

Volunteers rescue, release pelican at Sepulveda



A distressed pelican (above) was spotted Oct. 25 in the lake at Sepulveda Basin Wildlife Reserve in Encino, Calif., with fishing line and a plastic bottle tangled around its right wing and leg, preventing it from flying. Ernesto Poblana (right) of LA Animal Services' Specialized Mobile Animal Rescue Team carries the distressed pelican to initial treatment after recovering it Oct. 26. (Photos courtesy of Jim Hanlon)



By Jay Field

ENCINO, Calif. — More than two dozen people watched as Eagle Scout candidates from Orange County Troop 1149 opened the animal crate releasing a recovered American White Pelican at the Wildlife Reserve in the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers' Sepulveda Flood Control Basin Dec. 1. Within minutes, the pelican, known to area bird watchers as 'Firebird,' took flight and joined its pod on the reserve's island.

The distressed pelican was spotted by bird watchers in late October with fishing line and a plastic bottle wrapped around its right wing and leg. LA Animal Services' Specialized Mobile Animal Rescue Team captured the injured bird Oct. 26 and eventually turned it over to the International Bird Rescue in San Pedro for treatment and rehabilitation. The fishing line caused small wounds to the bird's right wing fold and right leg.

According to its website, IBR operates two year-round aquatic bird rescue centers in California, which care for more than 5,000 birds every year.

Staff and volunteers of the IBR, SMART and the San Fernando Valley Audubon Society joined photographers and others for the pelican's release. Earlier in the day, volunteers from local colleges planted native California plants and picked up litter.

The 225-acre reserve is managed by the City of Los Angeles Department of Recreation and Parks under lease by the Corps' Los Angeles District. With more than 200 species of birds, the refuge is considered one of the finest in a major urban area in the country.

(Story compiled from reports by Muriel Kotin, San Fernando Valley Audubon Society, and wildlife photographer Jim Hanlon)

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— PELICAN from Page 1 —

After its rescue from the lake at Sepulveda Basin Wildlife Reserve in late October, the injured pelican spent several weeks at the International Bird Reserve in San Pedro for medical treatment and rehabilitation. The IBR has 40-foot and 100-foot cool water aviary ponds to help wounded birds recover and to test their ability to fly between perches. (Photo courtesy of Jim Hanlon)



The rehabilitated pelican takes a few steps from its transport crate to the lake at Sepulveda Basin Wildlife Reserve in Encino, Calif., Dec. 1, as bird watchers, volunteers and rescue staffers look on. (Photo courtesy of Mike Stensvold)

The pelican nicknamed 'Firebird' takes a victory lap around the lake at Sepulveda Basin Wildlife Reserve in Encino, Calif., Dec. 1. The fortunate animal was released at the same time as a second rehabilitated pelican found with a broken bill in Long Beach. (Photo courtesy of Jim Hanlon)



COMMANDER'S MESSAGE



HAPPY HOLIDAYS!

*Greetings to all during this merry month,
from LA to Phoenix, to those overseas.
For those of you sitting in cold freezing weather,
we'll try to send you a warm winter breeze!*



*As I reflect on my time in the District thus far,
I'm amazed how fast the time has flown by.
You've all worked so hard and accomplished so much,
I'm so proud of your efforts, I'm one lucky guy!*

*But there's still so much more that we have to do,
to make our District a great place to be.
With a focus on people, training, and facilities,
it will be even better, just wait and you'll see.*

*But for now the focus is on family and friends,
and the things we are most thankful for.
For me it is easy, my wife and my kids,
and of course the SPL Corps!*

*Warm Regards,
Col. Toy*



BUILDING STRONG® and Taking Care of People!



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New Year Celebrations: What we do on the other side of the world

By Priyanka Wadhawan

District Asian American - Pacific Islander
Program Manager

LOS ANGELES — As the holiday season approaches, the various cultures of our employees prepare to celebrate the season with co-workers, family and friends. I thought what a wonderful way to end the year by sharing the exciting colorful tradition of my East Indian heritage. As an Eastern Indian descendant, most people think of Asian Pacific Islanders as people from China, Samoa Islands and Japan. Asian Pacific Islanders also represent the people of India. Our Commander-in-Chief, President Barack Obama, along with Secretary of State Hillary Clinton were the first U.S. Presidential party to visit the nation of Myanmar, a neighboring country of India; a historical event that will solidify Asian global presence.

