

White River receives National Blueway designation

District reflects on freedom, equality

Federally recognized
tribes sign BPNM Floodway
programmatic agreement



Contents

The RiverWatch Magazine • Vol 32 • No 1 • April 2013

- District reflects on freedom, equality 4
- Memphis District works to counter earthquake risks 6
- White River receives 8
National Blueway
designation**
- Federally recognized tribes sign BPNM 10
Floodway programmatic agreement
- Billingsley receives appreciation, recognition award 14
- Branch chosen as Featured Engineer 14
- Sirmans says goodbye after 34 years with USACE 16

DEPARTMENTS

- Commander's Corner* 3
George Grugett honored at MRC meeting
- Security Strong* 12
Dangers of posting to social media sites
- Safety Strong* 13
Portable Fire Extinguisher Safety
- Around the District 15



On the cover ...

Aerial view of the White River showing trees and the sharp meandering of the river. (Photo by Mark Godfrey, The Nature Conservancy)



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The mission of The RiverWatch Magazine is to support the Commander's internal communication program for the Memphis District. It also serves as the Commander's primary communication tool for accurately transmitting policies, operations, technical developments and command philosophy to Memphis District team members.

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Teammates,

This month, I'm honored to share this story featuring one of our own true heroes.

George Grugett honored at MRC meeting

story by Jim Pogue,
Chief, Public Affairs Office

In a brief ceremony at the conclusion of the Mississippi River Commission (MRC) public meeting in Memphis on April 9, MRC President Maj. Gen. John Peabody and other officials honored USACE Memphis District retiree George Grugett with a ship's plaque identical to the one that will be placed on the new Motor Vessel George C. Grugett.

Maj. Gen. Peabody spoke of Grugett's lifetime of public service including duty as a bomber crewman in World War II, three decades as a Corps of Engineers employee and another three decades with the Mississippi Valley Flood Control Association. Memphis District Commander Col. Vernie Reichling and members of the Mississippi River Commission also attended the ceremony.

In addition, Stephen Gambrell, Executive Director for the MRC, shared a Bible for the pilothouse that all the members of the Commission had signed.

Grugett was involved in a traffic accident last fall and is



Photo courtesy of USACE Marine Design Center

currently recovering from injuries he sustained as a result.

The Motor Vessel George C. Grugett is under construction at Horizon Shipbuilding in Bayou La Batre, Ala. It will be 114 feet long, 35 feet wide and will assume the duties now assigned to the Memphis District's Motor Vessel Strong.

The dedication ceremony for the new vessel is currently planned for late June or early July of this year. **RW**



Photo by Jim Pogue

George Grugett, center, at the presentation. Left to right, MRC President and MVD Commander Maj. Gen. John W. Peabody, along with current Commission members Brig. Gen. Margaret W. Burcham, Dr. Norma Jean Mattei, Sam E. Angel, R. D. James, Rear Adm. Gerd F. Glang, and Brig. Gen. Anthony Funkhouser; and Memphis District Commander Col. Vernie L. Reichling.



Photo by Jim Pogue

George Grugett, center, surrounded by family members sharing in this prestigious occasion. Left to right, Judy Murray (sister), Johnny Winford (nephew), Mike Grugett (son), Greg Grugett (son), and Dianne Grugett (daughter-in-law).

District reflects on freedom, equality

story and photos by Brenda L. Beasley



Mayor AC Wharton

In observance of African American/Black History Month, Memphis District team members gathered at city hall council chambers Feb. 13 to reflect on the struggles that Americans and the world have had, and continue to have, in the history with civil rights and freedom.

Hosted by the Equal Employment Opportunity Office and the Special Emphasis Program Committee, the program focused on the 2013 theme: *At the Crossroads of Freedom and Equality: The Emancipation Proclamation and the March on Washington*; which is a commemoration of two seminal historical events -- the 1863 signing of the Emancipation Proclamation and its impact on slavery and the 1963 march on Washington and its impact on the Civil Rights Movement.

The event included special greetings from the city of Memphis Mayor, musical performances by the Memphis District Choir, and a key note speaker who's worked for the NAACP for more than 20 years. Following the program, the district's Castle Club served refreshments at the Clifford Davis/Odell Horton Federal Building.

"This is a critical time in our history," said city of Memphis Mayor AC Wharton during his greeting. "We're not where we want to be, but thank God we're not where we once were."

