were many components that went into the process of designing these rolling feet." Said Atwater, "Since the feet needed to be compatible with all the bolt-together gates on the Mississippi, I needed to start with the as-built drawings of all the gates to determine the overall weight range to build the feet for the heaviest gate rather than just the gate at Lock and Dam 14 so they can be used again. I had to take into consideration the gate's center of gravity with

respect to both the crane and the bearing point on the rolling feet for all positions as the gate rotates. If that is incorrect, the crane operator would be fighting gravity throughout the laydown process and there would be a greater risk of the gate wanting to flop over rather than going smoothly and causing a shock load crane boom."

One of the top priorities throughout the design process was to create feet that could be installed with minimal effort. Ideally, they didn't want to have to drill any extra holes or weld anything onto the gate to use the rolling feet since that would require additional work before the repair could get underway. Atwater's ultimate solution was removing six existing skin plate bolts on the downstream side of the gate, once the bolts were removed, the feet could be installed using those existing holes, with longer bolts. On the upstream side of the gate, the rolling feet connected to a large gusset plate with clamps to hold the feet in place,




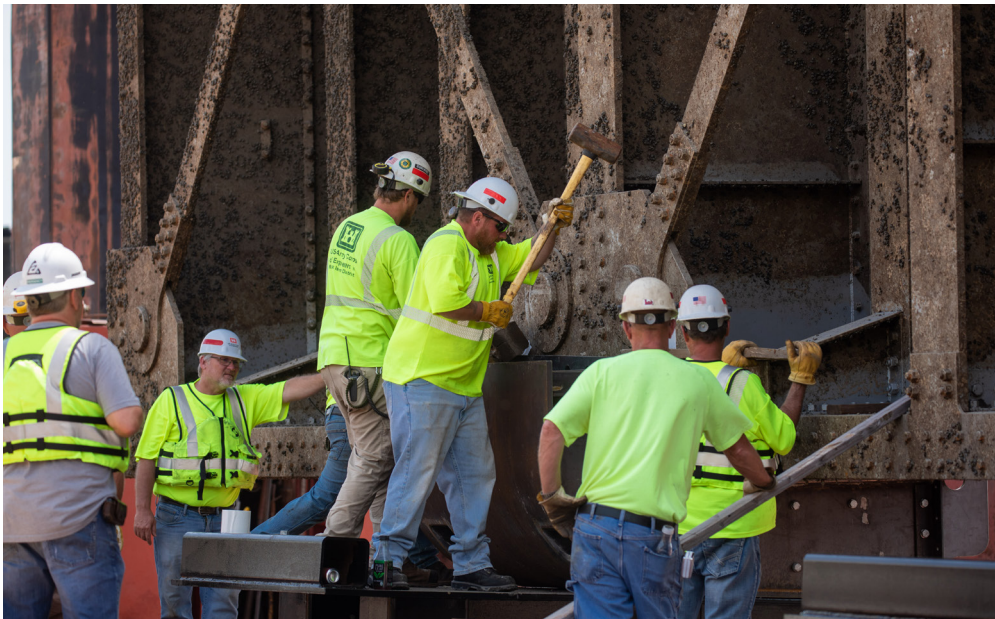
The new rolling feet used for laying miter gates on their side were designed and fabricated in the Rock Island District's maintenance facility at the Mississippi River Project Office in Pleasant Valley, Iowa. Photo by Kirk Atwater



preventing it from dropping when the crane is supporting it with the rolling feet still attached.

Laying the miter gate down using the rolling feet anytime repairs are needed is much safer for employees and quicker because it does not require scaffolding to be constructed around the upright gate. The plan is to use the rolling feet anytime the Corps has significant structural repairs needed to miter gates in the future.

After the repair of the miter gate, Atwater concluded, "The rolling feet worked as intended! Yes, we will be making some minor changes for their next use. They will be a critical component for all future repairs to miter gates on the Mississippi River moving forward." 



