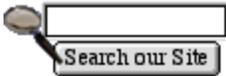


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Temp: 25 °F  
Hi: 23 °F  
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**LOCAL NEWS**

Posted Nov. 11, 2002

## Menasha dam undergoes first renovation in nearly 70 years

By Michael King

*Gannett Wisconsin Newspapers*

MENASHA — One of two key drain plugs holding back Lake Winnebago, the state's large inland lake, has been given a major facelift.

The Menasha dam, a 70-year-old concrete structure owned and operated by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, is in the final stages of a two-month, \$850,000 overhaul.

"This is the first major renovation of the dam since the early 1930s," said Nick Brittnach, chief of operations at the Corps' Fox River project office, Kaukauna. "It's a major upgrade revamp of the structure and components."

A key part of the project involved installation of gate hoists on each of the six dam gates eventually will allow them to be remotely opened and closed from the Corps' Detroit District office.

Until now, one motor mounted on a train track above the dam had to be moved manually to lift or close each one for water regulation in Winnebago and the Fox River.

"It was a two-, three-man job," said Pat Bodwin, a crane operator with Lunda Construction Little Chute. "You had to push it from gate to gate."

For now, one of the four remaining Corps' employees working on the river will go to the gates and simply push a button to raise or lower the gates.

"At this point it's not automated, but it does have the capability for remote operation," Brittnach said. "It really comes in handy in severe weather. We can make our adjustments in a more timely manner."

"Our mission is flood-control, which is water regulation," he said. "That is why we're here."

Ten data collection stations located around the Fox-Wolf River Basin, the 6,430-square-mile area of east central Wisconsin that drains into Winnebago, monitors water levels that are relayed via satellite to Kaukauna and then relayed to Detroit.

"What you do in Menasha affects the whole river," Brittnach said. "When you open a gate or close one, it's going to affect all the way down to De Pere."

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