

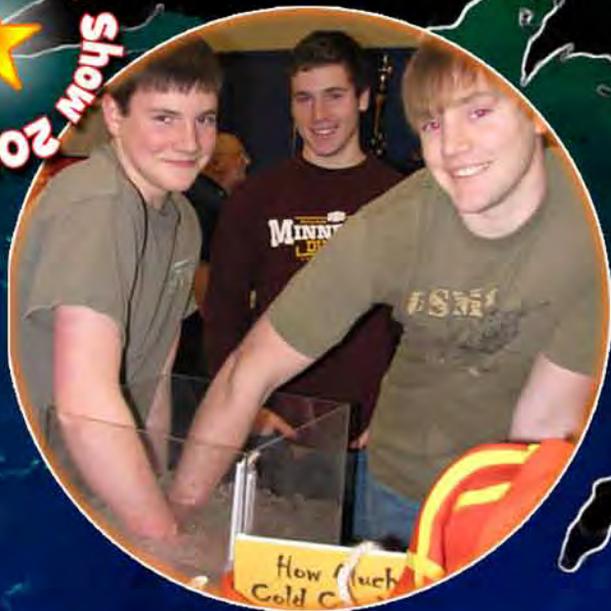
SOUNDINGS



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Duluth Boat Show 2010



Detroit Boat Show 2010

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Soundings

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Commander's Column



Lt. Col. James B. Davis

In recent months, I am sure you've read and heard a lot about the O-Plan.

Under the O-Plan, short for Operations Plan, our district mission is to provide vital public engineering services in peace and war to strengthen our nation's security, energize the economy, and reduce risks from disasters.

We strive to:

- Deliver superior performance every time;
- Set the standard for our profession;
- Make a unique, positive impact on our nation and other nations; and
- Build a strong bench – employees with knowledge, experience, expertise, and ongoing training to hone their skills.

On May 11, I met with employees in a brown bag informational meeting to share my insights on O-Plan, as well as listen to their questions and concerns. We plan to schedule at least one more such meeting in June, because it is important that each of our team members be informed and aware of the O-Plan, as well as their roles in helping it succeed.

Through the O-Plan, we can achieve

our vision of being an excellent engineering force – one that works with its partners through disciplined thought and action to deliver innovative and sustainable solutions to the nation's engineering challenges.

Our goal should be for the Detroit District, along with the entire corps, to be ONE DISCIPLINED TEAM — in thought, word, and action — and to meet our commitments, with and through our partners, by SAYING WHAT WE WILL DO, AND DOING WHAT WE SAY.

Numerous Detroit District initiatives will support this goal. Remember: Each and every one of us is important to the success of our mission. The O-Plan flows directly from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers' Campaign Plan and Great Lakes and Ohio River Division's Implementation Plan. It establishes a clear line of accountability to drive successful execution as the Corps endeavors to improve efficiency in all aspects of its work.

Bottom line: We seek to move from a process-oriented to a results-oriented organization. To this end, supervisors have conducted employee discussions on the O-Plan, explaining how and why each individual is a piece of the puzzle that supports Army Corps of Engineers' goals.

I encourage you to learn more about the O-Plan on our Intranet site – both to become better informed, and to increase your capacity to help us go from Good to GREAT!

More than 100 turn out for Asian Carp meeting



Photo by Tom Black

Jo-Ellen Darcy, assistant secretary of the Army for civil works, listens to a speaker during a Feb. 17 public meeting in Ypsilanti regarding combating the Asian Carp. Seated next to her is another panelist, Lindsay Chadderton, Ph.D., the Great Lakes aquatic invasive species director for the Nature Conservancy. About 100 people showed up at the three-hour meeting, sponsored by the Asian Carp Regional Coordinating Committee.

Division seeks ISO certification by fourth quarter 2010

by Joyce Hess, Detroit District USACE



Spring 2010

As part of its “Good to Great” initiative, the Detroit District has made available to its employees a Regional Business Process Manual. The web-based manual features more than 700 business processes, each with a link to Army Corps of Engineers regulations or guidance.

The manual results from the district’s ongoing efforts to achieve accreditation from the International Organization for Standardization, based in Geneva, Switzerland, which disseminates worldwide proprietary industrial and commercial standards.

