



## 1996 was safest year

By Bernard W. Tate  
HQUSACE

The safety program of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers continues to improve, and the command is being recognized and awarded for it.

USACE was the only Army major command to receive the Chief of Staff of the Army's Safety Award for MACOMs in fiscal year 1996 (FY96). Brig. Gen. Burt Tackaberry, Director of Army Safety, presented the award during the Senior Leaders Conference in August.

FY96 was the Corps' best safety year of the 1990s, with a worker's compensation rate of 1.32 (1.32 employees per 100 received compensation for on-the-job injuries that year). In addition, there were only four contractor accidental fatalities in FY96 (down from seven in FY95), and one employee accidental fatality (equal to FY95).

"We have outstanding people throughout the Corps who make safety part of how they work every day," said Connie K. DeWitte, chief of the Safety and Occupational Health Office. "I especially credit those doing the work. Corps people have significant exposure to falls from heights, electrocution, and drowning. To achieve our success in safety, with the stress of right-sizing, speaks volumes about the people we have."

But safety doesn't just happen.

"It starts with the command climate, from the leadership down," said DeWitte. "We have good tools in the program. We have the accident prevention plan that we require for specific contractor projects. We have our Safety and Health Requirements Manual. We have commandwide safety video teleconferences. We use Activity Hazard Analyses where a contractor or our own work crews look at whatever they're going to do, identify safety and health hazards associated with each step, then put plans in place to control those hazards and minimize chances of injuries."

"During a trip to the field, a contractor told me that he likes working with the Corps because safety is everybody's business," said DeWitte. "That made me feel good because something we've tried to do is integrate safety into all our work."

"I am proud of our safety accomplishments, but we are not resting on our laurels," wrote Lt. Gen. Joe N. Ballard, Chief of Engineers, in the latest Safety Policy and Accident Prevention Plan.

"The accident prevention plan for this fiscal year concentrates on two things," said DeWitte. "One of the big issues we're going to look at is contractor fatalities. I think there may be a weak link there, and we're looking at strengthening the tie-in between the Activity Hazard Analysis and its use in the field."

"The second item in the Chief's plan is to integrate risk management into everything we do. We're taking that basic risk management philosophy, examining it, and working it into our organization. We want to improve the way a person on the job-site effectively manages what's done there, resulting in an even better accident prevention program than we have now."

Contractors repair a levee breach on the Feather River in California following winter floods. The Corps is one of many federal, state, local and private organizations preparing to face the challenges of El Niño and prevent similar problems. (Photo courtesy of Sacramento District)

## Corps readies for El Niño

By Becki Dobyns  
HQUSACE

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers continues preparations to help state and local governments combat emergency conditions expected from the El Niño weather phenomenon.

"Along with California's Department of Water Resources, the Corps is developing contingency plans for levee systems which could potentially require flood-fighting actions," said Ed Hecker, chief of the Readiness Branch in Civil Works' Operations, Construction and Readiness Division in headquarters.

Current efforts focus primarily on California, where storms are expected to have the greatest impact. In addition to levees, coastal projects such as beaches and harbors are also receiving full emergency consideration.

"We're providing a wide range of technical assistance to state and local agencies," said Hecker. Areas of the state expected to be particularly hard-hit have been pre-designated by the Corps and the State Department of Water Resources to avoid delays in determining which organization will respond. Critical materials required for flood-fighting are being identified and stockpiled.

"The Corps has a list of contractors ready and is developing flood-fight and emergency repair scopes of work so that any threatened system could be rapidly addressed by an emergency contract," Hecker said. "They're working these contract packages to the point where they can award in literally less than an hour if necessary. Depending on the type of mission requirement, there may be some indefinite delivery/indefinite quantity-type of contracts that are 'on the shelf.' No administrative or engineering time should be lost when the event actually occurs."

The Corps is also analyzing options for how reservoirs would be operated in various emergency scenarios. The intent is to maximize the space available in flood control pools for the expected rainfall. Several

methods are in place to expedite the review of permit applications so as not to hinder emergency response actions. Flood control channels must be maintained to control obstructing vegetation.

In addition, placing potential augmentees from around the Corps and volunteers from the U.S. Army Reserves on alert is part of the routine action taken by the headquarters operations team in response to any approaching emergency, Hecker said.

The Corps' Research and Development community is also identifying and preparing remote sensing and modeling tools to assist field offices in studying potential scenarios and how they might play out.

"The Corps laboratories have a number of special tools to compliment districts for special analysis," said Ed Link, Director of Research and Development. "Coastal storm surge and regional snowmelt modeling are specific examples."

El Niño may also bring another year of heavy snowfall and snowmelt flooding in the upper Midwest. "We monitor the snowpack and if, say, in January, we have a much larger-than-normal snowpack in certain basins, we'll begin developing advance measures projects and strategies for the area, in coordination with state and local agencies," Hecker said.

### Historical concerns

El Niño is an abnormal warming of waters in the eastern Pacific which climatologists link to worldwide weather extremes, from flood to drought. It is likely to create higher-than-normal storm activity, particularly on the west coast in January, February and March. The current El Niño is being compared to a similar pattern in 1982-83 which caused \$2 billion damage nationwide, \$100 million of that along the coast of California.

Floods last winter which damaged a number of levees in California created concern for preparedness this year. The Corps, along with local, state, and

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## Vision commentary

is the first in a series of *cultural aspects of the Corps vision, which will be a regular feature in the "Engineer Update."* Each is the opinion of the writer and will hopefully provoke thought and discussions. Please write a letter to the editor if you feel strongly about a commentary's message or if you have suggestions for a future topic.

### The future demands one Corps

Are we as popular as Chrysler or New York City? They were two giants who were living on their reputation and had not projected adequately into the future. There were some who believed they were worth saving a few years ago. Who would do that for the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers? If we keep the "operate as usual" culture we might find out the answer.

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers is in the early stages of restructuring, re-engineering and reinventing itself to meet the future. We've seen similar efforts before. Is this one different? I believe it is! This one is driven by very real customer factors that necessitate a strategy that strengthens our customer relationships. Satisfying our customers isn't enough. We must DELIGHT them! Although the final grade won't be posted for awhile yet, the first semester grade looks pretty good to me.

The Chief has decided, and I believe that all of us agree, that districts can no longer be put in the position of competing among themselves for work. It is critical that we size and staff each district based on the primary business in its geographic area only. In other words, we need to let a district's mission "grow

to what the customer base can support!" In some cases, starting with today's organization, that will be downward. Additionally, any functions performed infrequently or that produce insufficient income to meet acceptable overhead rates should be worked on a regional or national basis. A "One Corps" mindset is essential for all of us as we posture ourselves for the future.

