

# NewsCastle

Vol. 36 No. 4

A monthly publication of the Los Angeles District of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers

October 2006

## Project of the Month

Rio Salado Oeste, Phoenix, AZ

## Hispanic Heritage Month

Special Guest: Congresswoman Hilda Solis

## Plus:

Chief Extends Reach to Young Hispanics

Competition Benefits College Bowl Players

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And more...

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If you build it, they will come...but then what?

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## Cover Story

### If you build it, they will come...but then what?

Written by Mike Tharp

In 1850 the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers changed the course of the San Diego River so it would drain into False Bay. One hundred years later, the Corps dredged that bay, helping to create scenic Mission Bay. Some 50 years later, the Corps built the San Luis Rey River Flood Control Channel in San Diego County to funnel that river safely to the sea.

So far, so good.

Then events rapidly evolved to prove yet again that no good deed goes unpunished. Although the 7.6-mile-long San Luis Rey flood control levee was completed in 1999, and San Diegans' lives and property have been protected ever since, over the next few years the law of unintended consequences unfolded with a vengeance.

The twists and turns of the past 10 months, which at one point saw a U.S. congressman threaten to man a bulldozer himself, provide a cautionary tale for how the Los Angeles District adapted and adjusted to unforeseen circumstances. The District's strategic reaction and tactical actions may well serve as a learning tool for other districts faced with unexpected challenges that any project could encounter.

San Luis Rey now appears to be a win (for the environment)-win (for a major flood-control project). But the win-win came only after a lot of time and frustration.

In his 1927 Pulitzer Prize-winning novel, *The Bridge at San Luis Rey* (about an 18th century Peruvian tragedy), author Thornton Wilder has his main character, Brother Juniper, declare: "Either we live by an accident or we live by a plan."

In the case of the 21st century San Luis Rey, the Los Angeles District lived by both.

A decade or so ago, after the flood control part of the project was mostly finished, Mother Nature acted as only she can. Despite an arid climate, San Diego County contains one-third of the remaining coastal wetland acreage in Southern California, as well as the largest area of vernal pools in the region. Enough rain fell in the San Luis Rey channel to create ideal growing conditions for a jungle of plant life. No one is quite sure when a tipping point was reached, but by last year the vaunted flood control channel had become choked with vegetation, including the invasive fast-growing pest, arundo donax, sort of a bamboo on steroids.

Along with the plants came the birds, including the least Bell's vireo and the Southwestern Willow Flycatcher, both endangered species. The Corps, like individual Americans and other government agencies, must abide by the rules of the Endangered Species Act. One of those, in effect, is don't mess with the habitat of endangered species. Yet it was quickly becoming obvious to District team members and San Diego stakeholders alike that San Luis Rey's flood channel could no longer serve its original purpose because its channel was clogged by 30 acres of the giant reeds—and at least two species of endangered birds.

In letters during 2002 to residents worried about floodplain boundaries, Deputy District Engineer for Project Management Brian Moore explained that, because of critical habitat issues, the Corps had to study alternative operations and maintenance practices for the channel; the study included a supplemental Environmental Impact Report. The Endangered Species Act also required the Corps to formally consult with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USF&WS).

USF&WS was adamant about protecting the rare birds. But the Corps needed to get in the channel and clear the underbrush so San Luis Rey's flood-control function would work. Oceanside Director for Public Works Peter Weiss shared the Corps' concern that heavy rainfall could uproot brush, washing it downstream in a wall of water toward populated areas, possibly coagulating at the piers of four bridges and forming unwanted dams.



The bike trail is one of the recreation features of the San Luis Rey flood control project



Oceanside officials are concerned about debris collecting along the piers of the four bridges crossing the San Luis Rey

The hitch was permits. Permits from both Fish and Wildlife and other regulatory agencies. Last year, under mounting public pressure, Oceanside's City Council threatened to clear the channel without the required permits, prompting a letter from District Engineer COL Alex Dornstauder that the city could face "very serious legal repercussions" if it acted on its own.

Signaling that the Corps grasped the gravity of the problem, Ruth Villalobos, the District's Planning Division chief, told the Oceanside City Council that "this is the preeminent disaster waiting to happen in the entire district." Rep. Darrell Issa, a Republican from nearby Vista, told reporters he himself would operate a bulldozer to jump-start the cleanup, but then acted to help obtain a \$1 million emergency appropriation for the project.

In December the District contracted Recon, an environmental consulting firm, to begin removing the invasive plant. COL Dornstauder watched the initial clearing efforts with City Councilman Rocky Chavez. "Frankly, I don't know what went on 10 years ago, but, to me, the fact that we're here today cutting wood is a big step in the right direction," he told the North County Times. Overall, 22 acres were cleared in December.



A resident enjoying a walking trail along the San Luis Rey



Mayor Jim Wood, City of Oceanside, discusses the challenges of clearing the San Luis Rey river with Major General Don Riley, Director of Civil Works, USACE

Back in Los Angeles, Kevin Inada, project manager, and Debbie Lamb, technical team manager, were coordinating their efforts with the California Dept. of Fish and Game and the Regional Water Quality Board to resolve remaining impediments. "The Corps of Engineers is on top of it," Inada said, "and we're progressing ahead." Among the Emergency Action Plan's steps: in a 3-day, 6-inch rainfall forecast, clear debris from bridge piers; for a 9-inch forecast, clear vegetation on a swath 60 to 100 feet wide along a 5-mile stretch; and if a flood were imminent, a contractor was standing by with people, equipment and materials.

During the weeks that followed the December launch, District team members were in regular contact with Oceanside city officials, as well as federal and state authorities, addressing legal and technical issues in hopes of reducing flood risk. The District ranked its twin missions at San Luis Rey—to protect the public from flood danger and to protect endangered and threatened species in the basin near Oceanside—as a "high-priority" project.

Three key strategies lay behind the District's decisions: preemptive emergency action, which protected lives and property from possible flooding during the rainy season; systematic clearing, which minimized any impact on the environment and increased the San Luis Rey Channel's capacity for flood protection; and close consultation with USF&WS and state

resource agencies to ensure the preservation of wetlands as well as the protection of endangered species in the project area.

In February COL Dornstauder toured the basin with Congressman Issa and Oceanside officials and told them the Corps' three-phased, multi-year project, when finished, would protect an estimated \$185 million in property from flood damage. Villalobos reiterated that the Corps remained committed to the longer-term larger clearing effort.

This summer District team members worked overtime to design the long-term maintenance plan for the San Luis Rey levee system. That plan was scheduled to be available for public review in September. "We unintentionally created a wetlands habitat for the vireo," District Acting Public Affairs Chief Jay Field said. "In 1988, before the project began, there were only eight pairs of vireos in the riverbed. Now there are more than 100."

It wasn't easy, and it isn't over yet. But the San Luis Rey River project shows how, with careful attention to detail, patience and collaboration with local sponsors and stakeholders, the District converted an accident into a plan.



Chipper begin phase clearing of the over grown vegetation of the San Luis Rey channel

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## Feature Stories

### Chief Extends Reach to Young Hispanics

Written by Mike Tharp



Lt. Gen. Strock with Humberto Gallegos at last year's Career Fair

Chief of Engineers Lt. Gen. Carl Strock believes that the Corps “could increase our focus on interesting young Hispanics in science and technology,” he said in an interview during the 17th annual Hispanic Engineer National Achievement Awards Corporation (HENAAC) convention Oct. 5 at the Anaheim, Calif., Convention Center.

“We can expand on that,” said Strock, citing the Los Angeles District’s sponsorship last year of the Viva Technology program at Roosevelt High School which, he said, the District “executed and embraced,” the first District in the nation to do so. Using student “engineering” teams coached by Hispanic engineering students, Viva Technology fosters teamwork and collaboration in completing engineering projects under competitive conditions.

This year’s Viva program is in New York, next year’s in Jacksonville, and Strock suggested that the Corps “should really do more of a network approach to these things. We can take advantage of those kinds of structured programs in a better way.”

At the HENAAC event, Strock and Ray Mellado, chairman and CEO of HENAAC, reaffirmed a partnering agreement committing their organizations to “a mutual vision and a coordinated effort to embrace opportunities in the fields of engineering, science, mathematics and technology.”

