



As part of the LA Conservation Corps' Paddle the LA River program, the Mountains Recreation and Conservation Authority launched a new initiative 'River Access for All.' On Sept. 26, LACC guides and MRCA Rangers hosted special needs young adults in the morning and a group of veterans and a very cool service dog, Atticus, in the afternoon. (USACE photo by Dave Palmer)

## By Dave Palmer

**LOS ANGELES** — Success of the LA Conservation Corps' Paddle the LA River program is well documented. One of the program tenets is access to the river. To answer that call, program partner the Mountains Recreation and Conservation Authority developed 'River Access for All,' which offers kayak outings on rafts that can accommodate challenged children and adults and those with limited mobility.

"We wanted the boating experience to not be limited to a select group of people who can pay to paddle the Los Angeles River so we also required groups to submit a plan on community involvement and outreach," said Lisa Sandoval, District realty specialist.

The program was booked solid as soon as it was announced and openings are rare, but with little more than a week before the final trip of the season, MRCA had a vacancy. After consulting

with another program partner, Friends of the LA River, a call was made to the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Los Angeles District.

"When the call came in from FoLAR that space was suddenly available in the MRCA program, one group came to mind," said Jennie Ayala District outreach Coordinator and STEM program manager. "I remembered the passion of Tova and Sterling Barbour of the Veterans Advocacy Group of America. They'd contacted me for USACE support on an educational program they offer to veterans' children."

VAGA also reached out through veteran channels and in keeping with tradition, were able to fully book the opportunity for a group of veterans.

"One thing that we like to do is to give back, to see our veterans out here; the smile on their faces just means so much," said Sterling. "Next year we are definitely going to do this again for our

veterans, because it is so wonderful."

These veterans were fairly ambulatory, although many still showed physical signs of their injuries, making them perfect candidates for the new program.

"With our inflatable rafts we're able to accommodate various disabilities, we've had a variety of organizations come out," said Fernando Gomez, Chief Ranger of the MRCA. "Today, VAGA was able to participate; one individual was blind and we had our first service dog. Because the KaBoat platform is so stable and if they aren't able to paddle, they can leave it to the rangers."

As a fully committed partner to the city's Los Angeles River Revitalization Master Plan, the District's own work on river ecosystem restoration plans to restore natural habitat where appropriate, improve water quality and enhance recreational benefits, all while maintaining its primary mission of flood damage reduction.

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# USACE Environmental chief visits Southern Arizona

By Daniel J. Calderón

**TUCSON, Ariz.** — The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Los Angeles District hosted Dr. Christine Altendorf, the USACE Environmental Division chief during a two-day visit Aug. 29-30 to the southern Arizona area.

“It was a great honor for the Tucson Resident Office team to be able to host Dr. Altendorf’s visit to our area of responsibility,” said Jesse W. Laurie, a project manager in the Formerly Used Defense Sites program at the TRO. “Dr. Altendorf is the first [Senior Executive Service] member from USACE Headquarters to visit us here.”

On her first day, Altendorf toured District projects in the Fort Huachuca area. There, she spoke with the garrison commander and had the opportunity to see how the Corps is working to create more sustainable projects at the post. She also visited Col. Smith Middle School on the post. The school, which officially opened in early August, is touted as “Arizona’s first net-zero school.”

During her stop at the Tucson area on her second day, Altendorf visited Davis-Monthan Air Force Base and spoke with the wing commander there. She also visited the new barracks built by the District. The barracks received a Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design Gold certification from the U.S. Green Building Council for sustainability designs throughout the facility. Altendorf said the Corps is always on the lookout for new ideas and ways to increase energy independence.

“This is a National priority and our customers are demanding more sustainable products and services,” she said. “The Corps is always looking for ways to be good stewards of the Nation’s resources, whether those resources are natural, financial or social. Reducing energy consumption will reduce operating costs, reduce dependence on foreign oil, reduce impacts on the climate and attract future talent by creating a culture committed to sustainability.”

To create a culture of sustainability, the Corps has introduced a series of sustainability initiatives. Altendorf said among the proposals for internal operations and infrastructure, the Corps is focused on reducing energy intensity by 30 percent from a fiscal year 2003 baseline, reducing water intensity by 26 percent from a fiscal year 2007 baseline, reducing non-tactical vehicle petroleum consumption by 30 percent from a fiscal year 2005 baseline, and reducing greenhouse gas scope One and Two emissions by 23 percent from a fiscal year 2008 baseline.

“Within our internal operations and infrastructure, we have established our baselines and apportioned goals out to our Major Subordinate Commands – so each commander has a clearly defined share of the overall Corps goal,” Altendorf explained. “We are training energy managers, working to complete energy and water evaluations at our largest facilities and developing a metering strategy. We are also implementing alternative financing tools, such as Energy Savings Performance Contracts, where third parties implement energy and water



Jesse W. Laurie, a project manager in the Formerly Used Defense Sites program at the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Los Angeles District’s Tucson Resident Office, shows Dr. Christine Altendorf, the USACE Headquarters Environmental Division chief, the location of District projects on Fort Huachuca during her Aug. 29 and Aug. 30 visit to Southern Arizona. Altendorf visited the sites to see the scope and progress of the District’s sustainability initiatives. (USACE photo by Daniel J. Calderon)

conservation measures in our facilities and get paid back from the savings that the improvements generate.”

Throughout the visit, Altendorf had high praise for the work being done by District members. Laurie said the visit required significant coordination throughout the area and said he appreciated the work done behind the scenes by Corps members and by members of the area military installations.

“Dr. Altendorf’s visit was a great example of a combined team in action,” Laurie said. “The success of her visit required close coordination between several Corps districts... USACE Headquarters... [and the installations].”

Altendorf said the District is right on track with Corps-wide initiatives. She said the projects at Fort Huachuca are keeping in line with how the Corps, as a whole, should be caring for its military customers.

“LA is doing a great job on supporting the Army and Air Force,” she said. “What we must do now is focus on our own backyard and really look at what can be done with Corps property [vehicles and buildings] to reduce energy usage. The Corps as a whole is lagging on our Office of Management and Budget sustainability metrics and it is going to take each person at every district to be aware and involved for us to move forward.”



# COMMANDER'S MESSAGE

Dear District Teammates,

**H**appy Fiscal New Year! As usual, the entire district team did a fantastic job closing out the fiscal year. A quick recap of the fiscal year 2012 program shows that we processed 1,903 actions valued at over \$800 million ~ a phenomenal accomplishment! The worst part of closing out our program year was that the last two days of the fiscal year were a Saturday and a Sunday; however, this fact did not deter the SPL team. Throughout the weekend, every employee that I came in contact with was enthusiastic and driven to accomplish the mission.

Again, everyone did a great job, but special kudos goes out to our top-notch Contracting Division! Danny Carrasco and Maria Cisneros ran our recurring AAPB meetings the entire year. These meetings were efficient and effective and guaranteed that everyone was on the same sheet of music. I enjoyed hearing the collective "YAAAY!!!" from all AAPB participants when we awarded a contract.