A new business practice that places the profit center at the regional (division) level, with a standard overhead rate system would also remove some of the negative incentive for a district engineer to be in the survival mode. (There is already talk about reducing S&A rates.) There are a number of ways to reduce all of our rates if we are committed to our customers. Customer **delight** must become the primary basis for the pride and energy each of us has for the Corps.

We have a proud history filled with enduring accomplishments. To ensure the tradition continues, we must position ourselves to best compete for limited funds, keep up with useful technology, seek out "nontraditional" customers and opportunities and provide them the services they need at a competitive price.

Success requires a concerted effort on all our parts. We must manage the entire organization as a corporate whole and then discipline the system. We must also identify responsibility for unique areas of expertise and then make corporate decisions to delegate authority and expect accountability for managing those areas. For example, we need to develop a corporate outreach program and ensure that each team member, Corpswide, understands the importance of,

**"... districts can no longer be put in the position of competing among themselves..."**

and his or her individual responsibilities for, ensuring that program's success.

Also, in my opinion, establishment of a G-3 (Security, Plans and Operations) in the MACOM headquarters, with elevation of division commanders' authority relative to directors, would provide the means to plan, execute and emphasize the "One Corps" concept. We must find a way to actively interface with customers whose geographic responsibilities do not coincide with ours. The key is developing a better understanding of, and the subsequent execution of, the dual roles of the Chief, the first as part of the Army staff and the second as a MACOM with operational responsibilities.

We also should address what the operational responsibilities are at the division level. The division has a very real mission as a regional command and control headquarters. In the future, I believe the division will take on the regional equivalent of current district work management and support activities. We can and should regionalize or nationalize more functions in order to truly get the most from the division and the MACOM headquarters. We would then be in a position to allow districts to focus on their geographical customers and grow to meet those needs.

The future demands "One Corps." Hopefully, we won't have to find out if we have the kind of friends New York and Chrysler needed.

**Brig. Gen. Henry S. Miller Jr.**  
Southwestern Division

## INS agreement supports customer service

By Anita Horkey  
Fort Worth District

If you want to know what "One Door to the Corps" means, ask the Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS). The Corps and INS recently signed an agreement for nationwide project management services. The Corps will provide INS these services through an Architect-Engineer (A-E) Resource Center dedicated to INS. It will bring the capability of the Corps to INS and prioritize INS work.

Last December, INS headquarters in Washington, D.C., approached Corps headquarters requesting project management service. INS is growing and needs upgraded, larger facilities, but its staff could not meet the requirements.

The Corps selected Southwestern Division, which chose Fort Worth District, to propose how the Corps could satisfy INS. It was one of two proposals considered by INS; it also asked General Services Administration (GSA).

A Fort Worth District team developed the Corps' proposal. The team had eight people from the district, one each from Southwestern Division and headquarters, and folks from Albuquerque, Buffalo, Galveston, Jacksonville, and Los Angeles districts.

For six weeks, they analyzed how the Corps could support INS. They especially addressed simplified

project management. In the past, INS often worked with several Corps districts at a time, but they preferred to work through only one.

INS also wanted support for its regional staffs, real estate services, help in planning and programming, a flexible working environment, and priority scheduling.

"Our approach to the INS mission, what we felt INS was looking for, was work prioritization," said Ralph Barrett, team leader.

The AE Resource Center met many of INS' concerns. "The center represents INS within the Corps," Barrett said. "It's staffed with people who can obtain priority for INS projects. Their allegiance is to the Corps, but it's also to the customer, and there are no other customers to erode that allegiance."

Barrett added that they did not throw out standard business practices. The proposal left intact full-service cradle-to-grave project management. "The center respects that process and doesn't change it. All it does is influence that process to give priority to INS work."

The final proposal combined the Corps' engineering services, cost-cutting initiatives, flexibility and customer focus. On June 12 INS accepted our proposal.

Now Fort Worth District and SWD must bring the proposal to life. The district is organizing and staffing the AE Resource Center.

"A lot of people felt the Corps was so embroiled in procedures and policies that we couldn't change," said Barrett. "But we can change. We're on the leading edge of reinventing how the Corps does business. It's an exciting time."

The center is in Fort Worth District, but other districts will also do the work. "The district isn't treating this as a Fort Worth mission; it's a Corps mission," Barrett said. "Other districts aren't losing work. We respect boundaries, and we respect local districts' capability and enthusiasm for the work. As long as they can perform, they've got the work."

Barrett said he hopes other agencies join INS in realizing it isn't economical to duplicate Corps services. "A lot of federal agencies have engineering capability, and they pay people to do what the Corps does every day," he said. "If this agreement with INS does nothing else, it shows that the Corps is the premier federal engineer agency. I look for other federal agencies with a need for engineering and construction to ask the Corps for their own center. And I see the Corps responding."

So does Chief of Engineers Lt. Gen. Joe N. Ballard. The Corps/INS agreement "was more than just a competition on beating out GSA," he told Fort Worth District people. "I think it's a model we can hold up and say 'This is how way we're going to do business.' It will gain untold support from potential customers."

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# Districts tackle pesticide cleanup

By Vanessa Villarreal  
Chicago District

Methyl parathion, a dangerous pesticide intended for use on crops, has been found in Chicago area homes. Chicago District is heading the effort to help the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) clean up the contamination. Five other Corps districts are involved in the Superfund operation.

Mississippi Valley Division (MVD) has also been involved with cleanup in EPA Regions IV and VI in the southern U.S.

The entire project involves seven states with costs reaching \$65 million. In the Chicago area, as of Oct. 1, environmental samples were taken at 774 residential households. Biological sampling has taken place at 369 households so far, with 84 qualifying for relocation, decontamination, and restoration.

Susan Hill, realty specialist on loan from Baltimore District, is the on-site relocation project coordinator for the Chicago Metro Methyl Parathion Project.

"As of Oct. 1, we had 84 homes on the list for relocation, and every week the number changes," Hill said. "EPA estimates that the whole show (relocation, decontamination, and restoration) will take about two years to complete."

Methyl parathion is a highly toxic pesticide made to spray on crops. Outdoors, sunlight breaks methyl parathion down into harmless components in a few days, but it is illegal for exterminating bugs indoors because it can linger for years and cause severe health problems in people.

But some exterminators use it for roach spray. Investigators have identified four suspects that may be involved in the illegal purchase, misuse, and sale of methyl parathion in the Chicago area.