The agreement declares that both leaders “recognize that a workforce comprised of diverse, high-performing individuals, with valuable talents and strengths, is critical to providing excellent services to all our customers, especially Soldiers and their families.”

“We should expand existing outreach,” Strock said in the interview. “We should make a special effort during Engineer Week, for example. We can do a better job of reaching Hispanic people.”

The main way to do so, he added, is “command emphasis and visibility. We can improve on that. From the command level there has to be a better understanding of demographics and increasing diversity. Each of us needs to know the various population groups within our command.”

If Corps leaders don’t understand such facts, he said, the solution is “to increase our offensive strategy and awareness to show that our workforce is representative of the American population.”

An afternoon workshop Strock was attending was based “on the philosophy that there is a huge demand for technologically capable people and the supply is limited.” Noting that the Hispanic community is the fastest growing community in the U.S., he said the Corps must “gain access to this community. If we don’t target them, we will miss out on an opportunity.”

Corps strategy and policy for this mission comes from its role as “a public agency whose responsibility is to act in the public interest.” But, he also said, “From self-interest, we will only be as successful as we are in balancing this supply and demand. It’s about both public interest and self-interest.”



### Competition Benefits College Bowl Players

Written by Greg Fuderer

They wore uniforms, but no pads. There were a lot of whistles, but they blew to *Vive La Vida Loca* or YMCA, not following a hard tackle or a penalty or a score. And even though the referees were “homers,” the competitors didn’t complain. One team eventually was crowned champion in HENAAC’s College Bowl, but each of the 300 or so college students who participated came out a winner.

The competition took place at HENAAC’s 2006 conference in Anaheim, Calif., in October. It resembled an amalgam of the NFL Draft, GE College Bowl and American Idol. Thirty agencies, businesses and corporations each provided a coach, an assistant coach and a judge for the competition. The coaching staffs interviewed students, then used two rounds to draft those they felt most met the qualifications they sought.

“We looked for students who showed the potential for leadership, teamwork and creativity,” said Corps team coach Cynthia Perez, a project manager with the Jacksonville District. After Perez and assistant coach David Van Dorpe made their draft choices, they rounded out their team of

10 players through an assignment process.

The competition consisted of five rounds. Teams received their assignments, then met with coaches for five minutes to discuss goals and strategies. Teams had 25 minutes to develop their presentation, skit or model, ensuring that each student participated in the presentation of each task.

“Our team bonded very quickly,” said Van Dorpe, a project manager with the Los Angeles District. “We wanted them to learn how to come together as a team and overcome a difficult obstacle. There is never enough time, never enough resources. You have to work together to leverage your talents and achieve your ultimate goal.”



Team HENAAC

The four women and seven men who comprised the Corps team represented the Air Force Academy and colleges and universities from Puerto Rico, Arkansas, California, New Mexico and Texas. Although the Corps team didn't win the competition, the coaches were pleased with the teamwork they displayed.

“I was taken by surprise by their preparation,” Perez said. “They were extremely smart; knew what they wanted and how to get there. They didn't need much coaching at all.”



HENAAC Team members jumping at the opportunity to apply lessons learned

Van Dorpe explained that the College Bowl was not a one-way learning experience. “I learned a great deal from the students about my own management and leadership skills,” he said. “It's a competition and time is short, decisions must be made quickly—right or wrong. That is something that I apply in my own job—make sure the decisions we make are wise ones—there is no turning back.”

According to Van Dorpe, students and coaches quickly applied their skill sets, employing project management tools of the trade. “We used lessons learned after each round to discuss how we did, how we functioned as a team and what we could do better in the next round,” he said.

“They become your kids,” said bowl coordinator Gonzalo Martinez. “You take an interest in them.”

Van Dorpe agreed with that sentiment. “I hope that they went away with a sense of accomplishment,” he said. “My main goal was to teach them to think, work and act as a team. I

wanted them to learn that collaboration at times means leading, but many other times it may mean following another good leader. Every good leader knows when to follow.”

“It's a different way of doing it. You get to observe their reactions under stress situations,” Martinez said. “It breaks down barriers and it's a great recruiting tool. But I also learned that it is a great exposure tool as well. There are many folks out there that have no idea who the Corps is, what it does and how it operates.”

Perez agreed. “The Corps has a lot to gain,” she said. “It gives us a great feel for the market out there as far as who our future ‘replacements’ could be.”

The “future replacements” don't take long to arrive, according to Martinez. Several of the coaches for companies at this year's bowl had participated as students in earlier years.

For the Corps, Van Dorpe had served as a College Bowl coach during HENAAC's 2005 conference. “I jumped at the opportunity to coach again,” he said. Noting the chance to introduce some of the top graduating students from across the nation to the Corps, he continued, “It's a great recruiting tool for the Corps and a great opportunity to share a little of my knowledge with the students.”

Like members of the Corps team, Perez was herself drafted. “I was actually volunteered for this task by College Bowl Corps Manager, Alberto Gonzalez,” she said. “His experience as assistant coach last year taught him that the coach needed to be energetic, possess leadership skills and most of all care about and enjoy working with our youth.”

Would she do it again? “I can't wait to participate again next year, whether as coach or in any other capacity,” Perez said. “Mama Hen already misses her chicks.”



### Tucson Resident Engineer Wins HENAAC Luminary Award

*Written by Mike Tharp*

Actor Brian Keith was nominated for an Emmy three times for his role as Uncle Bill Davis in the 1966-71 TV series, “A Family Affair.” Indirectly, he is also part of another honor—Julie Martinez' Professional Achievement Luminary Award presented to her Oct. 5 at the annual Hispanic Engineer National Achievement Awards Corporation (HENAAC) conference in the Anaheim, Calif., Convention Center.

Martinez, Tucson Resident Engineer—the first woman ever to hold such a position in the Los Angeles District—recalls watching the television show as a girl in San Pedro, Calif. “The whole reason I wanted to be an engineer was Uncle Bill in ‘A Family Affair,’” she explains. “He built

dams all over the world, and it was so exotic to me.”

Like Uncle Bill, Martinez trained as a civil engineer. After receiving her degree from San Diego State University, she joined the Corps and literally has never looked back. “I’m a tomorrow thinker,” she says. “You’re only as good as your last failure.”

The failures have been few during Martinez’ 20-year career with the District, and the successes plentiful. Calling her “a superb leader, engineer, manager and role model,” Col. Alex Dornstauder, Los Angeles District Engineer, cited her work in Tucson “as the most productive field office in the region.”

John Keever, Area Engineer for the Arizona/Nevada Area Office, and someone Martinez credits as being one of her role models, said she “dedicated herself to project delivery for customers, stakeholders and the public at large. At the same time, she has been the foundation for her family—dependable, assertive and trustworthy.”

Maj. Brad Endres of the Arizona/Nevada Area Office, said Martinez “leads our largest resident office with over \$75 million in construction placement scheduled for fiscal year 2006 with a staff of 14 personnel. Some of the District’s most highly visible projects are under her domain: the Nogales Wash flood drainage reduction project, the Global Information Center at Fort Huachuca and the Tucson Drainage flood damage reduction project in downtown Tucson.”

Receiving the HENAAC award from Lt. Gen. Carl Strock, Chief of Engineers, South Pacific Division Commander Col. John McMahon and Dornstauder, Martinez was praised for “being responsible for all Corps of Engineers construction activities and engineering responsibilities in southern Arizona.” That includes the particularly important collaboration with the Dept. of Homeland Security for customs and border protection, as well as Davis-Monthan Air Force Base’s Air Combat Command.

She was also publicly applauded for her work on the high-profile Pier 400 project at the Port of Los Angeles and for volunteering after destructive Hurricane Hugo struck Puerto Rico, where Martinez helped repair public utilities.

Other Luminary honorees included women and men from the Air Force Research Laboratory, the U.S. Coast Guard, the SPAWAR Systems Center, NASA’s Ames Research Center, as well as engineers and managers from such blue-chip corporations as Dow Chemical, Boeing, Ford, DaimlerChrysler, Raytheon and General Motors.

“I’m very humbled,” says Martinez. “To be in that company—I’m a little surprised.”