The Great Lakes and Ohio River Division’s Regional Quality Management Team, which includes Joyce Hess and John Niemiec from Detroit, is seeking to achieve ISO 9001 accreditation of its Regional Quality Management System. This certification measures the division’s quality management efforts against an internationally recognized set of standards.

When the initiative began four years ago, the division decided to approach ISO certification as a region – unlike other divisions, in which each individual district achieved certification at its own pace.

Initially, the regional team was charged with capturing and writing down the Corps of Engineers business processes, starting with those that affect customer service. Team members compiled those processes in the online manual, which took a year to complete. Thereafter, the team began its quarterly auditing – assessing whether the processes were effective, and whether they were being used. Team members have striven to establish a culture focusing on customers first and building quality into all the Corps does.

The manual spells out policies and procedures for:

- Monitoring key business processes;
- Record keeping;
- Auditing for defective output and implementation of corrective actions;
- Top-down system review at regular intervals; and
- Continual improvement of the processes for optimum efficiency.

Studies and analyses have shown that having a system of well defined, repeatable processes minimizes defects.

“Detailed instructions make us less likely to forget an important step, send something to the wrong place, or perform steps in the wrong order,” Niemiec said. “We must remember that mistakes cost time and money to correct. They reduce product quality, and create unhappy customers.”

Niemiec added that uniform standards enable employees to achieve the positive by-products of greater speed and quality

in their everyday activities.

“Achieving ISO 9001 certification is very important for our division,” Niemiec said. “The regional quality team is asking colleagues to support our efforts. Their buy-in is the key element in taking the division from “Good to Great,” by consistently providing quality goods and services focused on customers’ needs.”

Once the Detroit District has been independently audited and certified to be in conformance with ISO 9001, it will proudly display and publicly state this accreditation on its website and at work sites.

Access the manual at:
<http://pmbpmanual.lrl.usace.army.mil/Qualtrax/Quality/ASP/Default.asp?PageID=10000500>

Corps district commanders address SAME conference

Good attendance and ample networking were in evidence at the 2010 Society of American Military Engineers, Great Lakes Restoration Initiative and Small Business Workshop, held April 14-15 in Detroit.

The SAME conference, which featured exhibits by attending organizations, was well attended by contractors, other civilian businesses, and representatives of federal and state agencies, all of whom learned about



business opportunities in the Great Lakes region.

On April 14, three U.S. Army Corps of Engineers district commanders spoke about ongoing and upcoming business opportunities available through GLRI: Col. Vincent V. Quarles, Chicago; Lt. Col. James B. Davis, Detroit; and Lt. Col. Daniel B. Snead, Buffalo.

The following day, Davis and Snead discussed opportunities the Corps of Engineers offers to large and small businesses. Lt. Col. Stephen Bales, Deputy

Commander of the Louisville District, spoke on military construction opportunities. Other speakers included Capt. Scott McCostlin, who described his experience serving in Iraq, and Thomas Vargo, acting director of the Michigan Small Business Administration.

Other participating agencies and organizations included TACOM, the Defense Logistics Agency, Michigan Minority Business Enterprise Center, Environmental Protection Agency, U.S. Forest Service, U.S. Geological Survey, Fish & Wildlife Service, Coast Guard, and National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration.

Employees of the Quarter

3rd Quarter 2009

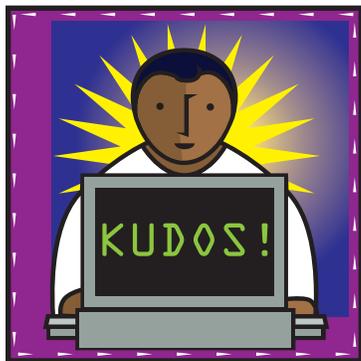


Karen Krepps
Environmental Branch

Karen Krepps demonstrated outstanding effort in convincing headquarters to bring its 11th annual "Consulting with Tribal Nations Training Conference" and sixth annual Tribal Nations Community of Practice meeting to the Detroit District.

