

Crosscurrents

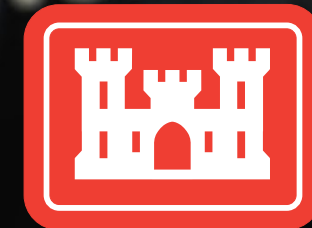
Serving the St. Paul District since 1977

Vol. 47, No. 2

PEOPLE FIRST

-Diversity, equity and inclusion efforts gain traction at the district level

Pages 4-5



**US Army Corps
of Engineers** ®

St. Paul District

(cover) Dave Francksen, channels and harbors survey technician, stands in front of a survey vessel on the Upper Mississippi River, near La Crosse, Wisconsin, May 4. USACE photo by Patrick Moes



Crosscurrents is an unofficial publication authorized under the provisions of AR 360-1. It is published quarterly for U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, St. Paul District. Views and opinions expressed are not necessarily those of the Department of the Army or the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers.

Articles and photography submissions are welcome. Submissions may be mailed or emailed. Submissions should be in Microsoft Word format. Photos should be at least 5 in. x 7 in. at 300 dpi.

The mission of *Crosscurrents* is to support the commander's internal information program for the St. Paul District and its stakeholders. *Crosscurrents* also serves as the commander's primary communication tool for accurately transmitting policies and command philosophy to the St. Paul District community and its customers.

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Employees can join the conversation on the People First Teams site



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Comments From The Top: A message from Col. Karl Jansen

Why “People First”

An age-old debate in the Army wrestles with the question: “What’s our top priority? Accomplishing the mission or taking care of our people?” One popular slogan sought to settle the debate: “Mission First, People Always.” The slogan is handy because it emphasizes the Army’s warrior ethos, drive to win, and reliability to persevere in tough environments – while acknowledging the responsibility to always keep the needs and welfare of people in mind. I argue that this slogan missed the mark, and today’s mantra of People First, if properly understood, is superior in comparison.

Often, soldiers and families felt that putting the mission first was often at the expense of taking care of people. This perception may have developed because of a culture in which all unit training and higher headquarters directives became the “mission” and any cost to accomplish the mission seemed to be justified. Family life suffered, living conditions suffered,

personal safety suffered and the Army Values suffered – in the end, readiness declined.

The Army’s fundamental duty is to fight and win our Nation’s wars. The Army, by definition, is people and an Army can only win through our people. Said another way, our people are everything, and without them, we are nothing. This is where “People First” comes in.

The essence of our People First philosophy is that our mission is taking care of people. By accomplishing our mission we stand ready to fulfill our duty to fight and win when the Nation calls on us. Taking care of people is giving people the leadership they deserve – safeguarding them, resourcing them, training them, developing them, correcting them, listening to them, motivating them, showing appreciation and inspiring them with a sense of purpose and feeling of belonging. Taking care of people means treating them with fairness, dignity and respect. Taking care of people is not cod-

ding and taking care of people does not mean we have low standards. On the contrary, holding people accountable to high professional standards and ethics is central to taking care of them and those around them.

In the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, winning is “finishing quality projects on time and within budget, safely.” When we put people first we are setting conditions to win, because a ready, professional, diverse and inclusive workforce can accomplish anything – and we have the delivery record to prove it.

Implementing our People Strategy and our People First Plan is the way we show that People First is more than a slogan. These documents guide how we’ll build and maintain a capable and cohesive team that is ready, professional, diverse and inclusive, and how we’ll create and foster a positive and healthy work environment to earn a reputation as an employer of choice.



This issue of *Crosscurrents* takes a deeper look at the philosophy of People First and I hope you’ll enjoy the various perspectives conveyed throughout.

Thanks for all you do, and thanks for staying MVP!

Diversity, Equity and Inclusion efforts gain traction at the district level

Story by Melanie Peterson

Special Emphasis Program Committee

The equal employment opportunity, or EEO, office, recently recruited nine representatives and five committee members to serve on the Special Emphasis Program Committee, or SEPC. The SEPC also includes the equal employment opportunity manager, Courtney Emmerich, and special emphasis program manager, Lupe Santos-Jensen.

Each of the nine representatives (see sidebar) will lead a specific program. The representatives will work with the EEO office to provide educational information regarding special observances that are recognized by law or executive order. The representatives will also help to create engaging activities that promote cultural awareness and inclusion across the district, assist with barrier analysis, help with community outreach and assist the district in expanding its list of partnerships with colleges and other institutions to try to recruit a diverse workforce.

“Most importantly, the members of this committee will go back to their work unit and be a working example of inclusion in their work unit and division,” Emmerich said. “The more people across the district that we can utilize to promote diversity in the workplace, the quicker you will see organizational change. We are always striving to make sure we are an organization that acts with MVP (Mission-Value-People) in mind and inclusion is a building block to putting people first. The team is going to focus on action items the district can take to make sure

we’re living out the MVP values and fostering an environment of inclusivity.”

Santos-Jensen said, “Diversity is important because it expands on creativity and problem solving. You will come up with more creative results more effectively with a diverse team than a homogenous team where everyone thinks the same. When people feel that their voice is heard and when they are able to voice ideas and concerns, employees are more likely to be happier and higher performing. It increases morale.”

Beyond that, Emmerich said, an equitable and fair hiring process is the law. Federal agencies are encouraged to use strategic hiring activities to attract talented and qualified applications. In addition, Emmerich said, diversity allows us to have a variety of perspectives and adds to our talent and organization.

Diversity, equity and inclusion forum

A year ago, diversity, equity and inclusion, or DEI, forums were focused on recruitment and there were usually between 20-40 attendants. These days, the DEI forums cover a broader range of topics and the number of participants is usually well over 100.

The DEI forums take place monthly and topics relate to current events, special observances, employees sharing experiences or DEI-related

Story continued on Page 5

Special Emphasis Program Committee representatives

The Federal Women’s Program - Theresa Gant-Gaines

Hispanic Employment Program - Thomas Burrow

Black/African American Employment Program - Loren Soma

Disabled Veterans Affirmative Action Program - Andrew Huffman

Asian American and Pacific Islander Employment - Gloria Penaloza-Ruiz

American Indian or Alaskan Native Employment Program - Michelle Larson

The Individuals with Disabilities Program - David Mikrut

Days of Remembrance of Victims of the Holocaust - Terry Zien

LBGTQIA+ Pride - Melanie Peterson

Committee members: Megan Severson, Christine Davis, Terrance Fluekiger, Eric Hanson and Joe Bernaix



*Equal employment opportunity office logo.
USACE courtesy graphic*

Story continued from Page 4

training. “Our office seeks input from employees on what they want to hear and learn,” Emmerich said. “I envision the special emphasis program committee will also help guide the topics for future meetings.”

Santos-Jensen said that more employees are now open to talking about concerns they have. “The DEI forum allows employees to speak up or write freely and anonymously, so people feel they can share their thoughts without repercussions,” she said.

One of the reasons the DEI forum has been so successful is because of support from leader-



Courtney Emmerich, equal employment opportunity manager, and Lupe Santos-Jensen, equal employment opportunity specialist, stand in the dewatered lock chamber at Lock and Dam 4 near Alma, Wisconsin, Feb. 12. USACE courtesy photo

ship. Emmerich said she encouraged leadership to approve funding and create a charge code for the events so employees do not have to use their personal time. Funding was approved in fall 2020. “It demonstrates the agency and leadership commitment to DEI,” she said.

Santos-Jensen said, “I applaud leadership for prioritizing EEO in the People First Plan and integrating DEI into our operations and our everyday workforce.”

Inside the Castle podcasts

It wasn’t long after Emmerich started at the St. Paul District that she was asked to do a social justice podcast as part of the revolutionize civil works team. The podcast series follows special observances that the federal government recognizes such as Women’s History Month. It also covers current events and issues or topics in the organization.

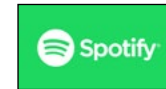
“One of the important things,” Emmerich said, “is that I didn’t feel comfortable talking about this topic without including a person of color who could share their lived experiences on this topic. Memphis District EEO manager Donnell Wright and I had already worked together on a training session for St. Paul District and he eagerly volunteered to co-host the Inside the Castle podcast with me.”

The podcasts are unscripted, Emmerich said, with just a few questions beforehand to guide the conversation. The conversations can get lengthy and are often edited down.

Emmerich said the podcasts are important because as the EEO manager, it’s her job to prevent discrimination and the best way to

accomplish that is to educate the workforce about various protected bases to be proactive in preventing discriminatory behaviors in the workplace.

All of the Inside the Castle podcasts can be found here:



Equal employment opportunity office

As the EEO officer, Emmerich said it’s her duty to ensure that DEI remains a priority. “We need to ensure that we have buy-in from the top of the organization to throughout the district to ensure we are proactively working to prevent discrimination and continue to create a workplace where everyone feels included, respected and valued.”

Emmerich said her job is to make sure leaders are thinking about EEO when making decisions that could affect the whole of the organization and making sure that decisions are equitable.

She stressed that EEO is also an advisory service available to anyone. “The office processes complaints and requests for reasonable accommodations, but we also have this component where we are working to create cultural awareness and promote inclusive activities. We want people to feel comfortable coming into our office to talk to us in any situation.”

Emmerich said, “I’m proud of the work we’ve done since I’ve onboarded and there’s a lot of excitement toward the EEO program and SEPC. I really want to keep that momentum going and find creative ways to keep the workforce engaged on the topic.”

Altmann recognized for antiterrorism work

Story by Melanie Peterson

The Mississippi Valley Division selected St. Paul District security technician, Robert Altmann, for its 2020 Lt. Col. Ronald C. Francis Best Antiterrorism Program Manager Award and its 2020 Antiterrorism Honor Roll.

Altmann was nominated for his work on the St. Paul District antiterrorism program during fiscal year 2020. With an area of responsibility that stretches over 240 miles of the Mississippi River and with 41 field sites scattered across five states, Altmann's commitment to protect personnel and ensure the mission is not affected by terrorist threats has been extraordinary.

