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St. Paul District

Crosscurrents

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Strategic Vision: Revolutionize Effectiveness

St. Paul District receives Hammer Award

By Peter Versteegen
Public Affairs Specialist



The St. Paul District and other federal agencies in the Twin Cities received Vice President Al Gore's Hammer Award for

participating on the team that organized the first-ever Government on Display weekend at the Mall of America. The event took place Feb. 6-7, 1999 in Bloomington, Minn. The Hammer Award is part of the National Partnership for Reinventing Government – an effort to build a government that works better and costs less. The district had 16 employees participate in the event. (More on page 4.)



Photos by Peter Versteegen

Top photo, from the left are: Larry Ecker, head lock operator at Lock and Dam No. 2; Steve Lenhart, lockmaster at Upper Saint Anthony Falls; Michelle Schneider, Engineering Division; and John Johnson, Information Management. Bottom photo: Lori Taylor shows a booklet on Water Safety to St. Paul District Deputy Commander Lt. Col. (P) William Breyfogle and his wife Cynthia.



**Strategic Vision:
Revolutionize Effectiveness**

Seize change

By Col. Kenneth Kasprisin
St. Paul District Commander



This article is long overdue. I first wrote it several months ago and asked others to

evaluate it before it was published. As expected, I received several opinions and some recommendations for change. Some feared it may be perceived as too harsh and that some of you would be offended. I have struggled since then with some internal strife – a concern of how to communicate issues, current activities, and future direction without being perceived as too negative or harsh.

After many agonizing hours of contemplation, I am convinced the majority of our employees are mature, intelligent and rational enough to not personalize the discord.

This and future articles are not intended to criticize the district but to communicate aspects of organization, process, leadership, and other management essentials so we can collectively make the St. Paul district more effective and efficient. We will improve. The only question that remains is “will we do it the hard way or the easy way?” Hence, the subject of this article is CHANGE.

Jefferson Davis has said: “The past is dead; let it bury its dead, its hopes and its aspirations; before

you lies the future – a future full of golden promise; a future of expanding national glory, before which all the world shall stand amazed. Let me beseech you to lay aside all rancor, all bitter sectional feeling, and to make your places in the ranks of those who will bring about a consummation devoutly to be wished – a reunited country.”

Our forefathers’ wisdom always amazes me. They had a tremendous ability to address timely issues while constantly keeping an eye on the future. This quote is quite interesting. It was made during a time in our nation’s history filled with change, turmoil, and philosophical differences. Although the St. Paul District is not faced with the magnitude of those issues, the essence of the quotation has some relevance for us. We are facing a period of unprecedented change and with that change comes resistance – even occasional bitterness. Are we going to covertly resist the change or are we going to embrace it and capitalize on the opportunities it provides? We must do the latter in order to be successful!

We have a tremendous work force within our district. The talent and skills are truly remarkable. Unfortunately we also have a very small percentage of “sub-performers.” Several have even made it to a level that adversely affects others. These folks don’t worry me much. It takes time, but mechanisms are available to help “improve” these folks. They certainly offer challenges and frustrations but in the big scheme of things, we can deal with them. The ones that worry me are those that constantly fight progress. This insidious group covertly resists any attempt to modify current

organizations or processes. They resist for several reasons:

- They fear the change will adversely affect their current status;
- They personally don’t like the change and will do all they can to resist;
- They believe it will create more work for them;
- They are entirely too comfortable with the way things currently exist.

Whatever the reason – they are a poison to organizational effectiveness and that hurts us all. They create rancor and bitterness - all the ingredients needed for the recipe called disaster.

If we are to march grandly into the future, we must embrace the change that is upon us (CEFMS, PROMIS, Project Management, Regional Management Boards, METL-based training process, modified supervisor to employee ratios). These changes are not optional. They are not something we can ignore, thinking or hoping they will eventually go away. Once decisions are made, it is absolutely counterproductive to constantly question, resist or attempt to modify the directions. To do so does nothing but create other issues and a great deal of personal frustration. “There is nothing so useless as doing efficiently that which should not be done at all,” wrote management consultant Peter F. Drucker.

