

INTERCOM

US Army Corps of Engineers, Walla Walla District
Vol. 38 No. 4 October - December 2011

Preparing for cavitation repair



From Where I Sit

Safety at the forefront

We've all heard that safety is the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers' highest priority. Well, as the Walla Walla District releases fiscal year 2012's new Safety Implementation Plan, this statement is even truer.

As one of the two McNary Lock and Dam environmental compliance and safety officers in Umatilla, Ore., I believe the new safety plan provides us with the guidance and structure to facilitate the continual improvement of the safety culture across the District.

The new safety plan includes a few changes we can expect:

Online training and testing for both Corps and contractor personnel. Everyone will be notified when these modules are available for use.

The new Hazardous Energy Control Program is in effect. This program is a keystone for safety of personnel, equipment and the environment.

Promoting the use of the Near Miss Reporting Program. This program allows the entrant to log an incident which is then sent to the District Safety Office for review and to be shared in after-action reports to all employees.

The Near Miss Reporting program was developed by a Leadership Development Program class, but had since sat idle.

Behind every accident there is a near miss, and having the means to share those incidents could very well save a life.

To help move this plan forward, the

District is establishing six new safety specialist positions that will help us keep safety at the forefront of all our operations.

Each facility will have a full-time safety specialist to assist in managing a wide variety of safety-required mandates.

Two of the components the safety specialists will help manage are the mandated position and activity hazard analyses.

The new PHA/AHA library will allow supervisors and employees to instantly understand precautions of their work environment.

By getting all Corps personnel involved in safety management, we can synchronize and share our individual strengths and past lessons learned.

With all the new initiatives, it is important to support these programs to further safety improvements within the District.

For more information on the current Safety Implementation Plan initiatives, visit the District's intranet safety website and click on "FY12 SMAP" under the Policy/Information tab.

*Carson Freels
Environmental Resource Specialist*



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Corps, District updating websites getting a face lift, trimming fat and a tummy tuck

story by Joe Saxon

The District's website is going away. But don't worry. We're going to bring it back. Sleeker.

All U.S. Army Corps of Engineers websites are going to migrate to a new, modern, efficient format in 2012. It's part of the Corps' effort to streamline the content management process and brand its websites with a consistent look and feel designed to deliver a rich end-user experience.

"Our District website contains more than 53,000 files, of which 33,000 have not been accessed in the past nine years. We need to clean that up," said Stephen Doherty, the District's website migration project manager.

"The migration will eliminate outdated information and establish a consistent identity that reinforces predictability so a visitor will know a USACE website when he or she sees it," he said.

The District's website will migrate in March, but there are a number of crucial steps that need to occur before then. Each section will need to appoint primary and alternate content providers who can inventory content and start removing old, duplicative data.

"Content providers and the Public Affairs office will coordinate on legacy content that will either migrate or be discarded," Doherty said, based upon a low, medium or high priority. "We think it will be better to build the system from the ground up, complete with sunset dates, rather than trying to accommodate old and outdated files," Doherty said.

"That way, we can focus on keeping the system streamlined and relevant and avoid having another 33,000 files that no one reads," he added.

Public Affairs will coordinate content provider training around early March. Afterwards, content providers and PA will work with the Defense Media Activity (DMA), the Corps headquarters' contracted Web team, to migrate content on their current sites to the new platform. This entails uploading files and documents, copying and pasting text from the legacy site, building Web pages, and setting up all the necessary modules for functionality and content.



INTERCOM is an unofficial publication authorized by the provisions of Army Regulation 360-1. It is published bimonthly by the Public Affairs Office, Walla Walla District, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. It has a distribution of 1,500 copies. Contents of the INTERCOM are not necessarily the official views of, or endorsed by, the U.S. Government, the Department of Defense, or the Walla Walla District, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers.

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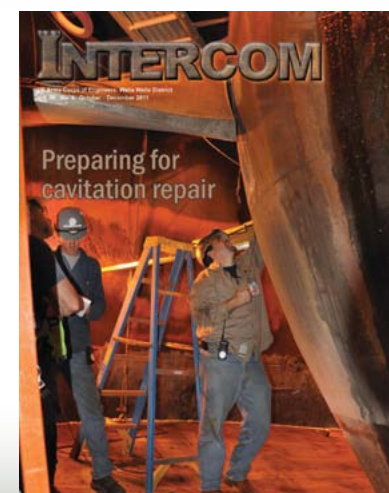
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On the cover



Hydro Consulting and Maintenance Services, Inc. worker Mallory Davis measures cavitation on unit three at Lower Granite Lock and Dam near Pomeroy, Wash.

photo by Stephen Doherty

How you can help make our new website a success:

1. Review the current, public website.
2. Ensure outdated, duplicative and inaccurate content is removed before migration.
3. Review current Web pages to ensure accurate, relevant information is featured.
4. Migrate content from existing site.
5. Contribute and edit content on the new public website once migration is complete.
6. Obtain training.