The year 2013 marks two important anniversaries in the history of African Americans and the United States. On Jan. 1, 1863, the Emancipation Proclamation set the United States on the path of ending slavery. On Aug. 27, 1963, hundreds of thousands of Americans, Blacks and Whites, Jews and Gentiles, Protestants and Catholics, marched to the memorial of Abraham Lincoln, the author of the Emancipation Proclamation, in pursuit of the ideal of equality of citizenship. It was on this occasion that Martin Luther King, Jr. gave his famous speech, "I Have a Dream."

"150 years ago the emancipation proclamation started this quest that still has a long way to go," said Wharton. "Then 50 years ago, Dr. King and the march on Washington reminded us, oh so clearly, that we have not yet overcome."

Because he saw a lot of young faces in the crowd, Wharton described his younger days and his involvement in the civil rights movement. He wanted those who may have only heard about it or read about it, to have an understanding of what it means to them.

"It simply means that while there was a role for President Lincoln, while there was a role for Rosa Parks, Dr. King and others, there is still a role for you," he said.

Asking listeners to take a brief journey with her back to



Assisted by Special Emphasis Committee Chair Karen Brady (center), Deputy Commander Lt. Col. Dave Patton, left, presents a certificate of appreciation to Madeleine Taylor.



Members of the district choir perform for the first time. Front row, left to right, Foluke Houston (EEO), LaQuetta Glaze (ACE-IT), Kim Wooten (EC), Valerie Marshall (Contracting), Pam Harris (Executive Office), Carla Wells (Contracting) and Sierra Marshall (Contracting). Back row, LaTasha Martin (Contracting), Leo Ramos (Internal Review), Matthew Davis (EEY) and Jim Pogue (PAO).



Left to right, Becky Fowler, Shellie McGee, Chief Inspector Todd Cash with the Shelby County Sheriff's Office, Marvin Cash and Rich Ott.

150 years ago, key note speaker Madeleine Taylor, executive director of the NAACP Memphis Branch, shared her take on the struggles and hardships experienced through the ages.

"This year, we celebrate the freedom that the proclamation started and the 13th amendment finished," she said. "A freedom from iron shackles. A freedom to learn and begin to make decisions that would affect our own lives."

In the past 150 years, freedom has taken on many new meanings for men,

women and children, she continued. The equality for all men guaranteed in the U.S. constitution was not immediately available.


"We had to fight for freedom in the congress, in the state house, in the city council chambers, and in the streets of our city," said Taylor. "Yet here, 150 years later, we are still waiting to be truly free."

Although the NAACP has been here for 104 years advocating for justice, equality and freedom for all, Taylor described events today that show how far

we still need to go.

"How can we say that we are free?" said Taylor, "When children and seniors live in constant fear of violence from their caregivers and parents; when we live in a system of justice in which prosecution is racially based; when we are imprisoned in a cycle of debt from payday loans; when workers pay into social security pensions for years, only to find out that the pension system is likely to fail; when employment at minimum wage does not produce enough income to afford decent low-income housing; and when voter identification requirements are designed to suppress the vote. In such an environment, can we really be free for the pursuit of happiness?"

On Feb. 12, Taylor spent the day in Nashville with the state legislature. It was NAACP day on the hill. The message that they imparted was "We will stand in, sit in and demand the freedom that we were promised over 200 years ago in the U.S. constitution," said Taylor. "We won't stop until it can be achieved."

Just as the Emancipation Proclamation marked the beginning of the end of slavery, the March on Washington numbered the days of second-class citizenship. "Many separate and different roads have been travelled that led to the success and triumph of African Americans," said Shellie McGee, the district Equal Employment Opportunity Officer. "Our purpose here today is to remember, to honor and to celebrate that journey." 



Memphis District works to counter earthquake risks

story by Jim Pogue,
Chief, Public Affairs Office

We may as well face it: earthquakes are a fact of life for those of us living and working in the New Madrid Seismic Zone. Memphis sits in the southern portion of one of the inner rings of that zone.

Although we may not feel most of them, sensors recorded 13 quakes in the zone ranging from magnitude 1.2 to 2.6 between Jan. 4 and Feb. 4 of this year. This is a relatively accurate representation of quake frequency.

Unlike the massive 7.7 magnitude temblors of 1811-1812 that were felt throughout the eastern and central United States, these smaller events are rarely felt, but are registered by seismographs in the area. Still, that's no reason to breathe easy. Experts predict a 25 to 40 percent possibility of a magnitude six or greater earthquake in the region within the next 50 years.

This is an especially troubling prospect since the Clifford Davis/Odell Horton Federal Building in downtown Memphis (location of the district headquarters) was built in 1961 – long before current seismic building standards were established.

“The Federal Building was not designed to withstand a large earthquake,” Memphis District Structural Engineering Section Chief Mike Sheridan said. “There is a high potential for a partial or complete collapse of the building from an earthquake greater than magnitude six.”

