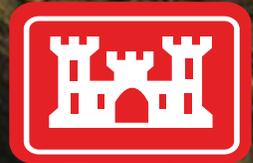


U.S. Army Corps of Engineers

SOUNDINGS

Detroit District



Spring 2009
Volume 33, No. 1

**Soo tackles
cold and 'Dirty Jobs'
during winter work**



Commander's Column

New lock, VA, Milcon and ARRA create largest workload since WWII

This is an exciting time to be in the Detroit District. We have our greatest workload since World War II and possibly in the district's history.

Most of that work comes as a result of the 2009 Omnibus Bill and the American Recovery and Reinvestment



Lt. Col. James B. Davis

Act of 2009, also known as the Stimulus bill. There is more than \$103 million for 61 projects in the Omnibus bill and \$41 million for 18 projects in the Recovery Act.

The district has other work from the Army and other government agencies: renovation of 14 Veterans Affairs medical facilities, construction of three NOAA gage houses, and BRAC construction, including Army Reserve Centers. There is also work for other districts, Rock Island and Louisville. Furthermore, we will begin construction on the replacement lock in Sault Ste. Marie, Mich. The new Lock at the Soo will be the largest project in the district's history, currently estimated at \$580 million.

In other areas, we also will see great changes in our regulatory program. The 2009 Omnibus bill requires

that the Detroit District transfer a large portion of our northern Indiana Regulatory functions to the Chicago District.

Finally, I have full confidence that the district will deliver superior performance on all of our projects and programs. I look forward to the challenges before us. These next several years will be professionally and personally rewarding times.

The nation faces some difficult times and is relying on the Corps to do its share to support the war and the economic recovery efforts. We must come through for our nation. Let's get it done!

In This Issue:

Soo Area Office focuses on lock maintenance.

TV's "Dirty Jobs" films episode at lock.

Pages 4 & 5

Pie throwing and holiday party pics.

Pages 6 & 7

Great Lakes Update.

Page 8 & 9

Grand Haven Ice Jam Conference.

Page 10

Employees of the quarter.

Page 11

Detroit Boat Show.

Page 12

Cover photo: Matt Leazier helps fellow Corps employee Ben Wittum as he uses a torch to cut the gate diagonals on the south leaf of the MacArthur Lock during the winter maintenance period at the Soo Locks in Sault Ste. Marie, Mich. (Photo by Carmen Paris/Soo Area Office)



Photo by Gregory Piatt

Brig. Gen. John W. Peabody, commander and division engineer of the Army Corps of Engineers' Great Lakes and Ohio River Division, looks over blueprints of the new lock to be built at the Soo Locks in Sault Ste. Marie, Mich. with employees of the Corps' Detroit District. Peabody visited the Detroit District in early May.

SOUNDINGS

DISTRICT ENGINEER
Lt. Col. James B. Davis

PUBLIC AFFAIRS OFFICER
Lynn Duerod

**DEPUTY PUBLIC AFFAIRS OFFICER
AND EDITOR**
Gregory Piatt

EDITING AND DESIGN
Unified Business Technologies
Troy, Mich.

In this issue:
Cassandra Kardeke
Carmen Paris
Thomas O'Bryan

Soundings is an authorized newspaper of the Army Corps of Engineers 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/newsandevents/press>.

Circulation: We print 400 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.Duerod@us.army.mil.

For general information, call toll free: 1-888-694-8313

Detroit District begins first-ever projects for VA

By Gregory Piatt
Public Affairs Office

When the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Detroit District, awarded a contract in December to upgrade a U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) facility in Milwaukee, it was the first time the district would supervise construction for the VA.

But it won't be the last time since the district is working on 17 contracts for renovation work at six VA facilities in Michigan, Indiana and Wisconsin. Those facilities are in Detroit, Milwaukee, Fort Wayne, Ind.; and in Ann Arbor, Battle Creek and Saginaw, Mich.

"The Detroit District takes great pride in supporting the VA and assisting them in getting their facilities upgraded," Marilyn Hill, chief of Contracting, said.

But it was the \$2.28 million contract award in Milwaukee that kicked off the new cooperation between the Detroit District and the VA. The district will supervise the renovation of a vacant wing of a building for the human resources department of Milwaukee's Clement J. Zablocki VA Medical Center.



