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LRDispatch

Melcher visits district, Table Rock offices

by Jennifer Wilson
LRDispatch staff

Division Commander Brigadier General David Melcher spent Jan. 23 and 24 in Little Rock District talking to employees, touring a construction project and a powerhouse and learning more about a permit issue.

Little Rock District is Melcher's first stop on his second round of visits to the district offices since he assumed command in September 2000.

Melcher started his visit with an hour set aside to talk to and hear from district office employees. He talked about two issues that have been consuming a lot of his time lately.

Employee responses

"A few months ago, I asked for feedback from employees about my guidance and philosophy for fiscal year 2002, and I got it," Melcher said. He received more than 600 e-mail responses.

"I read every one of them, and I responded to them too," Melcher said. "I also compiled the responses to give me a clearer picture of what was going on in the division."

According to Melcher, 80 percent of the responses were positive and supportive of the guidance. Fifteen percent were positive, but said their supervisor hadn't talked to them yet about the guidance yet. Five percent of the responses were pessimistic about the guidance or the supervisor's ability to explain the guidance, or they had a personal issue.

Some of the specific issues that were mentioned by employees in their responses to Melcher include:

- How coaching or mentoring in the workplace helped employees improve professionally.
- Concerns that poor performers in the organization receive the same awards as

good performers.

- The importance of professional certification to the organization and to individuals.

- Concerns about whether or not we will be able to maintain a capable workforce for the future.

"I appreciate the responses that I got, and how honest some of them were," Melcher said. "Many of these issues or areas need to be addressed, either at the division level or the district level. I've shared the information with my staff at division and the district commanders so they will know and be able to help in areas that need improvement."

Support to the military

Melcher said that he had recently returned from a trip to the Persian Gulf where he was able to meet with some of our military customers and see a few of the SWD employees who are deployed.

"We're doing a lot of work there, and I thought it would be good to go see it and meet the customers," Melcher said. "We've got great people on the ground working for us."

"In those visits I talked to folks there in support of the CREST," Melcher said. "I visited the office that Keith Loos is working out of, but he was out in the field. I wasn't able to see him, but I left a commander's coin for him."

Melcher also talked about all the aid and infrastructure rebuilding that will begin in Afghanistan when the fighting stops. More than 50 possible projects already have been identified

(See "General" on Page 12.)



Brig. Gen. Melcher and Maj. Brown had lunch with PPEP participants and district EL's to discuss Corps issues.

Corps, Little Rock District see great things happening

Great things are happening all over the Corps, especially here in Little Rock District. Since the new year began, I have had the opportunity to talk directly with two of our congressmen as well as Chief of Engineers Lieutenant General Flowers and Southwestern Division Engineer Brigadier General Melcher. All spoke well of what we are doing here. I've also sat in on a headquarters' Resource Management Committee.

What they said

Funding, of course, was a major topic in all of these meetings. The outlook is that it will get better, but we still have a while to go before we are fully funded to our requirements.

We are finalizing the numbers for the fiscal year 2003 budget now, and it looks like we will get several million more than we thought a month ago. These additional funds are in our Operations and Maintenance account, and will go far to prevent further degradation of our infrastructure. In a couple of parks we have been given money to use specifically for upgrades, but the rest of the money simply will be used to maintain what we have.

Based upon my meetings, I think we have finally helped headquarters' understand how their decisions affect our budget. Some of their well-meaning initiatives are costing the districts more than they had previously realized. Helping headquarters understand this does not mean the problem is solved, but it is the first step. I expect things to improve, even though it will be slower than I'd like.

Congress is very mindful of the Corps of Engineers, and our relationship with them is improving. I have received several comments about how our interaction with the public has improved lately. This is mainly with the rangers and regulators who interact daily with the public, often about issues that are unpopular with the public. But, it also includes everyone who talks with the public, whether they are a receptionist, secretary, program manager or division chief. I thank each and every one of you for this, and I want to continue improving in this vital area.

The chief's thoughts

Lt. Gen. Flowers was able to spend about a day and a half with his district engineers, and he had several good things to say.

Mission Essential Task List is central to our planning. It will be used to define what is most significant to us and outline what training will be done to support those missions. Individual Development Plans will be based upon the METL. The ability to

From where I sit

by Col. Benjamin Butler
District Engineer



perform our mission will be one of the important outcomes of our METL analysis. Little Rock District will be working hard on our METL to ensure it reflects our mission requirements and is useful in helping us execute our program.

Project Management Business Plan, also called our corporate business plan, will be fully implemented this year. The chief understands how severely this will tax us, but it is important to get this done quickly. The chief has promised that once implemented, there will be no more data calls from headquarters! The end product will be one that is helpful to us in the field, and not just something that is focused on making life at headquarters easier.

I need everyone to help get this done correctly. As we go through the final development and implementation, headquarters will be looking for "value added" feedback to find and eliminate any problems before they become a crisis. More will be coming out on this very soon.

The chief is committed to ensuring this organization is a "learning organization," that is constantly improving itself. Part of this involves the work on METL and PMBP. It also means we need to provide feedback mechanisms across district and division boundaries. Lessons learned in Seattle should be quickly conveyed to Little Rock and visa versa. We should all be learning from each other.

Telework and virtual USACE are two important concepts we will be working on for the future. It is important to remember that one cannot teach, coach and mentor well from home, but we do need to look at how we can take care of personnel and do better work through available technology.

Relationships are still key to the Corps vision. He is talking about relationships at all levels, from our interaction with members of Congress to how we interact with our personnel. All of us must continue to improve in this area, and the chief is very

(See "From where I sit" on Page 3.)

LRDispatch



**U.S. Army Corps
of Engineers**
Little Rock District

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News Briefs

2002 free interactive federal leave chart available

FEDweek has just posted a free 2002 interactive federal employee leave use tracker on its website. Just go to www.fedweek.com/HotFreeNews/default.asp and you can download an Excel spreadsheet version or a zipped version of the chart. Then all you need to do is fill in your specific information, and the sheet tracks your leave.

You can also go to The Wire at www.swl.usace.army.mil/thewire and click Helpful Links to get to the FEDweek site.

Locality raise split announced

As expected, President Bush designated 3.6 percentage points of the January general schedule locality raise to be paid out across-the-board and the other 1 percentage point is to be divided as locality pay.

The effect of the decision is that GS raises—payable with the first full pay period of the calendar year—ranged by nearly a percentage point among the 32 localities.

Employees working in the highest-paid locality, San Francisco-Oakland-San Jose, got 5.42 percent, while employees in the Huntsville, Indianapolis, Kansas City, Orlando and the catch-all “rest of

the U.S.” got 4.53 percent.

Wage-grade employees, who are paid under a separate locality system and who get their raises at varying times, will have their fiscal 2002 raises capped at the GS average amount of 4.8 percent.

C Fund suffers worst year in its history

The Thrift Savings Plan’s common stock (C) fund in 2001 posted the worst year since the fund’s inception in 1988, losing 11.94 percent for the calendar year after gaining 0.88 percent in December.

The yearly loss comes as no surprise to investors who have been watching the fund’s struggles on a month-to-month basis—the fund was down in six of the 12 months, including four monthly drops exceeding 6 percent—but the decline still stings, especially following the drop of 9.14 percent in 2000, which until now was the worst annual performance in the fund’s history.

The other two stock-oriented TSP funds, the small and mid-capitalization U.S. stock (S) fund and the international stock (I) fund also posted gains in December, with the former up 5.31 percent and the latter up 0.52 percent. Those funds began last May, but based on the returns of their underlying funds, they were down 7.32 and 21.86 percent, respectively, for calendar year 2001.