Based on this sobering information, Memphis District leadership is taking steps to address the situation and improve

the safety of employees working at the district headquarters.

“A level of risk this high to so many of our employees is not acceptable,” Memphis District Commander Col. Vernie Reichling said. “We have to find a way to buy down that risk.”

The seriousness of the situation has also come to the attention both of the Division Commander, Maj. Gen. John W. Peabody and the Chief of Engineers, Lt. Gen. Thomas P. Bostick.

“There are tons of bureaucratic obstacles and reasons ‘why not’ to do this, or why it can’t be funded, must be delayed, etc ... but there is a single compelling reason why: Our employees are at potentially serious loss of life risk if we do not get this corrected. We have a sacred duty to correct deficiencies which could cause major loss of life. This is no different than the dam safety program, in my view,” Gen. Peabody said.

“... we’ll push this at our level” Gen. Bostick also said in a recent correspondence.

Because the federal building is owned and operated by the U.S. General Services Administration (GSA), the first step in finding a solution was to meet with them and ensure they were aware of the problem. Col. Reichling, District Real Estate Branch Chief Terry Rupe and Sheridan traveled to Atlanta Feb. 13 to meet with GSA regional commissioner John Smith and members of his staff. With them they carried the serious concerns of all the resident agencies and groups now using the existing Federal Building. These included the courts, members

Located at the corner of Front St. and Poplar Ave. and adjacent to The Canon Center and the Mud Island parking garage, the Clifford Davis/Odell Horton Federal Building sits on a bluff which is one street over from the Mississippi River. The Memphis District moved into this building in November 1963. (Photo by Brenda L. Beasley, April 10, 2012)



of Congress, law enforcement agencies and others.

A preliminary seismic assessment revealed at a minimum the following problems which the team presented to the GSA regional leadership:


- The 1961 construction codes did not include seismic design. Initial standards were developed in 1976, with continual revisions through the years as major earthquake damage defined items requiring significant change. In 1994 the first edition of the Standards for Seismic Safety for Existing Federally Owned and Leased Buildings, Recommended Practice 4 (RP4) was developed, with subsequent revisions in 2002 (RP6) and 2011(RP8). Since 1976 the changes in seismic design have been complex and significantly raised the bar on this issue.
- The building was constructed with older style columns and reinforcing details not designed to deal with the effects of a major earthquake. The structure is non-ductile (inflexible) and brittle.
- The destructive power of the “design earthquake” can produce forces 40 times greater than what the building was originally designed to withstand.
- The building is situated on an area called the Mississippi Embayment. A characteristic of this geologic feature is its tendency to amplify ground shaking and to produce liquefaction (when soil turns into a fluid like mass during an earthquake event).
- The stone façade on the building is hung with hooks and is not firmly anchored. In the event of a major quake the stone panels could break or shake loose and fall off the building.

The GSA will conduct a Tier 1 seismic assessment this year in accordance with standards established by the American

Society of Civil Engineers (ASCE). This includes completion of checklists of evaluation statements, such as date of construction, type of construction, code acceleration design values at the building, etc., that identifies potential deficiencies in a building based on performance of similar buildings in past earthquakes. This basic screening is designed to filter out buildings in non-seismic zones and those of low potential of poor performance in an earthquake. The identified deficiencies, if any, are used at the beginning of the Tier 2 Evaluation. This would likely take place in fiscal year 2015.

A Tier 2 Evaluation uses an approach that is applicable to certain types of buildings and Performance Objectives based on specific evaluation of the potential deficiencies identified in the Tier 1 screening to determine if they represent “actual” deficiencies that may require mitigation (repair). Analysis of the entire building may not be required. Based on these results, if the deficiencies are limited, a Tier 2 mitigation of those specific deficiencies may be completed. But if the deficiencies are extensive, corrective action can be initiated from this point or a Tier 3 Evaluation can be deemed necessary to focus on severe deficiencies that may have certain non-linear behaviors to resist the design earthquake.

In the meantime, Col. Reichling added that it is important we remember we are still living with this threat on a daily basis. It is up to everyone to stay individually prepared. You can find additional information on earthquake preparedness at <http://www.fema.gov/earthquake/earthquake-information-individuals-and-families>.

To ensure continuity of effort, Col. Reichling has designated Deputy District Commander Lt. Col. Dave Patton as the lead on this effort. We'll keep you informed of the progress on this important initiative. 

White River receives National Blueway designation

story by Brenda L. Beasley

T

he White River and its entire basin became the second watershed to receive designation as a “National Blueway” at a ceremony in Little Rock, Ark., Jan. 9. The first was the Connecticut River; however the White River Watershed is the first to undergo the full nomination, evaluation and recognition process.

