Charleston
DISTRICT DISPATCH
"Just Doing It"

Vol. 25 No.3 | U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Charleston District | Fall 2002

Dredged Sand finds Home on the Beach

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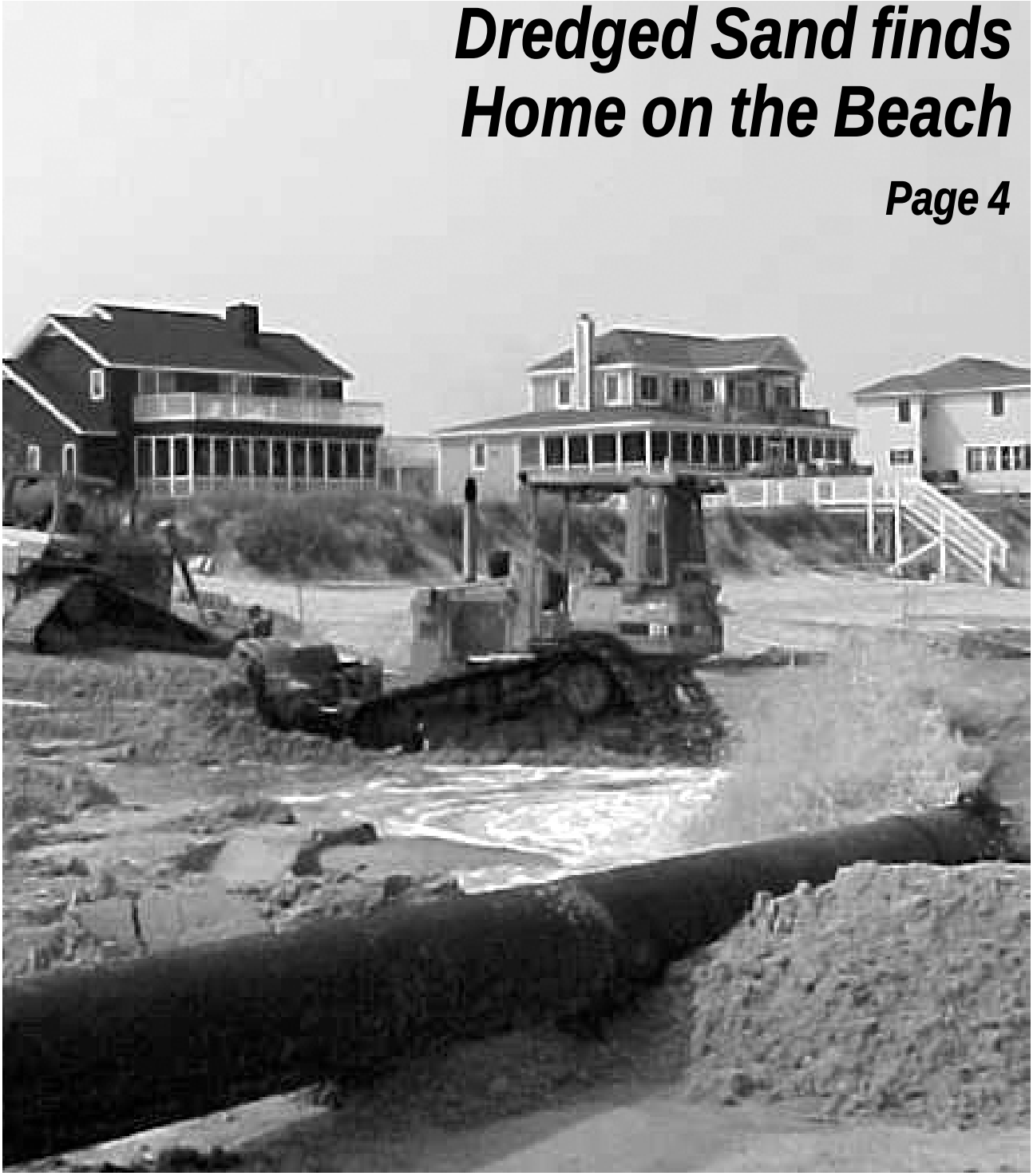

Charleston District Dispatch

Volume 25, Number 2
Summer 2002

District Dispatch is an unofficial publication of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Charleston District, authorized under the provisions of AR360-1. The editorial views and opinions expressed are not necessarily those of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers or the Department of the Army. *District Dispatch* is a command information publication of U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Charleston District. Circulation is 250. Articles, photographs, and other contributions are welcome and encouraged. The editor reserves the right to make editorial changes to all material submitted for publication. Letters to the editor are also encouraged. The deadline for submissions is the 1st of the month preceding publication.
Send submissions to: Editor, *District Dispatch*, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Charleston District, 69A Hagood Avenue, Charleston, SC 29403. Details may be obtained from the Public Affairs Officer at (843) 329-8123. Written material may be electronically sent to: alicia.m.gregory@usace.army.mil.

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On The Cover

Southern Dredging Company uses bulldozers to push material recently placed onto Garden City Beach as part of the three million dollar Murrells Inlet Dredging project.

The beach was designated as a disposal site for the beach-quality material that was dredged from the Murrell's Inlet Channel as part of the Corps' Beneficial Use of Dredged Material program. Courtesy Photo.

District Commander's Corner

Lt. Col. Peter W. Mueller
Charleston District Commander

Congratulations to the District Team for all your efforts in **Accomplishing Our Mission** and meeting the needs of the Nation and our Customers throughout FY02. We had a super year with many accomplishments from construction emplaced, contracts awarded, permitting actions completed, value engineering recommendations accepted, project designs delivered, studies pursued, support provided, risks analyzed, training conducted, projects managed, customers satisfied, or lessons learned! I thank each of you for your personal contributions.