The Detroit District began in December supervising the renovation of a vacant wing of a Civil War-era building for the human resources department at the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs facility in Milwaukee.

Nuvo Construction Co., a small business in Milwaukee, was awarded the contract to completely renovate the 16,000-square-foot wing on the medical center's campus for the VA's Great Lakes Health Care System or Veterans Integrated Service Network 12.

"Providing updated working areas for the human resources department will assist the VA in keeping a fully-staffed operation that directly affects care of veterans," Patrick Kuhne, the Detroit District's project manager for the Milwaukee and six other VA projects, said.

"Improved facilities, whether a

hospital or administrative building, translates to better and more efficient care for our veterans," Kuhne added.

The Milwaukee and other construction projects also should benefit the local economy by having additional workers in the area for the length of the project, Kuhne said. About a total of 30 workers will be needed and between 5 and 10 will be new hires, according to Nuvo Construction.

The Milwaukee medical center building will undergo structural work to repair leaks, windows and the roof. Additionally, new plumbing will be installed, the emergency sprinkler system will be relocated, a new heating and cooling system will be installed, the wing will be rewired, a drop ceiling will be added, the interior will be painted, new carpeting will be laid and new office cubicles will be erected. The work will also include asbestos abatement.

"This is a complete renovation that will involve structural work to accommodate a new office layout," William Merte, the Detroit District's chief of Construction, Cost and General Engineering Branch, said.

"We are ready to support the VA in any design and construction project as requested." ■



The Corps renovation work at the Milwaukee VA campus is one of more than 17 contracts to fix-up six VA facilities in Michigan, Indiana and Wisconsin.



MacArthur Lock sees bulk of work as Soo is shut

By Gregory Piatt
Public Affairs Office

This winter, employees of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers carried out major maintenance work on the Soo Locks in Sault Ste. Marie, Mich.

Sandblasters stripped lead-based paint from gates inside the locks while crews replaced worn wooden and plastic fenders that line the upper walls of the locks.

Welders and other workers repaired the giant gates and their gear and door mechanisms and structures which allow vessels to enter and exit the locks.

“The crews exceeded my expectations,” Jim Collins, the supervisor of the shop yard and mechanical section at the Detroit District’s Soo Area Office, said about the 60 employees who carried out the winter maintenance.

The Corps’ Detroit District operates and maintains the locks. The Soo’s two operational locks – the Poe and MacArthur Locks – shut annually from Jan. 15 through March 25, in accordance with a multi-agency agreement regarding St. Marys River Winter Navigation and Soo Locks Operations and conduct maintenance.



Jim Collins

This winter, the MacArthur Lock closed Dec. 15, to undergo a Corps of Engineers mandated regular inspection held every five years.

The Poe’s maintenance was completed before the Soo opened for the Great Lakes shipping season March 25, while the MacArthur opened in May.

The major tasks needed to be accomplished during the maintenance period included work on the MacArthur’s guard gates, operating gates and fill/empty valves.

The Poe Lock work included work on all hydraulic power units,



Photos by Carmen Paris

Soo Area Office employees place large wood planks onto a barge, which placed at the upper end of the MacArthur Lock, during the winter maintenance period.

the gate actuator, a valve and electrical controls. Crews also worked on fender replacements and the rehabilitation of the power plant’s tailrace gantry crane.

One of the challenging tasks was to strip the lead-based paint from the MacArthur Lock’s guard gates. Crews at the Soo had not completed a major in-house blast and paint operation in more than 30 years.

Many of the young guys volunteered to blast because it got them out of the severe cold and into a climate controlled containment area, Collins said. “But they earned their money,” he added. First, the blasters underwent three days of training from the Detroit District’s Safety Office on hazards specific to the winter work plan. They also had to become compliant with the latest OSHA and EPA requirements for dealing with lead-based paint.

The crews erected a containment area around each gate leaf, and all the air leaving the enclosure was scrubbed through a system of high efficiency particulate filters.

All workers entering the containment were blood tested for lead levels before and after the job and were equipped with protective equipment.

To further ensure lead didn’t leave the facility, a trailer with a clean room and shower facility was provided.

Randy McKinney, a Soo maintenance mechanic helper, said he liked working inside blasting. The work also allowed him to see what he accomplished, McKinney said.