"Rob is an asset to the organization and is well-deserving of this recognition. His dedication to force protection and willingness to explore new protection methods are a credit to him and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers," said Jeff Becker, St. Paul District chief of security and law enforcement and Altmann's supervisor.

Under Altmann's management, the St. Paul District's antiterrorism program continually exceeded expectations. St. Paul District led the Mississippi Valley Division in the execution of antiterrorism exercises, completing one hundred percent of required exercise of antiterrorism plans months before the division's regional effort to accomplish this task. Altmann also used an automated system to track and record random antiterrorism mea-

sure execution as a best practice, which is being explored for use within the division.

Altmann said, "Being selected for this award is confirmation that my predecessors, my co-workers and myself have the combined knowledge to create and deliver a first class product which can be adapted for use throughout the division."



Robert Altmann, security technician. USACE courtesy photo

Check out the updated security and law enforcement intranet page [here](#)



- In and out processing
- Foreign travel form
- Marking Controlled Unclassified Information (CUI)



Stringham earns recognition for public affairs work

Story by Nayelli Guerrero

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Mississippi Valley Division, recently selected George Stringham, St. Paul District deputy public affairs chief, as the division's public affairs officer of the year.

The Mississippi Valley Division presents this award annually to the top public affairs officer within the division's six districts. Stringham received this award in recognition of his leadership, dedication and devotion to duty. As a public affairs specialist for the past 19 years, Stringham has helped hundreds of thousands of citizens learn more about the Corps while providing critical public safety information during numerous disasters.

Stringham's accomplishments include working closely with district leadership to keep both the public and district employees informed during the COVID-19 pandemic and making improvements to increase traffic and visibility to the district's website and social media profiles. He has also volunteered to support the Corps of Engineers at the national level by deploying in support of

Hurricane Laura recovery efforts and serving as the lead public affairs specialist at the USACE Emergency Field Office in Lake Charles, Louisiana. Additionally, he supports the Department of Defense Civil-Military Emergency Preparedness Program by assisting the Republic of Georgia in bolstering their crisis communication abilities.

"George is one of the hardest working, talented and level-headed public affairs practitioners in the business," said Shannon Bauer, St. Paul District, public affairs chief and Stringham's supervisor. "He always puts the public and his customers first. We are absolutely lucky to have him with us here at the St. Paul District!"



Maj. Gen. Diana Holland, Mississippi Valley Division Commander, presents a commander's coin to George Stringham, St. Paul District deputy public affairs chief and the Mississippi Valley Division public affairs officer of the year, Feb. 9. USACE courtesy photo



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*This app is to support the suicide /
sexual assault prevention campaign.*



Regulatory committee explores diversity, equity and inclusion

Story by Melanie Peterson

A new regulatory division committee is looking to address the issues of diversity, equity and inclusion, or DEI. Maria DeLaundreau, a regulatory project manager and the founder of the committee, said, “The committee is open to everyone in regulatory. We have about 15 standing members right now and we meet once a month.” Within that committee are five sub-groups including a team for observances and holidays such as Women’s History Month. Other sub-groups include a group that hosts current events discussions, a group to create tips for hosting inclusive meetings, a group to create a baseline survey for regulatory to help evaluate DEI

needs and interests, and a group that is working on an office map that includes existing accessible and inclusive infrastructure.

DeLaundreau said she had been involved with similar teams at other places she worked which were meaningful to her and she wanted to create something similar at the Corps. “There’s room for improvement anywhere,” she said. “Having support from your peers makes it easier to have a neutral ground, gives communication tools, let’s you practice being an ally and creates a safe environment for people to grow.”

Some people are new to DEI work, some people have been involved in DEI for an extended period of time and some got a wake-up call last year, DeLaundreau said. “I’m excited about empowering people on the team to bring more to the Regulatory Division. Our current events subteam hosted a discussion with about 30 people on current events, tying in the Emmys, government and the Olympics. We talked about why representation matters and how it ties back to what we’re doing in our work.”

Marie Kopka, regulatory lead project manager and committee co-leader, said they are building the curriculum as they go, based on what team members are interested in learning about. “We started with having a shared vocabulary and basic DEI terms and we’re building off of that,” she said. “One of the first, visible efforts, is that some of us are including our pronouns (for example, she/her/hers) on our email signature block. This is something that is shown externally, so it radiates out to the public.” Kopka said they are also working on using more inclusive language in correspondence.

“We are passing along resources to be an ally, amplifying voices, being inclusive and providing tools that anyone can use,” Kopka said.

Kopka said there’s been leadership support for the committee on multiple levels, from regulatory division leadership to the commander, to the equal employment opportunity office, to other divisions hearing about it and sparking interest to create their own groups.



“As biologists and ecologists, we study and celebrate diversity in nature, recognizing that survival of the fittest does not always lead to equity and inclusion. Exploring these themes from a human and societal standpoint, with a group of biologists and ecologists makes for interesting conversations and an expansion of minds. The diversity, equity and inclusion team is a great outlet for growing as a civil servant, as a biologist/ecologist/scientist or simply as a human being trying to make sense of this world.”

-Matt Groshek, regulatory specialist and DEI team member



Maria DeLaundreau, regulatory project manager. USACE photo by Patrick Moes

Wezel-Peterson embraces her identity as a deafblind individual

Story courtesy of the Minnesota Commission of the Deaf, DeafBlind and Hard of Hearing

Molly Wezel-Peterson was born in South Korea. At nine months old, she was adopted by an American family and brought to Minnesota. Both of her parents are hearing. Wezel-Peterson is the only deafblind member of her family; her siblings are all hearing as well. The family is not fluent in sign language, but instead use a system of home signs to communicate with Wezel-Peterson.

“The communication part was hard for me,” Wezel-Peterson said. She started out in mainstream school, but the communication between her and her parents became a challenge, especially with her parents’ divorce happening simultaneously. She transferred to the Minnesota State Academy for the Deaf, or MSAD. At MSAD, Wezel-Peterson thrived with socializing with other students who are deaf and being able to communicate with them.

Wezel-Peterson attended the Rochester Institute of Technology/National Technical Institute for the Deaf, where she majored in business technology, and Metro State University where she fo-

cused on business administration, getting a bachelor’s degree. Those studies led to working in business offices as an administrative professional.

Wezel-Peterson did not always identify as a deafblind person. She grew up being deaf until the school staff diagnosed her with Usher Syndrome (a syndromic cause of combined deafness and blindness) at age 10. “Growing up, I knew what Usher Syndrome was, but I didn’t know it also applied to me,” Wezel-Peterson said. Later, Wezel-Peterson asked her mother about the diagnosis and found out that her parents had known that Wezel-Peterson had it from the start. “You were born that way,” they told her.

Wezel-Peterson shares that her mother was adamant that deafblindness would not stand in the way of her daughter’s success in life. “My mom wanted me to be independent and believed that I could do anything I put my mind to and be successful in life,” Wezel-Peterson said. She has not relied on parental assistance and believes in learning the responsibilities that come with life – such

as paying for college without parental assistance – as a form of empowerment.

Wezel-Peterson has worked for the St. Paul District since 2012. “Many engineers there have no time to focus on the administrative part of their jobs. That’s where I come in,” Wezel-Peterson said. Her responsibilities include transferring informational data, timekeeping, monetary reimbursements and other office-related duties. Her duties support the 45 people in the hydraulics and hydrology branch.

Wezel-Peterson said the most appealing part of her work is being around people. “All the workplace banter and fun



Molly Wezel-Peterson, hydraulics and hydrology branch administrative assistant. USACE photo by Emily Chavolla

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moments – I relish those moments!” said Wezel-Peterson. She adds that it’s important to be positive and encourage one another, which leads to higher morale among the employees. With the current coronavirus pandemic, the social part has been reduced due to the safety restrictions in place. “I’d much rather be working at the office and among people, as I thrive from being among like-minded folks,” Wezel-Peterson said. Isolation has been a very different experience for Wezel-Peterson, but she hopes that it won’t last much longer.

She also adds that her workplace has been very accommodating to access needs connected to being deafblind. Tools she uses at work include zoom text, a larger computer monitor screen and making sure her access needs are being met. They also ensure Wezel-Peterson can participate in meetings by providing American Sign Language interpreters, which stemmed from a prior meeting where Wezel-Peterson stood up, informing the department that interpreters were needed more frequently to ensure equal participation.

Wezel-Peterson adds that there are six deaf employees in the district, and those interpreters put them on an equal footing with their hearing coworkers. “Sometimes you need to stand up for what you need to succeed at work, including your communication access needs.” She encourages deaf people to educate their hearing coworkers and bosses about communication options and preferences, deaf culture history and norms and share opportunities to learn sign language. “Even if it’s just covering the basics, it does go a long way,” Wezel-Peterson said.

Outside of work, Wezel-Peterson enjoys working out, going for walks or running, and socializing with friends. She would like to spend more time with her family, but it’s hard as they don’t live nearby.

Wezel-Peterson offers the following advice, “This is for everyone, whether you are deaf, or deafblind – you come first. – You can empower yourself to be successful in your life. Be sure to share positive encouragement and do not pull each other down. We as deaf or deafblind, we can do anything we put ourselves to, to stand up for ourselves in life.”

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Workforce Recruitment Program helps diversify workforce and recruit talent

Story by Nayelli Guerrero

The Workforce Recruitment Program, or WRP, is a national recruitment program that helps federal employers hire college students and recent graduates with disabilities for temporary or permanent positions. The WRP database contains more than 2,000 resumes from individuals with disabilities from a wide variety of majors and backgrounds, with candidates ranging from first

year undergraduate students to law school students. All WRP candidates are eligible for the federal government's Schedule A hiring authority, which allows agencies to hire individuals with disabilities without posting a job announcement. The Department of Defense funds 14-week-long paid WRP internships at no cost to the hiring agency.