In Construction and Programs and Projects Management division, where the "rubber meets the road" with our customers, I was thoroughly impressed with the incredible efforts of our resident engineers, project managers and project engineers. With the influx of late expiring funds in the last two weeks of September, everyone worked hard to get to an "awarded" project. The key to success was "teamwork," and I saw that happen on a daily basis.

On the money side, our Resource Management team ensured a smooth and orderly close-out of our financial books! At 10:00 p.m. we began our close-out process; and by 10:26 p.m., we handed off our portion of the close-out to the USACE Finance Center in Millington, Tenn. I took an informal poll Oct. 1 and everyone agreed that this year's

fiscal year-end close-out was the smoothest that they could remember!

What now? **IT'S CLEAN-UP MONTH!**

For the month of October, I encourage everyone to take the time to clean up their personal work spaces and the common areas that you share with your fellow employees.

Our logistics team has located recycling bins on every floor to facilitate the recycling and clean-up effort. As you know, FACILITIES are one of my three focus areas. We all play a part in maintaining the areas where we work so that we can create an atmosphere where all people can do their best work!

We head into the fall season with a lot of momentum. I look forward to beginning the first quarter of the new fiscal year with you! I am so thankful to be working with so many dedicated and talented teammates. In fiscal year 2013, we continue our march forward **BUILDING STRONG® and Taking Care of People!**



Warm Regards,

*COL Toy*



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The NewsCastle is published monthly under the provisions of AR 360-1 for the employees and extended Engineer Family of the Los Angeles District, USACE.

Views and opinions expressed herein are not necessarily those of the District or of the Department of Defense.

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# Diversity United, Building America's Future Today



By Sonya M. Trammell-Jones  
EEO Specialist

**LOS ANGELES** — The Office of Equal Employment Opportunity recognizes Sept. 15 – Oct. 15 as Hispanic Heritage Month. Sept. 15 was chosen as the starting point for the celebration because it is the anniversary of independence of five Latin American countries: Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras and Nicaragua. They all declared independence in 1821. In addition, Mexico, Chile and Belize celebrate their independence days on Sept. 16, 18, and 21, respectively. The month's national theme is "Diversity United, Building America's Future Today." I would like to highlight the effort that Hispanics have made in building our nation and recognize our comrades that wear our service colors!

Hispanics have served in the United States military since its establishment and have fought in every conflict since the Revolutionary War with 44 Hispanic Americans being awarded the military's highest honor for bravery, the Medal of Honor! In addition to these MOH

recipients, thousands of Hispanics have died in combat defending our freedom. We are a better country for their dedication and sacrifice.

Beyond the military, Hispanics continue to play an important role in every aspect of our society, and their influence is growing. According to the 2010 Census, the U.S. Hispanic population surged 43 percent, rising to over 50 million up from 35 million in 2000. Latinos now constitute 16 percent of the nation's total population of 308 million. Hispanic population growth accounted for more than half of the nation's growth over the past decade.

The Hispanic population in the military has also grown, but Hispanics continue to be under represented in our nation's military forces. Despite making up over 17 percent of the population between the ages of 18 and 40, only 11 percent of the United States Army and the Air Force are Hispanic. Hispanics make up 12 percent of the Marine Corps and 14 percent of the Navy. While these figures are lower than the percentage of Hispanics in the general population, they represent a significant increase

from 1994 when the number of Hispanics entering the Army was just 6.6 percent of new recruits.

Despite recruitment levels lower than the overall population, Hispanics are retained in the force and promoted at the same or higher rates than other groups. Today, I want to highlight a few outstanding Hispanic Americans who have risen to the highest ranks and are serving in high profile and critical positions for the defense of our nation.

Gen. David Rodriguez leads the United States Army's Forces Command. As the 19th leader of this critical organization, Rodriguez oversees one of the Army's most important functions, preparing forces for deployment to combat.

Lt. Gen. Rhett Hernandez recently stood up the Army's Cyber Command, which brings the Army's cyber resources under a single command. Under the leadership of Hernandez, Cyber Command is developing and protecting the critical network that links our civilian and military war fighters in every battle space.

Maj. Gen. Angela Salinas began her military service as an enlisted Marine in 1974 and now serves as the Director of the United States Marine Corps' Manpower Management Division. In this position, she ensures that the Marine Corps has the right mix of forces to respond to any contingency worldwide.

Rear Adm. Samuel Perez serves as the Commander of Carrier Strike Group One. Carrier Strike Group One is based in the Pacific and has a 100 million square-mile area of operations.

At every level of our nation's military, Hispanic Americans are serving in critical leadership positions. They have demonstrated exceptional dedication to their country and their fellow service members. They have risked their lives fighting to defend our nation and our freedom, and we owe them an immeasurable debt of gratitude for their sacrifice.



Hope you "Like" us on facebook



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# City funds additional Newport Harbor dredging

By Greg Fuderer



R.E. Staite's dredge Palomar works in tight spaces alongside waterfront homes in Newport Harbor to remove sediment from channels, restoring safe navigation for boats using the harbor. (Photo courtesy of Chris Miller, Newport Beach Harbor Resources Manager)

**LOS ANGELES** — By year's end, Newport Harbor will hold 210,000 fewer cubic yards of material, thanks to a \$3.6 million contribution from the City of Newport Beach that allowed the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to award a contract modification for additional dredging in the harbor.

The city provided the funds to the Corps in order to add work to a \$6.3 million dredging contract begun in May, which removed 348,000 cubic yards of material from the harbor's federal channel.

The contract and its modification provide significant maintenance dredging of the harbor for the first time in more than 70 years, re-establishing safe navigation for nearly 12,000 first responder, commercial and recreational vessels that call the port home.

While the base contract allowed for the removal of a significant amount of material, it was not sufficient to dredge the entire width of the channel. The additional funding provides that.

"This work will bring the federal channel down to a uniform controlling depth," said Scott John, a project manager with the Corps' Los Angeles District. "It will improve water quality through increased tidal flushing, eliminate dangerous high spots throughout the harbor and most importantly improve navigation. We couldn't have done the additional work without the funds from the city."

The contractor, R.E. Staite Engineering, transported about 110,000 cubic yards of the material from the base contract to Port of Long Beach for a development project. The remainder went to an offshore disposal site, where the material from additional work, begun Sept. 22, will also be placed.

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## Corps awards \$100 million water treatment plant contract

By Brooks O. Hubbard IV

**LOS ANGELES** — The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Los Angeles District awarded CDM Constructors, Inc., of Rancho Cucamonga, Calif., a \$100.1 million construction contract Sept. 12 for a new water treatment and distribution System project at Fort Irwin.

The facility is designed to provide up to six million gallons of water per day to the inhabitants of the National Training Center. Fort Irwin Garrison officials estimate 50,000 soldiers train at the NTC annually and 85 percent of the permanently assigned community

lives on the post.