Programs Management

story by Joe Saxon

Every successful organization has its cornerstones. These people--individuals and teams serving as its foundation, its glue, the rock. They go the extra mile to rise above the day-to-day noise to keep the wheels turning to help organizations achieve excellence. They are not always recognized because they are nose-to-grindstone types who don't crave the spotlight or self-promote. They simply get the job done.

Dana Knudtson is one of these people, and as chief of Programs and Project Management Branch he is not alone. The Vancouver, Wash. native has a dedicated crew with him, daily pouring in a ton of sweat equity, working to make greatness possible.

U.S. Army Corps of Engineer districts depend on program managers to successfully integrate a myriad of business lines, money streams, project management processes, people and facilities into a finely tuned system that fully executes budgets and delivers quality products and services to the nation. According to Knudtson, the budget process used to be a somewhat stable process, but not now.

"During the last eight years there has not been a single, defined, consistent process from year to year. It continues to be ever changing, challenging at the moment, with way too many competing requirements for federal dollars. It means there are no established standard processes you can use from one year to the next. You expend the same amount of energy year after year learning what's in the guidance," he said.

Program managers also "develop, defend and execute" the budget, and though it sounds simple, it isn't.

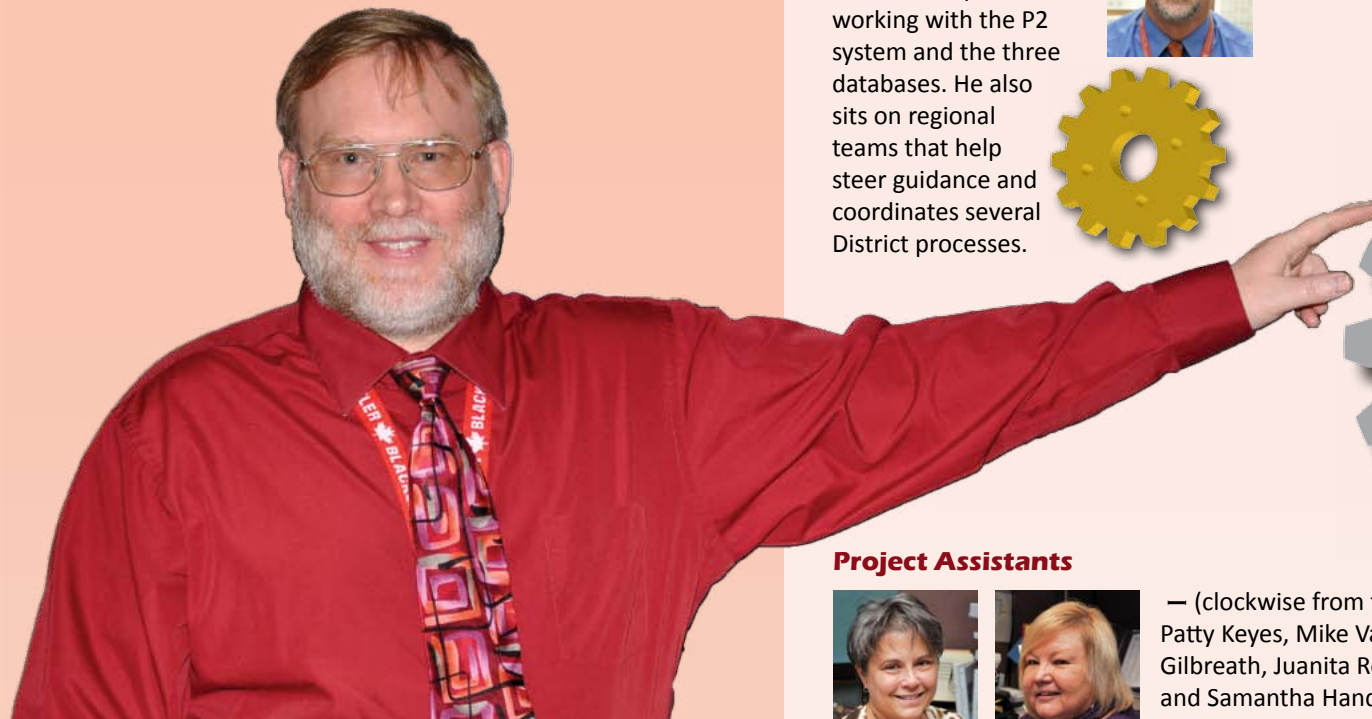
"Budget defense is a big part of what we do, which isn't easy in this budget-cutting environment," he said.

They answer weekly and sometimes daily data calls. They're simultaneously focused on executing the 2012 budget, while defending the 2013 budget and defining the 2014 budget.