"The Workforce Recruitment Program brings college students and recent graduates to an agency so we can benefit from their talent," Lupe Santos-Jensen, St. Paul District equal employment specialist, said. "Managers can evaluate participants on the job for 14 weeks, with the option to offer full-time, permanent employment."

The U.S. Army typically allocates two to three WRP positions per year to the St. Paul District. Once the district's equal employment opportunity office receives the allocations, they contact offices to determine if they are interested in placing a WRP candidate.

During a 14-week WRP internship, supervisors assign candidates tasks that address their

skills, interests and goals in addition to the office's specific needs.

Ryan Malterud, regulatory south branch chief, said, "In regulatory, we work with interns to determine their skill sets and then we pair them with a project manager, senior ecologist or other staff to ensure they get as much as possible out of their internship. We have had interns process permits, conduct compliance inspections in the field, shadow senior ecologists in the field and help collect data. The work the interns do really depends on their background, education, skillset, and what their interest is in the regulatory program."

The number of WRP candidates that the St. Paul District hires permanently varies each year depending on if the student is a good fit and if the office has an opening. Santos-Jensen said, "We look for hard-working candidates who are interested in contributing meaningfully to the Corps' mission."



Lupe Santos-Jensen, St. Paul District equal employment specialist. USACE courtesy photo

A graphic for the Safe Helpline. It features a fist made of text, with the words "I'm here to listen" and "I need to talk" repeated in various sizes and orientations. The fist is green and white. Below the fist is a yellow speech bubble containing the text "DoD Safe Helpline safehelpline.org | 877-995-5247".

Need to Talk?
Safe Helpline is here to help.
Anonymous, Confidential Support for Survivors of Sexual Assault in the DoD Community, Anytime, Anywhere.

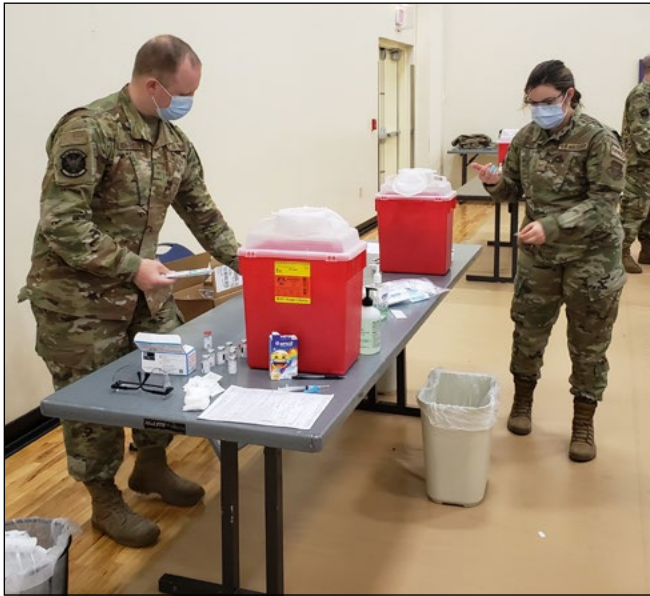
DoD
Safe Helpline
safehelpline.org | 877-995-5247

Corps employees receive COVID-19 vaccine from community partner

Story by Elizabeth Stoeckmann

Employees of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, St. Paul District, lined up inside the Minneapolis Air Force Reserve fitness center waiting for their COVID-19 vaccination March 28 and then again April 27.

The Corps' Readiness Operations Center played a key role in the joint effort with the 934th Airlift Wing, Minneapolis Air Force Reserve, Minnesota, where more than 140 Corps personnel received both rounds of the



Air Force Reserve aeromedical technicians prepare to administer the COVID-19 vaccination to Corps employees, April 27. USACE photo by Elizabeth Stoeckmann

vaccine from the Air Force Reserve aeromedical technicians.

St. Paul District Commander Col. Karl Jansen made a request to the Minnesota Federal Executive Board for assistance in finding vaccinations for the Corps' critical workforce. "Because the Corps has a strong federal and Department of Defense partnership within the Twin Cities area, our friends at the 934th immediately responded and within days, both agencies worked out details for the voluntary opportunity," Jansen said.

Ready to respond, Airmen from the 934th escorted Corps employees to a required medical briefing and then to the auditorium for the vaccine and observation waiting area. "Both the Corps and 934th leadership coordinated for the morning arrival of Corps employees for their first vaccine," said 934th Emergency Operations Center Commander Jon Pieters. "Army Corps of Engineer employees arrived promptly and were marshalled to an educational briefing before receiving their vaccine."

Phil White, Corps Readiness Operations Center chief, is responsible for the mitigation and reporting of COVID-19 for the St. Paul District.

"Phil White and Kristin Kosterman did an outstanding job organizing the event and keeping all employees informed of what to expect,"

said Abby Hansen, Corps chief of the Civilian Personnel Advisory Center. "Furthermore, the staff at the 934th were well prepared, organized and incredibly welcoming. Everyone was ready to assist, answer questions, and ensure we all felt safe, healthy and ready for our vaccination."

The buzz of chatter was high amongst employees who hadn't gathered in one common place since the pandemic started in March 2020. The location was ideal and Corps employees said they were grateful for the convenient opportunity.

"I wasn't expecting to get my vaccine until much later in the spring/summer," said Nathan Wallerstedt, Corps chief of the Project Management Branch. "This was a great opportunity that the 934th Airlift Wing was willing to provide vaccinations to other federal partners within the area."

The 934th has administered more than 2,000 first and second doses of the vaccine since the beginning of the year.

"I am extremely proud of the Aeromedical Staging Squadron team. Not only for how they prepared for this Point of Distribution (POD) for the Corps, but for all local partnering agencies," said Air Force Capt. Jon Polos, 934th Aeromedical Staging Squadron Director

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of Operations. “We are fostering new relationships and simultaneously opening up new training opportunities with federal agencies we previously had not worked this closely with.”

Air Force Staff Sergeant Julia Matthews, a medical case manager for the 934th Aero-medical Staging Squadron said she volunteered to help with the first and second point of distribution operation for the Corps. The process is common to the medics because of mass vaccines to service members,



St. Paul District employees wait 15 minutes after receiving their vaccine to monitor for an adverse reaction at the Minneapolis Air Force Reserve April 27. USACE photo by Elizabeth Stoeckmann

federal employees, spouses, dependents and smaller unit needs.

The fluidity of the process from start to finish was impressive for Joe Schroetter, Corps project manager.

“I appreciated the convenient location of the 934th to efficiently offer the vaccine,” Schroetter said. “The event coordination was seamless, and employees were happy to see each other.”

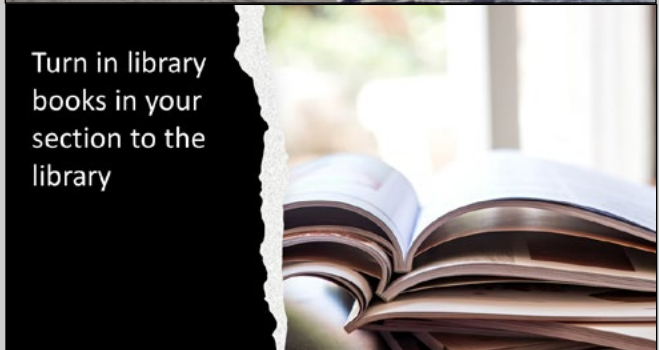
Taking care of people is one of the Corps’ guiding principles.

“I’m grateful for the positive response from our community partners in taking care of our people in a safe environment to get us back to normalcy,” Jansen said.

The 934th leadership couldn’t agree more.

“We plan and prepare for contingencies every day,” said Air Force Col. Randy Stoeckmann, 934th Mission Support Group commander. “The Airmen are poised and ready to respond with pride and professionalism. Everyone’s mission is critical to helping bring an end to the pandemic.”

Building move tips



Click [here](https://youtu.be/lmQY6ejkQL0) to watch a video about preparing for the upcoming building move or visit <https://youtu.be/lmQY6ejkQL0>

Moe champions safety program

Story by Melanie Peterson

In addition to serving as the chief of the navigation support section, Kristin Moe also plays an important part in the St. Paul District's safety program as the Army Corps of Engineers Safety and Occupational Health Management System, or CESOHMS, champion. She will serve an integral role in preparing the district for the stage 2 closeout assessment and stage 3 baseline at the end of June.

There are three stages of CESOHMS implementation. The first stage, Moe said, focuses on the groundwork for the safety program and makes sure there are policies and process-

es in place in the district. The second stage ensures that processes are communicated to employees and being followed. There are six objectives (see graphic) that provide the district a framework to follow. The third stage is continuing the existing program with constant improvement and feedback, and with employees taking individual ownership for safety. "It's about creating a new culture of safety where everyone participates and everyone shares the responsibility for a successful safety program," Moe said.

As the CESOHMS champion, Moe said her role is to champion the change. "I believe that change is important and we need to communicate that to all levels of the organization," Moe said. "We need to make sure that people are accountable for their role in the change process. Part of my role is to advocate to remove obstacles that are in the way of this change."

Moe stressed that she wants employees to be engaged and involved with safety in their everyday duties. Some ways that employees can get involved include:

- Coordinating a toolbox talk for your work group
- Share information and lessons learned
- Take action to correct a hazard (ex. clean up after a spill to avoid a potential slip/fall)

- Report a hazard to the safety office (report hazards and safety issues' link on the safety intranet site [here](#))
- Provide a safety briefing to site visitors

"CESOHMS is a comprehensive program that supports us in accomplishing our missions safely," Moe said. "It empowers employees to be proactive and engage in workplace safety so we're all looking out for each other."



Kristin Moe, chief of the navigation support section and district CESOHMS champion. USACE courtesy photo



The six objectives of CESOHMS. USACE courtesy graphic

Federal Employee Viewpoint Survey provides path toward a better tomorrow

Story by Patrick Moes

The results are in for the annual Federal Employee Viewpoint Survey.