The three-year construction project will replace the current treatment system as well as use new technologies to process the water to meet state and federal standards.

Lt. Col. Joseph Seybold, the WTP project manager with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, said Fort Irwin has established strict standards to conserve as much as possible of the area's limited water resources.

"The new WTP will use a combination of electro-dialysis reversal (EDR) technology, reverse osmosis, and a mechanical evaporator to purify the water to achieve the post's 99 percent

water recovery rate requirement," said Seybold. "EDR separates contaminants from source water through an electrochemical process."

The current system uses reverse osmosis to treat potable water at the post and is unable to meet current potable water demands.

The project also includes water system improvements, supporting utilities and infrastructure upgrades.

All information concerning project milestones and project construction schedules can be found at the Federal Business Opportunities website (<https://www.fbo.gov>).

## Be aware of your surroundings, minimize risks

By Jeff Koontz, Security and Law Enforcement chief

**LOS ANGELES** — As the days get shorter and daylight savings time kicks in on Nov. 4, our morning hours will be even darker and the sun will set before 5 p.m. We are all aware downtown Los Angeles changes dramatically after dark and so do the transportation routes we use to get home. For an extended work day, the safest way to travel would be to drive your own vehicle to the District and park in the secure lot. This is a costly option, but it is hard to put a monetary value on your personal safety.

### 1. District to your Mode of Transportation

a. When walking outside of the building, be aware of your surroundings at all times, keep your head up and constantly scan from right to left. Make eye contact with individuals and make a conscientious decision to give individuals the greeting of the day.

b. If possible, travel in pairs, at least to your mode of transportation. Avoid taking shortcuts through alleys and unlit areas and attempt to travel on populated streets with good lighting. The LAPD advises; if you see something suspicious, call the police. Never try to handle it yourself. It could cost you your life.

### 2. In Transit on your Mode of Transportation

a. In most cases, this would probably be on a train (buses as well), so pick a train/bus with plenty of occupants and stay close to the phone/operator that connects you with the conductor/driver.

b. Same procedures for walking; continue to observe your surroundings and things going on around you. Keep your head up make eye contact with individuals and give them the greeting of the day! Let them know you are around and that because of your awareness, you would make a terrible victim for them to select.

c. Ensure that you have programmed into your phone, the contact phone number of the law enforcement agency that would respond to your situation on your mode of transportation.

### 3. Mode of Transportation to Your Residence

a. This is perhaps where we are the most vulnerable; just like accidents tend to happen closest to home, the same holds true here. We need to stay vigilant especially for this final step of our journey. If driving, travel on busy, well-lighted streets, keep your windows up and car doors locked.

b. If you are walking to your residence, simply re-look at number 1a and 1b above. Or have a loved one meet you for the short trip home.

Bottom line is that without you, we will not have a successful year! If you would like to discuss your individual transportation plan or for suggestions don't hesitate to stop by the Security office or contact me for assistance!

## Los Angeles Police Department crime prevention tips

LA attracts all types of people and the majority of them are law-abiding. However, you have no way of knowing who is and who is not. For this reason, you must be prepared to protect yourself. The LAPD encourages you to practice the following crime prevention measures to increase your personal safety and security.

### At home

- Install quality deadbolt locks on all exterior doors and windows and use them.
- Install a wide-angle viewer in the doors at all entrances to see who is outside without opening the door.
- Remove or trim shrubbery that hides doors and windows so neighbors or passersby can see someone trying to break into your home.
- Light the outside of your home to discourage prowling or loitering. Use outside floodlights for all entryways, pathways, stairwells and laundry, trash and parking areas. Connect outside lights to a timing device, motion detector or a light sensitive switch so lights switch on automatically during hours of darkness.
- Make a decision about installing an alarm system only after considering such factors as the cost, the reputation of the company and the likelihood of false alarms.

### If a stranger is at your door

- Never indicate you are home alone. When home alone never open your door to a stranger.
- Do not open the door to anyone you do not know without first verifying the person's identity. This includes police officers, repair, delivery or salespersons, and political or charity volunteers. Ask to see identification.
- Have the person slip their identification card under the door. If you have any doubts about the person, look up the telephone number in the telephone directory and call the company or agency the person claims to represent.
- Do not rely on telephone numbers given to you by strangers at your door, the telephone number they give you could be an accomplice.
- Do not open the door to a stranger requesting help or the use of your telephone. Offer to make the telephone call yourself while the stranger waits outside.
- Have telephone numbers for emergencies, such as police, fire and paramedic services on every telephone instrument in the house.

For more tips on safety visit the LAPD Foundation online at <http://www.lapdonline.org>.



# New Border Patrol station named for Brian A. Terry opens



A Border Patrol Agent salutes during the raising of the U.S. Flag as part of the Sept. 18 dedication ceremony of the Brian A. Terry Border Patrol Station in Naco, Ariz. The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Los Angeles District built the station which was named for the Border Patrol Agent killed in the line of duty Dec. 15, 2010. (USACE photo by Daniel J. Calderon)

By Daniel J. Calderón

**BISBEE, Ariz** — Members of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Los Angeles District joined with state and national representatives along with family and friends to honor Brian A. Terry, a border patrol agent who was fatally shot while on duty Dec. 14, 2010, during the dedication ceremony of the Brian A. Terry Border Patrol Station held Sept. 18 in Bisbee, Ariz.

"This station really is designed for our 21st century Border Patrol Agents," said Humberto De La Cruz, the Patrol Agent in Charge of the new station. "The design of this facility was laid out for our specific needs."

With the logistics worked out, the project began moving full ahead when construction started in 2010. The project took on a new tone with the death of Agent Terry. Although the agents were still excited about the new facility, there was a sense of need to "do something" to remember him.

During the course of the project's construction, Rep. Darryl Issa took

the idea to name the facility for the slain agent up through Congress and President Barack H. Obama signed H.R. 2668, the "Brian A. Terry Memorial Act," which designated the station as the Brian A. Terry Border Patrol Station in May. Robert Heyer came forward on the Terry family's behalf to thank the CBP and everyone involved in the facility's construction. He also spoke about the Brian A. Terry Foundation (<http://www.honorbrianterry.com>) which, according to the website, strives to "honor Brian's work ethic, love of country, and love for his fellow Border Patrol Agents by providing" support for agents across the country.

More than two dozen friends and family were on hand for the ceremony in addition to dozens of CBP agents.

"I remember that day. I was angry. I was hurt. I was stunned with disbelief trying to figure out what kind of people, what kind of scourge of the earth, could perpetrate such a heinous crime," said Chief Patrol Agent Richard Barlow during the dedication ceremony. "We're gathered here today to honor the

memory of a fine Border Patrol agent. This facility will serve as a reminder of his commitment and his dedication to duty."

