Intercom

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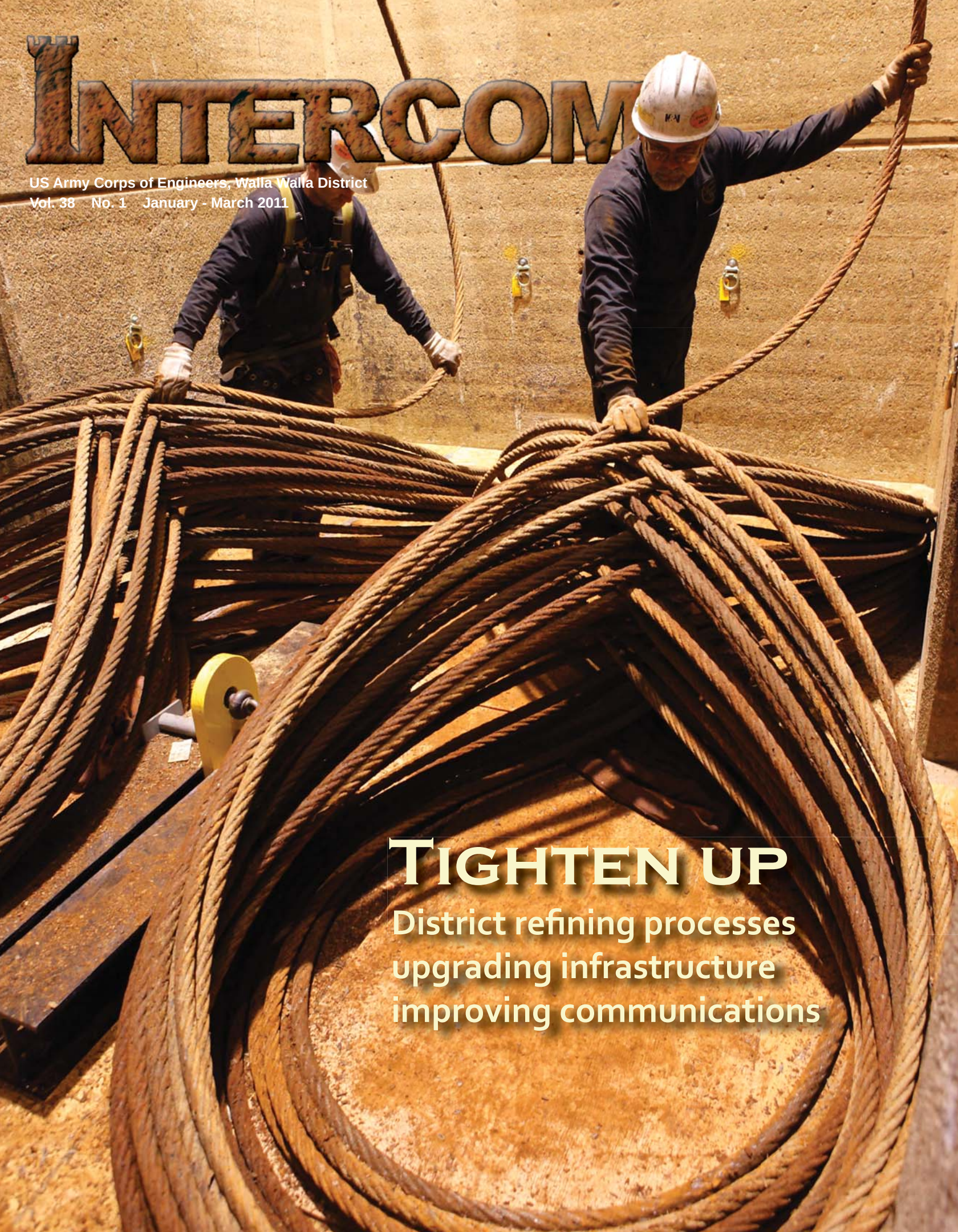

Tighten up

District refining processes upgrading infrastructure improving communications

From Where I Sit

Getting to go to work

As he visited the District last year a few months after I'd started working here in late 2009, Lt. Gen. Robert Van Antwerp, Chief of Engineers, said something in an employee meeting that hit me like a lightning bolt. He said the Corps wants to employ those who say "I get to go to work here" rather than just having to work to earn a paycheck.

His words that day described exactly how I feel about the privilege of working in the District. I trust those words resonated with many of you, too.

I get to work in Corps Public Affairs. It's truly a privilege because of the unique vantage point I have. I get to work directly with District leadership. I get to work on the front lines at the projects and out in public. I get to see many of you in action doing many different and great things. Sometimes I write about it, sometimes I photograph it, sometimes I shoot video of it, sometimes I talk about it to reporters or anyone who'll listen.

I also get to translate a lot of your technical effort into plain English for different audiences. I get to do that as part of my great immediate team supporting the larger District team.

I get to live, work, travel and play in the beautiful Walla Walla area and the Snake River Basin. It doesn't get any better than this. I'm hoping you're having a similar peak life and work experience.

It's as if I'd worked an entire career to end up in this great place—the Walla Walla District. Formerly, I was a public affairs chief at the Army's Umatilla Chemical Depot, and I worked in the private sector, large and small non-profits, and as a government contractor. I get to apply all that experience to the job I get to do now.

As I serve the public and work with great colleagues in the District, I find it quite natural to practice each of those marvelous Army values of loyalty, (dedication to) duty, respect, selfless service, honor, integrity, and personal courage on a daily basis. I see many District colleagues doing the same. I believe we know we "get to go to work here" each day.

Bruce Henrickson
Public Affairs Specialist

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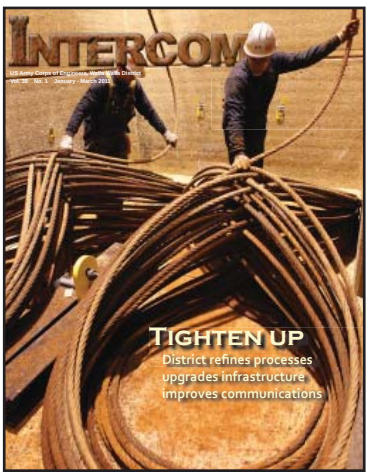
On the cover



Workers wind wire rope from Lucky Peak's intake tower near Boise, Idaho. The project replaced the 20-year-old cable in November 2010.
photo by Keith Hyde

Oh my, SOCKEYE leading 2010 return

by Terri A. Rorke

photo by Mike Peterson, courtesy of Idaho Fish and Game

Sockeye

In 2010, 386,525 sockeye fish passed through Bonneville Lock and Dam, surpassing a 1955 record of a 237,748 run.

The Record: 2010 welcomed a record return year on both the Columbia and Snake rivers: 386,525 sockeye run through Bonneville Lock and Dam and a record 2,201 sockeye run through Lower Granite Lock and Dam.

Second Highest Record: In 2009, the total season had a 1,219 run at Lower Granite Lock and Dam.

Chinook

In 2010, 189,391 chinook returned to Lower Granite Lock and Dam.

The Record: The 2001 season returned a record of a 210,381 run at Lower Granite Lock and Dam.

Second Highest Record: The 2010 season returned 189,391 chinook at Lower Granite Lock and Dam.

Steelhead

In 2010, 206,907 steelhead passed through Lower Granite Lock and Dam.

The Record: The 2009 season returned a record return of 323,697 steelhead at Lower Granite Lock and Dam.

Second Highest Record: 2001 returned a record of 262,568 steelhead at Lower Granite Lock and Dam.

Ten years ago, few believed that sockeye salmon were on a path to reach record-breaking returns on the Columbia and Snake rivers. However, the once nearly extinct species led the Northwestern Division's 2010 fish return counts with 386,525 sockeye passing through Bonneville Lock and Dam in Cascade Locks, Ore. The previous record at Bonneville Dam was set in 1955 with a total of 237,748 sockeye.

Also, the Snake River sockeye return at Lower Granite Lock and Dam near Clarkston, Wash., reached 2,201, topping 2009's 1,219 record.

Lower Granite is the same dam that never saw more than 15 sockeye pass per year in the 1990s. Yet, today, it is experiencing fruits of multi-million dollar efforts over the years.

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers worked together with regional fish managers from Native American Nations and federal and state agencies with the intent to improve juvenile passage conditions for sockeye and eventually see an increase of returning adult sockeye.

"It's really encouraging to see record returns of a species that has been on the brink of extinction in recent years," said District Fish Biologist Tim Dykstra.

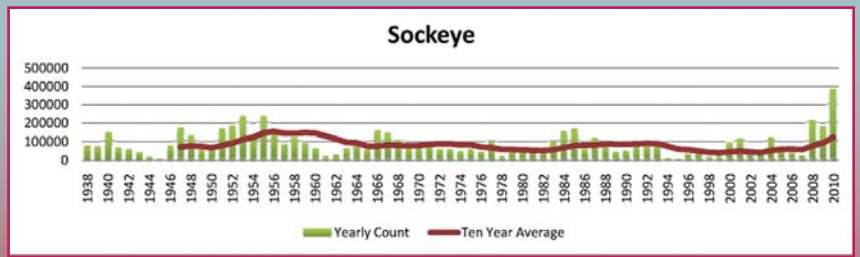
Dykstra said he can remember how less than ten years ago many in the region were debating whether to eliminate funding for sockeye hatchery production since returns were so low. But slowly the numbers climbed and today, the Endangered Species Act-listed sockeye are setting records.