Established in 2012 by the Department of the Interior, the National Blueways System places national emphasis on the value of an approach to river conservation that considers all the activities and uses within the watershed and the effectiveness of local partner collaboration for project planning and delivery, according to Shawn Phillips, a planning supervisor with the Mississippi Valley Division’s Regional Planning and Environmental Division South.

Participation is entirely voluntary and locally-driven. The designation does not add additional regulations or requirements, nor does it change private property or water rights. Federal, state and local authorities are not affected.

“Locally driven partnerships that include diverse interest groups working together were a key factor behind this designation,” said Scott Simon, director of The Nature Conservancy in Arkansas. “We hope this news and the momentum it causes will bring new partners that can help build an even brighter future for people and nature in this watershed.”

The National Blueways System stems from the America’s Great Outdoors Initiative launched by President Obama in April 2010 to develop a national 21st century conservation and recreation agenda. The initiative aims to reconnect Americans with the great outdoors through jobs, service, recreation and education. A keystone of this initiative is for various Federal agencies to work together and alongside state and local governments, and non-governmental groups to conserve our National natural resources.

“From kayaking on the Dismal Swamp Canal in Virginia to moose-hunting with paralyzed Veterans in Alaska, the America’s Great Outdoors initiative is gaining momentum throughout the country. Our work across America’s abundant recreation sites is educating our youth and communities about the health benefits and job advancement opportunities related to conservation and outdoor recreation,” said Jo-Ellen Darcy, Assistant Secretary of the Army (Civil Works).

Scenic view of the Cache River. (Photo by Clark Jones, Cornell Lab of Ornithology; photo provided by The Nature Conservancy)

Towboat carefully navigates the meandering White River.

(Photo by Mark Godfrey, The Nature Conservancy)



The Lower White River/Cache River is one of three pilot projects. The White River Basin study authority is the foundation for USACE to participate in the America's Great Outdoors effort, said Phillips. An interagency workgroup has identified strategic goals and specific objectives for the AGO effort in the Lower White River Basin (which includes the Cache River).

From the study, specific and general recommendations will be made for additional efforts and management measures that may be implemented by the USACE or partner Federal, state, or local agencies or groups. It is an "umbrella" study for the basin that will identify additional projects and sub-basin management plans. The product will be delivered within 3 years and under \$3 million, according to Phillips.

Flowing 722 miles from its headwaters in Arkansas's Boston Mountains, the White River runs north into Missouri before coursing south through the Ozarks of Arkansas to the Delta and into the Mississippi River in southeast Arkansas. Its watershed encompasses 17.8 million

acres, and the water in the White River and its tributaries and reservoirs serve as a source of drinking water for many of the 1.2 million people living here. It also provides water for irrigation and agriculture, which represents the greatest economic impact in the watershed, followed by recreation-based tourism.

Watersheds in the basin include Big Creek, Cache River, Lower Black River, Current River, Spring River, Middle White River, Buffalo River, Bull Shoals River, James River, Bayou Des Arc, Village Creek, Upper Black River, Eleven Point River, Strawberry River, Little Red River, North Fork White River, Table Rock Lake

and Beaver Lake.

There are two distinct regions in the basin: a hilly region located in the Ozark Uplands in north and northwest Arkansas and southern Missouri; and a deltaic region within the Mississippi alluvial Valley in eastern Arkansas. At its southern end the White River empties into the larger Mississippi River. This connection offers access to the Nation's extensive inland waterway system.

The White River is also one of five commercially navigable rivers in Arkansas. "We are pleased to hear of this designation, and we look forward to being a part of the sustainable economic opportunities the White River provides," said Gene Higginbotham, executive director of the Arkansas Waterways Commission, which is responsible for developing and protecting waterborne transportation in the state.

Conservation in the 21st Century requires an integrated water resources management approach operating across agency jurisdictions, programs, and authorities. In response, Federal agencies are joining state, tribal and private stakeholders in a variety of conservation approaches to conserve and manage landscapes and watersheds. These groups will collaboratively identify problems/issues and propose creative solutions to better maintain and enhance the internationally significant natural resources of the White River Basin, as well as contribute to the basin's regional economic and recreational opportunities.

"Ultimately, this collaborative study will allow us to maintain and enhance this valuable ecosystem within a sustainable agriculture-based and recreational landscape to balance ecological, economic, and social interests for our children for generations to come," said Phillips. **RW**



Thank you for your support!