During the ceremony, Larry Flatau, chief of the District's Interagency and International Support program, received a Certificate of Appreciation from the CBP for the work done on the new facility. The District awarded the contract for the 450-agent station in August 2010. The \$34 million facility includes work space for the Customs and Border Patrol agents assigned there, a vehicle maintenance facility, fuel station, indoor shooting range, a wash rack, helipad and stables for horses. In the course of building the new facility, the District's contractor did run into some interesting obstacles, however.

"One of our biggest challenges was that we had to build up the new station before we tore down the old facility," said Bob Gillis, CBP project manager. "To do that, we had to work around the agents working three shifts a day."

Agents said they appreciated working with the District.

"It wasn't bad to work with the Corps," said supervisory Border Patrol Agent Kelly Videc. "They really had a talented group and they were very mindful of what we needed throughout the project. Throughout the whole process, they were helpful and accommodating when we needed to make a change. Not everything we [CBP agents] needed was in the plans, but they were very amenable to changes."

With all the changes made and the facility completed, agents in Bisbee were ready to continue their mission. Agents at the facility are responsible for covering nearly 1,200 square miles of area, including more than 32 miles of the border between the U.S. and Mexico.

"Today, we open a new chapter," said Barlow. "I stand here before you today to celebrate the life and legacy of Border Patrol Agent Brian A. Terry. May he continue to remind us of the core values under which we serve – Vigilance, Integrity and Service to Country."

# Water intoxication, how much is too much

By Cecy Ordonez

**LOS ANGELES** — One of the common mantras heard when engaging in weight loss, exercise and healthy living is “drink plenty of water.” After all, approximately 70 percent of an adult’s body is made up of water (<http://allaboutwater.org>). Water is needed to maintain body fluids, regulate body temperature, detoxify harmful chemicals, protect and moisturize joints and to transport nutrients and oxygen to organs and muscles (e.g. brain and heart). In other words, drinking water is necessary for our survival. However, what most people don’t realize is that having too much water can be fatal and is becoming an increasingly recognized problem.

In 2007, a Sacramento radio station held a contest, called “Hold Your Wee for a Wii,” where the contestants were asked to drink as much water as they could without urinating. The winner, a 28-year old female, died hours later from water intoxication. In 2008, a 40-year old woman died after drinking 4 liters of water under two hours as part of her diet plan. In 2011, a 29 year-old male hiker died from drinking too much fluid during a long hike. Although these are a few examples of notable cases, water intoxication is becoming more frequent. The frequency has increased enough that even doctors are now performing an “on-the-spot test” for blood sodium levels to determine if dehydration or water intoxication has caused a runner to collapse.

Water intoxication occurs when the normal balance of electrolytes in the body is pushed outside safe limits. Although there are several types of electrolytes, the main culprit of water intoxication is a decreased concentration of sodium, also known as hyponatremia. Sodium is responsible for regulating blood pressure and also maintains the muscles, heart and brain function. Sodium is crucial to these organs and basically to every cell in the human system. Each cell has a self-regulating system that regulates and ensures an adequate amount of sodium is present by moving electrolytes and



**A student at California State University, Chico was made to drink excessive amount of water as part of initiation rites to join a fraternity in 2005. He collapsed and died of heart failure due to water intoxication. (U.S. Army photo by Chris Miller)**

water in and out as needed. If too much water is present outside the cell, in attempt to keep the sodium at the right concentration, the water moves into the cell where theoretically the cell can swell and burst.

One common example of water intoxication occurring is during high intensity or prolonged exercise. During exercise, sodium and water are lost when sweat is produced. If the exerciser drinks only water, the sodium concentration is decreased. Consider a glass of salt water; if you pour half the glass out (as lost when sweating) and replace that with water only, the sodium concentration of the glass is decreased. Another example is infants who are given bottles of water or diluted infant formula and are not able to regain balance of their electrolytes. Both these examples can lead to seizures, coma or death.

It is important to note that it is not about how much you drink but rather how fast. A healthy adult can process fifteen liters of water per day, which is an insane 60 cups per day (<http://waterfyi.com>), though it is not advisable

to drink this much. The recommended amount of water to drink depends on many factors: weight, weather, activity level, medications and existing medical problems. As a general guideline, eight to 12, 8 ounce glasses a day is a common recommended intake and should be taken in roughly one 8 ounce glass per hour, giving the body adequate time to absorb and remove the water effectively. For those who exercise longer than 60-90 minutes, replacing fluids with a sports drink (or natural coconut water), sports gels or a salty snack can keep the sodium levels balanced.

Keep in mind that the majority of the problem with intake of water is dehydration rather than over-hydration. A quick way to keep both balanced is looking at your urine: a clear color is over-hydration, pale yellow means adequate hydration, concentrated or dark yellow means dehydration. Bottom line is this: too much or too little of a good thing, like water, is bad. Attention to the level and balance of your hydration is an important key to healthy living.



# District readies FUDS work for Kingman area



Fran Firouzi (right), a U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Los Angeles District project manager for Formerly Used Defense Sites, talks with Opjit Ghuman, Eco and Associates, about a site which may need to be cleaned of hazardous material just outside Kingman, Ariz. (USACE photo by Daniel J. Calderon)

By Daniel J. Calderón

**KINGMAN, Ariz.** — The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Los Angeles District is preparing for work at the Formerly Used Defense Site just outside of Kingman, Ariz.

The District has approved the Time Critical Removal Action for the former Skeet Range, which is referred to as Munitions Response Site 03 of the former Kingman Ground-to-Ground Gunnery Range. The site covers approximately 75 acres.

"Analysis of soil samples at this site found concentrations of polynuclear aromatic hydrocarbons over 1,000 times higher

than that allowable under 2007 Arizona residential risk-based screening levels," wrote Fran Firouzi, the District's project manager. "The surface soils of approximately 60 residential lots have been impacted by skeet fragments and PAHs."

The District has already completed the site inspection. During the inspection, the District found the PAH levels in the area to be significantly higher than acceptable. Many of the lots have not been landscaped or modified, and they still show evidence of the clay pigeon shards used at the skeet range.

The contaminants are likely from fragments of clay pigeon debris leftover from the area being used as a skeet-shooting range during World War II. Firouzi and her team are in the process of completing letters to send to residents outlining the requests to enter the property for further testing and soil removal.

Work on the property involves sampling the soil on the properties identified by the study to see how much impact the PAHs have had. If the inspection warrants, the District could remove up to one foot of soil from properties and replace it with clean soil. The District will replace any surface grading, landscape or xeriscaping it removes during the course of the cleanup to try and match pre-work status.



Fran Firouzi, a U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Los Angeles District project manager for Formerly Used Defense Sites, looks at the surface of a property near Kingman, Ariz., for signs of hazardous material. The District is working on a plan to contact residents about a Time Critical Removal Action for the site which was used as a skeet range when the area was part of the Kingman Ground-to-Ground Gunnery Range. (USACE photo by Daniel J. Calderon)



# You need more than smoke alarms

By Steve McCombs

LOS ANGELES — I've a question for all of you. Do you have a Carbon Monoxide detector in your home? No? Well, you should. Let me tell you how my CO alarm saved my life.

