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Crosscurrents visits Lock and Dam No. 9



Ron Hogan (front) and Larry Becwar, head lock and dam operators, are ready to assist the tow crew as the tow enters

the lock. While double lockages are common on the upper Mississippi River, this "double" towboat arrangement was a lit-

tle more rare. Actually, only one towboat was running; the other was getting a free ride.



Richard Boller, a head lock and dam operator at Lock and Dam No. 9, inspects the new restricted area sign that will be installed on the upstream face of the dam. The large lettering will improve the readability of the restricted area warning signs.



Lockmaster Charlie Hiam (right) discusses a maintenance project with equipment repairman Jack Irwin.

100 million AIDS victims predicted

WASHINGTON (ARNEWS)—AIDS continues to dominate the national media for good reason; since 1983, 17,338 Americans have died from the disease and the number is expected to raise to 179,000 by 1991. Recently, an interview was conducted with Col. William L. Moore, Medical Corps, project manager for the Army Surgeon General for AIDS testing, treatment and programs. Listed below is his blunt, candid and to many, frightening assessment of AIDS in the U.S. The disease is claiming an astonishing number of victims. Here's what all of us need to know about AIDS.

LUNDBERG: What would you say to the soldiers of the Army about AIDS if you had them as a captive audience for one minute?

MOORE: First, I would explain that AIDS is caused by a virus that cannot be transmitted by casual contact, only by the exchange of bodily fluids such as blood or semen. Second, I would point out that soldiers residing in the Washington area live in the sixth largest concentration of reported AIDS cases in the U.S. and it is doubly important for them to avoid high-risk behaviors which could expose them to the virus. Third, I would stress that the only sure means of avoiding exposure is to abstain from high risk behaviors such as intravenous drug use and promiscuous homosexual and heterosexual activity. Fourth, I would recommend use of condoms during any sexual encounter where the partners have not been in a mutually faithful monogamous relationship for a period of five or more years.

LUNDBERG: When was the first case of AIDS reported in the U.S. and how many cases do we have today?

MOORE: The first cases were seen in the late 1970s, and the disease was officially recognized by the Center for Disease Control in Atlanta in 1981. As of Feb. 2, 30,396 cases have been reported to the CDC and the number is doubling about every 13 months. The U.S. Surgeon General estimates the U.S. will have 270,000 cases by 1991.

LUNDBERG: Is AIDS always fatal?

MOORE: Yes. Once the AIDS virus has effectively destroyed the immune system, it appears that all the victims eventually die.

LUNDBERG: How many Americans have died to date as a result of AIDS?

MOORE: As of Feb. 2, the CDC reports that 17,338 have died since 1983, but this is considered to be under-reported by perhaps as much as 25 percent. The U.S. Surgeon General estimates that 179,000 Americans will have died by 1991. He also

estimates that 100 million could die worldwide by the year 2000.

LUNDBERG: How many people infected with the virus will get the disease?

MOORE: We don't know. Early estimates were that 10 to 25 percent would develop the disease, but more recent estimates, supported by better studies, indicate that at least 50 percent of those infected will eventually develop classical AIDS.

LUNDBERG: How fast does the virus attack those people who get the disease?

MOORE: Again, we don't know. It appears that those infected with the virus progress at varying rates. In general, it seems to take about five years for those who progress to develop AIDS. One of the most important objectives of Army research is to determine the natural course of the disease and how to predict its effects.

LUNDBERG: How long after getting to the final stage of AIDS do you die?

MOORE: A patient who has developed full-blown AIDS can be expected to survive from 18 to 24 months. Episodes of severe illness occur intermittently throughout this time and response of opportunistic infections to treatment is variable.

LUNDBERG: How long will it take to develop a vaccine for the disease?

MOORE: Researchers from the National Institutes of Health have stated that no vaccine can be expected before the mid-1990's. One problem is that the virus mutates rapidly and vaccines against current strains are not likely to produce broadly effective protection.

LUNDBERG: How can a person tell for sure he or she has the AIDS virus?

MOORE: The only practical way is through a blood test. The Army testing program uses two forms of tests: the ELISA, a quick, inexpensive screening test and the more specific Western Blot confirmatory test. Persons are considered positive only after repeated positive results from both types of test.

LUNDBERG: Why does the Army test for the AIDS antibody instead of for the AIDS virus?

MOORE: It's very difficult and expensive to detect the virus itself in the bloodstream. It's far easier, cheaper and quicker to use the very sensitive ELISA screening test, subjecting any positive samples to the more specific tests for the virus itself.

LUNDBERG: How long is the incubation period from the time an AIDS virus enters the body until the virus can be

detected or the antibody appears?

MOORE: We don't know. The test usually becomes positive within two to six weeks of infection with the virus, but there are reports of individuals who have been infected without showing antibody development for more than a year. This is another area where a great deal of research is being focused.

LUNDBERG: After the AIDS virus has entered the body, but before it has been detected or the antibody appears, can the person transmit the virus to others?

MOORE: Yes. If the virus is present in the body, the infected person must be considered capable of passing on the virus, whether or not his body has yet developed a response to the virus.

LUNDBERG: Has anyone who tested positive for the AIDS antibody ever tested negative later?

MOORE: No.

LUNDBERG: Have there been any reported cases of a person being infected with the AIDS virus as a result of "social contact", i.e. hugging, kissing, crying, sneezing, etc., or from an insect bite?

MOORE: No. That's the good news, the virus appears to be transmitted only through exchange of blood or semen, or during childbirth.

LUNDBERG: What is the difference between a bacterium and a virus?

MOORE: A bacterium is a self-contained cell, alive in its own right. A virus is a small particle which enters a cell of the body and interrupts the cell's normal function to reproduce itself. The cell may die as a result, releasing more of the viral particles into the body to infect even more cells, and so on.