Building on previous accomplishments, the St. Paul District continued its success in ensuring maximum participation of the annual survey after 352 St. Paul District employees or nearly 75% of the district, according to Col. Karl Jansen, St. Paul District commander. Despite a slight decrease from the 2019 participation rate, Jansen said he was impressed by the 2020 results and stressed that they were still among the highest participation rates within the Corps of Engineers.

“Overall, we have a fantastic organization and continue to trend upwards in almost all [Federal Employee Viewpoint Survey] areas,” Jansen said. “I’m very confident that we will again be named a USACE best place to work again this year, for the sixth year in a row.”

The 2020 survey was slightly different from previous versions due to several questions related to the COVID-19 pandemic. Around

a dozen standard questions were removed to accommodate the new questions. The removal and addition of new questions had a bearing on the historic results when compared year-to-year, but Jansen said the results collected from the changes expressed optimism that the district is on the right path. He said the question that provided the greatest increase in positive responses from last year was “My supervisor is committed to a workforce representative of all segments of society.” Jansen said the district’s positive responses toward the question increased by 8% in the 2020 survey results from 76 to 84%. He said the increase is an indicator of the district’s renewed commitment to diversity, equity and inclusion.

Despite a somewhat stagnant survey response rate of about 50% favorability toward thinking that the survey results will yield positive change, Jansen said he’s committed to implementing effective strategies to build a better, more robust workforce. “I’d like everyone to know that you have my personal commitment, and that of our senior leaders, to take

these results of this survey seriously and to make genuine efforts to keep [the St. Paul District] a great place to serve.”

One of the areas where the district has enacted tangible reform because of recent survey results is the launch of the of the St. Paul District’s People First initiative, which is intended to build a more holistic environment for the workforce. The vision of the district’s “People First” plan is to build and maintain capable and cohesive teams who deliver our program

of today while preparing for an uncertain future. Jansen said the plan provides for more interactive collaboration within the workforce and stressed the importance of employee engagement using the recently developed MS Teams People First conversation option via the Microsoft Teams People First site (which employees can access [here](#)). “This is a venue to crowd-source ways that we can all take action to stay engaged, boost our health and wellness and foster a diverse, inclusive and cohesive team,” Jansen said.



Click [here](#) or visit <https://youtu.be/Xo046UGMc3g> to watch Col. Karl Jansen talk about the Federal Employee Viewpoint Survey results.

Civil Servants of the Year announced



Bryan Peterson
operations

LEADERSHIP

With his team, Peterson ensured continuity of operations throughout the entire 2020 navigation season, with detailed safety measures to protect our crews during the pandemic.

"It is the efforts of the entire navigation team and their accomplishments that even made it possible for me to be considered for this award. They all successfully executed COVID-19 risk mitigation measures within their work areas to assure their safety and the safety of the general public. These are truly the Civil Servants of the Year and I am honored to represent them."

Position title: Chief of navigation
Total years with the St. Paul District, Corps of Engineers and federal government: 39 years this July
Previous positions: Survey technician, deckhand, dredging inspector, equipment specialist, chief of maintenance, chief of locks and dams
Education: Civil engineering program at the Winona Technical College
Hobbies: Spending time with grandkids, traveling, hunting, fishing
Residence: Houston, Minnesota



Virginia Regorrah
engineering and construction

EXCELLENCE BEYOND EXPECTATIONS

Regorrah expertly administered a colossal workload increase while simultaneously tripling the size of her team to posture for

current and imminent projects. Outside the office, Regorrah is a change leader and role model serving as a Girl Scout troop leader, engineering professor and recreation league sports photographer.

"It is a very humbling experience to realize that the individuals that I work with took the time to nominate me for this honor. I will strive to always be worthy of their thoughtful act."

Position title: Western area engineer
Total years with the St. Paul District: 21
Total years with the federal government: 33
Previous positions: U.S. Army engineer officer
Education: Bachelor and Master of Science in civil engineering from the University of Hawaii, Master of Science in geography from the University of North Dakota and current PhD candidate in civil engineering from North Dakota State University
Hobbies: reading, photography, SCUBA diving
Residence: East Grand Forks, Minnesota



Rebecca Seal-Soileau
engineering and construction

EXCELLENCE BEYOND EXPECTATIONS

Seal-Soileau was critical to keeping the highly complex International Souris River plan study – involving two countries,

multiple federal, state, and provincial agencies, and the U.S. State Department – on track and continually focused on the outcome while ensuring all issues were addressed and the team came to a unified, mission-focused resolution.

"It is incredibly humbling to receive an award that really reflects the efforts of so many fantastic dedicated people working in supportive teams every day."

Position title: International Joint Commission specialist
Total years with the St. Paul District: 19
Total years with the Corps of Engineers: 27
Total years with the federal government: 28
Previous positions: Corps of Engineers Waterways Experiment Station, associate professor of geology at North Dakota State University
Education: Bachelor of Physics and PhD in geology from the University of Minnesota
Hobbies: Hiking, canoeing and kayaking
Residence: Rosemount, Minnesota

Recognizing our Employees of the Month: The MVPs of MVP



March
Andrew Buell
operations



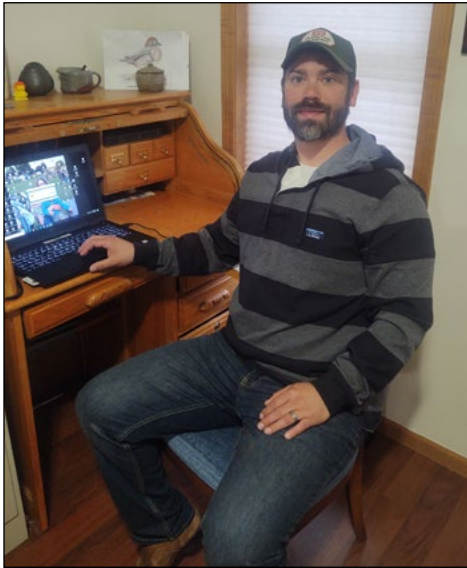
April
Kevin Denn
*engineering and
construction*



May
Kimberly Bahls
*resource
management*



Around the District



Staff at Lock and Dam 5 near Minnesota City, Minnesota (top), and staff and volunteers at Gull Lake Recreation Area near Brainerd, Minnesota (bottom), wear their life jackets for Wear Your Life Jacket at Work Day, May 21. USACE courtesy photos

St. Paul District employees participate Denim Day, April 28, to spread awareness of sexual assault. Left to right, top to bottom: Joey Shoemaker (regulatory), Abby Hansen (civilian personnel advisory center), Chris Bowen (engineering and construction) and Jon Sobiech (regional planning and environment division north). USACE courtesy photos



News and Notes

New Hires

Matthew Buchacker, natural resources specialist, operations, Federal Dam, Minnesota
Alex Cray, student trainee, engineering and construction, Hastings, Minnesota
Erin Fickle, park ranger, operations, Valley City, North Dakota
Landon Hill, park ranger, operations, Valley City, North Dakota
Michael Hvidhyld, lock and dam operator, operations, Red Wing, Minnesota
Sean Johnston, civil engineer, engineering and construction, St. Paul, Minnesota
Aubrey Jurgerson, park ranger, operations, De Soto, Wisconsin
Jacob Minnis, lock and dam operator, operations, Red Wing, Minnesota
Elizabeth Moriarty, attorney-adviser, office of counsel, St. Paul, Minnesota
Aaron Pieplow, safety and occupational health specialist, operations, Fountain City, Wisconsin
Timothy Sullivan, lock and dam operator, operations, Red Wing, Minnesota
Helen Walz, civil engineer, engineering and construction, St. Paul, Minnesota
Robyn Yliniemi, safety and occupational health specialist, engineering and construction, Fargo, North Dakota

Promotions

Christina Afdahl, civil engineer, engineering and construction, St. Paul, Minnesota
Scott Barr, maintenance worker, operations, Fountain City, Wisconsin
Peter Burke, lock and dam operator, operations, La Crescent, Minnesota
Samantha Carlstrom, civil engineer (hydraulics), engineering and construction, St. Paul, Minnesota
Matt Clark, program manager (temporary), programs and project management, St. Paul, Minnesota
Daniel De Vaney, channel maintenance coordinator, operations, Fountain City, Wisconsin
Stephanie Dupey, supervisory realty specialist, real estate, St. Paul, Minnesota
Karen Eklund, regulatory specialist, regulatory, Hayward, Wisconsin
Jason Foss, supervisory civil engineer (geotechnical), engineering and construction, St. Paul, Minnesota
Rebecca Graser, supervisory biologist (temporary), regulatory, Brookfield, Wisconsin

Raelene Hegge, regulatory specialist, regulatory, St. Paul, Minnesota
Joel Hermann, lock and dam operator supervisor, operations, Trempealeau, Wisconsin
John Henderson, civil engineer, engineering and construction, Winona, Minnesota
Dakota Koenig, marine machinery mechanic, operations, Fountain City, Wisconsin
Kevin Lakey, lock and dam operator, operations, Trempealeau, Wisconsin
Katie Leslie, archeologist, regional planning and environment division north, St. Paul, Minnesota
Andrew Lorenz, engineering equipment operator, operations, Fountain City, Wisconsin
Robert Maroney, biologist, regional planning and environment division north, Brainerd, Minnesota
Rachel Mesko, economist, regional planning and environment division north, Fort Bragg, North Carolina
Collin Moratz, biologist, regional planning and environment division north, Moline, Illinois
Marcus Patterson, secretary, operations, St. Paul, Minnesota
Ryan Price, supervisory civil engineer (geotechnical), engineering and construction, St. Paul, Minnesota
Amy Rothstein, chief of resource management, resource management, St. Paul, Minnesota
Mitchell Serjogins, lock and dam operator supervisor, operations, Alma, Wisconsin
Joseph Shoemaker, supervisory biologist (temporary), regulatory, Green Bay, Wisconsin
Jamie Simmons, project scheduler (temporary), regional planning and environment division north, St. Louis, Missouri
Hunter Simonson, natural resources specialist, operations, McGregor, Minnesota
Anthony Skemp, lock and dam operator (temporary), operations, Eastman, Wisconsin
Rachel Steiger, wildlife biologist, regional planning and environment division north, St. Louis, Missouri
Denita Wesley, realty specialist, real estate, St. Paul, Minnesota
Brian Yagle, supervisory biologist (temporary), regulatory, St. Paul, Minnesota

News and Notes

Retirements

Penny Caldwell, supervisory realty specialist, retired March 14, 2021
Jeffrey Kapaun, natural resources specialist, retired April 30, 2021

Taps

Howard Saunders passed away Feb. 21, 2021. Howard had a 20 plus year career as a lock and dam operator. Howard worked on the Dredge William Thompson and is one of the workers credited with saving the life of a fellow worker after an electrical shock and cardiac arrest.

