



US Army Corps  
of Engineers®  
St. Paul District

# Crosscurrents

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## Outstanding Planning Achievement Award to Grand Forks-East Grand Forks study team



Photo by Anna Wetterling

The Grand Forks-East Grand Forks study team received the Planning Team of the Year Award for outstanding interdisciplinary planning performance. Fifteen of the 31 St. Paul District study team members assembled on Sept. 9 at the district office. They received the Outstanding Planning Achievement Award for their exceptional efforts and innovation that went into formulating and preparing the Grand Forks-East Grand Forks General Reevaluation Report and Environmental Impact Statement. The report presented a flood reduction plan for Grand Forks, N.D. and East Grand Forks, Minn., which were devastated by the flood of 1997 on

the Red River of the North. Holding the award (above) are Lisa Hedin, project manager, and Ed McNally, the technical manager. Standing, from left are: Dave Tschida, Virginia Gnabasik, Ralph Berger, Rick Carlson, Curt Hall, Vicki Johnson, Marilyn Kruchten, Chris Afdahl, Mike Leshner, Chris Behling, Phil Sauser, Brian Johnson, and Larry Joachim. St. Paul team members not present for the photo were: Jeanne Anderson, Greg Dasovic, John Fisher, Doug Hoy, Mark Meyers, Jim Muegge, Karen Nagengast, Byron Nelson, Kevin Nelson, Mike Osterby, Kent Pederson, Grant Riddick, Michelle Schneider, John Shyne, Jeff Stanek, and Jenny Yager. More, page 3.

**Strategic Vision: Invest in People**  
**High-grade people fill high-grade positions**

By Capt. John Weidner  
 Executive Officer

Lately, there seems to be a lot of confusion and frustration about the process we use to fill high-grade (GS-14 and GS-15) positions. Specifically, I've heard concerns that the policy prevents in-house employees from being selected for a job within their organization, and that the process is being used to force diversity upon the Corps of Engineers. Although mobility will help you rise through the ranks faster, neither of the above concerns have materialized in our district.

The goal of the high-grade recruitment and selection process is clear – to select the best-qualified person for each position. To create a pool of highly qualified candidates, we advertise the position to as diverse an audience as possible. So far, I think it has worked well and the district is better for it.

Altogether, the district has 17 high-grade positions. Over the past year, we've hired six people to fill high-grade positions. Three came from outside the district and three came from inside the district.

For instance, Ken Buck, chief of Construction-Operations; Jim Peak, assistant chief of Engineering Division; and Mike Knoff, chief of Hydraulics and

Hydrology Branch, came from outside the district. We've also hired "in-house" people to fill high-grade jobs. John Bailen was named the chief of Engineering Division; Judy DesHarnais became the chief of Project Management Branch; and Bruce Boldon advanced to the chief of Construction Branch.

Additionally, four of these positions remain vacant. The chief of Regulatory Branch is one. The positions of chief for Resource Management Division, Information Management Division and Real Estate Division are being upgraded to GS-14. They will be advertised and filled competitively. The district has started the recruitment process for these and we should fill them in six to nine months.

Here's some of the background on how the Corps fills its top jobs. Filling any high-grade position is a two-step process — recruitment and selection. In 1997, the Chief of Engineers issued a Corporate Recruitment Policy. This policy applies to the recruitment for all GS-15 and supervisory GS-14 positions. The spirit of this policy is to promote diversity in recruiting in terms of both people and the breadth of experience they bring to the Corps' mission.

Before filling vacancies covered by the corporate recruitment policy, district commanders are charged with developing a recruiting strategy and conducting extensive outreach to assure a diverse candidate pool. This recruitment strategy includes providing information on our corporate vacancies to educational institutions, professional organizations, women's networks and minority associations.

In St. Paul's case, the commander of MVD approves the recruiting plan in writing before the district begins its selection process. Other districts have similar requirements. We also call upon district and division ad hoc panels and technical experts to further evaluate

*People, cont. on page 5*

**Corporate Positions**

GS-15	GS-14 Supervisory
CO, ED, OC, PM	CO-Asst., CO-C, CO-MR, CO-R, ED-Asst., ED-D, ED-H, IM, IJC, PM-A, PM-B, RE, RM