The bond (F) fund posted the TSP’s best return in 2001, up 8.61 percent after a 0.61 percent loss in December, while the government securities (G) fund gained 0.42 percent in December for a 2001 gain of 5.39 percent. Meanwhile, money in the G fund is being invested at a 5.25 percent annual rate in January.

GSA raises mileage reimbursement rate

The General Services Administration has increased the federal mileage reimbursement rate for travel by car two cents to 36.5 cents per mile in 2002.

GSA sets the mileage reimbursement rate for federal employees. By law, the government-wide rate cannot exceed the IRS’ rate. In November, the IRS adopted a new standard mileage reimbursement rate of 36.5 cents per mile for 2002.

GSA’s decision to mirror the IRS rate was made on Jan. 8, and the rate will be effective for travel on or after Jan. 21, 2002.

Under federal travel regulations, employees may use personal vehicles for official travel if authorized by their agency.

If an agency authorizes travel by other means, such as travel by air, and employees drive their own cars instead, reimbursement rates are limited to the cost of the authorized means of travel.

Tell us what you think

Editor's note: The LRDispatch staff welcomes your opinions. Letters must be signed. If you choose to have your name withheld from publication, we will honor that request.

Comments must be received by Feb. 14 for publication in the next issue. Send your comments to jennifer.l.wilson@SWL02.usace.army.mil or mail them to the Public Affairs Office at P.O. Box 867, Little Rock, AR 72203-0867. We reserve the right to refuse publication of any letter that is deemed libelous.

Remember to keep the criticism constructive and the questions coming.

From where I sit

(Continued from Page 2.)

grateful for the major improvements we have made so far.

His last slide quoted a Japanese proverb, “Vision without action is a daydream, action without vision is a nightmare.”

The chief ended by saying that our future is bright, and our personnel are our greatest asset. I thought that was a great way to end.

Great work

DeJuan Carter and **Bobby Van Cleave** have both recently earned their Professional Engineer license. This is a difficult certification and is indicative of their hard work and dedication. DeJuan

also will be recognized as an “engineer of merit” this month at the Black Engineer of the Year Conference in Baltimore.

Peggy O’Brien of Omaha District has been selected to be the Russellville Project Office Operations Manager.

Peggy Paulson was selected to be our new chief of Safety. **Henry Himstedt** has been selected as the new chief of Hydraulics and Hydrology Section.

All of these people have worked hard, dedicated themselves to being the best and are now receiving well-deserved recognition for their efforts. Congratulations to each of you.

Things are going great, and it is due to the dedicated work each of you do every day.

Family news

Best wishes

Matthew Stewart, son of **Lou Ann Stewart**, an administrative support assistant at Table Rock Project Office, was activated by the Naval Reserves for a one-year tour of duty and is currently stationed in Virginia.

Births

James Beard's wife, Annette, gave birth to their ninth child, Samuel Luke Beard, Dec. 27. Beard is the operations manager at Clearwater Project Office.

Jasmine Mary Cash was born Dec. 24 to **Carla Cash**. Cash is a budget analyst in Real Estate.

Nathan Whitmore was born Dec. 20 to **Elizabeth Whitmore** and her husband, Greg. Whitmore is the project manager for Programs and Project Management Division.

Jon Wedgeworth and his wife, Jennifer, adopted six-week-old Mary Beth on Jan. 24. Jon works at the Table Rock Dam Safety Project Office.

Congratulations

Sarah Stein, daughter of **Chuck Stein**, chief of Operations Technical Support Branch in Operations Division, was named an Advanced Placement State Scholar for Arkansas. Sarah was a student aide in Programs and Project Management Division last summer.

Kara Virden, daughter of Corps photographer **David Virden**, graduated with honors from Harding University Dec. 15.

Jason Wilson recently graduated from Southeast Missouri State University and joined the Clearwater Project Office as a park ranger. Wilson previously worked at Clearwater as a co-op ranger.

During **Brigadier General Melcher's** visit to the district Jan. 23 and 24, he presented coins to ten employees who were nominated in advance by their

employees.

Mark Dixon of Design Branch was recognized for his work on the pre-bid phase of the C-130 J Flight Simulator Facility.

Bobby Van Cleave of Engineering and Construction Division was recognized for earning his professional engineering certification.

Paula Dye and **Doreen Rogers** of Logistics Division and **Dianne Batson** of Operations were recognized for their outstanding service to the district as they leave for other jobs.

Ralph Allen of Counsel for his good work as one of the district attorneys, and for his many volunteer activities in the community.

DeJuan Carter of Engineering and Construction Division was recognized for earning his professional engineering certification and for being selected to receive a Certificate of Merit at the Modern Day Technology Leadership Luncheon in February.

Charlie Hagston of Table Rock Powerhouse was recognized for being the only mechanic at Table Rock since May 2001 and keeping up with the daily routine, preventive maintenance and even making modernization equipment replacements during this time.

Bill Bradley, a senior electrician at Table Rock Powerhouse, was recognized for his great attitude toward teamwork. His leadership and willingness to pitch in with projects outside his normal duties set an example that the remaining maintenance employees readily followed.

Renee Sanchez of the Table Rock Project Office was recognized for providing invaluable support to the Administrative Section while the administrative support assistant was on extended medical leave.

Melcher also presented coins to other employees during his visit to the Table Rock and Beaver powerhouse, Table Rock Project Office and the Table Rock Dam Safety Project Office.

Deaths

Eudell Combs, a retired construction inspector from Table Rock Project Office, passed away Jan. 6.

Milton Bradford, father of Ozark Field Office Park Ranger **Rick Bradford**, passed away Jan. 15 in Cleburne, Texas.

Floyd Martin, a retired cement finisher with Greers Ferry Project Office, passed away Jan. 11. He was 82.

Farewell

Paula Dye, budget analyst in Logistics, left the district Jan. 25 to take an administrative office promotion with the United States Geological Survey district office in Montgomery, Ala.

Lauren Taylor, student aide in Safety Office, left the district Nov. 26.

Devin Chappell and **Scott Howard**, laborers for Russellville Project Office, left the district Dec. 29.

Doreen Rogers, secretary in Logistics, left the district Jan. 25 for Louisville District where she will work as a secretary in Logistics.

Debbie Moody, program analyst in Information Management Office, left the district Feb. 10 for the Japan District where she will work as a program analyst in the Resource Management Office.

Brian Harper, economist in Planning and Environmental Division, left the district Jan. 13 for Alaska District where he will serve as an economist.

New faces

John Balgavy joined the Central Arkansas Area Office as a resident engineer for the Little Rock Air Force Base Resident Office.

Balgavy was a project manager for Programs and Project Management Division and is taking the position vacated by Dan Clemons when he was promoted to area engineer over the Central Arkansas Area Office.

Troy Bookhout and **Robert Millard** joined the district at Table Rock Project

(See "Family news" on Page 5.)

Mass transportation benefits increase for DoD employees

by **Hollye Acker**
LRDispatch staff

Federal employees who choose to ride the bus or vanpool to work are eligible for reimbursement of their expenses under the Department of Defense's Mass Transportation Fringe Benefit Program.

Effective Jan. 1, eligible participants can be reimbursed up to \$100 for their actual incurred commuting costs.

"I love the program," said Mary Ann Pitts, a district realty assistant who lives in Cabot. "The government is usually taking something from us, but with this program, they are actually giving federal workers a great benefit."