Congratulations



Jeff Becker, security and law enforcement, graduated from the Federal Outreach and Leadership Development program. This training is conducted by the Minnesota Federal Executive Board.

Nayelli Guerrero, public affairs, graduated with a bachelor's degree in American Studies from the University of Minnesota – Twin Cities, May 16, 2021.



Trevor Kough, engineering and construction, and family welcomed a new baby, Theodore Kough

Graduating class of the Executive Leadership Development Program:

Shannon Bauer, public affairs
Chris Bowen, engineering and construction
Nate Campbell, programs and project management
Steve Clark, regional planning and environment division north
Abby Hansen, civilian advisory personnel
Corrine Hodapp, operations
Ryan Malterud, regulatory
Kristin Moe, operations
Desiree Morningstar, regulatory
Elizabeth Nelsen, engineering and construction
Alex Nelson, engineering and construction
Jim Rand, operations
Phil White, readiness operations center
Eric Wittine, engineering and construction

Selectees for the Tier II Leadership Development Program:

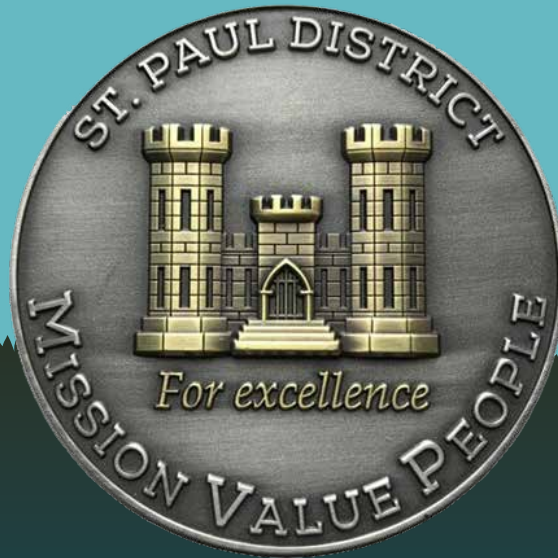
Daniel Burger, operations
Jeff Cook, operations
Sierra Keenan, regional and planning environment division north
Nancy Komulainen-Dillenburg, regulatory
Erin Krug, engineering and construction
Nathan Meisgeier, engineering and construction
Dan Mielke, engineering and construction
Gloria Penalozza, real estate
Michelle Prosser, programs and project management
Bryanna Sauer, resource management
Joey Shoemaker, regulatory
Brian Yagle, regulatory



2021



SUMMER AWARDS





COLONEL'S MESSAGE

Team MVP,

“People First” is more than a slogan, it’s a value and philosophy emphasizing the fact that people are central to all we do. We can only accomplish our vital mission by attracting, training, resourcing, developing, and retaining a capable and cohesive team of talented professionals who

embody the Army values. Stated another way, our people are everything, and without them we are nothing.

This publication recognizes exceptional service and achievements from our talented and dedicated teammates over the past year and in some cases over several decades in the public sector.

In the Army, winning matters. In the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, “Winning is delivering quality projects on time and within budget, safely.” As you turn the pages of this awards book, you’ll clearly recognize that our people transcended the COVID-19 pandemic and found a way to win and to help others win. This “can-do” spirit is emblematic of the Corps of Engineers and everyone can be rightfully proud.

From disaster response, to time in service, to functional area expertise, the awardees we are recognizing this summer certainly exemplify the St. Paul District Guiding Principles and our mantra of Mission, Value, and People.

I commend all our supervisors and staff who invested time to recognize the contributions of those around them, those who invested their time and talents to produce this amazing book, and I salute all who went the extra mile to serve with distinction. Well done!

It is a true honor to serve alongside all of you ... thanks for all you do and thanks for staying MVP!

~ COL J



Messages from our Senior Leaders



From U.S. Army Maj. Timothy Shebesta -

I am only able to spend a short time with the St. Paul District, but it has been a great experience working with you all. Although I will likely never meet most of you face to face, you have taught me a lot about how the district operates and how important all the various roles in the district are. It is remarkable to see how hundreds of people, working on dozens of very different tasks, all come together to make the district operate smoothly. Most importantly, I am impressed with your strength and resiliency to rise above the changing ways of virtual work environments through the pandemic phases. Thank you for welcoming me to the district and allowing me the opportunity to learn from you to empower me to be a better USACE leader. Keep up the good work!

From Kevin Wilson -

First, I need to diverge from the standard message. It's SUMMER in the Midwest! What a great time of year! Midwest summers make even the worst winters tolerable. Over the past 16 months, we have become accustomed to USACE WebEx, Skype, Microsoft Teams, Zoom, Go To Meeting, Google Classroom, VPN and a host of other programs in our professional and personal lives. Terms like: "you are double muted" "can you hear me now ... how about now?" "your camera isn't on" "we might have a bad connection" have been all too common. Yet, we have endured, we have learned a lot and continue to eagerly face new challenges. I am proud of everyone. We work together as a team, we coordinate and communicate with our partners, and our stakeholders and congressional delegation continue to be appreciative of our "can do" attitude. Everyone's drive and commitment to deliver the program, be wise stewards of the public trust, stay safe, and be considerate of others, all personify the Army values. Thank You! I am looking forward to the next few months as we start to regather, to move the district headquarters to a new location and as an organization to move forward with the future in mind. I appreciate all you have done and sincerely wish you a productive, enjoyable, and safe summer ahead. Great job!!



From Michael Bart -

District Family: I continue to be humbled and amazed at your flexibility and determination to serve our country in the myriad of missions that St. Paul District executes. We are in a unique period of our history that will likely have continued influence on how we do our work in the future. You have demonstrated commitment, resourcefulness, and a "can-do" attitude on a daily basis. I personally thank you for your contributions and dedication! You exemplify public service and the best we as a team can be.

From Terry Birkenstock -

Thanks to all of you for continuing to pull together to get us through this challenging period in our history. It has felt like a giant experiment over the past year with the pandemic. As a learning organization, we will try to retain the best practices we discovered and eliminate the things that are not working. Thanks for continuously sharing your perspectives on that and also on how we can build the best and most effective "workplace" of the future. Change is constant and there is certainly more in store for us over the next year, but you have proven to be agile, flexible, and productive no matter what gets put in your way. Thank you for your continued dedication to the Corps.



Messages from our Senior Leaders

4



From Tamara Cameron -

Gratitude. That is the one word that comes to mind as I think about our MVP team and what we have accomplished this past year. Together, we have weathered quite a storm of change in both our personal and professional lives, adapting to rapidly changing conditions while accomplishing our many missions. As I traveled around the district, I saw examples everywhere of collaboration among many disciplines of operations, engineering, planning, and environmental stewardship that have collectively contributed to the betterment of our sites and our service to the public.

I am grateful for the sacrifices many made to prepare for the busy season ahead. I encourage all of our individual work units to take some time to celebrate our collective achievements and to appreciate each other. As always, please stay safe at work and at home and continue to look out for one another.

From John Carrell -

I would like to take the opportunity to express my sincere gratitude for the tremendous work that was accomplished by the MVP Team. This past year was a testament to our resilience and commitment to each other and the mission. I am honored to be a part of such an outstanding organization, and I look forward to continued excellence as we deliver the program while also taking care of each other. We know there will be challenges ahead but together we will overcome all obstacles.



From Chad Konickson -

Thank you Team MVP! I'm awed and inspired by the resilience and adaptability everyone has shown over the last 15 months. Seeing the dedication to our many missions, despite unprecedented challenges, reminds me why it's such a privilege to serve alongside you. I'm excited that this summer represents our transition to a new and improved state, made better by the lessons of the last year, and shaped by our collective commitment to our most valuable asset - each other. I hope everyone has a fantastic summer!

From Amy Rothstein -

MVP team members: I am proud to be a part of this great organization with outstanding employees. Your dedication to accomplishing the mission while taking care of yourself and others is commendable. While we may not have envisioned this year to include the added challenges brought upon us by COVID-19, we were able to adapt, persevere, embrace new technologies, and expand our communication platforms with others. I appreciate the hard work of all MVP employees to ensure we succeeded in our endeavors.



Messages from our Senior Leaders



From Kevin Sommerland -

Our annual summer awards ceremony affords us an opportunity to step back and acknowledge the contributions of TEAM MVP. It is through your dedication and commitment to excellence that we continue to be viewed as an elite district among many. As I have traveled to various projects throughout the district and engaged with district office employees, I am amazed by your level of enthusiasm and technical expertise demonstrated on a daily basis. Take pride in your personal accomplishments and continue to safely enjoy the summer season and all the recreational opportunities the upper Midwest has to offer.



ST. PAUL DISTRICT
MISSION VALUE PEOPLE
For excellence

MISSION
committed to successfully deliver our program

VALUE
passionate about using our expertise to serve others

PEOPLE
dedicated to our inspired and professional workforce

DRIVEN to be a
WORLD-CLASS DISTRICT THAT DELIVERS
for our Workforce, Partners, Region, Enterprise, and Nation
by **BUILDING STRONG**
and Taking Care of People!