It was a very cool April morning at about 3 a.m. and I, my wife and my eldest son were all contentedly snoozing away. So were my two dogs, Tala and Atouk (if you're a fan of the movie "Caveman," you may recognize those names). Anyway, I was suddenly awakened by a very shrill and obnoxious noise and it was not my wife (I am so dead when she reads this). This annoyance was, in fact, my CO alarm going off. Pulling myself out of bed, I also noticed the house heating system had come on. The thermostat was set fairly low, but the temperature had dropped enough during the night for it to engage. And when it lit off, something went terribly wrong with the air/fuel mixture in the furnace. It was running very, very, rich. But it wasn't the heat I was concerned with. My more immediate concern was the level of CO reading on my alarm.

Here's a quick "science guy" lesson. CO is an odorless, tasteless and colorless gas that is a by-product of incomplete combustion, especially from fossil fuels. In short, almost anything that burns gives off CO and you won't know it's there. It will also kill you pretty quickly when the concentration goes high enough. At 50 parts per million most healthy adults will begin to get symptoms of CO poisoning - those include headache, nausea and vomiting in the early stages. The higher the concentration, the quicker this stuff will make you unconscious and dead. Here's why.

Your red blood cells carry oxygen around to your body parts, right? There's a substance called hemoglobin that is part of the red blood cell. The hemoglobin molecules are what grab oxygen molecules and carry them around your body to be used. Well, guess what? Hemoglobin's attraction to CO is about 400 times greater than it is to oxygen. So when CO is present, the hemoglobin will latch onto it instead

## CARBON MONOXIDE (CO) POISONING



CAN'T BE SEEN



CAN'T BE SMELLED



CAN'T BE HEARD



CAN BE STOPPED



U.S. Department of  
Health and Human Services  
Centers for Disease  
Control and Prevention

of the oxygen. Thus, your hemoglobin molecules don't have space to carry the oxygen to keep you alive. And the more CO in the air, the quicker this occurs. What's even worse is that it takes a long time for your body to "gas off" the CO. Thus it is often called "the silent killer."

So, how do you stop a silent killer? Noise works quite well. When my CO alarm went off, the reading was 289 parts per million and rising. Had I not had the alarm, or not been awakened by something else, there's a very good chance that I and my aforementioned loved ones would have all died. Eventually, the heater would have caused a fire and the smoke alarms would have gone off. But if we were all unconscious from CO poisoning, the smoke alarms would have made no difference. That obviously did not happen as I am alive to write this column. What did happen is I got everyone the hell out of the house, turning off the heater and turning on our whole-house exhaust fan as we went out. Not one of us had any symptoms and we were able to return inside within 30 minutes. This is exactly why I purchased the alarm. And it's exactly

why you should, too.

You also need a smoke alarm in every bedroom, one in the hallway, one in the kitchen, one in the garage, and if you live in a two-story house, both floors need coverage. As to your CO alarm, I recommend the plug-in variety that has a readout and battery backup. Install it in your bedroom at chest level. CO has almost the same weight as air, so if any is present the alarm will sound and wake you up. Since I cannot officially endorse any particular product, just use your search engine to find one. Or if you want to call me personally, I will tell you what brand I own...just can't do it in an official capacity.

And remember to change out the batteries twice a year. The time change to and from daylight savings time are a good way to remember. Go spend the money and make sure your home is protected. The lives of your family are at stake.

As always, drive safe, drive sober and buckle up!

*Safety Steve*



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# New center honors legacy of service

By Dave Palmer

**LOMA LINDA, Calif.** — After more than three decades of service to the community, the Jerry L. Pettis Memorial Veterans Medical Center in Loma Linda, continues to enhance its service to veterans. Healthcare System Director Donald F. Moore and Lt. Col. Joe Campbell, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Los Angeles District's Southern California Area Office executive officer, cut the ribbon on a new 9,000 square-foot Transition Center here Sept. 21.

The center hosts reception, registration, compensation and pension, as well as patient education services for returned veterans.

"Offices nearest the center will include patient advocates, chaplains and representatives from several veterans service organizations who can assist with claims at the federal, state and local level," said Campbell. "We are very proud of our work with the VA; we are truly 'Building Strong and Taking

Care of People.'"

Officials also took the opportunity to pay tribute to the medical center's namesake, who championed the cause for bringing a modern VA Hospital to the area. A bust of Pettis was unveiled by the late congressman's widow, retired U.S. Rep. Shirley Pettis.



"I want to thank congresswoman Shirley Pettis for her dedication to the Loma Linda VA Hospital," said Campbell. "Her efforts and those of her late husband were instrumental in the establishment and continued growth of the Loma Linda VA Hospital and in providing health care to our veterans."

According to their website the facility opened in 1977 and is one of the top 25 employers in the Inland Empire; with more than 2,294 employees and 1,332 volunteers serving more than 65,000 Veterans who entrust their health care needs to the VA.

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## Camp Elliott public meeting discusses munitions project

By Greg Fuderer

**SAN DIEGO** — The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers held a public meeting here Sept. 20 to address an upcoming field investigation for munitions debris at the former Camp Elliott in northeast San Diego, Calif.

Lloyd Godard, a project manager for the Corps' Los Angeles District, discussed the Remedial Investigation and Feasibility Study that will investigate the presence of military munitions and chemical constituents that might have been left behind from military use of the property and determine alternatives that could be taken in the event any are found.

The remedial investigation serves as the mechanism for collecting data to characterize site conditions, determine the nature of the waste and assess risk to human health and the environment. The feasibility study is the mechanism for the development, screening and detailed evaluation of alternative remedial actions.

Field work for the investigation, set to begin Oct. 22 and expected to take three and a half months to complete,

will include collecting and analyzing soil samples and conducting digital ground mapping to identify magnetic anomalies in the study areas. Magnetic anomalies could indicate the presence of munitions, or they could be scrap metal or trash with no association to the former military use.

The project area, known as East Elliott, consists of approximately 3,200 acres, about five square miles. It is part of 30,500 acres acquired by the Department of Defense in 1941 and used as a U.S. Marine Corps training facility from 1941 to 1944 for live-fire exercises with tank, anti-tank and artillery detachments. The investigation at the former camp is being managed by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers under the Formerly Used Defense Sites program, which was created by Congress to clean up the environmental hazards at formerly owned, leased, possessed or used Department of Defense properties.

The majority of East Elliott is undeveloped at present, and unrestricted access along its southern boundary makes the area attractive for a variety of recreational uses, including hiking, mountain biking, jogging, motor



If you see (Recognize) what you think is a military munition, a UXO, or piece of a munition, the most important thing to remember is do not touch it. Immediately get away (Retreat) from the area in the same direction from which you entered. Make sure to tell (Report) your concern about the suspect munition to an adult (a police officer, a teacher, a parent). The best thing to do is to call 911. (USACE Graphic)

biking, horseback riding, and off-road vehicle use. Rock climbers also use several clusters of large boulders located near the southeast corner of the site.