As we begin FY03 I know our Nation and our stakeholders can count on our team to continue to provide the best possible support, deliver quality projects, and execute our programs. A key task this year is to continue to work toward full implementation of the Project Management Business Process (PMBP) and fielding of the new automated information system (AIS) P2. We all know there are varying degrees of the implementation of the PMBP around the Corps and I am proud of the District's progress in 2002 and past years. In FY03 the Corps will continue to consolidate past progress, strengthen and standardize processes, and field the new AIS.

Our training and implementation actions focused on team involvement and standardized processes improve our flexibility, efficiencies, agility, and regional capabilities, allowing the Charleston District and the whole Corps to better meet customer needs. Professional football provides a great example of the tenets of the PMBP – team involvement and standard processes.

Team Involvement. Football teams are composed of individual specialists (guards, tackles, receivers, linebackers, runningbacks, quarterback etc.) and their specialty coaches that hone their individual abilities part of the time, to ensure their ability to contribute to a team effort. Our Project Delivery Teams (PDTs) are the same, composed of engineers and scientists with various technical specialties and administrative staff. Each PDT member has a branch chief to coach them and help develop their skills. Quarterbacks lead the team on the field of play, they coordinate actions and call signals much as the project manager leads the PDT. But all players must scrimmage regularly as a team to synchronize their skills in order to win the big game – just as PDT's meet to coordinate, communicate, and brainstorm to ensure they are most successful in delivering their win – a quality project. You don't win without the full team.

Standardized Processes. Football has set standards for field dimensions, number of players, and rules that all players understand and fans expect. These rules - common operating principles - allow traveling teams to play anywhere in the country and ensure players and fans are not confused. That's all we are doing with PMBP, setting standards in processes and expectations so each of our team members and our customers/fans clearly understand our field of play. We can easily call any player off of the bench so they can walk onto the field and contribute if the team needs to rest another player with the same specialty. In the Corps we can even do this virtually! But football rules have not stayed the same for the past 110 years. New technology and experiences result in improvements in equipment and rules. Today technology and the impact of winning games have demanded the official's use of "instant replay" to confirm or change official decisions. Today, the cost of doing business, more efficient technologies, and expectations for shorter delivery times for customers demand that we increase our efficiency - that's what the PMBP and P2 will do for our team!

Consider these similarities as you watch the weekend game or work through PMBP training modules. Learn the rules, understand the field of play, hone your individual skills, scrimmage with your PDT, and be prepared for when you're called into the big game. Delivering our best possible project requires synchronized execution by every specialist on the field! Let's Play Ball!

ESSAYONS!

Dredged Sand finds Home on the Beach

by Alicia Gregory
Public Affairs

Each year, nearly 400 million cubic yards of material are dredged to maintain the nation's waterways and harbors. That's a lot of dredged material to find a place for.

Murrells Inlet Project Manager Gary McAlister and his project delivery team were able to not only find a place for the navigation channel material, but also to use the material to provide storm protection for a nearby beach and stabilize a threatened bird habitat area.

Using dredged material for another purpose, rather than just storing it away in disposal areas, is termed "*beneficial use* of dredged material." Beneficial use of dredged material is a priority for the Corps as the placement of dredged material could provide for shoreline stability and significantly reduce the cost of transporting the material much further offshore. Dredged material is no longer being regarded as a "spoil" or "waste" but as a valuable resource. This method is often used when the cost of doing so is less than or equal to the traditional disposal alternative, the economic benefits justify the additional costs, or if a sponsor elects to pay the additional costs.

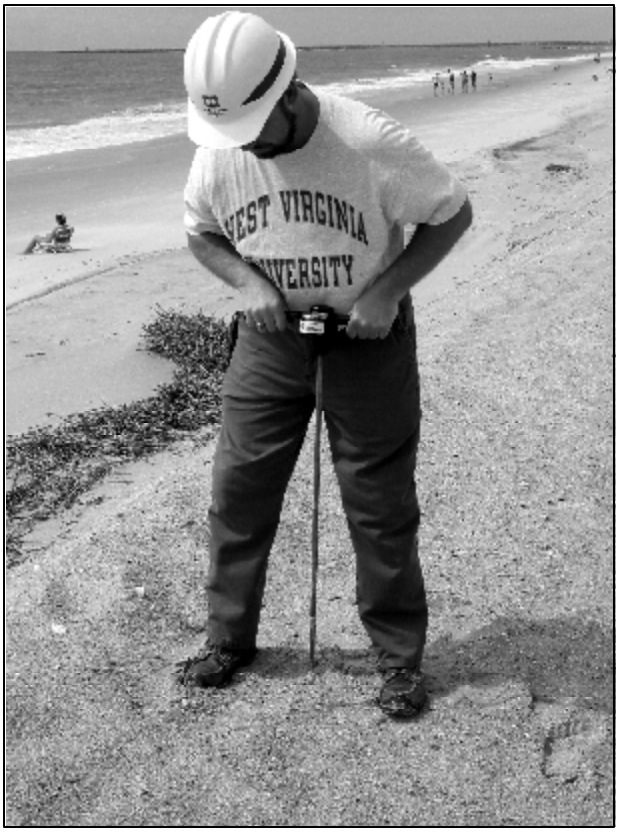
Murrells Inlet, a three million dollar dredging project, which was awarded this April, involved placing beach-quality sand that was dredged from the entrance channel and deposition basin to place on Garden City Beach and Huntington Beach State Park, which are both near the Myrtle Beach area of South Carolina and adjacent to the project.

"In order to maintain the navigation channel, material that settles in the channel area must be removed to an authorized project depth," explained McAlister.

According to McAlister the last time the area had been dredged was more than 14 years ago. Although the channel had maintained project depth, it had migrated southward causing erosion at Huntington Beach State Park. At the same time, Garden City Beach had a severe oceanfront erosion problem that was threatening structures along the beach.

"The team recognized that dredging the inlet presented us an opportunity to not only restore the navigation channel, but also to mitigate erosion at both Huntington Beach State Park and Garden City Beach," said McAlister.