According to the EPA, misuses of methyl parathion were found in Ohio, Michigan, Mississippi, Illinois, Louisiana, Tennessee, and Arkansas. A case of methyl parathion misuse in Mississippi led EPA to believe there was a link to Chicago. On April 9, authorities searched a home in Bellwood, Ill., and found about 40 ledgers with hundreds of names and addresses in Chicago where methyl parathion was sprayed. The case is under investigation.

Under the Superfund program established by Congress, EPA is responsible for identifying sites where hazardous substances have been released into the environment, and for taking action if the material could endanger public health. EPA Region V asked Chicago District to help clean up Chicago residences contaminated with methyl parathion.

Relocation, decontamination and restoration is a multi-step process. The first step is identifying homes contaminated with methyl parathion. EPA finds addresses of contaminated homes in the ledgers, by word of mouth, and by people calling the Methyl Parathion Hotline.

If there's a possibility a home has been contaminated, EPA's medical team takes air and wipe samples. If the amount of methyl parathion found might cause a health problem, the people living there are tested by public health nurses contracted by EPA.

If the biological tests show anyone in the home with high levels of the pesticide, then EPA recommends that the house be decontaminated.

Next is relocation and documentation, and two teams have been set up for those. There's also an Administrative Support Team assisting everyone at the methyl parathion site.

"Twenty-four families have been relocated so far," Hill said. "There are families that don't want to be inconvenienced by the cleanup we're conducting, but we do our best to tell them about the harmful effects of methyl parathion, and how important it is to have everything and everyone tested."

The Administrative Support Team from Chicago District's Real Estate Division maintains the financial data base for relocation and restoration, assists the Documentation and Acquisition teams with paperwork and photo identification, oversees moves, assists the acquisition team with leases, and conducts interviews.

"During interviews, my job is to help each family fill out a health sheet, comment sheet, and family information form," said Ines Ruiz, Administrative Support Team member. "These forms tell us if the families know where the pesticide has been sprayed, and if they have any special needs that will help make their relocation a smooth and easy one."

Ruiz said some people get emotional during interviews when they're told they have to move out for weeks, and that their personal belongings might be too contaminated to save.

The Documentation Team records each step of the decontamination, which is done by civilian contractors. Decontamination consists of removing and replacing floors, walls, cabinets, and carpets. The owners are given the opportunity to pick and choose items

being replaced. "Most of the time, the landlords allow the owner to pick and choose things such as carpet color," said Hill.

Bill White, Chicago District's Real Estate Chief, is in charge of the Corps' relocation operation. According to White, steps are taken to ensure that employees at the site aren't affected. "Each person is given a baseline medical exam prior to involvement in the cleanup. They are then monitored monthly for changes in that baseline."

The Documentation Team's job is broken down into four steps. Documentation before and during the move assures that items that can't be decontaminated and stored will be replaced in kind.

The four steps are:

**Pre-doc.** Videotapes and photos are taken inside and outside the house af-

ter a family has moved out. Both the Documentation Team and the movers received 40 hours of hazardous material training, and wear protective suits, respirators, gloves, and booties to protect against the pesticide.

The team also pays close attention to the condition of the residences inside and out so items can be replaced in the houses exactly where they were before the move.

**Move-doc.** The furniture is decontaminated by contractors and goes into temporary storage until the residence is cleaned and restored. Videotape and photos document the condition of furniture and belongings that had to be thrown away because they couldn't be cleaned.

**Post-doc.** The empty residences are videotaped and photographed again. This takes place after the Decontamination Team's cleanup, but before property is restored.

**End-doc.** After the residences are restored to original condition, they are videotaped and photographed a final time to document the Restoration Team's work.

The Restoration Team has two full-time employees from Chicago District, six employees from Omaha District, an EPA on-site coordinator, and a contractor representative.

According to Dick Albert, Chicago District Construction Branch chief, restoring a unit takes 21 to 28 days. Restoration includes painting, replacing and patching drywall, and replacing carpet and tile.

"Our main goal is to keep up with the decontamination activity and get the tenants back in their units within 60 days to minimize the relocation cost and to open up available temporary housing for the next relocation unit families," said Albert.

The Acquisition Team is made up of personnel from Louisville District. They negotiate with landlords and apartment owners for relocating residents. Every step is paid for under the Superfund program. According to EPA, most money in the Superfund comes from taxes paid by the manufacturers and importers of certain chemicals and petroleum.

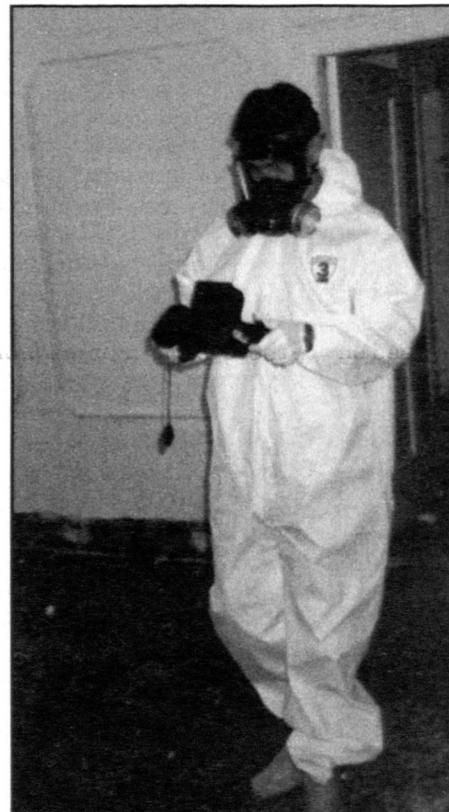
When a home is decontaminated and restored, the family is notified by mail. As of press time, seven families have been moved back into their homes.

## MVD response

MVD coordinated efforts in Mobile, Vicksburg, New Orleans, Omaha, Memphis, and Little Rock districts to support EPA's Regions IV and VI.

All five districts have been restoring homes. They relocated 621 residences, involving more than 2,400 people. At press time, 478 residences have been restored.

The largest portion of the support has been provided by Mobile District, which relocated 413 residences and more than 1,600 people. Omaha District decontaminated and restored 22 businesses in Mississippi.



Bradley Waldrom takes pictures during post-documentation. (Photo courtesy of Chicago District)



A member of the Documentation Team moves personal belongings out of a home contaminated with methyl parathion. (Photo courtesy of Chicago District)

*(Editor's Note: Lt. Gen. Joe N. Ballard has been Chief of Engineers for a year and a month. In the following interview, he looks back at his first year and reflects on both his, and the Corps', accomplishments.)*

**Update:** Can you give us a quick overview of the places you've been and things you've done during your first year as the Chief?