Since the St. Paul District is an expert in lock sandblasting and painting operations, several personnel from the Mississippi Valley Division’s district were brought in to train and augment crews at the Soo.

One of those St. Paul sandblasters, Joel Miller-Oates, said it was



Corps employees bust out concrete as they perform maintenance on the MacArthur Lock this winter.

for winter maintenance period



Photo by Lynn Duerod

Corps employee Bill Campbell works on the MacArthur Lock during the winter maintenance period.

great working in a climate-controlled area.

“In our district we blast outside,” he said. Everything here is well-lit, the Soo had nice equipment and there were no safety issues, Miller-Oates added.

John Laitinen, a Soo master derrick boat operator, was one of the few people tasked to make sure all the



John Laitinen

equipment and the sandblasters used were working. “The toughest job is moving the scaffold and to make sure everything is going around the clock,” Laitinen said.

The sandblasting work was conducted during the day to minimize the noise impact to a nearby hotel while the repainting of the gates occurred at night.

In other parts of the locks, fender crews replaced worn oak and plastic timbers on the east center pier and southwest pier. Crews also replaced rubber fenders and fender steel on the Poe and MacArthur Locks’ west nose pier. The fenders keep ships from bumping into the lock’s structure, damaging the lock and the vessel.

Mechanical crews worked on the Poe Lock hydraulic power units, filtering oil, inspecting components and

‘Dirty Jobs’ tackles the Soo Locks

By Lynn Duerod
Public Affairs Officer

The dirty work of going into the bowels of the Soo Locks and cleaning and greasing its inner mechanisms is one of the latest tasks that will be featured on the Emmy-nominated show “Dirty Jobs with Mike Rowe”.

The show’s producer said they expect the episode about the Soo Locks to air on the Discovery Channel sometime in September. The program airs nationally and internationally.

Rowe and the “Dirty Jobs” film crew visited the locks in Sault Ste. Marie in early March and worked out in the winter weather and inside the lock. Some of the jobs Rowe performed were to clean and grease valve engine sector gear, and replace and tighten a bolt on that gear – all in the MacArthur Lock’s gate house. He also did lateral cleaning in the MacArthur Lock culvert and mucking in the Poe/Davis Locks’ well tunnel.

Blustery winter weather delayed the crew from filming and they got started later than expected. As a result, they extended their stay longer so they could complete the jobs that were originally scheduled.

In addition to the work, the Corps’ Detroit District hosted a press conference with Rowe at the locks. According to the film crew, this was only the second time in the show’s 200 episode history that Rowe has been available to the press.

testing the equipment. The Poe’s south hydraulic actuator also was replaced.

The MacArthur’s downstream operating gate leafs were both jacked, the anchorages disassembled, the anchorage bores were built up and re-bored, and new anchorage pins were installed. The cracked concrete in the embedded anchorage was chipped out to allow for inspection of a connection point and then replaced. The quoin and miter blocks were inspected, bolts tightened and grease lines were replaced.



Photo by Lynn Duerod

Mike Rowe, host of the “Dirty Jobs with Mike Rowe” on the Discovery Channel, emerges from a day of dirty work at the Soo Locks in Sault Ste. Marie in early March.

Another crew completely disassembled the MacArthur’s gear train to replace a worn pinion gear on the south gate engine. The work involved removal of a 7,000 pound sector gear and field machining of new bearings.

“This was the first time it was replaced since it was built in 1943,” said Dan Ellis, who worked on the gear assembly. ❧



Pies fly in CFC fundraiser



Delia Martinov gets Maj. Mike Brooks.



Employees watch pie toss.



Jack Frost zaps Mike O'Brien.

Photos by Gregory Piatt



Lt. Col. James Davis wipes the cream from \$400-cream-pie-bid from his eyes.



Michelle Booker takes aim to pie Gary O'Keefe during the fundraiser that made \$796.

Fun had by all at the District's holiday party



Julie Udell (left) and Alaa Jafar keep the beat to the tunes.



Valerie Stevens unwraps her White Elephant gift.