Congress passed the program in April 2000 as a result of Executive Order 13150, Federal Workplace Transportation. The goal of the program was to reduce federal employee's contribution to traffic congestion and air pollution, and to provide transportation alternatives.

Until January, employees could be reimbursed up to \$65. Now the rate has increased to \$100, and many employees have their entire transportation costs covered.

Dee Knight, a district contract specialist, said she has been riding the vanpool from Conway since 1997. Until the executive order was passed in 2000, Knight footed her own transportation expenses.

"It's good to be reimbursed," Knight said. "This program promotes the use of mass transportation, and more people are

actually using it now."

Knight and Pitts said their transportation costs are completely covered now.

"Also, I don't have to worry about my car being stolen or getting mugged walking to the building," Knight said. "The van brings me right to the door."

"I can even sleep on the way to work," she added.

Knight said she likes not having to put the extra wear, tear and miles on her vehicle.

"I also like not having to fight traffic and worry about a parking space," she said.

Pitts said the van she rides in has room for 15 passengers, but it's not always full. She said the other passengers are friendly and work for federal, state and private sectors.

Pitts said she would recommend this program to other employees.

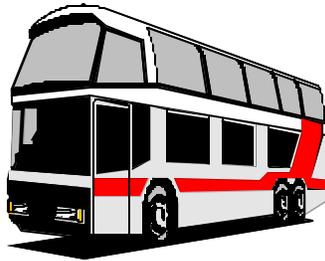
"The program is easy to sign up for," she said, "and I haven't had any problems with it."

Knight also said the program was simple.

"I just do a purchase request once a month on CEFMS and provide a copy of my monthly bill to Thomas Harris. It's easy."

Cathy Finch, staff auditor, said about 30 district employees are taking part in this program, and are receiving benefits ranging from \$29 to \$100.

For more information about the program, contact Thomas Harris, district finance and accounting officer and Little Rock District program monitor, at 501-324-6610, or Finch in the Internal Review Office at 501-324-5639.



Family news

(Continued from Page 4.)

Office. Bookhout is a new maintenance worker at the power plant. Millard is a hydropower trainee.

James Montgomery joined the district Jan. 14 as a program analyst in Management Branch.

Georganne Ramsey joined the district Dec. 16 as an accounting technician in Finance and Accounting Branch. Ramsey previously worked as a clerk at the Pine Bluff Arsenal Resident Office.

Karl Serbousek joined the district Dec. 17 as a mechanical engineer in Engineering and Construction Division.

Jeremy Brown joined the district as a civil engineering co-op student at Clearwater Lake.

Doug Stilts joined the district as a

park ranger co-op student at Clearwater Lake.

Speaker's bureau

Russellville Project Office Shoreline Coordinator **Titus Hardiman** and Park Ranger **Jeff McCarty** attended the River Valley Realtor's Meeting on Jan. 14 at the Russellville Holiday Inn.

They used this opportunity to speak to with local realtors in hopes of deterring any problems that could arise with new property owners that might be unaware of Corps regulations.

Also, they answered questions about the Lake Dardanelle Shoreline Management Plan and its future revisions along with questions about electrical and water intake easements.

Thanks

It is with pleasure that I write this

letter to thank the Army Corps of Engineers for selecting the Central Arkansas Veterans Healthcare System as this year's recipient of your "Project Santa."

The group and individual donations made by your organization have and will continue to bring joy and good cheer to many of our veterans.

Thank you again for supporting our hospitalized veterans during this holiday season. We look forward to working with you in the future.

Sincerely,

Susan Berry, Central Arkansas Veterans Healthcare System

Welcome back

Lou Ann Stewart, administrative support assistant at Table Rock Project Office, returned from an extended period of sick leave and is doing well.

Bass Pro Shops, Corps promote water safety

by **Hollye Acker**
LRDispatch staff

Personnel from three Corps districts and Bass Pro Shops Outdoor World Museum combined forces again to present the third Interactive Bass Pro Fish and Wildlife Museum Water Safety Program Oct. 22-25.

Ken Lucius, a natural resources management specialist at the Stockton Lake Project Office in Kansas City District, developed the program three years ago with Rick Collins, Terry Snowden and John Hernandez of the Bass Pro Museum in Springfield.

"One of the goals of this program was to get together the best of the water safety interpreters from the three Corps districts which were within driving distance of the Bass Pro Shops' national headquarters in Springfield," Lucius said.

"We wanted to meet as many kids in the area as possible and teach them about water safety. It's good to teach younger kids because they are most easily influenced."

Lucius said it's also more likely that younger children will remember what they've learned and tell their parents about it.

This year, Corps employees from Little Rock, St. Louis and Kansas City districts helped present 111 programs during the weekend to more than 3,000 pre-school through second-grade students, teachers and parents.

The programs were given at the museum, as well as at schools in Springfield, Fordland and Nixa.

Park Rangers Greg Oller and Clint Moore from the Table Rock Project Office made presentations for the program, along with Park rangers Andrew Jefferson and Harlan Lamb from Wappapello Lake in St. Louis District; Park Rangers Larry Smith and Dan Sandersfeld from Truman Lake in Kansas City District; and Park Rangers Buck Wenger, Dave Moore and Lucius from Stockton Lake in Kansas City District.

Presenters used a variety of water safety tools such as videos, CD's, tapes, coloring books, stickers, pamphlets and posters to get their message across.

"Bobby the Boat," a three-foot tall

remote-controlled boat with sirens and horns, also made an appearance at the program.

"The kids really love the sounds it makes," Lucius said. "We can even make it talk to the kids, so it's a great interactive tool."

Lucius said this has developed into a two-part program.

"After the presentations, everyone gets to tour the Bass Pro Wildlife Museum, which adds another dimension to the program," he said.

Classroom teachers also were given educational materials to continue promoting water safety.

"We like to give them tools they can keep using in school," Lucius said.

Each school was given water safety videotapes and corresponding coloring

books that can be used as teaching guides.

Lucius said since the first program in the fall of 2000, a total of 271 programs have been presented to more than 7,500 attendees.

"We've had great results since our first program," Lucius said.

"Each year we just keep expanding it."

Lucius said the response from students and teachers has been overwhelming.

"We get tons of letters and pictures from the kids," he said. "The kids like telling us how much they learned and what their favorite parts of the program were."

"'Bobby the Boat' and Sam the 'Willie Be Safe' beagle from Wappapello Lake are always class favorites," Lucius said.

Kiosks educate public about dangers of hypothermia

by **Jamie Oliver**
LRDispatch staff

In an attempt to educate the public about the dangers of hypothermia, Park Rangers Allison Smedley, Jennifer Hoban and John Bridgeman recently designed and implemented 11 new hypothermia bulletin boards in kiosks around Lake Dardanelle.

"We've had a lot of cold weather and we still have a lot of people out and around the lake at this time," Smedley said.

"Even though the parks don't see high numbers of people this time of year, anyone around the water is still at risk."

According to AdventureSports.com, hypothermia "describes the rapid, progressive mental and physical collapse accompanying the chilling of the inner core of the human body." It is caused by exposure to cold, aggravated by wet, wind and exhaustion and is the number one killer of outdoor recreationalists.

Fred Jester, Jr., 47, of Ashdown, Ark., died Dec. 25 of hypothermia after the boat he was fishing in sank on Millwood Lake in Ashdown.

Smedley said the average year-round temperature on Lake Dardanelle is 67 degrees, but that drops to around 54 degrees in October through February.

"When the water temperature drops around 50, the average person has a 50/50 chance of surviving a 50-yard swim," Smedley said, noting that the boards were in place before the Millwood drowning.