**Ballard:** This first year has been an extremely busy, yet productive year. One of our first tasks was the Corps reorganization plan. The plan was successfully accepted by Congress and implemented by the Corps. It was important to me to set the mark for the Corps moving into the next century and we worked long and hard on a strategic vision. I presented the Strategic Vision on Valentine's Day as promised, and this has become our road map for the future.

There was a need to reassure the senior Army leadership and our elected officials on the Hill of the Corps' relevance, not only to the rest of the Army, but to our great country as well. This has proven to be a long and tedious task, but we are making headway and our efforts will continue.

I also had an objective to visit the Corps family; to hear their concerns, share thoughts, and see the great work that the Corps is known for in support of our Army and our Nation. I've visited almost two-thirds of our districts and labs worldwide and will visit the remainder by next summer. This is an important endeavor. There are over 37,000 employees in the Corps with the majority at district level. The districts are the "front line" who deal with our customers and the American public, and I need to stay in touch and closely focus them.

**Update:** Last year, you offered an impression of the Corps as a professional organization with fine folks, but a little out of the mainstream of the Army, which didn't always deliver everything it promised. Has this impression changed, and if so, how?

**Ballard:** I have been impressed, very impressed, with the professionalism and dedication of the Corps employees everywhere I have traveled. My impression of the Corps being, as you say, "a little out of the mainstream



During his first year as Chief of Engineers, Lt. Gen. Joe N. Ballard gets an overview of operations in the Port of Los Angeles from Vern Hall, Director of Development. (Photo courtesy of Los Angeles District)

of the Army" was an accurate assessment. But this is a leadership challenge not only at the headquarters, but at the division and district levels as well. We always need to remember that we are an integral member of the United States Army team. We need to

make ourselves more relevant to the Army. We are not the Corps of Engineers, we are the United States Army Corps of Engineers.

Concerning the delivery of products, customer satisfaction or "delight the customer" needs to be at the forefront. An important part of the Corps' Strategic Vision is "Revolutionize Our Effectiveness." This has a sub-strategy to "Satisfy the Customer." We cannot be a first rate engineer organization without delivering quality products, on time, and within budget. We need to optimize effectiveness from our customers' perspective.

**Update:** Everywhere you have met with Corps members, you have

stressed your intent to make the Corps more relevant to the Army. What have you done in the past year to increase Corps relevance, and has it been successful?

**Ballard:** I cannot stress the issue of our relevance enough. Our future hinges on it. We are working on improving our relevance to the Army on a daily basis. Initiatives include being active members of various work groups, Council of Colonels, General Officer Steering Committees, General Service Councils, and other forums at DA level; office calls to the Senior Army leadership; inviting the Senior Army leadership to see what the Corps is all about; visiting the various CINCs and Post Commanders while on the road...to hear their concerns, share thoughts...to learn of their needs, anticipate requirements, and provide proactive support. Additionally, the MACOM Advocate program is in place. We have collocated Corps personnel

with the Directors of Public Works (DPWs) on installations, video teleconferences are conducted quarterly with the DPWs and MACOM engineers, and I have instituted the attendance at ENFORCE of both the DPWs and MACOM engineers. All these efforts, on all of our parts, have been successful. However, we still have an ongoing uphill climb in front of us. There are many key contacts we need to make and show that the Army Corps of Engineers is an effective, efficient engineering organization.

## The First Year Ballard reflects on progress, change

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**Update:** You have placed a special emphasis on installation support. What are the major initiatives behind the concept of reinventing installation support?

**Ballard:** Installation support is where our reputation is on the line with the Army. This is where we are most visible and when I coined the phrase "reinvent installation support," this is exactly what I meant. We need to enhance our support to ensure customer satisfaction. Commanders want the best value for their dollar. They want a dependable, on-call organization that can meet all of their engineering needs so that they can give their soldiers, civilians and families a better quality of life. I already mentioned the collocation initiative between the DPWs and the districts. This partnering effort has already made great headway in reinventing installation support. Providing installations "one door to the Corps" for all their problems or concerns is another ongoing initiative.

**Update:** Last year, you stressed the importance of a single vision and strategic plan, and in February, the Corps Strategic Vision and a plan to achieve it were launched. Since that time,

what has been done to implement the plan and make the vision real?

**Ballard:** I am pleased with how the Strategic Vision has taken hold and is growing strong roots in our organization. When visiting the divisions and districts, I see the enthusiasm and energy put forth in developing implementation plans to carry out the three goals and seven sub-strategies. This is an ongoing effort, but we are living the vision on a daily basis with all our de-

isions and actions. Remember, total implementation could take as long as 10 years, but it will have a dramatic effect on all segments of the Army Engineers, our customers and our partners. Today's challenge is to get out on the bow wave of change and lead it and shape it, not react to it.

**Update:** Have Corps members, as a rule, bought into the vision, and if so, what evidence have you seen that this is true?

**Ballard:** The Corps vision is definitely taking hold at all levels. With any change you will have some resistance. It is human nature. There are pockets of resistance, but overall the response has been positive. All levels are speaking the same vision. We must live the vision and bring this great organization of ours to even higher elevations. It takes all of us to carry this forward, and as a team, we can make the Corps vision a reality.

**Update:** How has the Transition Team helped you this past year?

**Ballard:** The Transition Team has been very important during the course of my tenure as Chief. They got me off and running in the right direction, allowing me to immediately focus on the areas that needed attention. I will continue to rely very heavily on their expertise and advice. They helped to refine the vision and strategy and ways to execute it. The Transition Team will reconvene the end of January, and I plan to discuss the second phase of the Strategic Vision implementation with them.

**Update:** In addition to the Strategic Vision, what do you see as some of your major accomplishments over the past year?

**Ballard:** As I mentioned earlier, reorganization was one of my initial focus points along with the development of the Strategic Vision, and the reestablishment of relevance. But there was a lot more than just that going on. Congressional testimony for both the House and the Senate Appropriations Committees took a lot of preparation, but proved to be very successful. I spend a lot of time on the Hill meeting with members of the House and Senate on issues of concern. Some of our largest civil works and



Lt. Gen. Joe N. Ballard, Chief of Engineers, tours family housing in Fort Meade, Md., during his first year in command. (Photo courtesy of Baltimore District)

military construction efforts are hot political items. I have been to the Everglades to see the great environmental restoration underway...same with the Columbia River Fish Mitigation and many other projects. On all my visits to military posts and air bases, I have toured all of the construction efforts the Corps is undertaking.