LUNDBERG: What does the AIDS virus actually do?

MOORE: The AIDS virus selectively attacks the T helper cell—the major component of the immune system—in which it reproduces, eventually destroying the cells. This leaves the body virtually defenseless against infections by unusual as well as common organisms. Death is frequently the result of pneumonia or meningitis.

LUNDBERG: How can a person be sure his or her sex partner isn't infected?

MOORE: There is almost no way to be certain. Even a negative blood test for viral antibodies is of questionable value in those who continue high risk behavior such as intravenous drug use or sexual promiscuity. In a mutually faithful monogamous relationship for the past five to 10 years, in which neither partner has been transfused with

blood or blood products during the same period, neither should be infected.

LUNDBERG: Why are the armed forces so interested in AIDS?

MOORE: There are a number of reasons. The most important one is the maintenance of combat readiness, specifically the protection of soldiers from unnecessary exposure to potentially serious infectious agents not commonly found in the U.S. Also, blood transfusions in combat situations are needed and done "on the run" in battle and everyone in uniform is a potential donor. We need to ensure our fresh blood supply is not contaminated. Further, because of the damage to their immune systems, infected persons can be made ill by certain vaccinations, and from infection by uncommon organisms.

EDITOR'S NOTE: Col. M.J. Lundberg is the public affairs officer of the U.S. Army Military District of Washington.

AIDS Prevention Tips

A recent report by Surgeon General C. Everett Koop includes these recommendations for preventing AIDS:

☐ Those who are sexually active or even slightly unsure of their partner's sexual activity are strongly urged to use condoms, a proven, effective barrier to AIDS. A person can be infected with the AIDS virus without showing symptoms, so the need for caution cannot be over-emphasized. Condoms also help protect against other diseases, such as herpes.

☐ The ideal protection is to have a faithful relationship with an uninfected partner who is also faithful. The more partners a person has, the greater the risk of AIDS.

☐ No one should abuse drugs, but those who can't change their behavior should not share needles.

☐ Avoid sex with prostitutes (both because they are often drug abusers and because they have many partners), male homosexuals and bisexuals.

☐ Avoid sex practices that can cause cuts or tears in the linings of the vagina, rectum or penis.

☐ Women who have tested HIV positive should avoid pregnancy both to avoid infecting their children and because pregnancy increases the chance of developing AIDS symptoms.

Programs planned for Take Pride in America

by Ray Nelson

Natural Resource Management

In the course of water resources management, the Corps of Engineers has developed and maintained public lands. The Take Pride in America (TPA) campaign promotes the idea that public lands belong to everyone and that, in turn, everyone should share in the responsibility of caring for natural resources for present and future enjoyment.

TPA Awareness Week is May 19-24 and the Construction-Operations Division is planning special programs and activities at the district's recreation projects, locks and dams, and field sites, that will involve community groups and volunteers in the campaign.

—The Mississippi Headwaters projects will be offering various interpretive programs focusing on the Constitution and TPA.

—Tree planting projects are being planned with the Scout troops and local volunteers at Orwell, Leech, Cross and Baldhill Dams for wildlife and erosion control benefits. Most of these tree transplant programs are three to four year projects.

—Roadside and riverbank cleanup programs will be conducted in cooperation with local communities and organizations at Cross, Leech, Eau Galle, Lac qui Parle, Lake Traverse, Orwell and Mississippi River sites south of the Twin Cities.

—At Blackhawk Park, a renovation project centered on the beneficial use of dredged material is being developed. Joint efforts with the Fish and Wildlife Service on beach development and kiosks will also concentrate on TPA awareness.

—Programs are planned for aluminum can collection centers at many of the projects. Local Boy Scout troops are volunteer-

ing for this activity by hauling cans from various collection points to recycling centers.

—Eco-expoz and Junior Ranger programs for grade school kids will offer the benefit of participation in programs that teach them about forestry and wildlife, water use management, protection of natural resources, and park ranger job responsibilities.

—Senior citizen groups and Boy and Girl Scout troops will be involved in bird house construction and placement at nesting sites. The local flower club in the Sandy Lake area has proposed a flower planting project at Sandy Lake Recreation Area.

—At Mud Lake, located in the Lake Traverse Project area, the Corps is participating with a local management group, the Department of Natural Resources and Ducks Unlimited in a waterfowl habitat improvement project.

—At Lock and Dam No. 9, a formal dedication ceremony for a new handicapped accessible fishing dock will be held later in the summer. The dock was built in cooperation with the local walleye fishing club and handicap citizens. The dedication day will include a plaque unveiling, lock and dam tours and exhibits on TPA.

In today's economy, with cutbacks in budget and personnel at all levels of government, the resources to maintain public lands have become increasingly more difficult to find. Volunteers from the private sector are more important than ever to resource managers as informed and working guardians of natural resources. As a part of this nationwide program, the St. Paul District will do its share to make Take Pride in America a success.

Applications being accepted for scholarship

Applications are now available for the 1987 Coors Veterans' Memorial Scholarship Fund which provides more than \$500,000 to sons and daughters of American veterans. Deadline for completed applications and materials is July 1, 1987.

A minimum of 100 scholarships, with a maximum value of \$5,000 each, will be awarded to eligible students. The scholarships will assist students in completing the final years of their undergraduate studies.

