



US Army Corps
of Engineers
St. Paul District

Crosscurrents

Vol. 17, No. 2

February 1994

District dedicates new offices



Photo by Georgia Stanonik

The district dedicated its new offices on Friday, January 14 with a ribbon cutting, an employee awards ceremony and office tours. Left to right are Weiming Lu, executive director of the Lowertown Development Agency; District Commander Col. James Scott; and North Central Division Commander Col. Richard Craig. An estimated 300 people attended the ceremony held on the skyway level above the front entrance on Fifth Street. The Corps has

had an office in St. Paul since 1866 and has been at the Post Office and Custom House since 1940. The General Services Administration signed a lease in September 1992 for four-and-a-half floors of an existing building at Fifth and Sibley Streets. The agreement called for complete renovation of the building. Work was completed in September and about 450 employees moved to the new Army Corps of Engineers Centre in October 1993. More on pages 2-3.

The Corps family tours our new offices



The district's open house began on the skyway level with an awards ceremony and reception. During the reception, recent retiree Ken Harrell (left) introduced Peter Knight, a Midwest Region Junior Achievement project manager, to the new facility and to district personnel, including Dave Christenson (right) from Emergency Management.

Photos by Georgia Stanonik



Left to right are Roger Fast, a retiree; Charles Malmer, a civil engineer in Programs Management Branch; and retirees Peter Fisher and Fred Kelley.

The district held an awards ceremony along with the open house. Among those who received awards are (left to right) District Deputy Commander Maj. Chuck Rogers; Tom Novak from Design Branch; John Anfinson from Planning Branch; Dave DePoint from Emergency Management; Martin Frawley from Real Estate; Rick Gorr of Information Management; and Olivia Vavreck from Logistics.





District Historian John Anfinson (second from right) acted as a tour guide during the open house. Here, he answers questions about the display of former district commanders on the eighth floor.



Visiting the Computer Room are, from left, Trisha Sullivan, Tara Scheffel, Matt Scheffel and Doris Sullivan, Design Branch. Sullivan was a tour guide.



A group of retirees, below, paused for a group photo on the skyway level during the reception. Left to right are Delores Schuster, Roger Fast, Helen Marriott, Rita Langley, Jean Thurmer, Sheldon Fox, Margaret Kincaid, Peter Fischer, Fred Kelley, and Roger Baldwin.

Cost of Doing Business program and consolidation aim to make district more competitive

Embedded in the district's operations, like reinforcing bars in thick concrete, are two unassuming efforts that guard against rising business costs and bureaucratic inefficiency. One is the consolidation of offices. The other is the Cost of Doing Business program (CODB). Together, they lay the foundation for individuals to make their work processes more efficient and the district more competitive overall.

Office Consolidation

On January 24, Planning Division was consolidated into Engineering Division. The new name is now Engineering and Planning Division (EP).

"The goal of the consolidation is to structure the district to competitively perform its current and future missions," said District Deputy Commander Maj. Chuck Rogers.

When the consolidation is complete, a flattened organization will provide greater flexibility and efficiency and the district will have one less GM-15 position. Planning is now a branch of the new Engineering and Planning Division.

"The consolidation achieves CODB savings, but is actually separate from the CODB initiative," Rogers said. "Consolidation of the divisions was the first step. There will be more steps if each division can identify duplication of effort at the branch and section levels."

Cost of Doing Business

Alongside consolidation, the CODB program is working to make the district more efficient and to reduce costs. While consolidation shortens the path between the top and bottom of the organization chart, the CODB program focuses on inefficient or redundant processes.

In 1993, the district's offices and divisions identified over 130 initiatives to streamline business processes under the CODB program. Marilyn Campbell, a staff accountant in Resource Management, compiled a summary matrix that acts like a paper version of rebar. The St. Paul District CODB Summary ties together and strengthens district-wide initiatives under CODB. The matrix begins with a Contracting Division proposal to reduce the number of pre-solicitation notices. The matrix ends with a Project Management Branch item to draft all budget documents for project manager review. In between are the roughly 130 CODB ideas submitted by offices and divisions.