"There is a lot of emphasis on identifying the real work that has to be done to keep the projects working at a minimum level, and we must work hard to defend the non-routine projects that have to get done. With no earmarks for the past couple of years, it becomes more challenging to maintain our infrastructure," he said.

That means spending a lot of time talking with a lot of people around the building to keep himself situationally aware.

"I rely upon a great many people to pull bits of information so we can answer the money stream questions. It takes evenings, nights and



Dana Knudtson

weekends. I don't make everybody happy all the time, but I try my best, and I have a great staff," Knudtson said. "They are a wonderful group of people fully dedicated to mission accomplishment and very capable in helping me acquire everything I need to know."

For Knudtson, much of that effort coalesces around the monthly Project Review Board (PRB) meetings he describes as "a continuing process that reports on the District's program."

"We've developed several different types of tools and methods to display data so that different people can read and understand it," he said. "We try and put it into the format that works best for current leadership."

"Overall, I enjoy the PRB," he said. "It's a meeting that requires me to do my due diligence to stay abreast of what's happening within the District." The PRB's preparation, however, is "intensive" he said. It requires a "great amount of work to pull information from Corps of Engineers Financial Management System and Oracle software databases."

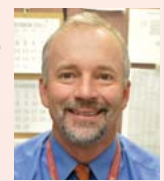
"But you have the ability to tell the story of how the program is performing and the challenges we encounter, while finding ways to celebrate our victories and accomplishments," he related.

Another key task involves preparing commanders for the annual Congressional visits to Washington D.C.

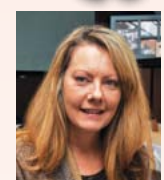
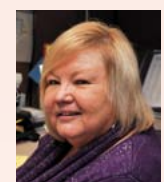
"I work with staff to prepare the annual Congressional visits to D.C. It's about a one-and-a-half to two-month ordeal once the president's budget is provided the first Monday in February.

"This is where we help educate and inform Congress on challenges we face," he said.

P2 Coordinator — Cary Rahn is responsible for implementing all activities required for working with the P2 system and the three databases. He also sits on regional teams that help steer guidance and coordinates several District processes.



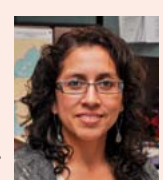
Project Assistants



— (clockwise from top) Debra Kendall, Patty Keyes, Mike Vandiver, Connie Gilbreath, Juanita Roberson, Kelly Cowden and Samantha Handcox are responsible for coordinating and quality controlling

all project inputs into P2. They work directly with budget assistants at the projects and with project managers identifying suggestions for how and where information should lie datewise in the scheduling system. They also update projects' status monthly.

Program Analysts — (clockwise from top) Lisa Rodighiero, Helene Chong, Sally Sipperley, Cristy Chavez-Ortiz are responsible for budget development, plus defense and execution, while working numerous internal and external data calls associated with funding. They develop work plans and identify excess funds that could be used in other Corps districts.



Program Managers — (clockwise from top) Randy Chong, Julie Davin, Jeff Sedgwick oversee specific parts of the District program and coordinate those portions of the budget with project managers responsible for individual projects.



photos by Stephen Doherty

Annual budget process

1st Quarter -- "Ideally we would have a signed public law but in reality, it's now just a series of continuing resolutions. That means we're challenged with numerous data calls asking, for example 'How much funding is required for one week through, say, the 18th of November?' Are special contracts needed? Is there any excess money you can offer for flooding? We're doing a lot of 'what if' scenarios in case we don't get a law funding us."

Midyear -- "Defense of the president's budget, Congressional visits, data calls from Congress -- 'Why is funding needed? What work can you perform?' You're defining the 2014 fiscal year

budget, defending the FY13 year budget and executing the FY12 budget and answering the numerous data calls on three different fiscal years all at the same time. It's an extremely chaotic quarter."

3rd Quarter -- "Final touches are put on the FY14 program budget. You've finished the defense of the FY13 budget and are loading it into P2 system, while doing mid-year reviews and prioritizing the FY12 program needs."

4th Quarter -- "Finalize loading the FY13 program while shutting down FY12 program."

"Imagine building a house and then redesigning and rebuilding the living room, kitchen, dining room and bathrooms multiple times throughout the year while designing a second house and planning a third home. That's similar to the challenge the programs management staff faces."

-Dana Knudtson

Making a presence *Around the District*

Employees of the Fourth Quarter

There's no time like the present to achieve goals, win races, improve the environment and connect with our community.

That's just what has been happening lately around the District.

Check it out!



