



## Tug team wins big Detroit River race



N. Schulthesis

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Lynn Duerod

## P-2 Management System training complete for 2004

By Shannon A. Satchel

Public Affairs Office

Promise-2 or P-2, as it's known throughout the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, is well on its way to implementation.

Named for the Promise-2 system this new management computer system, tested throughout the Corps since February 2004, is designed to make budgets and various aspects of any project more visible to its users.

At the Detroit District 150 people have completed P-2 Management System training classes and are preparing to launch the program in the upcoming fiscal year.

Training classes were held to help the Corps team better understand P-2 system operations. Courses offered in P-2 were Project Delivery Team (PDT), Project Delivery Team "LITE" (PDT LITE,) Management Analysis Training (M&A,) and the Executive Overview Course.

PDT teaches users how to use the Program Manager (PM), which consist of scheduling and budget elements.

PDT "LITE" consisted of learning how to use Primavision software and according to Karen Krepps, district archeologist, was much like taking CEFMS (Corps of Engineers Financial Management System) training. The class is very interesting, but wasn't hard at all, she said, after participating in the PDT LITE course.

M&A training covers the use of Oracle Financial Analyzer, software



Casondra Brewster

**District employees busily work to learn the P2 system as well as input data into the new database designed to track projects with more ease.**

in P-2, is used to report and analyze financial data for Primavision.

The Executive Course is an overview of the entire system offered to senior management.

"With all of this training completed, the Corps now has the proper knowledge to perform certain tasks and activities in the computer system dealing with P-2," said John Niemiec, P-2 coordinator.

"There are a lot of steps that have to be followed to get to where you want to go in the system," Krepps said.

To refresh trainees on various steps to navigate the system future web based practice training may be conducted soon, with the Detroit District's next training phase planned for fiscal year 2005.

The Corps embarked on this new and more visible management system so people in all districts could share information, and so headquarters

would have opportunities for greater accessibility to Corps projects worldwide.

The P-2 system is a Corps-wide effort to get all projects in one database for a roll-up of all Corps scheduling, budget, and other project data.

"This system is more planned out than the last one and it has a lot more time put into it," Niemiec said. "It is like any other software — it has a learning curve."

P-2 is capable of being virtual and easy to access, but it is still a challenge to add data into the system. That's why the Corps is doing training classes to teach the users how to input data easier, according to Niemiec. The P-2 system will be up and running at full capacity next fiscal year after everyone has completely added all necessary data.

For more information about the P-2 Management System, click on <https://pmbp.usace.army.mil>

## SOUNDINGS

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*Soundings* is an authorized newspaper of the Detroit District. It is published quarterly, under supervision of the Public Affairs Office in accordance with provisions of Army regulation, AR-360-1. It is prepared using desktop publishing and printed by offset press. The *Soundings* is also available on the Internet at <http://www.lre.usace.army.mil/functions/pa/press/html>.

**Circulation:** We print 600 copies per issue and circulate them to employees, retirees, and anyone requesting a copy in writing.

**Contents:** Views and opinions expressed in this publication are not necessarily those of the Department of the Army. The U.S. Army does not endorse any product or service that may be advertised or mentioned in this publication. News copy is prepared in accordance with Associated Press, AP Style Guide. All photos are U.S. Army photos unless otherwise indicated.

**Submission:** The Public Affairs Office welcomes comments and opinions about the information published in *Soundings*. News tips, ideas, suggestions and articles may be mailed to *Soundings*, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Detroit District, P.O. Box 1027, Detroit, Michigan 48231-1027, Fax: 313-226-5993, E-mail: [Lynn.M.Duerod@lre02.usace.army.mil](mailto:Lynn.M.Duerod@lre02.usace.army.mil).

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## Call out for volunteers overseas; Iraq, Afghanistan

The Global War on Terror requires now more than ever that the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers be able to fulfill its wartime mission of providing full spectrum engineering and construction management support to American forces.

In January 2004, USACE established a new provisional division in Baghdad. The Gulf Region Division (GRD) has three districts in Mosul (North), Baghdad (Central) and Basra (South). The division manages construction, administers contract work, and supports oil and electrical infrastructure projects.

A separate district office, the Afghanistan Engineer District (AED) was established to oversee the work in Afghanistan.