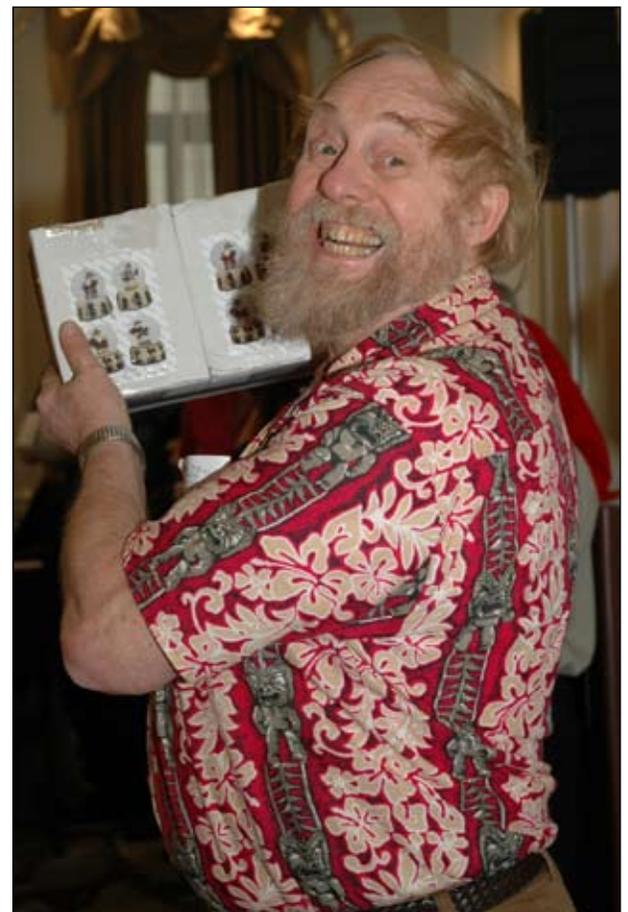


Ricky Garcia (left) and Pat O'Connor entertain the crowd.

photo by
Cassandra Kardeke



Laura Wanielista, wife of Corps retiree Joe Wanielista, ended up with an unwanted shark lamp in her first selection during the White Elephant gift game.



Les Weigum hams it up with his White Elephant gift.



Great Lakes Update

Great Lakes Region Forum on '09 Projects

About 90 people attended the Great Lakes Contractor Industry Forum on March 30, in Detroit for a heads-up meeting about the Corps' workload for this year.



Photo by Gregory Piatt

Marilyn Hill, the Detroit District's Chief of Contracting, explains the contracting process to attendees of the Great Lakes Contractor Industry Forum in March.

The Corps wanted contractors to know an increased workload was coming as a result of the 2009 Omnibus Bill and from the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009. Much of that workload would be contracted in a small window which would close by Sept. 30.

"We are concerned about capacity because we have a large workload," Mike O'Bryan, the Detroit District's Chief of Engineering and Technical Services, told contractors.

Corps officials from Detroit, Chicago and Buffalo attended the forum, where fiscal year 2009 Great Lakes Navigation Projects – dredging plan and non-dredging work – were presented along with the region's Veterans Affairs workload. Contractor capacity was also discussed.

The forum was held just weeks before 2009 U.S. Army Corps of Engineers/Society of American Military Engineers Small Business Workshop on contracting opportunities with the Armed Services, which was held at Selfridge Air National Guard Base in late April.

Great Lakes dredging team meets in Detroit

Corps dredging experts from the Detroit, Chicago and Buffalo Districts met in mid-January with the director of programs from the Great Lakes and Ohio River Division to discuss the upcoming Great Lakes dredging season.

During the Great Lakes Navigation Dredging Summit in Detroit, 15 Corps experts reviewed the execution of last fiscal year's dredging program and also looked at how the Corps could improve this year's dredging program.

This review occurred before the 2009 Omnibus Bill and American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009, or better known as the Stimulus Package, passed. But the experts were anticipating a larger dredging schedule this year because of the extra funding and many of the dredging contracts

need to be awarded before Sept. 30.

"Dredging is a very important part of our division and the Corps dredging team has to be on top of its

game," said Michael White, director of Programs, Great Lakes and Ohio Rivers Division, about executing an increased dredging schedule.



Photo by Gregory Piatt

Michael White, director of Programs, Great Lakes and Ohio River Division, tells officials from the Detroit, Chicago and Buffalo Districts that they need to all be on the same page when executing this year's Great Lakes dredging program.