Kerry Brink
Maint. Systems Analyst
Dworshak Dam



Jean Desjarlais
Contract Specialist
District Headquarters

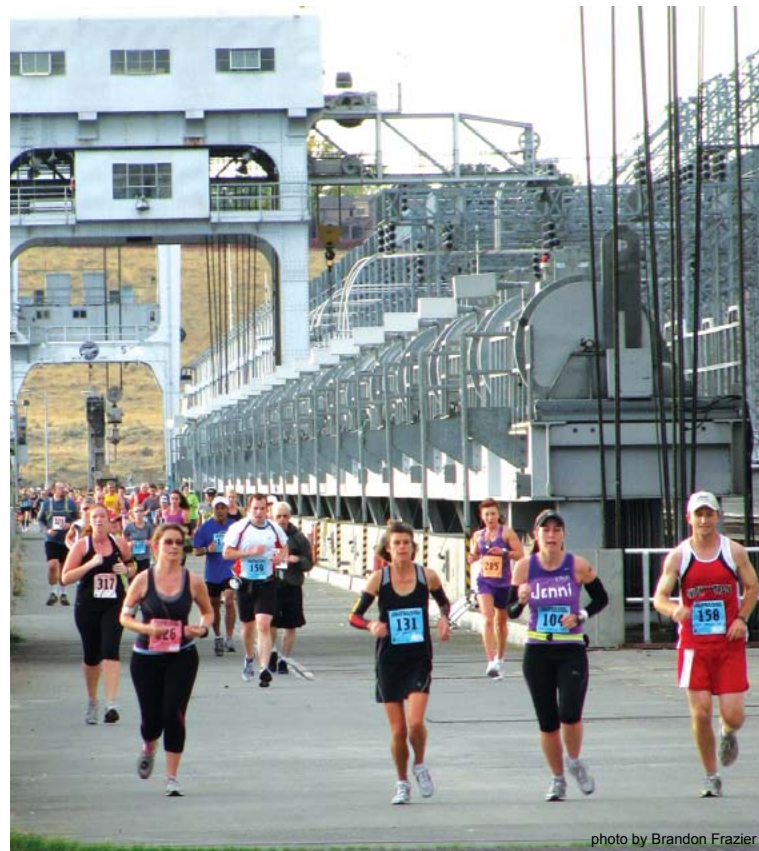


photo by Brandon Frazier

(Above) Runners check out McNary Lock and Dam as they compete in the Columbia River Power Marathon in Umatilla, Ore. in October. Walla Walla District Commander Lt. Col. David Caldwell made opening remarks before the race.

(Above, right) Ten Walla Walla University students volunteered at Rooks Park at Mill Creek near Walla Walla, Wash. in October as part of their yearly fall service day. They installed bases for six new garbage can holders and removed and replaced an old kiosk.

(Right) Bobber the Corps' water safety dog and District Natural Resource Specialist Michael Swenson hand out frisbees during the Veteran's Day Parade on Main Street in Walla Walla, Wash.



photo by Jeremy Nguyen



photo by Terri A. Rorke

District celebrates Hispanic Heritage Month

story by Andrew Dankel-Ibáñez

The Nation's theme for Hispanic/Latino Heritage Month 2011 is "Many Backgrounds, Many Stories ... One American Spirit."

The Presidential Proclamation for 2011 states, "From those who trace their roots to America's earliest days to those who recently came to the United States carrying nothing but hope for a better life, Hispanics have always been integral to our national story ... America is a richer and more vibrant country because of the contributions of Hispanics, and during National Hispanic Heritage Month, we celebrate the immeasurable impact they have made on our Nation."

Accounting for more than half of our nation's population growth from 2000 to 2010, the Hispanic/Latino community continues to have an even greater impact on our communities and our nation.

Whether we trace our roots to the Aztecs, Incas, Mayas or a variety of multiethnic and multicultural traditions, we share one American spirit and members of the Hispanic/Latino community will continue to shape who we are and what we have become as a people.

In honor of Hispanic Heritage Month 2011, a brown bag luncheon was hosted by the Equal Employment Opportunity office in October.



The District was fortunate again this year to have a presentation by Dr. Victor Chacon, senior director of diversity for the Washington State Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS) in Olympia, Wash.

The former college educator was joined by myself, a past colleague and current District EEO Specialist, for a presentation titled "Hispanics/Latinos in Washington State and the U.S."

National Hispanic Heritage Month is officially celebrated Sept. 15 to Oct. 15.



photos by Joe Saxon

The rich tapestry of Hispanic cultural heritage was on full display, above, during a speech by Dr. Victor Chacon, left, senior director of diversity for the Washington Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS) in Olympia, Wash.

Preparing the cavity

story and photos by Stephen Doherty



Fixing cavities, whether in teeth or in rutted steel, requires the same elements—find, drill, grind and fill.

Workers and contractors at Lower Granite Lock and Dam near Pomeroy, Wash. are grinding away at turbines while the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers works hard to keep hydropower facilities in good condition. They find it's a challenge with aging infrastructure.

