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District readies for severe spring flooding



Photo by Peter Verstegen

Marilyn Aird, center, provides support to Craig Evans, Engineering and Planning Division (PE), in estimating costs during the emergency flood exercise in Emergency Operations Center (EOC) on March 13. Left to right are Don Peterson (PE), Evans,

Aird from Contracting Division (CT), Delores Aldinger (CT), and Bob Le Monds from Construction-Operations Division (CO). "We were reviewing equipment rates on requisitions that came in from the field," said Aird. More on page 3.

District fulfills Corps' vision through respected, responsive and reliable service

by COL J.M. Wonsik
St. Paul District Commander

At the risk of stating the obvious, we have our hands full. The implementation of CEFMS, the advance measures to prepare for floods; the actual flood emergencies; the transfer to a new division, plus our normal work.

We come to work facing these and other issues in an organization that works together to serve the public and national interest.

LTG Ballard, chief of engineers, is conscious of the demands we encounter each and every day in serving the national interest. His headquarters team, the district and division engineers have spent some time looking down the road with the goal of preparing us to meet what will be the enormous demands of tomorrow.

LTG Ballard has said that throughout its history the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers has served the national interest. You need look no further than the imminent floods we are now preparing communities to fight.

I don't need to remind you that the Corps is the world's premier engineering organization. We are trained and ready to provide advance measures service along the Minnesota River and the Red River of the North.

Our service demonstrates that this district is a vital part of the Army—and is a vital part of the Corps' vision. The Corps' vision makes us:

- The engineer team of choice —

responding to our nation's needs in peace and war;

- A values-based organization — respected, responsive and reliable.
- Changing today to meet tomorrow's challenges.

The Corps strategy is designed to provide better service to the Army and nation in traditional Corps mission areas, and enhanced service through an expanded Corps role in strategically targeted Army military and civil mission areas.

Let me change subjects now. Our immediate concern is the threat of imminent flooding.

We take the forecasts from the National Weather Service very seriously. We have been aggressively pro-active in preparing for potential record flooding. Engineers from the district office in St. Paul and from Fargo, N.D., have been meeting with officials in communities throughout eastern North Dakota, Minnesota and western Wisconsin for several weeks. Based on these meetings and our assessment of each community's needs, we have requested special authority to start construction of emergency levees in advance of actual flooding. By the end of March, we had reviewed advanced measures projects for 25 communities in the Red River Basin and three in the Minnesota basin.

The district has targeted those communities that need extra protection the earliest or where the threat is the greatest. Wahpeton, Breckenridge and Harwood are at the top of the list.

The district will invest an estimated \$3-4 million for the

advanced construction. Most of that amount will be for federal contracts to local construction, heavy equipment and trucking companies and for pump rentals.

The district's normal authority for building emergency levees usually begins after flooding actually starts. Approval of our requests for advanced measures by Corps headquarters is an indication of how serious we feel about run-off conditions in this region.

Estimates of potential damages prevented run as high as \$40.4 million for East Grand Forks, Minn., and which has a cost to benefit ratio of 47 to 1. At the low end is Ft. Ransom, N.D., with an estimate potential damages prevented of \$50,000 and a ratio of 1.7 to 1.

In total, the district has developed plans for emergency measures for more than 70 communities in North Dakota and Minnesota that are most vulnerable to flooding based on National Weather Service forecasts. These plans were developed to insure that the district could offer assistance in a timely fashion either in advance of flooding or once it begins. April and May will be trying months for the St. Paul District.

The challenges will be many and will reach every person in the district. I am confident that the people here will once again meet those challenges. The Corps' vision includes the words "respected, responsive and reliable." That vision and those words describe the St. Paul District.