One of the hardest parts of the job as Chief is the various disaster relief efforts supporting contingency operations, be it the floods in the Northwest or the hurricane-ravaged communities in the Southeast. It is heart-wrenching to see such destruction and loss of life and property, but then I see the extraordinary efforts of the Corps out there lending their fellow citizens a hand in their times of need. I am very proud of the great team we have in the Corps.

My travels have also brought the opportunity to meet with the Corps family and to conduct frequent Town Hall meetings. I have conducted over 37 thus far, and all of them have been both interesting and challenging with very thought-provoking and penetrating questions.

**Update:** You have met with a lot of the members of the Corps over the past year. Is there anything that stands out to you as being especially noteworthy?

**Ballard:** The dedication and professionalism of our work force at all levels is especially

noteworthy. We have quality folks on the team and I have witnessed that first hand. Look at the number of Vice President Gore's Hammer Awards that teams and individuals from the Corps have received. We are up to 33 with almost that many more on the way. Our reputation for innovative thought and execution is well known in all circles. This occurs because the people in the Corps care. Truly care. This is very pleasing and bodes well for our future.

**Update:** By the same token, is there anything you have seen that really needs to be improved?

**Ballard:** First, we must remember why our organization exists. We are the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers! We are integral members of America's Army. That means all 38,000 of us, not just the 500 who wear the uniform. Secondly, we must improve our relationship with our customers and partners. During these times of constrained resources, we must improve and implement sound business practices and processes.

**Update:** You have greatly realigned the executive office staff in the headquarters. Why?

**Ballard:** Two reasons. First, the realignment will improve the flow of communications within the headquarters and facilitate horizontal integration. The Deputy Commander will assume a dual role as the Deputy Commander/Chief of Staff. Two Deputy Chief of Staff positions will be established. Under one of these Deputy Chief of Staff positions will be the Secretary of the General Staff (SGS) de-

signed to oversee correspondence control, staff action, administration and protocol. These changes will significantly enhance our effectiveness not only on internal actions, but external as well. Secondly, the realignment will make the headquarters organization reflect the organization of all the other MACOMs in the Army. This is important. It allows outsiders to know entry points into the organization.

I am also considering the establishment of three other organizations under the Executive Office: Support for Others, Office of Congressional Liaison, and a Security, Plans and Operations office.

All these changes will allow closer coordination of staff actions in the

Corps as well. The three areas represent organizations that have increasingly become more important in our day-to-day operations as we change to reflect our nation's and our Army's policies and actions.

It is our intent to do this as closely as possible in a budget/personnel neutral manner.

**Update:** Looking ahead, what is your top priority for the coming year?

**Ballard:** First priority is to move out quickly and decisively on the implementation of the strategic vision. There are others. The recent addition of the execution of the FUSRAP

(Formerly Utilized Sites. Remedial Action Program) mission is a prime example of not only how we must be adaptive to rapid change, but to be adaptive in the changing of our priorities as well. As in all of our work, our credibility will be judged by the degree of flexibility and adaptability we demonstrate in taking on greater mission responsibility.

**Update:** Now that you have completed the first year, do you have a better idea of the primary things you want to accomplish over the next three years as Chief?

**Ballard:** We already have placed the implementation of the Strategic Vision as the key to our future. Restructuring is tough on people so we really want to use the results of the "test divisions" for restructuring over the course of the next year and then focus on implementation over the last two years. Lastly, I know I have said this numerous times today, but I want to stress the point that we need to continue demonstrating the Corps' relevance to both the Army and our nation. I'll be stating this every opportunity I have over the next three years.

**Update:** Finally, have you had the opportunity to fish in any of the Corps lakes since becoming Chief, and if so, have you noticed any increase in your catch?

**Ballard:** I unfortunately have had only one opportunity to fish while traveling thus far in my command. I took some leave prior to the start of the Senior Leaders Conference in Minneapolis to spend a day fishing. When I am on the road we are always on the go and for some reason my district and division commanders try to keep me decisively engaged from sunrise to sunset. However, as I look at my long-range calendar and see Alaska next year, I just know that there is a big fish with my name on it!



# Salmon stay safe despite dredging

By Heidi Helwig  
Portland District

The Corps' dredging practices in the Pacific Northwest are not harming salmon. That's what Portland District set out to prove when it designed a device to fit on the dredge *Yaquina's* drag arm.

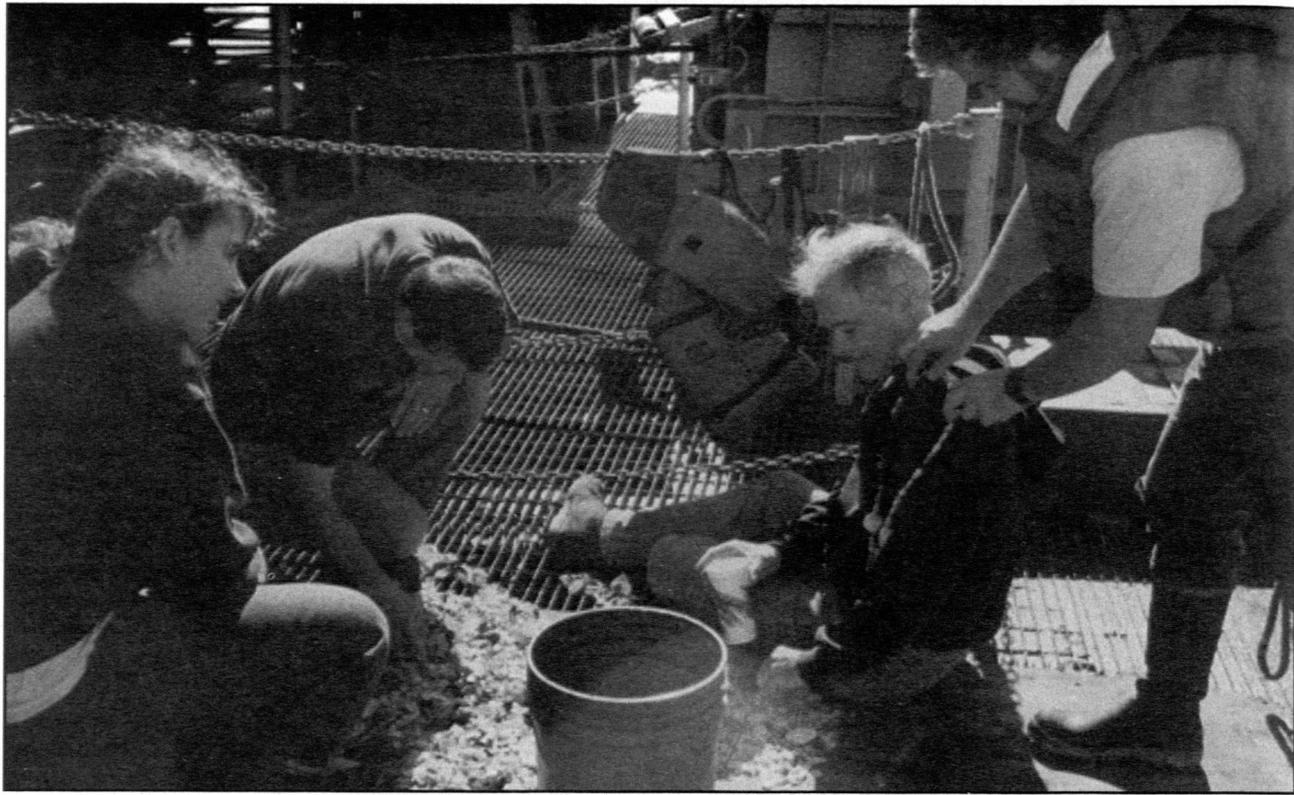
Officially called a fish sampler, the device (a basket with half-inch steel mesh) was attached to the dredge in June. Now, hours of testing later at three estuaries, not one salmon was drawn into the dredge.