She then helped plan and organize the events, which took place Oct. 10-23, 2009 in Mt. Pleasant, attended by 56 people from around the nation. Krepps, Detroit Tribal Liaison, and Paul Clautier from the Portland District worked together to organize the training and meeting with the Saginaw Chippewa Indian Tribe. The conference took place at the Soaring Eagle Resort in Mt. Pleasant, Mich.

The conference was judged a huge success and the Tribe presented a traditional Indian blanket to the District following completion of the session.



Nick Zager
Geotech & Structural Engineering Branch

Nick Zager, a civil engineer, provided innovative design support for several Operations & Maintenance projects during the third quarter of 2009.

His efforts included the design of a mechanically stabilized earth wall for the Erie Pier confined disposal facility in Duluth, Minn., and two concrete walkways for Saugatuck Harbor and Sturgeon Bay.

The Duluth project was an alternative design replacing a previous plan that was deemed not feasible. It provided a stable unloading area for the dredge disposal site. Zager completed the design in a short time frame to meet contracting deadlines by the end of July 2009 for an award in fiscal year 2009.

Zager's extra efforts also prevented delays to the two structural repair contracts at Saugatuck and Sturgeon Bay. The modifications were requested in August to include additional walkway features not part of the original contract. Zager worked extra hours as needed to expedite the design changes and avoid delaying contract work.

Zager also visited the Saugatuck site and coordinated all design and construction concerns with field office personnel and the contractor. His positive attitude and solid work ethic served the Structural & Engineering Branch well during a busy summer.



Joshua Keyser
Soo Area Office

Joshua Keyser, a powerplant shift operator, is one of four people responsible for the maintenance and operation of four hydro-generators at Sault Ste. Marie, Mich. It is not uncommon for technical problems to develop outside of Keyser's 7 a.m. to 3:30 p.m shift hours. Crises occur like a computer systems malfunction, flooding of the turbine sump, or blackouts of the electrical power grid.

Regardless of the hour of day or how inclement the weather, Keyser selflessly responds to all types of random failures typical of a modern hydro plant. His devotion made it possible for his plant, the St. Marys Falls Canal Hydro Plant, to be designated a "Top Performer" by the Electric Utility Cost Group. Meeting any one of four criteria enables a plant to be designated a Top Performer. Seventeen Army Corps of Engineers plants were designated Top Performers, and 13 of them met only one criterion. Four, including the St. Marys Falls facility, met two criteria.

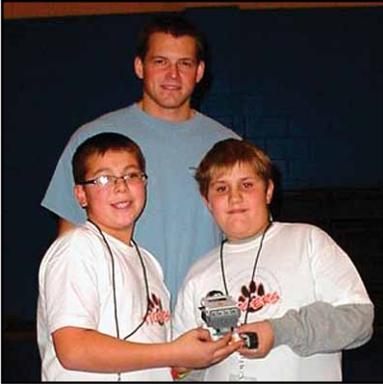
"Mr. Keyser is a talented hydro operator who is devoted to supplying reliable, economical power to the local community," said his supervisor, Walter Hart.



Spring 2010

Soo Area Office intern coaches top rookie Lego team

by Tom Black, Detroit District



Nick and two of the participants of the League proudly show off their robot.

Agriculture has 4-H and Future Farmers of America; law enforcement has youth police academies; and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers has the Lego League.

Perhaps it's not an exact correlation, but the Army Corps of Engineers does like to see youths develop an interest in engineering.

Since many children enjoy Legos, those colorful, interlocking plastic squares that can be used to construct buildings, houses, or robots, it makes sense to encourage their creativity. Who knows, this just might inspire some budding young engineers.

Nick Springer hopes so. The Soo Area Office engineering intern enjoys helping kids discover what great work they can do – for example, designing, building and programming a Lego robot.

Last fall, Springer coached a robot design team from Soo Township Elementary School in Sault Ste. Marie, Mich., to be the best finish of any rookie team in the First Lego League tournament in a statewide competition in Flint, Mich.

“FIRST” (For Inspiration and Recognition of Science and Technology) founded the Lego League in 1998 to inspire students interested in engineering and technology, as well as to promote teamwork and collaboration with like-minded students.

This was the first time Soo Elementary ever fielded a Lego League team.

During a roughly six-week period (including regional competition at Lake Superior State University in November) Springer met with the students two days a week after school for about an hour-and-a-half, supporting their efforts to design, program, and fine-tune the robot.