Imminent floods heighten visibility of EOC exercise



Photos by Peter Verstegen

Predictions for severe flooding of rivers throughout the St. Paul District brought increased media visits for those who participated in the district's Emergency Operations Center (EOC) exercise on March 13. In the top photo, EOC Chief Dave DePoint briefs a media team from the ABC affiliate, KSTP-TV. The exercise trained and refreshed district



personnel who support emergency flood operations in the field. At left, Mark Paulus (center), helped Don Peterson and Mike Osterby navigate through a computer software application. "We were checking equipment and labor rates," said Osterby. The three are from Design Branch. Below, DePoint, Teri Alberico, a biologist in Engineering and Planning Division, and Osterby discuss lessons learned from the EOC exercise. Alberico worked as an administrative assistant during the flood exercise.

Due to the imminent threat of flooding this year, the district received approval to spend more than \$5 million for the Advance Measures Program. Advance measures are done before predicted flooding and protect against loss of life and damage to improved public property from flooding. The program allows the Corps to: strengthen federal and non-federal flood control structures; construct



temporary levees to protect life and improved property; clear river channels and dredge federal projects to restore the flow to original design capacity; and relieve the threat of flooding from possible dam failures through dewatering, controlled breaching or strengthening of flood protection structures.

Corps' Heritage Toastmasters teach students to 'speak up'

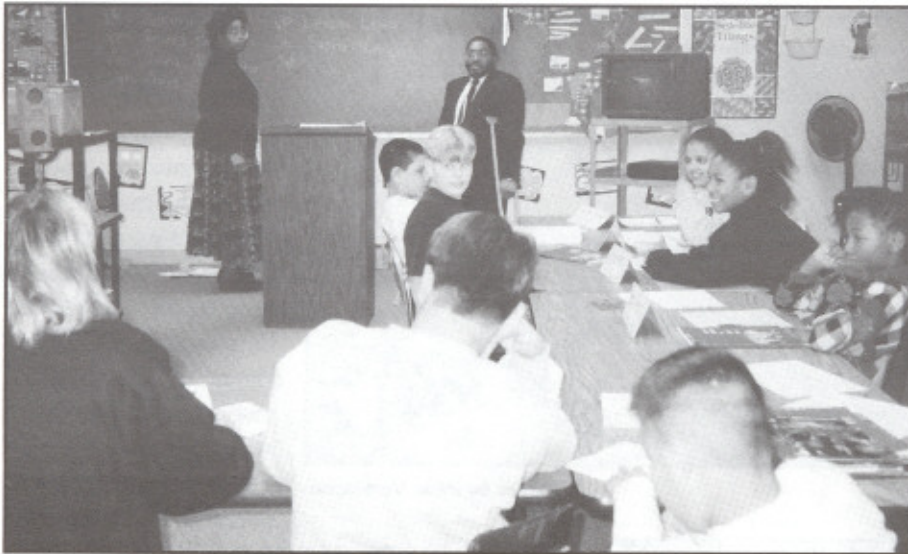


Photo by Peter Verstegen

Vanessa Lewis and Russell Williams stand at the front of a class at Benjamin Mays Magnet School in St. Paul. Lewis spoke to the class of fifth and six graders as part of a project by the Heritage Toastmasters Club of the St. Paul District. She presented a speech on the importance of listening. Lewis works in Human Resources and Williams is chief of Resource Management Division. Williams is coordinating the program.

by Peter Verstegen
Public Affairs specialist

"Let's start. We're 10 minutes late," said Sosna Alemayehu, age 11.

With her commanding words, Alemayehu and her classmates at Benjamin Mays Magnet School in St. Paul began what their program coordinator Russell Williams calls a "pioneering effort" in youth leadership. Williams is chief of Resource Management at the St. Paul District and is coordinating the program for Heritage Toastmasters.

Alemayehu and other fifth- and six-grade students are learning to manage meetings, to give speeches, to address impromptu subjects — called "Table Topics," and more.

What makes the program special is its outreach to students at the

elementary school level.

The students learn and practice real world skills in the Toastmasters Youth Leadership Program, sponsored by members of the Heritage Toastmasters Club at the Corps of Engineers' St. Paul District.

The students have practiced their speaking skills during eight weekly sessions, which began in late January and ended at a March 19 graduation.

Williams worked with Jenny Johnson, a teacher and assistant program coordinator at Benjamin Mays.