If you looked only at her early upbringing, you might be surprised too. Martinez was born in San Pedro, a blue-collar seaport town at the tip of the Palos Verdes Peninsula, some 25 miles south of downtown LA. She was the second of six children to a first-generation American father and a Mexican national mother. “In my world...the men ruled the roost and women were there to serve. Anything I learned about mechanics or construction was by looking over my brothers’ shoulders,” she wrote in an autobiographical essay.

But Martinez realized early on she was different from the other women in her family, and after they moved to San Diego, she breezed through high school, graduating at age 16. Two years later, her parents moved back to Mexico to start a business, basically handing her the house and car keys and telling her to take care of her siblings while running the U.S. side of the business.

That’s why it took her eight years to struggle through San Diego State, after which she immediately joined the Corps. “I could see the diversity and the opportunity to learn and to try a variety of things and in this I have never been disappointed,” she wrote. “There could have been no better choice for a girl who knew she didn’t know so many things but couldn’t wait to learn.”

Coincidentally, one of the biggest projects she has worked on for the District was Pier 400 in the Los Angeles Harbor, a short walk for many of her family members. “It was very special to me,” she recalls, “and there were a lot of questions at pretty much every family gathering in San Pedro.”

For that she was given the Corps’ 2000 Construction Management Excellence Award for supervising \$180 million in large dredging, landfill and deep-draft navigation projects in and around the Ports of LA and Long Beach. She maintained “an aggressive safety program and exceptional partnering programs,” the award read. “Her coordination skills with the sponsors earned her high marks in the District and exceptional performance ratings for the past three years.”

Besides Pier 400, other mega-projects Martinez was heavily involved with included the San Luis Rey River, Los Angeles River and Prado Dam.

Besides Keever, other positive influences on her career have included Terry King and Lt. Gen. Robert Van Antwerp, former Los Angeles District Engineer.

Martinez is at once proud and clear-eyed about the cultural influences of her Hispanic heritage. “I come from a culture that didn’t encourage education, even among men,” she explains. “It was work. But getting this award and hearing a lot of the people (at the convention) speaking Spanish, I’m impressed and a little surprised that we’ve achieved the levels we have as a group in science and technology. I’m encouraged to help keep this going.”

Many of her family members still live in Mexico. “They range from the top 2 percent of the economy to the normal bottom—farmers, ranchers, those who live off the land,” she says. “They all have a lot of richness in that culture. It’s so much about family.”

And so it is with Martinez herself. Her mother, who is ill, lives with her in Tucson, and Martinez has buried her father and a sister in recent years. “In the struggle between family and job, family wins,” she says, “but I have a boss, John Keever, who is so understanding.”

Moving from a county of 10 million and a hyper-profile project list has caused her to make some adjustments. “It has been interesting,” she says, quickly praising “the stunning quality and work ethic” of her fellow team members in Arizona. The desert around Tucson “sometimes has its own quiet beauty,” she allows, “and you re-think things in a place like Tucson.”



Maj. Gen. Johnson presents Julie Martinez, Los Angeles District Tucson Resident Engineer, with a certificate marking her selection as a 2006 HENAAC Luminary Award honoree

And, says the lifelong gardener, accustomed to the balmy climate of San Pedro and San Diego, "I had to re-learn how to grow things."

In an April 4, 1966, segment of "A Family Affair," the wealthy bachelor consulting engineer Uncle Bill finally decides to forego globetrotting and become a full-time father to the three children who moved in with him after the death of their parents. Her mother and family, the Corps, the District and future Hispanic engineers are all fortunate that Julie Martinez doesn't have to make that decision.



### 3rd Hispanic USACE Training Workshop

*Written by Jay Field*



In conjunction with the annual Hispanic Engineer National Achievement Awards Corporation (HENAAC) Conference, USACE hosted the 2006 Hispanic Training Workshop Oct. 4 at the Marriott Hotel in Anaheim. This year's theme was "Communicating Trust in a Global Environment."

Richard Alvarez, Chief of Engineering and Construction, New York District, led the presentations with an overview of the Viva Technology high school engineering academic and career awareness program. Following a cultural quiz, in which participants learned the Spanish translation for "Crazier than a goat!" Wilbert Berrios, Chief of Corporate Information, presented information on diversity in the Corps. Of particular note, he stressed, is how the Corps' Hispanic workforce is not reflective of the American population. Berrios outlined ways in which the Corps is working to increase opportunities for Hispanics within the organization. Keynote speaker, Patricia Rivers, Chief of the Environmental Community of Practice, gave an address on Trust in the Workplace. Rivers covered the four types of trust necessary in the workplace (contractual, communication, competence and rebuilding), as outlined in the book by Dennis and Michelle Reina, "Trust and Betrayal in the Workplace." Following a brief awards ceremony where the USACE nominees for 2006 HENAAC awards were recognized, along with those who supported the workshop, Maj. Gen. Ronald Johnson, Deputy Chief of Engineers, presided over a Town Hall meeting with participants. Maj. Gen. Johnson gave a brief "state of the Corps" presentation that included the chief's future vision on where the Corps is headed.



### Project of the Month

#### Rio Salado Oeste, Phoenix, AZ

Written by Scott Estergard

Tuesday, 24 October 2006

Project: Rio Salado Oeste Feasibility Study, Salt River, Phoenix, Arizona

**Summary:** The Rio Salado Oeste Study is being conducted by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE), Los Angeles District and the City of Phoenix, with the cooperation of the Flood Control District of Maricopa County (FCDMC). The purpose of this study is to identify whether there is a Federal interest in implementing a project along the Salt River from 19th to 83rd Avenues in Phoenix. This study is to identify feasible flood damage

reduction and ecosystem restoration alternatives that are technically feasible, economically practicable, sound with respect to environmental considerations, and publicly acceptable. The City of Phoenix, as the non-Federal sponsor, supports the proposed project purpose to provide flood damage reduction, ecosystem restoration, passive recreation, and other related outputs.



Flooding along the Salt River (Rio Salado) in Phoenix



Before the project riparian habitat was dwindling

On October 18, 2006, the Corp's Civil Works Review Board unanimously agreed the Rio Salado Oeste project meets policy. The project may now be released for state and agency review.

Upon completion of a 30-day review period, the project will be submitted to the Chief of Engineers for approval. USACE anticipates having a signed Chief's report by December 2006. The project may be authorized for construction if the Chief's report is signed and a

Water Resources Development Act is passed this year.

**Background Information:** The study area is located along an 8 mile reach of the Salt River in Phoenix from 19th Avenue to approximately 83rd Avenue. The primary problem is the severe degradation and loss of riparian habitat along the Salt River; which once flowed perennially and supported substantial growth of cottonwoods, willows, and mesquites. Increasing appropriation of surface and groundwater resulted in the transformation of the Salt River to a dry river that flows only ephemeraly in response to storm runoff and effluent discharge. In addition to restoration there are opportunities to reduce future flood damages and improve recreation opportunities associated with the restored floodplain.

**History:** Previous studies and reports have considered flooding, water quality, environmental degradation, and recreation on the Salt River. A 1995 reconnaissance study conducted by the Corps found a Federal interest in pursuing feasibility studies on a 33 mile reach of the river. Of the 33 miles 2 specific areas had a non-Federal interest in pursuing a study at that time and included sites in Tempe and Phoenix with those Cities being the non federal sponsors. The Rio Salado Project is currently in final phase of construction.



The river runs dry most of the year

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## Area Office Highlights

### Arizona/Nevada Highlights - Integrated Plan Addresses Flooding and Redevelopment in Flagstaff

By Mike Tharp



Typically little more than a trickle of water, the Rio de Flag can become a raging river when the spring snow-melt hits the San Francisco Peaks above the city of Flagstaff

Suncups. Hedgehog cactus. Poison hemlock. Bull thistle. Showy golden-eye. Western blue flag. Alligator juniper. Poor man's pepperwort. Hooker's primrose. Yellow monkey flower. Grass leaf tansy-aster. Siberian elm. Alkali pink. American vetch.

Just a sample bouquet of the 112 plant species found along a mile-and-a-half stretch of the Rio de Flag River near Flagstaff, Ariz. The Rio de Flag is a tributary of the San Francisco Wash, in turn a kid brother to the mighty Colorado River.

The Rio de Flag rises out of basalt, igneous rock through which its waters percolate, one reason so many flowers and other plants flourish along its winding course.