The workload at GRD and AED is increasing steadily and is expected to remain at a high level for two or more years. This creates a need to increase the current

Personnel interested in volunteering for deployment should access the web at [www.cpol.army.mil](http://www.cpol.army.mil) <<http://www.cpol.army.mil>> to identify current vacancies.

All personnel should apply using the vacancy announcements found at [www.cpol.army.mil](http://www.cpol.army.mil) <<http://www.cpol.army.mil>>.

staff size and to sustain those levels for the near future. The Corps is pushing to encourage personnel with the requisite skills to volunteer for service overseas to meet upcoming peak workload.

All questions concerning the hiring procedures should be directed to the local Civilian Personnel Advisory Center

## Postcards from Iraq: Deroche

*District Employee relates his forward-deployed adventure for all 'back home' to experience*

*Editor's Note: Bob Deroche, from the district's regulatory branch, writes just about everyday. His messages are posted on the district's intranet. You must be a Detroit District employee to access these messages. To access his journal entries go to the link: <http://Are48:81/C9/Our%20People%20on%20Point/default.aspx>*

**W**ell, 10 days after I left Sterling Heights (Mich.), I'm here at Camp Victory next to Baghdad International Airport.

Yesterday was spent travelling to Kuwait City where we waited in 126 degree heat and flew with the British Royal Air Force.

We travelled in a C130 transport and took off and landed in complete gear, i.e., kevlar vest and helmet and DCUs (Desert Camouflage Uniform). The plane was NOT air conditioned. We all looked like we were sitting in a sauna with sweat dripping off our faces and I swear you could have mopped the floor with my T-shirt, I was so soaked in sweat.

They push water on you continuously, recommending you drink 9 quarts of water in an 8 hour day. I haven't worried about eating salty foods, that's for sure...I need the salt. They have treated the USACE (U.S. Army Corps of Engineers) superbly throughout the whole training and travel period, so far. Last night, there

were four of us who flew with the RAF (British Royal Air Force) and the Division office, which we will all be working for, met us at the airport, stopped at the chow hall, which is beyond words (good words, You can really gain weight if you don't watch what you eat). And, then, took us to a trailer where five of us spent the night; two bunkbeds and one half a bunk. It was air-conditioned and had a private shower and toilet...something we were all happy with.

Everything is relative. Any other time most of us would have likely complained about the facility, but after a couple nights in a warehouse with 150 cots and trailers containing flush toilets which were often plugged and no toilet paper and showers that had standing water on the floor much of the time, this was like a palace.

They picked us up and took us to the chow hall for breakfast and now we are waiting for a convoy to go to the "Green Zone" in downtown Baghdad for our



Terry Furtaw, district employee (L), and Bob Deroche show off their deployment garb while enduring 115 degree heat in Kuwait before arriving in Iraq for a 120-day deployment. Deroche is documenting his journey with daily journal entries.

briefings.

I was told two days worth. It is much cooler today, only supposed to hit 113 (degrees).

I was just told by a major that was just passing through that I will not be working in downtown after all, but at the "boat-house" here in Camp Victory. It's right on the lake (Saddam) Hussein created with several palaces and guest houses.

I have plenty of pictures, but right now several people are waiting to use this computer. Once I am in my permanent work space I'll be able to send pictures.

All for now, gotta go.

## Project Highlights

### St. Joseph community thanks Corps for lake-front nourishment



These photos show in various stages the beach nourishment work before, during, and after that the Corps in conjunction with Contractor, MCM Marine did in the outer portion of the St. Joseph Harbor, Mich. The sign above shows positive reaction from local residents for the placement of dredge material on the shore.

## Treatment pond receives funding

The Village of Superior leaders signed a Project Cooperation Agreement, PCA, with the Corps, August 9, 2004. Lt. Col. Donald Lauzon, district engineer, and Alex Grymala, Village president, signed the agreement under the 154 Program, in this case a wastewater treatment pond. Also attending the signing ceremony were Congressman Dave Obey and local community members.



Lt. Col. Donald Lauzon, district engineer, presents Alex Grymala, village president, and local Village of Superior community members a Corps' check.



## Commander and family greet crowds at Grand Haven parade



(Left) Lt. Col. Lauzon, district engineer, and family participate in Grand Haven's annual festival parade as Tom O'Bryan drives the Corps red mobile. (Above) Lt. Col. Lauzon greets Terri Lynn Land, Michigan's Secretary of State.