Some of the eligibility criteria has changed since last year, with the most notable point being the required grade-point-average. This year, the student must have a cumulative grade-point-average of 3.0 or better on a 4.0 scale as compared to last year's 2.75 grade-point-average. Applicants

must have completed at least one year of college, be 22 years old or younger as of July 1, 1987 and be enrolled full-time in an accredited four-year institution of higher learning in the United States or an accredited two-year program leading to a four-year undergraduate degree. Applicants must be dependents of honorably discharged American service personnel; dependents of active duty, guard or reserve military personnel (minimum two years); or dependents of American service personnel killed in action, missing in action or died in the line of duty.

Applications can be obtained by writing Coors Veterans' Memorial Scholarship Fund, P.O. Box 3111, Northbrook, Ill., 60065 or call toll-free 1-800-492-6677.

Social Security is part of new retirement program

The third tier or part of the new Federal Employees Retirement System (FERS) is Social Security. The Social Security system is a social insurance program designed to provide a variety of benefits. Officially called Old-Age, Survivors, and Disability Insurance (OASDI), Social Security benefits include:

a. monthly benefits for persons who are retired and are at least age 62, as well as monthly benefits for an eligible spouse, and dependents.

b. monthly benefits for persons who become disabled and benefits for an eligible spouse and dependents during the period of disability.

c. monthly benefits for eligible survivors.

d. lump sum payment upon covered member's death.

Employees under FERS will pay a percentage of their salary up to a specified earnings amount to Social Security OASDI. The Federal government pays an equal amount. The maximum taxable wage base (specified earnings amount) in 1987 is \$43,800.00. This means that in 1987 employees are subject to Social Security taxes for up to the first \$43,800.00 of their annual salary. The percentage employees pay into Social Security OASDI is as follows:

- In 1987 — 5.70%
- In 1988-89 — 6.06%
- After 1989 — 6.20%

In addition to OASDI, all employees, whether covered by FERS or CSRS, pay 1.45% of their salary (up to the maximum taxable wage base) to Medicare.

EDITORS NOTE:

This article on Social Security benefits was prepared by the the Technical Services Branch in Personnel. Social Security is the third part of the three-tiered FERS or Federal Employee Retirement System. The other parts of the new retirement system—the Thrift Savings Plan and the Basic Benefit Plan—were covered in the March and April issues of Crosscurrents.



Offset law may reduce Social Security checks for CSRS retirees

Employees who work in a job not covered by Social Security—such as federal employees covered under CSRS—but who have enough credits to be eligible for Social Security retirement benefits, may be affected by a 1983 change in Social Security law. This change applies to retired and disabled workers who first became eligible in 1986 or later for both a Social Security benefit and a pension based on employment not covered by Social Security.

It does not apply to employees covered by FERS.

Under this change, a different formula is used in calculating the Social Security benefit. This results in an offset or smaller monthly payment. Employees in certain categories are "grandfathered" under the 1983 change. The offset rule does not apply to workers who reached age 62 prior to 1986 or to workers who became eligible for CSRS or other non-Social Security retirement benefits before 1986.

In addition, CSRS employees who become disabled during the year before the month their 62nd birthday are also grandfathered and, therefore, are not subject to the offset rule.

The offset rules also apply to benefits of spouses and surviving spouses. Benefits are reduced by two-thirds of the amount of any

public (Federal, state or local) retirement benefit payable to the spouse based on his/her own work in non-Social Security public employment. This government Pension offset provision applies to all spouse-beneficiaries who became eligible for a public pension after June 1983, without regard to financial dependency on the primary Social Security beneficiary.

Previously, the Social Security benefit was offset by the full amount of public pension, but no offset applied under the following circumstances:

- (1) the spouse was entitled to OASDI benefits before December 1977;
- (2) a spouse/divorced spouse was first eligible for a public pension prior to December 1982; or
- (3) a financially dependent spouse was first eligible for a public pension from December 1982 through June 1983.

Individuals who have questions on Social Security entitlements or who wish to check on their own Social Security earnings should contact their local Social Security office. In the Twin Cities Metro Area, the Social Security Administration Office is located at 316 N. Robert Street, St. Paul, Minnesota, telephone 378-1151.

Picnic plans being finalized

by Joe Yanta

Set aside June 26 for fun! On that day we will have the 1987 Engineer's Day Awards Ceremony and Picnic at the new Lake Elmo Regional Park Reserve.

The picnic will feature a wide range of children's and adult games and activities, but we will also have plenty of opportunities for unscheduled, unplanned fun and relaxation. (No alcohol, however—park rules prohibit that.)

Adult activities will probably include volleyball, a fishing contest, sailboarding, horseshoes, and a corporate olympics (featuring teams from CO, ED, PD, and the support offices). Children will be welcome to participate in any adult activity as long as they do not injure or embarrass the older participants.

Children's activities will include a variety of games, contests, and other activities for various age groups. Adults will be barred from the children's activities for their own safety and dignity. Adults can watch and provide encouragement, however.

Bingo and a dessert contest are also scheduled for that day.

One activity will be of interest to all—lunch. The catered dinner will feature barbecued chicken (cooked on site) and potato salad, beans, and a bakery roll. The

dessert contest entries will be available for everyone after the judging. Pop, snowcones, and popcorn will also be available as long as supplies last.

Everyone in the district family is invited to participate in the picnic. But we will have to pay a price—or prices, as the case may be—for our fun and food. Various ticket options are available. Not all options include the meal, but all do include the pop, snacks, and activities.

—\$4.50 for two quarter chickens (breast/wing and thigh/leg) and the full meal

—\$4.00 for one quarter chicken (choice of white or dark meat as long as the choice lasts) and the full meal

—\$3.00 (special children's price: 12 and under) for one quarter chicken and the full meal

—\$2.00 for adults (no meal)

—\$1.00 for children 5 to 18 (no meal)

—Children under 5 will be admitted free (no meal).

We will have to purchase all tickets in advance (about a week before the picnic) so that we can be sure to have enough food, pop, and snacks available.