I want to take this time to give you an introduction of how my culture brings in the New Year.

Diwali is India's biggest and most important holiday of the year. The festival gets its name from the row (avali) of clay lamps (or deepa) that Indians light outside their homes to symbolize the inner light that protects them from spiritual darkness. This festival is as important to Hindus as the Christmas holiday is to Christians.

Diwali, celebrated in October or November each year, originated as a harvest festival that marked the last harvest of the year before winter. People would seek the divine blessing of Lakshmi, the goddess of wealth, as they closed their accounting books and prayed for success at the outset of a new financial year. Today, this practice extends to businesses all over the Indian subcontinent, which marks the day after Diwali as the first day of the new financial year.

Indians celebrate with family gatherings, glittering clay lamps, festive fireworks, strings of electric lights, bonfires, flowers, sharing of sweets, and worship to Goddess Lakshmi. Some believe that Lakshmi wanders the Earth looking for homes where she will be welcomed. People open their doors



President Barack Obama and First Lady Michelle Obama greet young dancers at a Diwali candle lighting and performance at Holy Name High School in Mumbai, India, Nov. 7, 2010. (Official White House Photo by Pete Souza)

and windows and light lamps to invite Lakshmi in.

Over the centuries, Diwali has become a national festival that is enjoyed by most Indians, regardless of faith: Hindus, Christians, Muslims, Jains, Buddhists, and Sikhs. They will visit each other's home on this day and sit together to share a meal and light lamps.

Diwali is preceded by a monthlong (in some regions two months) celebration in India. And yes, most people are off the entire month! Festivities begin with grand parades to the sea at the end of the monsoon season where images of the elephant god, Ganesha, are submerged in the choppy blue waves.

A monthlong gala celebration follows with theater enactments (Ram Lila) of the ancient epic Ramayana, or Ram's Journey. Tents are put up and nightly dances (called Dandia and Garba) are held, with live bands, and men and women in ethnic dresses twirling in colorful pandemonium. Special food and drinks are made and consumed. People drive around daytime in cars or rickshaws, distributing colorful boxes of sweets and dried fruits to each of their acquaintances, stopping for chai and samosas and catching up on

gossip. Time slows down to a delicious tranquility, the glare of the summer ends, and autumn bestows a cooling golden hue – people breathe a sigh of relief and enjoy the new season.

Card parties are held almost every night, where 'teen patti' is played, which is similar to poker. Most card parties are multi-generational; grandkids, grandparents, aunts and uncles pitted against one another in card holdouts. It's auspicious to gamble around Diwali – divine forces favor the brave and the risk-taker.

Two weeks before Diwali (called Dusshera), hundred-foot tall effigies of the three demons (you'll have to read the Ramayana to know who these guys were) are burned. It's a battle of good versus evil, and this marks the victory of the good forces.

On the night of the actual Diwali festival (yes, it's taken us a month or two to get here), hundreds of clay lamps are lit and placed around the home. Since we are now officially in the twenty-first century, many homes will also string up extravagant LED light displays. Handmade clay lamps remain essential however – Diwali, after all, means "row of lamps".

— See CELEBRATIONS, Page 5 —

District employee goes the distance to support mission



These Deployable Tactical Operating Systems/Emergency Command and Control Vehicles provide additional work space, and are equipped with a satellite dish and radio antennas, emergency floodlights, work stations and the equipment and capabilities necessary to conduct response and recovery operations in a disaster environment. (USACE photo by Brooks O. Hubbard IV)

By Brooks O. Hubbard IV

FAR ROCKAWAY-QUEENS, N.Y. — The U. S. Army Corps of Engineers North Atlantic Division had its more than 3,000 employees engaged in response operations at the peak of the Hurricane Sandy mission. Nearly 1,000 additional team members from other divisions across the nation also joined

the operation.

Alex Watt, a Deployable Tactical Operating Systems/Emergency Command and Control Vehicle operator with the Los Angeles District, is among employees providing support to team members deployed to the area. Watt is serving in his primary role with his vehicle, providing responders a secure and dry work platform to accomplish their task. Watt and teammate Glenn Emigh drove their ECCV roughly 2,800 miles from LA to New York City.