Both locations were designated as "beneficial use disposal areas" for the project through working with officials at Georgetown County, the local sponsor. This designation allowed the beneficial use of all dredged materials to protect the State park and public beach. In addition, the Federal Government realized a cost savings of approximately one



Alan Shirey, team leader of the Environmental Resources Section, test sand compaction at Garden City Beach using a cone penetrometer. Photo by Alicia Gregory

million dollars by placing the material on the beaches instead of offshore.

"Had the erosion continued without the placement of dredged material, the potential existed for the State Park to be breached and major erosion damage could have occurred to a large, productive bird habitat," said McAlister "This would have resulted in a tremendous loss to the environment and an economic loss to the South Carolina State Parks, Recreation and Tourism office." The placement of the sand on Garden City Beach protected existing structures and allowed for continued use of the beach by the general public.

The environmental concerns on this project centered on the potential impacts caused by erosion at Huntington Beach State Park, and properly locating the placement of sand at the two designated disposal areas.

The District team, with a great deal of participation and coordination from State and Federal resource agencies, local government agencies, and customers, studied the impacts to:

·Nesting sea turtles, particularly the Federally threatened Loggerhead sea turtle,

·Wild and cultured Federally threatened Sea-beach Amaranth (a native beach plant),

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OVEST Designated Center of Expertise

The Office of Value Engineering Study Team was designated this summer as a Center of Expertise for the USACE Value Management/Value Engineering Program retroactive to October 2001.

The team has been utilized in this capacity for several years as they conducted value-engineering studies worldwide for the Corps.

"Part of how this came about stems from the Chief of Engineers attendance at the Society for American Value Engineers (SAVE) Conference (the governing organization for certifying value engineers) as the keynote speaker this May," explained Ron Burkhard, OVEST team member. According to Burkhard, the Chief met with the Corps attendees at the conference who stressed the importance of value engineering, specifically OVEST, to the Corps.

Since that time the headquarters not only established OVEST as a center of expertise, but also is working on an engineering regulation that will spell-out the specifics of the Corps' value engineering process.

As a Center of Expertise, OVEST will assist Headquarters with the Value Engineering program through items such as training support, program coordination, reporting and publication of value-engineering documents, all subject to available funding.

"This reinforces the Corps desire to reinvigorate the value-engineering process," said Lt. Col. Peter Mueller, District Commander. "The value-engineering process assures projects get a second set of eyes on the project, augmenting the project delivery team. It is part of the Project Management Business Process and the goal to make sure we deliver the best product to our customers."

Army's Resumix Transition Starts

Good news! We are consolidating all the resumes maintained by five of our Continental United States (CONUS) Civilian Personnel Operations Centers (CPOCs) into one central Resumix database. This consolidation will happen in stages starting with the North East CPOC. The South West, South Central, South East and North Central CPOCs will be merged incrementally thereafter.

Why are we doing this now and what are the advantages of a centralized resume database?

One of the recommendations made by the Staffing Process Reengineering Group was to move toward a single portal, centralized employment process for all Regions in 2002. The announcement to close the Army National Capitol Region and the South East CPOCs resulted in a redistribution of serviced organizations among the remaining CPOCs. Since CPOCs now need access to resumes and requisitions residing in other databases, we decided to centralize the databases as soon as possible. Applicants will need to have only one resume in the database and it can be used to apply for a vacancy in any region.

Soon, resumes submitted through the Army Civilian Resume Builder will flow automatically into the centralized Resumix database. Self-nominations initiated through the Vacancy Announcement Builder will be posted automatically to the centralized Resumix database and will provide on-line confirmation to the applicant.

Using a new tool called ANSWER, applicants will be able to go to one place to obtain information about their resume and self-nomination submissions. ANSWER will replace the Resumix On-Line Applicant Response Systems (ROARS) and Standard On-Line Applicant Response System (SOARS) and will notify applicants of the receipt, status and final disposition of their applications.

The consolidation of the five regional databases is considered Phase I in the move to the single portal concept. Phase II will bring in the remaining regions (West, Europe, Pacific and Korea) later in 2002.

For more information about the transition visit the Army CPOL Home Page.

Team Members Experience Leadership Development Program

by Lisa Metheney
Economist

Gene Maak, a hydraulic engineer in the Technical Service Division, and Lisa Metheney, an economist/plan formulator in the Project Management Division are the Charleston District's most recent participants in the USACE Leadership Development Program (LDP).

The LDP is designed to prepare GS-12s and -13s to serve in leadership positions, by providing specific training and development opportunities. Acceptance into the FY02 class was competitive, with South Atlantic Division allotted one Civil Works slot and one Military slot. There were also 10 at large spaces available within the program. Maak and Metheney had to submit an application, resume, statement of interest, and receive an endorsement from the District Commander. The application process was completed in September 2001, and participants were notified in late December if they had been accepted.

The first part of the three-year course is the completion of a six-month developmental assignment in another District. Essentially the participants "job swap" amongst the group, so that each district that sends someone away receives a person in return. This January Maak and Metheney received their assignments. Metheney was assigned to the Europe District in Wiesbaden, Germany. Maak was originally assigned to the Rock Island District in Illinois; however, due to some commitments on the part of some of the other participants, some assignments were juggled and he was reassigned to the Transatlantic Center in Winchester, Virginia.

"I was really fortunate to be assigned to the Europe District," says Metheney. "Besides the obvious reason of getting to spend time in Germany, it was very beneficial because they do only Military Programs work there and I had never done that type of work before. And by not having any Civil Programs work, I couldn't cheat and do something I knew how to do, I had to learn all the ins and outs of the Military Program." While in Europe District, she served as a Project Manager in the Ansbach Section, working on a number of projects, including the construction of a Central Wash Facility at Schweinfurt. She also developed a programmatic Project Management Plan for the Barracks Program and assisted in the development of a streamlined approach to funds requests for Operations and Maintenance projects.