The park also charges \$2.00 per car (not per person) for a one-day parking sticker.

Of course, if you prefer to work, you have the option of staying in the office or bring-

ing your work to the park. If you don't want to work or attend the picnic, you should schedule annual leave. We hope to see you at the park, however!

PICNIC HELPERS NEEDED

The picnic committees are looking for volunteers. If you are interested in working on a committee or working at the picnic, please contact one of the following committee chairpeople.

Location—Mary Schommer (7494).

Food—Bruce Carlson (7079). Need help with set-up, serving, and cleanup for food, pop, and snacks; and with judging for the dessert contest.

Volleyball—Doug Norris (5936). Need teams and officials; maybe additional equipment.

Children's Activities—Suzanne Gaines (7577). Need activity organizers and leaders.

Adult Activities—Chuck Crist (7559). Need activity organizers and leaders; also teams for the corporate olympics.

Photos—Bruce Heide (7575). Need help with the videotaping.

Bingo—Denise Yale (7505). Need helpers.

Publicity/Tickets—Joe Yanta (5997). Need ticket sellers; also carpool drivers.

Overall Coordinator—Dave Haumersen (7070).

Corps Calendar

May 1	FERS class 8:00—12:00 (See note below)
May 3	Asian-Pacific Heritage Week begins.
May 6	FERS Class 12:30—4:30
May 7	FERS class 8:00—12:00
May 8	FERS class 8:00—12:00
May 9-10	Mississippi River Research Consortium LaCrosse, Wis. Dan Krumholz/ext. 5898
May 10	Mother's Day
May 12	FERS class 8:00—12:00
May 13-15	NCD EEO Training Seminar Holiday Inn Town Square, St. Paul Marianne Price/ext. 7481
May 14	FERS class 12:30—4:30
May 16	Armed Forces Day
May 22	FERS class 8:00—12:00
May 25	Memorial Day observed— federal holiday
May 27	FERS class 8:00—12:00
May 27-29	World-wide VEO Conference Holiday Inn Town Square/Tom Heyerman/ext. 5923
May 29-30	NCD Command Inspection Nick Carter/ext. 7939
May 30 -	International SAVE Conference
June 3	Radison Hotel, St. Paul/ Tom Heyerman/ext. 5923
June 3-4	Channel Maintenance Forum Meeting Prairie du Chien, Wis. Dan Krumholz/ext. 5898 FERS classes: Federal Employees Retirement System—Room 1033. Contact Vicki Demo, ext. 7515.

Savings Bonds campaign end May 31st

By Maj. Chuck Rogers

By the time you read this, you will have less than a month left. Do not allow yourself to miss out on such a good deal! Stop what you are doing so you can take advantage of this great offer. Do yourself and your wallet a favor. There is a person within your office that can help you make money painlessly, safely, and legally.

That person is your Savings Bond canvasser. You may already have been approached by your canvasser. If not, soon you will be given the opportunity to help prepare yourself for your financial future by buying bonds.

Take the time to listen to what your canvasser has to say. If you do, you will realize that buying U.S. Savings Bonds makes sense. They earn a guaranteed minimum yield of 6 percent. This is at least as good as many money markets and any passbook savings accounts. When you consider the advantage of paying no state or local income tax on the interest from the bonds, it is equivalent to receiving an 8.3 percent yield. In today's market, that is an attractive figure.

U.S. Savings bonds really are the "Great American Investment." Help yourself. Help your country. Buy bonds.

District office has "alarming" problem

The routine business of the day was interrupted by the repeated clanging of the fire alarm in the district office.

Most employees grumbled as they headed for the two end stairwells. A few hung back, apparently hoping that the bell would stop ringing and they could go back to work.

The bell stopped ringing about the time the first employees down the stairs reached the 8th floor. Immediately, the word was passed down the line of employees—"false alarm." Some continued down the stairs; other employees stopped their descent and made their way for the elevators and a ride back to their office.

If this sounds familiar, then you must have been in the district office during one of the recent false fire alarms. False alarms, sometimes triggered by a malfunction in the aging alarm system; sometimes by a contractor working in the postal area of the building, have plagued employees in the district office for the past year.

And it looks like it may continue. According to Dave Christenson, chief of Emergency Management, the Post Office has two projects which will help solve the false alarm problem. However, both projects will take a year to 18 months to complete, Dave said.

First, the Post Office is working on repairing the present alarm system and adding a building-wide public address system. Secondly, they are planning to install a entirely new and modern alarm system.

In the meantime, the false alarms are likely to continue and be a frustration to district office employees. "We know that the false alarms are frustrating and in some cases create a hardship on some of our employees who have problems climbing down stairs," Dave said. In addition, "we are concerned that our employees will become complacent and not respond properly to the alarm in a real emergency. At the present time, there is only one alarm and it signals total evacuation of the building. And there is no "all clear" signal," he explained.

Fire is a serious subject and all alarms should be considered real, Dave noted. More than 6,000 people die in fires each year in the United States; another 30,000 are injured. Fires cause an estimated \$700 million in damage each year.

Fires in tall buildings such as the Post Office or in high rises cause special problems. Fire equipment normally can only reach the 6th or 7th floor level. At the same time, there may be several hundred employees located on floors above that level. And there is often a problem with limited access and evacuation routes.

"In the St. Paul Post Office building, there are two stairwells approved for evacuation of the building—the two outside stairwells on the west and east sides of the building. During an actual fire emergency, the stairwells would probably be filled with employees evacuating the building as the fire fighters were trying to get up to the area where the fire was located. There could be a lot of congestion in the lower stairwell areas," Dave said.

The special problems associated with fires in tall buildings make it even more important for employees to immediately evacuate the district office when the alarm sounds.