*Another satisfied customer*

## Lepeer Park island project completed



(Above) New construction blends with old wall creating a smooth transition. (Right) Detailed workmanship creates solid stone wall for municipal wells.

The Leeper Park erosion control project helped to ensure municipal water wells were not compromised or lost due to erosion. The project provided protection along the riverbank for two public drinking water supply wells threatened by erosion in the City of South Bend, Ind.

Several sections of the crumbling wall was repaired which included rebuilding the stone wall on a reinforced concrete foundation at three locations, where it completely fell apart, along the eastern side of the island. In addition, protective riprap stone was placed along the entire length of the existing eastern

wall to help avoid future failing.

Everyone concerned with the new wall at the Leeper Park Island Section 14 project in South Bend, Ind., are very pleased with the entire project, including how the new wall matches with the old wall creating a seamless transition, according to Carl Platz, project manager.



## Senators introduce bill to provide dental, vision benefits

By David McGlinchey

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Two Senate lawmakers introduced a bill to provide federal employees and their families with access to voluntary dental and vision health insurance, an area of persistent concern for many government workers.

The Federal Employee Dental and Vision Benefits Enhancement Act of 2004, was introduced by Sens. Daniel Akaka, D-Hawaii, and Susan Collins, R-Maine, chairwoman of the Governmental Affairs Committee.

The House [recently passed legislation](#) pushed by Rep. Jo Ann Davis, R-Va., to require the Office of Personnel Management to study how to improve vision, dental and hearing benefits for federal employees.

The Senate bill, however, would require OPM to go beyond studying and actually

implement new benefits systems.

“The federal government’s most important asset is its human capital,” Collins said.

“The opportunity for employees to purchase enhanced dental and vision coverage will help the government with its ongoing efforts to recruit and retain a highly qualified workforce.”

During a July 6 interview with Government Executive, Davis said it is not clear what form of legislation will ultimately come from Congress.

“At this point we’re not sure if [senators will] just pass our bill as is, or if they’ll incorporate it into the bill they have.

“But I feel very strongly that something will come out, because I think they feel very strongly about this issue,” she said.

The Senate bill would set up a system for dental and vision benefits like the long-term care insurance program currently available to federal employees.

The government would use its purchasing power to negotiate rates, but not pay a share of premiums.

The bill would allow OPM to select an array of companies and insurance packages to give federal workers options for supplemental insurance.

The new options would not affect the Federal Employees Health Benefits Plan, according to a Senate aide.

“This is an important first step,” Akaka said. “Under our bill, the immense buying power of the more than 8.6 million employees, retirees and dependents will be leveraged to obtain the best possible rates and most comprehensive coverage for those who choose this voluntary supplemental dental and vision benefit package.”

Collins and Akaka said the supplemental coverage was common among state government employees and large companies. Employees in 48 state governments currently have access to dental coverage.

## Senate ditches ‘open seasons’ for federal retirement contributions

By David McGlinchey

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The Senate unanimously approved a bill Friday that would eliminate open seasons restrictions on contributions to the Thrift Savings Plan.

Open seasons have been used since the inception of the 401(k)-style federal retirement savings plan to restrict TSP participants from altering their contributions too often. This year, federal workers can adjust their retirement contributions during two periods, the first ended June 30 while the second runs from Oct. 15 through Dec. 31.

“Allowing employees to join the Thrift Savings Plan or to make other changes when they choose — not just during two yearly open enrollment periods — will give employees more control over their investment decisions,” said Sen. Susan Collins, R-Maine, chairwoman of the Senate Governmental Affairs Committee.

Officials at the TSP have thrown their support behind the bill ([S. 2479](#)), telling Congress that once-practical restrictions on changes have now outlived their usefulness.

If it is passed by the House and signed by the president, the

Senate legislation still will not affect open season restrictions on the government’s matching contributions. If new employees do not begin contributing immediately, they will need to wait for an open enrollment period to begin receiving matching contributions from their agencies.

Lawmakers decided it would cost too much, about \$300 million a year, to remove the restrictions on government matching. Agencies match employee contributions dollar-for-dollar on the first 3 percent of salary employees contribute each pay period and 50 cents on the dollar for the next 2 percent of pay.