Help me incorporate and adapt areas of required change. It is the “right” thing to do and it is really our only recourse. Resistance and bitter feelings only serve to make the process painful and lengthy. Re-read the quote from Jefferson Davis – before you lies the future. It will be whatever we make it.

Strategic Vision: Enhance Capabilities**District, Bureau of Indian Affairs cooperate on Devils Lake EIS**

By Peter Versteegen
Public Affairs specialist

The Devils Lake project team met with officials from the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) on Feb. 18. They met to seek successful methods for input from the Spirit Lake Tribe on a flood control outlet proposed by the Corps of Engineers for Devils Lake, North Dakota. A portion of the outlet would cross reservation land, some of which is privately owned. The outlet is designed to reduce flooding from the lake. The BIA has agreed to be a cooperating agency on the Environmental Impact Statement and will help in providing information. "We also asked for their advice on improving relations with the tribe," said Judy DesHarnais, project manager.



Photo by Peter Versteegen

Left to right are Judy DesHarnais, Devils Lake project manager; Paul Hoffman, area hydrologist, Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA), Aberdeen, S.D.; Sam Dupris, a consultant hired by the Corps as a tribal liaison; and Jerome Lacher, operations engineer, Aberdeen BIA.

Strategic Vision: Enhance Capabilities**Red River of the North mediation process provides positive outcomes**

By Peter Versteegen
Public Affairs Specialist

This February a committee in the Minnesota House of Representatives heard a success story about the Red River of the North (RRN) mediation process. The mediation established a rational and timely process for critical natural resources protection and for effective flood protection. "The mediation agreement in itself will not result in a reduction in flood damages or improvement in natural resources, but it does establish the goals and process for such an outcome," said Chuck Spitzack, Planning, Programs and Project Management Division (PM). Spitzack represented the Corps of

Engineers in the mediation. The process applies to natural resources management in the Minnesota portion of the river basin.

"This is an historic piece of work," said Don Ogaard, executive director of the Red River Watershed Management Board, one of the members of the work group that forged the agreement. "It spells out goals and strategies that will allow for effective flood protection and natural resource protection."

Environmental interests, individual citizens, state, federal and local agencies participated in the mediation and forged the agreement in December 1998. Also on the Corps team were Randy Devendorf and Jeff McGrath from PM; Scott Jutila and

Dave Loss from Engineering Division; and Joe Yanta, Regulatory Branch.

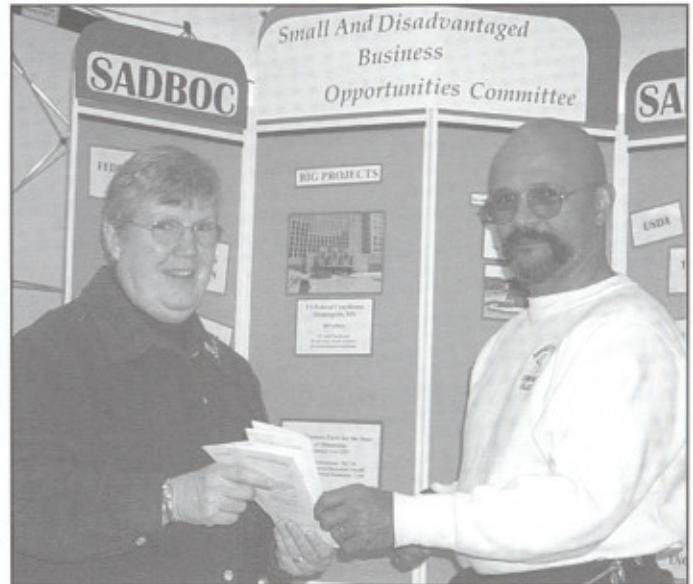
Drainage problems, flooding and soil erosion have plagued the shallow river basin for years. Watershed districts and resource managers have disagreed about the most effective and least environmentally destructive methods to reduce flood damages. Controversy peaked after the Corps and the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources completed a joint Environmental Impact Statement (EIS). At that point, the Minnesota legislature authorized the mediation to resolve disputes and to break the gridlock.