**(Top)** The Quad Cities Heavy Lift Crane meticulously lowers the miter gate into the rolling feet. **(Middle)** Maintenance crews diligently hammer shims into place so the rolling feet are properly placed before laying the miter gate down. **(Bottom)** The Quad Cities Heavy Lift Crane successfully lowers the miter gate onto its side while using the rolling feet. *Photos by Kelcy Hanson*

# BUILDING WETLAND REGULATORS

By Albert Frohlich, Project Manager

In June, Rock Island District Regulatory Division employees and other regulators from the Chicago, Louisville, Detroit, Memphis and Omaha Districts attended a USACE Regulatory Development Program Wetland Delineation Class held at Nahant Marsh in Davenport, Iowa. In addition to the USACE staff, employees from the Iowa Department of Transportation and Nahant Marsh attended. This was the first in-person wetland delineation class held since 2019.

Wetland delineation is the process of identifying the wetland/upland boundary and is required as part of a complete application for a Department of Army 404 Permit. This skill is key to building a better regulator. The class, which lasted four days, was

designed to teach regulators how to identify hydric soils, interpret the landscape for wetland hydrology and determine whether the plant community is hydrophytic or not. While not a plant identification class, there were several excellent botanists who attended and were willing to extend their knowledge to the class.

Each day built on the skills learned on the previous day and afternoon field trips provided the opportunity to practice skills discussed in the classroom. The first day began with basic information about the process and why it is done. This was followed by a field trip to discuss the basics of digging soil observation holes and plant sampling. Day two is often described as the meat of the class and includes



**During the USACE Regulatory Development Program Wetland Delineation Class held in June, students perform a rub test to determine whether a soil is organic or mineral. Photo provided by Albert Frohlich**

**A group of regulators estimating percent cover of the tree canopy. Photo provided by Albert Frohlich**






learning about all of the wetland indicators, soils, hydrology and vegetation. By day two, the class was broken into teams of four or five people and it was rewarding to see these groups working together discussing what they see. Days three and four get progressively more difficult and the field trips offered more diversity in soils and vegetation.

This year's field trips were held at Nahant Marsh, Pigeon Creek Park in Bettendorf, Sherman Park near Calamus and Ikes Fen near Geneseo, Illinois. The Quad Cities is a great location to teach this class. Wetlands near the Mississippi River and associated marshes are full of wetland indicators and this year's class discovered them all. In addition to the sites close to home, Sherman Park near Calamus offered examples of sandy soils and other hard-to-identify soil indicators. Ikes Fen in Geneseo also never disappoints. This location is rich in unique plant life and has hydric soil indicators present such as loamy mucky mineral and potential histic epipedon (this is highly organic soils for those who don't know what this means).

The Rock Island District has been offering this class for years. Prior to his retirement, former Project Manager Neal Johnson taught the class twice a year to USACE employees and other agency staff. In 2012, I began teaching the class to "make sure I knew my stuff." In 10 years of teaching, I've taught over 300 students with an excellent team of other instructors from across the Corps. This team of instructors includes Chad Lamontange from St. Louis, Don Reinke from Detroit, Andrew Blackburn from Chicago and Shawn Blohm from Buffalo. This class is a team effort and without the others, the class wouldn't work.

USACE Regulatory Development Program Wetland Delineation Class is typically offered annually in a different location each year, depending on funding and demand. The class was paused for two years due to the COVID-19 pandemic because it cannot be offered virtually. If the demand for the class this year is any indication of the need moving forward, the group of instructors will be busy for a few more years as there have been many new hires across the USACE Regulatory Program. 



**The team of regulators from Rock Island, Chicago, Louisville, Detroit, Memphis and Omaha Districts and their instructors from Rock Island, St. Louis, Detroit, Chicago and Buffalo Districts who attended and lead the 2022 USACE Regulatory Development Program Wetland Delineation Class in June. Photo provided by Albert Frohlich**

# EMPLOYEE SPOTLIGHT

By Kelcy Hanson, Editor

## KIRK ATWATER

Mississippi River Project Maintenance Project Engineer



**K**irk Atwater has been an imperative part of the Rock Island District over the last 11 years, spending most of his time in the Design Branch, Structural Engineer Section and most recently transitioning to the Mississippi River Project Office's Maintenance Section in October 2021. Atwater provides direct engineering support for all the work performed by the Mississippi River Project's Maintenance Section. His duties include developing and planning for upcoming maintenance projects, troubleshooting and problem-solving issues that arise as maintenance crews perform work, designing structures and tools and coordinating everything back with the

Engineering Section. In addition, Atwater is Rock Island District's expert in Hydraulic Steel Structure (HSS) design and continues to provide higher level guidance for on-going HSS design projects within Engineering and Construction.

