



The Tres Rios Phase III Flow Regulating Wetlands, built by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Los Angeles District, received the 2012 Crescordia award from the Valley Forward Association in the Site Development and Landscape: Public Sector category. The overall project makes use of reclaimed treated wastewater to create a wetlands in Phoenix's West Valley and provide water to the areas river systems. (USACE photo by Daniel Calderón)

By Daniel Calderón

**PHOENIX** — The Tres Rios Phase III Flow Regulating Wetlands received the 2012 Crescordia award from the Valley Forward Association in the Site Development and Landscape: Public Sector category.

The Valley Forward Association initiated the Environmental Excellence Awards in 1980 to recognize outstanding contributions to the physical environment of Valley communities. The program is the benchmark for promoting livability, conserving natural resources and sustaining the valley's desert environment for future generations.

The Association received more than 120 entries for the 2011 competition. A professional panel of jurors identified a maximum of two Awards of Merit

and one coveted first-place Crescordia winner per each of the sixteen categories.

"The award provides recognition and publicity to the great things that are being done on Tres Rios," said Troy Olson, Resident Engineer for the District's Roadrunner Resident Office. "Peers have acknowledged the vision and the implementation of that vision into a completed project that provides flood control, prime habitat and areas that can be utilized recreationally for fishing, bird watching and other ways. These awards reward the Corps and our partners for our efforts to execute environmentally friendly projects that bring communities together."

The Crescordia, a Greek term meaning "to grow in harmony," award recognizes exceptional physical, technical and social development

in the Phoenix metropolitan area. The Valley Forward awards program spotlights distinguished projects throughout the "Valley of the Sun" that demonstrate a high level of environmental commitment and contribute to the region's overall sustainability. Since 1969, the Valley Forward Association has endeavored to bring business and civic leaders together to evoke thoughtful public dialogue on significant issues and to promote cooperative efforts to improve the environment and livability of local communities.

According to Olson, the success of the project was truly a team effort. Among the members of the award-

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# District participates in Arizona Construction Career Days

By Daniel J. Calderón

**PHOENIX** — Members of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Los Angeles District joined with construction firms, schools and other exhibitors to be a part of the Association for Construction Career Development to participate in the 2012 Arizona Construction Career Days held Oct. 4 at the Papago Park Military Reservation in Phoenix.

Several hundred high school students from around Arizona participated in the two-day event. From its inception in 2007, the goal of the AZCCD was to support the growing need for students, teachers and career counselors to understand better the many career opportunities that are available in the Construction Industry.

"We're trying to develop partnership with industry so the students can come out with certifications and education in various construction fields," said Katie Mendoza, a member of the Workforce Development Group in the Maricopa Skill Center. "We like talking to exhibitors here to get their insight. We use that insight to help build curriculum to fill the needs of industry."

According to the AZCCD, the Career Days events are a workforce development tool used to introduce high school students to careers in the construction industry and support the pipeline that will provide the professionals of tomorrow. Members of the LA District team were happy to participate in the event.

"I think it went really well," said Kevin Thomas, chief of the Construction Support Branch at the District's Arizona/Nevada Area office in Phoenix. "It's very important that we take every



Kevin Thomas (left), chief of the Construction Support Branch at the Los Angeles District's Arizona/Nevada Area office in Phoenix and Nick Erwin, a District intern, speak with students about opportunities with the Corps during the 2012 Arizona Construction Career Days held Oct. 4. (USACE photo by Daniel J. Calderón)

opportunity to support students as they take steps to secure their future. We encouraged them to continue their education so they are better prepared to attain their goals."

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winning team were Tom Luzano, David Pham, Van Crisostomo, Sandra Willis from Engineering; John Drake and Gwen Meyer from Project Management; Christina Chavez from Contracting; Joel Rodriguez, Project Engineer and John Silcox, a construction representative.

According to the write up for the award presented to the Corps and to Kiewit, the District's contractor for the project, "Phase three of the Tres Rios program updated and reconfigured drainage systems and removed salt cedar in a 2.5-mile-long, 650-acre stretch of open water and wetland marshes at the confluence of the Gila, Salt and Agua Fria rivers. The project has created 44 acres of new open-water reaches, along with 10 acres of marsh habitat and 46 acres of riparian

habitat."

"The District is now three for three for the Tres Rios Program," Olson said. "In 2010, Tres Rios Phase II Flow Regulating Wetlands won two Crescordias in the following categories: 'Environmental Technologies - Public Sector' and 'Buildings & Structures - Industrial & Public Works.'"

With the award in hand, Olson said the work at Tres Rios is not done yet.

"There is one Reach left of Tres Rios Phase III, which is 'Tres Rios Environmental Restoration Phase IIIC.' Phase IIIC will cover the area from El Mirage Avenue west approximately one mile, which is upstream of the Agua Fria confluence," Olson said. "The design for this Reach will be performed in-house. Construction will not take place until the 902 limit is raised for Tres Rios and funds are authorized."

The current limit for the project is

approximately \$158 million. In order to continue construction, more money will need to be authorized along with the limit being raised by Congress on the project. Olson said there are two potential phases in the Tres Rios project that have not received funding yet.

One is on the south side on Gila River Indian Community land and the other is a recreation project on the existing area using federal funding, non-federal funds and betterment funds. The Phoenix Office of Cultural Affairs has provided \$1 million for the project so far for incorporation of art into the design of the project. The goals of the recreation project would be to construct pathways, a ramada, seating areas, reptile haves and a bat cave at the overbank wetlands area. A construction contract may be awarded in 2013 for the recreation project.



# COMMANDER'S MESSAGE

Dear District Teammates,

I am continually awed by how much has changed over the past year. Fall is upon us again. Families are getting ready to travel across the country for holiday visits and there is an electricity in the air that is almost palpable. I remember what I was doing a year ago.

At this time last year, I concluded our second SPL Strategic Planning Meeting with the District's senior leaders. The theme was TRAIN TO CHANGE. I believe that people are the foundation for everything we do. Given that training is an integral part of our strategic direction and the focus for my second year in command, I knew the results from our SPM would help us achieve our number one mission of project and program execution.

Now, we're getting ready for my last Strategic Planning Meeting as commander of the Los Angeles District. It will be the culmination of 2+ years of SPL's current strategic direction and vision. This meeting promises to be an exciting and rewarding program designed to motivate our current leaders; but, even more importantly, to inspire the next generation of SPL leaders!

Also this month, the close of the calendar year is in sight. There are many celebrations to be had and acknowledgments to be made.

Thanksgiving is coming up. For most of us, it is a time to reflect on the blessings we have received throughout the year. It is a time to remember our loved ones and a time to gather around the table to share our bounty with friends.

Veterans Day is also this month. I know many of you are veterans of our Armed Forces and I truly appreciate your service. Our current military makes up less than one percent of the population but they bear the load of 100 percent of our nation's security. I also acknowledge the sacrifices made

by military families who have to maintain a household while their loved one is overseas. For anyone who has never had to go through the experience, it is uniquely challenging. There is not a responsibility like it in the world.

For our civilian members who are deployed during this time of year, our thoughts go to you and to your families.