The 11 kiosks were set up in various places around the lake, including along the beginning of the Bona Dea Trail.

"We have lots of people still using the trail, and we thought this would be a prime place to put a good message about Dardanelle," Smedley said.

The boards will remain in place until the spring season starts. They will then change to warm water safety issues.

"People are noticing the boards," Smedley said. "If we reach even one person with our message, then the boards accomplished what they were set up for."

Two earn PE registration

by **Jamie Oliver**
LRDispatch staff

Little Rock District employees DeJuan Carter and Bobby Van Cleave recently earned their engineering professional registration.

According to a regulation issued from Headquarters in Washington, D.C., dated Nov. 30, 2001, "professional registration is an important measure of the competency of the USACE engineering workforce." The regulation also established a new Corps policy regarding career advancement for positions in the Engineers and Scientists Career Program.

Wayne Lewis, assistant chief of Engineering and Construction Division, said that under the new regulation, Corps engineers cannot hope for advancement past GS-13 unless they have this registration.

"If you want to be a GS-13 or higher, you now must have this," Lewis said, noting that 90% of the engineers with the district have their professional registration.

After nine and a half years with the district, Carter, a structural engineer in Design Branch, decided to take the test to increase his job options and credibility.

"With this, you can stamp your own drawings, own your own business," Carter said. "In a sense, (I did this) to become a real engineer, to be viewed by the rest of the world as a competent engineer."

Other professions, like certified public accountants and lawyers, are required to pass an exam to be registered as professionals in that area. Similar to lawyers and doctors, the certification is there to protect the public's safety.

"This registration is in place to help safeguard the public's life and welfare," Lewis said. "With the doctor, you should want to know if he's board certified to practice. You should want to know the same here."

Unlike the bar or the CPA exams, however, Carter said if you fail one section of the professional engineering

exam, you are required to take the entire test over.

"That's one thing I would change about it," Carter said. "In other fields, if you fail one part, you retake that part, but not with us."

Carter said the test can only be taken up to six times throughout your career.

For Van Cleave, this was the second time to take the test.

"I took the afternoon portion with the geotechnical emphasis," said Van Cleave, a geotechnical engineer in Design Branch. "This time, I felt I had the background to better work the problems."

He said the news of passing the eight-hour long exam came as an early Christmas present.

"I heard on Dec. 21," Van Cleave said. "Joe Clements, executive director of the State Board of Registration for Professional Engineers and Land Surveyors and a Corps retiree called me, and I had to make sure that he had the correct person. It was a great Christmas present."

Like Carter, Van Cleave worked for his registration to achieve a personal goal.

"My main reason was to advance my status as a professional and to advance my education," Van Cleave said. "I suppose it's suspected of all professional engineers, and I just wanted to get it behind me."

According to the headquarter regulation, professional registration is (C"strongly encouraged for all USACE

(See "Certification" on Page 11.)



Carter



Van Cleave



National Engineers Week 2002 February 17-23

Feb. 19

11:30-12:30 Opening ceremony and awards presentation followed by a reception. D.E. Conference Room. All employees are invited to attend

1:30-3:00 CPC Training: Concrete Parking Lot Design and Construction. D.E.'s Conference Room. *Rita Madison, Arkansas Ready Mixed Concrete Association*

Feb. 20

11:30-12:30 Joint lunch program with the *Society of American Military Engineers, American Society of Civil Engineers and the Little Rock Engineering Club.* North Little Rock Hilton. Cost \$12

11:30-12:30 Lunch and Learn Video: The History and Building of Dams. D.E.'s Conference Room. All employees are invited to attend.

1:00-2:00 CPC Training: NPDES and Storm Water Permitting. D.E.'s Conference Room. *Gary Griffin, Arkansas Dept. of Environmental Quality*

2:30-3:30 CPC Training: Boiler, Pump and Steam Applications. D.E.'s Conference Room. *John Bryant, Johnson & Scott.*

Feb. 21

11:00-12:30 CPC Training: Applications and Lessons Learned About Tilt-Up Concrete Construction. D.E.'s Conference Room. *Mike Sugrue, Con-Steel*

1:30-2:30 CPC Training: The Energy Monitoring and Control System Operating at LRAFB. D.E.'s Conference Room. *Mike McClellan, Trane Co.*

Feb. 22

12:00 Lunch program with *Arkansas Society of Professional Engineers.* Holiday Inn Select on Shackelford Road. Cost \$15.

Montgomery Point: District's newest lock and dam

by Jennifer Wilson
LRDispatch staff

On the White River Entrance Channel just upstream of the Mississippi River, what should be a quiet place surrounded by rural farms and hunting land has become a hub of activity. Slowly, a one-of-a-kind lock and dam is beginning to take shape.

The Montgomery Point Lock and Dam construction site is half a mile up the White River Entrance Channel from its confluence with the Mississippi River in southeast Arkansas. The channel links the McClellan-Kerr Arkansas River Navigation System with the Mississippi River. Towboats traveling from the Mississippi must navigate the first 10 miles of the White River before passing through a man-made canal and entering the Arkansas River.

Because there's no lock and dam in the entrance channel, when Mississippi River stages drop, water drains from the entrance channel. As the channel gets shallower and narrower, it becomes difficult for tows to navigate.

Montgomery Point Lock and Dam is designed to fix that problem. The unique design of the dam's 10 gates is the key. Once complete, the bottom-hinged, torque-tube gates will be raised into position using hydraulics to maintain a stable navigation pool for towboats in the entrance channel.

If there's enough to maintain a navigation pool, the gates can be lowered, and boats will be able to freely travel over the gated spillway.



Contractors unload the bottom-hinged, torque tube gates that will be installed in the dam.



Work on Montgomery Point Lock and Dam is progressing well. Here you can see the centerline of the lock beginning to take shape.

First challenges

"We spent the first year and a half constructing the cofferdam and slurry trenches and dewatering the work area so that we could begin building the lock and dam," said Mitch Eggburn, resident engineer at Montgomery Point. "While it was good to see the project start, the job didn't become challenging until we started placing the concrete."

The Corps' contractor, J.A. Jones/Atkinson-A Joint Venture, began placing concrete in summer 2000. To date, the navigable pass and lock chamber is beginning to take form out of the alluvial soil that surrounds it, but it's taken a lot of coordination and hard work to reach this point.

"There's always new and different challenges when you are placing concrete," Eggburn said. "I know it seems like it would be the same thing over and over again, but

it's not. No placement is exactly alike. Almost every placement has its own, unique problems to overcome. It just depends."

If the challenge associated with each individual placement isn't enough, another issue that affects concrete placement is weather.

"In the summer, you have to keep the concrete mix from getting too hot to avoid shrinkage cracks and cold joints," Eggburn said. "So our contractors have an ice plant on site, and they replace a portion of the mix water with ice to keep it cool."

Then in the winter, you can't place concrete when temperatures get too cold.

"We heat our mix water to keep the concrete temperature up, but we can't do much about the ambient air temperature," Eggburn said. "We haven't had a big problem with the weather so far this winter, but last winter we couldn't place any concrete for about a month due to the very cold temperatures."

Each day, crews erect the forms that will hold the reinforced concrete until it sets or becomes hard. Then at night,

begins to take shape, office reaches full force



Some portions of the concrete that makes up the lock wall has been completed to its full height.

usually around 5 or 6 p.m., the concrete placement begins, and it doesn't stop until the area they start is complete.