Under certain operating conditions with turbines churning through water, the pressure of the water moving over a turbine blade can drop far enough to cause the water to turn into vapor, causing micro explosions referred to as cavitations that

can rut and damage turbine steel.

As the cavitations get deeper, maintenance workers may fill them with belzona, a type of epoxy, but that is only a short term solution.

To permanently fix the problem, the whole surface of the discharge ring, parts of the blades, runner, cone and hub are replaced with a new metal overlay.

The Corps brought in Hydro Consulting & Maintenance Services Inc., a woman-owned small business, to complete the repairs.

This specialty contractor is one of only a handful that is able to redo the top layer of metal on the discharge ring.

"This is the first time this work has been done to this unit at Lower Granite," said Rob Lustig, chief of maintenance at Lower Granite.

The process begins by identifying the areas of the turbine blades and discharge ring requiring repair or replacement.

Afterward, the contractor grinds all the metal to the lowest point in the cavitation, so everything is smooth. Then they re-weld the discharge ring with stainless steel to build the wall back up to its original depth.

According to Project Engineer Dan Forge, units three through six will be completed during a two-year time period.



(Left page) After sandblasting the turbine and discharge ring, a Hydro Consulting & Maintenance Services Inc. worker, left, takes cavitation measurements as Mallory Davis, center, collects data in October at Lower Granite Lock and Dam near Pomeroy, Wash. District employees, including Engineering Equipment Operator Leader Bradley Clark, right, identified spots requiring grinding and welding on unit three's turbine blade and hub. (Above, left) Workers inspect the discharge ring on unit three. (Above, right) Unit three blade is lit up to identify cavitation damage. (Left) Lights illuminate an otherwise vacant unit three scroll case at Lower Granite.

Boise Outreach Office

A Door to the Corps

story by Terri A. Rorke

Public outreach requires not only effective communication but understanding people's needs and backgrounds.

One of the best ways to do this is to have an open door, where members of the public, stakeholders and project partners can easily communicate with an organization at the local level.

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Walla Walla District has an outreach office in Boise, Idaho for this purpose.

With the District's headquarters building sitting more than 250 miles away in Walla Walla, Wash., the Boise Outreach Office offers the Southern Idaho region effective and tailored service for its needs.

"In order to do a good job working in Idaho, it's important to understand the politics and culture here," said Ellen Berggren, the District's outreach coordinator and project manager at the Boise office.

Most of the five employees working there have not only lived in the area for part of if not their whole lives. They also have a thorough understanding of the region's role players and geography.

The team's background allows each employee to connect on a deep level with people who live in Idaho—a state that makes up the majority of the District's 107,000-square mile jurisdiction within the Snake River watershed.

Beyond Idaho-centric issues, the outreach office manages a variety of District-wide programs in six states: Idaho, Washington, Oregon, Wyoming and small parts of Nevada and Utah.

On any given day, you may find outreach office employees meeting with congressional staffers, coordinating flood-fight efforts or educating the public and more.

To many, the outreach office is the face of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. For the team, this identity hones a responsibility for each employee to be effective, multi-tasking communicators and educators.

"Oftentimes, people will ask us a question about the Corps that we may not know the answer to,

but we do know where to direct the question," Berggren said.

The office reaches the public through education, but also by listening to local residents' concerns, issues and needs.

In addition to partnering with multiple agencies on a variety of projects, it also provides planning and technical assistance to Idaho cities, counties, state agencies and Tribal governments to support their efforts in developing community-based strategies in areas that match the Corps' congressionally authorized programs.

The outreach office offers assistance on a number of services to include environmental impact statements, resource planning, flood hazard mitigation studies, hydraulic structure design, watershed modeling and analysis and more.

"As a civil works-focused District operating on a cost-share basis, I think it is important for us to provide the technical capabilities here in Idaho to be responsive to sponsor needs within our tight budgets," Berggren added.

With its many roles, the Boise Outreach Office is an open door where the public can meet the Corps and know someone is ready to help.



Kim Grezeszak
Office Automation Clerk



Mark Mendenhall
Civil Engineer



Nathan Pierson
Civil Engineer



Brandon Hobbs
Hydraulic Engineer



Ellen Berggren
Project Manager

District Civil Engineer Mark Mendenhall manages a variety of government programs to include the Planning Assistance to States Program, the Continuing Authority Program and the Rural Idaho Environmental Infrastructure Program (Section 595) program.

Through American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 dollars, he was able to assist seven rural Idaho communities in funding necessary wastewater projects through the Section 595 program.

The projects range from wastewater treatment, water supply, environmental restoration and surface water resource protection.

One success found in part from Mendenhall's efforts occurred in Bliss, Idaho—a city of about 300 people. Mendenhall worked with Idaho officials who have been trying to fund a wastewater system development project there for more than 20 years. Bliss residents are now benefiting from the completed project.