I trust you understand you have all the support we can provide. If you know someone who is deployed, military or civilian, take some time to contact them – by phone or by e-mail – or contact their families to let them know we are here for them.

In this season of giving thanks and honoring veterans, let's also remember to be generous and share what we have with others. The Combined Federal Campaign kicks off this month. If you haven't taken the time to go through the book, there are many worthwhile organizations listed who are counting on our contributions. A little bit truly does go a long way. I'm not saying "give till it hurts," but I am asking that you consider if giving is the right thing for you.

I am thankful for you and for all you do to take care of people in our District. I am thankful for your tireless dedication and your service to the American people. And, I am thankful for the support you provide to each other every day. Have a great Thanksgiving.

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



Warm Regards,

Col. Toy

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# National American Indian Heritage Month

By Linda McCart

**LOS ANGELES** — We celebrate the month of November as National American Indian Heritage Month. Congress chose the month of November to recognize the Native American/Alaskan Native culture since it concludes the traditional harvest season and was generally a time of thanksgiving and celebration for Native Americans. Our national theme is “Serving Our People, Serving Our Nations: Native Visions for Future Generations.” We pay homage and focus attention on the contributions that Native Americans have made to enhance and protect our nation. The role Native American have in the development of our country are invaluable and have helped preserve and protect the freedom that we all enjoy.

One of the early proponents of an American Indian Day was Dr. Arthur C. Parker, of the Seneca tribe and Director of the Museum of Arts and Science in Rochester, N.Y. He persuaded the Boy Scouts of America to set aside a day for the “First Americans” and for three years they adopted such a day. In 1915, the annual Congress of the American Indian Association formally approved a plan endorsing “American Indian Day.” It directed its President, Rev. Sherman Coolidge, to call upon the nation to observe such a day. Coolidge issued a proclamation which contained the first formal appeal for recognition of Indians as citizens. A year prior to the proclamation being issued, Red Fox James, a member of the Blackfoot tribe, rode horseback from state to state seeking approval for a day to honor America’s first citizens. On Dec. 14, 1915, he presented endorsements from 24 state governments at the White House. However, there is no record of a national day ever being proclaimed. It was not until 1990 that President George Bush approved a joint resolution designating November as “National American Indian Heritage Month.” Since 1995, Presidents Clinton, George W. Bush, and Obama have issued proclamations which designate

(USACE photo by Richard Rivera)



November as National American Indian Heritage Month. These proclamations celebrate the contributions of American Indians and urge people of the United States to learn more about the American Indian cultures.

The history of Native American participation in conflicts between the United States and other countries goes back before there officially was a United States. In the earliest conflicts between European and burgeoning U.S. interests, tribes split their loyalties, especially during the Revolutionary War and the War of 1812. During the Civil War, American Indians fought for both the South and the North as auxiliary troops. For American Indians, serving in the military has been about volunteering. When President Woodrow Wilson declared a draft in 1914 when World War I began, American Indians were not eligible for the draft because they were not considered citizens of the United States. However, some 12,000 volunteered for military service in that war, according to the Department of Defense.

American Indians have given distinguished service in all branches of the military from the very first military operation. The Congressional Medal of Honor, the highest honor given by the United States, was established in 1861 for the Navy and expanded in 1862 to the U.S. Army (and later to other branches). The first time that an American Indian received the medal

was in 1869, when it was awarded to a Pawnee member of the U.S. Army’s Indian Scouts unit, which was discontinued as a separate element of the Army in 1947. Since 1869, 27 American Indian - Alaskan Native servicemen have received the Medal of Honor. The U.S. Marine Corps enlisted the service of Navajo code talkers during World War II to protect messages being sent by American forces from enemy interception. In July 2001, the original 29 Navajo “code talkers” received the Congressional Gold Medal, and the Congressional Silver Medal.

Today there are 156,515 American Indian - Alaska Native veterans, according to U.S. Census figures. The Pentagon reported as of March 2012; 22,248 active-duty Native military members; 13,511 in the Navy; 4,404 in the Army; 2,205 in the Air Force; and 2,128 in the Marine Corps. While the U.S. population recorded nearly 1.4 percent American Indian, the military population was 1.7 percent American Indian, making it the highest per-capita commitment of any ethnic population to defend the United States.

Please join the Los Angeles District in celebrating the rich and diverse American Indian culture. You can learn more about the commitment and contributions of American Indians to our nation and the Federal Government by supporting your Native American - Alaskan Native Special Emphasis Programs.



# Donation helps fund study

By Dave Palmer



Col. Mark Toy, Los Angeles District commander speaks during an event at North Atwater Park along the Los Angeles River Oct. 9. The city received a donation of \$970,000 to help fund the District's Ecosystem Restoration Feasibility Study.

**LOS ANGELES** — Through the Los Angeles River Revitalization Master Plan, the city has hundreds of community projects proposed, with some already taking shape. One such site, North Atwater Park, hosted a unique ceremony Oct. 9 where a private company donated funds to the non-profit group Friends of the LA River who, in turn, donated \$970,000 to the city for the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Los Angeles District's Ecosystem Restoration Feasibility Study.

"The Corps has led a planning process, where we identified problems and opportunities along the river," said Chief of Planning Division Dr. Josephine Axt. "We've narrowed our area of interest to an 11-mile stretch from roughly Griffith Park to downtown. This month, we're starting our higher headquarters policy compliance review. We've done a lot of work that has resulted in alternative plans."

In regards to the LA River, public safety remains the Corps' number one priority. That said, there are three significant portions of the river that offer a semi-natural river bed; the Sepulveda Basin, site of the Paddle the LA River Program, the Glendale Narrows and 2.6 miles of soft bottom after the Willow Street drop structure which is an inter-tidal estuary.

"We have always enjoyed a partnership with LA County Flood; it's been 70 years," said Col. Mark Toy, Los Angeles District commander. "During that time, it has always been about flood risk management, the safety of our people and that's why long ago we channelized the river. Now, we can look at things like flood risk management in the same sentence with ecosystem restoration and recreation."

Ecosystem restoration projects, like this one, are a major share of the Corps' workload. The District is also working on water quality improvements and recreation opportunities along the Tres Rios in the heart of Phoenix, Ariz. As Toy mentioned, it is all in keeping with the District's motto, **"BUILDING STRONG and Taking Care of People!"**



Los Angeles Mayor Antonio Villaraigosa (seated) officially receives a donation of \$970,000 from the non-profit group Friends of the LA River, who received the contribution from Miss Me, Inc. The money will help fund the District's Ecosystem Restoration Feasibility Study. (USACE photos by Dave Palmer)

# Holiday Season holds risks both new and old

By Jeff Koontz

Security and Law Enforcement chief

**LOS ANGELES** — As we head in to the holidays, everyday tasks and the traditional shopping season add layers of risk to our daily lives. Below are tips from our friends at the Los Angeles Police Department. I hope you heed this advice and as always if we can be of any assistance feel free to stop by the security office, give us a call or drop me an email.