"There are two reasons why they place concrete at night," Eggburn said. "First, in the summer it's cooler at night, and that's good for the concrete mix and the workers—the guys actually placing the concrete have the hardest job here.

"Secondly, the workers can make better use of the daylight to erect the forms and prepare for the placement. At night, the actual placement can be done under work lights. Some nights, depending on the weather, you can actually see the glow from the work lights from the Lock 2 bridge."

Eggburn said he estimates that it will take at least another year and a half to finish the remaining concrete placement.

Overlapping work

With a project of this size, the phases of the work overlap, and that's the case at Montgomery Point. As the concrete placement continues, work will start in April on other areas of the project.

"We are going to start construction of the floating guidewalls this spring," Eggburn said. "All of the concrete

placement will be complete in the lock chamber floor then, so we will build them there. When the entire structure is complete and flooded, the guidewalls will float and be moved into place using a towboat." The guidewalls guide towboat pilots as they enter and exit the lock.

The dam gates have been delivered to the Montgomery Point construction site. As soon as concrete placement is complete on the dam monoliths, which will probably be this summer, the gates will be installed.

Staffing the office

Four years ago, the Montgomery Point Lock and Dam Resident Office didn't even exist. So Dan Clemans, Central Arkansas area engineer, along with help from Eggburn and others, have had to build the construction office to meet the needs of the project.

"The office didn't reach full staffing until this past summer," Eggburn said. "But it's worked out really well for us. We have never been over staffed or understaffed. We have pretty much been sized correctly to handle the amount of work that we have here."

The office now has ten Corps employees and five contract employees. The contract employees include representatives from Cooley, Dennis & Denmon Engineering Co. of Jackson, Miss., who provide on-site quality assurance inspection and concrete testing services.

"The office staffing is very stable, which is unusual in my experience for a project in a remote location," Clemans said. "We are also fortunate in having attracted some very experienced and capable people to work there. It's a challenging and difficult project and they are doing a great job."

Recently the chief of Quality

Assurance for the project, Joe Goodson was selected to receive the 2001 Hard Hat of the Year for Southwestern Division.

"Joe's done an excellent job, and he's had a lot of help from the rest of the crew that greatly contributed to this recognition," Clemans said. "It's a team effort. That Joe was nominated reflects very highly on the hard work and efforts of the staff that he leads, and shows how far things have progressed from the difficult days when the contract first started."

So what has Eggburn learned about staffing a construction office for a large-scale project that's a little off of the beaten path?

"You've got to get people who can cook," Eggburn says with a laugh. The Montgomery Point office is 14 miles off of the main road, and then it's still 30 minutes away from a town of any size.

"You learn quickly to bring whatever you need, because there's nowhere real close to run get something to eat or drink."

A long time in the making

While construction on Montgomery Point started in 1999, some employees in Little Rock District have been involved with the project for years. Eggburn has been working on Montgomery Point in some way since he started with the district in the late '80s. So being resident engineer over the construction of Montgomery Point is a dream job for him.

"I still have a framed copy of the first sketches we ever made of the dam gates," Eggburn said. "It's on a napkin that Larry Winters and I drew on after we visited the Tennessee Valley Authority to discuss the gate design. It feels weird to be able to go outside and stand next to one of the gates now."

Eggburn encourages employees to come by the site when they are working in the area, especially if they are engineers.

"It's rare to get a chance to see a construction project of this size in the Corps," Eggburn said. "This is when designers need to visit the site, see this side of the process and watch as the plans that hundreds of Little Rock
(See "Montgomery Point" on Page 10.)

Pine Bluff gears up to operate Montgomery Point

by Jennifer Wilson
LRDispatch

"Montgomery Point is one-of-a-kind. There's no other lock and dam like it in the world, and that means there's no one we can turn to for advice," said Chester Shaw, operations manager at Pine Bluff Project Office.

Pine Bluff Project Office will be the office in charge of staffing, operating and maintaining Montgomery Point once it is complete. It's not a challenge that they take lightly. Crews from the Pine Bluff Marine Terminal have been planning for Montgomery Point for three years.

With Montgomery Point's unique design come some unique challenges. The biggest is how the dam gates will be dewatered for regular and emergency maintenance work.

"Since the gates will be underwater as part of their normal operation, they will need to be painted and checked regularly to make sure they stay in working order," Shaw said. "To do that, we have to build a containment structure around five of the ten gates, pump out the water and do the work."

But the challenge that is unique to Montgomery Point is that the dewatering structure will have to be constructed in place while the flow of the river is going over the gates. That puts a lot of people and equipment in a potentially dangerous situation.

If that isn't enough of a challenge, since water levels in the White River Entrance Channel is dependant on the Mississippi River flows, the dewatering can only be done when the Mississippi River is between elevation 115 and 125. Historically, that's about a two-month window from August to October.

"We've been working for three years to develop a plan to do this dewatering," Shaw said. "We need to find a way to do it quickly and safely. If we miss our window, flows on the Mississippi River could rise and flood our dewatering structure."

Since two heads are better than one, Shaw and the Pine Bluff Marine Terminal crew have been working with crew from the Russellville Marine Terminal to develop a workable solution.

"For example, just the other day Royce Coley, Mike Bagley, Leon Phillips, Spencer Cox and Tommy Gunther from Russellville sat down with Doug Eggburn, Mike Hutchinson, Bill Aldridge, Blake McCord and Allen Best from Pine Bluff and Glenn Proffitt from the district office to brainstorm about the issue.

"We discovered that we would need to make modifications to the spuds on the Motor Vessel Shorty Baird's crane barge before it could even be used at Montgomery Point. That's something we wouldn't have know until it was too late if we hadn't been talking about it now."

Working together is nothing new for the district's two marine terminals, but now the stakes are being raised. When the district's Arkansas River and Pine Bluff Marine Terminal fleets and crews are busy dewatering Montgomery Point, that will leave one crew from Russellville to perform maintenance or emergency work to keep the other 13 locks and dams on the Arkansas portion of the system operational.

To give the Russellville crews experience working a different section of the river than the one they are used to, Russellville is sending some of their crew to work with the Pine Bluff Marine Terminal crew and become more accustomed to working together and operating the equipment. The two marine terminal crews also are meeting regularly to brainstorm ideas and look at problems from different angles.

"We've also received great support from personnel in Operations, Engineering and Project Management divisions in identifying special equipment

and infrastructure that will be required to operate and maintain Montgomery Point."

Another issue that is being worked out is how the lock will be staffed. Danny Smith, lockmaster at Norrell Lock and Lock 2, will take on lockmaster duties at Montgomery Point.

"Job descriptions for the lock operators and lock mechanics are being developed now so that they can be advertised later this year," Shaw said. "Our goal is to have the personnel trained and at the site before construction is complete so they will be ready to go. The staffing will be basically the same, except Montgomery Point will have a few more lock operators than other locks on the system because of the access issue."

Because of the large fluctuations in water levels in the White River Entrance Channel, the access road leading to the lock and dam is not always passable.

"At this stage, we don't know if we will always be able to get to the lock by road, so we are going to proceed as if there's no road there," Shaw said. "We are making plans to take the crews back and forth to the lock by boat."

"With that in mind, we want to make the boat trip to and from the lock as safe as possible. So we are looking at requiring two people to travel to the site together. That means that they will work at the lock in shifts and then travel back together when the next team relieves them."

Shaw and Mike Miller, chief of Operations Division, are still developing how that will be done.

Montgomery Point

(Continued from Page 1.)

District employees have worked on come to life. It's the best on-the-job training that you could get."