David J. Hayes
DEPUTY SECRETARY DAVID HAYES

Along with a commemorative copy of the designation document signed by the Secretary of the Interior Ken Salazar, Deputy Secretary of the Interior David J. Hayes (Center) sent this "thank you" photo taken at the designation ceremony Jan. 9 in Little Rock, Ark. The Honorable Terrence "Rock" Salt, principal deputy assistant secretary of the Army for Civil Works is on the far right.



Photo by Cheryl Willis

Quapaw Tribe Business Chairman John Berrey (right) performs an Eagle Blessing Ceremony to thank the workers of the Programmatic Agreement and bless future relations between the Quapaw Tribe and the Memphis District. Robert Dunn, Ph.D., (left), Col. Vernie Reichling (center), and Jimmy McNeil (partially hidden) represent the district.

Federally recognized tribes sign BPNM Floodway programmatic agreement

by Robert A. Dunn, Ph.D. RPA, Regional Technical Specialist

Six federally recognized tribes have signed the new Birds Point/New Madrid Floodway Programmatic Agreement (PA). Two tribes, the Quapaw Tribe and the Delaware Nation, signed the PA during a signing ceremony held at Memphis District Nov. 20, 2012. Three tribes - Osage Nation, the Absentee Shawnee, and the Eastern Shawnee - signed by mail in December 2012, and the Thlopthlocco Creek signed in a ceremony Jan. 18.

This PA puts the Corps of Engineers in full compliance with Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended, and the President's Advisory Council on Historic Preservation (Council) regulation 36 CFR 800. The Missouri State Historic Preservation Officer (MO SHPO) signed the new PA Aug. 24, 2012, and the Council

signed it Sept. 20, 2012. The new PA replaces the 1996 Floodway PA dealing with the specifics of the mitigative data recovery program conducted by Memphis District in the Floodway in the late 1990s and early 2000s. The 1996 PA became obsolete with the activation of the floodway during the historic record flood in 2011.

The invited signatory tribes include the Quapaw Tribe, the Osage Nation, the Delaware Nation, the Absentee Shawnee and Eastern Shawnee Tribes, and the Thlopthlocco (Creek) Tribal Town. One other tribe invited to sign, the Chickasaw Nation, has declined to do so because the Chickasaw leaders and elders object to the MO SHPO's requirement that human skeletal remains inadvertently discovered in the floodway must be photographically documented as part of the Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act of 1990

process.

This new PA has been in development since 2010 when a consultation meeting with eight tribes and the Missouri SHPO was held in July in Cape Girardeau, Mo. Following the activation of the BPNM floodway in May 2011, Regional Planning and Environmental Division South archaeologists Jimmy McNeil and myself, both stationed at Memphis District, held numerous meetings with the tribes culturally and historically affiliated with the Ohio River-Mississippi River confluence and particularly with the Missouri counties (Mississippi and New Madrid) comprising the floodway. One meeting in particular held in Sikeston, Mo., in August 2011 is particularly noteworthy.

This contentious and emotionally charged meeting primarily focused on the damage to Native American graves caused by floodway activation. Scouring exposed

the remains of not less than 25 individuals associated with a late prehistoric Mississippian component of site 23MI136 when the levee was artificially crevassed by explosives on the evening of May 2, 2011. This site was previously known as an historic 19th century homestead. No one knew the site also contained a highly significant late prehistoric component.

The Mississippian graves were buried in a natural levee that became part of a private levee in the late 19th century and then were incorporated into the Corps of Engineers federal levee system in the early 20th century. When the floodwaters subsided in June 2012 these scattered remains were respectfully collected by a team comprised of USACE archaeologists and engineers, the MO SHPO senior archeologist, and members of the Osage Nation. In compliance with Missouri state law, the remains

were turned over to the MO SHPO in preparation for the repatriation process required by NAGPRA.

Following the Sikeston meeting in August, the Osage Nation and the Quapaw Tribe insisted that the President's Advisory Council on Historic Preservation (Council) be brought into the consultation process for development of the new PA. The key issue to be addressed was whether the mitigative data recovery completed by Memphis District prior to floodway activation was sufficient mitigation.

In the opinion of these consulting tribes, the prior data recovery (archaeological excavation of selected sites) conducted by the district was not sufficient to mitigate for the damage caused by floodway activation in 2011, or any future activation.