"Back when we were working on the funding, Mark was new to the outreach office, but was very willing to learn about our communities and to work with Bliss and our other agency partners," said Carleen Herring, an economic development division manager for Region IV Development in Twin Falls, Idaho.

Mendenhall's efforts also extend to his desire to broaden his knowledge.

He was recently chosen as one of ten employees Corps-wide to be a part of the Planning Associates Program—a year-long program.

The program offers selected Corps employees an advanced training opportunity in water resources planning to broaden competency in solving complex water resources issues.

When District Civil Engineer Nathan Pierson joined the Boise Outreach Office in February 2011, he soon became very familiar with the Corps' mission four months later when he helped fight floods on the ground in Madison and Jefferson counties in Idaho.

The Idaho native learned very quickly what it means to establish a rapport with Corps partners.

"In a flood fight situation, getting to know local agency personnel and continuously communicating with them is essential to our mission," he said. (See left page for scenes of Pierson during flood-fight efforts in spring 2011 in Idaho)

District Hydraulic Engineer Brandon Hobbs also helped report flood activity to the District

headquarters during the spring 2011 flood fight in Southeastern Idaho. His position allows him to work in the Boise region while still a part of the Hydrology and Hydraulics Branch at the District headquarters in Walla Walla, Wash.

"I serve as a voice on the local level while having eyes on the ground," he said. "Working in the state that I grew up in while seeing these communities benefit from Corps projects is a great reward."

Hobbs said his position offers him a chance to help the Corps build more effective relationships in the region.

Leading by example, Ellen Berggren is an achiever. Combined with her project management background, multi-tasking and leadership skills, Berggren is able to lead the direction of many Corps programs, efforts and initiatives in Idaho and beyond.

It's no wonder that she was named the Silver Jackets Coordinator of the Year for 2011.

Berggren received the award for her support in developing a successfully integrated Silver Jackets team of eight agencies throughout Idaho.

Berggren's technical understanding of Idaho flood risk issues and the strengths

See BERGGREN on 12



photo by Amber Larsen



photo by Amber Larsen



photo by Terri A. Rorke

(Right) White caps on the Boise River. (Left) District Civil Engineer Nathan Pierson confers with District Civil Engineer Herb Bessey on spring 2011 flood-fight operations in Idaho.

BERGGREN, continued from 11

of each agency, combined with her communication skills and personal dedication, make her a leader for other silver jackets coordinators.

Part of Berggren's interagency accomplishments include partnering with the Federal Emergency Management Agency to develop a joint statewide Risk Map (Risk Mapping, Assessment and Planning) and establishing the Boise River inundation mapping study.

The study is an application that provides maps to local emergency managers, the National Weather Service and

FEMA.

But, if you ask Berggren, being recognized as Silver Jackets coordinator of the year is a result of being a part of "a great team here in Boise."

Her other responsibilities include working as a project manager on District-wide projects, while leading as the District's outreach coordinator.

"Outreach is a District-wide responsibility," she said.

"And we all should help the community understand what the Corps can do, to include its capabilities, services and resources."



District Commander Lt. Col. David Caldwell prepares to sign an updated and revised Idaho Silver Jackets charter in June 2011 along with regional partners (left to right) FEMA Regional Administrator Kenneth D. Murphy, Idaho Bureau of Homeland Security Director Brig. Gen. Bill Shawver, National Weather Service Meteorologist Robert Diaz, U.S. Geological Survey Idaho Water Science Center Director Stephen W. Lipscomb, and Idaho Department of Environmental Quality Deputy Director Curt Fransen.

Silver Jackets Fast Facts

Silver Jackets is a nationwide program currently with 27 teams. The interagency team finds solutions to address flood hazard issues at state level.

The Corps participates in the Silver Jackets program as part of its established National Flood Risk Management Program.

Eight agencies participate on Idaho's team including FEMA, the Idaho Department of Water Resources, the Idaho Bureau of Homeland Security, and the National Oceanic Atmospheric Administration National Weather Service.

Idaho Silver Jackets: One Solution

After the Gulf Coast was hit in 2005 by Hurricane Katrina, the most destructive hurricane ever to strike the country, many government agencies focused on reorganizing flood-fight efforts.

One major answer to this reorganization was the Silver Jackets program, which is a state-level implementation of the National Flood Risk Management Program. It was one of many programs initiated after Hurricane Katrina to improve the nation's ability to respond to and mitigate flood events.

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Walla Walla District was one of the leading organizations in the Silver Jackets program as the third team in the country to sign an official charter in 2009. There are currently 27 teams.

"I think after Katrina, the Corps realized that risk is a shared responsibility," District Project Manager Ellen Berggren said. "We needed a forum or mechanism to continuously communicate with affected communities."

Berggren was recently named Silver Jackets Coordinator of the Year.

