

# From Where I Sit

## When you close a door ... take the lessons with you

When I learned I was hired as a public affairs specialist here at the District in mid-2009, I didn't know anything about Eastern Washington nor a soul in town, but I did know one thing: this is where I was supposed to be.

From that day forward, I learned life-changing and metamorphic lessons through true friendship, community, counsel, proxy families, spiritual renewal, and experimental business blunders.

My time here taught me lessons to reflect on years to come and wisdom to share over a lifetime.

I've been fortunate to get to know many of you after writing countless articles and producing 17 *Intercom* magazines.

I walk away with a deep appreciation and respect for what you do every day. My job allowed me to understand your role in moving America forward ... and in some cases, the world!

Every *Intercom* afforded me the opportunity to gain a deeper understanding of exactly how our District lives up to its motto: Serving our community, our Nation, the world.

Your reach is far, wide and effective.

I've seen firsthand how you've made a difference in rural communities through the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009. I've witnessed your partnerships in action with regional organizations to improve our environment and educate our youth.



I've been amazed by your volunteer-spirit to assist in emergency response efforts and Overseas Contingency Operations. And I'm still in awe at your impeccable ability to keep our multipurpose hydropower facilities running day to day and fueling renewable energy to power our Nation.

Living in Walla Walla taught me so much through the good and the bad.

I bought a house, adopted another dog and grew with many people in the "friendliest town in America." In my personal time, I began part-time graduate school with the Johns Hopkins University online and employed my pay-

checks to discover myself in the unfamiliarity of five countries and 13 U.S. states.

I am thankful for every moment because it helped me grow and prepare for the next chapter.

I will finish out 2013 as a married gal (as of July 27) in Miami working on completing my Master's studies in digital communications.

But my life wouldn't have been this fruitful and I wouldn't feel so prepared for the next step if you wouldn't have been so fundamental to my life.

With thanks, I part with hope that we keep in touch so we continue sharing our stories years on end.

Signing off with my deepest gratitude and respect,

*Terri A. Rorke*

*Public Affairs Specialist & Intercom Editor*

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# Mill Creek team opens new, sustainable building

story by Gina Baltrusch



Rainy weather couldn't stop Mill Creek Dam and Bennington Lake's grand opening and ribbon-cutting ceremony April 19 to celebrate the completion of their new office building, the Walla Walla District's first civil works construction project built to achieve Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) sustainable-building standards.

The new visitor area just inside the front entrance was filled with visitors and District staff as Deputy District Commander Maj. Rod Baker and Operations Project Manager Rick Beauchesne officiated a short ceremony to mark the occasion.

Mill Creek staff and project delivery team members provided tours of the new facility to highlight the new office's energy- and water-efficient systems that will reduce operations and maintenance costs while will better accommodating staff and visitors.

"This project's energy-saving features are designed to achieve a 30-percent reduction in energy consumption and significantly reduce office operating costs over the lifetime of the building," said Simeon Francis, the new office building construction project manager.

Construction began in February 2012, and Mill Creek staff moved into the new building early March. The new 3,756-square-foot office

replaces a 900-square-foot configuration of building additions that did not meet staff or visitor needs or meet modern building construction standards.



(From left) District Project Manager Simeon Francis, Maintenance Worker David Parker, Deputy Commander Maj. Rod Baker, and Natural Resources Management Supervisor Rick Beauchesne cut a ceremonial ribbon to celebrate the grand opening of Mill Creek's new sustainable office building near Walla Walla, Wash., April 19.



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## On the cover



**Members of the Pacific Northwest Waterways Association tour Little Goose Lock and Dam's navigational and hydropower facilities March 21.**

photo by Gina Baltrusch