With all that natural beauty flanking its banks, the river wouldn't seem to pose a problem for residents, visitors or structures in northern Arizona. But like a lot of pretty rivers in dry zones, it tends to flood after gully-washers and snow-melt runoff. With deadly clockwork, floods inundated Flagstaff in 1888, 1896, 1903, 1916, 1920, 1923, 1937, 1938, 1950, 1963, 1966, 1973, 1979, 1983, 1988, 1990, 1993 and 1995. According to Coconino County historical hazard records, the

last ten floods were responsible for 18 deaths and \$9.3 million in property damage.

Since 1997 the Los Angeles District has been studying and planning a twin project to address both flood damage reduction and recreation. It originally was authorized for \$24 million, and District team members are currently working with elected officials to reauthorize it for \$54 million. The construction startup date depends on that reauthorization. "This is of great benefit to the Corps," said District senior planner Kim Gavigan, "and the city is looking at this as a huge boost to its redevelopment, particularly the south side."

Sen. John Kyl announced in November 2005 that \$3.5 million had been appropriated for the Rio de Flag project in the Energy and Water Appropriations bill. Congressman Rick Renzi added that Rio de Flag drainage channel area improvements would include replacement of five bridges, which would "enhance downtown's transportation options and provide new recreation trails used by both people and bicycles." The project "is critical to the city's economic growth and prosperity and will protect thousands of structures," he said. Added Louis Uptmor, acting project manager for the Corps, "They've (Arizona's elected officials) been instrumental at getting appropriations for us to continue with the design, and their influence will be a major component of when we'll be able to start construction."



The city and the Corps are working to reduce the risk of damage from flooding.



According to Coconino County Historical Hazard records: 10 flood events caused 18 deaths, 10 injuries and did \$9.3M property damage

The project's importance has ballooned over the years. Like most other parts of the Southwest, Flagstaff has seen its population soar, and nearly half of Rio de Flag's so-called 100-year floodplain now includes residential areas. The city's population is an estimated 65,000, Coconino County's roughly double that. Commercially zoned structures and the Northern Arizona University campus also would be vulnerable to the worst flood that might occur in a century.

Included in such a bulwark will be channel and bridge modifications, a detention basin, berms and floodwalls. Recreational features include multipurpose trails and an underpass to the south side at the new railroad bridge. Anticipating the project's completion, the city of Flagstaff has contracted an architectural team to prepare an urban design master plan to spruce up the city's south side. "The flood control project will realign and restore the Rio de Flag's channel to its historic outfall in order to minimize potential flood damages," the city's Web site said.

Mayor Joe Donaldson called the project "a crucial component to our downtown redevelopment, Northern Arizona University campus master planning and addressing community storm water runoff." He estimated that the city's redevelopment programs would attract more than \$100 million in private investment.

Los Angeles District's Planning Branch is the prime mover in problem-solving for water resources, which ultimately leads to federal action on a project.

Once the Rio de Flag project is completed, residents, businesses and all that abundant plant and animal life along its banks can live and breathe more safely.



**High Desert Highlights - Corps Evaluates Former Baywood Park Training Area**

*By Jay Field*

Field work for the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) Recurring Review of the former Baywood Park Training Area (BPTA) is being conducted in and around Montana de Oro State Park near Los Osos.

Project manager Tawny Tran said, "As part of the Formerly Used Defense Sites (FUDS) Military Munitions Response Program (MMRP), we're here to evaluate whether our previous response actions continue to protect the public and the environment." Research shows there have been no findings of old munitions since the Corps implemented institutional controls in 2002, including the posting of warning signs and other public awareness materials, she added.

The site visit includes non-intrusive visual surveys of the former training area and interviews with residents and park visitors. Wendy Church of PIKA International, the Corps' contractor for the BPTA project, said "We're using GPS and taking digital photos to develop baseline site conditions." "This work will aid future evaluations," she added, "and allow the Corps to compare how physical conditions have changed due to erosion, activities and development."



Gerald Stone and Wendy Church of Corps contractor PIKA International survey the coastline of the former Baywood Park Training Area near Los Osos



Wendy Church documents site conditions along the coastline of the former Baywood Park Training Area near Los Osos

Workers will stay on established trails and roadways to protect against harming wildlife. Corps biologist Tom Keeney is accompanying the teams to ensure they avoid threatened and endangered species like the snowy plover. "We're outside of their nesting season, but they're roaming the beach feeding on the kelp that's washed ashore," he said. "With all the normal park activity—people horseback riding and walking along the beach—the plovers are not likely to be impacted by the survey teams," he added.

The former Baywood Park Training Area was used during World War II (from 1943 to 1946) as a training area for troop maneuvers, bivouacs and amphibious landings. Some of the ordnance items used during the training included small arms ammunition, mortars, rockets, grenades and practice land mines.

The Corps performed numerous ordnance clearance actions at the former training area between 1945 and 1995. "The chances of encountering old munitions are slim," said Corps ordnance and explosives safety specialist B.J. Allen. "But you should be wary of any type of old metal you find and not fool with it," he added. Old ordnance items retain their explosive potential and may cause

harm, even though they require the application of energetic force to set them off.

Results of the BPTA site visit will be included in the final Recurring Review report, due to be published next spring.



**Southern California Highlights - Partners Express Support for Aliso Creek Project**

*By Greg Fuderer*

While a national dialogue takes place over evolution and adaptation, the agencies responsible for the restoration of Aliso Creek agree that it requires some man-made intervention. During a creek-side ceremony at the Aliso & Woods Canyons Wilderness Park, representatives from those agencies reiterated their pledge to restore and protect one of Southern California's natural resources.

"We're committed to solving the problem," said Orange County Supervisor Tom Wilson. He spoke of development how it often leads to increased water flows, pollution, erosion and invasive plant species. "We value our beaches and communities," Wilson said, stressing the need for a comprehensive approach that would stabilize the creek and reduce erosion, remove invasive species and restore native plants, and treat water before it arrives at Aliso Beach. During the ceremony, U. S. Rep. Ken Calvert stressed the need to conserve water. "There's no such thing as waste water," he said. "It's a significant resource, especially in here in Southern California." Looking forward to the task at hand, he said, "It's a big job with a tough budget."



Ed Demesa, Col. Alex Dornstauder and Brian Moore (left to right) discuss the benefits of Aliso Creek restoration with a member of the public

The ceremony emphasized a 2004 agreement to "establish a collaborative watershed partnership ... to promote watershed health, economic sustainability, and community vitality." Los Angeles District Engineer Col. Alex Dornstauder spoke for the Corps when he said, "It's an honor to be part of the team and share in the partnership of this project. We will be an active and committed member."

The project, according to study manager Ed Demesa, provides an opportunity for the Corps to put into practice its Environmental Operating Principles. "This is a familiar challenge for us," he said. "It's a chance to provide leadership and to work as partner to address a situation that will affect our children and future generations."

A recently signed a memorandum of understanding with EPA provides opportunities for close coordination among agencies and potential partnering in the implementation of specific water quality measures in the watershed.

The Aliso Creek project will finalize designs to stabilize the degrading streambed, reduce scour damage to infrastructure, improve and restore aquatic, riparian and wetland habitat and provide water quality treatment of surface flows discharging to the ocean.

# NewsCasting

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## Highlighted Division

### REAL ESTATE WANTS YOU! DISTRICT DIRECTORATE HELPS AREA MILITARY RECRUITING STATIONS

Written By Mike Tharp

One overlooks the Rose Bowl Parade route in Pasadena. The other sits in a two-tier Burbank mall anchored by such retail icons as Macy's, IKEA and Sears.

One sets its sights on health care professionals. The other seeks any qualified person who wants to join any of the four major military branches.

Both are military recruiting stations, and both were nurtured into existence by the Los Angeles District's Real Estate Directorate. "We (the Corps) conduct all the leasing activities for all the armed forces," says District chief Hector Angeles. "DoD comes out with regular procedures for new offices or upgrades to existing facilities and we carry out the orders for the armed forces."

The Real Estate Directorate is DoD's executive agent for the Recruiting Facilities Program, the Homeowners Assistance Program and the Defense National Relocation Program. That includes appraisal, planning and control, acquisition, management and disposal of land. Sort of a super realtor for America's soldiers, sailors, fliers and marines.