Kim Larson and other district biologists were prompted to accelerate the testing program by a number of species listed by the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) under the Endangered Species Act. Coho salmon are listed as a threatened species south of Cape Blanco on the Oregon coast. Cutthroat trout are listed as endangered in the Umpqua River, and steelhead are proposed for listing in other rivers up and down the coast and in the Columbia River.

"We've been wanting to do these tests for the last two or three years, and the listing of the Coho brought it to the forefront," Larson said.

"When we first began planning this testing, we didn't know the Coho's threatened listing would be limited to south of Cape Blanco," said wildlife biologist Eric Braun. "Even without the listing, the Corps is concerned about any impacts it might have on salmon. And, now, there is enough of a potential for listings for us to look at all our projects."

Though these tests were not required by NMFS (the agency regulates in-water activities to protect fish and other aquatic organisms) the agency was



Katheena Morello (left), and Mike Crewson (right), both fisheries biologists, work with *Yaquina* dredge crew members Dan Grigsby (middle left) and Bill Averill to sort the contents of the collecting basket. (Photo courtesy of Portland District)

interested in seeing them done. Larson said the findings will be included in a formal report.

"It's important that we show we don't have an impact on migratory salmon," Larson said. "In this way, we can continue working in the water without hurting the declining salmon population. We're trying to get a jump ahead on the listing process."

Without proof that the Corps does not impact the salmon fisheries, NMFS could severely restrict the Corps' schedule for dredging.

Shipyards designed the device, and Construction, Operations and Readiness Division budgeted money for building, installing and testing.

Each test lasts only two minutes, but is repeated

as often as possible in a 12-hour stretch. Some 12-hour periods are from noon to midnight and some begin from 4 a.m., covering both dawn and dusk periods when salmon are more active.

The two-minute limit was a necessity. In two minutes the basket can be brimming with rocks and debris sucked off the river bed. The sandy dredged material falls through the grates into the hopper.

After tests in the Siuslaw and Umpqua rivers, *Yaquina* Bay this year, and earlier in Coos Bay, not one salmon was found in the basket. The findings were repeated later in the summer when the dredge worked the Rogue, Chetco and Coquille river entrance channels along the southern Oregon coast.

# Employees find bike commuting rewarding

Article and Photo  
By Lira Frye  
New Orleans District

Wherever you go in the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, there are people who ride bicycles to work. The Louisiana climate is conducive to riding, so New Orleans District headquarters has a number of riders.

They brave the streets of The Big Easy for different reasons. For some, a bicycle is transportation.

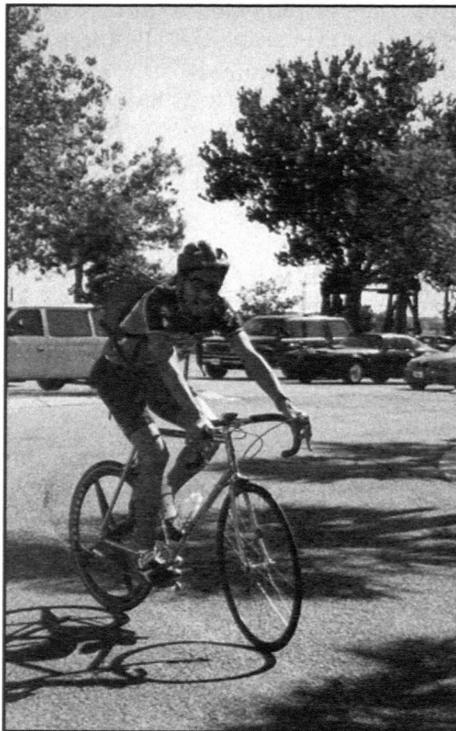
"My car was flooded in May 1995," said Jenness McBride, a biologist in Environmental Projects Section. "I needed another way to get around, so my bicycle became my transportation."

McBride rides two miles each way from Uptown. "It's a great, relaxing kind of thing," she said. "The neighborhood I ride through is beautiful, and I don't mind that it's longer than a drive. I get a chance to decompress."

Bill Hicks, a project manager with Programs and Project Management Division, agrees. "It's a great stress reducer," he said. "I don't have a car and I only ride about six blocks, but it's motivating."

Others use the opportunity to train, exercise, or just have fun.

"I race bikes, but it's tough finding



New Orleans District employee Howie Gonzalez likes biking to and from work.

time to ride," said Howie Gonzalez, a study manager with Planning Division. "It's real convenient for me to ride in and then ride home. One of the last

things I feel like doing once I get home is riding." Gonzalez rides 14 miles each way from Chalmette. "It takes me about 50 minutes, and during the school year, it takes the same amount of time to drive."

John Fogarty, a team leader with the New Orleans Area Office, rides the longest distance, about 22 miles from Destrehan, two or three days a week. "I do it for exercise," he said.

For others riding the bike is fun.

"I ride 17 miles from Chalmette and for me it's a real passion," said Troy Constance, a study manager with Planning Division. "I explain it like this -- if you're a golf lover and you could play nine holes of golf on the way to work and nine holes back, would you do it? First thing when I wake up, I go out to play, just like a kid with a western flyer and streamer. On the way home, I get to defuse. That's the biggest plus -- real mental relief."

Stan Green, a project manager with Programs and Project Management Division, rides 6.5 miles. He sees his bike ride as a serene experience.