Maak was not without his own international exposure. While at the Transatlantic Center, he was assigned to the Site Development Section. As part of his learning experience he worked on a Joint Munitions Storage Complex for AL Jaber Air Base, Kuwait; the Western Ammo Phase II Amendment in Cairo, Egypt; the Synchrolift Expansion at Ras El Tin Naval Base Alexandria, Egypt; and Air Base Upgrades KAF Fighter Apron Review for the Al Salem Air Base, Kuwait. He also used his computer skills to create a custom Graphic User Interface (GUI) to simplify database operations and customized the access database for the inventory of associated Computer Added Design (CADD) facilities, structures, and/or details designed by TAC.

"Overall my experience at TAC was satisfying," said Maak. "My goals while on assignment were to contribute to the organization and learn something different. I did both. TAC is an organization within the Corps that focuses 100 percent on military work within the bounds of the Middle East. The design engineers and project managers assigned to TAC travel frequently to these locations to visit the sites and develop and maintain close personal contacts with project sponsors of these host countries. In the Middle East business is personal, and the personal relationships developed over time are paramount for the success of a project; not unlike the way business is done in the South."

The team members who came to Charleston District also found the program beneficial. Rusty Mizelle, who is a Program Manager in NAU, had never worked on the Civil Works side of the Corps. He said he found the work interesting and challenging. And the people who worked with him enjoyed the fresh perspective he brought.

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Team Members Learn Self-Defense

by Gizelle George
Public Affairs Student Aide

In 2000, South Carolina had a population of more than four million. That same year, the state had 32,293 violent crimes, including 233 murders, more than 1,500 rapes and 5,883 robberies. There were also more than 24,000 cases of aggravated assaults, and 38,888 burglaries. The state had the fifth highest crime index, second highest occurrence of violent crimes, ninth for crimes against property, and first for total cases of aggravated assaults.

It is for these very reasons, Murphy and Iris Winn, indicated, that self-protection and knowledge of the many aspects of self-defense are critical. Self defense is "one's ability to recognize and analyze violent/nonviolent situations and take the appropriate moral, legal, psychological and/or physical actions necessary to diffuse or neutralize a threatening circumstance."

District team members gathered in the second floor conference room July 17, for a Brown Bag luncheon sponsored by the Specials Emphasis Program, to learn more about the topic from guest speakers Murphy Winn and his wife Iris, both employees in the District's Regulatory Division and former owners of a Self Defense School in Hampton, South Carolina.

Murphy Winn demonstrates self-defense techniques to Patricia Miller, a Regulatory team member who attended the Brown Bag lunch.

"Contrary to popular belief, self-defense is hardly just about physical ability," Murphy explained. "Rather, it is a combination of physical ability, weapons and/or fighting techniques, common sense, awareness and attitude. Awareness, attitude and common sense make up almost 85 percent of this equation. Your attitude can either dissolve a situation or it may escalate it."

Violence in the workplace today is a common occurrence, and it can occur to anyone, at any time and in any location. In the likelihood that such unfortunate incidents were to occur, and physical self-defense becomes necessary, Murphy said that every area on your body can be used as a weapon.

At the same time, it is essential to know the laws that govern self-defense in South Carolina. According to South Carolina law, a person must actually believe that he is in imminent danger of loss of life or serious bodily injury or actually was in such danger and have had no other probable means of avoiding the danger.

The Winn's concluded the Brown Bag luncheon with a demonstration on various self-defense techniques.

LDP

From Previous Page

"Rusty was a high-energy guy who loved learning about how things worked on the Civil side," said Joe Jones, chief of Planning Division. "He was sometimes frustrated by the difference in pace (compared to Military Programs), but we liked having him here."

Dante Agulto, who works in TAC, said he enjoyed his time in the District. He worked mainly on completing Five-Year Reviews for the Environmental Protection Agency. This is a service the District completed for EPA where EPA cleanup actions are reviewed to see how they are functioning based on the cleanup and the original plan.

"Dante helped us out a great deal with the EPA reviews," said Mark Nelson, Design Branch Chief. "We enjoyed having him here."

The next steps for Metheney and Maak are to begin work on the five training classes they must complete over the remaining 28 months of the program, including a 16-week assignment to the Army Management Staff College to complete the Sustaining Base Leadership and Management course.

West Point Graduate Observes Employees

The Charleston District hosted a West Point graduate this summer as part of a Corps-wide program to give the recent grads the opportunity to observe the workings of a Corps district before they start their careers as Army engineers.

District team members spent time explaining the district's roles and responsibilities to 2nd Lt. David Chonowski as part of this program.

The second lieutenant program is an important program because it provides professional development for young officers. Today's young lieutenants don't see much of the Army Corps of Engineers until sometime later in their career, which can be six to eight years," explained Lt. Col. Peter W. Mueller, District Commander. "This gives them an idea of what USACE does for the Army and the Nation.

"Thirty days is a short period, but he got a broad overview of what the district does in the Civil Works program and got to visit a military construction project as well. Now he will go off to the Officers Basic Course and be in a tactical unit for the next four years, then he is off to the Officers Advanced Course," explained Mueller. "Really, the first time he will get to see the Corps again is in another eight years from now, and only a small percentage of active duty officers get to do that."

According to Chonowski, this experience gave him a better understanding on how the Corps operates, which has in turn made him better prepared for the path he will decide to take during his career.

Graduates were able to take advantage of the program during their break between graduation and attending the Officer Basic Training Course in the fall.

As an engineering graduate, Chonowski said he would be able to use what he learned at the district during his career.

"I was amazed by the different types of projects that the people here handle," said Chonowski. "Everyone was great to take time out of their schedules to show me what they did."

In addition to learning what was done at the district headquarters' level, the lieutenant went onsite to visit several projects. He said he was especially impressed with the district's dredging programs and being able to go onto an actual dredge.