Newly refurbished Santa Clarita joint forces recruiting station



Corps, contractors, and recruiters discuss plans for station in San Fernando Valley

Here's how it works on the ground. The military branch decides on a location that meets its recruiting mission, based on a formula within the area it has established as its target market. Real Estate Directorate team members then check out the lay of the land and handle negotiations with property owners and leasers. They also compile and keep the paperwork.

Like most real estate deals, recruiting stations are all about location, location, location. Ordinarily, Southern California recruiting stations have sprouted in strip malls because of their high traffic flow and accessibility. Lately, more are being placed in the sprawling shopping malls that dot the suburban landscape—the better to showcase a station's profile. That's the case with the Burbank facility, whose grand opening was Oct. 16, 2002. A few are tailored specifically for a niche clientele—in Pasadena the station is in an office building, a venue designed to appeal to doctors, nurses, dentists and other health care professionals who may be interested in signing on with Uncle Sam. "The image there is a little different from that of the foot soldiers," explains Angeles.

As in most any landlord-tenant relationship, problems unavoidably arise. Some landlords object to the increased traffic around their property; others may not like it that a potential recruit may occupy a parking space in a strip mall lot longer than an ordinary retail customer. "Every landlord has his own idea of the ideal tenant," says Angeles.

The 16-year Corps veteran, who also served as a Navy corpsman 1978-82, thinks 9/11 has changed what happens at the recruiting stations his directorate handles. "If anything, there's more eagerness," he says. "From what we hear, people are sometimes beating on their doors. In the past, they had to entice them to reel them in."

During the grand opening ceremony Oct. 16, 2002, at the Pasadena site, Lt. Col. John Cook, commander of the 6th Army Medical Dept. Recruiting Detachment, said the office "is connected to a larger strategy that will allow the Southern California Health Care Recruiting Company to better serve the health care market in the Los Angeles area." That unit, he continued, "recruits highly qualified and professional doctors, nurses, veterinarians, dentists, optometry-, medical services- and health science-trained experts for both the full-time Army and the U.S. Army Reserve."

One example: Capt. Elizabeth M. Shin, a pediatric dentist in the L.A. area for more than eight years, became one of the station's first recruits as an Army Reserve Dental Corps officer. Capt. Shin was stationed with 18th Medical Company Dental Services in Stanton, Calif.



Service flags mark the entrance of the newly refurbish Glendale recruiting station in the Eagle Rock shopping center



Entrance to the Army office of the Glendale recruiting station.

Due west of Pasadena, in beautiful downtown Burbank, senior military officers, civilian elected officials and private sector businesspeople attended the grand opening of that recruiting station. David Laurell, mayor of Burbank, called on Americans "to look to those who wear the uniform with pride." Brig. Gen. Bernardo C. Negrete, deputy commanding general of the Army Recruiting Command, Fort Knox., Ky., observed that "the Army recruits quality, not volume, and this new station will have an impact on drawing on that quality." He called it "a first-class operation."

An estimated 450,000 people live within five miles of the mall, whose name was changed Burbank Mall from Media City Center a few years ago. The name change is part of a \$25 million renovation at the mall, so the recruiting station seems poised to capitalize on the revitalization project.

Back at L.A. District, Angeles takes an almost paternal pride in the Real Estate Directorate's involvement in the recruiting process. "There's a fervor of patriotism out there," he says, "that has made this job a little easier—and hopefully that carries over to the future."

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## Equal Employment Office (EEO)



### HISPANIC AMERICANS: OUR RICH CULTURE CONTRIBUTING TO AMERICA'S FUTURE

National Hispanic Heritage Month recognizes the contributions of Hispanic Americans to the U.S. It celebrates Hispanic heritage and culture and began in 1968 and covers a 30-day period until Oct. 15. September 15 celebrates the independence of five Latin American nations: Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua; Mexico and Chile celebrate their independence Sept. 16 and 18, respectively LA District encompasses four states with some of the highest percentages of Hispanics in the population: California, Arizona, Nevada and Utah, California alone is home to 12.4 million Hispanics, and Los Angeles County itself hosts nearly 5 million Hispanics—largest in the nation.

Hispanics now total 43 million in the U.S., the nation's largest ethnic or race minority, 14% of our total population, and that number is projected at 103 million by 2050. There are 1.1 million Hispanic veterans of the U.S. Armed Forces, and currently, there are 200,000 Hispanics serving in our Armed Forces.

Among our 700 team members working for the nation, the number of Hispanics is 125. We recognize that we need more qualified Hispanics in our workforce, and we are taking many positive, proactive steps to make that happen. For more than two years, for example, the Los Angeles District has been a vigorous supporter of HENAAC, the Hispanic Engineers National Achievement Awards Corporation. Last year we partnered with HENAAC to inaugurate the first-ever technology program at Roosevelt High School. And we were particularly proud and pleased this summer when our own Al Quintero, head of the Construction Division's Contract Administration Section, was named a Role Model by HENAAC and featured on its Web site. Al himself estimates that he has personally recruited six Hispanic engineers to the Corps. And we join other districts several times a year in dispatching teams to engineering and technology job fairs to let potential recruits know about the Corps.



Just as we want to continue to be known as the nation's premier engineering institution, we also want to be known as a welcoming and nurturing destination for Hispanic team members. So it was a natural and relevant segue from the District's commitment to Hispanics for the District to have hosted recently a special guest. Congresswoman Hilda Solis represents the pinnacle of Hispanic success in American politics and society. She also represents the 32nd Congressional District, which includes a dozen cities with some of the fastest-growing Hispanic populations in America. She became the first Latina named to the powerful and exclusive House Committee on Energy and Commerce. As a member she continues her career-long commitment to improve the quality of health care and to fight for environmental justice. She also serves as the Committee's ranking member on its Environment and Hazardous Materials Subcommittee.

Last year Congresswoman Solis was elected Co-Chair of the bipartisan Congressional Caucus for Women's Issues and as Chair of the Democratic Women's Working Group. She is serving her second term as Chair of the congressional Hispanic Caucus Task Force on Health.

Of special interest and importance to us here in the Los Angeles District, she has won legislative victories to authorize the federal government to examine how it can improve the San Gabriel River Watershed's recreation and environmental opportunities. And in a law that all of us in uniform paid close attention to, she removed barriers to U.S. citizenship for more than 45,000 non-U.S. citizens serving in the U.S. military and Reserves.

In 2000 she became the first woman ever awarded the John F. Kennedy Profile in Courage Award for her pioneering work on environmental justice issues in California. Her California environmental justice legislation, enacted in 1999, was the first of its kind in the nation to become law.

Congresswoman Solis graduated from California State Polytechnic University Pomona and earned a Master of Public Administration degree from the University of Southern California. She worked in the Carter White House Office of Hispanic Affairs and was later appointed a budget analyst with the Office of Management and Budget in the Civil Rights Division. Before she was elected to Congress from the 32nd District, she served eight years in the California legislature. She made history in 1994 by becoming the first Latina ever elected to the California State Senate.

Congresswoman Solis is a lifetime resident of the San Gabriel Valley and lives in El Monte with her husband Sam, a small business owner. Her parents and her six siblings, she says, continue to be sources of great inspiration to her.

BIENVENIDO!



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## Safety

### DoD to Restrict Cell Phone Use on Military Bases

By Sgt. Sara Wood, USA  
American Forces Press Service

WASHINGTON, Jan. 5, 2006 – Defense Department installations have begun implementing new cell phone restrictions for drivers on military bases.

The new regulation, published in the Federal Register in April 2005, states that anyone driving a motor vehicle on a DoD installation cannot use a cell phone unless the vehicle is safely parked or the driver is using a hands-free device.

Many installations already have implemented the new restrictions, and the rest will implement the rules on their own schedule, said John Seibert, assistant for safety, health and fire protection for DoD. There is no deadline for installations to implement the restrictions, Seibert said, but he expects most will do so this year.

"We have not issued an implementation schedule," he said. "But it's definitely getting everyone's attention."

The law enforcement policy offices for each military department are putting together policies and procedures for the implementation and enforcement of the restrictions, Seibert said. He explained that this regulation is a minimum requirement, and installation commanders still have the authority to put stricter rules in place. Each installation will determine the punishment for violation of the rules, he said.