More Great Lakes Update

Marquette Field Office

Corps helps with new bridge

A dedication ceremony was held in November, formally opening the new bridge along County Road 497 over the Sturgeon River in Nahma, Mich.

The Corps' Detroit District was one of the federal and state agencies which assisted on the \$1.6 million project, which used federal and state funds. The Corps issued the permit for the bridge. The original one-lane bridge was closed in 1991 after its decking was deemed unsafe for vehicle traffic.



Photo by Bob Deroche

Federal, state and local officials gathered in November for a ribbon cutting opening at a new bridge along County Road 497 over the Sturgeon River in Nahma, Mich.

Duluth Area Office

'Cold hand Duluth'

The Duluth Area Office paired with the St. Paul District for a Corps exhibit at the Duluth Boat Show in mid-February.

The booth's water safety focus came from a participatory program called "Cold Hand Luke." The challenge was to learn about hypothermia by retrieving bolts, nuts and washers from the bottom of small tank of ice water.

After dropping them back in, the participant would hold their hand

in the water until the cold became unbearable, and then try to pick the bolts, nuts and washers back up again.

More than 200 kids, families and adults participated, and the exhibit was well received. It especially attracted young and teenage boys, a group that doesn't generally visit the Corps booth.



Photo by Mary George

A Duluth boat show attendee thrust his hand into ice water to pick up bolts, nuts and washers in the Corps' hypothermia exhibit at the show.



Photo by Carmen Paris

Soo Area Office

NTI films at Soo

Northern Transitions Inc. filmed its employees, who are contractors at the Corps' Soo Area Office, in early March for a promotional video about the private, nonprofit organization that finds work for persons with developmental disabilities.

Larry Miller and Russ Cardamoni, both NTI contractors working at the Soo, carry out their duties as they are filmed for an NTI promotional video.

The film, shot at the Soo, will provide information about the services that NTI provides to customers and clients. The area office is in the fourth year of a five-year contract with NTI, which supplies 21 workers for various jobs, such as janitorial services, grounds maintenance, snow removal and maintenance of government-owned electric carts. Also, NTI leases electric carts, lawn tractors and snow throwers to the area office.



Coast Guard assists Corps with ice jam after Ottawa County workshop in January

By Cassandra Kardeke
Public Affairs Office

On a cold and snowy day in Grand Haven, Mich., personnel from the U.S. Coast Guard, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, the county's emergency management departments, and residents attended a Jan. 15 workshop to learn about what causes and how to prevent ice jams and flooding.

The Corps' Lake Michigan area office and Ottawa County emergency management officials held two ice jam workshops in mid-January at the Grand Haven Community Center just weeks after a local railroad bridge impeded the ice flow, causing flooding upstream on the Grand River.

Carl Platz, a project manager with the Corps' Lake Michigan Area Office, reminded city and public safety officials that the Corps of Engineers can help with preventive measures to keep the jams from reoccurring, especially the one near the U.S. Highway 31 bridge over the Grand River, which is next to the railroad bridge that caused the December ice jam.

One such method to prevent a jam and flooding is to utilize the U.S. Coast Guard, Platz said.

In January, county emergency and public safety officials did just that. They contacted the Corps' Grand Haven Sub Office to request a Coast Guard cutter before a repeat of the December ice jam.

The USCGC Katmai Bay, 140-foot ice-breaking cutter was brought in from Sault Ste Marie, three weeks



Photo by Thomas O'Bryan

The USCGC Katmai Bay plows through the ice flow in February near Grand Haven, Mich. The Corps and local officials held a January workshop to prevent ice jams on the Grand River and to mitigate flooding.

after the workshop.

"Because of the workshop, city officials learned that they can go through us to get help. It was one of the best things that ever happened in the community," said Tom O'Bryan,

area engineer for the Lake Michigan Area Office.

"Without the USCG and USACE working together to respond to their needs, the ice jam may have been a potential problem," O'Bryan said.



Carl Platz



Photo by Mariners' Church of Detroit

Detroit District Engineer, Lt. Col. James Davis, and Capt. Jerry Bisette, Grand Lodge President of the International Ship Master Association, participated in the 45th annual Blessing of the Fleet ceremony at the Mariner's Church in Detroit on March 8.