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## Joint Forces Training Base home to energy-efficient headquarters



The Army Reserve Center project is in the “punch list” stage with safety officials, contractors and District project delivery teams making final inspections before furniture is installed and the customer takes possession in October. The ARC is the headquarters for the 79th Sustainment Support Command which was activated Dec. 1, 2009. (USACE photo by Dave Palmer)

By Dave Palmer

**LOS ALAMITOS, Calif.** — Soldiers, family members and civilians of the 79th Sustainment Support Command will soon have a new headquarters, organizational maintenance area and acres of parking at the Joint Forces Training Base here. The work is all part of a nearly \$25 million project managed by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Los Angeles District.

Andy Stevens of Retrofit Services Company from Rancho Cucamonga, Calif., was onsite Sept. 12 putting the finishing touches on the computerized building management system that will control the state-of-the-art energy efficient heating, ventilation, and air conditioning for the headquarters building. The system uses multiple condensers and is nearly 30 percent more efficient than systems of just five years ago.

“This one [building zone] is calling for one stage cool, fans on, temperature is 72 [degrees] in the zone and the set point is 72, so it’s doing just fine,” said Stevens. “You can change your occupancy status at any time, emergency override it, shut it down and we do have the chemical alert push-buttons that will close all dampers inside and out.”

The alert buttons are located throughout the facility and once activated because of an attack or a release of hazardous chemicals, no air is allowed in or out of the building to protect the occupants, according to Maj. Phillip Oster, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Los Angeles District’s Santa Ana Resident Office deputy who oversees the project.

To reduce construction costs and increase future savings, the project is using eco-friendly features, like re-cycled material, and in the case of the covered parking lots, they will generate energy with a photovoltaic system. The contract partner’s quality assurance manager for the project explained the feature.

“At peak, they produce 375 KVA [kilovolt-amps],” said Edward Desmond, Cox Construction of Vista, Calif. “In theory, it’s enough power to offset the footprint of the Army Reserve Center building.”

While not designated a net-zero facility, the extensive use of energy efficient materials during construction will enable the photovoltaic system to actually return power to the Los Alamitos grid, off-setting the operating costs of other buildings on the base, according to Desmond.

The Energy Policy Act of 1992 mandated the use of “low flush” urinals in government facilities. This project takes it a step further with water-free urinals. The USACE Engineer Research and Development Center estimates that they pay for themselves in six-months to three years and the cost savings don’t end there. All new Army construction is designed to satisfy the Silver-level standards of the Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design rating system, in accordance with the U.S. Green Building Council guidance.

According to Oster, the project is in the “punch list” stage with safety officials, contractors and District project delivery teams making final inspections before furniture is installed and the customer takes possession of the ARC in October.



# District celebrates future leaders

By Daniel J. Calderón

**LOS ANGELES** — The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Los Angeles District celebrated a successful completion to another year of Leadership Development Program classes during a ceremony held at the District headquarters Sept. 12.

The ceremony was the culmination of LDP Tier I and LDP Tier II, both of which are meant to develop future leaders for the District.

"I think this went extremely well," said David M. Boals, a District management analyst and the District's Leadership Development Program coordinator. "I was very pleased with the entire process."

During the graduation event, LDP participants gave presentations for Col. Mark Toy, Los Angeles District commander, and other senior leaders. Presentations ranged from proposed sponsorship packages so new employees would feel more welcomed into the District to a totally new way of distributing employees across the District to maximize productivity and increase quality of life.

"This is the most important thing I have to do all day today," Toy said as he welcomed the graduates and assembled senior leaders. "I'm glad to see so many branch chiefs and division chiefs here. I know they realize the importance of this program and of your accomplishments."

Students worked for the past nine months to reach the graduation. Each tier of LDP covered leadership principles. The goal of LDP is to develop leaders at all levels, across all functional areas and career programs. Students begin at Tier I and can progress through each of the higher levels. The program is also designed to meet the needs of prospective and current leaders at various stages of development. Leaders within the District and from around the Corps of Engineers come in to speak with students about various topics. Students also have the opportunity to learn about their strengths and how to apply those strengths in their regular work environment.

The Leadership Development Program is open to employees across



During the graduation event, Leadership Development Program participants gave presentations for Col. Mark Toy, Los Angeles District Commander, and other senior leaders. (USACE photo by Richard Rivera)

the District. In Tier I, the ideal number of students is 10-12 and in Tier II, eight is the magic number. Each level does require some travel and a commitment of time outside regular work hours to ensure assignments are met. Tier III involves students in Division-level leadership and requires more of a time commitment from students and from their leadership. Boals said his only concern about the program is continued funding from across work groups.

Boals said the program has been in the District for six years. He credits former District commander, Col. Thomas Magness with revitalizing it. Boals said there were trends senior leaders in the District could see that warranted a return of the program. Trends included an increase in retirements and a loss of "corporate knowledge" that is passed down from one generation of workers to another. With six years invested in future leaders, Boals said the program is paying off.

"When I see the people come out of the program, I don't worry about our future," he said. "I can see how strong our leaders will be in the future when I see the graduates we have in this program."

Allison Lind, an LDP Tier I graduate, said she enjoyed her time in the program.

As a relatively new member of the District, with less than five years with the Corps of Engineers, Lind said the program will help her focus her efforts to become a future leader in the Corps.

"I felt I needed to find my stride in becoming a leader here," she said. "I feel the program helped me become more self aware of my strengths and leadership potential. I'm also more aware of the management and work styles of people around me. In the long run, that's going to help me and I'm going to be able to help the Corps."

The future leaders already have their near futures planned for them. Toy said the graduates' first assignment is to attend the upcoming Senior Leadership Conference in November. There, Toy said the LDP graduates will help shape the policy for the District and work on ways to ensure they match up with the overall USACE and South Pacific Division goals.

"This year will be a celebration of senior leadership" Toy said as he discussed the speakers lined up for the three-day event. "You're not just going to be attendees. You will all be developing the future of the District. Based on what I've seen today, I'm really excited about what you will be showing us at the conference."