Efforts to improve juvenile fish passage at Corps dams along the Columbia and Snake rivers include adding bypass systems and fish screens, passing water over spillways, adding fish slides that provide a surface passage route for migrating juvenile fish, and using new scientific findings when deciding when it is best to transport juvenile fish.

"As the Corps dams have been overhauled, our aim is to make the dams as invisible as possible to fish," Dykstra said.

In addition to improved juvenile fish passage conditions at Corps dams, several other factors contributed to record sockeye adult returns that include excellent ocean conditions, completion of projects that focused on restoring important degraded habitat, and increasing sockeye hatchery production by the State of Idaho.

Chinook and steelhead continue to exceed ten-year average returns on both the Columbia and Snake rivers. In 2010, the Chinook return reached its second highest record of 189,391.



2010 marks the record year for returning sockeye salmon with 386,525 passing through Bonneville Lock and Dam.

Projects

site by site

stories and photos by Terri A. Rorke

Winter doesn't come easy for the Walla Walla District. Instead of relaxing during the cold months, it uses the season as a time to perform not only annual routine and non-routine maintenance, but to make long-term improvements at its eight hydropower dam facilities. While taking advantage of this year's extended navigation lock outage, the District made a lot of progress.

Check out some updates on the latest projects...

(Top) Carlan Bradshaw, of Los Angeles, readies her camera during a public tour of Lower Monumental Lock and Dam in January. The public had a rare look at the dewatered navigation lock in Kahlotus, Wash. The inside perspective provided the public with an informative look at the $15.6 million project.

This maintenance season served as a crucial time for optimum level of teamwork performance because of the extended navigation lock outage at Lower Monumental Lock and Dam in Kahlotus, Wash. Teamwork on the outage and other maintenance projects throughout the Federal Columbia River Power System and the Boise region enabled the Corps to further achieve its goal of navigation system reliability and uninterrupted service to the nation.

Monumental team

Steve Hartman

Margie McGill

As workers polish off months of intense labor on Lower Monumental's freshly fabricated navigation lock gate, they can attest it was no easy task. But the dedication and teamwork of the Corps with regional collaborators made this monumental task a reliable, safe reality.

There were many key stewards of this project who invested years of involvement. People in roles as varied as engineering, construction, navigation and contracting had to diligently find solutions that were best for taxpayers, the economy and the environment. The $15.6 million project required detailed designs,

~ Continued on page 6

~ *Continued from page 5*

research, and countless meetings but everyone kept their eye on the overarching goal of providing a safe, reliable lock system that offers an efficient means of transportation for grain, wood products, petroleum, and other commodities.

The 42-year-old lift gate at Lower Monumental Lock and Dam has experienced more than 50,000 lockages since the dam went into service in 1969. The fatigue and stress resulting from these lockages led to cracks and fractures that were first noticed in the late 1990s.

After performing numerous emergency and planned repairs on the gate, which resulted in only short-term solutions with continued cracking, experts determined that a planned outage to replace the entire gate would be the most economical way to maintain navigation service for the region—an essential component of the Columbia-Snake rivers transportation system.

Team members on the Lower Monumental navigation lock gate replacement project discuss operational procedures of the gate and alignment of the seals in February. Corps employees left to right: Structural Engineer Eric Walton, Mechanical Engineer Chuck Palmer, Electrical Engineer Bruce Crawford and Mechanical Engineer Kyle Desomber.

In 2002, key District personnel began developing a plan to provide long-term solutions to the problems seen and forecasted for the navigation lock components. One of those key employees is Project Manager Margie McGill who led in formulating a plan to address the rehabilitation needs of the navigation lock with emphasis on the downstream lift gate. Her efforts resulted in an approved rehabilitation plan in 2006.

In 2009, funds for the lift gate replacement came in the form of a surprise when President Barack Obama signed The American Recovery and Reinvestment Act, which was the major driver of the rehabilitation plan. The District now had the challenge of completing the lift gate replacement in one and a half years when it would have normally taken three years.

"As many people are aware, the purpose of stimulus funding was to get America back to work through shovel-ready projects. This project needed a bit of work before we could call it shovel-ready," McGill said. "With strong leads from engineering, contracting and construction, we were able to put together a successful contract for the fabrication and installation of the gate, which was awarded within a four-month period."

Despite the condensed schedule, District Project Manager Allen Pomraning said McGill relished in the challenge.

"When I reflect on Jim Collins' book Good to Great, there is a quote that describes Margie perfectly, 'Fill the culture with self-disciplined people who are willing to go to extreme lengths to fulfill their responsibilities,'" he said.

McGill and other Corps personnel worked closely with key regional collaborators, like the Pacific Northwest Waterways Association (PNWA), which advocated for funding of this project. PNWA protects federal infrastructure investments that benefit the Northwest and is the voice of the Northwest regarding all inland, deep-draft and coastal navigation issues.

"The Walla Walla District has done an outstanding job of coordinating with stakeholders in the months leading up to this unprecedented closure and during the installation of the new lock gate," said PNWA Executive Director Glenn Vanselow. "This advance planning allowed growers, shippers and overseas buyers of Northwest products to plan in advance, and helped to minimize economic impacts to the region."

One of the last phases of the plan took place in October 2010 when the project management "baton" was passed to District Project Manager Steve Hartman to manage the onsite construction work. The transition allowed the District to take advantage of Hartman's 20-plus years of construction management experience during the last phases of the gate replacement.

"The commitment and professional cooperation by all parties were the keys to the success of this significant project," Hartman said. "In the end, the quality of the finished product is a reflection of the caliber of the entire project team."

Of course, the navigation lock gate replacement took hundreds of people throughout the last decade to communicate and work together to make this project a reality. But accomplishments like this only happen through monumental people.

Monumental finish

Project Manager Steve Thompson updates Walla Walla's Union-Bulletin Reporter Andy Porter on the navigation wall repair project during January's Lower Monumental public tour.

In addition to replacing the navigation lock gate at Lower Monumental Lock and Dam, the Corps also completed the second phase of repairing spalling and cracking issues along the navigation wall on monolith 15.

The benefits of the concrete wall repairs are safety, reliability and structural integrity. The repair addresses spalling and cracking that's been occurring since the 1990s and has become more significant in the 2000s.

"We're trying to minimize any impacts to the navigation industry while maximizing the repair benefits in the time and funding constraints that we have," Project Manager Steve Thompson said.

Currently, the District is working on designing the final phase of the project, so that it is ready for execution when funding becomes available.

Also, the District completed the dam's gear box cable replacement project in both towers (See photo of new cables on page 5).

(Background) The second phase of the Lower Monumental Lock wall repair is complete in this February 2011 photo.

McNary Lock and Dam workers prep powerhouse for new season

photos by Pasquale Anolfo

In McNary's powerhouse, workers are currently reassembling unit 7 in a five-year, $70 million stator winding replacement project. They are currently fabricating bars for unit 1 and 8 in Montreal. Units 2 and 7 are expected to be finished in May 2011 (See photos on this page).

Both of McNary's main hoist drums were realigned on the intake crane in the navigation lock. Both drums were successfully load-tested to 110 percent, which allowed the lock to be finished and put back in to service in mid-February. The Bonneville Power Administration funded the $1.5 million project.

Through American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 dollars, the upstream and downstream derrick cranes were repaired in a $1.78 million project. $1.4 million of the funds went to a contract awarded to Seattle-based Ederer, which provided all engineering and onsite installation services. The project was completed in December 2010.

Maintaining our infrastructure

~ Continued on page 8

Lower Granite Lock and Dam

The project is installing a new stator winding in unit 3. The reassembly is expected to be complete in mid-April.

photo by Bruce Henrickson

Little Goose Lock and Dam

In March, powerhouse workers took advanced-level training on how to prepare prominent types of governors used in the District. They are learning how to adjust, refurbish and tune-up the governors for peak performance of hydroelectric systems.

The project also repositioned a pin in the trunnion valve during the navigation lock outage to restore the pin back to its original position.

Ice Harbor Lock and Dam

U.S. Army Corps of Engineers photo

The project repositioned a pin on the navigation lock upstream gate to restore the pin back to its original position (See photo, left). Subsequently, the contractor repaired damaged concrete on the navigation lock filling and emptying system.

The project is also upgrading its low-voltage switchgear with new components and building a new storage building.

Mill Creek Dam and Bennington Lake

The project is installing a toe drain along the diversion dike to measure seepage amounts and locations and to reduce standing water at Rooks Park.

photo by Jeremy Nguyen

Dworshak Dam

In an American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009-funded project, the Corps is building a Dworshak Fish Hatchery Effluent System that will make returned river water cleaner and environmentally friendly.

The project is refurbishing its station service compressed air system by installing new piping and adding new receiver tanks and an air dryer. These modifications will result in improved efficiency of the compressors, higher quality air output and reduced machine wear and tear.

photo by Keith Hyde

Lucky Peak Dam

In a nearly $100,00 project, Lucky Peak's intake tower wire rope was replaced in November 2010. The last time the wire rope was replaced was in October 1991.