“We departed from Los Angeles on the evening of Nov. 6,” said Watt. “Because of a snow storm, we were not able to get here until the morning of the 8th and set up our vehicle to provide support to team members who were working the power mission.”

The ECCV extends into four side-compartments for additional work space and is equipped with a satellite dish and radio antennas, emergency floodlights, work stations and the equipment and capabilities necessary to conduct response and recovery operations in a disaster environment.

USACE supported the emergency power missions in New York and New Jersey, with teams and resources in place to haul, install, operate and maintain generators at critical facilities. One of the Corps’ missions was to support the NYC Housing Authority and provide power to five of its public housing buildings in the Ocean Bay Housing District.

Watt, a long time emergency responder, is no stranger to devastation. Last year, he deployed to aid citizens impacted by a tornado in Joplin, Mo. Watt served as a quality assurance representative on the debris removal mission along public rights-of-way in the city.

This year’s mission for the Corps falls under the National Response Framework in support of the Hurricane Sandy response.

— CELEBRATIONS from Page 4 —

Houses are repainted afresh this time of the year and cleaned out thoroughly. Women make floor art, called Rangoli, to welcome the Goddess Laxmi into their home and bless them with good fortune. Firecrackers burst (there’s now an attempt to ban them to curb air pollution). The party finally ends in the wee hours of the morning. The day after Diwali feels a bit sad. Shredded firecracker paper lies on the street like confetti and lamps are blackened with soot. Rows of sad children in uniforms wait for the school bus on a grey winter morning – it’s back to work.

And then Indians start preparing for a round of Christmas and New Year parties...

My son, who is eighteen months old, will know the joys of Thanksgiving and Christmas. We also celebrate a condensed one-evening, fast-food version of Diwali to suit our American lifestyle. But sometimes I fear that he’ll be unable to experience the joy of a truly different culture besides the ephemeral joviality of Santa Claus and jostling Black Friday sales. Christmas is sadly a one-day holiday, and then people trot back to work, full of egg-nog, the next day. Before you realize it, the biggest American holiday has come and gone and you’re left with all those dratted lights to pull down from the rain-soaked eaves. I’ll put it off till March 2014 – I think the lights should mostly last till then...

It would be lovely to whisk the baby

away for a month to a culture which now seems alien; a different planet – where the pace is slow, people aren’t as rushed and festivals last a bit longer so that we can truly savor the mood and season, and reconnect with family. Perhaps when he’s older and can truly appreciate, we’ll visit (not looking forward to a twenty-hour plane ride closeted with a ‘terrible two-er’). Right now he’s busy pulling off the ornaments from our Christmas tree to test if they are shatter-proof (mental note – only stuffed toys to hang on the tree next year).

Enjoy your family and delicious holiday food (its okay, go ahead and eat that cookie), and slow down to savor the moments. Happy Holidays to one and all, and a lovely 2013!

Possession of Firearms and Dangerous Weapons in Federal Facilities

By Jeff Koontz
Security and Law Enforcement chief

LOS ANGELES — I realize that we are living in violent times and I understand that all law abiding citizens have the right to bear arms to protect themselves and others.

Having said that, this information is taken directly from Title 18 of the US Federal Code that covers Possession of Firearms and Dangerous Weapons in Federal Facilities.

The term “federal facility” means a building, or part thereof, owned or leased by the Federal Government, where federal employees are regularly present for the purpose of performing their official duties.

As you can see, each and every workplace that we have in the Los Angeles District meets the criteria for federal facility protection.

That also means that if you park in or within the boundaries of a protected federal facility you cannot possess or have in your custody any weapon as described below. This includes on your person, locked in your desk or in your car and all vehicles are subject to search while on a federal facility. It is also unlawful to transport a weapon in a U.S. General Services Administration vehicle.

The term “dangerous weapon” means a weapon, device, instrument, material, or substance, animate or inanimate, that is used for, or is readily capable of, causing death or serious bodily injury.