Employees Of The Quarter

Third Quarter

Kim Ihlenfeldt Kewaunee Office



Kim Ihlenfeldt

Ihlenfeldt did Grand Haven's daily administrative duties while carrying out her normal duties in the Kewaunee Office while Jennie Nowakowski was deployed. She did those duties with a smile, a positive attitude and without complaints.

Michael Geiger Engineering, Design and Construction Office



Michael Geiger

Geiger's diligent efforts to prepare scopes of work and other documents to facilitate contract awards for U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, and work on the Negaunee, Mich. Section 219 project was in addition to his other responsibilities. Geiger had to learn how to set up Design-Build contracts and then execute them in short order. Geiger provided invaluable support to the VA program.

Bryan Rintamaki Soo Area Office



Bryan Rintamaki

Rintamaki operates and maintains the St. Marys Hydro Power Plant, which supplies more than 20 percent of local power. Of all of the Corps hydro-generators, four of the five St. Marys generators ranked in the top five for total generating hours. The fifth generator is ranked eleventh. He is extremely good at planning maintenance activities in quick succession that minimize downtime.

Fourth Quarter

Toni Massart Kewaunee Office



Toni Massart

Massart is always willing to put her work on hold to help others despite being responsible for the budget for the Lake Michigan Area Office. For example, she assisted the Duluth Area Office in getting their budget to meet the district's requirement. Massart trained the Duluth staff to manage their own budget.

Scott Aldrich Soo Area Office

Aldrich's performance has been outstanding this period. Aldrich operated and maintained two survey vessels for – hydrographic surveys.



Scott Aldrich

In addition, he utilized the BUFE to complete after-dredge surveys for the Chicago District. He performed this work despite the fact that the duties assigned were outside of his position.

Cassandra Kardeke Public Affairs Office



Cassandra Kardeke

Kardeke's job is to keep employees informed and her efforts can be seen on the hall monitors, the district's Web site, and in compiling the news clips. In everything she gets involved with she gives her all. She has been a leading participant in planning two annual events. She doesn't need to be prodded, because

she just does it with spirit. Cass gets it done!

Richard Rizzo Engineering, Design and Construction Office



Richard Rizzo

Rizzo performed great as the technical coordinator on the International and Interagency Services, Department of Veterans Affairs Program. Rizzo completed critical documents for 10 new Inter-agency Support Agreement packages in very short order, working late hours and weekends through the holiday season. Furthermore, it led directly to the addition of 10 new projects worth \$11.8 million for the Detroit District.





Boat show exhibit a hit with kids and adults

Shortly after the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Detroit District, set up its booth in February at the Detroit Boat Show at the city's Cobo Center, its Soo Lock exhibit became popular

The Corps exhibit was a hit especially with the kids as they huddled around the new version of the replica of the world famous Soo Locks.

The new model was designed and constructed by Jim Selegan from the Detroit District's Hydraulics and Hydrology Office. The kids splashed the water, pulled the Lock's gates open, and played with the miniature Great Lakes freighter while parents praised the educational value of the model.

The Corps' booth was part of the boat show's "Kids Clinic" and the nearly 60 district volunteers working the show passed out literature on the Soo Locks, Corps projects in the Great Lakes and water safety information from the Corps' National Water Safety program. As a result, the Corps' Bobber the Water Safety Dog made a couple of appearances at the show.

Other materials at the booth were popular – a kids packet containing various Corps publications and a water

safety coloring book, Great Lakes water levels forecasts and charts, and regulatory permit applications. And of course, the Corps candy bowl was popular again this year with kids and adults alike.

Photos by Gregory Piatt and Darryl Williams



A young girl quietly picks a piece of candy at the Corps' booth..



Bobber the Water Safety Dog welcomes Boat Show attendees to the Corps' booth.



Corps employee Marie Strum hands one of the kids attending the show their mark-off sheet after demonstrating how the Soo Locks works. Kids needed to get a mark on their sheets after watching a demonstration in order to get a prize.



Detroit District's Darryl Williams (right), who spent a lot of time working at the Detroit Boat Show, listens to a visitor at the Corps' booth.

Detroit District Events

Detroit Engineers Day

June 19

Soo Locks Engineers Day

June 26

Groundbreaking for new Soo Lock

June 30

District hosts SAME conference

Aug. 11-13

Detroit picnic

Aug. 21