Growing up, Atwater lived in a household that aided his engineering career. His father was a union welder for Caterpillar and worked on cars on the side. Atwater learned to weld as a teenager and spent countless hours in the shop helping his dad. He had a lot of hands-on learning and problem-solving experience that helped him become a better engineer. Atwater says, "I've learned firsthand that just because a design 'works' on paper doesn't mean it will work well in the field or for the end user."

Atwater graduated with a Bachelor of Science in Physics with Engineering from Illinois College and a Bachelor of Science in Civil Engineering from University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign in December 2010. He also received his Master of Science in Civil Engineering from University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign in December 2011.

In 2009, Atwater applied for the Science, Mathematics, and Research for Transformation (SMART) Scholarship-for-Service Program, funded by the Department of Defense and after receiving the scholarship, the Rock Island District was listed as his "sponsoring facility." The scholarship locked him into a contractual graduation date and starting date with the District, which is how he learned about of the Corps of Engineers. When Atwater first started working for the District there was a hiring-freeze but because of his scholarship exception, he was able to start employment upon graduation.

"After I started working for the Rock Island District, it was clear to me that I wanted to design and work with the big hydraulic steel structures that are a critical component of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers' mission."

Atwater is fascinated with everything related to the Corps' HSS infrastructure and loves that his job deals with different aspects of these structures on a near daily basis. In general, HSS encompasses any steel structure used to control the flow of water i.e., lock gates, dam gates, flood control structures, etc. The District has a real mix of original structures that are around 90 years old and still in service, all the way to brand new structures that are still currently being fabricated, and everything in between.

*Continued on page 11*

“The breadth and age of structures in the District provides a uniquely challenging work environment that you can’t get anywhere else in the industry. It is incredibly rewarding to troubleshoot problems on aging infrastructure. Diving into design related details and fabrication approaches from the 1930s is a little like stepping into a time machine because we do things so differently today. The craftsmanship and attention to detail from the original construction are unparalleled,” said Atwater.

When asked about his most memorable project, Atwater says there’s no one project that is most memorable. He’s had the opportunity to work on some very high-profile projects throughout his career and most times, the timing just worked out that he was available to assist where needed. Some of his career highlights include the Marseilles Dam allision

and final dam repairs, Lock and Dam 22 Tainter gate design, all new bolt-together Illinois Waterway miter gate design, Illinois Waterway emergency miter gate removal and bulkhead recess incorporation and the ILWW new miter gate installation. Several of these projects were ‘firsts’ for the Corps and were projects that had no easy solution, which made them even more rewarding to complete.

“I love that I get the opportunity to work with massive steel structures and infrastructure that you can’t find anywhere else,” said Atwater. “It is incredibly rewarding to solve problems that arise on these structures and to see them continue to function as intended even though some of them are over 90 years old. I hope the structures that I have designed will go on to outlive me in the same manner as the original designers back in the day.”

“  
**I hope the structures that I have designed will go on to outlive me in the same manner as the original designers back in the day.**  
”



**Can you name where this photo was taken?**

If so, send your answer to [Kelcy.C.Hanson@usace.army.mil](mailto:Kelcy.C.Hanson@usace.army.mil) to be featured in the next issue of the Tower Times.



**Last Issue's Winner**



Answer : Basement of Annex, Fire Protection System  
 Winner: Adam Ziegler

# ANTI-TERRORISM MONTH

By R. Scott Harbison, Chief, Security and Law Enforcement

**A**ugust is Antiterrorism Awareness month. Because we live and work in areas where the threat of terrorist activity is generally considered to be low, our employees can easily be lulled into a false sense of security. The Rock Island District enhances quality of life and provides value to the region and the nation by delivering vital engineering and water resource solutions to the community. However, the importance of our inland navigation and flood risk management missions make us a tangible and symbolic target for those that would seek to undermine this great nation.

Providing a safe work environment is essential to daily operations and is a responsibility that falls on each of us. Suspicious activity that should be brought to the attention of District leadership includes any behavior, either overt or implied, to commit an act of physical aggression, sabotage or theft of resources, or violations of security protocols. iWatch Army is a program that encourages and empowers the Army community, which the Corps of Engineers is a part of, to identify and report suspicious behavior potentially associated with terrorist activity.