The intent of this information is to make everybody aware of the law and with everyone’s cooperation we will continue to be safe in the workplace and honor the District’s motto, “**BUILDING STRONG and Taking Care of People!**”

Holiday Season Security Awareness



Report



Suspicious Activity

Indicators:

- People drawing or measuring important buildings.
- Strangers asking questions about security or building security procedures.
- Briefcase, suitcase, backpack, or package left behind.
- Cars or trucks left in No Parking zones in front of important buildings.
- Intruders in secure areas where they are not supposed to be.
- A person wearing clothes that are too big and too hot for the weather.
- Chemical smells or fumes that worry you.
- People asking questions about sensitive information such as building blueprints, security plans, or VIP travel schedules without a right or need to know.
- Purchasing supplies or equipment that can be used to make bombs or weapons or purchasing uniforms without having the proper credentials

Also Report Situations Where:

- Individuals have isolated themselves or are emotionally withdrawn from friends/community
- Individuals are absent from the workplace for seemingly no reason
- Individuals with apparent grievances

Primary Reporting Methods

- Law enforcement official or agency
- Security force or guard members

Alternative Reporting Methods

- DA Civilians/Soldiers: your chain of command
- Spouses: your military member/FRG Leader
- Children: your parents or teachers
- Contractors: contract agency or COTR

What to Report

• When did suspicious activity occur	• What type of activity
• Where did activity occur	• Describe what you saw
• How many people involved	• Provide pictures if you took any
• How many vehicles involved	

See Something, Say Something

Organized team or lone wolf, foreign or home-grown, targeting many places or just one, using available technology or weapons made with their own hands—the fluid, obscure nature of the terrorist threat demands that we know what to look for and where to look. Familiarize yourself with indicators of suspicious activity and be ready to report such activity to proper authorities.

Always Ready, Always Alert
Because someone is depending on you





iWATCH ARMY

iREPORT **i KEEP US SAFE**

Contact Security at 213-452-3969 to report any suspicious activity, behavior or objects.

See Something Say Something

USACE completes Ajo Border Patrol Station

By Daniel Calderón

AJO, Ariz. — The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Los Angeles District participated in a ceremony Nov. 27 to cut the ribbon at the new Customs and Border Patrol Agency's Ajo Station.

"The new station is the strong, solid platform, for our customer's people - Border Patrol agents. It provides the tools and infrastructure to allow the agents to much more effectively accomplish their mission," said Shari Brandt, resident engineer for the District's Tucson Resident Office. "I'm so proud to be able to be here for this ribbon cutting. Projects like this really showcase our commitment to our motto of **'Building Strong and Taking Care of People!'**"

The new facility covers more than 30 acres and contains more than 54,000 sq feet of working space. Buildings at the new station include an administrative and training facility, a detention area and fueling stations for the vehicles assigned there. The agents also have a helipad on the new facility.

"This is truly a remarkable occasion for the CBP and for the Ajo Station," said Jack Jeffreys, patrol agent in charge of the Ajo Station. "The old facility was designed for 25 agents and we have more than 500 personnel here now."

The original Ajo station, which was completed in 1987, still stands next to the new facility. The new \$30 million project is designed to meet the Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design Silver standard. In order to meet that standard, D.L. Withers Construction, the District's contractor, installed low-water use utilities, used recycled and rapidly-renewable materials, energy-saving lighting, native drought-resistant plantings, solar heated hot water, and photo-voltaic panels on all buildings and covered parking.

"This facility takes advantage of what we have plenty of here in Arizona - the sun," Jeffreys said. "Approximately 35 percent of the energy for the facility comes from the sun and we're using solar energy to heat the water."



Shari Brandt, resident engineer for the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Los Angeles District's Tucson Resident Office, accepts a plaque of appreciation for the work done by the Corps from Jack Jeffreys, U.S. Customs and Border Protection patrol agent in charge of the Ajo Station, during a Nov. 27 ribbon-cutting ceremony at the station. The District served as the managing agent during construction of the new facility. (Photo by Daniel J. Calderon)

The station was designed to meet LEED Silver standards as a minimum. Through a few additional steps during construction, the team was able to pursue enough points to submit for LEED Gold. The final submittal will be done after the final Commissioning report is completed in December, but members of the team are very confident in achieving LEED Gold. Photo-voltaic panels on most of the roofs provide power for the facility and for the water heaters. The power feeds back into the Arizona Power Supply grid so the Ajo station essentially reduces its year-round demand on APS.