As the installations implement the restrictions, they have a responsibility to notify the public by putting up signs or putting notices in base newspapers, Seibert said. Many installations are allowing a grace period in which motorists in violation of the rule will be warned and not ticketed.

This regulation was developed based on information from the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, which studied driving distractions as the cause of motor vehicle accidents, Seibert said. The study found that cell phone use is the fastest growing and most visible distraction that leads to accidents, he said.

The DoD regulation follows suit with many regulations that states and cities have already imposed. Currently only Connecticut, New York, New Jersey and the District of Columbia ban hand-held cell phones for drivers, but many cities have imposed their own rules, according to the Governors Highway Safety Association.

"We are in front of the majority, but we certainly are not the first ones to do this," Seibert said.

This cell phone regulation will increase traffic safety on installations, Seibert said, but more importantly, it will encourage safe driving habits.

"Our intent is that this will drive an increased attention to the importance of safe driving and that we'll see a change in driving behavior, both on military installations and off," he said.



### Cell phones compete for drivers' attention

Written by JT Coleman  
U.S. Army Combat Readiness Center



7/7/2006 - FORT RUCKER, Ala. – Psychologists at the University of Utah published a study June 29 showing that motorists who talk on handheld or hands-free cellular phones are as impaired in their driving as drunks.

Driver inattention is the leading factor in 80 percent of vehicle crashes according to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration.

"Just as you put yourself and other people at risk when you drive drunk, you put yourself and others at risk when you use a cell phone and drive. The level of impairment is very similar," said David Strayer, a psychology professor and the study's lead author.

One analysis shows cell phone users are more than five times more likely to get in an accident than undistracted drivers.



Information in the Risk Management Information System, or RMIS data base, shows that a Soldier distracted by her cell phone while operating her privately owned vehicle accidentally steered into oncoming traffic. The Soldier overcorrected the vehicle trying to get back in her lane and lost control. The vehicle rolled three times and injured the Soldier.

Army Regulation 190-5, Motor Vehicle Traffic Supervision, states that anyone driving a motor vehicle on a Department of Defense installation cannot use a cell phone unless the vehicle is safely parked or the driver is using a hands-free device.

"The regulation covering cell phone use while driving is the minimum standard to be enforced. Posts and individual commanders can make it more stringent," according to Fred Bucher, acting Policy Branch chief of the Law Enforcement Branch in the Pentagon. "Training and Doctrine Command has initiated a policy that active-duty members must also use a hands-free device while driving their vehicles off post," said Bucher.

There is little change in the degree of attentiveness that can be made from people using a hands-free device or having a phone to their ear while driving, said Bucher.

"Statistics in the military don't directly link cell phone use while driving to accidents. However, many officers are writing in the remarks section of the citations that drivers were on the phone when they violated rules of the road such as illegal lane changes or speeding," said Bucher.

Since April, more than 212 million people in the United States are using cell phones compared to about 4.3 million during 1990, according to the Cellular Telecommunications & Internet Association.

"The bottom line is driving requires your full attention," said Bucher.

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## Security

### The Screening Experience All Shoes Must Be Screened

#### Why We Screen Shoes

TSA instituted mandatory shoe screening as an additional security measure when the threat level for the aviation sector went to Orange, or high, August 10. Screening shoes by x-ray is an effective method of identifying any type of anomalies including explosives. TSA's highly trained transportation security officers can see if a shoe has been tampered with when they view it on the X-ray equipment. Requiring all passengers to remove shoes for x-ray screening increases both security and efficiency at the checkpoint.

Today improvised explosive devices are the number one threat that TSA guards against. More than 31,000 Transportation Security Officers have received rigorous training in IED detection and are required to complete four hours a month of recurrent training to detect all forms of explosives. Training and technology are two layers in TSA's systems approach to security in the airport. Other layers include: intelligence, behavior observation technique, random canine team searches, federal air marshals, federal flight deck officers and additional security measures both visible and invisible to the public. Each one of these layers alone is capable of stopping a terrorist attack. In combination their security value is multiplied, creating a much stronger, formidable system.



TSA wants to assure the traveling public that it's working aggressively to protect the traveling public against threats they expect and those they don't expect. Continued cooperation and vigilance are they keys.

Have doubts about the ability to detect explosives in shoes? Read Assistant Secretary Kip Hawley's remarks and see a recently declassified X-ray image of simulated explosives in a pair of shoes.

[Learn more about the shoe screening policy. Shoe Screening](#)

[Learn more about the new security screening procedures. New Security Procedures](#)

[Learn more about what items are now prohibited due to heightened security. Prohibited Items](#)



**Human Resources**



**HOUSE BACKS 2.7 PERCENT CIVILIAN PAY RAISE FOR 2007**

The House approved a 2.7 percent pay increase for civilian federal employees in 2007. Representatives voted for the raise as part of the fiscal 2007 Transportation-Treasury appropriations bill, which passed by a vote of 406-22. President Bush proposed a 2.2 percent raise for both military and civilian employees, but in May, the full House approved a higher 2.7 percent military raise as part of the 2007 National Defense Authorization Act. Shortly after that action, 10 members, led by Reps. Tom Davis, R-Va., chairman of the Government Reform Committee, and House Democratic Whip Steny Hoyer, D-Md., sent a letter to appropriators asking for the same hike for civilians. A policy statement released by the administration said the president "strongly opposes" the higher raise, citing an additional \$600 million cost and noting that the 2.7 percent exceeds the average increase in private-sector pay as measured by the Labor Department's Employment Cost Index.

The bill expressly included Homeland Security and Defense department civilian employees in the 2.7 percent raise. Those two departments have new pay-for-performance systems in the works that are intended to eliminate automatic pay raises for all employees. In a statement following the vote, Hoyer said the "Washington area delegation works hard every year to provide federal employees with a fair pay adjustment that follows the principle of pay parity, including Department of Defense and Department of Homeland Security employees." The president's statement specifically urged deletion of the 2.7 percent raise for those departments because of the personnel system changes -- particularly those at the Pentagon, which rolled out its new system for the first 11,000 employees in April. "The provision is ambiguous as to how the increase would be applied to employees covered under these departments' modernized pay systems and will unnecessarily complicate their implementation," the statement said. This year was the first time that President Bush proposed equal pay raises for both groups, but the move did not forestall the annual pay parity battle in Congress.



**NEW FEDERAL EMPLOYEES DENTAL AND VISION INSURANCE PROGRAM**

Federal and USPS employees eligible for the FEHB program (whether enrolled or not) and annuitants will be able to enroll in dental and/or vision insurance this fall, with coverage effective 31 December 2006.

The FEDVIP open season will be held at the same time as the FEHB and FSAFEDS open season, 13 November 2006 through 11 December 2006.



Premiums are enrollee-pay-all and will be deducted pre-tax for employees. Enrollments will be available as self only, self plus one, and self and family and will take place on the BENEFEDS Portal at <http://www.benefeds.com/>.

Employees are encouraged to learn all they can about the new National Security Personnel System (NSPS) program. Several websites and tools are available to aid employees in understanding how NSPS will affect them:

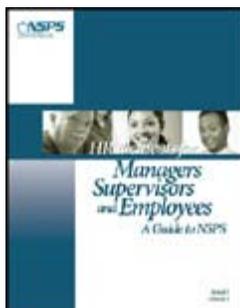


**The NSPS Web Site:** (<http://www.cpms.osd.mil/nsps/>) The Civilian Personnel Management Service (CPMS) web site is the best source for information related to NSPS. Employees are encouraged to check the site regularly as new items are continually added to the site. A couple of the recent additions are:

- Pay Pool Process at a Glance
- Fact Sheet for Employees in Entry/Intern/Developmental Positions



**The New CPOL NSPS Web Site:** (<http://cpol.army.mil/library/general/nsps>) On 3 August 2006 the Army launched a new NSPS web site designed to educate and inform the Army workforce worldwide. The site provides information about NSPS and tools such as videos, presentations, and brochures. This web site also offers an update bulletin available via email. The NSPS Bulletin is published every other Wednesday as well as when a NSPS announcement or update occurs.