## What to Report


Trust your instincts. We rely on our senses every day of our lives. If a behavior or activity makes you feel uncomfortable, report it. Here are some examples of behaviors and activities to report:

- People drawing or measuring important buildings
- Unmanned aerial systems (drones) photographing/loitering around important buildings
- Strangers asking questions about security forces or security procedures
- A briefcase, suitcase, backpack, or package left behind
- Cars or trucks left in No Parking zones in front of important buildings
- Intruders found in secure areas
- A person wearing clothes that are too big and bulky and/or too hot for the weather
- Chemical smells or fumes that worry you
- Questions about sensitive information such as building blueprints, or security plans without a right need to know.
- Purchasing supplies or equipment that can be used to make bombs or weapons

## How to Report

Because the majority of our assets are located on standalone facilities outside of Army installations, it is important to report suspicious activity to local law enforcement. Talk to your supervisor or any leader in your work unit. Suspicious activity reports within the District area of responsibility should be submitted in the "4W+ Report" format to the District Security office by email to: [dll-cemvr-security-sc@usace.army.mil](mailto:dll-cemvr-security-sc@usace.army.mil). The 4W+ are:

- (1) Who: Individual or project name effected by the event
- (2) What: Event or situation
- (3) When: Date and time
- (4) Where: Project location, address, mile marker

(5) Supporting Details: Report causes, contributing factors, corrective actions, mitigation measures taken, next action required, course of action, support needed, detailed incident information (tell the story), and known media coverage. 



# TRAINING TIDBITS

## Leadership Development Program Level 2 (LDP2)

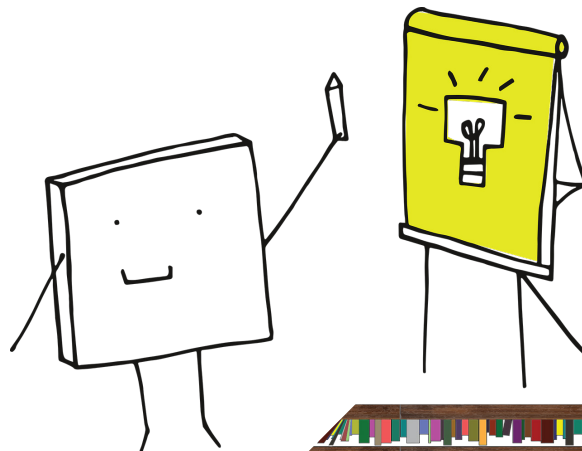
- ▶ Program is scheduled for FY23 starting in OCT and ending in May.
- ▶ Applications are due by 10 AUG with participants announced by end of AUG.
- ▶ Orientation will take place in mid to late OCT.
- ▶ Program schedule will be posted here soon: Training - Leadership\_Training (army.mil). or go to MVR Intranet > click on blue Training box > click on Leadership Development Training site page.

## Supervisor Development Opportunity

- ▶ Supervisor Workshops will be taking place 9, 10, 11 and 16, 17, 18 AUG.
- ▶ Supervisors may register for a one day workshop in TED by searching for course number: MVR-PLD.
- ▶ Workshops are designed to be extremely engaging and interactive and will offer knowledge and tools to improve employee engagement, and assist with leading teams in a hybrid environment.

## Mandatory Training

- ▶ All FY22 Mandatory training in TED should be completed at this point.
- ▶ The date in TED of 30 SEP is misleading and is entered that way to trick the system and ensure course is accessible throughout the year instead of only until the start or end date.
- ▶ If an employee has any courses still showing under the mandatory training tab in TED then it isn't fully complete yet.
- ▶ Be sure once training is viewed that the employee circles back to their mandatory training tab and clicks on the certificate link to open and close the certificate. This will close the loop and the system will automatically mark the employee complete and move the course from the mandatory training tab to the employee history.
- ▶ Any training completed outside of TED system will require employee to send completion certificate to their office training coordinator so their TED record can be manually marked complete.



# AROUND THE DISTRICT

Please send family news to [Kelcy.C.Hanson@usace.army.mil](mailto:Kelcy.C.Hanson@usace.army.mil) to be included in the next issue of the *Tower Times*.

## CONGRATULATIONS



Congratulations to Judy Borah on the birth of her twin daughters, Levi Jade and Lacey Mae, on March 14. Levi weighed in at 5 pounds, 10 ounces and Lacey weighed 6 pounds, 2 ounces. They're loved by their big sister Rylan.