PEOPLE FIRST

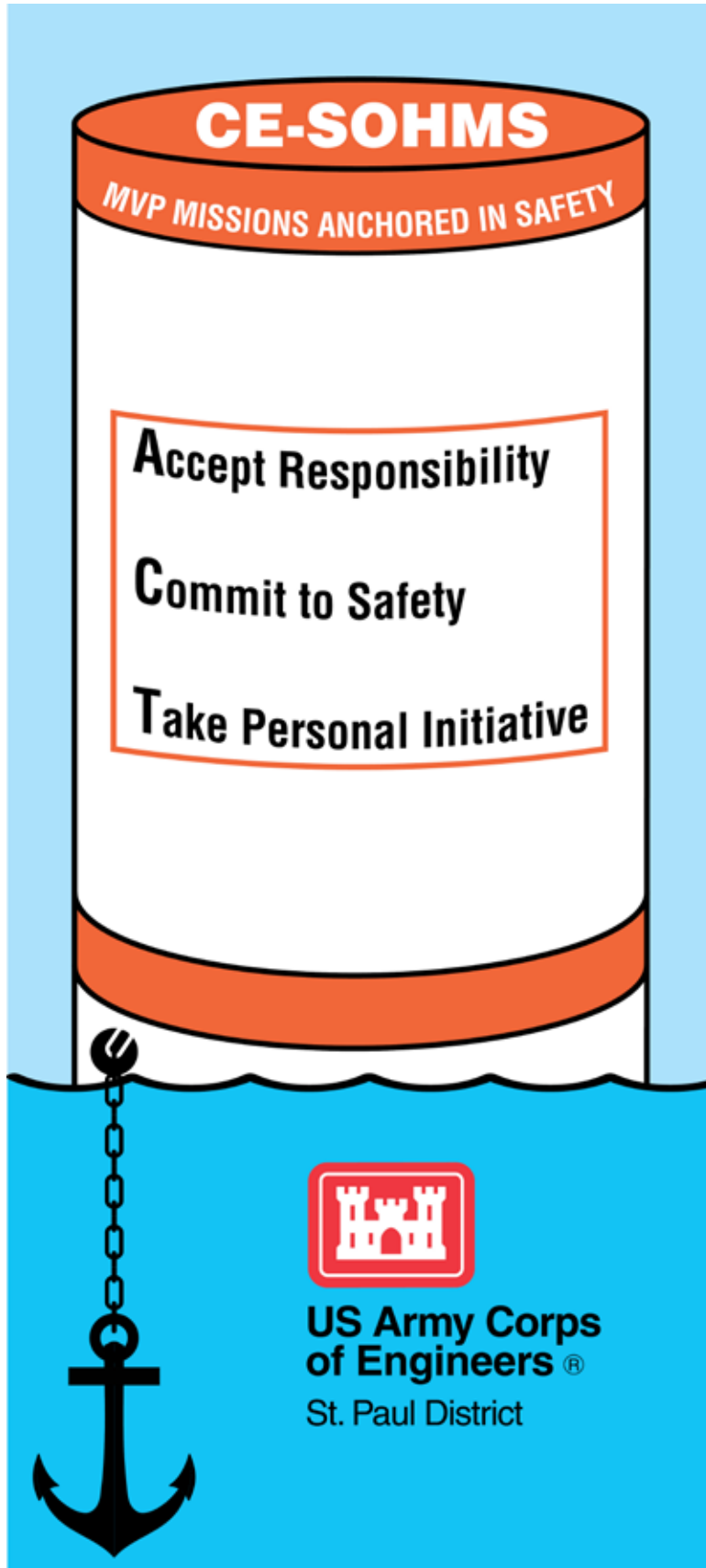


St. Paul District Guiding Principles

Guiding Principles: A broad philosophy that encompasses our collective beliefs and values and guide our organization throughout its life in all circumstances, irrespective of changes in its goals, strategies or type of work. Guiding principles create an organizational culture where everyone understands what's important.

1. We hold ourselves accountable to high standards and professional ethics
2. We understand and follow our processes
3. We resource and empower our multidisciplinary teams to succeed
4. We demonstrate positive teamwork, communication, collaboration and cooperation
5. We step-up to serve our fellow citizens and nation in times of disaster or conflict
6. We embrace constructive conflict to yield better results
7. We are forward-looking and use ingenuity to seize opportunities and address challenges
8. We play to our strengths, embrace change, and continuously improve
9. We are fully committed to the ideals of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion
10. We take care of one another and value clear, candid and transparent two-way communication
11. We build optimistic engaged leaders who maintain a healthy work environment
12. We invest to recruit, develop, employ and retain talented teammates





YOU NEED TO ACT!

Accept Responsibility

- Know your PHA's/ AHA's
- Anticipate Hazards
- Share Lessons Learned

Commit to Safety

- Learn Safety Standards
- Promote Safe Behavior
- Recognize Safe Actions

Take Personal Initiative

- Report Safety Concerns
- Identify Improvements
- Eliminate Unsafe Practices



**US Army Corps
of Engineers®**

St. Paul District



Executive Leader Development Program



Shannon Bauer



Chris Bowen



Nate Campbell



Steve Clark



Abby Hansen



Corrine Hodapp



Ryan Malterud



Kristin Moe



Desiree Morningstar



Elizabeth Nelsen



Alex Nelson



Jim Rand



Phil White



Eric Wittine

I applied for the executive leadership development program as an opportunity to continue my leadership self-awareness as I work to advance my professional career. I am incredibly thankful that the St. Paul District offers such programs, and more importantly, allows civilian human resource agency employees to take part in the program. Although our class ended up meeting in a virtual environment, I feel I gained another amazing cohort of leaders to call friends, coworkers and mentors. I look forward to using what I learned as my career progresses forward. ~ Abby Hansen



My leadership journey has culminated in the realization for me that I learn best by immersing myself in books, podcasts and videos and take little nuggets of leadership gold that work for me. St. Paul District's leadership development program is an awesome place to get lots of leadership nuggets while also building relationships with other colleagues who have a passion for leadership and learning more about yourself. ~ Ryan Malterud



New MVP Special Emphasis Committee Members



Joe Bernaix
SEPC Committee Member



Thomas Burrow
Hispanic Employment Program Representative



Christine Davis
SEPC Committee Member



Terrance Fluekiger
SEPC Committee Member



Theresa Gant-Gaines
Federal Women's Employment Program Representative



Eric Hanson
SEPC Committee Member



Andrew Huffman
Disabled Veteran Affirmative Action Program (DVAAP) Representative



Michelle Larson
American Indian/Alaska Native Employment Program Representative



David Mikrut
Individuals with Disabilities Employment Program Representative



Gloria Penaloza-Ruiz
Asian American Pacific Islander (AAPI) Employment Program Representative



Melanie Peterson
LGBTQIA+ Pride Representative



Megan Severson
SEPC Committee Member

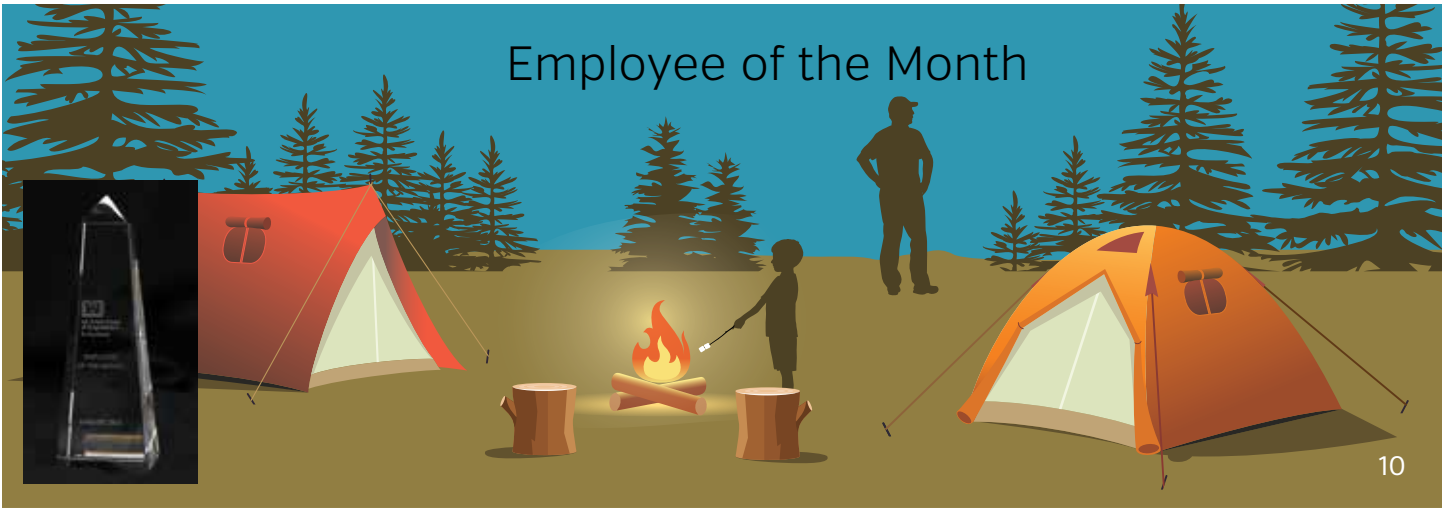


Loren Soma
Black/African-American Employment Program Representative



Terry Zien
Days of Remembrance of Victims of the Holocaust Representative

Employee of the Month



10

Individuals are nominated by their coworkers for the work/tasks they complete while at work. The nominations are gathered and verified by EEO, CPAC and their supervisor. All nominations that are cleared by EEO, CPAC and supervisor are sent to the Employee of the Month selection committee and the committee selects one individual for the month. If an individual is not selected, their nomination is forwarded to the following month because the nomination is valid for a total of six months.