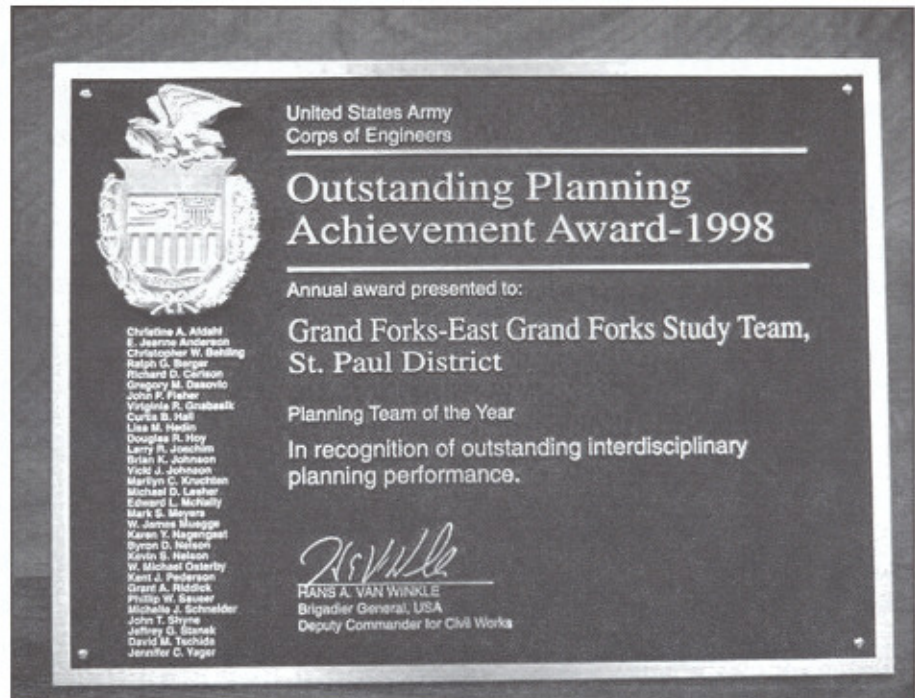
**Strategic Vision: Revolutionize Effectiveness**

## District earns 3rd planning award

By Peter Verstegen  
Public Affairs specialist

The St. Paul District received its third Outstanding Planning Achievement Award from the Deputy Commander for Civil Works. The award was first announced at the Senior Leaders Conference in San Francisco in August. Members of the district team accepted the award in St. Paul this September. The award recognized exceptional efforts and innovation in formulating and preparing the Grand Forks-East Grand Forks General Reevaluation Report and Environmental Impact Statement and related documents. The district previously received planning awards in 1996 for Devils Lake and in 1995 for the Floodplain Management Assessment.

The report presented a flood reduction plan for Grand Forks, N.D. and East Grand Forks, Minn., which were devastated by the flood of 1997 on the Red River of the North. The Red River rose to a stage of 54.3 feet, 26.8 feet above flood stage. The flood drove nearly 60,000 residents out of their homes. Before the flooding had receded, the district reactivated a previously suspended but authorized project. "In the first couple of months following the flood, the team worked intensively with local officials to define a preliminary permanent levee



Photos by Peter Verstegen

alignment," said Lisa Hedin, project manager.

"This award was very well deserved," said Hedin. "We worked closely with the communities and states and in the end they accepted the project design. We achieved this in one-half the time it would normally take," she said. The normal time for a general reevaluation report and environmental impact statement (EIS) is 32 to 48 months. But the team quickly realized the schedule allowed less than 18 months if it were to make deadlines for inclusion in the Water Resource Development Act of 1998. The team worked closely with high-ranking officials throughout the Corps, the states and municipal officials to meet this objective.

The team prepared intermediate planning documents, set timely checkpoints, involved all participants, established a focused-reporting process, conducted formal partnering, used a red-flag

review, employed consultants, involved the public, worked with a single point of contact with each state, and engaged in daily communication with the city officials.

"This award indicates that all available district and Corps resources were put on the fast track to protect these communities from similar disasters," said Hedin.

### Crosscurrents resumes publication

Crosscurrents resumes with the September 1999 issue. The district briefly suspended publication to address changed priorities and reduced resources in Public Affairs from fall 1999 to spring 2000. After this issue, the Public Affairs Office plans to publish Crosscurrents as a quarterly and resume monthly issues later in 2000.

Peter Verstegen, editor

**Strategic Vision: Build Team****Present and past employees gather in St. Paul for 24th reunion**

By Peter Verstegen  
Public Affairs Office

More than 70 employees and retirees gathered for the 24th annual St. Paul District Retirees' Reunion at the Kelly Inn in St. Paul on Sept. 9. The reunion included District Commander Col. Kenneth Kasprisin's overview of the district's significant activities and the induction of Dave Haumersen and Bob Post into the district's Hall of Fame. (See "Hall of Fame" below.) Kasprisin outlined changes in the district's organization, personnel and projects. He also discussed highlights of a fiscal 1999 budget of more than \$104 million and an expected budget of more than \$116 million for fiscal 2000.

**Hall of Fame members welcome Haumersen, Post**

Dave Haumersen, former chief of Construction-Operations, and Bob Post, former chief of Engineering Division, were inducted into the St. Paul District Hall of Fame at the 24th annual retirees' reunion in St. Paul on Sept. 9. (See photo at right.)

Haumersen was the first deputy district engineer for Project Management and was devoted to subordinate development and recognition. Post was directly and continuously involved in district projects that won Corps-wide recognition. Both recently retired and now work in the private sector.



Photos by Peter Verstegen

Above left is Betty Krueger, who was secretary in Contracting Division when she retired. Sally Lunsford, middle, was secretary in Office of Counsel when she retired and Jean Turcotte was chief of IM-I (Information Management-Planning and Implementation Branch) upon retirement.