The state finals, which featured 48 teams, took place at Carman-Ainsworth Middle School in Flint on Dec. 12, 2009. Taking the same name as their school's athletic teams, the Soo Elementary Tigers consisted of nine boys and one girl, ages 10 to 12. Their charge was to construct an autonomous, pre-programmed robot that would navigate a 3-by-6-foot game course — knocking over certain markers, collecting pieces, and returning them to the starting base. The students named their 6-by-4-by-8-inch robot “Billy-Bob.” It operated on a track drive system similar to that of a tank, and, like all the robots in the competition, used a Lego Mind-

storms microcontroller.

Additionally, students were required to give several presentations, including one describing a study on a mode of transportation, one on the importance of teamwork, and one on the design and functioning of their robot. At the end of the competition, the Soo Elementary Tigers received a team trophy for their top rookie finish, and each student received a medal.

Springer said he enjoyed working with the students because they were fast learners and enthusiastic. “They were quick to pick up on some of the details of the programming – something that can be difficult for young minds to grasp,” he said. “Nick has shown great dedication to this challenge,” said John Swartzlander, a welder in the Soo Area Office who served as First Lego League coordinator. “His interaction and leadership skills with the children have inspired the team to achieve at this level.”



Mariners Church hosts Blessing of the Fleet



Photo provided by Mariners Church
Lt. Col. James Davis continues the long-honored tradition of a Detroit District Commander ringing the bell during the annual Blessing of the Fleet Ceremony, March 14 at Mariners Church in Detroit, on behalf of fallen military heroes. The service included prayers, hymns by J.S. Bach, the U.S. and Canadian national anthems and “Taps,” played by an honor guard during the presentation of the wreaths.

Deputy commander speaks at Detroit engineers' meeting



Civil engineer intern Alicia Lane presents a certificate of appreciation to former Deputy Commander Lt. Col. Michael Brooks after he spoke to a local chapter of the National Society of Black Engineers.

Former Detroit District Deputy Commander Lt. Col. Michael Brooks spoke on "USACE and the Stimulus" at the Oct. 23, 2009 meeting of the Detroit Alumni Extension, of the National Society of Black Engineers, NSBE. The gathering took place at the Engineer Society of Detroit's Southfield, Mich. office.

His presentation marked the beginning of the DAE's 2009-2010 series of general body meetings. It included

highlights of funding for the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers from the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act, focusing both on national implications and the impact on Michigan projects.

Brooks' presentation was informative and well received, said Alicia Lane, a civil engineer intern with the Detroit District, as it is rare for government officials to appear at DAE meetings and speak on current funding directives such as ARRA.

Lane also addressed the gathering, presenting an article that appeared in the *Grand Rapids Business Journal* about an African American contractor who was awarded an ARRA contract for the Grand Haven, Mich. revetment repair. She noted that ARRA funds have made an impact on black engineers within the state of Michigan, and on behalf of the DAE presented Brooks with a certificate of appreciation for being the guest speaker.

Detroit District gearing up for busy construction season

by Tom Black, Detroit District

The Detroit District had awarded seven fiscal year 2010 dredging contracts as of late March, including one funded by the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act, also known as the economic stimulus package.

ARRA funded a \$794,800 contract awarded to Ryba Marine Construction Co. of Cheboygan, Mich., for dredging 52,000 cubic yards of shoaled material from St. Joseph Inner Harbor. The work started March 27, with an expected late April conclusion.

Contracts awarded with Corps of Engineers fiscal year 2010 funds for spring and summer jobs include:

- Two contracts awarded to Luedtke Engineering Co. of Frankfort, Mich.: \$1,408,300 for dredging 160,000 cubic yards of material from the Detroit River; and \$303,800 for dredging the Grand Haven and Holland outer harbors.;

- A \$328,350 contract for Great Lakes Dock & Materials, LLC, of Muskegon, Mich., which will dredge 50,000 cubic yards of shoal material from Ontonagon Harbor in the western Upper Peninsula.