# Welcome new employees



**1st Lt. Sean Petersen - SIG**



**Elena Eggers - OC**



**Drew Nollsch - CD**



**Madalyn Esch - ED**



**Eric Holland - CD**



**Bonnie Rogers - RG**



**Sondi Matovich - AM**



**James Hagen - AM**



**Mark McLarty - ED**



**Sgt. 1st Class Terstriep - CD**



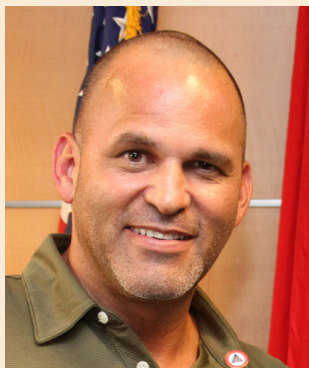
**Maria Batiste - CD**



**Spc. John Wiles - DE**



**Victor Ozuna - CD**



**Richard Dulac - CD**



**Justin Gay - PPMD**



**Amber Perry - AM**



# Welcome new employees



Sandra Voss - PPMD



Leslie Nguyen - CD



Alex Rybak - ED



Clarence Manalang - CD



Kimberly Payne - CPAC



Debra Higgins - PPMD



Dennis Graham -CD



Sonya Trammel-Jones - EEO



Enoch Burrola - ED



Brianne McGuffie - RG



Matthew Berger - RM



Daniel Heyenbruch - ED

Los Angeles District Commander Colonel Mark Toy shared his thoughts on leadership during the New Employee Orientation July 18 and Sept. 19.

According to the commander leaders must be passionate about their jobs and what they do. They should mentor their employees to help them reach their personal and professional goals. They must continue learning through self-development and training. Leaders must take care of people and work to build and strengthen relationships because those relationships can help carry them through and lastly, leaders must be thankful and humble.

“Never get to big for your britches,” said Toy. “You can never take things for granted.”

(USACE photos by Richard Rivera)



## *Around the District*



## **professional pride**



District Commander Col. Mark Toy took time Sept. 14 to recognize these employees for their contributions to the District. Col. Daryll Fust (left) received the Army Commendation Medal for his leadership and attention to detail that enabled successful mission execution while serving as the Acting Deputy District Commander. The Commander's Award for Civilian Service was presented to Ventura Gomez (right) for his service as an advisor to the Deputy District Commander and District Commander for multiple policy and staffing issues related to Human Resources. The Achievement Medal for Civilian Service was presented to Larry Estrada (not pictured) for providing comprehensive knowledge of legal and human resource management laws and advisory services and assistance to the Deputy Commander and Division Chiefs. (USACE photos by Richard Rivera)

## **in memoriam**



Karen Warren, a retired Programs and Projects Management division budget analyst passed away Sept. 23. She is survived by two adult sons, relatives and many friends.



# Leadership Development Program



Tomas Beauchamp-Hernandez, LDP Tier I facilitator, and Col. Mark Toy, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Los Angeles District commander, stand with LDP Tier I graduates (from left to right) Chris Spitzer, David Silvertooth, Veronica Romero, Shanti Santulli, Quana Higgins, Meris Bantilan-Smith, Chad Allen, Richard Polanco, Blake Horita, Jonas Kidd and Alison Lind along with David Van Dorpe, the District's Civil Works Branch chief, following a graduation ceremony held Sept. 12 at the District headquarters. The LDP program develops leaders from across the District's functional areas and career programs to provide a continuity of leadership throughout the Corps. (USACE photo by Richard Rivera)



Following a ceremony Sept. 12, Col. Mark Toy, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Los Angeles District commander, stands with LDP Tier II graduates (from left to right) Veronica Chan, Sheri Brandt, Jesse W. Laurie, Daniel J. Calderón, Damien Lariviere, Ruben Sasaki, David Van Dorpe (not a participant – he is the District's Civil Works Branch Chief), Rosa Ramirez and Jeff Owens along with Mark Cohen – the facilitator for this year's program. The LDP program is designed to develop leaders at all levels, across all functional areas and career programs. (USACE photo by Richard Rivera)

**BUILDING STRONG®** *and Taking Care of People*

# Recognizing the contributions of Americans with disabilities to both our workforce and our society



Sgt. Jerrod Fields, a below-the-knee amputee sprinter in the U.S. Army World Class Athlete Program. Fields competed in the trials at the recent Paralympics. (U.S. Army photo by Tim Hipps)

By Sonya M. Trammell-Jones  
EEO Specialist

**LOS ANGELES** — During this month, we pay tribute to the accomplishments of both men and women with disabilities, whose work helps keep the nation's economy strong, by reaffirming our commitment to ensure equal opportunity for everyone in America. The effort to educate the public concerning issues related to disability and employment began in 1945 when Congress enacted Public Law 176, which declared the first week of October as 'National Employ the Physically Handicapped Week.' The year 1962 found the word, 'physically,' being removed in order to acknowledge the employment needs and contributions of persons with all forms of disabilities. Twenty-five years later, Congress expanded the week-long recognition to a month, changing the name to National Disability Employment Awareness Month.

The month of October finds people in America recognizing the value of persons with disabilities in employment. July of 2009 found the percentage of people with disabilities in the labor force at 23, compared to the rate of 71.8 for non-disabled persons in America. There is much to be done in relation to people with disabilities where employment is concerned; this much is plain, and awareness of disability issues in relation to employment is crucial.

The theme of this year's National Disability Employment Month, "A Strong Workforce Is An Inclusive Workforce: What Can You Do?" has been designed to capture the vital role that expectations play in our success as individuals as well as a society. It is important that we ensure, as a nation, that both people with disabilities and their employers expect that they will fully participate in our workplaces. People with disabilities offer a wide variety of skills and abilities to employers, with a level of loyalty that cannot be surpassed.

Expectations are not enough. People with disabilities must also have the opportunities available to us to work. We need access to a complete range of employment choices in order to maximize our talents and abilities. With both opportunities and choices available to us, people with disabilities will have the ability to maximize the many talents we have in American society. We will have the ability to contribute to the economy and build the communities we live in.

"People with disabilities must be woven into our work culture," said Kathy Martinez, U.S. assistant secretary of labor for disability employment policy. "Already, we benefit from the incredible array of talent they bring to our workplaces. But we must raise the bar, we must create the inexorable expectation that people with disabilities will contribute in every way to our economic successes. Only by nurturing this expectation and providing people with disabilities with unlimited employment opportunities, can we all benefit from their talents."

A disability, as defined within regulations, is either physical or mental. What this means is the disability must substantially limit one or more of the person's life activities, such as walking, impact one of the person's senses or affect breathing, learning or several additional activities that people usually perform on a regular basis. The categories of targeted disabilities within the federal government include, yet are not limited to, 'deafness, blindness, missing extremities and paralysis.'

What Can YOU Do to Advance the Employment of People with Disabilities?

In support of the "What Can YOU Do?" outreach effort, the EEO Campaign for Disability Employment asks that you help spread the word about the value and talent that people with disabilities bring to the workplace by participating in the events planned by your Disabilities Program Manager, Deborah Lamb. She can be contacted at extension 3798.



# Voice Over Internet Protocol, migration and training

By Kenneth Bautista, ACE-IT

**LOS ANGELES** — The District offices located at 915 Wilshire Blvd. will be switching phone systems from the General Services Administration legacy phone service to the Corps of Engineers managed enterprise Voice Over Internet Protocol system. During the next few weeks a number of activities will occur.