Savings already have resulted from some of the CODB initiatives. For example, computer entries of accounting data at the office of origin and eliminating duplicate reports are saving money. "With computer software," said Ann Allen, chief of Management Analysis Branch, "we may save money by getting software for use on a Local Area Network instead of buying a great number of individual software packages." Information Management is studying possible savings that result from changes in the use of computer software.

Engineering Division Study

Before consolidation, Engineering Division (ED) undertook a four-month CODB study in 1993 to identify strong processes and processes that demanded improvement.

"The study gathered data in two ways," said Al Geisen, acting assistant chief of EP. "First, ED compared its business processes to that of four other civil works districts. We accomplished this by comparing the approach each district would take in designing a hypothetical project. Second, we utilized a detailed questionnaire that was sent to key team members in and outside of ED who worked on the St. Paul, State Road and Finger Lakes projects."

"The study revealed that our district produced high quality work, that we had a strong work ethic, had high professional standards and took pride in our work," said Geisen. "The study also revealed that overall design efficiency could be improved in three major areas — redesign and lost work, under-managed resources and small project execution."

Redesign and lost work occur when key design-related issues are not resolved early on with the local sponsor and with the design team in general. Without early resolution, design work is done that later has to be changed or discarded. This is lost work.

Under-managed resources occurs when team members work without clear direction, and evaluate too many alternatives during the plan selection or evaluation stage of the design.

Finally, the study exposed a process in which small projects are treated the same as large projects as far as team composition is concerned. Reducing the number of team members through the use of multi-disciplinary engineers reduces costs.

Reducing overhead means more dollars for projects

Another focus of the CODB program is reducing overhead costs in the district. By reducing overhead costs, more dollars are available for projects and to serve customers. Overhead is the cost of running the district. Basically, it includes everything except costs charged directly to projects, to O&M projects (Operations and Maintenance), and to certain reimbursable accounts like regulatory. Overhead includes such things as administrative support staff and administrative costs for technical divisions.

Working smarter

Said Harold Taggatz, assistant chief of Construction-Operations, "CODB involves all of us. We must work smart and serve customers at less cost. The CODB will be a continuous effort and not a one-time shot." Taggatz participated in a Corps-wide CODB task group that studied operation and maintenance issues.

Concluded Rogers, "The CODB initiatives that we have already identified are smart ideas from smart people, but I suspect there are more smart ideas which have not yet surfaced. We need to get the word out to every level that all of us can impact our cost of doing business. This is not just a management function. I would hope all of our people would feel free to identify ways to improve the way we work."

Soil Conservation Service becomes lead agency for agricultural wetlands

Four federal agencies with wetlands protection responsibilities recognized the Soil Conservation Service (SCS) as the lead federal agency for delineating wetlands on agricultural lands.

The Departments of Agriculture, Interior, Army and the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) signed the memorandum of agreement January 6.

Under the agreement farmers will be able to rely on SCS wetland maps to determine the extent of wetlands under both the Farm Bill (also known as the Swampbuster program) and Section 404 of the Clean Water Act.

Previously, farmers participating in U.S. farm programs received a wetland map from the SCS for Swampbuster purposes only. If that farmer needed a Section 404 permit for work in wetlands, the Corps of Engineers or the EPA required an additional wetland delineation.

The agreement eliminates this duplication of effort and gives farmers one wetland determination from the federal government. Farmers can now rely on a single wetland determination by the SCS for Swampbuster and Section 404 purposes. The Section 404 regulatory program will continue to be administered by the Corps and the EPA.

Acting Assistant Secretary of the Army for Civil Works, G. Edward Dickey, said, "The interagency agreement should result in an improvement in the accuracy of delineations on agricultural lands through the use of standard methods and better training."

The agreement reflects the commitment of the Clinton Administration to implement its wetland policies through a coordinated process focused on eliminating inconsistencies among agency policies, minimizing duplication of efforts, and the accurate delineation of wetlands for use by all agencies.

Bits and Pieces

Grand Forks study approved

A \$2.1 million three-year feasibility cost sharing agreement (FCSA) for Grand Forks, North Dakota, received the green light from higher authorities, announced Study Manager Ed McNally, Planning Branch. "The approval is a fairly significant step for the district," McNally said. "This is only the district's second major cost-shared feasibility study. (Crookston was the first.) Whether it will lead to construction is anybody's guess. We do hope to pull significant portions of the community out of the flood plain."