"In our situation, time is one of the critical factors in insuring the safety of our employees during a fire emergency. The sooner employees start evacuating the building, the sooner they reach the street and safety," Dave commented.

"Another problem we see during the false alarm situations is employees returning to their offices if they hear the alarm stop ringing or hear that it is a false alarm," Dave added. "The problem with this type of ac-

tion is that we cannot be sure that the alarm stopped because it was a false alarm. It is always possible that the fire destroyed the wiring, causing the alarm to stop. With this uncertainty, our only course of action is to continue the evacuation until we get reliable word from Postal maintenance or building security that the alarm is terminated and it is OK for employees to return to their offices."

During any evacuation alarm situation in the district office, employees should follow these evacuation procedures:

—Upon hearing the alarm, evacuate the building using the end stairwells. Do not use the center stairwell or the elevators.

—Proceed all the way to the street level and then go to the YWCA on Kellogg.

—**DO NOT** call the Post Office, the Executive Office or Emergency Management. That could be wasting needed evacuation time.

—**DO NOT** stop if the alarm stops.

—Return to your office **ONLY** if given the "all clear" by Postal Security, Postal maintenance, Emergency Management, or someone in your supervisory chain of command.



Kelsey Willis, water control, talks with a radio reporter following a public meeting in LaCrosse. The meeting was one of two meetings held in communities along the Mississippi in March to discuss last year's high water

conditions. Ed Eaton, chief of water control, also participated in the two meetings which were sponsored by the Minnesota-Wisconsin Boundary Area Commission. The other meeting was held in Prescott. Photo by Ken Gardner

Retirement eligibility and payments based on age and earnings

Under Social Security, full benefits are paid at age 65 to employees with sufficient quarters of Social Security coverage. The retirement age for full Social Security benefits is gradually increasing to age 67 as shown below:

Year of Birth	Age for Full Retirement Benefits
Before 1938	65
1938	65 years, 2 months
1939	65 years, 4 months
1940	65 years, 6 months
1941	65 years, 8 months
1942	65 years, 10 months
1943-54	66
1955	66 years, 2 months
1956	66 years, 4 months
1957	66 years, 6 months
1958	66 years, 8 months
1959	66 years, 10 months
1960 - later	67

Eligible employees can retire at age 62 with reduced benefits. This reduction is about one-half percent per month for each month the employee is under the full retirement age. Benefits are also paid to the eligible spouse and children while the retired worker is still living. These do not affect the level of the worker's benefit.

To become eligible for Social Security retirement benefits, an employee must have served under Social Security covered employment for a specific period of time. The amount of time depends on an individual's date of birth. Those workers born after 1929 need 40 quarters of Social Security coverage. Those born before 1929, need less. A person who has 40 quarters of coverage is fully insured for life. Quarters of coverage are earned by working in a job covered by Social Security and are determined in the following manner:

a. For years prior to 1978, a calendar quarter in which a person has been paid \$50 or more in wages;

b. For years after 1977, the following chart is used:

Wages Needed For One Quarter of Coverage

Year	(Max: 4 Quarters Per Year)
1978	\$250
1979	260
1980	290
1981	310
1982	340
1983	370
1984	390
1985	410
1986	440

If a person is fully insured, most types of benefits can be paid or provided based

on that person's earnings record. A fully insured status, however, is only one requirement for eligibility under Social Security and is not directly related to the amount of benefits that can be paid.

Unlike the Basic Benefit tier of FERS, which uses an employee's high-three average salary, the amount of the Social Security benefit is based on **each** year of earnings. In addition, the Social Security System operates on a "weighted benefits formula," which means the higher an employee's income, the lower the percentage of benefit received. This favors lower income workers.

A worker, age 62 to 65, who is otherwise eligible for retirement insurance benefits, can choose to receive a reduced benefit, or to wait until 65 and receive the full retirement insurance benefit rate. Social Security benefits are based on a worker's career earnings. The longer an employee works and the more he/she earns, the higher the Social Security benefit.

The employee's monthly Social Security retirement benefit—called the Primary Insurance Amount (PIA)—is based on earnings during the employee's working lifetime. The AIME or Average Indexed Monthly Earnings is based on the employee's lifetime earnings indexed or adjusted to put them in proportion to the earnings level of all workers for those years. Earnings are taken from the year 1951 (or from the year the employee was 21, if later), up to the year the employee reaches age 62. These years are the "base" years used to determine AIME. The lowest five years of earnings are then dropped and the resulting years are called the "computation" years.

The PIA is then determined from a table or by a mathematical formula depending on the year in which eligibility is obtained.

Once retired, Social Security benefits may be reduced if an employee earns more than a certain amount from other employment. Earnings are defined as wages or self-employment income the employee makes while retired. Social Security permits a limited amount of earnings before benefits are reduced. The following shows the earnings limitation for 1986 and the reduction amount:

AGE	Maximum Earnings Allowed
Under Age 65	\$5,760
Age 65-69	\$7,800
Over Age 69	No Limit

Currently, the reduction in Social Security benefit for earnings beyond the maximum amount is \$1 for each \$2 earned. Beginning in 1990, the reduction will be liberalized to a reduction of \$1 for each \$3 earned for workers age 65 or older.