"It was interesting to see how the military works with civilians here," said the Illinois native. "The people who work here have a lot of experience and you can tell that the work they do is just as hard as any military unit."

"District employees did a great job in welcoming him and giving him a great introduction to USACE," said Mueller.

It wasn't all work for the recent graduate. He was able to take advantage of the local tours on the Yorktown, Ft. Sumter, and other historical sites, not to mention his free time on the beaches.

"This has been very enjoyable for me," said Chonowski. "Everyone here was great. It was obvious that they enjoyed showing me their work, and I enjoyed learning. I would recommend this program to others (West Point graduates)."

Maj. Joe Armstrong, Deputy Commander, explains his varied job duties to 2nd Lt. David Chonowski. Photo by Alicia Gregory

St. Stephens Powerplant Gets Governor Upgrades

The Charleston District replaced and upgraded its hydroelectric governors at the St. Stephen Powerhouse this summer.

Under a supplement to the Cooper River Rediversion Project contract, maintenance personnel from Santee Cooper performed the upgrades to the hydroelectric governors at the powerhouse, located on the Rediversion Canal.

A governor is a mechanical or electrical device that automatically controls the speed of a turbine.

The District approached Santee Cooper last year about performing the upgrade.

"Santee Cooper was replacing their governors, so it was decided that it would be mutually beneficial for them to help with the installation," said David Hubbard, chief of Operations.

The existing governor design has been around since before the 1940s. The manufacturer is discontinuing parts. The Santee Cooper team is in the same boat as the Corps because they have the same governors.

Enter the digital age. Governors now manufactured are all digital and considered state-of-the-art. The governors at the Santee Cooper's Jefferies hydropower plants will be budgeted for upgrade in the near future.

"Performing the upgrade at St. Stephen will not only assist the Corps, but it will give Jefferies maintenance personnel the opportunity to gain additional experience that will be applied to our equipment," said Mike Lankford, Jefferies Station manager. "The Corps needed technical assistance and we needed the experience; it is a win-win for both parties," Lankford added.

St. Stephen's new governors are all digital and considered state-of-the-art. Photo by John Crawford.

Santee Cooper receives the energy produced at St. Stephen's three-unit, 84-megawatt facility and controls its operation remotely from the Energy Control Center in Moncks Corner.

"The availability of 84 MWs of energy at St. Stephen means a great deal to Santee Cooper, particularly during periods of high demand," said Lonnie Carter, senior vice president of Corporate Planning and Bulk Power. "It's a resource we can call upon when we need it."

The Cooper River Rediversion Project was authorized by Congress. Financed, constructed and maintained by the Corps, it was completed in 1985. The Corps developed the project to reduce silting in Charleston Harbor, thus reducing the Corps dredging costs. The project diverts water from Lake Moultrie along the 14-mile long Rediversion Canal. The canal empties into the Santee River.

The District, Santee Cooper and the Department of Natural Resources maintain a close relationship through a partnering process that periodically brings together key members of both organizations to discuss issues of mutual concern.

"This is a great example of synergy. The partnership between our two organizations enabled us to find a solution to an ongoing problem," said Lt. Col. Peter W. Mueller. "While individually the district had run into roadblocks in getting the new governors installed. The partnership with Santee Cooper found the best solution through the team problem-solving process. Our ability to modernize our equipment benefits both agencies and ultimately our customers by the powerhouse being more efficient and effective, the result of a great team effort."

Editors Note: This article was adapted, with permission, from an earlier story by Willard Strong, that appeared in the Santee Cooper Publication, Currently.

SAD Completes Charleston's Command Assistance Visit

South Atlantic Division team members visited the Charleston District as part of a Division-wide Command Assistance Visit Oct. 8 through 10.

SAD Commander Brig. Gen. Peter T. Madsen's intent is to conduct a Command Assistance Visit (CAV) once a year rather than 18 independent inspections throughout the year, according to Lt. Col. Mark Held, SAD Deputy Commander. The intent is to nest results with the Senior Leader Conference (SLC) in November, then look at which programs District's will want to use for next year's CAV. The CAV should be looked at as a District tool for the District Commanders.

The CAV looked at four focus areas -- Technical Quality Management, Individual Development Plans/ TAPES, EEO Compliance and Capability, and Strategic Communication.

The Charleston District, who was the fourth of the SAD Districts to participate in the CAV, had champions in each of these areas to assists the SAD team with their inspections.

"It is important that we continually work to improve our efficiency and effectiveness," said Lt. Col. Peter W. Mueller, District Commander. "We learned a number of lessons from division staff." These lessons were briefed to the District staff following the inspections.

Brig. Gen. Madsen talks about ways to retain Corps team members with first-line supervisors like Emma Billue. Photo by Alicia Gregory

After the SAD outbrief, several District supervisors were able to talk directly to the SAD Commander during a first-line supervisor luncheon. Brig. Gen. Madsen was then treated to a tour of the Charleston Harbor area.

"We scored a touchdown," said Mueller. "The CAV was professionally executed by Charleston District and the SAD staff. We had a great open dialogue by both division and district, and we all learned something from the assistance visit."

MURRELLS

From Page 4

·Wintering critical bird habitat for the Federally threatened Piping Plover and nesting and foraging areas for the State threatened Least Tern.

We had numerous meetings, site visits, and phone calls with our partners from the Department of Natural Resources and U.S. Fish and Wildlife to discuss the effects of the project," said Alan Shirey, team leader of environmental resources. He added that this particular project had more coordination with the resource agencies than any other project he had worked on to date. "It was an incredible effort put forth by all involved to make sure we had the least possible adverse impacts to listed species."

The environmental agencies were not the only participants to this complicated project. The local community and Georgetown County officials were very involved with the process to coordinate the timing of the project and how it would affect the tourists and homeowners.