"It helps maintain your connection to the world instead of isolating you as a car does," Green said. "I smell pine trees and honeysuckle, crawfish boiling as I pass through Bucktown,

doughnuts in deep fat, and bacon frying in a dozen kitchens. I watch the sunrise over Lake Pontchartrain. How many people enjoy going to work? I do."

All the cyclists agreed that, initially, riding in traffic was frightening.

"I've only had one serious crash," Green said. "It was one of those learning experiences, and I was careless. Now I'm more careful."

Constance has a different method for handling the roadways. "You need to ride aggressively. You assert yourself in the traffic and they respect you."

Changes in weather can also challenge a cyclist's perseverance.

"I generally don't ride if it's raining in the morning," Constance said. "On the other hand, showers can spring up almost out of nowhere, so it's good to be prepared. My clothes are protected by plastic bags inside my knapsack."

"I avoid cold, rainy days," he added. "Somewhere along the line I became too old to think that being cold and wet is fun."

The cyclists said several changes made by the district have made riding more convenient. Inside bike racks, shower availability, and ramped entrances make New Orleans District headquarters bike-friendly.

# Around the Corps

## General officer news

Brig. Gen. Henry S. Miller Jr., commander of Southwestern Division (SWD), retired on Nov. 7. Col. Donald Holzwarth, currently deputy commander of SWD, will become the commander.

## Computer give-away

Since early this year, members of the Cold Region Research and Engineering Laboratory's Logistics Management Office have been working on President Clinton's Executive Order 12821, Improving Mathematics and Science Education in Support of the

National Education Goals, an on-going program to donate computer equipment to schools. So far, eight local schools in Vermont and New Hampshire have participated. Many more are expected to participate in the coming school year.

The give-away is on a first-come, first-served basis.

About 400 items ranging from keyboards to network systems have been donated to the schools. The equipment will be used for instructional purposes from the basics of how a computer works to introduction to computer usage.

## Dam safety measures

On Sept. 9, Association of State Dam Safety Officials (ASDSO) representatives from all states and Puerto Rico adopted the Dam Safety Program Performance Measures (DSPPMs) developed by the Corps.

The performance measures were developed by a task force organized by the Engineering Division of Southwestern Division. The team included members from the other Corps divisions and five other federal agencies, plus the state of Texas. The measures were reviewed by the 10 federal agency members of the Interagency Committee on Dam Safety.

In addition to being adopted by ASDSO, the performance measures have been translated into Spanish for use in Mexico. Copies were also furnished to the national dam safety agencies in Australia and Canada for possible use.

## Public Lands Day

About 350 volunteers participated in New England District's Buffumville Lake and Hodges Village Dam for the National Public Lands Day (NPLD) program on Sept. 27.

NPLD is a national effort to call attention to public lands, harness a volunteer workforce, and restore natural resources.

Work crews were assigned based on experience and physical abilities, and a qualified Corps employee or volunteer headed each of the 23 teams.

Work done included renovating hiking trails, building footbridges, building and installing wood duck boxes, and building shoreline fishing platforms and erosion control. Blueberry bushes were planted, a vista cleared beside a wetland, and general cleanup work done.

NPLD addresses the growing backlog of repairs which threatens natural resources and limits recreational accessibility. The program also educates the public about natural resources, and engages the pub-

lic and private sector in volunteer activities to improve public lands.

## Engineer honored

At the Interagency Committee on Dam Safety's quarterly meeting on Oct. 7, the Hon. Eluid Martinez, Commissioner of the Bureau of Reclamation (BuRec), gave the bureau's Federal Partnership Award to Arthur Walz Jr., chief of Geotechnical and Materials Branch, Directorate of Civil Works. The award is the highest award the commissioner can give a federal employee outside the BuRec.

BuRec recognized Walz for his dedication and commitment to improving dam safety while serving on the Association of State Dam Safety Officials Peer Review of the dam safety program for BuRec and five other Department of Interior bureaus.

## SAD Programmer of the Year

Sheila Emanuel, Jacksonville District's CEFMS program analyst, recently received South Atlantic Division's Programmer of the Year Award.

Emanuel played a vital role in the district's CEFMS implementation, first as training coordinator, then as program analyst. Among other things, she established and managed an off-site training facility with 14 instructors who taught about 65 students a day for about six months, created a five-day executive training course, set up and managed the district's help desk, and traveled throughout the Corps as a CEFMS trainer and troubleshooter.

## Chinese engineers

Three groups of engineers from the People's Republic of China (PRC) were hosted by New York District in response to a request from Montclair State University, N.J.



The guests were interested in the Corps' role in flood control, emergency operations, and dredging. At home, they are responsible for flood control, natural disaster prevention, water and air pollution, water development and treatment, dam projects, relief for victims of natural disasters, and other environmental protection.

## Name change for environmental center

By Kimberley Speer  
Huntsville Support Center

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Environmental Training Support Center (ETSC) became the Army Environmental Awareness Resource Center (AEARC) on Oct. 1.

"We still support environmental training, but our scope has widened along with the needs of the modern Army, and we wanted a name that reflects what we actually do," said Mary Hodgens of the center's information team.

The center, in the Corps' Professional Development Support Center in Huntsville, Ala., offers numerous environment-related support services and products to the Department of the Army, Army Environmental Center, Corps of Engineers, and Army installations.

Services include support for environmental training and awareness, assistance with resources and source lists, and project management services. Prod-

ucts include developing printed materials such as brochures, soldier's field cards, Rolodex cards, placards, posters, diagrams and stickers. Creating videotape presentations, from scripting and editing to voiceovers and duplication, is also part of the mission.

"Installations or activities pay only the direct cost of reproducing and distributing projects, and many of our products are free," Hodgens said. "Salaries and overhead are on us, except for contracts required for video production."

## Ice station SHEBA

On Sept. 18, two Canadian icebreakers, the *Louis S. St. Laurent* and *Des Groseilliers*, carrying six scientists from the Cold Regions Research and Engineering Laboratory (CRREL) and more than 50 other scientists, embarked on a journey to establish Ice Station SHEBA.

This is the largest, most complex science experiment ever done in the Arctic. The *Des Groseilliers* will remain frozen in the pack ice of the Arctic Ocean and left to drift as a floating science platform for 13 months.

Ice Station SHEBA's mission is for researchers studying the Arctic ice pack to better understand the Arctic climate so forecasts of global climate change can be improved.

## Graduates

Four Corps employees recently completed course work for their Master's of Engineering degrees through the Coastal Engineering Education Program (CEEP).