## **Driving**

- Avoid driving alone or at night.
- Keep all car doors locked and windows closed while in or out of your car.
- If you must shop at night, park in a well-lighted area.
- Park as close as you can to your destination and take notice of where you parked.
- Do not leave packages or valuables on the seat of your car. This creates a temptation for thieves. If you must leave something in the car, lock it in the trunk or put it out of sight.
- Be sure to locate your keys prior to going to your car.

## **Automated Teller Machine**

- If you must use an ATM, choose one that is located inside a police station, mall, or well-lighted location. Withdraw only the amount of cash you need.
- Protect your PIN by shielding the ATM keypad from anyone who is standing near you.
- Do not throw your ATM receipt away at the ATM location.

## **Shopping**

- Shop during daylight hours whenever possible. If you must shop at night, go with a friend or family member.
- Dress casually and comfortably.
- Avoid wearing expensive jewelry.
- Do not carry a purse or wallet, if possible. They are the prime targets of criminals in crowded shopping areas, transportation terminals, bus stops, on buses and other rapid transit.
- Even though you are rushed and thinking about a thousand things, stay alert to your surroundings.

## **At Home**

- Be extra cautious about locking doors and windows when you leave the house, even for a few minutes.
- When leaving home for an extended time, have a neighbor or family member watch your house and pick up your newspapers and mail.
- Indoor and outdoor lights should be on an automatic timer.
- Leave a radio or television on so the house looks and sounds occupied.
- Large displays of holiday gifts should not be visible through the windows and doors of your home.
- When setting up a Christmas tree or other holiday display, make sure doors and passageways are clear inside your home.
- Be sure your Christmas tree is mounted on a sturdy

base so children, elderly persons or family pets cannot pull it over on themselves.

- If you use lights on your Christmas tree ensure the wiring is not damaged or frayed. Frayed or damaged wiring can cause a fire.

## **Strangers at Your Door**

- Be aware that criminals sometimes pose as couriers delivering gifts.
- It is not uncommon for criminals to take advantage of the generosity of people during the holiday season by soliciting donations door-to-door for charitable causes although no charity is involved.
- Ask for their identification, and find out how the donated funds will be used. If you are not satisfied, do not donate.
- Donate to a recognized charitable organization.

## **Hosting a Party**

- Have non-alcoholic beverages available for party guests.
- Find alternative transportation for intoxicated guests.
- Arrange for an official designated driver for your party who will not drink at all.

## **Attending a Party**

- Have something to eat before consuming alcoholic beverages.
- Eat high protein foods that will stay in your stomach longer and slow the absorption of alcohol into your system.
- Remember only time will eliminate the alcohol from your body.
- Know your safe limit.
- Never drink and drive.

## **Internet Crimes**

Fraud on the Internet takes many forms. The Internet's promise of substantial consumer benefits is coupled with the potential for fraud and deception.

## **Pyramid Schemes**

- Pyramid schemes are similar to multi-level marketing. Pyramid schemes provide financial incentives to recruit new distributors. They are generally prohibited because it is a mathematical certainty that the pyramids will collapse when no new distributors can be recruited.

## **Unsolicited Commercial E-mail**

- Internet service providers report handling 60 million electronic messages per day. Estimates of Unsolicited Commercial E-mail indicate it comprises as much as one-third of the total E-mail traffic.

## **Online Auctions**

- Online auctions are popular to many people who use the Internet. Generally, online auctions are person to person sales where individuals bid for various types of merchandise. The highest bidder then pays in advance of receiving the merchandise. A growing problem is sellers failing to deliver merchandise that consumers have purchased.



# LA District participates in Tres Rios festival



Ann Palaruan, a member of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Los Angeles District, talks with a young attendee during the Tres Rios Nature and Earth Festival held Oct. 27. The Corps joined with other exhibitors for the one-day event to celebrate the project and raise awareness of the recreation opportunities available. (USACE photo by Daniel J. Calderon)

By Daniel J. Calderón

**PHOENIX** — Members of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Los Angeles District joined with exhibitors and vendors at the Tres Rios Nature and Earth Festival held Oct. 27 at the Base Meridian Wildlife Area.

It was the first time the festival had been held in the fall. Normally, the festival is a two-day event in the spring. Organizers combined the one-day festival with a river clean up in the area.

"I thought it was a great turnout," said Ann Palaruan, with the LA District's Regulatory Division in the Arizona/Nevada Area Office in Phoenix. "We had plenty of folks turn up and come talk with us about the Corps programs and about the Tres Rios project."

The overall Tres Rios project involved the construction of a flow-regulating wetlands and restoration work along the banks of the river. The Corps of Engineers, City of Phoenix and contractors involved in the project have won several awards.

Among the most recent are the 2012 Valley Forward Crescordia Award in the Site Development and Landscape: Public Sector category and the Chief

of Engineers Award of Excellence for Environmental Design.

"We're pretty proud of the work we do," said Vic Bartkus, with the LA District's Asset Management Division, "and we're proud to come and talk with people who want to know more about the Corps. At today's festival, though, it was all about the environment. And you really couldn't ask for a better day to do it."

Under a mostly clear sky with temperatures only reaching into the 80s, several hundred festival attendees had the opportunity to enjoy canoeing, kayaking and paddle boarding in the Gila River. Other activities included fishing and hiking. Exhibitors had information about activities in the area and about how attendees could get out and enjoy the nature in their own backyard.

"I love coming out here," Palaruan said. "It's great to get out of the office and talk with people about our projects. And, it's even better to be able to come out and see how much positive impact our projects can have on communities."

The LA District plans to participate in the festival in the spring.



Paddle boarders and canoeists take to the Gila River during the Tres Rios Nature and Earth Festival held Oct. 27. Members of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Los Angeles District joined with other exhibitors for the one-day event to celebrate the project and raise awareness of the recreation opportunities available. (USACE photo by Daniel J. Calderon)



# The Battle of Calorie Burn: Cardio, Intervals or Weight Training

By Cecy Ordonez

**LOS ANGELES** — There have been hundreds of studies that look at what burns more calories: cardio, interval or strength training. Many simply do not have time to exercise, so knowing this information will allow you to get the most out of your workout and weight loss efforts. However, before I reveal the differences, it is important that I emphasize that the **MOST** essential component of weight loss or getting in shape is: **DIET**. Even if you exercised for ten hours per week, you have 158 hours that you can still do a lot of damage. If you are eating right, or working towards eating right and want to exercise to burn more fat, here is what you need to know:

## Cardio

To lose weight, you have to burn more calories than you consume. Doing cardio is a no-brainer. Step on the treadmill, elliptical trainer, bike, etc., for 30 minutes and note how many calories you have burned. The problem for most is this repetitive and mindless movement can be really boring. In addition, there is very little Excess Post-exercise Oxygen Consumption, better known as “afterburn.” Simply put, EPOC is a process in which oxygen is being used to return your body back to a resting state and to do this the body continues to burn energy or calories. On the other hand, cardio can be less demanding than interval or strength training, which means you can do longer exercise sessions.