Lower Granite Lock and Dam, near Pomeroy, Wash.; Little Goose Lock and Dam, near Starbuck, Wash.; Ice Harbor Lock and Dam, near Burbank, Wash.; and McNary Lock and Dam near Umatilla, Ore., took advantage of the extended navigation lock outage time to accomplish additional lock work that would ordinarily exceed the annual two-week winter maintenance outage. Outage periods for those locks ranged between 5-9 weeks with various closing and reopening dates.

Out with the old...

story and photos by Keith Hyde

November 2011 was rife with non-routine operations and maintenance (O&M) in Lucky Peak Dam near Boise, Idaho.

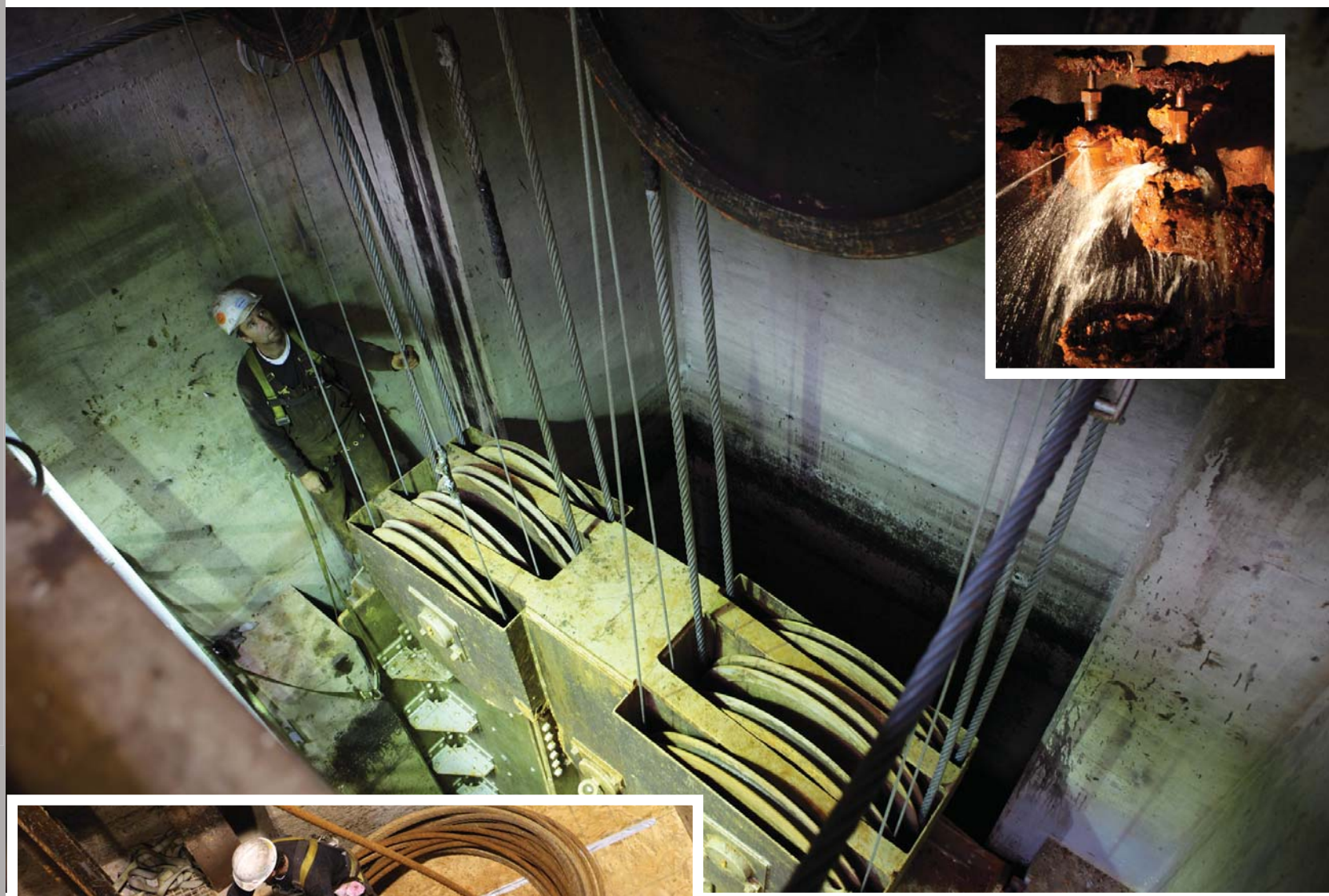
For the third time since the dam was built in 1954, the project replaced critical suspension cables--more than 8,000 feet of 1-1/4" galvanized wire rope--attaching hoists to two 100,000 pound emergency gates in the intake tower.

District employees were challenged during every phase of the installation. Lucky Peak Maintenance Foreman Monte Crawford seized the occasion to initiate many modernizations and improvements in safety equipment and processes.

As a knowledge management endeavor and to help inform future O&M planning, the project also contracted with Boise State Student Media Department to record and prepare a video presentation of the ten-day team effort.

For the first time, project staff closely inspected and troubleshot for future repairs of several leaking valves during the dewatering occasion inside the intake tower. The Lucky Peak Power Plant capitalized on the outage status by repairing rust blisters under paint coatings in the primary tunnel, and modernized several of their flow meters. Overall, it was a very productive winter.

...in with the new



Contract workers replace Lucky Peak's intake tower wire rope in November 2010. (Inset) The District was also able to troubleshoot for future repairs of leaking valves while inspecting the dewatered intake tower.

All in the family

photo by Joe Marek

Phil and Barbara Benge

Phil and Barb Benge have barely left each other's sides for the past 12 months while they've worked for the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers in Afghanistan.

The husband and wife team from Walla Walla, Wash., live together in a small room at the Qalaa House compound, which is the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers' district headquarters in northern Afghanistan. Until recently, they served as chairman and chairwoman of the district's source selection boards, working at adjoining desks evaluating contract proposals.

They were practically inseparable until Phil changed job responsibilities earlier this month to become a project manager in the facilities management program, which gives him responsibility for the district's offices and living quarters.

They still spend nearly all of their off-work hours together. They eat together. They shop at the bazaar together. They walk together for an hour nearly every night.

The family atmosphere abounds within the district. The Benges are just one of at least six family groups within the ranks of the Afghanistan Engineer District-North.

There are also the husband-and-wife teams of Bill Bolte and Dani Bolte, who also are from Walla Walla, and Brian Tracy and Irene Leyva-Tracy of Los Angeles; the father-and-son tandem of Richard Allen Newton of Warner Robins, Ga., and Richard Anthony Newton of Jacksonville, Fla.; and the brother-and-brother combo of Harry Pham and Alan Pham, both of Victorville, Calif.

There's another brother-and-brother duo – Joel Giblin of Las Cruces, N.M., and myself, Paul Giblin, of Phoenix.

Col. Thomas Magness, the district commander, encourages the family plan for staffing the district. He feels there are tangible benefits to having family members close by when home is so far away.

"Every single person who is deployed over here has a longing to be back home and to be with family. Those that are able to bring their families over here, I think that gives them that comfort, that confidence, that probably translates into what they're doing on the job," he said.

That's certainly true.

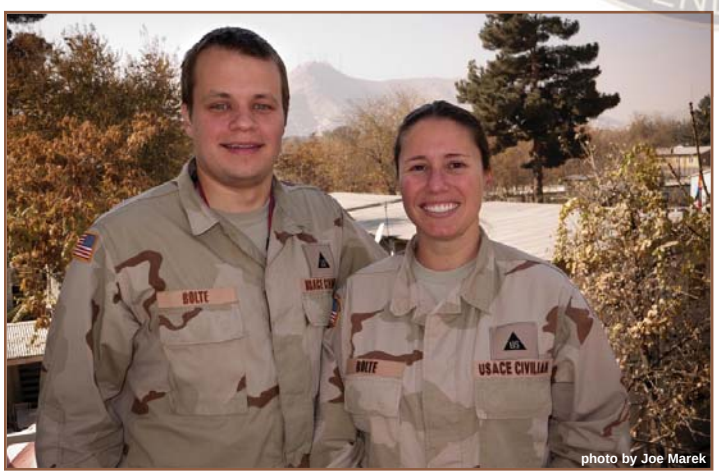


photo by Joe Marek

Bill and Dani Bolte

The Benges, Phil, 60, and Barb, 58, had worked together within the Corps for 30 years, but their jobs and family responsibilities frequently took them in different directions. When one flew out of state for an assignment or a conference, the other stayed home with their children.

"We could never go to the same places," Phil said. "We decided, OK, the kids are out of the house. This is an opportunity for us to stick together while we're working – and to travel together."

Both applied for positions in Afghanistan, and both were offered jobs, but not simultaneously. They declined their initial offers, opting instead to wait until they received offers at the same time. Eventually, they received concurrent offers and accepted. They arrived in theater in December 2009.

Despite Phil's job change, they're still very much a family act. Barb said they have a strong relationship and have enjoyed the nearly 24/7 closeness. "We live in a very small room, about the size that would fit a car. It's very tight and cozy. He takes up most of the room," she joked.

"There could be different opinions," Phil countered.