Following intensive consultation with the council and the affiliated tribes, Memphis District undertook a full damage assessment of the entire BPNM floodway using LIDAR (Light Detection and Ranging) imagery and on-the-ground inspection. In addition, the district committed itself to the



Photo by Cheryl Willis

Left to Right, Robert Dunn, John Berrey, Quapaw tribal elder Ranny McWaters, Delaware Nation THPO Tamara Francis Fourkiller, Jimmy McNeil and Col. Vernie Reichling at the Programmatic Agreement signing Nov. 20, 2012.

restoration of any significant site damaged by floodwater scouring. Site restoration would include the collection and eventual reburial of exposed human remains, the filling of scour holes, the placement of geotextile fabric over the filled areas,

and the placement of soil to a depth sufficient to allow future farming. This site restoration program was carried out at site 23MI136, the human remains discovery site, following site testing for National Register eligibility conducted for Memphis

District by the St. Louis District Mandatory Center of Expertise for the Curation and Management of Archeological Collections (MCX CMAC). No other significant site was sufficiently damaged by scouring to require site restoration.


The new BPNM Floodway PA will be in full effect for ten years. It is significant in that it is the result of an unprecedented amount of tribal consultation and input, that it involves federally recognized tribes as full partners (PA signatories) in the protection of significant cultural resources and traditional cultural properties on land that is not held in fee status by USACE, and that it commits USACE to a long-term program of damage assessment, and site restoration in the event of future activations or intensive levee repairs with the potential to impact Native American graves and National Register eligible sites. The signing of the new PA is clearly a success story for USACE and the affiliated Native American Tribes. 



Photo by Brenda L. Beasley

Left to Right, Robert Dunn, Jimmy McNeil, Col. Vernie Reichling, Thlophlocco Tribal Town representatives Charles Coleman, Dorothy Burden and Shirley Almaridgee at the Birds Point New Madrid Programmatic Agreement signing Jan. 18.

Dangers of posting to social media sites

by Harold Harden, Chief, Security and Law Enforcement Office

Memphis District Corps of Engineers
Yesterday

Summary

Recently, an Army garrison commander cancelled classes at a school located on the installation due to inclement weather, but did not close the installation. As a result, parents had to find ways to take care of their children and still work. One parent used a social media site to complain about the situation. In her complaint, she discussed the fact that her children were home alone because she was at work and the other parent was deployed. However, using information from the parent's profile, the family's home address could be located through people search engines (veromi.com, pipl.com, or zabasearch.com). In addition, more than 900 registered sex offenders lived in the local area. Although the children at home were of legal age to be home alone, the information from the post revealed an address and window of opportunity. Besides increasing the risk to her children, the parent's social media post also revealed a window of opportunity for theft.

Like · Comment

Memphis District Corps of Engineers
Yesterday

Results

- Critical information concerning family, lifestyle, and location was made available on social media websites to adversaries
 - Family, personal, and professional lives could have been endangered through the open forum
 - The apparent desire to be "heard" combined with the lack of knowledge of the risks inherent with the use social media sites presented unnecessary risk to family members
- Consider the secondary impacts of posting personal information on social media sites
 - Do not assume that only individuals you know are reading your postings
 - Update your social media privacy and account settings; don't rely on default settings to secure your posts
 - Balance your unit's use of social networking against the risk of providing information to criminals and adversaries

Like · Comment

Memphis District Corps of Engineers
Yesterday

Potential Impact

A parent's reaction to a garrison commander's decision to close schools could have placed the spouse's unit and family at risk. Assume adversaries are monitoring social websites. Before posting anything, assume the information is available to adversaries including terrorists, and criminals.

Like · Comment

Memphis District Corps of Engineers
Yesterday

Protection Principles

- Educate your workforce and families of the dangers of social media; it is not about avoiding it, but using it intelligently
- Regularly check and if necessary, update privacy settings and account settings on social media websites
- Conduct regular Operations Security (OPSEC) reviews of official Department of Defense social media webpages for posted comments by service members and their families

Like · Comment

Memphis District Corps of Engineers
Yesterday

Source: Excerpt from "Cyber Threat Vignettes," dated November 2012, which is a product developed by Headquarters, Department of the Army, Office of the Provost Marshal General in collaboration with the U.S. Army Cyber Command.

Like · Comment



FW

Portable Fire Extinguisher Safety

by Rodney Kellow, Chief of Safety

During the last two years I have been able to visit numerous construction and operations projects throughout our district. One thing I have observed is that we have many portable fire extinguishers (PFEs).

Having PFEs around is a very good thing provided that:

- They are mounted appropriately and are not obstructed
- They are properly inspected, serviced, tested and maintained
- Team members are properly trained on how to use them

Portable fire extinguishers (PFEs) shall be distributed per Table 9-4 on page 211 (9-25) of EM-385-1-1. There are numerous size/class requirements concerning PFEs in EM-385-1-1 pertaining to trucks, material storage areas, flammable storage etc.