"This is the first time that a club participating in Toastmasters International has reached to the elementary school level with a communications and leadership mission," said Williams.

From 12 to 20 students usually

attend the hour-long program. They gather in an upstairs classroom where pictures of prehistoric reptiles decorate the walls. The students, their teacher and Williams meet during the noon hour. Club members have gone to school to join the students in giving and evaluating speeches and to teach the students the principles of meeting management.

The students practice their brief speeches at a podium in front of the class under Johnson's watchful supervision. "This is a fabulous opportunity for these students," said Johnson. "The program fits in well with our communication arts and leadership, which is our magnet school emphasis."

And what are among the favorite speech topics for these elementary students? Topics include: school uniforms, sports, new teachers, the environment, new students, and favorite foods (pizza).

Williams coordinated this pioneering effort for the Heritage club. "I just enjoy doing it," said Williams. "Sure, our club will get points toward a distinguished club and a ribbon to hang on our flag. But the bottom line is that I enjoy it."

Keith Hardy, a district governor for Toastmasters International, began the program, which is now in its second year.

Williams, Johnson, and members from the Corps' Heritage club attended the March 19 graduation banquet with 20 students, many parents and relatives. Club members, recognizing that even a speech topic can be food for thought, chipped in to buy pizzas for the students' graduation.

Getting in gear at the locks

Locks have gear boxes (photo at right) that operate the gates and allow boats to lock through. The gear ratio necessary to operate a lock, according to Doug Hoy, "is like a granny gear on a farm tractor." Hoy works in Engineering and Planning Division.

The lock, in other words, uses an ultra low gear to push open the gates. "It takes 405 turns of the input shaft to turn the output shaft one revolution. Each of these gearboxes represents a substantial investment, which at the time of purchase was estimated at \$35,000 for the miter gate and \$20,000 for the tainter valve," Hoy said.

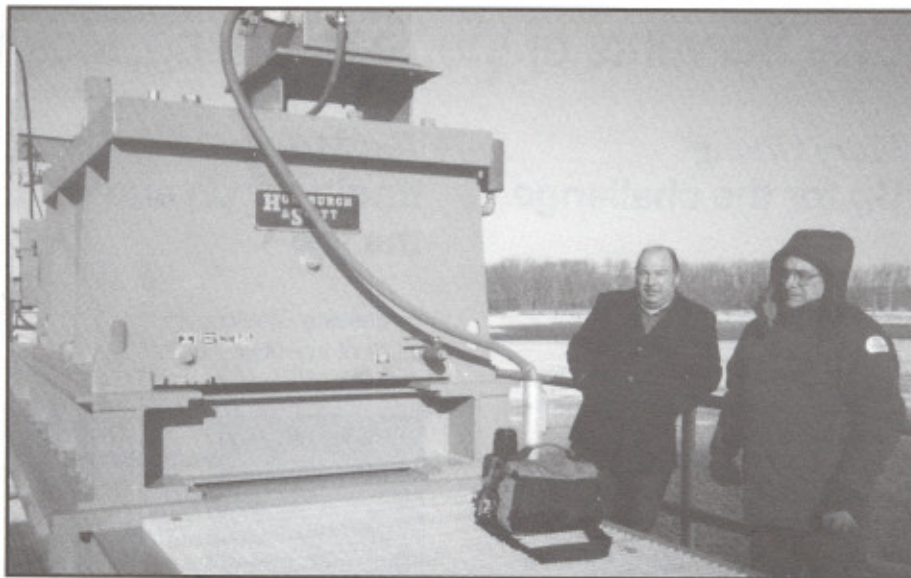


Photo by Jon Lyman

During the last 10-15 years, the St. Paul District has been in the process of replacing the original lock operating machinery, installed in the 1930s. To prevent damage during flooding, these new gear boxes are higher than the old ones. Hoy is at left, and Ken Tschida, upper area lockmaster, is at right. They are outside the gearbox at Lock and Dam No. 3 near Red Wing, Minn.