Elmo Webb of E&C's Engineering Branch got a chance to serve as acting resident engineer for several months in 2000. Webb was the lead geotechnical engineer during the design of Montgomery Point Lock and Dam.

"It's amazing to see something that you worked on being constructed, but it can also be painful because you can see your flaws," Webb said.

"I learned from the experience that your intention in a design is not always the way a contractor interprets your intent. I also learned that when you are meeting face-to-face with a contractor, you need to choose your words very carefully and be very patient."

'Black Hawk Down' reflects Army values

by Joe Burlas
Army News Service

The values of valor and self-sacrifice demonstrated by actors playing Delta Force troopers and Army rangers in *Black Hawk Down* are the same values being shown by soldiers around the world today, Secretary of the Army Thomas E. White said.

White made those remarks at a special screening of the movie for military

Certification

(Continued from Page 7.)

engineers at the GS-12 level and above. Registration signifies technical competence, proven ability and professional integrity. (It) gives greater credibility and weight to an individual's judgment and actions, both within professional circles and with the public at large."

Both Carter and Van Cleave agree that the sense of credibility and confidence that comes with passing the exam gives is worth the effort. They both encourage all Corps engineers to take the test.

"Self-confidence is definitely the most important benefit I can see," Carter said. "Being young, it shows the older engineers that you are willing to learn and work, and that you know what you're doing."

Van Cleave said that people expect the registration, and that although it is not necessary to prove credibility with a client, it certainly helps.

"You have the education, background and the knowledge," Van Cleave said. "But you still need that certification for credibility. It makes people feel more at ease and confident with you."

According to Lewis, the test is offered twice a year in April and October. For more information about the test, check www.state.ar.us/pels/. There are five district employees currently scheduled to take the PE exam in the spring.

"If anyone needs help studying for the test or if they just have questions about the test, they can contact me. I'd be happy to help them," Lewis said.

uniformed and civilian leaders in downtown Washington, D.C., Jan. 15.

Black Hawk Down, based upon a book with the same name by Mark Bowden, dramatizes a military operation that went wrong in Mogadishu, Somalia in 1993 and resulted in the deaths of 18 U.S. servicemen and more than 500 Somalis. It opened in theaters Jan. 18.

"Who would have believed a year after the script was approved for production that this country would be at war," White said. "The movie has a tagline, 'Leave no man behind,' which is extremely important today. That tagline could easily be used by the Army because it reflects the values of valor and self-sacrifice that we have been seeing in our soldiers these past four months as we combat terrorists and terrorism. In fact, those values have been an integral part of the Army during the entire 226 years of its existence."

Producer and director Ridley Scott told screening attendees that he and co-

producer Jerry Bruckheimer decided to make the movie to set the record straight. He said there was an apparent public misperception that the military messed up in Somalia, when in fact it was heroic in a very unstable part of the world. "We thought those soldiers should be remembered for their courage," he said.

First Sgt. Bruce Moore, a ranger now and during the Somalia operation, was one of several Somalia veterans who were brought to Washington to view the special screening. He rated the film as being 90- to 95-percent accurate with what he witnessed as a staff sergeant during the 1993 operation.

Distinguished screening guests included Vice President Dick Cheney, Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld, Deputy Secretary of Defense Paul Wolfowitz, retired Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Gen. Henry Shelton, Army Chief of Staff Gen. Eric K. Shinseki, actress Linda Carter and former Marine officer and political analyst Oliver North.

Zepps complete adoption in China

by Jamie Oliver
LRDispatch staff

It's a girl for Chris and Ken Zepp. Chris, a budget and accounting technician in Information Management, received word of her adoption referral Dec. 20. The Zepps have been in the process of adopting a child from China since March, 2001.

"I was in total shock," Chris said of Victoria Rose, who was born March 24, 2001 in China. "I'm probably still on Cloud Nine, it's just hard to concentrate."

The New York office of The Gladney Center, the adoption agency the Zepps have been using for the adoption, called Chris Dec. 18 to say that her referral would most likely come in January.

Chris said the referral process was held up initially due to a "lack of communication." She thought the referral had been logged Dec. 1 when it was actually mailed Dec. 1.

The call came while Chris was at work.

"I actually just sat there and cried quietly," Chris said. "I wanted to tell Ken first, but Debbie (Moody) heard my end of the conversation so we sat there and cried."

Chris will travel to China to finalize the paperwork on Tori. From there, they will come back Little Rock where they will meet up with Ken, who has been stationed in Germany since July on a tour of duty with the Army.

Chris will leave Little Rock District for Germany with Ken for two and a half years while he finishes his assignment. Her tentative travel date is set for Jan. 25. A baby shower was held Jan. 16 for Tori.



Victoria "Tori" Rose

CREST supports overseas troop operations

by **Hollye Acker**
LRDispatch staff

Little Rock District's Real Estate Division is gearing up to support Operation Enduring Freedom by sending volunteers with the Corps' Contingency Real Estate Support Team to support the Army.



Miles Pillars, Pat Bennett and Richard Devine of Real Estate Division anxiously await their deployment call to support Army troop movement overseas with the CREST program.

Created ten years ago at the end of Operation Desert Storm, CREST supports overseas troop movement during wartime or military operations.

District Realty Specialists Richard Devine, Keith Loos and Miles Pillars, along with Senior Realty Specialist Pat Bennett, volunteered for the CREST program.

Loos deployed in December, while the others are on-call and can be expected to deploy at any time.

The deployment can last either 90 or 120 days, depending on the Army's needs, Bennett said.

Team members are mainly responsible for negotiating the lease or purchase of land and facilities to be used by American troops, such as base camps.

"We also negotiate what is anticipated for the troops' needs," Bennett said.

Bennett said CREST was formerly a

mission that was overseen by the South Atlantic Division, but became a Southwestern Division mission more than a year ago.

"I joined CREST because I thought it would be an interesting thing to do," said Bennett.

Pillars said he volunteered for the program because it seemed like an adventurous, exciting opportunity to serve and do something different.

"I wanted to branch out and do something out of the ordinary," Pillars said.

Devine also joined the program because of its adventure potential.

"I've worked on disaster relief teams before," said Devine, "and I thought this would be a similar type of experience."

CREST members are treated just as other military personnel are, Bennett said. They are expected to pass a physical and undergo a military training course. Bennett said their course is held at Fort Leonard Wood, and covers military protocol; mine recognition and safety

training; and nuclear, biological and chemical warfare training.

"We also went through team-building competitions and obstacle course tasks to learn to work together," Bennett said.

People who had deployed before also were on hand to share their experiences.

"They are able to tell us what to

expect when we get deployed," Bennett said.

Team members also undergo customs training for the cultural area where they will be working. Bennett said they are taught the do's and don'ts of possible deployment areas.

This is beneficial, because when team members receive their deployment call, they are not told where they will be going, only when they will be leaving.

"There is an anticipation and some excitement there," Devine said. "Not knowing where you're going makes it adventurous."

Pillars agreed. "There's a certain element of mystique because you don't know where you're going. You don't know if it will be hot or cold, summer or winter," he said.

Bennett said she basically knows what to expect when she is deployed due to her former experience with the Marine Corps, as well as other Corps deployment missions to hurricane and tornado disaster areas.

Devine said he had a similar experience while he served in the Army.

"I spent time in a demilitarized zone in Korea," Devine said. "The environment was not hostile, so that makes it similar to the CREST project."

Pillars said he has been to the East before, but never with the military.

"It's exciting," Pillars said. "I'm waiting to see where we're going."

All agreed that they would recommend that others in the real estate area join the team.