Congratulations to Marisa Lack on the birth of her daughter Chloe Elizabeth Lack, on June 5. Elizabeth weighed in at 5 pounds, 12 ounces.



Congratulations to Matthew and Sarah Quinn on the birth of their son, William Blake Quinn, on April 28. William weighed in at 6 pounds, 8 ounces and 19 inches long.



Congratulations to Nick and Rachel Bails on the birth of their son Levi John Bails, on July 12. Levi weighed in at 5 pounds, 8 ounces and 17 inches long.



Congratulations to Alyssa and Ben Schwarz on the birth of their son, Silas James Schwarz, on May 3. Silas weighed in at 9 pounds, 11 ounces and 20 inches long.

**Annual Retirees' Luncheon**  
Friday, Sept. 9, 2022

Reservations due by Aug. 9. Please email Jerry at [jerryskalak@gmail.com](mailto:jerryskalak@gmail.com).

# SYMPATHY



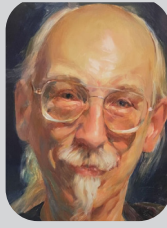
**Harvey Vance**, 94, of Muscatine, Iowa passed away May 22. Vance was a Army veteran and retired from the District in 1996 with 42 years of federal service. He worked at Lock and Dam 16 and retired as the Lockmaster.



**Ernest Jackson Jr**, 79, of Geneseo, Illinois passed away July 9. Jackson was a Army veteran who retired from the District in 2004 with over 40 years of federal service. He worked at several locks and dams over his career and retired as a Lockmaster.



**Irving Olson**, 87, of Blue Grass, Iowa passed away May 31. Olson was an Army veteran and worked as a Civil Engineer for the Corps upon college graduation. He retired in 1994.



**Russell Gruenwald**, 73, of Maquoketa, Iowa passed away July 18. Gruenwald was an Army veteran and served the District as a Civil Engineering Technician for 37 years, until retirement in 2004.

# RETIREMENTS

**Linda Weiman**, Program Analyst, retired April 1, after dedicating over 42 years of service to the federal government.

**Randall Kyle**, Illinois Waterway Maintenance, retired April 4, after dedicating over 19 years of service to the federal government.

**Frances Wachter**, Project Engineer, retired May 31, after dedicating over 23 years of service to the federal government.

**Renjie Xia**, Hydraulic Engineer, retired June 30, after dedicating over 20 years of service to the federal government.

**Charles Christian**, Saylorville Lake Maintenance Worker, retired June 20, after dedicating over 30 years of service to the federal government.

**Bonnie Amacher**, Human Resources Specialist, retired June 30, after dedicating over 22 years of service to the federal government.

**William Ford**, District Dive Coordinator, retired July 30, after dedicating over 36 years of service to the federal government.

# EMPLOYEES OF THE MONTH

APRIL

*Heather Anderson*



Heather's leadership, forethought and preparation were critical in the success of Rock Island District during the MVD virtual hiring/recruitment fair. The hiring fair was a new initiative using a new USACE platform called Yello.

MAY

*Todd Ernenputsch*



Natural Resources Management Specialist, Todd, wore multiple hats at several locations in support of the Illinois Waterway, Farm Creek project, and other District wide programs.

## EMPLOYEES OF THE YEAR

During annual Corps Day celebrations, several Rock Island District employees and teams were recognized with some major awards! Listed below are the individual award winners. Employees of the Year:

Mark Pratt (Engineering)

Matthew Stewart (Supervisor/Manager)

Phillip Rustad (Professional Occupations)

Elizabeth Crutcher (Technical/Administrative)

Yvonne Lohmeyer (Clerical/Assistant/Technical)

Steven Ritchhart (Trades/Crafts/Labor)

Kenneth Ross (Lock Operator)

Jacob Kidman (Wage Grade Supervisor)

Elizabeth Bruns (Public Contact)

Richard Nickel (Community Service)

Project Manager of the Year: Ben DeRo

Program Manager of the Year: Andrew Goodall

Procurement Contracting Officer of the Year for

Mississippi Valley Division: Elizabeth Dennison

Environmental Quality Award: Abby Steele

E. Manning Seltzer Award (for special contributions to  
the Corps legal mission): Rebecca Martinez

de Fleury Medal: Bill Ford

Gallery of Distinguished Civilian Employees:

Daniel Johnson