Social Security also provides disability, survivor and death benefits

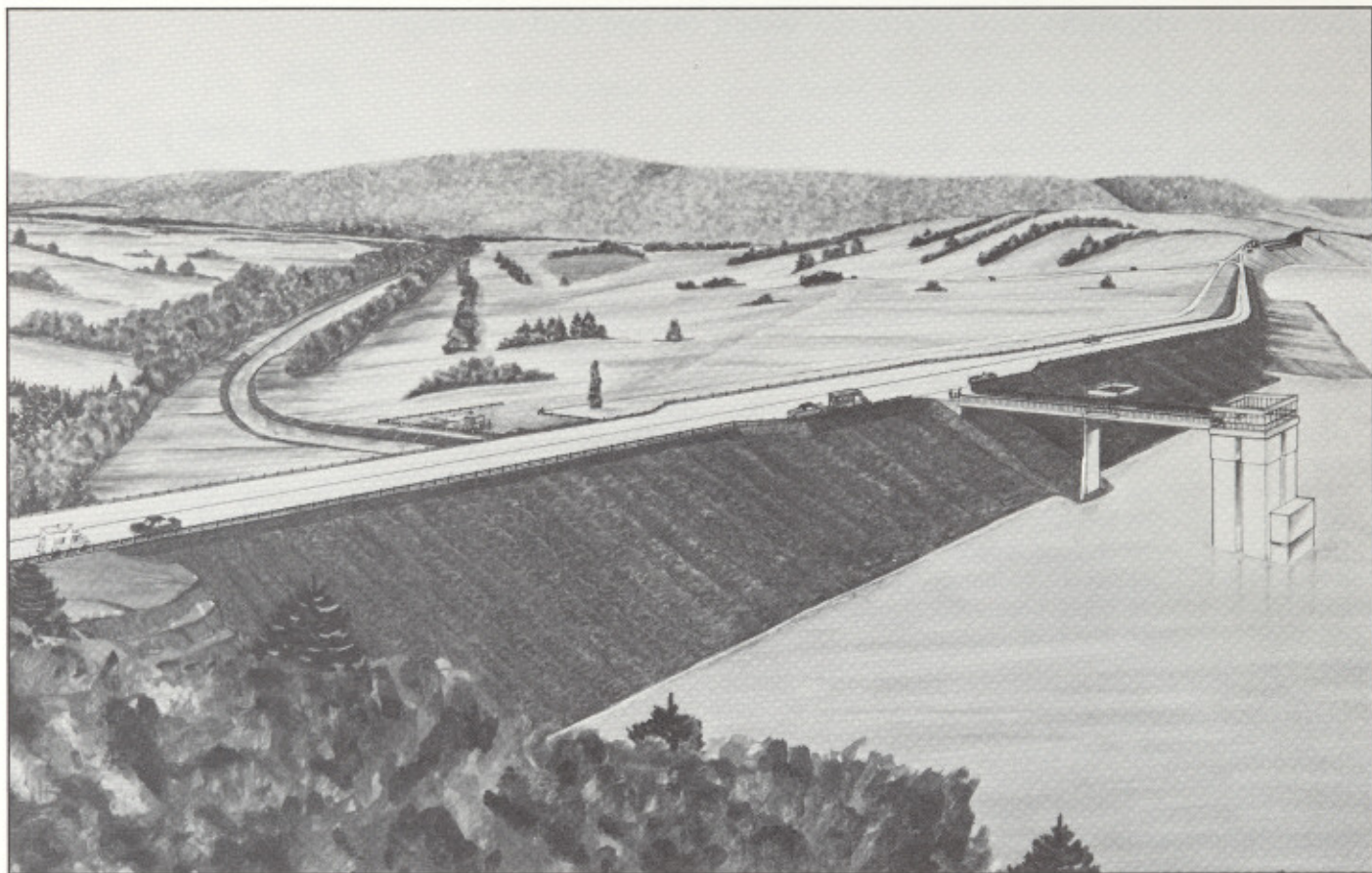
In addition to retirement benefits, Social Security also includes disability, survivor and lump-sum death benefits.

1) **Disability benefits:** The definition of disabled under Social Security is "the inability to engage in any substantial gainful activity by reason of any medically determinable physical or mental impairment which can be expected to result in death or which has lasted or can be expected to last for a continuous period of not less than 12 months."

The number of quarters of coverage necessary to be eligible for disability benefits varies according to individual circumstances. An eligible disabled worker will generally receive 100 percent of social security benefits. The disabled worker's spouse or unmarried divorced spouse age 62 (or any age with an eligible child) would receive 50 percent of the worker's benefit. Eligible children receive a benefit of 50 percent.

2) **Survivor benefits:** For a worker's survivors to be eligible for survivor benefits, the worker must have been either fully insured or covered under the Social Security system for a certain period of time just prior to death. A surviving spouse or eligible divorced spouse who is age 60 is eligible for 100 percent of the worker's benefit. Eligible children may receive 75 percent of the worker's benefit. Percentage of benefits paid is contingent upon the Monthly Maximum Family benefit.

3) **Lump-sum Death Benefits:** A lump-sum death payment may be made as a one-time payment of \$255, and is paid in addition to any monthly survivor benefits. This lump-sum is paid to the surviving spouse, or if there is no eligible spouse, to a child or children of the deceased.



This is what the LaFarge dam and reservoir would have looked like if it had been completed. Construction of the project

was halted in 1975 due to environmental concerns and lack of state support. Due to rising costs and lack of support, it has

been recommended that the project be deauthorized.

Project update

LaFarge Project waits for deauthorization

by Denise Yale
Public Affairs Office

It's not unusual for the Corps to spend years studying the feasibility of a project and then never construct it. It is unusual, though, when a project is approved and construction starts but is halted four years later and never resumed.

In the late 1930's, under the Flood Control Act of 1936, the Corps began studying flooding problems in the Kickapoo Valley in Wisconsin. The Kickapoo River is a tributary to the Wisconsin River in Southwestern Wisconsin. The area is subject to destructive flooding almost yearly. The LaFarge Project, which included a dam at LaFarge, Wis., recreation facilities and channel improvements along the Kickapoo River, was authorized in 1962. Construction began in 1971.