**The New NSPS Guide:** (<http://www.cpms.osd.mil/nsps/docs/HRMSE.pdf>) The "HR Elements for Managers, Supervisors, and Employees-A Guide to NSPS," is a new publication developed by the NSPS Program Executive Office. This guide provides employees with an overview of the critical elements they need to understand as they convert to NSPS. The guide includes topics such as pay increases and bonuses, pay bands, and job objectives, to name a few. The guide also includes "Key Terms and Definitions" employees need to be familiar with as they convert to NSPS.



**The Free NSPS On-Line Course:** NSPS 101 is a FREE on-line web-based course providing an overview of the Human Resources elements of NSPS, covering such topics as conversion to NSPS, classification, compensation, performance management, staffing flexibilities, and workforce shaping. This course is designed to address questions such as "What happens to me when my position is converted to NSPS?" to "How does the pay-for-performance system work?" NSPS 101 serves as a foundation for training in instructor-led courses that begin shortly before conversion into NSPS. The course also includes a conversion calculator that identifies an employee's career group, pay schedule, pay band, and estimate of within-grade increase buy-in.



# NewsCastle

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## The Punch List

### ANY GOLFERS OUT THERE?

For those of you who don't know, the Los Angeles District has a golf club, one which has existed for well over 35 years. Corps employees and retirees, friends and family, and Corps contractors are all welcome to join. Membership currently is \$30.00 a year. Our tournaments are held once a month (weather permitting), usually on Saturdays, at various courses throughout the local Southern California area. Tournament fees generally range from \$30.00 to \$35.00 (golf carts additional). We also participate in the Division-wide once a year tournament held in late summer (this year at Hunter Ranch Golf Course, Paso Robles, CA, August 28 & 29).

And don't worry about your golfing skills. Our members range from beginners to near-pro's. Members are placed in one of three groups (flights) with others of their abilities (i.e. golf handicaps) so that everyone has the chance of winning prizes.

Club membership is a great way to stay in touch, meet people (& network), and also to get some fun exercise and stay in shape.

Monthly tournaments for the remainder of 2006 are:

Hanson Dam Golf Course (Pacoima) – November 18th  
Encino Golf Course (Encino) – December 16th

For more information e-mail Mike Evasovic, Secretary/Treasurer, at [mmeasla@aol.com](mailto:mmeasla@aol.com) or call (562) 592-4610.



### CHECK, MATE: CHESS CLUB SEEKS PLAYERS FOR TOURNAMENT—PRIZES AND MENTAL HEALTH!



The Cross-Trainers Chess Club is being returned to active duty. It was established in the late 1980s to accommodate many District team members in a fitness program as part of the newly launched "Fit-to-Win" program. The Cross-Trainers Chess Club broadens the fitness horizon by exercising your mind as well as your body, so that senility doesn't set in quite so quickly as we all get older. Moreover, taxing your mind is a useful exercise to keep your brain waves flowing.

Ed Louie is proposing a chess tournament to be held within the District. Time and slate will be determined, as well as what appropriate prize will be awarded to the winner. All interested participants are asked to attend a meeting to be held in the PPMD conference room during the lunch hour from 11:30 a.m.-noon on Nov. 6. You can bring your lunch.

For anyone who doesn't understand fully the rules of chess or who is intimidated by the game, now is the chance to join the club and learn to outwit your opponent.

Please contact Ed Louie at (213) 452-4002 or by email at [Edward.B.Louie@usace.army.mil](mailto:Edward.B.Louie@usace.army.mil) for details and more information.



Do you know where and when this photo was taken?

Need a hint? It's not a dam currently in use.

Find out for sure just where and when this project was under construction in the next issue of NewsCastle Online.



### *In Memoriam*

**Charles Keller Hooppaw**, 68, of Scottsdale, Arizona, died June 3, 2006. He retired from the Corps as the Arizona/Nevada Area Engineer after 32 years of civil service.

**Sam Barker** died August 15, 2006. He served the Corps for more than 30 years.

**Doris Hollister** died August 18, 2006.



Don't forget to change your clocks on October 29, when Daylight Saving time ends.



Some DST trivia history for those looking forward to a little extra snooze time over the winter:

Changing the clocks in the spring moves an hour of daylight to the evening. In the fall, that hour reverts back to mornings. The amount of daylight is more pronounced the further from the Equator you live.

The whole thing started in 1784 with an idea from Benjamin Franklin, written in Paris as an amusement for his friends. He wrote of the advantages of a new oil lamp, and used the sun's rising time to poke fun at the Parisians' habit of sleeping until noon. <http://webexhibits.org/daylightsaving/franklin.html> has a longer description of this essay, including taxes for shutters left closed to block the early morning sun. Although he first wrote it tongue-in-cheek, the idea of wasted morning time stayed with him and others.

Following the example of Germany and Austria, the U.S. adopted "An Act To save daylight and to provide standard time, for the United States" to save energy in 1918 during World War I. It was so unpopular that Congress repealed it in 1919 and it was left as a local option. Only a few states in the East and Midwest kept using it.

President Franklin Roosevelt instituted year-round Daylight Saving Time in 1942 during World War II, calling it "War Time." From 1945 to 1966, states and localities were free to use it or not. The broadcasting industry suffered the most from the confusion, as well as transportation companies. New schedules had to be published every time a state or town began or ended DST.

By the early 1960s, there was as much arguing and fighting over time changes as there was confusion. On the 35-mile stretch of road between Moundsville, West Virginia, and Steubenville, Ohio, bus drivers and their passengers had to change time seven times.

The Uniform Time Act of 1966, signed by President Lyndon Johnson, created the Daylight Saving Time schedule we currently use – beginning on the last Sunday of April and ending on the last Sunday of October. For 15 months during President Richard Nixon's term, the Emergency Daylight Saving Time Energy Conservation Act set clocks ahead through April 27, 1975.

Next year, we change the time on the second Sunday of March and the first Sunday of November in an experiment signed by President George W. Bush. The impact of this change will be reported by the Secretary of Energy to Congress, which retains the right to revert back to the 2005 schedule once the Department of Energy study is complete.

But, no matter when we change the time, it's always a good idea to follow the suggestion of many fire departments – change the battery in your smoke detectors when you change your clocks. There's no better way to be sure you make it to the next DST change.



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## Final Word

### **Subject: A note from a Marine in Iraq (third tour)**

All: I haven't written very much from Iraq. There's really not much to write about. More exactly, there's not much I can write about because practically everything I do, read or hear is classified military information or is depressing to the point that I'd rather just forget about it, never mind write about it. The gaps in between all of that are filled with the pure tedium of daily life in an armed camp. So it's a bit of a struggle to think of anything to put into a letter that's worth reading. Worse, this place just consumes you. I work 18-20-hour days, every day. The quest to draw a clear picture of what the insurgents are up to never ends. Problems and frictions crop up faster than solutions. Every challenge demands a response. It's like this every day. Before I know it, I can't see straight, because it's 0400 and I've been at work for twenty hours straight, somehow missing dinner again in the process. And once again I haven't written to anyone. It starts all over again four hours later. It's not really like Ground Hog Day, it's more like a level from Dante's Inferno.

Rather than attempting to sum up the last seven months, I figured I'd just hit the record setting highlights of 2006 in Iraq. These are among the events and experiences I'll remember best.

**Worst Case of Déjà Vu** - I thought I was familiar with the feeling of déjà vu until I arrived back here in Fallujah in February. The moment I stepped off of the helicopter, just as dawn broke, and saw the camp just as I had left it ten months before - that was déjà vu. Kind of unnerving. It was as if I had never left. Same work area, same busted desk, same chair, same computer, same room, same creaky rack, same . . . everything. Same everything for the next year. It was like entering a parallel universe. Home wasn't 10,000 miles away, it was a different lifetime.

**Most Surreal Moment** - Watching Marines arrive at my detention facility and unload a truck load of flex-cuffed midgets. 26 to be exact. I had put the word out earlier in the day to the Marines in Fallujah that we were looking for Bad Guy X, who was described as a midget. Little did I know that Fallujah was home to a small community of midgets, who banded together for support since they were considered as social outcasts. The Marines were anxious to get back to the midget colony to bring in the rest of the midget suspects, but I called off the search, figuring Bad Guy X was long gone on his short legs after seeing his companions rounded up by the giant infidels.