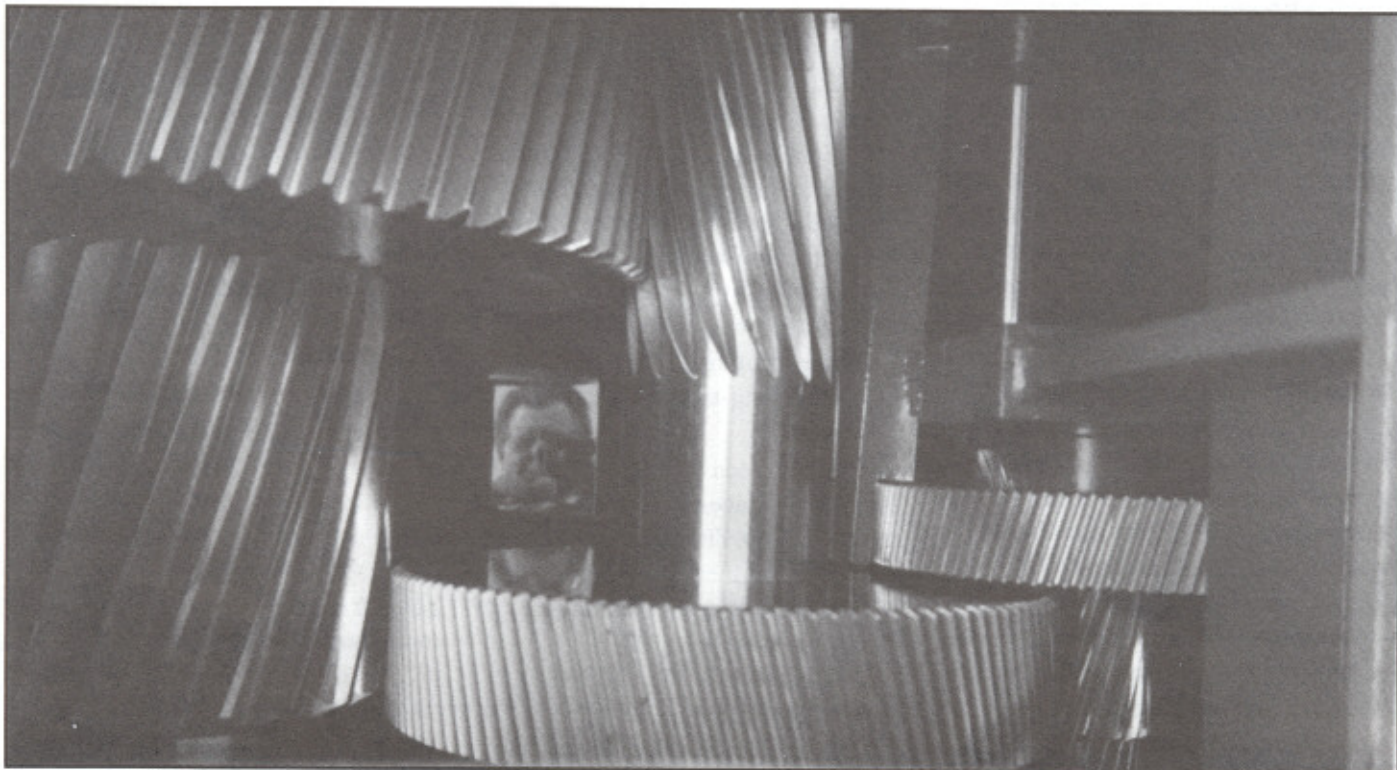


Photo by Jon Lyman

A pool of lubricating oil reflects Jon Lyman's face in the gear box at Lock and Dam No. 3. The new enclosed gear boxes replace "open gearing" used in the 1930s. The new boxes are safer, lubricate better and protect the drive components from dust and debris. Lyman is a Visual Information Specialist in Information Management.

Civil Servants of the Year: Chang, Mosner and Peterson

Mary Chang Up for the challenge

by Jessica L Shallow
student in Public Affairs

Editor's note: Mary chose not to have her photo accompany this article.