Kulah Dukuly
January



Ted Hecht
February



Andrew Buell
March



Kevin Denn
April



Kimberly Bahls
May



Christine Afdahl
June

Other District Recognition



11



U.S. Army Capt. Joshua Baida
Passed the Professional
Engineer Exam



Wade Carr
Passed the Professional
Engineer Exam



Nayelli Guerrero
Bachelor of Arts from the
University of Minnesota



Marie Kopka
Lean Six Sigma Green Belt



Erin Krug
Officer Commission to the
U.S. Navy Reserve



Cherrie Law
Masters of Accountancy
Degree from Rutgers
University



Kacie Opat
Passed the Professional
Engineer Exam



Samuel Smith
Project Management
Professional



Elizabeth Stoeckmann
Certified Knowledge
Manager

Other District Recognition



Kimberly Warshaw
Project Management
Professional



Commissioned as
U.S. Army 2nd Lt.
Cameron Tomczyk



Other District Recognition



These individuals were critical to the channel closure response and successful reopening of the Mississippi River navigation channel in pool 4 between June 3 and June 6, 2021. Working collectively as a team, these individuals supported the movement of the grounded vessel and barges out of the area, mobilized dredging assets, surveyed the area and processed the data, coordinated with industry and environmental partners, identified the placement and cut layout, dredged the channel, and reset the buoys. This team effort by staff from the Dredge Goetz, channels and harbors, maintenance and repair and the physical support branch was critical in reestablishing navigation as quickly as possible while maintaining the safety of the entire team.



Luke Anderson



Noah Andow



Craig Bauer



Joe Bernaix



Jake Bernhardt



Matt Boberg



Tony Broxson



Eric Carlson



Dan Cottrell



Ryan Danielson



Dan De Vaney



Brady Dehnke



Kaleb Doerr



Dalton Eide



Dave Francksen



Channing Helgeson



Danny Hentges



Chris Hill



Jacob Jandl



Brandon Johnson



Dakota Koenig



Mike Kouba



Brian Krause



Kaden Lisowski



Adrian Loewenhagen



Andrew Lorenz



Nick Lorenz



Adam Loven



Matt McFarlin



Jon Miller



Joel Miller-Oates



Matt Mohlke



Matt Platteter



Josh Przybylla



Matt Rolbiecki

Other District Recognition



These individuals were critical to the channel closure response and successful reopening of the Mississippi River navigation channel in pool 4 between June 3 and June 6, 2021. Working collectively as a team, these individuals supported the movement of the grounded vessel and barges out of the area, mobilized dredging assets, surveyed the area and processed the data, coordinated with industry and environmental partners, identified the placement and cut layout, dredged the channel, and reset the buoys. This team effort by staff from the Dredge Goetz, channels and harbors, maintenance and repair and the physical support branch was critical in reestablishing navigation as quickly as possible while maintaining the safety of the entire team.



Dale Rud



Jason Schieffer



Kurt Schroeder



Mike Seibel



Logan Skoug



Langston Spencer



Bart Spriggle



Chris Stai



Kris Taverna



Dan Teigen



Al Vanguilder





Federal Executive Board Civil Servant of the Year Nominees

15

Nominations for Civil Servant of the Year are for current employees who have distinguished themselves by sustained, superior performance, special acts, community service or other noteworthy contributions during the previous calendar year. Nominations may be based on the employee's contributions at work, outside work, or both.



Matt Clark



Nancy Komulainen-Dillenburg



Jake Fall



Troy Frank



Faye Healy



Richard Schueneman



Jim Sentz



George Stringham



Clay Tallman



Theresa Thury



Vinai Vinlander



Bryan Peterson
Civil Servant of the Year - Leadership

As navigation business line manager for the Mississippi River between the Twin Cities and Gutenberg, Iowa, Bryan expertly led his team of 250 employees to ensure ongoing commercial navigation during the COVID-19 pandemic. The navigation mission supports a multibillion-dollar industry that depends on continuous operation of 12 locks and dams, and maintenance of 240 miles of river channel through surveying and dredging. With his team, Bryan ensured continuity of operations throughout the entire 2020 navigation season, with detailed safety measures to protect our crews during the pandemic. He relied upon strong industry and agency partnerships, as well as a high level of trust and credibility, to overcome significant challenges and maintain a vital public service to our region and to the Nation.

-nominated by Tamara Cameron

Virginia Regorrah
Civil Servant of the Year - Excellence Beyond Expectations

Virginia is commended for her exemplary service and diehard commitment to the Western Area Office. Virginia expertly administered a colossal workload increase while simultaneously tripling the size of her team to posture for current and imminent projects. Additionally, she displayed genuine dedication to her staff in developing an internal training program to improve their technical competencies, boost workplace confidence, and establish a self-sustaining high level of morale. Outside the office, Virginia is a change leader and role model serving as a Girl Scout troop leader, engineering professor and recreation league sports photographer.

-nominated by Christian Bowen



Rebecca Seal-Soileau
Civil Servant of the Year - Excellence Beyond Expectations

Rebecca is recognized as a Civil Servant of the Year in the “Excellence Beyond Expectations Award” for the U.S. Army core values she exemplified through her work as the U.S. alternate co-chair for the International Souris River Plan of Study Team. Rebecca was critical to keeping the highly complex study involving two countries, multiple federal, state, and provincial agencies, and the U.S. State Department on track and continually focused on the outcome while ensuring all issues were addressed and the team came to a unified, mission-focused resolution. Rebecca broke barriers while mediating through controversial issues that ultimately formed long-term partnerships at the international, national and local levels.

-nominated by Michelle Larson



Jeff Becker

Graduated Federal Outreach and Leadership Development (FOLD)

Mission Statement

To serve as a premier inter agency leadership program by which we develop and support future leaders to deliver exceptional results in a dynamic environment. Program Objectives include developing oral and written communication skills, providing mentorship/coaching, driving positive change, developing critical thinking, assessing talent and performance, assessing self, team-building, maximizing business relationships, embracing diversity, and managing up in your organization

About FOLD

The Federal Outreach and Leadership Development (FOLD) Program is a program created to assist in the development of future federal executive leaders and to address projected leadership vacancies brought on by retirements. This program is unique in that it is designed for federal participants and is offered to all federal employees through an application process. Participants of this program will interact with local executives, visit local agencies, work in groups, refine their writing and speaking skills, share information and explore unique challenges faced and addressed by federal leaders in Minnesota. The program is self-managed and participant driven.





Length of Service Award

10 YEARS



Vanessa Alberto



Lucas Anderson



Mark Angelo



Theresa Gant-Gaines



Abby Hansen



Kevin Hanson



Joel Hermann



Adam Howard



Craig Jarnot



Christopher Laine



Christopher Laine



Robert Wachholz



Length of Service Award

15 YEARS



Charles Boyd



Tim Hermann



Jessica Kempke



Ashley Kiley



Robert Maroney



Kristin Moe



Rachel Perrine



Jonathan Peters



Thomas Rohrer



Matthew Stanton



Clay Tallman



Kay White



Length of Service Award

20 YEARS



Lowell Moline





Length of Service Award

25 YEARS



Michelle Kniep



Ilona Moen



Angelita Phipps



Cherie Price





Length of Service Award

30 YEARS



Tamara Cameron



Jodi Creswell



John Perry



Sue Robinson





Christine Afdahl



Terry Birkenstock



Jon Hendrickson



Kenneth Mertes



Retirements



Mark Hogeboom
Writer/Editor
January 2, 2021



Don Brantner
Lock and Dam 2
January 16, 2021



Bruce McFarlin
Dredge Goetz
February 26, 2021



Penny Caldwell
Real Estate
March 13, 2021



Steve Eggers
Regulatory
March 31, 2021



Greg Larson
Regulatory
March 31, 2021



Duane Isle
Logistics
April 30, 2021



Jeff "Goose" Kapaun
Lake Ashtabula Recreation
April 30, 2021



Timm Rennecke
Leech Lake Recreation
May 31, 2021



Michael Bart
Engineering and Construction
June 30 2021



Piloting Innovative Risk Assessment Efforts Awards

24



Certificate of Achievement

Riddick provided his geologic expertise and senior leadership to help make the Winona levee risk assessment a success. Riddick is always willing to help facilitate the discussion for risk efforts and help push the team toward finding consensus on the best estimate of risk. He is an effective communicator within the cadre and always goes out of his way to promote discussion from local sponsors and less experienced district personnel, as was the case for the Winona risk assessment.

Grant Riddick

Achievement Medal for Civilian Service

Each awardee is commended for exemplary service to the St. Paul District and to the nation for their invaluable contributions to the innovative risk assessment work performed by the St. Paul District dam and levee risk cadre. With their leadership, technical expertise and dedication to supporting the cadre's risk workload, the cadre was able to successfully provide critical risk-informed decisions for the Sabine Pass to Galveston Bay coastal storm risk management project, time-sensitive recommendations for levee accreditation for the Winona levee system and provide the first comprehensive risk assessment for a Mississippi River and tributaries levee system at the Commerce levee. Their commitment to service and technical quality reflect great credit upon themselves, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and the United States Army.



Theresa Gant-Gaines



Tim Grundhoffer



Jeff McGrath



Alex Nelson



Ryan Price



Colin Riddick



Greg Wachman

Achievement Medal for Civilian Service

Each awardee is commended for their exemplary service to the St. Paul District and to the nation for their individual contributions to the International Souris River plan. Each team member's willingness to step into any project and find a path forward led to a successful outcome of the plan formulation phase of the study. The awardees' dedication to the project and loyalty to the team reflect great credit upon themselves, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and the Department of the Army.



Patrick Dowd



Scott Jutila



Michelle Larson



Kacie Opat



Abby Moore



Kim Warshaw



International Souris River Plan Awards

Civilian Service Commendation Medal

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Garrett Blomstrand



Brett Hultgren



Chanel Mueller



Mitch Weier



Elizabeth Nelsen



International Souris River Plan Awards

Meritorious Medal for Civilian Service

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Michael Bart



Rebecca Seal-Soileau





Hurricane Laura Response

Achievement Medal for Civilian Service

Each awardee is commended for their invaluable service to our nation. The awardees served as vital members of the district's response to Hurricanes Laura and Delta. Each team member volunteered to deploy during the National COVID-19 pandemic, working hand-in-hand with the Federal Emergency Management Agency, the State of Louisiana and several local agencies to assist local survivors. Following landfall as a Category 4 hurricane near Cameron, Louisiana, on August 27, 2020, the team worked in five parishes, to assist FEMA's recovery efforts. The awardees dedication and selfless service reflect great credit upon themselves, the St. Paul District, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and the Department of the Army.