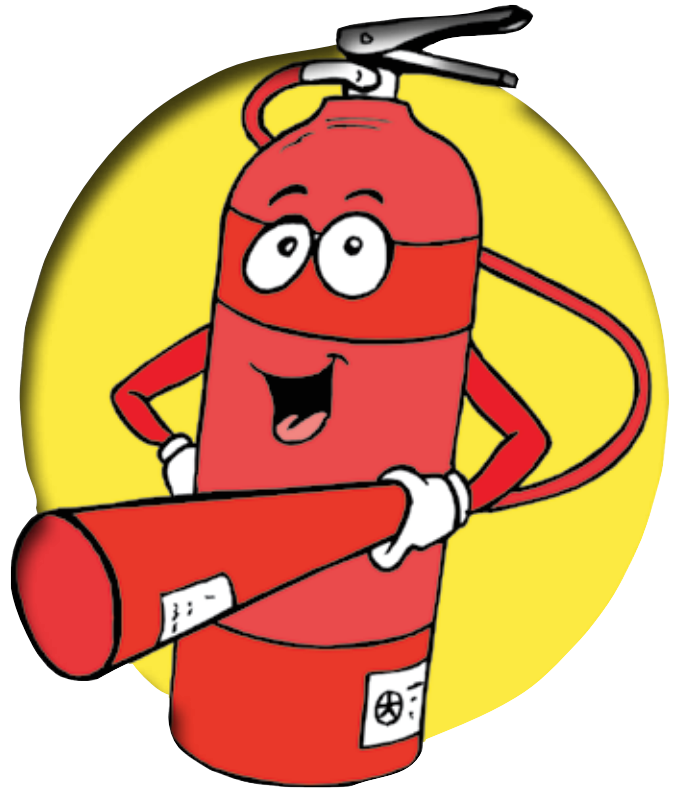
What I recommend is that supervisors and/or Collateral Duty Safety Officers (CDSO's) do an EM-385-1-1 (2008) electronic word search for "fire extinguisher" at: http://140.194.76.129/publications/eng-manuals/EM_385-1-1_languages/EM_385-1-1_English_2008/EM_385-1-1_2008Sep_Consolidated_2011Aug.pdf to determine specific requirements that pertain to your project or situation.

PFEs have to be approved by a nationally recognized testing laboratory and labeled to identify the testing lab such as Underwriters Laboratories (UL) or Factory Mutual (FM).

PFEs shall be inspected monthly and maintained as specified in NFPA 10. Monthly inspections have to be recorded. This typically means that a trained CDSO/team member conducts a proper monthly inspection to ensure that each PFE in his/her assigned area:

- are charged
- have the pull pin in place
- have the breakable seal in place
- have no visible defects in the barrel, handle or hose
- are clean (i.e. no spider webs, thick dust on extinguisher etc.)
- are not obstructed (i.e. always allow 180-degrees of clearance below and around each PFE for proper emergency access).

"In addition to monthly inspections ... we are required to have an annual service inspection, ..."



Now that we have touched on proper monthly inspections let's shift gears to properly "servicing, testing and maintaining" our PFEs as this is where I have seen the most confusion and weakness within Memphis District.

In addition to monthly inspections, which we do "in-house"; we are also required to have an annual service inspection, 6-year maintenance and 12-year hydrostatic testing performed on each PFE. Due to the cost of certification and equipment used these services are all done by NFPA compliant vendors.

Essentially our projects use a PFE vendor/service company from the yellow pages that will take a government credit card to perform annual service inspections, 6-year maintenance and 12-year hydrostatic testing. Please just ensure that your PFE vendor properly documents whatever they do.

Annual service inspection of a PFE is accomplished by the inspection tag the vendor dates and attaches to the extinguisher gauge or neck; whereas 6-year maintenance and 12-year hydrostatic testing requires a barrel sticker that is dated and lists what was performed, as well as, a service collar attached around the neck of the PFE.

Concerning training, many of our team members may not be aware that OSHA and USACE require 'annual' PFE training. For PFE Training slides/support contact the District Safety Office.


Supervisors/CDSOs need to ensure documentation is on file for each worker to validate annual PFE training. The best way to do this may be in ATMP with sign-in rosters maintained as a back up.

"Think Safety Not Just Compliance" 

Billingsley receives appreciation, recognition award

story by
Brenda L. Beasley

As a testament to his hard work and dedication, the Bayou Meto Water Management District presented an appreciation and recognition award to **Gary Billingsley** on Dec. 8, 2012, at the 77th Annual Mississippi Valley Flood Control Association

Annual Meeting in New Orleans, for his contribution to the project. The citation reads: "In appreciation and recognition for providing superior Construction Management, dedicated leadership and loyal commitment to the Marion Berry Pump Station and the success of the Bayou Meto Water Management Project." 