District receives Hammer Award for 'Government on Display' at Mall of America



St. Paul District Deputy Commander Lt. Col. (P) Breyfogle accepted the Hammer Award Feb. 6 on behalf of the St. Paul District.



Photos by Peter Verstegen

Pat Johnson, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and Louis Moore, staff of Cong. Martin Sabo and member of the Small and Disadvantaged Business Opportunities Committee.



Left to right are Jim Ryan, lockmaster at Lock and Dam No. 1 in Minneapolis, Bryan Armbrust, acting chief of Public Affairs; and Denise Haag, Administrative Manager at the Mississippi National River Recreation Area (MNRRA). They are discussing a MNRRA computer application that shows how a lock works.

**Strategic Vision:
Reshape Culture**

Higher speed limits mean more fatalities

By Ronald E. Scott, chief
Occupational Safety and Health
Office

Editor's note: This was Ron Scott's last column on safety before he retired.

There are an awfully large number of crashes in Minnesota every year, regardless of the speed limit, but speed is obviously a contributing factor in the frequency and severity of reported crashes.

A recent increase in traffic fatalities may be linked to higher speed limits, according to an in-depth traffic safety analysis announced by the commissioners of Minnesota's Public Safety and

Transportation departments. The analysis shows that, on roadways where the speed limit was raised in July 1997, fatal crashes for Minnesota increased by a whopping 66 percent.

Contrary to what most people believe, the state's rural two-lane roadways still account for the highest number of traffic fatalities, where for the most part, speed limits remained unchanged.

Taking all the records for five years prior to the speed limit change and comparing them to the year after the change indicates that on roadways where the speed limit was increased, the average number of fatal crashes per month was 5.8 compared to 3.5 prior to the increase.

On roadways where the speed limit was unchanged, the average number of fatal crashes per month was 39.2 compared to 38.4 for the 5 years prior, a 2 percent increase.

Taking a quick look at all crashes reported, the average number of crashes per month on roadways where the speed limit was increased was 661.7 compared to 615.4 prior to the increase, an 8 percent increase. On roadways where the speed limit was unchanged, the average number of crashes per month was 7002 compared to 7768.9 for the 5 years prior, a 10 percent decrease.

It is our responsibility to make good choices:

- Wear your seat belt;
- Be courteous on the road;
- Don't drink and drive.

Remember you don't have to speed, just because everyone else is. Driving privileges come with responsibility to ensure the safety of ourselves, our families and fellow workers – in short everyone on the highway. Slow down a little. I am planning to do so myself.

Strategic Vision: Satisfy the Customer

Tow punches through Lake Pepin ice

The Motor Vessel Hamilton (at right) of the Canal Barge Company in New Orleans, La., punched through the Lake Pepin ice on March 19. The event symbolically opened the 1999 navigation season into the Twin Cities. "The Hamilton locked through, northbound, at 9:40 a.m.," said Dan Schmidt, lockmaster at Lock and Dam No. 2 in Hastings, Minn. Late-winter shipments had beat the MV Hamilton to Winona, south of Hastings. But the Hamilton was the first to lock through the traditional gateway to the Twin Cities at Lock and Dam No. 2.