"Our goal is to have a Silver Jackets team in every state to reduce flood risk throughout the nation," Berggren said.

Much of the program is built around the patchwork quilt theory. Many problems are so complex that not one entity can deal with issues alone.

Silver Jackets can help states develop a patchwork quilt where every agency contributes its resources, programs, authorities in order to come up with a solution.

With its motto, "many agencies, one solution," the program is a one stop place where communities can come with a problem and have multiple agencies immediately available to help.

"I always tell people that the Silver Jackets goal is to help people help themselves. But to help them do it more efficiently," she said.



A record year for Contracting

story by Joe Saxon

2011 was an exceptional year for the Walla Walla District, particularly for its Contracting Division, which achieved records for its 1,372 overall actions and for executing \$114.5 million in contracts.

These numbers improved significantly from the Northwestern Division's previous records of 1,000 actions (contracts, purchase orders, task orders, modifications and de-obligations) and \$103 million in the 2010 fiscal year.

So how did they achieve it?

"What we do in contracting can't happen without cooperation and teamwork," said District Contracting Division Chief Ruthann Haider.

"We are an enabler, so as such, I need a customer to enable. This District and the people we support are the reason we are successful. They do a good job of identifying their requirements, which enables us to procure what they need," she added.

"We established a business and compliance branch that set up standards that everyone is following and those processes allowed us to become more efficient, and the proof is in the pudding," Haider said.

"It flows into increased dollar obligations because we became more efficient in our processes—allowing us to take on more projects and obligate more money."

Lest one get the wrong impression, "it wasn't all peaches and cream," Haider said. "We had serious challenges, especially in the fourth quarter, but we had a lot of hard work and a little bit of luck."

"There were some heroic efforts by some key people on my staff—Mary Van Sickle, Elaine Vandiver, Jean Desjarlais. Everyone worked hard and went above and beyond to make sure customers got what they needed.

"What else worked well was our relationship with Dana Knudtson and his folks in Programs Management," she said.

"We identified District priorities in a collaborative way with plans and programs. Dana would say, 'I need this money de-obligated so someone else can use it.' The Business Operations Branch would make these de-obligations a priority.

"Not only did we do our own work, Tracy Wickham's A/E team executed 15 task orders for Kansas City District worth more than \$6 million because they needed help due to their contracting folks being devoted to the Joplin tornado recovery.

"As chief, I couldn't be prouder of my staff," she beamed.



Tracy Wickham

Contracting award winners

Tracy Wickham- National Contracting Organization Contracting Mission Execution Award

District Contracting Division- Head of Contracting Authority Award for Excellence in Contracting, Best Small Contracting Office in 2011

Wendy Spegal- Northwestern Division Contracting Leadership Award

Ryan Bliss- Northwestern Division Contracting Officer Representative of the Year Award

District selects four companies for \$240 million worldwide cost engineering services contract

Four companies including a local Richland, Wash., firm were selected to provide nationwide cost engineering services for the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Walla Walla District as part of a \$240 million contract. The four include:

- **Project Time & Cost, Inc., Atlanta, Ga. - \$150 million**
- **Management of Construction Activities - MOCA Systems Inc., Newton, Mass. - \$50 million**
- **RC Engineering and Construction Mgt, Inc., Richland, Wash. - \$20 million**
- **Legis Consultancy, Inc., Atlanta, Ga. - \$20 million**

"We are very proud that USACE has selected RCECM to support them in their nationwide mission to provide cost engineering services," said Colette Steinwert, president of RCECM.

"This award is a significant win for our company, and will be an important part of the growth of our firm in the coming years.

We look forward to building a long-term relationship with USACE Walla Walla and its customers."

Services to be provided by RCECM include cost engineering, cost estimating, program and project management, planning and scheduling, risk analysis, cost and schedule performance measurement, and value engineering for projects located nationwide and throughout the Pacific Rim.

The Walla Walla District is the Corps' Center of Expertise for cost engineering services used by all federal government agencies throughout the program lifecycle.

Preconstruction and onsite construction management services include planning, program management, cost estimating, scheduling, risk management, change order management, claims analysis, forensics and stakeholder coordination.

Trailblazer

story by Terri A. Rorke

He doesn't prefer to run the biggest races, nor does he aim to win all the medals. But if you look closer at Jonathan Petersen—a U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Walla Walla District hydraulic engineer—with five triathlons under his belt, three years of division-level leadership program experience on his resume and a smile on his face—you see a man who doesn't opt for the easy path. Instead, he blazes his own trails.

Petersen trains as an ever-ready competitor. Whether he's preparing for races, tournaments or flood fights, he gives 100 percent.

His trailblazing days began in 2000 when he took on his first triathlon at 19.