"It's a good career enhancer, as well as good for one's exposure," Pillars said.

General

(Continued from Page 1.)

by the U.S. Agency for International Development.

"We'll see if we get called on to do some of the work. It will all be up to USAID," Melcher said. "Until then, our other support teams are standing in the door now, ready to help when we are called on."

After answering questions from employees, Melcher met with operations managers and had a working lunch with PPEP participants and the district's Emerging Leaders. Then he headed to Branson. One the way, Jerry Harris, chief of Regulatory Branch, briefed Melcher on the Bear Creek regulatory permit issue and showed him the site.

At Table Rock, Melcher met with powerhouse and project office employees and toured the Table Rock Auxiliary Spillway Dam Safety Project.

District loses security chief, friend in Thomas

by **Jamie Oliver**
LRDispatch staff

One of Elizabeth Whitmore's memories of John Thomas was being crammed into a very small truck with him.

"John Balgavy, JT and I were in this little Toyota truck Balgavy had," Whitmore said. "We were packed in like sardines. We did this twice. Why I still don't know."

Whitmore said she can't really remember where they were going, probably out for dinner, or just around town.

"It's one of the things we have always laughed about, the three of us trying to pack into Balgavy's Toyota," Whitmore said.



John Thomas

John "JT" Thomas, 60, chief of Security for the district, died Dec. 27, in his home.

Friends since he joined the district in June 1996, Whitmore and Thomas developed a friendship that extended beyond the confines of the office.

"We would have dinner with people from work and developed a close friendship," Whitmore said. "I confided in him, he confided in me, and I knew that he would never tell anyone what I said."

Thomas' sense of humor stands out for Whitmore.

"He had a joke for everything," Whitmore said. "He could remember a joke from 30 years ago when I couldn't remember the one he had just told me. He just loved to laugh."

Despite this, Whitmore said that Thomas also had a very serious side to him and he also liked to discuss religion and life. Thomas was a retired warrant officer for the Army, member of the

American Legion, Vietnam veteran and was awarded the Bronze Star.

He was survived by his wife, Christa; one daughter, Natasha Thomas of Fort Smith; three sons, John of Amarillo, Texas and Anthony and Randy of Fort Smith; five sisters and four grandchildren.

Thomas was buried with full military honors on Dec. 31 at U.S. National Cemetery in Fort Smith.

Whitmore called Thomas' death "devastating" and said it will be hard when she returns to work from maternity leave. Whitmore was on leave when Thomas died. Her son, Nathan, was born seven days before Thomas' death.

Whitmore said she wished that Thomas would have gotten to meet her son.

"You don't find people like him very often," Whitmore said. "It will be very difficult to go back to work knowing that he won't be there."

On the occasion of the death of a friend

John Thomas was one of my best friends. He was one of the "big brothers I never had." He is the first best friend that I've ever had that died.

Our friendship started, as some of the best ones do, with us having a strong dislike for each other. I was the Chief of Navigation Branch at Russellville when John came to the district. We had security before John, but it had never been one of our top priorities – probably because we hadn't had any real trouble with theft or terrorism in the past.

John entered the picture and advised me that our security measures were some of the most lackluster he had ever seen. He recommended measures that would have resulted in thousands of dollars of installation and O&M costs. I told John that I was in charge of running a little piece of a river, not a maximum security prison. Worse yet was that he forwarded his report to the Colonel which resulted in a note from the Chief of Con-Ops challenging me to be a team player.

So, one sunny Spring day I bought a twelve-pack of beer and invited John out to Murray Lock and Dam after quitting time for a heart-to-heart discussion of my security needs. That afternoon on the benches under the pecan trees was the start of a discussion about security where John realized I wasn't running a prison and I had budget constraints, and I realized we were operating facilities of

national significance which needed a high level of security.

In the months and years that followed, John was great at helping put together specs for fencing and other necessities, and over time, the security at all of our facilities improved.

That afternoon at Murray was the start of our friendship. I had already found out John was a security guru – probably qualified to work on a top-secret weapons project and overqualified to be the security chief at a Corps district.

Over the next few years, I learned much more about John. I discovered that John was a husband and father who loved his family deeply. He was a patriot who served his country in uniform for over twenty years and then put in nearly another twenty as a civilian employee. He was loyal to his country and to the Corps. He always tried to get his work accomplished to keep the people he worked for and those he worked with out of trouble. He was a good listener, and he always gave me his straight opinion – regardless of what I wanted to hear. He was a guy who liked to fish, liked to work on his own cars, and liked his beer at room temperature.

I'll miss his daily jokes, his wise counsel, his knack for straightening me out when I'd screwed up, and his ability to prod me to be just a little bit better today than I was yesterday.

When I see him in heaven, the first round's on me.

— *Written by John Balgavy*

Basic precautions can prevent spread of disease

Do you know about universal precautions? If not, you should be so you can protect your life and the life of others.

In June 1992, the Occupational Safety and Health Administration implemented the Blood Borne Pathogens Standard into law. This standard tells employers and employees how to prevent the transmission of blood borne diseases such as Hepatitis B and Human Immunodeficiency Virus in the workplace.

In Little Rock District, this standard should particularly interest public service personnel, such as park rangers who administer CPR and first aid to members of the public. It also should interest maintenance personnel who may be exposed to blood borne pathogens when they clean or repair restrooms and sewage lift stations, and any other employees who perform first aid or CPR emergency response duties.

Today, health care providers take universal precautions by wearing personal protective equipment such as gloves, goggles, face shields and coveralls whenever they treat a patient. Health care providers also take precaution by washing any skin that was exposed to body fluids with antiseptic



soap or cleanser.

Prior to the Blood Borne Pathogens Standard, personal protective equipment was not used by most hospitals, emergency responders, law enforcement personnel or even people like you and I who are sometimes called on to give CPR or first aid to someone in an emergency. We were unaware of the potential risks of such exposure. But now we know, and there are steps you can take to prevent your risk of exposure.

If your job duties require you to give medical assistance, you could be exposed to blood-borne diseases. You must receive annual blood borne pathogens prevention and awareness training. If your job requires that you administer CPR and first aid to the public, you can receive Hepatitis vaccines at no

cost.

If you have been exposed to body fluids in the line of duty, contact your team leader or supervisor immediately. You should see a medial doctor within 24 hours of the exposure. Employees who may come in contact with body fluids are required to keep a biohazard kit with them. The kit's contents should be checked often and replaced when expired.

On or off the job, we all want to help our fellow human beings. You should be aware of the potential health hazards that may exist when you give unprotected first aid or CPR.

Take the necessary precautions to protect yourself from exposure to blood borne diseases by using personal protective equipment prior to administering CPR and first aid. Another good personal hygiene habit is to wash your hands frequently.

If you have questions regarding the Blood Borne Pathogens Standard, 29 CFR 1910.1030, and how the standard relates to you, contact the Occupational Safety and Health Office by e-mail at peggy.Paulsen@usace.army.mil or telephone at 501-324-5616. You also can call the Federal Occupational Health Clinic at 501-324-6303.

PPEP showcases talents, gives opportunities to excel

Growing up, I was taught that if you are honest, work hard and do a good job, you will be recognized for your efforts. However, it seems that times have changed and just doing your job doesn't always work. Today, you have to promote yourself, volunteer for extra projects and showcase your talents. Just being honest and hard-working only gets you a retirement after 30 years.

In some jobs within the Little Rock District, showcasing one's talents is a daily occurrence. For others it is not so simple.