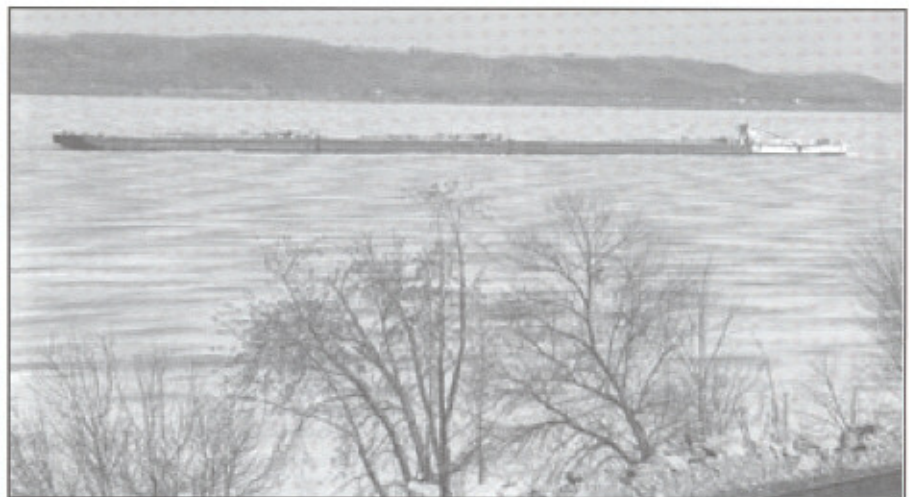


Photo by Tom Oksness

Strategic Vision: *Invest in People*

District celebrates National Engineers Week



Photos by Peter Versteegen

2 inducted into Order of the Engineer

As part of National Engineers Week, Bob Post, chief of Engineering Division, inducted Aaron Buesing (above left) and Jeff Stanek (above center) into the Order of the Engineer on Feb. 23 in St. Paul. Both work in Engineering Division. At right, Tom Sully looks at the Minnesota Society of Professional Engineers "Seven Wonders" award display that will visit MSPE chapters throughout Minnesota. The district's Mississippi River Basin Modeling System is among the winning projects.





Don Basham, Mississippi Valley Division, presented a special coin to Bob Post in honor of his distinguished tenure as chief of Engineering Division. Post retired at the end of March.



Don Basham, at right, was the keynote speaker for National Engineers Week. Basham is the director of Engineering and Technical Services at Mississippi Valley Division, Vicksburg, Miss. He is also the career program manager for engineers and scientists.



At left and holding a cup is Chester J. Harrison, Jr., PE, who attended the Order of Engineer ceremony on behalf of the Minnesota Society of Professional Engineers (MSPE). The MSPE sponsored the Seven Wonders engineering competition and awards.

Bits and Pieces



Photos by Peter Verstegen

Nelson, Foley and Devendorf honored

By Peter Verstegen
Public Affairs specialist

On March 1 the St. Paul District honored three individuals for their efforts on behalf of EEO, diversity appreciation and Consideration of Others.

Mark Nelson (above left), chief of Real Estate Division, and Pat Foley (above right), Hydraulics and Hydrology Branch, received the Commander's Award for

Outstanding Achievement in Equal Opportunity. The award recognized their efforts in 1998. Also pictured is Marianne Price, EEO Office manager.

Nelson increased the visibility of the Diversity Subcommittee through initiatives and activities. Foley acted as mentor for two women engineering students hired into H&H.

In the photo above right, Randy



Devendorf of Planning, Programs and Project Management Division, received the Considering Others Award from St. Paul District Deputy Commander Lt. Col. (P) William Breyfogle. Devendorf assumed extra responsibilities and supported his section chief during an extended sick leave. In addition, he went beyond his duty and was very considerate of his supervisor by keeping him up to date and listening to him.

<http://mvpiis/> offers 'inside information'

The district's intranet site at <http://mvpiis/> offers employees exclusive information resources that are not posted on the world wide web. The site is not accessible from home computers.

The site is available on district computers via Links on the district's home page. There are links for the Help Desk, the Library, Crosscurrents Online, and Event Photos. The photos showcase people receiving awards, attending conferences, planning meetings, and birthdays. The Library link offers the electronic version of the latest Federal Employees News Digest.



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Crosscurrents

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