They've used Afghanistan as a launching point for scheduled leaves to South Africa, and to Spain and Italy. They're planning an upcoming trip to Switzerland, France and Italy. The family deployment has worked so well they've extended their year-long tour in Afghanistan by six months.

Afghanistan has turned into a second honeymoon for the Boltes. OK, maybe not exactly, but they're newlyweds, and they're in Afghanistan together, too.

Dani had done a tour in Iraq a few years before they were married in June 2008, and they had discussed the idea of doing a tour in Afghanistan together. They committed when a manager in Walla Walla asked for volunteers.

"That was the final push," Bill said. "We're both adventuresome, young, dumb, with no kids. We wanted to see what was going on. A fairly typical story."

~ Continued on page 11

They arrived in Afghanistan in September 2009. Bill, 32, serves as a cost engineer at the Qalaa House compound in Kabul. Dani, 30, initially worked as a project manager in the Afghanistan National Police program before accepting a new job in November as a project manager in Kunduz.

"We came as a package deal," Bill said. "We both started looking into jobs, and we made it known that we were a package deal. We were fortunate that we were able to make that work."

There are obvious advantages, he said. For example, identifying a battle buddy and a roommate were easy. They also have been able to share the unique experiences of working in a combat zone. "Your spouse understands exactly what you're going through, because they're going through the same thing," Bill said. Scheduled leaves to exotic locales are another bonus, he said.

OCO CORNER

stories by Paul Giblin, public affairs specialist, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Afghanistan Engineer District - North

Donna Street shares expertise at inaugural Afghan women's conference

District Engineering and Construction Division Chief Donna Street shared her path to success along with other executives at the inaugural Afghan Women in Engineering and Construction Conference in Kabul, Afghanistan, Jan. 8.

More than 80 Afghan women engineers and construction executives learned about professional opportunities and established new work relationships at the conference hosted by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers.

The conference was designed for women who own, manage or serve in upper-level management positions at engineering and construction-related businesses.

"The conference was important in bringing together a unique group of courageous women who are moving toward independence in Afghanistan," Street said. "Running their own construction and engineering firms provides them an opportunity to break away from some of the past traditions that limited the ability for women to be more independent. This forum will allow them an opportunity to exchange ideas and lessons learned as each continues to grow their companies."

Several U.S. women employees of the Corps told the Afghan women about their own struggles to achieve executive positions in engineering and construction trades. Women excel in those fields in the United States now, but that wasn't always true, they said.

Street, who serves as the area engineer in Mazar-E Sharif, told the audience that she had strong support from her family, particularly from her late husband Bill, who always encouraged her to accept new responsibilities.

Street obtained an engineering degree as a young woman and spent her entire career in the Corps. She holds a senior executive position, though until recently, few women held senior positions.

One of the attendees, Fatema Hakimzada, who serves as vice president of Demo Construction Co., based in Kabul, said she was thankful the Corps conducted a symposium specifically for women, because business prospects for women in Afghanistan are extremely limited.

"Right now, today, I am very happy because we find this opportunity to be here," Hakimzada said. She made several important contacts during the conference, and she plans to bid on road construction work offered by the Corps.

Conference attendees represented many Afghan business firms, plus various Afghan government ministries, the Afghan Builders Association, vocational schools and universities and the U.S. Embassy. The speakers discussed the Corps of Engineers' overall program, contracting matters, and their personal and professional experiences in the engineering and construction fields.

U.S. Embassy official Robyn Kessler said one of the most valuable aspects of the conference was providing women business leaders a professional setting to learn from other women business leaders.

"The most important thing is networking, the opportunity for companies to see who else is out there and what they're doing," said Kessler, a senior commercial officer with the U.S. Department of Commerce. "There's so much going on in Afghanistan, particularly in the construction sector."

Street urged the Afghan women to be firm and fair in their business dealings, to disregard disparaging comments by people who feel they're unsuited for the business, and to work harder than men to prove that they are suited for the business.

"These women are moving women's rights forward in Afghanistan by forming their own companies," she said. "Pulling together rather than independently provides them more opportunities for success."

The Corps is the primary organization building army bases, police stations, roads, airstrips and other infrastructure projects in Afghanistan to increase the country's stability and economy. The Corps has two districts in the country – Afghanistan Engineer District-North, which is based in Kabul; and Afghanistan Engineer District-South, which is based in Kandahar.

**Editor's Note: March is Women's History Month*

Corps prepares Idaho communities for floods

by Terri A. Rorke

In February, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Walla Walla District, the State of Idaho and the National Weather Service held flood fight awareness and training sessions throughout Idaho.

District Disaster Response Manager Jeff Stidham helped Federal, State, Tribal and local officials understand their roles and responsibilities in the case of flood event.

"All disasters start and end at the local level," Stidham said. "If there's a flood fight, the city and county may take action and seek federal help, but then it's back to the locals again."

As the country's subject matter expert agency on flooding, Corps emergency management volunteers can arrive during a flood emergency within 24 to 48 hours. But communities need to first understand how to respond before external help arrives.

"The intent of the course was to help community leaders develop a plan in advance of the emergency," Stidham said.

Most people have normalcy bias, which means that they might feel the worst case scenario won't happen to them.

photo by Ellen Berggren

District Disaster Response Manager Jeff Stidham talks to Blaine County, Idaho, community leaders in February about how to prepare for a flood event.

"Floods are one of the most complex hazards or emergencies that communities have to deal with," said Doug Hardman, Ada County Emergency Management Director in Idaho.

"Because of their multi-jurisdictional nature, floods put a great deal of stress on coordination and communication efforts at all levels of government. That is why multi-agency planning, exercises, and training such as the Corps' flood fight course are so valuable to local emergency responders," he said.

Canyon County Emergency Management Director Todd Herrera said that participants who attended February's flood fight course came back with a great deal of knowledge that will help them if they have a flood event.

"This course allowed our emergency responders to start thinking outside the box. They were able to pre-identify their resources and how those resources could be used in a flood fight," Herrera said.

Stidham said he aims to get communities to a point of "brushing off" the flood.

"It's like a bad wind. You walk through it and you're done. If they can get to a point where a flood doesn't faze them, you have resiliency."

The District has 14 emergency management trained employee volunteers who respond to flood events. If you would like information on how to get involved, go to Emergency Management's volunteer registration and deployment page found on the District's intranet.

photo courtesy of Ada City-County Emergency Management

photo courtesy of Ada City-County Emergency Management

(Left) Community members trudge through muddy water when the Cottonwood Creek flooded Boise, Idaho in 1959. (Right) Caution tape marks off a flooded recreational path under the Eagle Road bridge in this June 2010 photo. The path, called the Greenbelt, runs beneath bridges along the Boise River.


photo by Stephen Doherty

Flood Safety

Agencies promote Flood Safety Awareness

Floods don't take holidays.

It floods somewhere in the United States or its territories nearly every day of the year. On average, floods kill nearly 100 people and are responsible for damages of nearly $7 billion annually.

Federal agencies brought flood safety awareness to Boise's state capital in March to highlight this risk.

The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's (NOAA) National Weather Service designated March 14-18 to promote annual national flood safety awareness. In Idaho, Governor Butch Otter also proclaimed this as Flood Safety Awareness Week.

The goal of Flood Safety Awareness Week is to educate the public of the hazards of floods and flash floods to reduce the loss of life and property. To meet this challenge, NOAA works closely with the U.S. Geological Survey, the U.S. Army Corps Of Engineers, Federal Emergency Management Agency and the Natural Resources Conservation Service. Other key partners in Idaho include the Idaho Bureau of Homeland Security, Idaho Department of Water Resources and the news media.

This year, the threat of spring flooding is average to slightly above average in most areas of Idaho. However, additional precipitation falling in Idaho's mountains continues to build the snowpack. The rate at which this snowpack melts will ultimately determine if and when flooding occurs this spring.

Melting snow is a major source of the flood water. Snowpacks store water through winter until it melts, delaying the arrival of water at the soil for days, weeks or even months after a storm.

photo by Stephen Doherty

(Top) Downtown Boise, Idaho. (Above) Federal agencies display flood awareness materials at the Boise state capitol rotunda during March's Flood Awareness Week.

Once it does reach the soil, water from snowmelt behaves much as it would if it had come from rain instead of snow. The water either infiltrates into the soil, or it runs off, or both. Flooding can occur whenever the rate of water input exceeds the ability of the soil to absorb it or when the amount of water exceeds natural storage capacities in soil, rivers, lakes and reservoirs.

In Idaho, total mountain snowpack usually peaks in early April and then slowly melts through May and early June. Rivers and streams usually reach their highest flows midway through the melt in May or June, but can peak earlier and higher if unusually hot or wet weather occurs.

Snowmelt flooding is more likely in years when the snowpack is above normal, but the threat of flooding is ultimately determined by the melt rate. In addition, snowmelt flooding may be worsened by spring rains falling over the mountain snowpack, adding to the water flowing into creeks and rivers. This occurred in June 2010 when rain fell on a below average snowpack in many areas of Idaho.


photo courtesy of Ada City-County Emergency Management

New P2 version streamlines process

by Terri A. Rorke

With annual cost-savings surpassing $2 million and processes streamlined to optimum levels, it's no wonder the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers implemented version 3 of its project management software, P2.