- \$1,047,650 – King Company, Inc., Holland, Mich., dredging 70,000 cubic yards of shoals from the Holland Inner Harbor;

- \$545,550 – King Company, dredging over 60,000 cubic yards

of shoals in the St. Joseph Outer Harbor and 6,000 cubic yards in the New Buffalo Harbor; and

- \$421,750 – Ryba Marine Construction Co., 36,500 cubic yards from Little Lake Harbor in Luce County, and 9,500 cubic yards from Whitefish Point Harbor in Chippewa County.

Meanwhile, at the Soo Locks, crews have been busy replacing

large timbers that serve as buffers inside the MacArthur Lock gate and on nearby piers. The wooden fenders serve as a buffer, allowing ships to glide into the lock, also preventing damage to ship hulls while the vessels are tied up to piers waiting to enter the lock.

The white oak timbers used on the lock gates and piers are 12 feet long, 10-by-12 inches thick, and weigh 500 pounds apiece, said Thomas Goebel, maintenance mechanical leader with the Soo Area Office.

At the West Center pier, Goebel's crew tried something new: augmenting new wooden timbers with plastic fenders so as to reduce wear-and-tear on the wooden ones, which are susceptible to cracking and

splintering. Workers also replaced fender timbers on the MacArthur Lock lower approach and in the boat basin used for Corps of Engineers vessels.

"All kudos go to our crew; they do a fantastic job, in all types of weather," Goebel said, singling out Kevin Farnquist and Mike Thompson, who led two separate crews this winter, in particular. The six-man, rotating crews stay busy with lock maintenance most of the year, Goebel said.

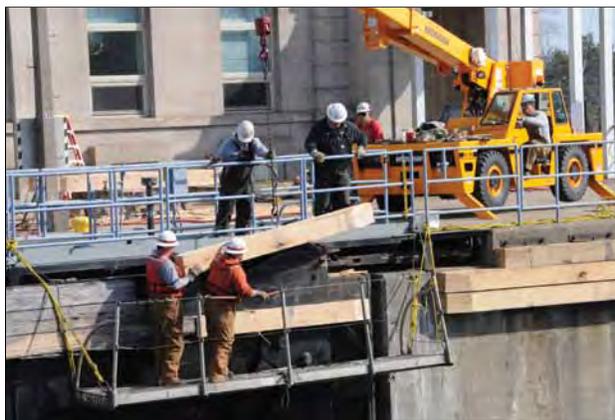


Photo by Carmen Paris
Soo Area Office employees Henry Lowes and Joe Bailey install timbers on the MacArthur Lock gate, while coworkers Kevin Farnquist and Ted Mrozek look on. Also pictured are Charles Rogers (red shirt) and Mike Thompson (operating crane).



Spring 2010

Corps' boat show exhibits attract steady crowd

by Tom Black, Detroit District

Two boat shows during February offered the Detroit District an excellent opportunity to showcase its many programs and achievements.

The Detroit Boat Show took place Feb. 13-21 at Cobo Center, while the Duluth Boat, Sport & Travel Show was held Feb. 17-21 at the Duluth Entertainment and Convention Center.

Detroit District volunteers interacted with many young families who stopped by the Army Corps booth so the children could partake in "Kid's Clinic," a program to educate children about boating safety and navigation.

The Soo Locks replica, designed by hydraulic engineer Jim Seleagan of the Hydraulics & Hydrology Branch, was a popular attraction for adults and children alike. It provides an easy-to-understand demonstration of how locks work and why the Soo Locks are essential to facilitate shipping and commerce.

About 62,000 people attended the show, according to its sponsor, the Michigan Boating Industries Association. The Detroit District promoted its achievements and initiatives through large poster boards depicting Army Corps projects and the distribution of materials.

Volunteers handed out a variety of brochures, press releases, fact sheets and boating safety materials. Some of the most popular items given away



Photo by Mary George
Showgoers check out the Duluth Area Office exhibit, which focused on the elements of water safety. Nearly 15,000 attended the Duluth Boat, Sport & Travel Show.

were the "Think Safety" plastic toss rings, Bobber the Water Safety Dog coloring books, six-month Great Lakes water level forecast and the 2010 Water Level Summary. Tattoos, stickers and candy were popular, too.

Most visitors' questions and comments pertained to the forecast for 2010 water levels, ice jams and ice-breaking activity in the St. Clair River, Asian Carp and the Soo Locks.