CEEP is a partnership between the Waterways Experiment Station (WES) and Texas A&M University (TAMU) through the WES Graduate Institute. Students spend the fall semester at TAMU and the spring and summer semesters at WES. They study at the WES Coastal and Hydraulics Laboratory under adjunct faculty from the lab. They then travel to Duck, N.C., for three weeks to complete field work at the WES Field Research Facility. The master's degrees are awarded from TAMU.

The one-year program is designed to give students the basic academic course work and practical training essential for solving modern-day coastal engineering problems. This is the third class to graduate from the program, which takes place every three years.

Along with the new name, new activities are now available. LEMAT or SIBER (also known as SEIBERTH) stakes (used to mark areas off limits for training, environmental protection and environmental hazards), can be provided with both reflective and reflective/thermal imaging capabilities. Soldier's field cards (similar to environmental cards used at facilities), and folded step-by-step instructions and maps, are part of the current Army-wide effort to put environmental information directly in soldiers' hands.

# Virtual team shares office in cyberspace

Article by Tom Verdel  
Photo by Janice Orvis  
Tulsa District

It was a tough assignment.

Tulsa District was asked to remodel the former hospital and clinic at Fort Sill, Okla., to house the Defense Finance and Accounting Service (DFAS) Lawton Operating Location.

The problem was, there weren't enough qualified people in the district to complete the mission on time. There wasn't even time to select an architect-engineer (A-E).

The solution? Share the project among districts by creating a "virtual team" that did most of its work by computer file transfers, phone, fax, and e-mail. It's working, and the district learned vital lessons that can be used by other virtual teams in the Corps.

Team members came from Tulsa, Fort Worth, Louisville and Little Rock districts. Their original plan was to make a quick start and bring the project up to a 30 percent design. At the same time, they would pursue A-E selection, and have a design ready to turn over to that firm.

But about halfway through the team reviewed its progress, talked to the customer, and decided to continue to work together through final design. Their decision honored the customer's request to maintain a consistent design team through the life of the project.

The 30 percent design came in on time in May. Tulsa District performed an independent technical review with in-house labor, and a biddability, constructability, and operability review with resident office staff.

The DFAS operating location and national staffs also reviewed the design. Reviewers were pleased and said the detail, technical adequacy, and comprehensiveness of the design was outstanding.

At that point the team estimated it was actually about 50 percent complete, so it cut its own schedule by a month. A 60 percent design also came in on time and met with universal approval from reviewers. At this point, the project is expected to advertise a full two months ahead of the original schedule.

Design costs are under budget, with \$38,000 remaining from an original \$215,000 for this work.

While the project is not entirely complete, some lessons about operating a virtual team have already emerged.

● Technology is important, but team commitment is crucial. Prospective members were given the op-



Members of the virtual team from Tulsa District check the latest information from team members in other locations. From left to right are Larry Gage, Tom Verdel, Sandi Egan, and Joanne Hensley.

tion to join the team or turn it down. This yielded a team whose members are excited about working together.

● A face-to-face team meeting at the beginning of the project introduced members and started a team relationship. Coordination has been maintained by normal fax, phone, e-mail traffic, conference calls, and so on. Face-to-face meetings have been held at critical times and these are still important.

● Despite a common computer-aided drafting and design (CADD) library, different offices find different work sequences and different ways of displaying design information. A flexible technical manager who can foster consensus on these details is critical to success.

● Although keystroke intensive, the virtual team learned that the Corps of Engineers Financial Management System (CEFMS) is a better way to manage funds, and gives a greater level of confidence in funds control.

The team would like CEFMS to provide a faster, more user-friendly interface with relevant, tailored summary reporting.

The team found that funding the project with monthly funds transfers from Louisville District to Tulsa District, then to Fort Worth and Little Rock districts is an unnecessary complication. Members feel that funding project design up-front, to cover all tasks included in the design directive, would be better.

● Project schedules are faxed from Tulsa to the other two districts. Since PROMIS will soon become the Corps' standard project management software, all three districts are switching to Microsoft Project (reportedly uploadable into PROMIS) as an interim scheduling software. It remains to be seen whether PROMIS and CEFMS together will work well as management tools, rather than primarily a finance and accounting program.

● "Virtual file drawers" on a district server (ideally located where the architects work) appears to be the best way to maintain project drawings.

There are three file drawers on the Little Rock server. The "new" drawer contains all architectural drawings (typically used as an "underlay" for the work of other disciplines.)

At Little Rock District, a batch file runs nightly and searches all project files that have been changed that day, saving the most current version to the "new" file drawer. This maintains current files which the various disciplines can access when they begin work on a drawing.

Two additional drawers, "tulsa" and "ftworth," store overlays and drawings produced in those two districts. This technology is readily available and has provided good service. Download time for a five-megabyte drawing file is less than 10 seconds.

● All three locations use Intergraph Microstation CADD software. None use discipline-specific application programs like Project Architect or Project HVAC.

Microstation may be viewed as the lowest common denominator of CADD programs. It has been sufficient for the DFAS project, a renovation where the basic building is a static feature. Future projects may require more sophisticated (and complicated) software.

## El Niño

Continued from page one

other federal agencies, fought to minimize the impact of last winter's floods. The Corps estimates its levees and reservoirs prevented \$2 billion in damage.

Since January, about \$110 million has been spent on flood-fighting, intermediate rehabilitation and restoring flood control systems to pre-event condition. "The magnitude of the levee repair program that has been accomplished by Sacramento District following the January-to-March flood events is outstanding," Hecker said.

One of the primary concerns from state officials is that the Corps won't be able to finish repairs on levees damaged last winter before the storms hit. According to Corps projections, however, the 35 critical levee rehabilitation contracts should all be completed by the end of November.

Nevertheless, apprehension over the approaching flood season led to an El Niño summit called by California Senator Barbara Boxer, and attended by Vice President Al Gore, FEMA Director James Lee Witt, and Corps Civil Works Director Maj. Gen. Russell

Fuhrman, among others.

"We used \$130 million to rebuild hundreds of miles of levees," said Gore. "Never before has so much repair work been done so fast."

### The big picture

The Corps must also contend with the long-term issue of reinforcing the existing levee system within the context of good floodplain management practices, Hecker said. Because each action upstream affects conditions downstream, watersheds must be viewed as systems rather than individual project sites.

"The Sacramento and San Joaquin basins are a complex system which is not easily understood," Hecker said. "A comprehensive study will answer some questions so that future decisions in terms of levee configuration and floodplain management will be made in a more deliberate and technically supportable way with the net result of significantly less damage caused by future flood events."