A feasibility study is the second step in the development of a civil works project. The first major step is a reconnaissance study.

Wopat and Ruyak give presentations

Ben Wopat, chief of Regulatory Branch, presented an update on the regulation of cranberry activities in the Clean Water Act to an estimated 200 people at the annual meeting of the Wisconsin Cranberry Growers Association at Stevens Point, Wisconsin, January 12.

Wopat and Jim Ruyak, the manager in the Headwaters Lakes Project Office, spoke at the 1994 Water, Lake and Wetland Conference in St. Cloud on February 3. The conference addressed water quality at the federal, state and local levels.

Otto invited to panel discussion

Dick Otto participated in a leadership seminar titled "The Multi-Purpose Mississippi River, its History and Future," sponsored by the Greater La Crosse Area Chamber of Commerce. The seminar was held at the University of Wisconsin-La Crosse on January 12. Other panel members included representatives of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, state and county agencies. Otto is the area resource manager in the Mississippi River Project Office in La Crescent, Minnesota.



Photo by Georgia Stanonick

Commander's Award for Public Service awarded to city planner

District Commander Col. James Scott presented the Commander's Award for Public Service in January to Rafic Chehouri (left), a member of the St. Paul's Department of Public Works. The district honored Chehouri for his exceptional service on the successful and timely construction of the St. Paul flood control project.

Chiefs change jobs

District Commander Col. James Scott recently announced job changes within the district's management. Engineering and Planning Divisions have been consolidated with Bob Post, chief. Chuck Crist, formerly with Project Management, is the new chief of the Planning Branch in the new Engineering and Planning Division.

Lou Kowalski, who had been chief of Planning since 1982, is now the District Deputy Engineer for Project Management and Chief of Programs and Project Management Division. Kowalski replaces Dave Haumersen who was reassigned as chief of Construction-Operations Division. Haumersen replaces Jim Nicholson who retired in late January under the Voluntary Separation Incentive Program.

Carroll makes movie

The Mississippi Headwaters Board in Walker, Minnesota, has asked Historian Jane Carroll to assist with the production of an educational video on the history of the Mississippi headwaters reservoir dams. Carroll's article on the dams, published several years ago in the journal, *Minnesota History*, will serve as the basis for the script. The headwaters board is a joint powers board of eight counties empowered by the Minnesota Legislature to protect the natural, cultural, scenic, recreational and scientific values of the first 400 miles of the Mississippi River.

Hello newcomers:

Construction Operations Division

Beverly J. Lewis, office automation clerk
Conrad K. Hauff, lock and dam equipment
Steven L. Moore, lock and dam operator
Todd A. Ennis, lock and dam operator

Contracting Division

Robert B. Stephenson, contracting specialist

Engineering Division

Thomas J. Swanson, surveying technician

District heads flood plains assessment

The district has been given the lead in a highly visible 18-month assessment of flood plains along the Upper Mississippi and Lower Missouri rivers. The \$4 million assessment includes three Corps of Engineers Divisions and five districts. Dave Loss, chief of the Civil Works Branch, Engineering and Planning Division, is the assessment manager. Congress authorized the assessment in response to the Flood of '93.

Baldhill Dam safety agreement signed

The Acting Assistant Secretary of the Army for Civil Works (ASA(CW)) and the State of North Dakota Office of Water Commissioner have signed a Project Co-operation Agreement (PCA) for the district to proceed with urgently needed safety modifications on Baldhill Dam. G. Edward Dickey, the ASA(CW), signed the agreement on January 14. The agreement culminates a three-year negotiation process with North Dakota. The first contract is scheduled to be awarded in July 1994. The Water Commission is the local sponsor. Baldhill Dam is near Valley City, North Dakota.

Native American newspapers available

Four Native American newspapers are available for viewing by the district staff. Papers from the Minneapolis Native American Center, the Leech Lake tribal paper, the Great Lakes Indian Fish and Wildlife Commission paper and News from Indian Country of Northern Wisconsin are available in the library. To be put on the routing slip, please notify Jean Schmidt in the library at 5680.