## Intervals

High-Intensity Interval Training is a system of organizing high intensity cardio with a lower intensity active recovery period for a specified time. For example, sprinting for 30 seconds and then jogging for one minute or hill climbs for two minutes in an indoor cycling class followed by 4 minutes of riding on a flat road. HIIT constantly forces your heart to adjust to changing conditions: sprints, jogging, sprint, jogging, uphill, downhill, etc. Like cardio, you burn



The “Raised Reverse Lunge Plunge” is training that pushes the heart and targeted muscle area so intensely that it creates change. (U.S. Army photo by Pam Long)

calories, but your EPOC extends hours after you completed your workout. In other words, you are burning calories even though you are sitting at your desk. On the other hand, since it is more demanding on your body, the recovery time is greater. This translates to a shorter exercise period, approximately 20-30 mins, before you are too exhausted to continue.

## Weight Training

The importance of weight training cannot be underestimated. Although cardio will help shrink you down, it will do so by using fat and muscle as an energy source. You end up skinny and soft. Strength training will allow you to retain or build muscle while burning off fat. More importantly, studies have shown that a strength training program

can increase your EPOC up to 38 hours after the workout.

## Bottom Line

The most important factor when it comes to weight loss is what you eat. Aerobic training helps weight loss, but not as much as most people think. Your best option is to combine weight training with cardio and interval training. However, leaving the above science aside, there is no 100% perfect way to get in shape and be healthy. In fact, the debate over the effectiveness of weight training vs. cardiovascular exercise among researchers may never get resolved. Therefore, the most important thing you can do for your health is find something you enjoy doing and do it consistently.



# District Disabilities Awareness Month: Focus On Diabetes

By Dave Palmer

**LOS ANGELES** — According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention only five percent of diabetes cases are Type 1. That leaves roughly 95 percent of all diabetes as Type 2, which is largely preventable with healthy food, physical activity and weight loss. The CDC notes that if the current trend continues, one in three American adults will have diabetes by 2050.

A trend so alarming that the Americans with Disabilities Act incorporated diabetes as a disability, effective Jan. 1, 2009. And why on Oct. 24, the Special Emphasis Program Committee, in recognition of Disabilities Awareness Month, featured an awareness lecture in their program. Doctor of Pharmacy Lindsay Gordon, a pharmacy resident with the Los Angeles Medical Center, was the keynote speaker.

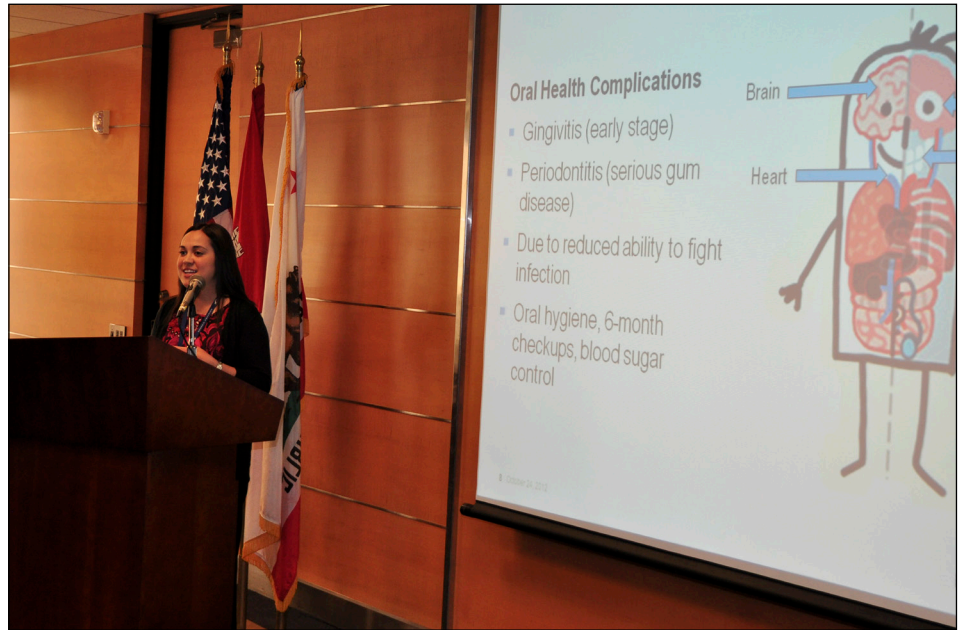
"It's the leading cause for new blindness, kidney failure and accounts for 60 percent of non-traumatic lower limb amputations," said Gordon.

Type 2 diabetes was formally known as "adult onset diabetes," which gives a false impression of who can acquire the disease. According to the CDC, the last two decades have seen an increase in Type 2 diabetes among children and adolescents. It is the cumulative effect of lifestyle factors (e.g. obesity, lack of physical activity, poor diet, stress, etc.) that plays a greater role than genetics according to Gordon. And the bad news doesn't stop there.

"Diabetics have a higher risk for stroke and heart attack, two to four times greater than those without the disease," said Gordon.

Much of the treatment regimen is the same as the prevention and never having diabetes is a good thing.

Cecy Ordonez the District's Army Health Promotion Coordinator said, "Although Diabetes is typically incurable, it is preventable. Having the right tools to stay healthy is key: eating a well balanced diet, regular physical activity, annual doctor visits for physical exams, and following your doctors directions (e.g. stop smoking or lose weight). Making this a priority is the first step to a better quality of life for you and your family."



Lindsay Gordon, a pharmacy resident with the Los Angeles Medical Center, was the keynote speaker Oct. 24 for the Los Angeles District Special Emphasis Committee's Disabilities Awareness Month program. Gordon's topic was the alarming trend in Americans, especially our young people concerning diabetes. (USACE photo by Dave Palmer)

According to the Library of Congress, the intent of this remembrance is to pay tribute to the accomplishments of men and women with disabilities and to ensure equal opportunity for all citizens. This year's theme is "A Strong Workforce is an Inclusive Workforce: What Can YOU Do?"

Kathy Martinez, assistant secretary of labor for disability employment policy said, "Employers who ensure that inclusive workplace policies and practices are woven into the fabric and culture of the organization create an environment that encourages all workers — including those of us with disabilities — to work to their full capacity and contribute fully to the organization's success."

Deputy Chief of Programs and Project Management Division Ken Morris summed up the remembrance.

"Our motto in the Los Angeles District is 'BUILDING STRONG and Taking Care of People,' said Morris. "What it means is that we provide folks with the tools, facilities and training to execute our mission. As I see it, there's a perfect spirit in each one of us and in spite of our perceived imperfections, we all have the power to do a lot of things we think we can't do. Each one of us has something incredible to offer."



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# Fall is approaching... faster than you think

By Steve McCombs

LOS ANGELES — Fall is rapidly approaching. And I do mean rapid, by the way; 32 feet per second, per second, is how fast gravity brings you down. In ordinary lingo, about 22 miles per hour for the first second, then an increase every second until you hit what is called “terminal velocity.” Unfortunately for some, the word terminal relates to more than just velocity. Col. Toy sent out a recent email stating we had a contractor fatality – I am on the Board of Investigation and it was, in fact, a fall.