That's why the Personal and Professional Enhancement Program, an avenue where employees can showcase their talents and demonstrate their potential to upper management, is such a great asset.

I was strongly encouraged by my co-workers to apply for the program. At the time I just saw it as more work with little possibility of return, and I already had enough work of my own to do. Then I was told that if I didn't have a good reason not to apply, then I should go ahead and do it. So I applied for the program, and sure enough, I was accepted.



PPEP 2002
**High Performance
 Leadership**
 by Laurie Driver

At the time, I wasn't really sure if it was a blessing or a curse, but after participating in the program for

only a few months, I began seeing some of the benefits.

The PPEP program has given me another avenue to "think outside the box." When our class works on projects no one tells you that you can't do something a particular way just because it has always been done that way. PPEP allows participants to come up with their own ideas and ways of doing things. This has been a dramatic change for some.

Class members are encouraged to think on their own and look
(See "PPEP" on Page 15.)

Promoting high enthusiasm, morale at work

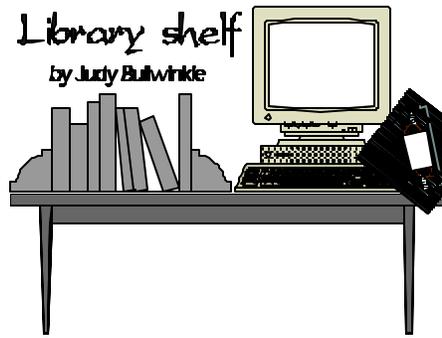
“Practice What You Preach: What Managers Must Do to Create a High Achievement Culture” (HD31. M2835 2001) presents the results of a survey of 139 offices from 39 firms in 15 countries in 15 different business types to determine the correlation of employee attitude with financial success. From this survey the author develops the characteristics necessary to promote enthusiasm and high morale in employees.

“Tempered Radicals: How People Use Difference to Inspire Change at Work” (HD58.8. M493 2001) stresses the importance of “walking the tightrope between conformity and rebellion.” The work includes sections on resisting quietly and remaining true to oneself, turning personal threats into opportunities and organizing collective action.

Good digestion, good health

“Healthy Digestion the Natural Way” (RC827. B467 2000) discusses the relationship between good digestion and good health. After explaining normal digestive processes and what problems can develop, the author offers a variety of gentle, readily available, natural remedies.

“Gastrointestinal Health” (RC806 .P5 2001) presents a self-help nutritional



program to prevent, cure, or alleviate irritable bowel syndrome, ulcers, heartburn, gas, constipation and other digestive disorders.

Guidance for federal employees job hunting

Updated publications offer advice for the job-seeking federal employee. “Using Today’s Reinvented Vacancy Announcement: A Guide to Finding and Interpreting the Critical Job Details”(JS 364 .M66 2000); “The KSA Sampler: A Companion to the KSA Workbook” (JK716. K752 2001); “The KSA Workbook: A Guide to Presenting Your Knowledges, Skills and Abilities”(JK716 .K75 2001); and “The Sampler: A Companion to the KSA Workbook”(JK716 .K75 2001) all provide tips and sample answers to form questions.

Help for federal employees

The new 2002 “CSRS Retirement Planning Guidance” (JK791 .C87 2002) outlines the areas of interest for federal employees retiring under the Civil Service Retirement System. Topics include Cost Of Living Adjustments, Social Security, mis-enrollments, survivor benefits, taxes and more.

“Your Guide to Understanding the New Tax Law” (KF6289.3 .Y68 2001) explains the details and applications of the new tax code. “Your FERS Retirement: How to Prepare for It, How to Enjoy It” (JK791.Y683 2001) and “Your CSRS Retirement: How to Prepare for It, How to Enjoy It” (JK791 .Y66 2001) cover topics on calculating retirement income, Thrift Savings Program advantages, Social Security, insurance, retirement expenses, work after retirement, moving and retirement tables.

Hot Websites of the Month

DOD Acronyms
www.dtic.mil/doctrine/jel/doddict/acronym_index.html

USACE Acronyms
www.usace.army.mil/acronyms.html

PPEP

(Continued from Page 14.)

at non-traditional methods of doing things. We are encouraged to work as a team, rely on each other’s strengths and use each other’s strong points to enhance our own weaknesses.

I also am getting a chance to go through beneficial training that I may not have received any other way. I already can see how our class is starting to put some of that training to practical use. Last month we used a Meyers-Briggs test to discover our own personality profiles and learn how to communicate and work with other personality types.

This is great because some class members are extraverts who like to brainstorm out loud, while others are introverts who need more time and space alone to formulate ideas on a project. Because of the diversity of the class personality types, I can hone my communications skills with someone whose personality is totally different from my own, which benefits the entire team.

In addition to formal training, PPEP also requires a mountain of required independent study. I have read more management books than I normally would have on my own, but I have learned a lot. I choose to read books that will benefit me the most. Also, it doesn’t hurt that the class shares which books are well-written and which ones can put you to sleep.

On top of all this PPEP also has required class projects. I’ve worked on a number of teams at the district, but none of them have had the same dynamics as our PPEP class. We have bonded as a team, and we’re focusing on becoming a well-oiled machine by the end of our training.

The main thing I’ve learned from PPEP is that the more open I am to new ideas, the more I will grow, not only as an employee, but as a team member and as a person. The icing on the cake is the friendships that have formed among class members. This may never have happened if I hadn’t had the opportunity of being in the PPEP class of 2002.

Frequent flier change finalized for employees

President Bush has signed into law a Defense Department authorization measure that allows federal employee travelers to keep for their own use frequent flier and similar travel incentive program credits that they earn through official travel.

The General Services Administration has issued a travel advisory providing interim details regarding this new authority. Employees with additional questions were urged to contact their supervisor or their agency's travel or financial policy manager, or GSA's Travel Policy Team at 202-501-0483.

Here are a few frequently asked questions from the GSA guidance that might help you understand the policy.

Q: What is the new law?

A: This travel advisory is based on enactment of the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2002. Section 1116 of this law specifically states that federal employees may retain for personal use promotional items, including frequent flyer miles, earned on official travel. This law repeals and

existing law (5 U.S.C. 5702 note; Public Law No. 103-355), which had prohibited personal retention of such promotional items.

Q: How is a frequent flier account established?

A: It is the responsibility of each traveler to communicate directly with an airline to establish his/her frequent travel promotional benefits account. Any associated costs are to be paid by the traveler, and are not a reimbursable expense.

Q: What may the traveler do with promotional benefits or material he/she receives from a travel service provider?

A: Any promotional benefits or material received from a travel service provider in connection with official travel may be retained for personal use, if such items are obtained under the same conditions as those offered to the general public at no additional cost to the government. This includes all benefits earned, including those earned before enactment of the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2002.

Q: Under what circumstances may the

traveler use frequent flier benefits to upgrade his/her transportation class of service when on official travel?

A: It is the policy of the government that employees generally must travel by coach class accommodations. However, you may upgrade your transportation class of service at your own expense. Therefore, as frequent traveler benefits may now be retained for your personal use, you may use any frequent traveler benefits you have earned to upgrade your transportation class to premium service. The regulations governing upgrades to premium airline accommodations continue to be found at FTR §§ 301-10.123 and 301-10.124. Your agency cannot pay for any upgrades, unless you meet one of the exceptions in these regulations.

Q: Are frequent traveler benefits taxable?

A: The Internal Revenue Service has indicated to GSA that these benefits may be taxable. GSA will provide additional information as we receive it from the IRS."

Information from this story was compiled from FedWeek and GSA.

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