1. A new VoIP phone will be placed on your desk and connected between your data outlet and your computer. This will take about 10 minutes. Your existing phone will remain in place and will work as it did before. VoIP phones will be deployed through Oct. 9.

2. The VoIP phone will become active immediately once connected to your computer for outgoing and incoming calls, from other VoIP phones only. If you're having connection problems, please contact Sonia Cretaro, Linda Chew or myself.

3. Your new voice mail system will become active as well. Please ensure you attend one of our training sessions.

4. ACE-IT will provide one hour of classroom training on the new VoIP phone and voice mail prior to the cut over. The training is scheduled for Oct. 4-5 and 9-10. The cut over is scheduled for Oct. 10.

5. Following cut over, your old phone will not receive calls to your phone number.

6. Please prepare your desk area



Benefits of voice over Internet protocol; Relocate your VoIP telephone instrument from one work station to another with ease, your number remains the same and there are no charges or associated paperwork to move the phone from one work station to another, integrate your telephone messages to your email account for easy access and archiving and reduce telephone costs significantly. (USACE photo by Dave Palmer)

for the new phone by removing as much stuff as possible from around your computer and under your desk near your Ethernet cable. Additional

information will be coming out on disposal of the old phones by U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Logistics Activity.

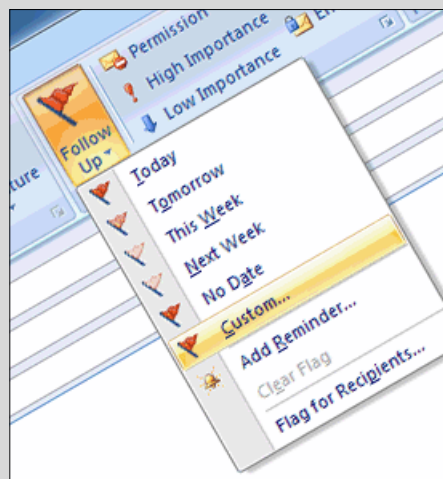
## Computer Chit Chat

### Make the Most Out of Outlook

By Mario Zepeda

Set Reminders to Act on Messages. If you spend a lot of time in Outlook, this tip can really boost your efficiency. Easy as it is, it's very underused. To set a reminder... visible in your Inbox... to act on or reply to any message, right-click on the message you want to set the reminder for, select Follow Up, and choose your Due By time and date. When you click OK, the message will be flagged for you to remember to respond to, and the date and time will be automatically kept track of. To clear the flag, right click on the message and choose Clear Flag.

Plus: it's almost the end of the year; it's a good time to start cleaning up unwanted emails. **DELETE...**



# Fair-weather friends – is that a redundancy or not?

By Daniel J. Calderón

I know, that seems a bit cynical; but, sometimes that's the way I think. Believe it or not, not everything that goes through my head is sunshine, lollipops and rainbows everywhere. Every now and then there are some things that just seem, well, there's really no other way to say it. They're dark thoughts. Maybe it's true that cynics are just frustrated idealists. Maybe the only way to handle being hit in the head with so much "reality" is to put up a shield of cynicism.

Just recently, I was pondering how people who say they are your friends can be so fickle. Is friendship such a capricious thing that simple disagreements can allow someone who claims the title of friend to simply pull out of that friendship? How can someone who truly believes he or she is your friend take themselves out of your life so quickly, cleanly and completely without even the benefit of an explanation or a goodbye?

It seems appropriate at this time of year to wonder if friendship is a mask people wear, a disguise with multiple uses. On the one hand, it's a good tool to get close to people who may be able to advance your career, social standing or benefit you in any number of ways. Friendship can also be a way to hide the fact that you don't want to be alone. It's a good way to insinuate yourself into a social group if you're unhappy with the idea of going through nights and weekends as a solo act. Friends can also be used (if you've got a family) to help watch your kids. Good friends are the most convenient babysitters since they usually don't charge more than the cost of a pizza and they sometimes cover dinner themselves.

Under the guise of friendship, you also reap the benefits of a support system that rivals anything the government can provide. After all, any business will charge for a loan; but, someone you have cultivated as a friend will not only not charge interest, he or she might not even remember loaning you money in the first place. When you go to work every day, you expect to be paid for the time you are there. Someone who comes to work for you as a friend might not keep any tally of the hours put in and will probably never ask you for a dime for all of that time he or she is helping you keep your business afloat.

Counseling sessions from people you bring in under the friendship flag is also an incalculable asset. Depending on who you bring in, you might have the therapeutic services of an individual (or group of individuals) who can do more

for you than a \$200-an-hour psychologist. Having that kind of backing can help keep you from foundering under what might otherwise become an overwhelming series of crises. Truly, those people would be considered priceless by any measure.

However, what does it say about you if you're the one in the friendship disguise? Who do you know that deserves for you to be so fervent a waver of the friendship flag only to pull it out from under like a bad magician doing the "magic tablecloth" trick? If you are that kind of person, I truly hope karma is not just a concept. I would rather have no one in my life than people who hide beneath the banner of friendship for their own aggrandizement.

To be sure, friends are important. They are there before you need them and will stay even when you think you're ready to face the world on your own. They are different from family because you do choose them and you cultivate each other and grow through the years as you face your own unique set of challenges that you find in your way. True friends are the people you never knew you needed; but, once they are found, you know you really don't want to live without. They laugh at your jokes, cry at your misfortunes, are ready to destroy anyone who dares to harm you and don't tell you it's too late at night when you call to talk about your life.

False friends, however, are worse than no friends at all. A false friend can do more damage than trying to live life on your own. A false friend will build you a bridge of tissue paper across the chasm of life and lead you to it with honeyed promises of never-ending support. Then, they will disappear as soon as you set foot upon it. As you tumble on your own, you look back for them and they will be long gone with only the memory of their assurances hanging in the wind.

Which are you? Are you the duped? Are you the faux friend? Or, are you ready to be someone's strength? Are you ready to stand with someone as their true friend? It is a responsibility not lightly borne; but, it is one that reaps a bounty matched by few things in this world. For the true friend, adversity is not insurmountable; rather, each difficulty is a new adventure to overcome with someone you choose to stand shoulder to shoulder with for as long as both of you stand at all.

Just a thought...



Hope you "Like" us on





## Endeavour Returns



Damian B. Pipkins, the grants coordinator for the City of Inglewood and son of Beverly Patterson, Los Angeles District Public Affairs Office, took this photo from the Metro Green Line Station on the corner of Crenshaw Blvd. and 120th St.

For some, the view was close to home. This photo courtesy of Ed Louie family friend Stacy Brown in Inglewood, Calif.



Shuttle Endeavour as she flies over Air Force Plant 42 near Palmdale, Calif., on Sept. 21. AFP 42 is where all the pieces and systems for the shuttle came together, were assembled and tested. Thanks to District employee Dennis M. Graham, civil engineer technician, for sharing.