"Aside from the flood control benefits, there could have been tremendous economic and recreation benefits for the area," Jim Ruyak said, Headwaters Project Office. Jim was the resident engineer for the project.

"The reservoir that would have been created would not have been the typical bowl-shaped reservoir but a beautiful, meandering lake that would be one quarter of a mile wide at its widest point and about nine to twelve miles long. It would also have had sheer sandstone cliffs and sloping shorelines."

"The intake structure that would have been part of the dam was the most sophisticated structure of that type available at the time," Jim said. "We would have had the capability of taking water out of the reservoir anywhere from the surface to the bottom and various places in between so we could regulate the temperature and oxygen content of the water downstream to improve water quality and fishing. It was the latest state of the art then and it would have provided the area with excellent cold water and warm water fishing."

Over \$18 million has been spent on the project including utility and highway relocation, and the purchase of about 9,500 acres of land. The project was 35 percent complete when environmental concerns were voiced and in 1975, construction was halted

when the state of Wisconsin withdrew its support.

A special study of the wet dam and a dry dam which might have the capability of having a conservation pool at some later date was completed in 1984. The study indicated that neither type of dam was economically feasible. Based on the study results and the low benefit/cost ratio, due to increased costs and interest rates, the LaFarge Project has been recommended for deauthorization.

If and when the project is deauthorized, there are several ways to dispose of the purchased land. "We could be ordered to return the land to its pre-construction state," Jim Gagnon, project manager said. "This would require removing the existing dam embankment and outlet works, and refurbishment of the area. Depending on possible deauthorization legislation, the land could eventually be disposed of by the General Services Administration (GSA)." Jim added that there are several options that have been proposed over the years. These include returning the lands to the original owners, offer it up for bids, give it to the state of

Separating church and state

We hear a lot about church and state sometimes; what the Constitution says about the role the state plays in religion, and vice versa. When the founding fathers gathered in Philadelphia, in May 1787, to begin writing what eventually became the Constitution of the United States—today the oldest written instrument of government in existence—the question of religion came up more than once.

Most of those at the Constitutional Convention were aware that America's earliest beginnings could be traced to a people seeking religious freedom. More than one person came to America to escape religious oppression in Europe, and more than one person moved from one colony to another for the same reason. No less a person than Benjamin Franklin desired each session of the Convention begin with a spoken prayer. The idea was voted down, however, for three reasons; the delegates feared an opening prayer might give the impression of dissension within the Convention, they didn't want to offend the Quakers—who believed in silent, personal prayer—and they lacked funds to pay guest preachers.

An even bigger debate arose over the proposal to require religious qualifications for all public office holders. This may seem ludicrous today, but it was the rule rather than the exception back in 1787.

At the time of the writing of the Constitution, only two states—New York and Virginia—did not have religious qualifications for state office holders. In New Jersey, New Hampshire, South Carolina and Georgia, a person had to be a Protestant to run for public office. Maryland and Massachusetts stipulated a person had to be of the "Christian religion" to run. Pennsylvania demanded that a person have a "belief in God and the inspiration of the scriptures," while Delaware mandated that only "Protestants who accepted the Holy Trinity" could serve in the legislature.

Despite these sentiments, an anti-religious requirement resolution by Charles Pickney—a Convention delegate from South Carolina—was adopted by the Convention. There were fears, however, among the delegates that such a resolution would not be accepted by the state legislature when it came time to ratify the new Constitution. These arguments were overcome, and eventually the Bill of Rights, guaranteeing religious freedom to all, was added to the Constitution in 1791.



This modern bridge was supposed to span the filled reservoir and provide access to the small town of Rockton. The Wisconsin for its use, development of an environmental study area, and annexation to nearby Wildcat State Park.

The lands and the service building at the dam site are currently being managed by the Mississippi River Project Office in LaCrescent, Minn. Although the project is on standby status, the land is not laying idle.

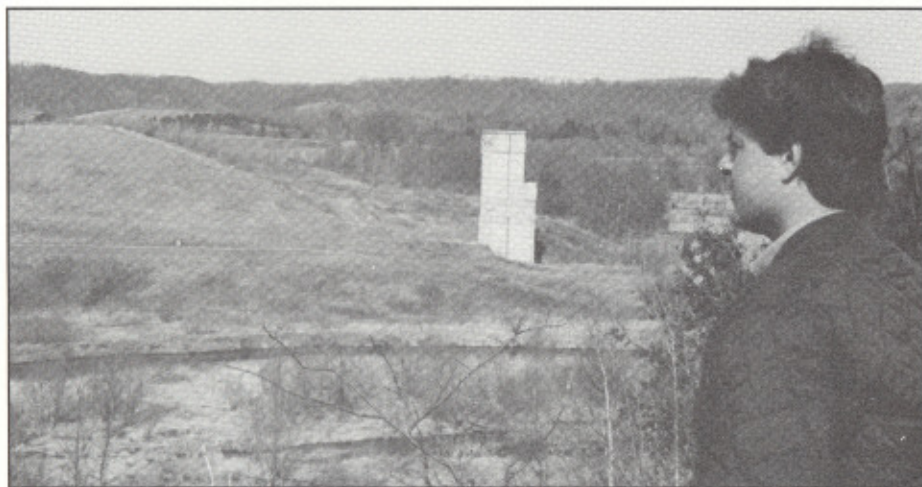
"The maintenance building is being leased to the town of Stark, Wis. for equipment storage and 1170 acres are leased to local farmers," Kevin Berg, Blackhawk park manager said. "The Blackhawk Retrievers Club uses the area annually for dog training clinics. A couple of years ago, a Boy Scout jamboree was held there and the area is used regularly by horseback-riding clubs." Other popular activities include canoeing, hunting and snowmobiling.

bridge was built by the state as part of their efforts to relocate highways from the proposed reservoir site.

The Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (DNR) stocks the area with pheasants for hunter recreation. In another game-bird program, the Arkansas DNR received permission from the state of Wisconsin to trap and remove some ruffed grouse from LaFarge Project lands. The grouse would be transported to Arkansas for release.

Last year, five bridges were removed from the area for safety precautions. This work and the land management is being carried out with operation and maintenance (O & M) funds.

The Water Resources Development Act of 1986 approved a study at Viola and construction at Gays Mills for independent local protection. Although deauthorization of LaFarge was submitted, it was not addressed in the act.



Blackhawk Park ranger Kevin Berg looks at the uncompleted dam on the Kickapoo river at LaFarge, Wis. While the earthen dam has "weathered" since construction was stopped in 1975 and now blends into

the landscape, the concrete control structure is still a very visible reminder of the uncompleted project.

Around the district

by Ken Gardner
Public Affairs

Once again, a district employee who has made the effort to develop his career has been rewarded with selection to a key district job. The case in point is **Stan Kumpala's** recent selection to be the assistant chief of Engineering Division. Actually, the filling of this position "doubly" points out the benefits of taking advantage of developmental assignments. First, Stan, who was chief of the Hydraulics Section in ED-GHH, has worked in several developmental assignments over the years. Most recently, he served as chief of the Maintenance Branch in Con-Ops for four months last year. Earlier, he had served as chief of GHH Branch for six months.

The second half of this story concerns **Harlan Briggs**, chief of Program Development in Rock Island District. Harlan spent about 4 months in St. Paul in 1985 on a developmental assignment working for Pete Fischer, then chief of Engineering. Harlan's developmental assignment in St. Paul was instrumental in getting him on the highly qualified referral list and to an interview for the assistant chief of engineering job.

Don't get me wrong. There are no guarantees when you take a developmental assignment or participate in any special training. But I think the benefits are pretty obvious. Developmental assignments substantially help employees make that all important "highly qualified" referral list and are an important factor in helping employees get selected for key positions.

In a related item, **Charlie Malmer**, Program Development, returned to St. Paul in April after spending nearly six months in Chicago on a developmental assignment. Seems that Chicago District was chiefless in their Program Development Office as they approached the very busy and critical annual budget submission season last fall. They decided to use the developmental assignment process to get the temporary expertise they needed while they went about the longer task of filling the job permanently. Charlie applied and was selected to serve as chief of Program Development in the windy city. He may have missed the mild winter we've had but he picked up some valuable experience running a district Program Development Office.

And one more "benefits of training" story. **Dale Mazar**, ED-M, spent last year on long-term training at Stanford

University in California. He was just named acting chief of Project Management Branch on a not-to exceed 120 days temporary assignment, filling in for **John Plump**, who is leaving St. Paul for Portland, Oregon.

Now on to some other items. **John Roach** is the new real property attorney advisor in Real Estate. John comes to the district from the private sector. We understand that **Earl Christofferson**, will be returning to the St. Paul District to fill the new Internal Auditor position. Earl left Accounting and Finance last summer for a job with Seattle District.

Elsewhere in this issue is an article on evacuating the district office during fire emergencies. After our last false alarm, I ran into some people in the cafeteria who were visiting the building from other agencies. They commented that they hadn't known what was going on nor what to do when the alarm went off. Let me make two points. First, if you are visiting the district office from one of our more than 40 field offices around the district, read the fire article carefully. Knowing the evacuation procedures could save you. Secondly, if you work in the district office and are hosting a meeting involving people from outside (or have outside visitors), let them know the proper evacuation procedures as soon as the alarm goes off.

The Dredge Dubuque has returned to the district after two years working on the Illinois Waterway and dredging at Calumet Harbor near Chicago. The Dubuque and its crew spent much of April dredging in Pool 1—the first time the Dubuque has worked in the Twin Cities.

While the Dubuque was working near the Lowry Avenue Bridge above St. Anthony Falls, the Derrick Boat Hauser and the Crane Barge Wade were also working in Pool 1 near the Lake Street Bridge.

Over in Information Management, **William Hutchinson** has taken on some of the photography duties. William works in Reprographics with Paul Martinez.

That's what's happening "Around the District" this month.

Bicentennial contest announced

The St. Paul Public Affairs Office will be holding a Bicentennial of the Constitution Writing/Art contest. It will be open to district employees and their immediate families only.

Entries must deal with some aspect of the Constitution and can fall into one of the following categories:

1. Essay/letter/poem—must be less than 400 words long, typed or printed neatly and double spaced.

2. Artistic, ie. graphics, photography, drawings.

3. Other—anything that is not covered in the first two categories.

4. Kids under 12 years—these can be in any of the above categories.

There will be one winner in each category plus runners up. Prizes (which will be explained in the June issue of Crosscurrents) will be awarded to the winners.

Entries must be received by July 31, 1987. They will be judged by a panel and the winners will be announced by August 15th. The winner in each category will be featured in the September Crosscurrents and runners up will receive honorable mention. The entries of the winners and runners up will be displayed in the 12th floor display case in September.

Contact Denise Yale, ext. 7505, for more information and entry forms.

Historic film available in library

The historic motion picture, "Upper Mississippi River Nine-Foot Channel Project: Construction of Lock and Dam No. 3," is now available on a one-half inch VCR cassette for loan from the technical library. The original film, made in 1937, is one of a number of 16mm films made by the district in the 1930's; unfortunately, the district has been unable to locate the other films. The film is 47 minutes long and silent.