We’ve all heard the saying, “it’s not the fall that kills you; it’s that sudden stop at the end.” Imagine yourself someone who enjoys skydiving (jumping out of perfectly good airplanes for an adrenaline rush). The very moment you leave the aircraft your speed is Zero feet per second. After one second you are traveling towards earth at 32 feet per second (22 mph). Then each second thereafter you increase your speed at a rate of 32 feet per second (hence, the “per second, per second”) until you reach the fastest speed at which you can fall through the atmosphere. That speed is about 120 mph. A rather ghastly outcome immediately follows when you reach Mother Earth without a functioning parachute. The recent “Space Jump” comes to mind.

Now let’s say you are a construction worker up on a 32 foot high scaffold and you fall off. In once second you would hit the ground at 22 miles per hour. Falls are the number one cause of death in the construction industry. This is why the OSHA regulations for construction require fall protection above 6 feet. But that’s not entirely why I wrote this article.

Let’s look at falls and other hazards around your home. Falls are the leading cause of non-fatal injuries for all children ages 0 to 19. Every day, approximately 8,000 children are treated in U.S. emergency rooms for fall-related injuries. This adds up to almost 2.8 million children each year. In 2005, 15,800 people 65 and older died from injuries related to unintentional falls; about 1.8 million people 65 and older were treated in emergency departments for nonfatal injuries from falls, and more than 433,000 of these patients were hospitalized. On average, unintentional falls cost \$100 billion annually in medical costs and account for 45 percent of the total costs for medically treated unintentional home injuries. These are some pretty staggering numbers. They come from the Centers for Disease Control and the Home Safety Council.

Slips on wet floors, trips over sleeping pets, walking around in the dark, missing a step on the stairs, falling off your roof, using an unsafe ladder, using a chair instead of a ladder or step-stool, catching your shoe on the edge where the floor stops and the carpet begins, slips in the bathtub or shower, running around the swimming pool instead of walking; all these and more are common causes for falls at home.

And just a reminder – the holiday season is approaching. Plan your events with the proper safety seasoning mix!!

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

***Safety Steve***



There are many hazards at your house, for which you might not be aware. The website <http://www.mysafehome.org>, will take you to a virtual tour of a home, and all the various hazards you can find everyday at your own house. You'll be surprised at what things you learn, guaranteed!! Email the link to your home computer and use it as a good learning tool for your family. If even one serious injury is prevented, it is well worth your time.

**I worked construction for 10 years before my fall. It shattered my body and my livelihood.**

**Work safely. Use the right equipment.**

**SAFETY PAYS. FALLS COST.**

FALLS FROM LADDERS, SCAFFOLDS AND ROOFS CAN BE PREVENTED!

U.S. Department of Labor

**PLAN** ahead to get the job done safely.  
**PROVIDE** the right equipment.  
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# When cutting back means stepping forward



Victoria Guilloty a student trainee in the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Logistics Activity walks Public Affair's Brooks Hubbard around the Chevy Volt, an electric car with a gas-powered backup plan. ULA also added two Flex Fuel vehicles to the fleet which can burn any combination of E85 (ethanol) or un-leaded fuel. (USACE photo by Dave Palmer)

By Kim Matthews

**LOS ANGELES** — We've all heard the phrase that less is more, usually by someone who isn't on the lesser side of things. In the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Los Angeles District, it seems like things are getting cut back more and more every day – budgets, personnel, transportation subsidies, fitness programs. Even the Logistics Management Office (ULA) is tightening the belt of District transportation.

That's one cut-back, though, that's a good thing. It's good for the District, it's good for the nation, and it's good for the planet.

Over the last few years, ULA has quietly been changing the way our District drives. What started with a single Chevrolet hybrid in 2009 has grown to a fleet of 13 vehicles that run on both gas and electricity – 12 cars that only use gas when driven faster than 35 mph, and one that is completely electric until the battery charge gets low. To fit into LA's varied needs, ULA has selected vehicles that include Chevy's Malibu and Volt, Ford's Fusion and Escape, and a Hyundai Sonata.

District Transportation Assistant Luis Perez is expecting more green vehicles next spring and summer, and

said he would like to be able to double the number we currently have. "The reaction to the new cars has been very good," said Perez. "Drivers are commenting on the mileage, saying it's great. The gas needle barely moves."

A favorite that has district travelers excited has been the Volt, an electric and gas car that can average 900 miles between gasoline fill-ups when the car is charged regularly. To help with this, a new charging station has been installed in the District headquarters area of the parking garage.

LA has long been a proponent of saving energy and finding new ways to conserve, and the greening of its fleet is turning into one of the most popular. Using a hybrid fleet not only helps fulfill the Corps' Environmental Operating Principles of fostering sustainability as a way of life throughout the organization, proactively considering environmental consequences of all Corps activities and creating environmentally sustainable solutions, it also demonstrates the commitment to being good stewards of the taxpayers' money.

By 2017, ULA will be downsizing the district fleet 20 percent more by cutting large SUVs and sedans, while utilizing more economical small and midsize sedans.

## Energy Initiatives

### *What is it?*

Private-sector know-how, entrepreneurship and participation is needed to secure U.S. Army installations with clean, reliable and affordable energy to strengthen the energy security and to support Department of Defense energy goals by best optimization of available resources.

### *What Senior Leaders are saying*

"We need to keep an eye on the investment here and keep an eye on what is needed to make sure we sustain this kind of opportunity," said Under Secretary of the Army Joseph W. Westphal. "Training and readiness for our force of the future is absolutely critical."

### *What has the Army done?*

The Army has moved forward to address the challenge of energy security and sustainability to ensure the Army of tomorrow has the same access to energy, water, land and natural resources as the Army of today.

The Army has made renewable energy a key component of fulfilling this objective and just recently set an ambitious goal for deploying 1 gigawatt (GW) of renewable energy projects - enough to supply approximately 250,000 homes - by 2025.

# Marina del Rey channel dredging provides multiple benefits



Dutra Dredging Company, of San Rafael, Calif., used the clamshell dredge Paula Lee to provide about 520,000 cubic yards of the sand for the Port of Long Beach for its Middle Harbor Redevelopment Project. (USACE photo by Dave Palmer)

By Greg Fuderer

**MARINA DEL REY, Calif.** — “In dredging, you don’t usually see the results, it’s just deeper water,” Andrew Hunt, the Dutra Dredging Company project manager for the Marina del Rey entrance channel dredging project, said Oct. 15 as the project ended. Standing atop nearly 75,000 cubic yards of clean sand the project placed on Redondo Beach, he continued, “I’m standing here looking at a beach we built. If we were here a month ago, I’d be standing in the surf zone.”

Being able to stand on a freshly-replenished beach was one of several critical and significantly beneficial results of a six-month, \$11 million navigational maintenance dredging project at Marina del Rey, whose primary purpose was to restore safe navigational depths to one of the nation’s busiest man-made marinas and home port to more than 5,000 recreational, commercial and first responder vessels.

“We’ve had problems over the years with sediment,” Los Angeles County Supervisor Don Knabe said at the project’s start in April about the boating conditions at Marina del Rey. “This project will improve safety for our first responders and other boaters and has the added benefit of providing material the Port of Long Beach needs. This is truly a win-win.”