"I had the opportunity to stop by our display and was impressed by the friendliness and knowledge of everyone working the booth," said Maj. John Richards, Detroit District deputy commander. "The Detroit Boat Show offers us a great opportunity to promote what we do here in the District and to address some of the public's questions and concerns."

Five hundred miles northwest of the Motor City, the Duluth Area Office

boat show exhibit focused on an overarching theme of safety — in water and on ice. "Cold Hand Luke," an interactive demonstration, showed how exposure to cold water can impede muscular dexterity, thus making it difficult for a person to avoid drowning if he or she fell through the ice into deep water.

A plexiglas box contained ice water, with a potpourri of nuts, bolts and washers at the bottom. Participants were asked to pick up a handful of the hardware and hold it in their hand in the ice water until they felt cold. Then they were told to drop the items and try to pick them up again, which proved very difficult for most participants. This underscored the dangers of venturing out onto the ice without knowing for sure how safe it is.

The Duluth exhibit also included information on the Lake Superior Marine Museum Association, employment with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and volunteer activities. The Duluth volunteers gave out Lake Superior Maritime Visitors Center brochures, water level information, coloring books and ice and water safety handouts. The booth was adjacent to the St. Paul District booth, which offered information on campground and recreational opportunities.

Photo by Tom Black
Left: Visitors look over the poster display, Soo Locks replica and other items in the Detroit District exhibit at Cobo Center. Darryl Williams of contracting answers a question from one of the estimated 62,000 attendees.





Photos by Cassandra Kardeke

Are we having fun yet? The faces of Dorretta Calhoun-Battles and Tom McKay would seem to indicate a great big “affirmative.”

Fun, Food and Friends – Holiday Party Well Attended

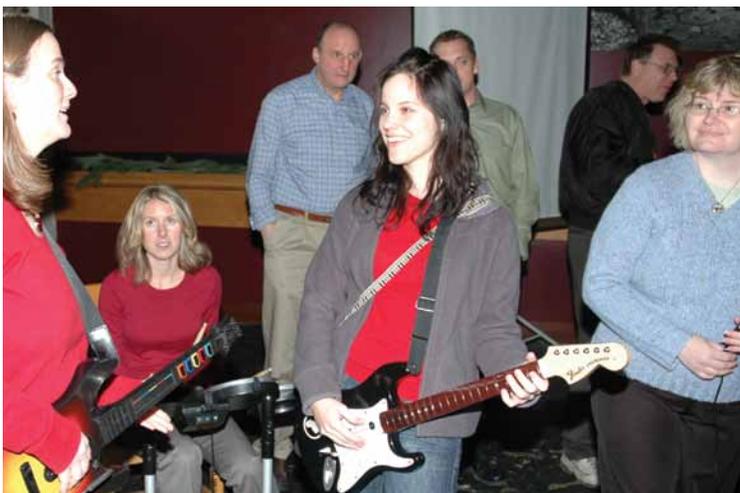
The Detroit District held its holiday party on Dec. 16 at a local restaurant. Current employees and their family members attended, as did numerous retirees. The relaxed atmosphere encouraged interaction and mingling among the District’s long-time and new employees. Events included a rock band contest, a tour of the facility, and a competition to see who could guess the most correct names of employees pictured as infants or toddlers. Lynn Duerod took top honors, correctly picking 16 of 18 names. Bill Rito guessed 12 correctly, and Jan Smith and Mike Allis tied for third with 10 correct names. The winners received gift baskets.



So you wanna be a rock-n-roll star? Winners of the “Rockband Champ” award, from left, were Mike Allis, Keith Kompoltowicz, Gail Monds (singing Billy Idol’s “White Wedding”) and John Allis. The rockers each won a miniature engraved trophy.



To paraphrase Don McLean, “A long, long time ago, I can still remember how those children used to make me smile...” Detroit District employees try to guess who’s who on the baby photo poster.



Laura Garrett and Katie Schill jam on guitar, Rebecca Chorenko keeps a steady beat and Rachel Nys sings Bon Jovi’s “Living on a Prayer.”



Les Weigum breaks bread with Detroit District retirees Bill Rossow and Surendra Sukhtankar.