James Adank



Terri Alberico



Mark Angelo



Nicole Baker



Craig Bauer



Arlan Baukol



Travis Burrier



Eric Carlson



Bill Chelmowski



Christine Craig



Ryan Danielson



Keith Davenport



John Dehnke



Maria Delaundreau



Dwight Deloney



Patrick Dowd



Michael Farone



Samantha Fink



David Francksen



Susan Funke

Hurricane Laura Response



Jay Grimsled



Joe Gurin



Jeffrey Hallam



Shane Hargreaves



Amy Heffernan



Jamie Hill



Chris Hill



Noah Jenneman



Yevette'e Jordan



Dan Kelner



David Keune



Ashley Kiley



Billie Jo Korpall



Kristin Kosterman



Chris Laine



Curt Larsen



Alex Le



Eric Lockington



Ray Marinan



Todd Martenson

Hurricane Laura Response



Curt Marty



Jamie Mercer



Brent Meyer



Matthew Mohlke



Abby Moore



Clarence Mrozek



Vincent Ngov



BJ Nissalke



Brandon Olson



Nathan Osmundson



Larry Puchalski



Daniel Reburn



Chad Rethwisch



Darold Sanderson



Zachary Santjer



Bill Schmidt



Jim Sentz



Megan Severson



Hunter Simonson



Anthony Skemp

Hurricane Laura Response



Logan Skoug



Chad Stellflug



George Stringham



Jerry Stussy



Jonathan Sundquist



Susanna Tsolakov



Gordon Tufte



Angela Wall



Shawn Weissenflug



Doyle Wilkins



Gary Wolf



Ashley Woods



Tammy Wick





Hurricane Laura Response

Civilian Service Commendation Medal

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Chris Botz



Christine Davis



Eric Dykman



Kristen Fairbanks



Jeff Ferguson



Jason Hager



Eric Hammer



Andrew Huffman



Sean Kelly



Zach Kimmel



Emily Kostner



Jane Mathison



Jeff McCullick



Bonnie Meyerhoff



Paul Morken



Chris Olson



Brad Perkl



Zachary Rogers



Bryan Sprang



Susan Taylor



Randy Urich



Alan VanGuilder



Kory Warrington



Phil White





Jesse Scott
Achievement Medal for Civilian Service

Achievement Medal for Civilian Service for Jesse Scott for actions he took on February 4, 2021 to assist a motorist with a medical condition. Because of his commitment, integrity and actions while on duty, Jesse quickly rendered potentially life-saving aid during a critical medical emergency. Accordingly, for dedicated service to the Corps and a willingness to help others in need, Jesse is nominated for the Achievement Medal for Civilian Service.



Nancy Komulainen-Dillenburg
Regulator of the Year

Nancy Komulainen-Dillenburg is the regulatory division's regulator of the year. She is recognized for her sustained and superior commitment to listening and responding to concerns from federally recognized tribes about regulatory actions. Nancy has engaged openly, honestly and frequently with consulting tribes on multiple complex actions in Minnesota and Wisconsin. She has led and facilitated meetings with tribes, where she readily shares information, listens respectfully with intent to understand and answers questions directly and honestly while also showing empathy and compassion. Her efforts have provided opportunities for tribes to engage meaningfully in the identification of cultural resources and led to project modifications to avoid or minimize impacts to important tribal resources. Nancy is unfailing in her commitment to engage with tribes, and her actions every day enhance our organization's ability to accomplish our mission and uphold our responsibility to meaningfully consult with tribes about our actions. Nancy is recognized for her commitment, integrity and leadership in the regulatory program!



Joe Jordan
Rock Island District's Professional Occupation Employee of the Year Award

For outstanding dedication and exceptional service, Joseph Jordan is awarded the 2020 Rock Island District Employee of the Year in the professional occupations category. Joe has long provided outstanding environmental compliance leadership on Rock Island District projects as both a senior biologist and regional technical specialist. This includes endangered species act management, emergency dredging, flood protection, and water level management with habitat restoration projects. Joe Jordan is valued across the nation as a National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) technical reviewer and with each review he enhances the MVR reputation of NEPA excellence. Joe regularly volunteers to take on other jobs, where he believes he can help, such as serving on the Alternate Care Facility Site Assessments team supporting COVID-19 care facilities. His enthusiasm is infectious as newer team members eagerly seek out his mentorship on NEPA compliance and project execution. Joe's

technical expertise and reputation has culminated with the successful completion of the South-Central Coast Louisiana Project Environmental Impact Statement and Integrated Feasibility Report. Joe led the MVN environmental planning product delivery team virtually from MVR and quickly established efficient working relationships with MVN personnel and stakeholders from the region. His outstanding leadership and technical acumen ensured the project complied with environmental laws and regulations as well as every environmental planning project milestone. Joe's outstanding performance of duty is in keeping with the finest traditions of civil service and reflects highly upon him, the Rock Island District, and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers.

Nationwide Permit Team – Dedication to Duty

The Nationwide Permit, or NWP, team achieved exceptional results during the 2020/2021 NWP reevaluation. These important permits are developed nationally and evaluated by the district to determine if they will be issued, further conditioned, or revoked, based on regional needs. That evaluation requires timely and robust coordination with states and tribes, including soliciting and evaluating complex and wide-ranging water quality certification decisions. The results of this effort were extraordinary given the aggressive, out-of-cycle schedule, the implementation of new, controversial regulations, frequent schedule accelerations and evolving guidance. The team preserved important state and tribal relationships through very sensitive and volatile consultations, and thorough horizontal and vertical coordination. The exceptional outcome reflects the team's professionalism, integrity, adaptability, and commitment to transparency.



Meghan Brown



Maria DeLaundreau



Todd Vesperman



Sam Woboril

Division Level Award



Eastern Area Office

Conway Lake Habitat Rehabilitation and Enhancement Project Superior Safety Performance 2020

This project is recognized for its superior safety performance. The Area Office Quality Assurance team and contractor team exhibited outstanding management and safety awareness working over 22,500 hours resulting in ZERO lost time incidents.



Tom Johnson



Scott Baker



Todd DeCosse



Bill Grinde



Calvin Halverson



John Henderson



Jackson Hoffman



Anthony Horacek



Bonnie Meyerhoff



Chris Settles



Kaleb Tweite



Christina Vasseur

Division Level Award



George Stringham

Mississippi Valley Division Public Affairs Officer of the Year

The Mississippi Valley Division presents this award annually to the top public affairs officer within the division's six districts. George received this award in recognition of his leadership, dedication and devotion to duty. As a public affairs specialist for the past 19 years, George has helped hundreds of thousands of citizens learn more about the Corps while providing critical public safety information during numerous disasters.

George's accomplishments include working closely with district leadership to keep both the public and district employees informed during the COVID-19 pandemic and making improvements to increase traffic and visibility to the district's website and social media profiles. He has also volunteered to support the Corps of Engineers at the national level by deploying in support of Hurricane Laura recovery efforts and serving as the lead public affairs

specialist at the USACE Emergency Field Office in Lake Charles, Louisiana. Additionally, he supports the Department of Defense Civil-Military Emergency Preparedness Program by assisting the Republic of Georgia in bolstering their crisis communication abilities.

Chris Botz

MVD Civil Responder of the Year

Chris Botz was selected as the Mississippi Valley Division's Civil Responder of the Year for his exceptional leadership, dedication to duty and selfless service. He deployed for 50 days to support Hurricane Laura recovery efforts during the worldwide COVID-19 pandemic. Chris performed at a high level as the technical monitor team leader, establishing himself as an individual that can be relied upon to accomplish every task. Chris was singled out on several occasions for excellence by both Federal Emergency Management Agency and Corps leaders. Chris showed outstanding leadership under pressure during his deployment in support of Hurricane Laura, when his team found themselves in the path of Hurricane Delta. Chris developed and orchestrated an evacuation plan and got his teams to a safe location.



Michelle Larson

MVD nominee and HQ USACE nominee for the American Indian Science and Engineering Society - Blazing Flame Award

Michelle Larson is a positive and resilient leader of character dedicated to offering her cultural background, technical skills, and commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion for the advancement of Native Americans in STEM, a strengthened federal work environment, and a better American society. As a senior hydraulic engineer assigned to the St. Paul District, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and member of the Leech Lake Band of Ojibwe, Michelle has blended her cultural and professional identities to help achieve the American Indian Science and Engineering Society vision for the next seven generations of native people to be successful, respected, influential, and contributing members of our vast and evolving global community. Michelle has volunteered her time and energy to educate STEM students, has advanced vital civil works water resources projects, enabled the Corps' Tribal Partnership Program, and

led numerous initiatives to enhance diversity, equity, and inclusion throughout the Corps' Mississippi Valley Division. Michelle's selfless efforts reflect highly upon her, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, the American Indian Science and Engineering Society, and underscore her worthiness of the title "Blazing Flame."

Division Level Award



Jon Miller 2021 Operations and Maintenance Castle Award Nomination

Jon Miller is officially commended for demonstrating the highest standards and Army values in operations and maintenance, customer service, safety and professionalism. Jon's positive impacts on his team and the dredge Goetz operation are a testament to the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers values. Jon's work performance has shown him to be a valuable asset to the federal government. It is with great pride that I recognize his dedication, outstanding achievements and contributions. For his efforts and impacts, Jon is awarded the Operations and Maintenance Castle Award in recognition of his service to the St. Paul District of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers.

Headquarters Level Award



Melanie Peterson 2nd Place USACE Civilian Writer of the Year 2020 Herbert A. Kassner Communication Competition

Awardees submitted a broad selection of products that showcased their work, and the command, in a creative and professional manner.