The dredging project removed nearly 800,000 cubic yards of sediment that had accumulated in the Marina del Rey entrance channel. That accumulation had reduced the depth and narrowed the width of the channel, making routine vessel transits more difficult and adding a safety risk for first responders like the Coast Guard, the Los Angeles County Sheriff Department and the county’s Lifeguard Service which often must act under less than optimal sea conditions.

“We’re doing what needs to be done to make the harbor safe,” Knabe said at the time.

Knabe also said the project is an example of how coordination among several levels of government can resolve regional issues.

“We’re saving over \$85 million and eliminating 47,000 truck trips,” Knabe said, referring to the financial and environmental impact if managers had been required to transport the dredged material to an authorized land disposal area.

Through extensive coordination with the Port of Long Beach, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and Los Angeles County hammered out an agreement to deliver about 476,000 cubic yards of material dredged from the Marina del Rey entrance channel to the port’s middle harbor redevelopment project. The material, transported by barge, provides a foundation that will allow the

port to transform two aging shipping terminals into one modern terminal, upgrading wharfs, water access and storage areas, expanding an on-dock rail, cutting air pollution, improving cargo-movement efficiency and environmental performance, and adding about 14,000 jobs in Southern California.

“The Middle Harbor Redevelopment Project is an opportunity for us to work with other agencies to provide a place for their dredged sediment,” said Rick Cameron, Director of Environmental Planning at the Port of Long Beach. “We receive fill material that we need for our terminal modernization project, and agencies like the Los Angeles County Department of Beaches and Harbors find a place to ship sediment, like that from Marina del Rey. It’s mutually beneficial and sustainable, dramatically reducing costs and eliminating the need to truck material to remote disposal sites inland.”

John Kelly, deputy director for the Los Angeles County Department of Beaches and Harbors, agreed.

“If we had to transport that material to an appropriate landfill, it would have cost around \$150 to \$200 a cubic yard,” he said at the conclusion of the project. “To transport it to the Port of Long Beach middle harbor project (by barge) cost \$14.50 a cubic yard. That was a phenomenal cost saving. The Corps and Dutra worked up until the final minute of the final day to bring the last loads in until the Port of Long Beach said, ‘Enough, we can’t take any more.’”

Another benefit realized from the project was the delivery of material to two popular recreational areas south of the project, eventually placing about 150,000 cubic yards of material offshore at Dockweiler Beach and about 82,000 cubic yards offshore and 75,000 cubic yards on the beach at Redondo Beach.

“A major benefit of this project is repurposing that sand instead of just taking it off and disposing of it somewhere,” Hunt said. “Is there a need, is there a use for that material? We delivered material to the Port of Long

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## — DREDGE from Page 12 —

Beach for port development, and we placed sand on Redondo Beach during the height of active beach season. It's very satisfying."

Although Hunt previously had performed navigational dredging projects for the Corps, this was his first time conducting beach replenishment, so he sought renourishment expertise to assist with the planning.

"It happened just as they predicted," Hunt said. "They said, 'We're first going to have to build the foundation out there (in the water). For a couple weeks, it'll seem like nothing is happening.' Once we had the foundation built, we raced down the beach, and everybody's coming up every day saying, 'I can't believe how much sand is on the beach.'"

Performing heavy construction in a heavily trafficked entrance channel or on a popular Southern California beach can lead to numerous questions about the methods involved, the anticipated schedule, environmental impacts, impositions on residents and visitors and a host of other issues relating to the safety and comfort of those performing the work and those affected by it.

"All projects with a scope like this are challenging, and you're going to find complexities that present hurdles along the way," Kelly said. "And the ability of the team to partner and decide how to solve problems and move forward without delay, I think that is the key. We had that all along with this project: logistics during construction, dealing with mariners' issues, monitoring of the environment, positioning of the dredge here at Redondo Beach, sand placement. There was no catastrophic outcome from any of that, but if you look at it, those were the challenging moments you expect, and you need to have the relationships to move forward and solve them. The opportunity to bring material from the harbor to the Port of Long Beach was enormous. Those are the kinds of opportunities that we in government have to recognize."

The onshore placement widened the beach by about 60 to 100 feet along a 1,300 segment south of the Redondo Beach pier. That Dutra pumped the material from a dredge moored offshore

reduced the project's environmental impact. As with the Port of Long Beach project, had sand not been pumped from offshore, to place a similar amount would have required about 7,500 dump truck deliveries, an economic and environmental cost that could have been too much to accept.

"Being able to pump the sand from offshore and have everything be very low impact for the beach goes during the end of the beach season up until Labor Day was very good," Kelly said.

"We're very happy with the conclusion of the project," said Elaine Jeng, a civil engineer for the city of Redondo Beach, who worked on the project. "The amount of people that came together to bring the project to fruition was amazing. There were concerns from citizens about the length of project and some other issues. But once the project began, we didn't hear much until the end. If you look, we have a bigger, wider section of the beach."

"Constant communication among all parties was the key to moving forward," said Cesar Espinosa, a department facilities planner for the Department of Beaches and Harbors. "We learned there are different ways to renourish a beach. There were concerns about the methodology the contractor was using at

the beginning, but in the end, it proved there are different ways of doing things."

"This project required everybody to be onboard all the time," said Jeffrey Cole, the Corps' project manager for Marina del Rey dredging. "We couldn't have been successful without the County's input, without the contractor, without the City of Redondo. The relationships started out strong and ended stronger."

Although the 2012 project for maintenance dredging and beneficial material reuse has come to an end, the effort to maintain navigational safety and to restore and protect California's shoreline continues.

"Harbor dredging and beach replenishment is not a project with a beginning and an end," Kelly said. "It's really a maintenance activity, and as soon as you finish one of these projects, you have to start thinking about your next dredging and your next beach replenishment."

That thinking will continue with surveys that determine more precisely the amount and location of sand placed at Redondo.

"Monitoring the width is crucial in understanding the natural processes of the beach here," Espinosa said. "So in the future, if we need to come back, we have a better idea of how to approach that."



Dutra Dredging Company puts the final touches on the placement of nearly 75,000 cubic yards of sand at Redondo Beach as part of the Marina del Rey entrance channel navigation project shortly before the dredge Paula Lee departed and bulldozers contoured the sand to meet the required beach profiles. (USACE photo by Greg Fuderer)

# Assistant Secretary for Civil Works visits district



Jo-Ellen Darcy, Assistant Secretary of the Army for Civil Works, views civil works projects during an Oct. 23 helicopter flight along California's southern coast as part of her visit to the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Los Angeles District. (USACE photo by Greg Fuderer)

By Greg Fuderer

**SAN DIEGO** — Jo-Ellen Darcy, the Assistant Secretary of the Army for Civil Works, visited the Los Angeles District the week of Oct. 23, speaking to an international dredging conference, visiting or viewing several Los Angeles District civil works projects and meeting with local sponsors.

Speaking to the Dredging 2012 international conference here, Darcy told attendees about the Corps' responsibility to the nation in developing and restoring water resources and about its effort to transform programs to meet the needs of the 21st Century.