"In many ways these issues were much more complicated than the environmental concerns," said McAlister. Numerous homeowners' concerns such as timing, noise concerns, and rental impacts had to be addressed. The team conducted town hall meeting with local residents, fisherman, and local real estate agencies to address concerns in the best way possible.

Because of the public impact that the project had, we were dredging on the Fourth of July and during the summer months, the team aspects were pretty tremendous," said Lt. Col. Peter W. Mueller, District Commander. "We started with a partnering session where we invited local officials to attend which helped them understand the nature of the project and time line and it gave the contractor a local perspective on how they would be affecting the community as well. This is a great example of a Corps project that was project focused with customers on the team"

"We have been involved in partnering this project from day one," said McAlister. "This project truly exemplified the Corps' Project Management Business Process. From the outset, all of the project team members were involved and worked together to meet the established project goals and customer expectations.

"The many visitors and local citizens in Garden City Beach and Huntington Beach State Park will continue to enjoy these recreational areas in a large part as a result of this project."

Employee of the Month

June —
Camille Mallory-Krolikowski, OVEST

Camille took the initiative to put together value-engineering presentations on a range of products from value-engineering based design Charrettes and design build, and has aggressively made these presentations at every opportunity to Corps personnel while on studies, promoting value engineering and OVEST

She also wrote the OVEST Project Managers handbook for value engineering.

July—
Rusty Mizelle, LDP Team Member, PM

Rusty, who was here on a leadership development assignment, did an exceptional job in developing the District's Corp Path training and initial planning for PMBP. He closed out several long-term CAP projects, and he supported DDPM on several regional meetings.

His accomplishments in the District were exceptional for someone who was here only a short period of time.

August —
Lorraine Chambers, Secretary , TS-D

Ms Chambers exhaustive review provided clear documentation that the district employees that use the CADD system to conduct the district's mission are correctly reporting those hours for the projects they are designing. Ms. Chambers has maintained excellent records of the accurate data reported on the CADD Excel Spreadsheet.

Her diligent efforts, professional standards, and pleasant demeanor are greatly appreciated by all who work with Ms. Chambers.

September —
Erlene Weathersbee, , RM

Erlene is one of those employees who always gets the job done no matter what. She stays late many afternoons to accommodate workload or employee needs without a complaint. Erlene goes the extra mile to ensure every employee gets quality service whether it pertains to a payroll action they need to discuss or funding they will be receiving from a customer.

Erlene is certainly a team player and has been a wonderful addition to the Corps family.

EEO Info

Mediation Questions and Answers

by Barbara Gathers
EEO Officer

1. What is mediation?

Mediation is a dispute resolution process in which disputing parties meet with an impartial person, (the mediator), in an attempt to, mutually, resolve their dispute. It may be offered when an employee requests EEO counseling because of an alleged discriminatory action. Mediation is different from traditional litigation in that it is informal. Unlike a judge or arbitrator, the mediator does not decide who is right or wrong, nor does he/she have the authority to render a decision or force the parties to accept settlement. Mediation is presently the most popular form of Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) used by agencies in employment related disputes.

2. What are the benefits of mediation?

Mediation allows participants to control their own disputes and resolve the problem themselves, rather than having a judge or some other officials decide it for them. Mediation offers the parties the opportunity for an early, informal resolution of the disputes. It costs less and uses fewer resources than do traditional administrative or adjudicative processes. In addition, morale is enhanced when the parties are cooperative in seeking to resolve the dispute themselves. Mediation allows parties to preserve their business relationship and provides them with a neutral, non-adversarial forum for discussing their respective positions.

3. Who are the mediators?

Mediators are experienced and trained in mediation and equal employment opportunity law. They have successfully completed a mediation skills course and have mediated or co-mediated cases. Mediators are neutral, unbiased professionals with no stake in the outcome. They are, normally, employees of other federal agencies, particularly, other Corps district or division offices.

4. How does the process work?

At the mediation session, each party will have an opportunity to explain his or her point of view without interruption, and to listen to what the other party has to say.

The mediator will encourage the parties to identify and express their needs, concerns and interests. The parties, guided by the mediator, will work towards finding a solution to the dispute that is acceptable to both parties. If an agreement is reached, the mediator will put it in writing and the parties will sign the agreement. As a participant in the process, each party's role is to mediate in good faith, utilizing the principles of common courtesy.

5. Is the mediation process confidential?

Confidentiality is essential in the success of all mediation proceedings. Confidentiality must be maintained by the disputing parties, by agency employees involved in the mediation proceedings and in the implementation of a resolution, and by the mediator involved in the proceeding. Although note taking is allowed during the session, no record of what took place during the session is kept for later reference. All offers, promises, and statements made during the course of the proceedings are inadmissible in any future litigation or arbitration of the dispute.

Mediators are neutral, unbiased professionals with no stake in the outcome.

6. Who should attend the mediation session?

At a minimum, the complainant and a representative of the agency should attend the mediation session. The person representing the agency should be given the authority to settle the charge on behalf of the agency.

7. How long does the mediation session take?

Normally, mediation is completed in one session, which may last from one to five or six hours.

8. What happens to a complaint if it is not resolved in mediation?

If a complaint is not resolved during the mediation process, the complainant is entitled to further pursue a remedy through the regular EEO complaint process by filing a formal complaint. The complainant will be given a final interview and informed of his/her right to proceed with a formal EEO complaint. No one can force a resolution on the parties, not management or EEO officials, nor the mediator.

9. What happens when an agreement is reached?

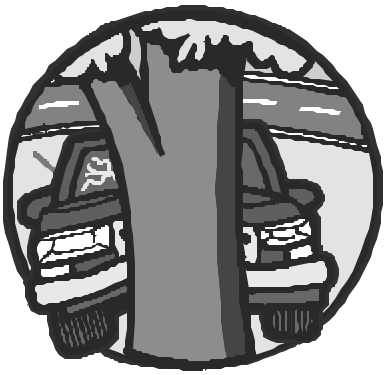
If the agency and the complainant agree to a resolution of the matter, the terms of the resolution will be reduce to writing (settlement agreement) and signed by both parties. The settlement agreement outlines the areas agreed upon by the parties and states clearly the terms of the resolution.