P2 is a suite of software applications configured to support project execution in the military, civil works, environmental, research and development and Interagency and International Services (IIS) mission areas overseen by USACE. The new software also introduces the Enterprise Data Warehouse (EDW) to its business processes.

EDW eliminates operation and system bottlenecks, according to District P2 Coordinator Cary Rahn. EDW reduces the complexity of data management because information is communicated from one source, rather than between multiple sources.

"While the deployment of P2 version 3 and the EDW have had their growing pains, in the end it streamlines security and system performance," Rahn said.

Understanding the new P2 version was necessary due to a change from the software developer, Oracle. USACE leadership collaborated with subject matter experts and users across the Corps to develop the new software because project managers, program managers and analysts use P2 to work on things like staffing analysis, program level budget development, and project level plans and schedules.

"P2 pretty much controls everything we do. It's definitely a main player in project execution for the District," Rahn said.

Rahn was one of four Corps employees who spent most of Fall 2010 traveling between the District and the Engineering Research and Design Center in Vicksburg, Miss., to perform validation testing on the new system to prepare project managers to use the software when it launched Corps-wide in February.

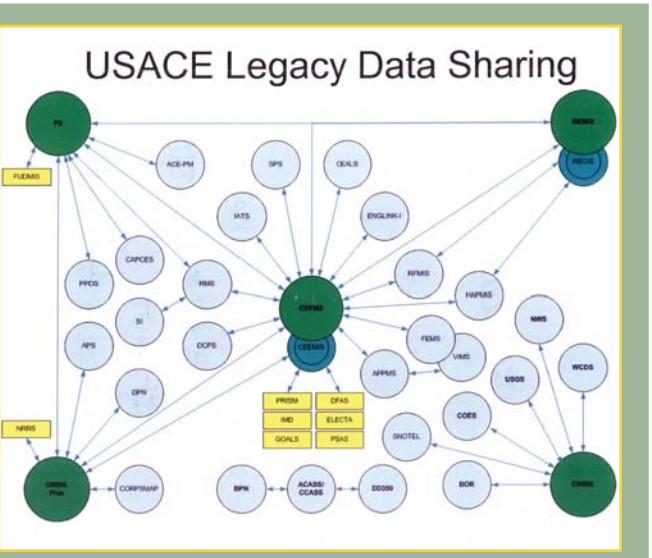
One operational change that users are experiencing in version 3 is to load resource needs by hours rather than dollars.

"By getting used to thinking in terms of how many hours it takes to accomplish a task, you can better manage the time needed for all projects," District Project Analyst Samantha Handcox said.

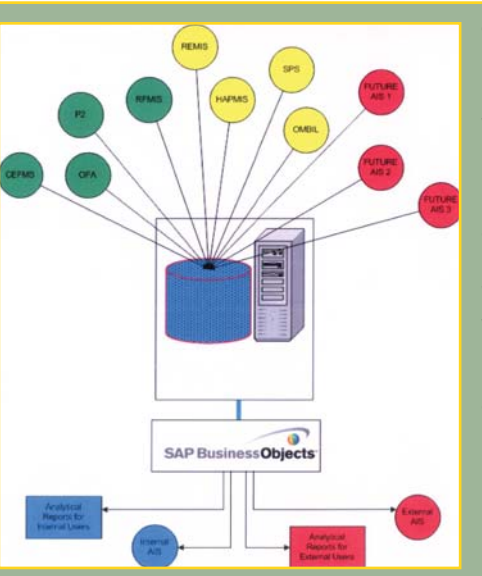
Rahn said the new version will force people to think in terms of level of effort--a process endorsed by the Corps--rather than the cost to accomplish work.

"You are really more accountable. It's a better way to develop your budget," he said.

Before



After



The P2 information process was recently simplified by introducing the Enterprise Data Warehouse, which channels all information through one system, rather than multiple systems.

THE CASTLE'S PAST

During and after the Revolutionary War, the Corps of Engineers was recognized as an essential arm of the service. But, for the most part, it was combined with one of the other branches, such as the Corps of Artillery.

In 1780 the Corps of Engineers, with several other branches of the service, appeared with a distinctive uniform that was modified from time to time until 1794, when specially designed buttons were provided for the Corps of Artillery and Engineers. These buttons had little resemblance to the modern insignia of the Corps of Engineers.

On March 16, 1802, Congress officially recognized the wide variations between the duties of the Artilleristes and Engineers by enacting legislation creating a separate Corps of Engineers and a Military Academy to operate as a function of the Corps. Development of appropriate uniform and insignia began almost immediately. The first step was a special Engineers Corps uniform, retaining the use of the Corps of Artillery button. The button then showed "an eagle standing on a field piece which points to the left and stands on an earthen embankment, a dull ground and parallel lines, the whole in an oval; the outer edge milled." A variation shows a stack of cannon balls at the bottom.

Existence of the famous "Essayons" button has been traced back to 1814, and possibly was first used on the uniforms of CPT Partridge during his assignment as acting superintendent of the Military Academy from 1808 to 1817. This button shows the masonry of the bastion of a marine battery, embrasured, casemated and crenellated, surrounded by water, a rising sun with rays, all surmounted by a soaring eagle bearing in his beak a streamer displaying the motto "Essayons." The whole is symbolic of the work of the military engineer, and is significant in its depiction of the embattlements created by military engineering genius as far back as the feudal days.

Prior to and since the creation of the "Essayons" button, the uniforms of the Corps of Engineers have shown numerous distinctive markings, such as velvet fittings, special arrangement of braids, location and arrangement of buttons, as well as variations from time to time in cloth and color. Most of these distinguishing markings have been for short duration as compared with the life of the "Essayons" button and the "Engineer Castle." Various designs of spaulettes and the "Star and Wreath" collar ornamentation have been generally short-lived.

Jonathan Williams, first commander of the Corps of Engineers and Superintendent of the Military Academy, served as American Agent in France during the Revolution, and made a thorough study of European fortifications. This was reflected in the earlier military defense construction in this country. Selection of the turreted castle as the Engineer insignia followed the first major construction undertaken by the Corps of Engineers--the building of a system of castle-like fortifications, many of which are still standing, were in fact called "castles." These fortifications, for the protection of harbors along the Atlantic Coast, was adopted by General Totten in 1839 as the official insignia of the Corps of Engineers; however, it apparently has been used for a short time prior to this by the cadets of the Military Academy.

The insignia represents a portion of a castle with a central arched entrance, grilled, and approached by steps, in a central tower, leading at each side by galleries pierced by two windows, to a corner octagonal tower, the galleries and towers crenellated.

As a symbol of the military engineers, the medieval castle is inseparably connected with the subjects of fortification and architecture.

The "Castle" has appeared at various times on epaulettes, belt plates, cap plate ornaments, on the shoulder knot, saddle cloth, as a collar ornament, and on the buttons.

The Castle's past

Did you ever wonder why the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers uses a castle as its official insignia?

The triple turreted castle has been in use by the Corps since it was adopted in 1840. Prior to that time, an insignia of a similar design was worn on the uniforms of the Corps of Cadets of the United States Military Academy since the Academy was under the supervision and direction of the Chief of Engineers.

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As a symbol of the military engineers, the medieval castle is inseparably connected with the subjects of fortification and architecture.

"The Castle's Past" article was first found in a February 1976 edition of the *Intercom Information Bulletin*.

District launches geographic information portal

by Terri A. Rorke

Let's face it. Without a map, we'd be lost.

Geographic information systems (GIS) help us with a lot of direction in life. From figuring out how to navigate to a new location on our GPS to finding the theater location on a map application on our iPods, we find our route. As one of the agencies on the forefront of GIS, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers is stewarding geospatial technology.

The District has an eGIS Information Portal website that houses multi-purpose information, which many business lines may find useful for decision-making. Inherently geospatial fields like real estate, which deals with property rights and engineering and construction, which may create map floodplain models can instantly locate the information on the portal.

The District GIS team has been working on the site for almost ten years now. Throughout 2011, the team will work on the final phase of the site development--adding searchable content. An added bonus is that users can check for accuracy and offer quality assurance on the geospatial applications on the site, since they are the experts of the content.

"The key to providing reliable data is knowledge management," said District Geographic Information Specialist Sean Redar.

Redar's goal is to capture the institutional knowledge that is communicated normally only out in the field at District locations. By capturing this information on the website, current and future employees can benefit for years to come.