"The Corps has a direct federal investment in commercial navigation, flood risk management, environmental restoration, hydro-elect power generation, recreation, and industrial and municipal water supply," Darcy said to conference attendees. She told them a shared government and private effort to continue to meet those requirements is essential to our nation's success.

"Our nation must balance engineering, the economy and the environment," she said. "That balance includes the beneficial reuse of the nearly 300 million cubic yards of material dredged annually by government and private agencies."

Coincidentally, the Los Angeles District had completed in early October a navigational dredging project at the Marina del Rey entrance channel that beneficially re-used nearly 800,000 cubic yards of material for shoreline protection and port redevelopment.

Darcy emphasized the importance of the nation's ports and of the Corps' significant contribution to maintaining

its maritime industry.

"More than 95 percent of containerized cargo arrives by ship," Darcy said, "and about 97 percent of our nation's imports and exports, about \$1.7 trillion, goes through Corps projects."

Following her comments to the conference, Darcy, along with the Corps' Commanding General for Civil and Emergency Operations Maj. Gen. Michael Walsh and South Pacific Division Commander Brig. Gen. Michael Wehr, flew by helicopter to Prado Dam. En route, she received briefings on several civil works projects from David Van Dorpe, the Los Angeles District deputy district engineer for programs and project management, and Dr. Josephine Axt, the District's chief of planning division.

At Prado Dam, Darcy met with representatives from the Santa Ana Watershed Project Authority, the Bureau of Reclamation and public works departments, flood control districts and water conservation agencies from San Bernardino, Riverside and Orange counties, all local sponsors or partners on the Santa Ana River Mainstem Project.

The agency representatives discussed

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Ed Demesa, chief of the Plan Formulation Branch for the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Los Angeles District, briefs Ms. Jo-Ellen Darcy, Assistant Secretary of the Army for Civil Works, about civil works projects along the Mexican border during an Oct. 24 visit to Spooners Gulch and the Tijuana River Watershed. (USACE photo by Greg Fuderer)



— CIVIL WORKS from Page 14 —

their interest about funding, land acquisition and the completion of different project elements along the river and within its watershed, and about timetables for studies to investigate additional authorizations for water conservation.

Just as important, though, was the consensus among the sponsors that the partnerships developed over several decades were critical in creating a unified vision for the watershed.

“The group engaged in a lively discussion of the unique attributes and compelling collaboration that sets the Santa Ana River Watershed apart from other watersheds in the nation,” Axt said. “The innovative combination of two existing models to incorporate both watershed goals and value to the nation, as well as the reproducibility of the Santa Ana River Watershed Based pilot to other watersheds, underscored the message that the Santa Ana River Watershed meets every criteria for successfully implementing a watershed-based budgeting pilot within USACE.”

On the flight back to San Diego, Darcy viewed several more civil works projects, discussing environmental restoration and water conservation measures along several waterways before returning to



Chris Peregrin (left), manager of Tijuana Preserve for the California Department of Fish and Game, briefs Ms. Jo-Ellen Darcy, Assistant Secretary of the Army for Civil Works, during an Oct. 24 visit to Spooners Gulch and the Tijuana River Watershed. (USACE photo by Greg Fuderer)

the coast. Axt and Van Dorpe briefed the secretary on navigational maintenance dredging projects at Newport Beach, Dana Point, Oceanside and San Diego, on beach protection and restoration projects at San Clemente, Solana Beach and Encinitas and on flood risk reduction and environmental efforts along Murrieta Creek and San Luis Rey River.

Darcy completed her visit to the Los Angeles District the following day along the Mexican border speaking with representatives from U.S. Customs and Border Protection, the International Boundary and Water Commission, the San Diego Regional Water Control Board, the California Department of Fish and Game and the city of San Diego.

Discussions covered multi-national watershed issues, primarily the Tijuana River and other waterways that feed into the Tijuana River Valley Watershed, often bringing debris and other contaminants into the border estuary.

Darcy met with Commissioner Ed Drusina of the IBWC and with stakeholders and members of the Tijuana River Valley Recovery Team to discuss the continuing need for collaborative partnerships in finding sustainable solutions to bi-national issues.

“Not only is it amazing the work being done here, but also the vision the district has for what it is we can continue to contribute,” Darcy said. “The plans they have been putting forward, not only for what I saw yesterday at Prado Dam, but also here in the Tijuana watershed, are a testament to the vision and professionalism I see with everyone in the Corps, and in the Los Angeles District in particular.”



Jo-Ellen Darcy (left), Assistant Secretary of the Army for Civil Works, meets with United States Commissioner Edward Drusina, of the International Boundary and Water Commission, during an Oct. 24 visit to the IBWC water treatment plant along the Tijuana River at the Mexican border. Participating in the discussion (from left) are Col. Mark Toy (commander of the Corps' Los Angeles District), Mr. Dawi Dakhil (operations manager for the International Boundary and Water Commission) and Brig. Gen. Michael Wehr (commander of the South Pacific Division). (USACE photo by Greg Fuderer)



## *Around the District*



### **professional pride**



District Commander Col. Mark Toy took time Oct. 16 to recognize these employees for their contributions to the District. The Achievement Medal for Civilian Service was presented to Larry Estrada for providing comprehensive knowledge of legal and human resource management laws and advisory services and assistance to the Deputy Commander and Division Chiefs. Betty Melendrez was named Program Manager of the Year in the September issue but, now we have a photo. Congratulations all. (USACE photos by Iliana Arias)



### **farewell too**

District Commander Col. Mark Toy presented departing civilian employee Stuart Strum (left) an Army Certificate of Achievement and the commander's coin at the District headquarters Oct. 26. About his departure Strum said, "I would like to thank everyone I have worked with here at the Los Angeles District. It has been a great time for me, and the decision to pursue new opportunities was not an easy one. My best to all, and I hope we cross paths again in the future." On Oct. 30, Toy bid farewell to Terry Lemberger after 43 years of combined federal service, 33 of which was as an enlisted soldier in the U.S. Army. The last four years she worked in the District's Civil Works and Navigation branches. In the Commander's Award for Civilian Service, Toy said, "She has continually maintained high standards of quality and productivity, going beyond the call of duty, taking steps to improve administrative processes in support of Programs and Project Management Division staff to meet mission requirements." (USACE photos by Richard Rivera)

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



# District names Employee of the Quarter

By Dave Palmer

**LOS ANGELES** — Maria Cisneros, a procurement analyst in the Los Angeles District Contracting Division, has received the Kevin Inada Memorial Employee of the Quarter Award for the third quarter of 2012.

"I feel honored, receiving such a prestigious award," said Cisneros. "I never expected to be recognized for doing my job."

Cisneros has worked for the District more than 30-years. In her current position, she provides oversight and acquisition support to contracting and District staff.

"Maria constantly takes the initiative to perform duties outside of her scope," said Deputy Chief Contracting Division Maj. Charles Seaberry. "Maria has contributed to the contracting mission in a variety of ways, most notably through her participation in most last minute suspenses that require immediate action."