Dedication, experience, and hard work made Mary Chang a strong candidate for receiving the Civil Servant of the Year Award. The University of Minnesota civil engineering graduate is the UNIX system administrator for Information Management (IM). UNIX is a computer operating system primarily used in Engineering and Planning (PE) that allows for multiple users at one time.

When asked what she liked about her job, she said, "You're kept busy all the time. It's a challenge. You have to be able to find a solution to problems in the system in a short period of time. I like that challenge."

One of the many challenges Mary faced was installing a fire wall, which is a device that deters hackers from reaching internal computer systems. The fire wall allows for greater security of the district's own computer network. The installation was successful and made the St. Paul District the first district to have an operational fire wall.

Mary has worked many extra hours to keep the district's computer systems and network communications up and running.

She has been with the Corps for just over 10 years now. When Mary

Chang, cont. on page 7

Jim Mosner Engineer on and off the job

by Jessica Shallow
student in Public Affairs



For some, engineering is just a job. For Jim Mosner it is a way of life. His actions as a supervisor in Engineering and Planning

Division (PE), as well as his support and dedication to his fellow employees, to young people in scouting programs, and to his family contributed to his being named a Civil Servant of the Year.

Jim has been the Chief of General Engineering Section in the Design Branch of the PE for seven of the seventeen years he has been with the district. He graduated from the University of Minnesota and earned a masters degree in civil engineering there after participating in the Corps-sponsored long-term training program.

He has been on a special assignment since mid-September as a member of the district's CEFMS (Corps of Engineers Financial Management System) Planning Team, responsible for the implementation of the CEFMS within the district.

The CEFMS planning team coordinates and supports the efforts of several task-specific teams, including the business processes team, the installation team, and the

database team. He has also been guided the development of the district's business process guidance and CEFMS User Guide.

During the past several years, Jim has also been involved in the district's Army Community of Excellence (ACOE) program. As a member of the ACOE committee, he helped develop the award nomination package that won a \$25,000 honorable mention award for the district. When the district received word of its win, Jim helped gather ideas on how the award money could be spent. After the committee surveyed employee preferences and requested a review of regulations, he recommended the purchase of jackets and attache bags.

In 1996, he worked closely with other divisions and offices to select the supplier of the award items, to compile the order information, and to distribute the items to all eligible employees. The ACOE items have been a great success and have had a very positive effect on the esprit-de-corps within the district.

In 1996, he was instrumental in creating an Engineering Exploring Post, sponsored by the Society of American Military Engineers (SAME). As a post advisor, Jim has organized field trips and meetings with engineering professionals to educate high school students to career opportunities in the engineering profession.

When not at work, Jim enjoys family activities with his wife Kathy and their two sons, Steve and Nate. He has been extremely involved in the scouting program for more than ten years, devoting his discretionary

Mosner, cont. on page 7

Angie Peterson Success through supporting others

by Jessica L Shallow
student in Public Affairs



Angie Peterson's qualifications for being nominated as a Civil Servant of the Year are noted as being outstanding and

numerous. She maintains excellent working relationships with everyone in the district and is highly regarded as a pleasant, professional employee. Angie willingly offers her time and support to others.

Angie has served in the Executive Office as secretary to the Deputy District Engineer for Project Management and as a secretary for the Programs and Project Management Division (PPM) three of the 12 years she has worked for the district. Prior to this position, she spent four years working in Real Estate Division (RE) and five years in Engineering and Planning Division (PE).

A fellow co-worker has noted Angie's ability to handle huge volumes of work and difficult situations with ease.

Others view Angie as a very calm and understanding employee and co-worker. She cares about putting other people first.

Her personality reflects strongly on her increased dedication towards community service. She is a very active member of St. Andrew's church in Elk River and volunteers monthly at the Dorothy Day Center

in downtown St. Paul. The Dorothy Day center serves meals to individuals traumatized by abuse, job loss, or severe financial problems. "I like the time I spend there," said Angie. "The people are always nice and very thankful."

Because of Angie's desire to help others, she also volunteers as a tutor for the Adult Basic Education Center in Elk River. At the center she works with a variety of people who need help with basic reading and writing skills to obtain their General Equivalency Diploma (GED).