The Senate bill, known as the Thrift Savings Plan Open Elections Act of 2004, has been endorsed by the Employee Thrift Advisory Council, the American Federation of Government Employees, the National Treasury Employees Union, the National Association of Retired Federal Employees, the Federal Managers Association, and the Senior Executives Association.

The House Government Reform Committee proposed a more expansive version of the open seasons bill, which would have eliminated restrictions on government matching, but lawmakers eventually scrapped that version and are expected to go along with the Senate legislation.

## Corps wins big in Tug Boat Race 2004 with Detroit crew

By Shannon A. Satchel  
Public Affairs Office

This year's 28<sup>th</sup> annual International Detroit-Windsor Tugboat race will be a significant entry in the history books for the Detroit District — coming way with two first place awards.

The Detroit District team raced the 19-year-old GREY FOX led by Capt. Robert (Bob) Kerr; Rick Brown, deck hand; and Bill Barnhart, captain and overseer of the GREY FOX.

The race, conducted on Saturday, June 19, with its course on the Detroit River, according to Kerr, was approximately three to four miles long with speeds of the boats reaching about 12 knots (13.8 miles per hour) with vessel horsepower ranging from 130 hp to 2000 hp.

The GREY FOX, a Navel sea training ship, was loaned to the Corps by the Navel Sea Cadet Corps while the Corps'



N. Schulthesis

Capt. Bob Kerr receives first place trophy.



N. Schulthesis

vessel DEMOLEN was engaged in Corps-related missions in Algonac, Mich.

The GREY FOX although the same as other tugboats as far as speed and weight is

concerned, differentiated from the race's other tugs by its superior displacement hull, according to Kerr.

A displacement hull determines the speed and level of power on a boat. For this reason the



Fred Miller

(Left) GREY FOX running neck-and-neck with TUG SHANNON during race. (Above) Primed for its first place win, the GREY FOX revs up for the Detroit River Tug Boat Race 2004 on June 19.

GREY FOX was capable of reaching a higher speed level than most tugs.

The GREY FOX was victorious in this race against 30 other tug boats, landing crafts, and other vessels winning first place in Class Five and first overall in Classes One through Five.

"...the Corps will get the respect that they deserve," Kerr said. He added, that he and his crew would like to thank Bill Barnhart for lending the Detroit District the GREY FOX.

For more information and pictures on the 2004 Tugboat race, go to [www.boatnerd.com](http://www.boatnerd.com)

### TSP TOLL-FREE TELEPHONE SERVICE BEGAN JULY 1ST

Thrift Savings Plan (TSP) participants and beneficiaries can begin using the TSP's new toll-free telephone service began July 1st. You can obtain TSP account or transaction information 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. You can also speak to a participant service representative at one of two TSP call centers from 7:00 am to 9:00 pm Eastern Time, Monday - Friday.

The primary toll-free number will be 1-TSP-YOU-FRST (1-877-968-3778), and the TDD number for the hearing impaired will be 1-TSP-THRIFT5 (1-877-847-4385).

## Locks dewatering major success for Soo Area Office

Soo maintenance crews conducted inspections and maintenance of the MacArthur Lock during the off-season this year.

Lock inspection team member's dedication allowed them to complete the five-year inspection process a day early.

MacArthur Lock was dewatered in June, allowing a unique opportunity for visitors to the Soo Locks to view the lock's structure, which is normally submersed.

More importantly crews were allowed to complete maintenance typically done during the winter shut down; but they were furloughed this past winter due to budget constraints.

### Retired General from India visits Detroit District



Casondra Brewster

Brigadier (retired) Singh, formerly the Chief of Engineers for the India Army, came to Detroit and spoke with many Corps employees about the similarities of the U.S. and India Corps of Engineers. During his 32 years with the Corps of Engineers he held many positions and appreciated the experience he encountered." An engineer is an all around person... can be an eng. tech., an environmental person,.. is capable of doing many things."



Crews, dwarf by the MacArthur Locks' massive wall and gates in the lock chamber, complete the project ahead of schedule. (Right) Marie Strum, chief, Watershed Hydrology, conducts lock inspections in the chamber, which is normally underwater.



Corps guests get rare treat; an opportunity to see MacArthur lock chamber completely emptied.