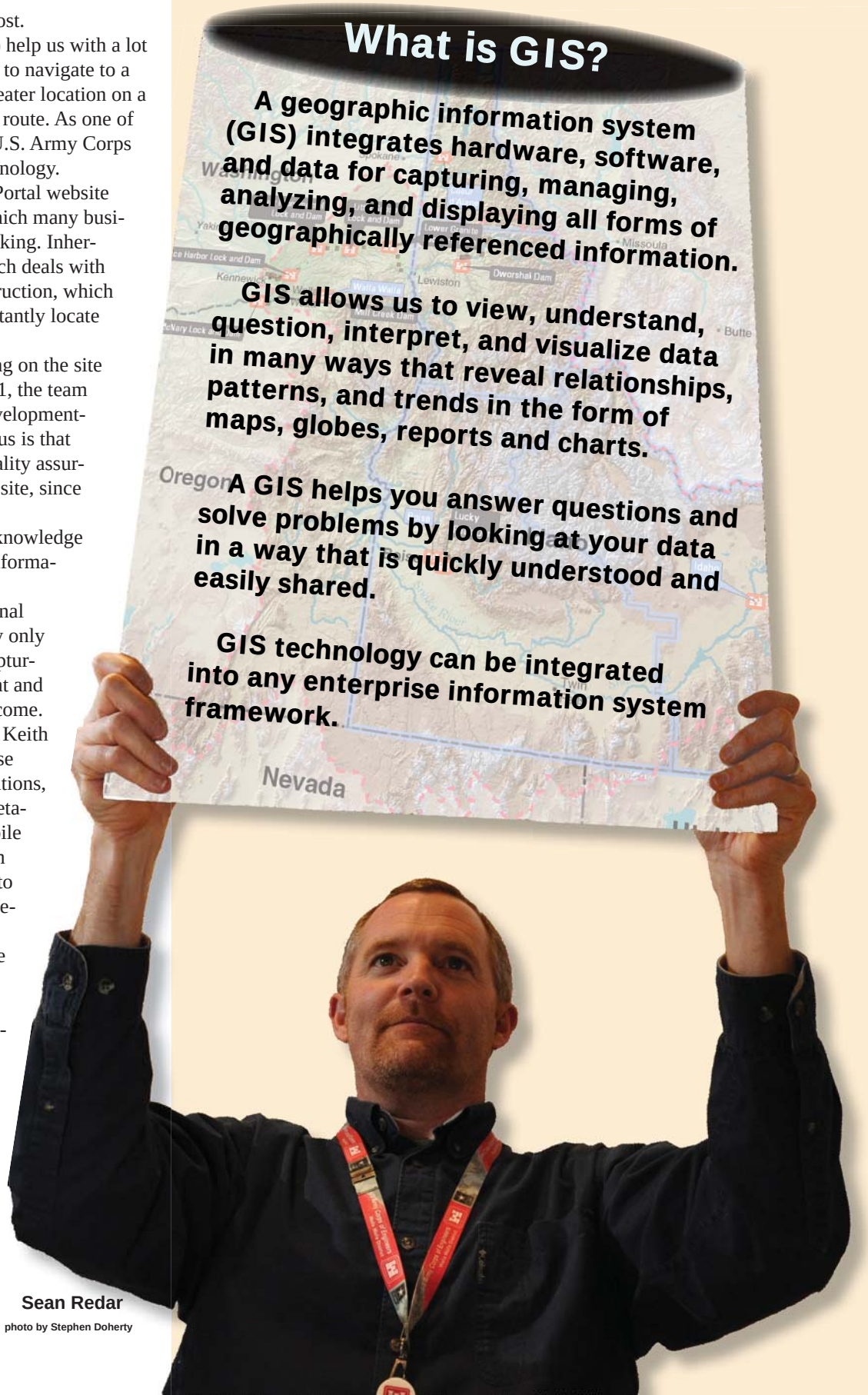
For example, District Project Manager Keith Koebberling and District Disaster Response Manager Jeff Stidham cataloged GPS locations, photos and characteristics of problem vegetation on the Jackson Hole Levees on a mobile device in Wyoming. In July 2010, Stidham and Koebberling uploaded the features onto the District GIS database, so they could create maps using the captured features.

"I use the District's GIS database in the preparation of all my projects," Koebberling said.

"The information contained in the database is available to all the team members, and the ability to manipulate this data is instrumental to the creation of plans and specifications that are biddable and clearly communicate the layout and features of the project site."

Users can find the eGIS Information Portal on the District intranet site.

To find more information about GIS, go to http://www.gis.com.



Sean Redar

photo by Stephen Doherty

USING YOUR NOODLES

story and photo illustrations by Stephen Doherty

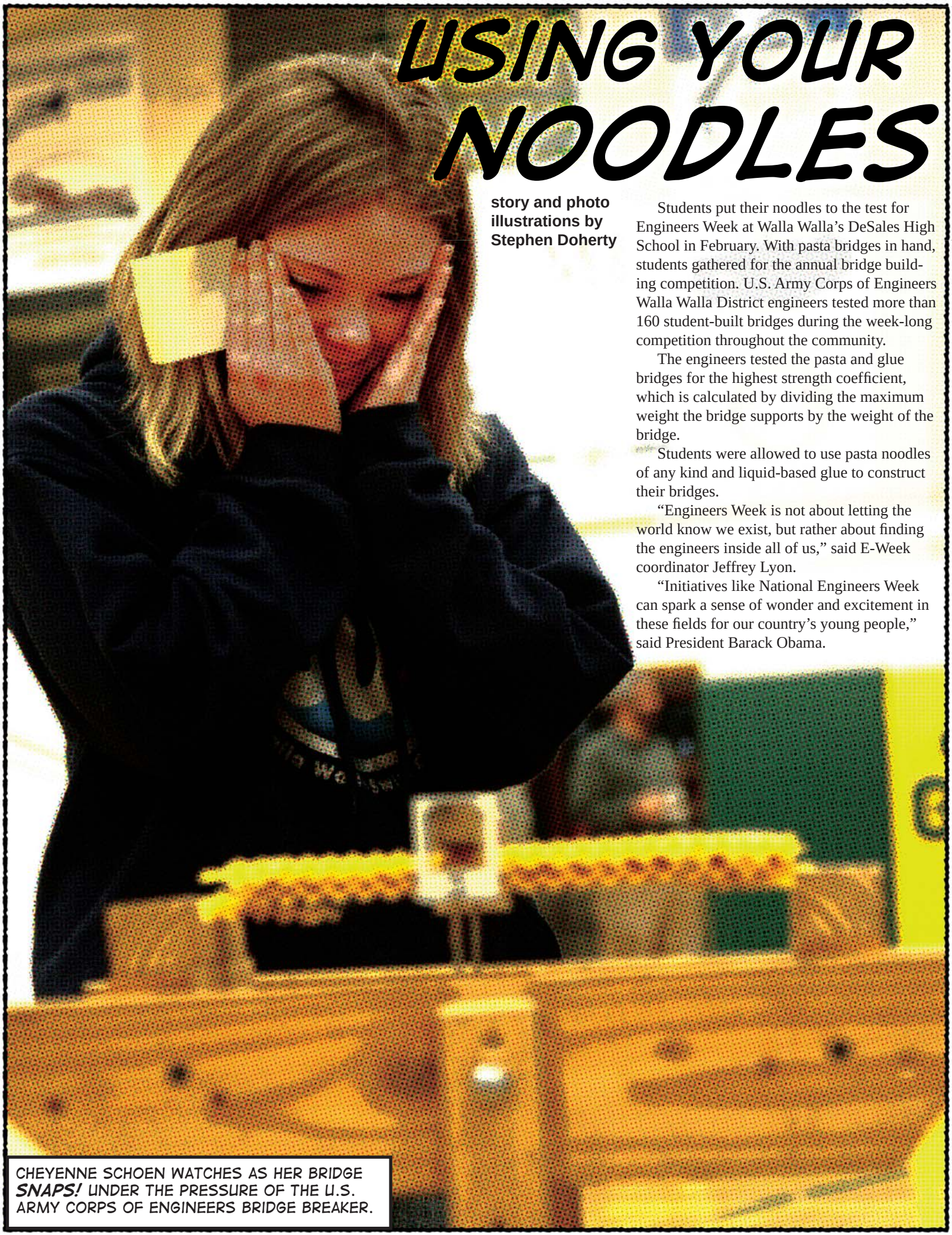
Students put their noodles to the test for Engineers Week at Walla Walla's DeSales High School in February. With pasta bridges in hand, students gathered for the annual bridge building competition. U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Walla Walla District engineers tested more than 160 student-built bridges during the week-long competition throughout the community.

The engineers tested the pasta and glue bridges for the highest strength coefficient, which is calculated by dividing the maximum weight the bridge supports by the weight of the bridge.