ENGINEERS
Turning Ideas
Into Reality.

NATIONAL ENGINEERS WEEK®
FEBRUARY 20-26, 1994

District observes Engineers Week

A committee of six engineers from the district will be "Turning Ideas into Reality" for National Engineers Week from February 20-26. National Engineers Week is an annual event to help raise public awareness and appreciation of engineers and their work.

The committee plans an Engineers Week ceremony, lunch presentations and publicity for the occasion. Terry Williams from Design Branch chairs the effort. Other members are Mark Meyers, Geotechnical Hydraulics and Hydrology; Mike Dahlquist, Cost Engineering Branch; Rick Miller, Management Engineering Branch; Tom Crump, Planning Branch; and Bruce Boldon, Construction-Operations Division.

"Engineers have always been major contributors to our nation's prosperity and quality of life," said President Bill Clinton. "Now, as our country embarks in a new direction, engineers will be key players in finding solutions to many of our challenges ahead. I am pleased to join all Americans in saluting our nation's engineers during National Engineers Week."

Diversity Appreciation begins Feb. 14

A week of films, workshops, seminars and theater focusing on diversity begins at 10 a.m. on February 14 in the third floor Training Room with remarks by District Commander Col. James Scott.

Patricia Johnson, chief of Contracting, will be the mistress of ceremonies for the district's fifth Diversity Appreciation Week (DAW), which offers over 20 activities on themes that touch gender, race, culture, age and disability. Last year's DAW, normally held in October, was delayed until February 1994 due to relocation of district offices. The theme is "Learning from Your Past to Discover Your Future."

A mix of new and popular encore presentations are packed in through the week.

Monday offers the film "True Colors;" a program on diversity in the Latin community titled "Son del Sur;" a gospel workshop titled "The Jubilations;" and Wendy Tai presenting "Transition - A Cultural Perspective."

Tuesday begins with a workshop on "White Males in Workplace Diversity" and "The Voyagers," followed by the film "Eye of the Storm," and the programs "What Makes a Community," "The King and I, and "The Magic of Attitudes and Perceptions."

"Disability and Elder Care Fair;" "Diversity Bingo;" a film on affirmative action and reverse discrimination; "Balancing Work and Family;" and a workshop on African history occupy the midweek.

Seven programs pack Thursday's menu. The Open Door Performers present "For Gimps who have considered homicide when enuf is enuf" at 9:30 in the third floor Training Room. "Communicating Across Cultures;" a film on diversity; the "Banjo Dancers;" "Stories of American Women;" "Heart of the Earth;" and "Why did we leave our homeland?" will also be presented.

The Chinese Lion Dance and the ethnic food taste close out Diversity Week on Friday, February 18.

The EEO office will provide details on program times, places and descriptions.

Nicholson retires



Jim Nicholson (left), chief of the Construction-Operations Division, retired Friday, January 28. He came to St. Paul from a three-year assignment as assistant chief of the Construction Division at the Vicksburg District. He has over 30 years of service with the Corps of Engineers in civil and military roles and has served 35 years with various components of the military, including the special forces. He received the Commander's Award for Civilian Service in May 1991 and January 1994. District employees held a retirement party in his honor Friday, January 21. Dave Parsons, chief of Construction Branch, is at right.

Real Estate chief takes job in LA



Real Estate Division Chief Elwin Yoder (above) is leaving the district to take a job as deputy chief of Real Estate in the Los Angeles District. His last day in St. Paul is February 15.



**US Army Corps
of Engineers**
St. Paul District

Crosscurrents

Crosscurrents is an unofficial publication, authorized under the provisions of AR 360-81. It is published monthly by offset for the St. Paul District, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers.

Editorial views and opinions are not necessarily those of the Corps of Engineers, nor of the Department of the Army.

Address all inquiries to:

Editor, *Crosscurrents*
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
Army Corps of Engineers Centre
190 Fifth Street East
St. Paul, MN 55101-1638

District Engineer COL James T. Scott
Public Affairs Officer Kennon Gardner
Editor Peter Versteegen