Eleven years later, he competed in his fifth triathlon in September, the Titanium Triathlon in Richland, Wash., and won Walla Walla's Peach Basket Classic Tournament with a District team in August and the Walla Walla Crush 5k in October.

How does he do it?



(Above) District Hydraulic Engineer Jonathan Petersen finishes his bike to work, or going to graduate school, I saw him do it. Once he commits to a goal, you know he'll see it through."

(Right) District Civil Engineer Logan Negherbon and Petersen pose for a photo after completing the Titanium Triathlon.

(Far, right) Petersen smiles as he finishes the triathlon.

"One of the things I appreciate most about Jon is that he's a person of action," said St. Paul District Hydraulic Engineer Kari Hauck who previously worked with Petersen.

"I didn't just hear him talk about running marathons, riding his bike to work, or going to graduate school, I saw him do it. Once he commits to a goal, you know he'll see it through."

Hauck and Petersen both deployed to Mississippi in support of Hurricane Katrina recovery on a temporary public structures mission there.

"Amid all the chaos, he managed to run every morning. It kept him grounded and sharp throughout his deployment," she said.



Jonathan Petersen

"I always train with a more intense workout regimen than the actual event so that I'm well-prepared for competition day," he said.

The engineer trained two months with his co-worker, District Civil Engineer Logan Negherbon, for the Titanium Triathlon.

For Petersen, competitions are "just like life," he said. "A race is not as fun if there's no one to talk to at the finish line."

He keeps his competitive edge by having fun with every goal he commits to achieve and enjoys the camaraderie found along the way.

"It's awesome to build on each other's commitment to the race," he said.

Naturally, his drive to be his best carries over to his work and leadership skills.

While previously working at St. Paul District, Petersen was not only the acting executive assistant in a four-month developmental position in 2007, but he also led an annual senior leaders conference as part of the Mississippi Valley Division's Emerging Leaders Program. For three years, Petersen was in the program that allows selectees to work with leaders division-wide, shadow senior executive service government employees and nourish natural leadership skills.

And as others join the Corps team, Petersen leads his peers by example.

Fellow Emerging Leaders Program participant Mike Renacker, a senior project manager at Vicksburg District, said Petersen continually inspired him to move out of his comfort zone.

"I watched him challenge himself to step out of his normal area of expertise and try new jobs at St. Paul District," Renacker said. "I took his lead and did the same thing. In fact, many people in the leadership class did that."

"He takes on new challenges and seems to have no fear. He sets his personal goals and reaches them," Renacker added.

His next goal? Start up a District Toastmasters International club like the one he found at St. Paul District. He said he wants to help others have an opportunity to develop public speaking skills like he did.

It seems that Petersen achieves whatever he puts his mind to, but always remembers others along the way and enjoys doing it.

"Have fun with your goals," he said. "Because in the end, it isn't about the goal. It's the path that you take to get you there."

"In the end it's not about the goal. It's the path that you take to get there"



photos courtesy of Jonathan Petersen



I'M WITH THE CORPS

Chris Alford

Name: Chris Alford

Position: Park Ranger, Mill Creek Dam and Bennington Lake, Walla Walla, Wash.

Describe your job.

My job varies from day to day and even hour to hour—from managing contracts, to monitoring flood levels, organizing volunteer projects, and educating the public about the Corps' missions.

What is the biggest challenge you've faced in your current position?

Finding the balance between meeting the Corps's obligations/goals and the needs of community stakeholders. Mill Creek has two Biological Opinions that have changed the way we manage Mill Creek flows for maintenance, floods, and even recreation. Working with our partners to find the best ways to meet both of our needs can be very challenging.

Describe a few accomplishments you've experienced with your job.

As a team, Mill Creek and District headquarters staff were able to award a contract for a new office, a new playground, new equipment and electrical systems, and continue to upgrade facilities and equipment to increase safety and reliability.

One of the best experiences that I have at Mill Creek, on a regular basis, is the great conversations I have with the public. I think sometimes we get so caught up in work that we forget that the facilities and lands we help manage are used by so many people and these people really do appreciate the good job we do. Many of the visitors are very interested in the work we do and want to help. Many of our volunteers sign up after these brief conversations.

What is the most rewarding part about your job?

Knowing that I am helping people enjoy their public lands every day by making sure the land is managed to the best of our ability and potentially saving lives and reducing property damage.

Please highlight a notable milestone or memory in your position.

Building great relationships with community partners after Mill Creek Dam received its Dam Safety Action Classification I rating in 2007. Back then, I was serving as the acting Mill Creek operations project manager. Responding to the rating involved our team working closely with the Walla Walla County Emergency Management Department. Together, we updated Mill Creek's Emergency Action Plan, held table-top exercises and coordinated a communication plan. As a result of building that relationship, we've been able to better communicate current and upcoming needs. This rapport will allow Mill Creek staff to continue to serve the District well in ordinary and extraordinary situations.



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