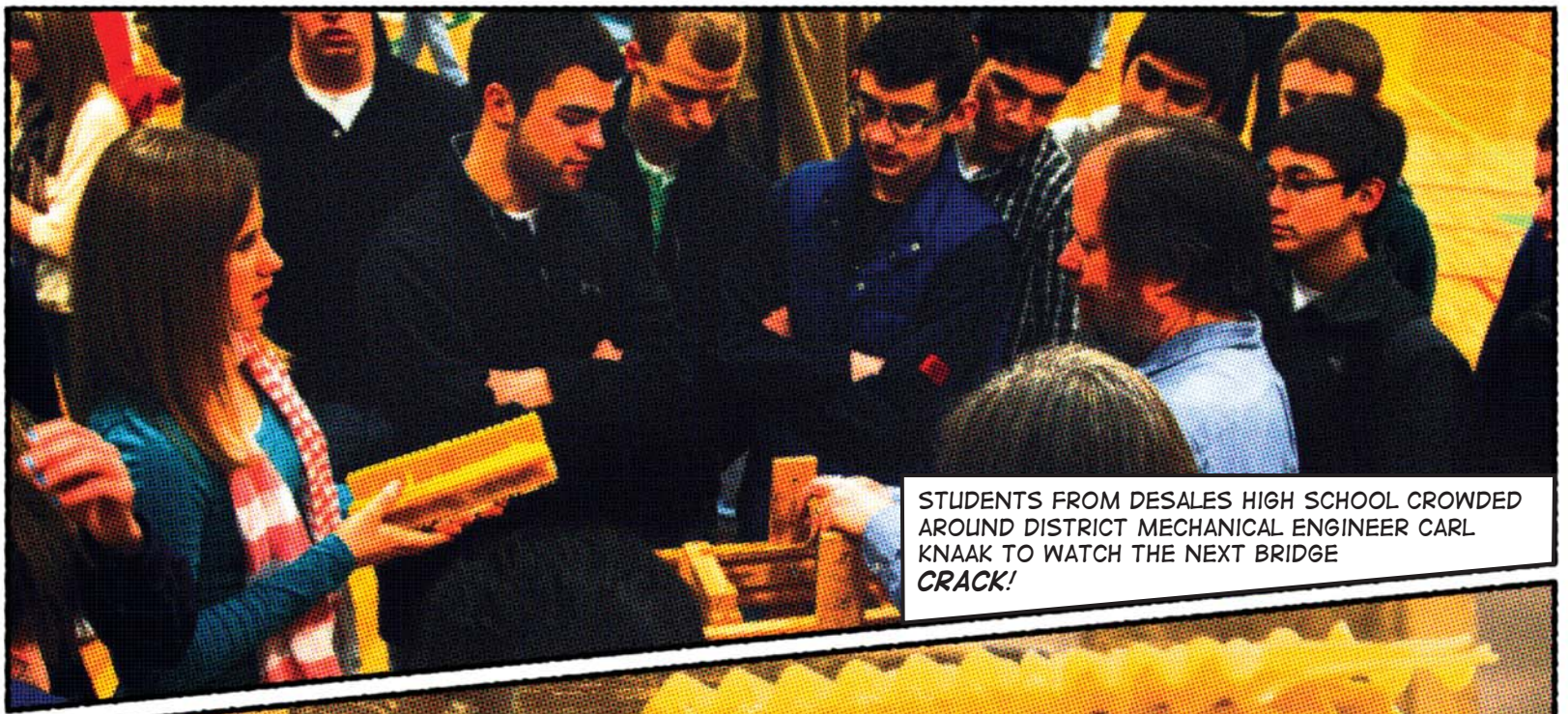
Students were allowed to use pasta noodles of any kind and liquid-based glue to construct their bridges.

"Engineers Week is not about letting the world know we exist, but rather about finding the engineers inside all of us," said E-Week coordinator Jeffrey Lyon.

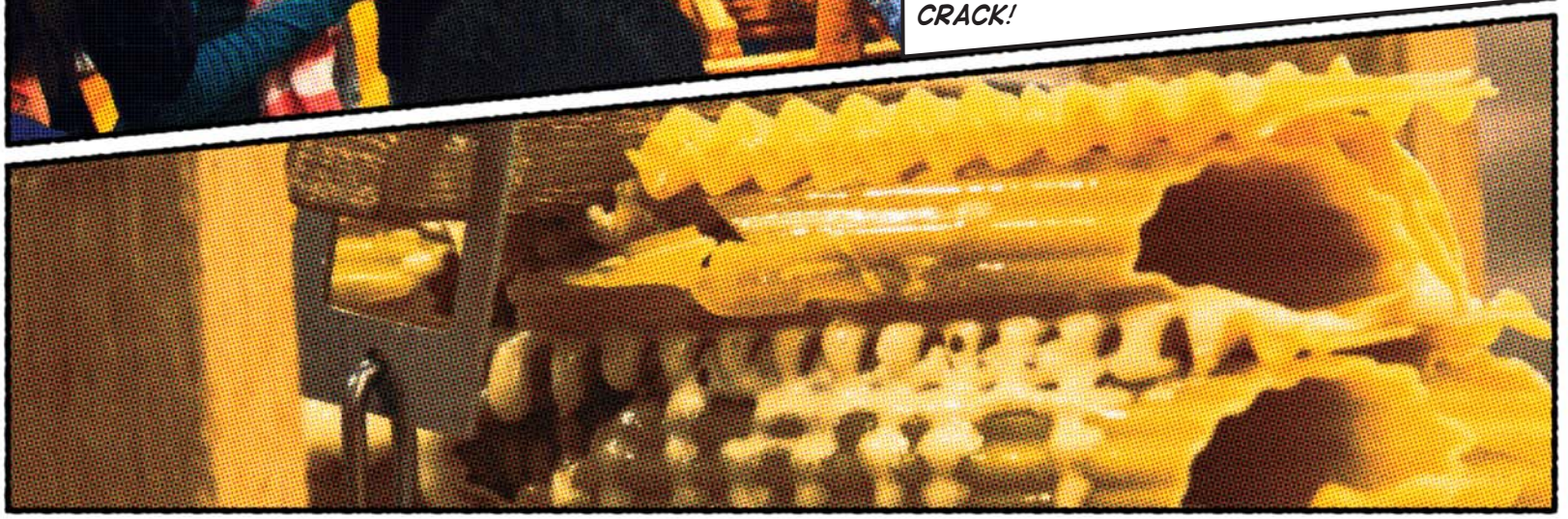
"Initiatives like National Engineers Week can spark a sense of wonder and excitement in these fields for our country's young people," said President Barack Obama.

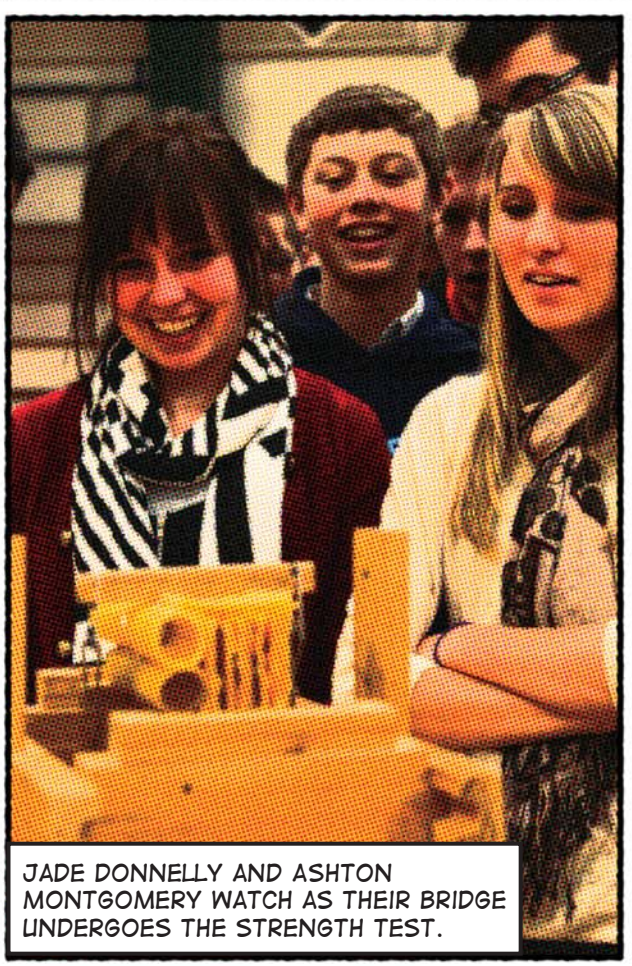


CHEYENNE SCHOEN WATCHES AS HER BRIDGE ***SNAPS!*** UNDER THE PRESSURE OF THE U.S. ARMY CORPS OF ENGINEERS BRIDGE BREAKER.