10. What happens if the agency does not comply with the terms of the settlement agreement?

If the complainant believes that the agency has failed to comply with the terms of the settlement agreement, he/she should notify the EEO Manager, in writing, of the alleged noncompliance. If the complainant is not satisfied with the agency's attempt to resolve that matter, the complainant may appeal to the EEOC.

11. Is mediation required?

Participation in the mediation process by the complainant is strictly voluntary. However, if the complainant elects to participate, the appropriate management official is required to cooperate and participate in the process as he/she is required to do in EEO counseling.



Safety Line

Inattentive Drivers Unsafe

By Mark Turner
Safety Officer

Driving fatalities attributed to inattentive operators jumped 72 percent in the last few years as drivers found more things to distract themselves.

South Carolina reported 930 deaths in 1996 of which 10 percent or 91 people were killed because of inattentive driving. In 2000 those deaths rose to 157, or 15 percent of 1,063 fatalities. Figures on the number of accidents with injuries and property damage caused by inattentive driving have also significantly increased.

Twenty years ago, distracted drivers were blamed for only a small percentage of automobile crashes. Recent studies indicate that today's drivers are not paying attention to their driving, but are often distracted by something inside, or outside their car.

For instance teenage drivers are distracted by other passengers, tuning the radio, or loading CD's. While older drivers are distracted by younger children, talking on cell phones, or objects or events happening outside the vehicle.

Most drivers will not admit that they were not paying attention when they were involved in a collision. Drivers get use to the physical motion of driving, but mentally they have a tendency to be somewhere else. This is a dangerous situation, like putting a loaded weapon in the hands of someone who if distracted enough might pull the trigger by accident.

Driving an automobile is a full time job, requiring 110% of your attention. Make a mistake and someone is going to have to pay.

Motorist are not making smart choices when they drive. When something unexpected happens on the road, drivers get in trouble and suddenly what was routine now becomes a serious mental response leading to certain critical actions required to avoid an accident. Paying attention may give you just enough time to save your life or the life of a family member or friend.

Scholarship Committee Fundraising Started

by Lisa Metheney
Scholarship Committee Chairman

The District's Scholarship Committee started their year of fund-raising activities with an Ice Cream Sundae Social on September 19. Over 35 people stopped by to partake of traditional ice cream sundae flavors and toppings. "This is a perfect way to close out the summer heat," commented one attendee. "I used to eat sundaes with my grandparents and have never lost my love of ice cream."

October was a busy month for the committee with four activities taking place. On October 17 the Committee hosted a chicken stir fry lunch. For only $5 diners were treated to egg rolls, stir fry over rice, a beverage and ice cream for dessert. "The stir fry lunch is an easy lunch to make and it appears that everyone really enjoyed it. It wouldn't be the same without Saulo Gaspi supplying the egg rolls though," commented one Committee member. Accompanying the lunch was the bulk sale of egg rolls. The egg rolls are so popular that Saulo was able to convince the lady who makes them to allow the Committee to take orders for the tasty Asian treats. The egg rolls were sold in bundles of 50 for $15 and over 500 egg rolls were purchased, raising close to $100 for the Scholarship Fund.

Polo shirts with the Corps Castle and the Charleston District name were also sold by the Committee during the month of October. Back by popular demand, the shirts were available in four colors with prices ranging from $25 - $30. "We get the shirts from Castlegear.com," stated Committee Chair Lisa Metheney. "They do shirts for districts all across the country and already had our screen set up and most people that ordered in the past were very pleased with the quality of the shirts. We had several people, especially new employees, asking where they could get the shirts, so we decided it was time to place an order again." Some people were disappointed that t-shirts were not available for sale again this year. "We are researching local vendors for someone who can do a variety of t-shirt styles for the District, as well as possibly supply some other District logo items such as hats, key chains, etc." said Metheney. "We will be doing a t-shirt sale in the spring. We are sorry for those folks who had hoped to purchase t-shirts and hats as Christmas gifts, but hopefully the variety and quality of shirts we can provide in the Spring will make up for their non-availability in the fall."

The final October event was the Annual Halloween Bake Sale. As usual there was the vast array of goodies, everything from brownies to cookies to cupcakes. Many people in the District supported the Bake Sale either by donating items or by purchasing items. "I look forward to the Bake Sale every year. I like seeing other people's ideas for holiday treats," stated Amy Henke. The bake sale is one of the Committees major fund raising events.

"The Committee would like to thank everyone who supported the Scholarship Fund by participating in October's events," said Metheney. "It appears that we will have at least 14 scholarships we will have to support this year so everyone's participation is appreciated.

Team Members Give Gift of Life

Elmer Schwingen led the Charleston District charge as the first district employee to donate blood at a Charleston District sponsored blood drive for the American Red Cross Oct 1.

Eighteen District employees showed up to donate, although only 11 were allowed to actually give blood due to Red Cross restrictions.

Employees who donated were allowed to receive up to four hours of administrative leave for the time required to donate blood and, if necessary, physical recover time immediately following a donations.

"Thanks again for your kind generosity to all who donated," said Chris Mack, blood drive organizer.

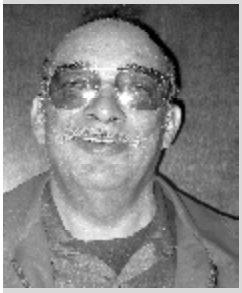
Welcome to ...

Chad Evangelista joined the Information Management Office on Oct. 7 as a Systems Development Specialist, serving as graphic designer for the department.

Chad is originally from Norfolk, Va. but has traveled the world as a Navy dependant. He has been recognized in the past in the International Spoleto Festival and free-lanced for some of the top advertising agencies in the state.