**Most Profound Man in Iraq** - an unidentified farmer in a fairly remote area who, after being asked by Reconnaissance Marines (searching for Syrians) if he had seen any foreign fighters in the area replied "Yes, you."

**Worst City in al-Anbar Province** - Ramadi, hands down. The provincial capital of 400,000 people. Killed over 1,000 insurgents in there since we arrived in February. Every day is a nasty gun battle. They blast us with giant bombs in the road, snipers, mortars and small arms. We blast them with tanks, attack helicopters, artillery, our snipers (much better than theirs), and every weapon that an infantryman can carry. Every day. Incredibly, I rarely see Ramadi in the news. We have as many attacks out here in the west as Baghdad. Yet, Baghdad has 7 million people, we have just 1.2 million. Per capita, al-Anbar province is the most violent place in Iraq by several orders of magnitude. I suppose it was no accident that the Marines were assigned this area in 2003.

**Bravest Guy in al-Anbar Province** - Any Explosive Ordnance Disposal Technician (EOD Tech). How'd you like a job that required you to defuse bombs in a hole in the middle of the road that very likely are booby-trapped or connected by wire to a bad guy who's just waiting for you to get close to the bomb before he clicks the detonator? Every day. Sanitation workers in New York City get paid more than these guys. Talk about courage and commitment.

**Second Bravest Guy in al-Anbar Province** - It's a 20,000 way tie among all the Marines and Soldiers who venture out on the highways and through the towns of al-Anbar every day, not knowing if it will be their last - and for a couple of them, it will be.

**Best Piece of U.S. Gear** - new, bullet-proof flak jackets. O.K., they weigh 40 lbs and aren't exactly comfortable in 120 degree heat, but they've saved countless lives out here.

**Best Piece of Bad Guy Gear** - Armor Piercing ammunition that goes right through the new flak jackets and the Marines inside them.

**Worst E-Mail Message** - "The Walking Blood Bank is Activated. We need blood type A+ stat." I always head down to the surgical unit as soon as I get these messages, but I never give blood - there's always about 80 Marines in line, night or day.

**Biggest Surprise** - Iraqi Police. All local guys. I never figured that we'd get a police force established in the cities in al-Anbar. I estimated that insurgents would kill the first few, scaring off the rest. Well, insurgents did kill the first few, but the cops kept on coming. The insurgents continue to target the police, killing them in their homes and on the streets, but the cops won't give up. Absolutely incredible tenacity. The insurgents

know that the police are far better at finding them than we are - and they are finding them. Now, if we could just get them out of the habit of beating prisoners to a pulp . . .

Greatest Vindication - Stocking up on outrageous quantities of Diet Coke from the chow hall in spite of the derision from my men on such hoarding, then having a 122mm rocket blast apart the giant shipping container that held all of the soda for the chow hall. Yep, you can't buy experience.

Biggest Mystery - How some people can gain weight out here. I'm down to 165 lbs. Who has time to eat?

Second Biggest Mystery - if there's no atheists in foxholes, then why aren't there more people at Mass every Sunday?

Favorite Iraqi TV Show - Oprah. I have no idea. They all have satellite TV.

Coolest Insurgent Act - Stealing almost \$7 million from the main bank in Ramadi in broad daylight, then, upon exiting, waving to the Marines in the combat outpost right next to the bank, who had no clue of what was going on. The Marines waved back. Too cool.

Most Memorable Scene - In the middle of the night, on a dusty airfield, watching the better part of a battalion of Marines packed up and ready to go home after six months in al-Anbar, the relief etched in their young faces even in the moonlight. Then watching these same Marines exchange glances with a similar number of grunts loaded down with gear file past - their replacements. Nothing was said. Nothing needed to be said.

Highest Unit Re-enlistment Rate - Any outfit that has been in Iraq recently. All the danger, all the hardship, all the time away from home, all the horror, all the frustrations with the fight here - all are outweighed by the desire for young men to be part of a 'Band of Brothers' who will die for one another. They found what they were looking for when they enlisted out of high school. Man for man, they now have more combat experience than any Marines in the history of our Corps.

Most Surprising Thing I Don't Miss - Beer. Perhaps being half-stunned by lack of sleep makes up for it.

Worst Smell - Porta-johns in 120 degree heat - and that's 120 degrees outside of the porta-john.

Highest Temperature - I don't know exactly, but it was in the porta-johns. Needed to re-hydrate after each trip to the loo.

Biggest Hassle - High-ranking visitors. More disruptive to work than a rocket attack. VIPs demand briefs and "battlefield" tours (we take them to quiet sections of Fallujah, which is plenty scary for them). Our briefs and commentary seem to have no effect on their preconceived notions of what's going on in Iraq. Their trips allow them to say that they've been to Fallujah, which gives them an unfortunate degree of credibility in perpetuating their fantasies about the insurgency here.

Biggest Outrage - Practically anything said by talking heads on TV about the war in Iraq, not that I get to watch much TV. Their thoughts are consistently both grossly simplistic and politically slanted. Biggest offender - Bill O'Reilly - what a buffoon.

Best Intel Work - Finding Jill Carroll's kidnappers - all of them. I was mighty proud of my guys that day. I figured we'd all get the Christian Science Monitor for free after this, but none have showed up yet. Talk bout ingratitude.

Saddest Moment - Having the battalion commander from 1st Battalion, 1st Marines hand me the dog tags of one of my Marines who had just been killed while on a mission with his unit. Hit by a 60mm mortar. Cpl Bachar was a great Marine. I felt crushed for a long time afterward. His picture now hangs at the entrance to the Intelligence Section. We'll carry it home with us when we leave in February.

Biggest Ass-Chewing - 10 July immediately following a visit by the Iraqi Deputy Prime Minister, Dr. Zobei. The Deputy Prime Minister brought along an American security contractor (read mercenary), who told my Commanding General that he was there to act as a mediator between us and the Bad Guys. I immediately told him what I thought of him and his asinine ideas in terms that made clear my disgust and which, unfortunately, are unrepeatably here. I thought my boss was going to have a heart attack. Fortunately, the translator couldn't figure out the best Arabic words to convey my meaning for the Deputy Prime Minister. Later, the boss had no difficulty in conveying his meaning to me in English regarding my Irish temper, even though he agreed with me. At least the guy from the State Department thought it was hilarious. We never saw the mercenary again.

Best Chuck Norris Moment - 13 May. Bad Guys arrived at the government center in the small town of Kubaysah to kidnap the town mayor, since they have a problem with any form of government that does not include regular beheadings and women wearing burqahs. There were seven of them. As they brought the mayor out to put him in a pick-up truck to take him off to be beheaded (on video, as usual), one of the bad Guys put down his machinegun so that he could tie the mayor's hands. The mayor took the opportunity to pick up the machinegun and drill five of the Bad Guys. The other two ran away. One of the dead Bad Guys was on our top twenty wanted list. Like they say, you can't fight City Hall.

Worst Sound - That crack-boom off in the distance that means an IED or mine just went off. You just wonder who got it, hoping that it was a near miss rather than a direct hit. Hear it every day.

Second Worst Sound - Our artillery firing without warning. The howitzers are pretty close to where I work. Believe me, outgoing sounds a lot like incoming when our guns are firing right over our heads. They'd about knock the fillings out of your teeth.

Only Thing Better in Iraq Than in the U.S. - Sunsets. Spectacular. It's from all the dust in the air.

Proudest Moment - It's a tie every day, watching my Marines produce phenomenal intelligence products that go pretty far in tearing apart Bad Guy operations in al-Anbar. Every night Marines and Soldiers are kicking in doors and grabbing Bad Guys based on intelligence developed by my guys. We rarely lose a Marine during these raids, they are so well-informed of the objective. A bunch of kids right out of high school shouldn't be able to work so well, but they do.

Happiest Moment - Well, it wasn't in Iraq. There are no truly happy moments here. It was back in California when I was able to hold my family again while home on leave during July.

Most Common Thought - Home. Always thinking of home, of Kathleen and the kids. Wondering how everyone else is getting along. Regretting that I don't write more. Yep, always thinking of home.

I hope you all are doing well. If you want to do something for me, kiss a cop, flush a toilet, and drink a beer. I'll try to write again before too long - I promise.

Semper Fi,