Outside of work and volunteering she likes to spend much of her time with her husband Rick and their pets.

Mary Chang, cont. from page 6

first started she was in the intern program. The program allowed her to work in numerous areas of the Corps.

Following her internship, she spent seven and a half years in the Hydrology Section and has worked in IM for about two years.

When she does have free time she enjoys shaping pottery.

"I want to thank the people who nominated me for Civil Servant of the Year," she said. "I also want to thank all the students with whom I've worked."

Jim Mosner, cont. from page 6

time to help lead his sons' scout units, to train scout leaders, and to coordinate many activities within the local Indianhead Council of the Boy Scouts of America.

"Being with my kids and participating in activities with them is most important to me. That, and seeing the happy look of accomplishment on the faces of the kids who achieve a new skill are the most satisfying things that keep me so involved in scouting," said Jim.

CEFMS is just around the corner

April 23 deadline looms for travel vouchers

"In one month, CEFMS is how you'll get your work done," said Marcia McCloskey, a trainer from Real Estate Division. "We go on line in mid-May. We have to be comfortable with it by then."

Formal CEFMS (Corps of Engineers Financial Management System) classroom training in the district office was completed in March and will run through April 24 for field offices.

To continue training, McCloskey urges people to learn the software now and practice on the training database. "If you completed travel orders the old way, do it as a practice item in the

CEFMS, cont. on page 8



Photo by Jon Lyman

Amy Rothstein (right), Resource Management, has made CEFMS training a sweet experience for her students. She has baked and brought brownies from the beginning of training classes at the district's "CEFMS Academy." At left is Bernard Pedersen, Information Management.

Bits and Pieces

CEFMS, cont. from page 7
CEFMS training database.”

Completing a purchase request, a travel or training request or ordering goods and services will require successful navigation through multiple screens. CEFMS will be the sole process to accomplish these requests and transactions beginning in mid-May.

Here is some important information for personnel who may travel soon. April 23 is the last day to submit travel vouchers to Finance and Accounting



Photo by Peter Verstegen

From left, Ed McNally and Curt Meeder attended the CEFMS Work Management and Resource Plans class. They work in Engineering and Planning Division.

(F&A) for payment. Individuals in the middle of travel may submit a partial travel voucher for payment by April 23. Travel vouchers received after then will be processed for payment in CEFMS in mid- to late-May.

Personnel who plan to travel and need cash may use their government American Express card. Individuals who don't have one should get one immediately.

District personnel who make purchases with VISA cards can also help the transition to CEFMS. Offices which know they have planned purchases scheduled between mid-April and early June, may make those purchases now. Those purchases can then be processed in COEMIS (Corps of Engineers Management Information System) rather than CEFMS.

Remember, during this transition to CEFMS, processing financial transactions, travel and training requests, and most other district business processes will be cumbersome. Please be patient, smile and remember no one is intentionally delaying anything. It just takes time.

Reading comes first for Corps retiree

Joe Schultz, a district retiree and a resident of Minnesota City, Minn., has found a new calling at age 70. He is a reading volunteer for the first graders at the Rollingstone Community Schools. He volunteers in the library for an hour or two each Tuesday and Thursday that school is in session and helps students when they encounter a challenging word in their reading. Otherwise, he follows along.

Schultz retired as a civil engineer from the old Engineering Division. He worked for 30 years at the district office in St. Paul.

Awards Picnic set

The 1997 Awards Ceremony and Summer Picnic is scheduled for Friday, June 20 at Long Lake Regional Park. The park address is 1500 Old Highway 8, New Brighton.

The park offers free parking, free admission, a beach, hiking trails, a ball field, volleyball court, and covered picnic shelter. There is no individual day-use fee. There is a nominal fee for beach use. The park is accessible for the physically challenged. At this time, details about the golf tournament are to be determined.

For details, contact Tom Sully, event co-chair, at 290-5573; Georgia Stanonik, event co-chair; at 290-5496; or Nathan Kathir, publicity coordinator, at 290-5569.



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