Courtesy Photo

Left to right, Memphis District Commander Col. Vernie Reichling, Bayou Meto Water Management District President Gary Canada, Memphis District's Gary Billingsley, P.E., and Mississippi Valley Division Commander Maj. Gen. John Peabody.

Branch chosen as Featured Engineer

story by
Brenda L. Beasley



Courtesy Photo

April J. Branch

The National Society of Black Engineers, Memphis Alumni Chapter, has chosen **April J. Branch** as the 2013 Featured Engineer. Since 2009, Branch has served as the program chair for their chapter. She has planned chapter activities and submitted activity reports to the regional board. The Memphis-Area Joint Engineers Council presented this prestigious award on behalf of NSBE during the annual Engineers Week Luncheon held at the University of Memphis Fogelman Executive Center Feb. 20.

Memphis-Area Joint Engineers Council (MJEC) is an umbrella organization for the 20+ engineering organizations and engineering educational

institutions in the Memphis area. MJEC has a membership of all members of these local chapters/sections and is governed by a Board of Directors, comprised of two representatives from each participating organization.


MJEC assists in coordination of Engineers Week by providing communication among engineering organizations. They're responsible for four parts of Engineers Week: Engineers Week Student Contest, held the Saturday before official E-Week; Featured Engineer/Featured Surveyor Awards, presented during the E-Week Kickoff Luncheon; Featured Engineering/Engineering Technology Student Awards, presented during the Engineers Week Banquet; and MJEC Award of Excellence, presented during the E-Week Kickoff Luncheon. 



Photo by Willie McClendon

Current and former coworkers join in the retirement celebration. Left to right, Mississippi Valley Division Counsel G. Rogers "Bitsy" Sloan, retired Memphis District (MVM) Paralegal Marilyn Shaw, Vicksburg District (MVK) Counsel Rymn Parsons, MVM Attorney Ann Bruck, USACE Logistics Activity Counsel Alvin Ellis (formerly with MVM), retired MVM Attorney Jan Cornaghe, retired MVK Counsel Henry Black, retiring Memphis District Counsel David E. Sirmans, MVM Attorney Charles Briggs, retired MVK Counsel Lanny Robinson, MVM Attorney Mary Ann Vandergriff, MVM Attorney Allen Scott Black, retired MVM Attorney Michael Parks, MVM retiree Odean Berry, MVM Attorney Janita Reliford, and MVM Paralegal Alexandria Cooper.

Sirmans says goodbye after 34 years with USACE

story by Jim Pogue,
Chief, Public Affairs Office

Many of us have a vision of attorneys as stuffy old guys in three-piece suits. Nothing could be further from the truth than was the case for recently-retired Memphis District

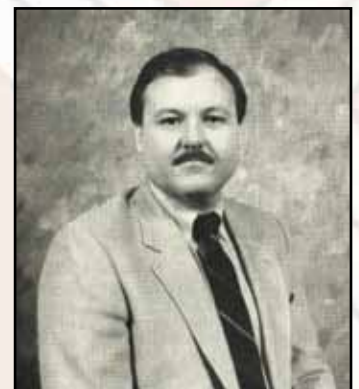
Counsel Dave Sirmans. Members of the Memphis District celebrated his 34 years of federal service at a party in his honor held on Nov. 30, 2012.

Not one to be comfortable sitting behind a desk, Dave was frequently out in the field using his extensive legal knowledge and expertise on

behalf of the Memphis District during a variety of missions and disaster responses.

For example, he successfully defended USACE's right to operate the Birds Point-New Madrid Floodway during the 2011 flood, a key component in ensuring the survivability of the regional flood risk reduction system. He also served as both the forward and rear lead counsel in the Office of Counsel in support of the Louisiana Recovery Field Office following hurricanes Katrina and Rita.

Sirmans was always anxious to share the extensive knowledge he garnered from his experiences with USACE, and served as a legal instructor for the Prospect Training Program beginning in 1984. Since 1987 he also coordinated the Contracting Officer's Representative (COR's) course and its successor, the Construction Contract Administration Course.



USACE Photo

From the RiverWatch archives: This photo of David E. Sirmans appeared in the April 1987 issue along with the announcement of his promotion to District Counsel for the Memphis District.

Sirmans said he planned to relax for a little while, spend time with his family, and then probably do some teaching in order to stay engaged with his profession.

We wish Dave and his family all the best for a long and happy retirement. **RW**



USACE Photo

No three-piece suits for Dave, hard at work right up until retirement day.