Chad recently married Tracy, a real estate agent, this December.

They both love to serve at their local church and work with children. He also teaches Shotokan karate and has studied since he was eight!



Alvin Severin has returned as the Chief of Logistics Management after working overseas at the Far East District in South Korea for the past five years.

Al has worked for the federal government for 12 years, not including his 24 years in the Army.

Joey Morton has returned to the district after a year on military duty with the Army Reserves as a Sgt. First Class at Ft. Gordon, Ga. supporting Homeland Security.

Joey is a Small Craft Operator in the District's field office located in Downtown Charleston, who has been with the district since 1978.

Tommy E. Fennel joined the Regulatory Division's Conway Field Office as a Biologist on Oct. 28.

Tommy graduated from Francis Marion University with a Bachelor of Science degree in Biology.

His most recent position was working for the South Carolina's Office of Ocean and Coastal Resource Management (OCRM).

Tommy's wife, Jill, is an attorney in North Myrtle Beach where the couple reside.

Tommy likes to Bass fish and hunt, and is a big NHL fan.

Its Open Season Time Again

FEHB Open Season

The annual open season for Federal Employees Health Benefits (FEHB) begins Nov. 11 and ends Dec. 9 of this year.

This is an opportunity for eligible employees to enroll or change plans or options. All changes become effective the first full pay period of the new year, which begins Jan. 12, 2003.

If you are already enrolled in FEHB you should receive a package of information from your current health carrier giving a complete description of their health plan for the new season. Look over the brochures carefully to be sure you understand the changes.

If you are satisfied with the coverage they will provide and do not want to change plans or options, do nothing. However, if you want to change plans, information about available Health Carriers is available from a variety of sources. Information is readily available on the web at ***www.opm.gov/insure***.

TSP Open Season

Thrift Savings Plan (TSP) open season is Oct. 15, 2002 through December 31, 2002. Please note that the dates for open season have changed, effective with this open season.

During the TSP open season, eligible CSRS and FERS employees may begin contributing, increasing, decreasing, terminating, or changing the allocation of future contributions to their TSP account among the five investment funds.

The FLTCIP open season

Open Season for the Federal Long Term Health Care Insurance Program runs from July 1 through December 31, 2002.

If you haven't already, be sure to visit the Long Term Care Partners' website at ***www.ltcfeds.com*** to view and/or order an Open Season Information Kit with application.

For more information about any of these programs, contact the Civilian Personnel Advisory Center.

Around the District

Congratulations

...to Chantell E. Russell, daughter of **Frank Russell,** TS. Chantell is not only in the International Baccalaureate Honors Program at Fort Dorchester High School, but also was voted Junior Class President.

... to **Ronald Nesbit**, PM, on the birth of his grandson, Bryson Kendric Nesbit, on Sept. 25. The baby weighed 6 lbs., 6 ozs. and was 19.5 inches long. His son, Jamar, and daughter-in-law, Tara are proud new parents.

... to **Robin Crosby**, OC, and **Charlie Crosby**, RD, on the birth of their granddaughter, Kristen Elizabeth Hamblin, on Aug. 24. The baby weighed 7 lbs., 3 ozs. and was 20 inches long. This is the first child for their daughter and son-in-law, April and Robert Hamblin.

...Crystal (Biller) Dennis, daughter of **Cindy Biller**, LM, on her marriage to Chris Dennis on Nov. 2 in Summerville.

...**Wayne Bieganousky**, TS, on his marriage Oct. 26 to the former Carol A. VanRensseaer.

...**Matt Laws**, TS, on his marriage to the former Johanna Mia Burmeister Sept. 14 in Mobile, Al.

...to Staff Sgt. Mark Turner, Jr. **son of Mark Turner,** SO. He was selected for an assignment as a jet engine mechanic on Air Force One.

Transfers

Randy Fowler, RD, transferred from the Permit Branch of Regulatory Division to the Enforcement Branch of Regulatory Division

Larry Hanford, RD, transferred from Project Management's Environmental Branch to Regulatory Division's Permit Branch.

Farewell

....to **Steve Hagan,** IM. Steve moved to Las Vegas, NV.

...to **Barbara Britz**, EO. Barbara is working as the Executive Assistant to the Charleston Area Director, former district employee Debbie Engle, of the Transportation Security Administration.

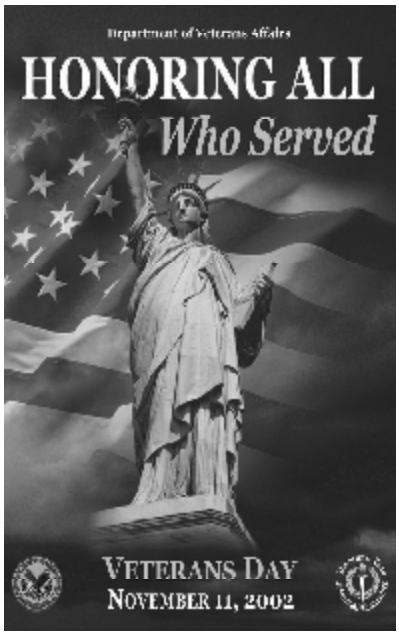
Speakers Bureau

District employees -- **Chris Perry,** TS; **Ken See**, TS; **Kent Stenmark**, EM; and **Shawn Boone**, PM -- presented the District's Floodplain model at Charleston Aquarium's Aquafest on Aug. 24.

Les Parker, RD, spoke to attendees at Richland County's Stormwater Management Symposium about the Corps' Regulatory Program on Aug. 21.

Bobby Riggs, RD, spoke to approx. 100 attendees at the S.C. Association of Special Purpose Districts conference about the Corps' Regulatory Program on Oct. 25.

Lincoln Blake, PM, presented a display on the Charleston Harbor Deepening and Widening Project at Charleston's Port Fest on Oct. 27.

Promotions

Rose Smalls, CT
Travis Hughes, RD