Hall of Fame members who attended the 24th annual retirees' reunion in St. Paul are (left to right): Peter A. Fischer, chief of Engineering Division (ED) from 1980-87; Harold Taggatz, assistant chief of Construction-Operations Division (CO) from 1986-98; Bob Post, chief of ED from 1987-99; Catherine Smith, who retired as chief of the old Examination Section in 1989; Dave Haumersen, chief of Construction-Operations from 1994-98; Jim Kursu, who retired as chief of Programs Management Branch; Lou Kowalski, deputy district engineer for Project Management and chief of Programs and Project Management Division from 1994-96; Sheldon Fox, who retired as head electronics mechanic in 1982; and Bill Goetz, who retired as chief of CO in 1990.

**Strategic Vision: Satisfy the Customer****EMP habitat restoration project dedicated**

By Peter Versteegen, Public Affairs Office



Photo by Peter Versteegen

**Ray Marinan (left) and Gary Palesh inspect one of the many varieties of trees planted on Slingshot Island on the Mississippi River. Altogether, nine varieties of trees were planted on the lower Pool 8 islands. The grasses surrounding Marinan and Palesh were planted to hold soil in place, add nutrients and provide wildlife habitat. The biodegradable tree tubes act as a small greenhouse and protect seedlings from the wind. Marinan works as a forestry technician in the Natural Resources Office in La Crescent, Minn. Palesh is a project manager in the district office in St. Paul.**

The St. Paul District joined the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the Wisconsin and the Minnesota Departments of Natural Resources to dedicate Phase 2 of the Pool 8 islands habitat restoration project on Sept. 17, 1999 at Stoddard Wis. The project is part of the district's Environmental Management Program (EMP).

The project lies within the Upper Mississippi National Wildlife and Fish Refuge. It completes the second of a five-phase effort to restore islands in lower Pool 8. Since 1939, more than 80 percent of the island acreage in the lower pool has been lost to erosion. The loss of habitat has contributed to a decline in many species of fish and wildlife. The project is designed to create conditions that nurture fish and wildlife development. Phase 2 cost about \$2.6 million.

*People, cont. from page 2*

candidates and combine all the referral lists.

The second phase is the selection process. It begins when each member of the selection panel reviews each candidate's background and independently makes a recommendation of the final group of "best qualified" candidates. The panel then determines which candidates will proceed to the next step – the interview.

The Corps also enlists the Gallup Organization to assist the selection panel in evaluating each candidate's leadership competencies. The Corps has been working with the Gallup organization on measuring the leadership competence of

executives since 1988. Gallup developed a structured-interview technique for use by telephone to help assess leadership. This telephone interview is tape recorded and analyzed by Gallup consultants. They derive an assessment of each candidate's leadership strength. Their assessment is provided to the selection panel to supplement existing information on the candidate.

Finally, the selection panel conducts personal interviews. The panel weighs the results of the personal interview, reviews the Gallup results and checks the summary of the supervisory background checks. They reconcile their differences and recommend the best candidate to the selecting

authority. The final selection authority for all district GS-15 positions rests with the Corps' Deputy Commanding General. The division commander, in our case Major General Anderson, selects the supervisory GS-14s. District supervisory GS-13 vacancies are selected using the same process, although panel members and selection authority reside within the district (District Engineer approval).

In conclusion, the high-grade selection process ensures that the district has the most qualified candidates available. Although it does take some time, the process also ensures that we have the most diverse group of applicants possible. It's then up to us to select the best for our St. Paul team.

## Consideration of Others Award Maule takes time to support co-workers



Photo by Anna Wetterling

District Commander Col. Kenneth Kasprisin presented the August Consideration of Others Award to Gayle Maule, Mississippi River Project Office (left), aboard the Motor Vessel Mississippi during a stop at Winona, Minn. Among her characteristics, Maule exhibited a cheerful attitude and made an extra effort to be sensitive to the needs of others. The result has been

to improve morale and has set an example for others to follow in their daily work.

She went out of her way to answer questions from her coworkers, even when the subject matter was not part of her required knowledge or in her job description. Her nominator wrote that "She sounds like Super Woman, and to me she is."

## Ott places first in chili cook-off

Mike Ott, a lock and dam operator at Lock and Dam No. 7 in La Crescent, Minn., placed first among individual entrants in the GREAT Eighth Annual DARE Chili Cook-Off in La Crosse, Wis., on Sept. 11. A total of 43 teams participated in the event.

GREAT stands for Gang Resistance and Training; DARE stands for Drug Abuse Resistance and Training.

The State Bank of La Crosse sponsors the cook-off which raises an estimated \$8,000 annually for city and county public safety initiatives. The La Crosse Police Department, the La Crosse County sheriff's department and the La Crescent Police Department share the proceeds.

## Wopat downs pound of peppers in 17 sec.

It took Ben Wopat, assistant chief of Construction-Operations Division, only 17 seconds to down a plate of Hungarian Hots peppers at the Pepper Fest in North Hudson, Wis., on August 21. He has participated in the fest on the Village Inn team for 14 years. Each individual member of the team eats one pound of hot peppers; teams eat five pounds. "My best time was 10.35 seconds," said Wopat. Wopat's team won the event this year with a time of 2:47. His time was the best among his five team members. Their prize was \$200.



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