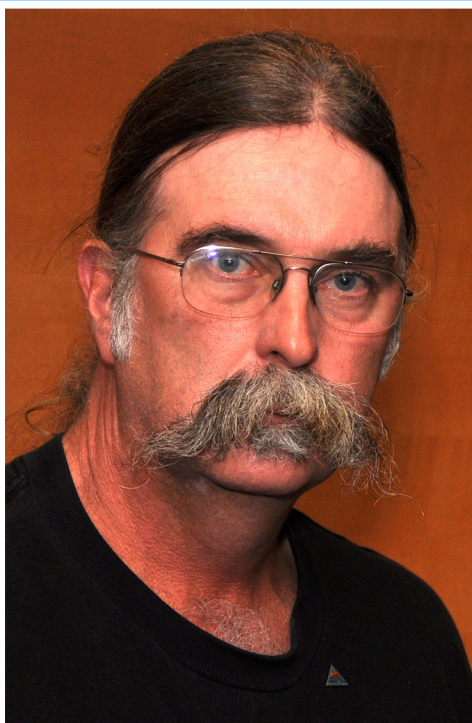
While the award pays tribute to the work Cisneros does for the District, her nomination also recognized her commitment to family.



**District Commander Col. Mark Toy honored Maria Cesneros as the Kevin Inada Memorial Employee of the Quarter Award for the third quarter of 2012 at the District headquarters Oct. 16. (USACE photo by Iliana Arias)**

"Frankly, I am impressed with her aggressiveness, creativity, determination and ability to schedule extracurricular activities around a full workload," said Seaberry. "She finds much needed time for family, which is important. She

has tremendous self-discipline. Maria is a dedicated, versatile and talented professional that remains a true asset to our organization. It is not adequate to say that she accepts responsibility readily. She seeks responsibility."



## in memoriam

Michael Haney, a member of the Asset Management division passed away in a traffic accident Oct. 23. Please have Michael's family and friends in your thoughts and prayers during this difficult time.

# Perfection is a dangerous fallacy

By Daniel J. Calderón

The old saying, “Nobody’s perfect” isn’t just a turn of phrase. It’s actual fact.

Should I have to prove it? Not really. Although I can say for certain that I don’t know everyone in the world; I have confidence enough to say that no one can bring me evidence of someone who is perfect. Why? Because definitions and perceptions of perfection are subjective.

Perfection means not making any mistakes, always being in the right place doing the right thing at the right time. It means having the right words to make any situation turn out for the best and knowing the right combination of give and take to make everyone in the situation feel they came out on top of it. Perfection is being so in touch with your own emotions that you have an innate empathy and can feel when someone needs you to intervene. It means operating at peak physical levels at all times and never being sick. After all, a perfect person is constantly in control of his or her body and is intimately in tune with every aspect of it.

Of course, that’s just my way of looking at perfection.

For others, perfection is more physical. There’s the perfect body, the perfect face, or it can be taken all the way to the perfect body parts. Someone has ideas of what the perfect lips feel like, how the perfect eyes see, the shape of perfect breasts or bottoms (on guys as well as girls – no one has a lock on looking for the perfect one or having differing opinions on what it means), the sound of a perfect voice or the feel of perfect skin.

There are notions of the perfect man, the perfect woman, the perfect husband and the perfect wife. Each of those have been the subject of raging debate, endless books, romantic-comedies in the movies and the basis of scores of situation comedies on television. How about the perfect kids or the perfect parents? Again, that’s been the fodder for dramas and comedies for countless generations.

There are also those who are in the

hunt for the perfect job. They want the perfect hours with lots of time off and enough money to spend on family. Some people define the perfect job as the one in which the spouse doesn’t have to work and can stay at home with the kids. Others say the perfect job is the one in which there is enough disposable income to go on those kinds of vacations others only dream of taking.

The list goes on and on. There’s the perfect car, the perfect clothes, the perfect house and a host of other perfect things that are supposed to, if attained, make everything ... Well, they’re supposed to make everything perfect.

So, people make great effort to realize their idea of perfection. Money is spent on fashioning the perfect nose, chin (I’m not too happy with my set of chins, by the way; but, that’s a completely separate story) or other body part. Money and effort are expended on seeking the perfect mate, the perfect house, the perfect something or other. And all the while, nothing in hand is good enough. Something better on the horizon always beckons because it looks just a little better than what is immediately available.

The hard part for some people to understand is that there really is no such thing as perfection.

A few definitions for being perfect -- conforming absolutely to the description or definition of an ideal type; excellent or complete beyond practical or theoretical improvement; entirely without any flaws, defects, or shortcomings; accurate, exact, or correct in every detail – preclude any possibility that any of us could fit the bill for being perfect.

I am confident in my abilities; however, I would hardly classify them as excellent beyond practical or theoretical improvement. I love my wife; but, I know she is not entirely without flaws or defects. And any of you who think that last little statement will earn me any time on the couch really don’t understand what it is to be married and dedicated to your spouse.

Being perfect is impractical and impossible. Striving to be better than

what we are is one of the core drivers. I want to be a better writer so I write – a lot. Some of you want to be a better ball player so you’re out on the court regularly. Sometimes, you’re not able to get out and practice your passion and it gets frustrating when you see people who are better than you. Guess what? There are always going to be folks who are better and folks who are worse at pretty much anything you can think to try.

It’s those differences that make us who we are. We are not a homogenous collection of creatures doing the same thing in the same way at the same time in the same place with the same goals. We will never be perfect; but, that should not stop us from trying to be better today than we were yesterday. Likewise, it should not stop us from enjoying what we can do when we do it. If doing something perfectly was the only way of enjoying things, I would never smile.

Put another way - if being a perfect father was the only way I could be happy in my role, I would be really disappointed with my life right now. I’ve missed times when I should have been watching my kids and they’ve gotten hurt. When I deployed, I wasn’t there to prevent, comfort or care for my daughter when she broke her arm. I’ve yelled at them when they really didn’t deserve it because I was mad about something else and I’ve allowed my work to take me away from them when they needed me. I’ve said wrong things at the wrong times and I’ve missed chances to do the right things. I’m not a perfect father.

But, I try to be a better one today than I was yesterday. I take my mistakes (and the mistakes of others that I’ve seen or heard about) and learn from them. I try not to make the same errors and try to be the kind of father that my children need and deserve. It’s a never-ending learning process and one fraught with peril, frustration and an amazing capacity for satisfaction. For, while I will never be the perfect father, I truly love the little victories. I loved watching them when they learned to walk and talk. I loved

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# Happy Halloween!



The Civilian Personnel Advisory Center (top) and Contracting employees (center) proved to be among the more spirited groups at the District headquarters for the holiday. Thanks to Richard Rivera and Maria Uribe for sharing and to Jim Cresto for sending in Erin Astudillo and Ismael Miranda's little dispute over holiday treats at the March Air Reserve Base Resident Office (left).



# National Native American Heritage Month



*The life of a person is a circle from childhood to childhood,  
and so it is in everything where power moves, -Black Elk*

**Serving Our People, Serving Our Nations:  
Native Visions for Future Generations**

Designed by Peter Hammer for the Defense Equal Opportunity Management Institute