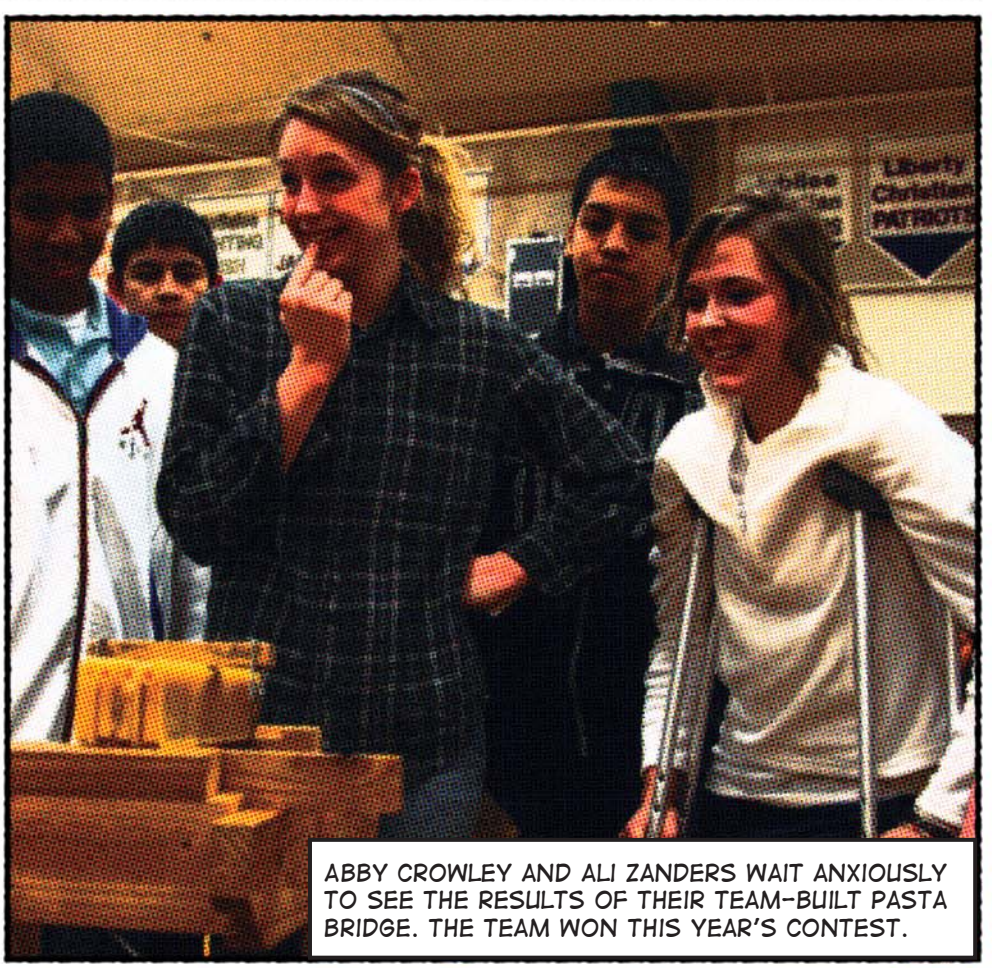


STUDENTS FROM DESALES HIGH SCHOOL CROWDED AROUND DISTRICT MECHANICAL ENGINEER CARL KNAAK TO WATCH THE NEXT BRIDGE ***CRACK!***





JADE DONNELLY AND ASHTON MONTGOMERY WATCH AS THEIR BRIDGE UNDERGOES THE STRENGTH TEST.



ABBY CROWLEY AND ALI ZANDERS WAIT ANXIOUSLY TO SEE THE RESULTS OF THEIR TEAM-BUILT PASTA BRIDGE. THE TEAM WON THIS YEAR'S CONTEST.

Around the District

The District has been pretty busy fundraising, playing football, and learning from and celebrating with local leaders in their accomplishments.

Top photo: Lt. Col. Decker Hains ceremonially cuts a Lower Granite modelled-cake at his promotion ceremony in January.

Below: Guest speaker Wenix Red Elk educates a crowd about native roots during a Native American Month luncheon in January.

Bottom, left: Office of Council's Attorney Linda Kirts welcomes Walla Walla Mayor Barbara Clark, who spoke during a District luncheon in March to celebrate Women's History Month.


photo by Terri A. Rorke


photo by Andrew Dankel-Ibanez


photo by Rita Greene


photo by Stephen Doherty

Team members huddle during inaugural Turkey Bowl Jan. 7.

Intern Contract Specialist Ben Wolfram received a $500 cash award from the Corps' National Contracting Organization for finding Army funding and developmental training opportunities for interns across USACE.


photo by Stephen Doherty

District Attorney Tyler Moore drops back to pass during the Turkey Bowl Jan. 7.

Walla Walla District raises $50,218.04 for 2010 Combined Federal Campaign

The District had a successful fundraising year. CFC is the world's largest annual workplace charity campaign, with more than 200 CFC campaigns throughout the country and internationally to help raise millions of dollars each year supporting eligible non-profit organizations that provide health and human service benefits throughout the world. Thank you for your donations!

Life on the Set

District adopting to social media

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers is adding ways it communicates to the public through social media. Internet-based tools like YouTube, Twitter and Facebook allow the Walla Walla District to effectively share its mission.

By using a variety of platforms designed to support a range of media, such as text, audio, photos and videos, the District now has the ability to communicate with larger audiences faster. In turn, social media allows the public to easily connect, learn and interact with the District.

photo by Bruce Henrickson

Social Media Facts

Facebook has more than 550 million users up from 400 million a year ago.

If Facebook were a country it would be the third largest country in the world.

The fastest growing segment on Facebook is 55-65 year-old females.

YouTube is the second largest search engine in the world.

More than 1.5 million pieces of content (web links, news stories, notes, photos, etc.) are shared on Facebook…daily.

Walla Walla District videos available on YouTube: Lower Monumental Navigation Lock Completion; Lower Monumental Navigation Lock outage; Paradise Creek Restoration Project; Contracting Small Business; I'm with the Corps-Contracting; I'm with the Corps.

Public Affairs garners 8 awards at USACE Herbert A. Kassner Journalism Competition

First place winner of TV Newsbreak: Amber Larsen

First place winner of Photojournalism: Stephen Doherty

First place winner of Sports Article: Terri A. Rorke

Second place winner of Civilian Journalist of the Year: Terri A. Rorke

Second place winner of Photojournalism: Terri A. Rorke

Third place winner of Television Feature Report: Amber Larsen

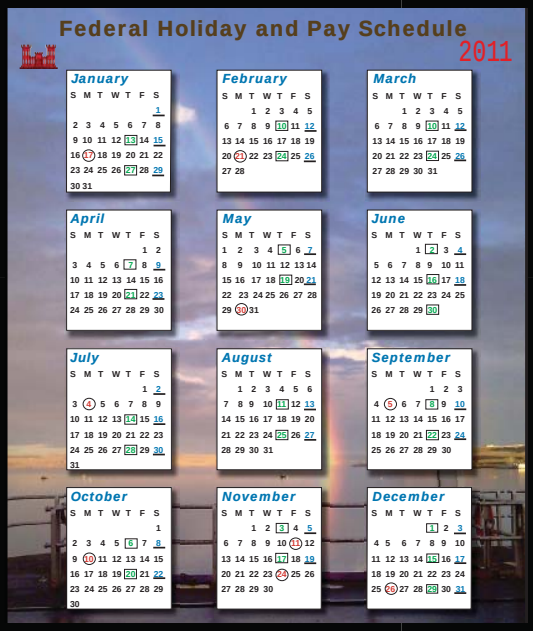
Honorable Mention of Photograph: Bruce Henrickson

Honorable Mention of Feature Article: Terri A. Rorke

2010 NWW Photo Contest winners

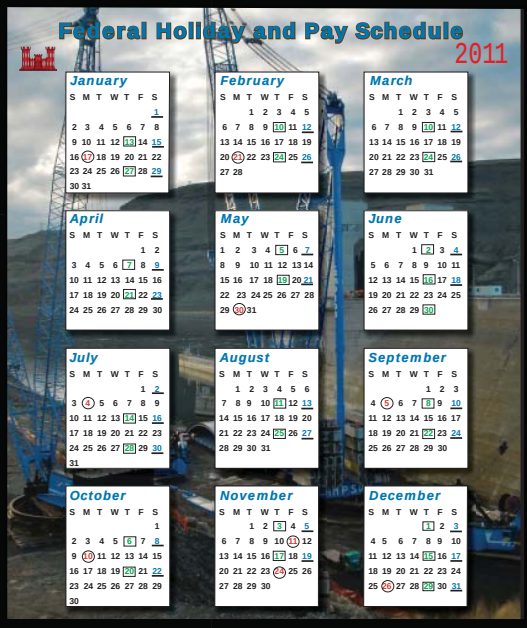
Nearly 500 District employees cast their vote for the 65 entries submitted in this year's District photo contest. Here are the results.

Pay Calendar Category Winner



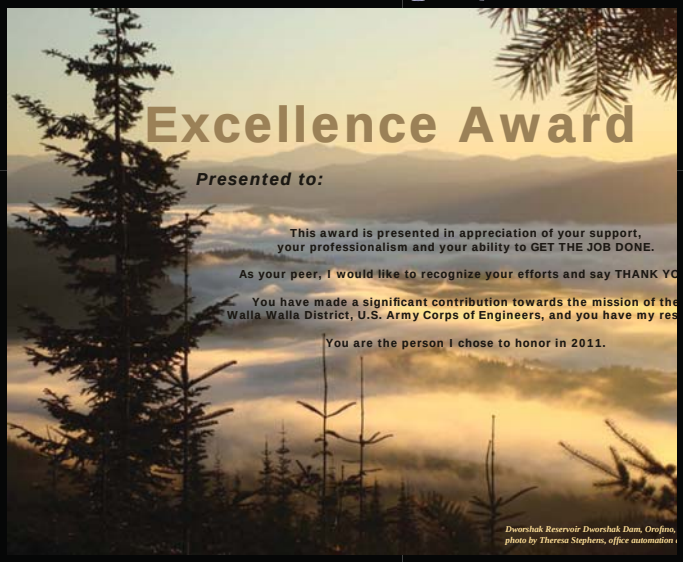
Lorence Ford, office automation assistant,
McNary Lock and Dam, Umatilla, Oregon

Pay Calendar Category Runner-up



Bryce Thompson, mechanical engineer,
Lower Monumental Lock and Dam,
Kahlotus, Washington

Peer Award Category Winner



Theresa Stephens, office automation assistant,
Dworshak Dam, Orofino, Idaho

Peer Award Category Runner-up

David Lewis, Corps volunteer,
Ice Harbor Lock and Dam, Burbank, Washington