"The Tucson Sector of CBP is one of the most active in the nation," Brandt said. "This project provides a modern, sustainable facility from which Border Patrol agents can accomplish the mission of protecting our nation's

border."

The Ajo Station is approximately nine miles south of Ajo, along State Route 85. According to the CBP, the area of responsibility for agents assigned there covers more than 64 miles along the international border and nearly 7,000 square miles of total operational area. The majority of the AOR covers environmentally sensitive or otherwise protected lands, including the Organ Pipe Cactus National Monument, Cabeza Prieta National Wildlife Refuge, Bureau of Land Management lands, Barry M. Goldwater Bombing Range, and Tohono O'Odham Nation.

"For the men and women of the Ajo Station, this new facility has been a long time coming and they deserve it," said Jose Cruz, acting deputy chief patrol agent for the Tucson Sector. "And so the mission continues."

Taking the fight to the enemy:

District employees join Susan G. Koman cancer walk

By Cecy Ordonez

LOS ANGELES — Two Los Angeles District employees completed the three day, 60 mile breast cancer walk in San Diego held Nov. 16 – 19. Each participant paid a \$90.00 entrance fee and dedicated their time and energy to raise \$2300. Here is what they had to say:

Michelle Mattson

Q: What inspired you to do the walk?

A: My best friend, Kristin Szabo, is now a two-time breast cancer survivor. She was first diagnosed at the early age of 30 and went through chemotherapy and radiation at the age of 31. I met her right after her hair started growing back. I didn't know she was a survivor. She is the most positive person that I know and it took some time for me to understand what she had been through. Kristin was in remission for over 14 years and was diagnosed earlier this year with a more aggressive form of cancer in her other breast. She chose to have a double mastectomy and just finished chemotherapy. Kristin had DNA tests completed and she has one of the known "breast cancer genes" and has a 30% higher chance of ovarian cancer. She is choosing to have her ovaries removed in December. She also turns 47 in December. This has been a long journey and I simply wanted to do something other than give her verbal support and donations.

Q: How hard was it to fundraise?

A: This was very difficult for me. I don't like asking for money. And the recent controversy with Susan G. Koman and Planned Parenthood was difficult to overcome.

Q: What were your training sessions like?

A: I walked with a good friend, Amy Ahrendt, on the weekends. We started in February with



Michelle Mattson (second from right) from the Carlsbad Regulatory office proudly finishing 60 miles with her team. Team Szabo is named after her friend, Kristen Szabo, who is now a two-time breast cancer survivor.

a 6 mile walk in the hills of Carlsbad and increased in miles quickly. We regularly walked a 14 mile route on PCH from Carlsbad to Encinitas and back, and one 17 mile route. We also had several back-to-back days to test our ability to walk a 14 mile, followed by a 7 or 9 mile course. We are busy working moms, so these walks were fun "girl time!"

Q: What did you learn or take from this experience?

A: Four lessons for me:

1. Cancer survivors are amazingly strong!
2. Early detection is critical to survival!
3. Awareness is the key to early detection!
4. Susan G. Koman provides a huge service in bringing awareness about this disease to the public forefront. Kristin tells me that finding information on breast

cancer now is easy relative to 14 years ago. Information is power and she felt more empowered this time. There have also been many advances in treatments. Kristin tells me that the chemotherapy, steroids, pain relievers, and the anti-nauseous drugs have improved significantly, making her already scary and stressful experience more tolerable.

Q: What would you say to someone who has been thinking about doing an event like this one?

A: It's rewarding, it takes commitment, and don't be afraid to ask for donations.

Jason Lambert

— See FIGHT, Page 9 —

— FIGHT from Page 8 —

Q: What inspired you to do the walk?

A: My first experience with the three day walk was in 2010 when my girlfriend was walking with her mom and sister. It was raining (a lot!) on the walk and I came down to cheer them on (and bring them extra rain ponchos and blister band-aids).

My grandmother had a brief bout that has fortunately worked out well due to some amazing advances in treatment. It is hard to find someone who hasn't had a personal connection to this disease. Breast cancer can affect anyone, man or woman, at any age, and can affect your family when you least expect it. As the father of a 7-year-old daughter, I walked because I want a world for her without breast cancer.

Q: Can you tell us about a memorable moment during the walk?

A: The constant cheering and entertainment provided by the "walker stalkers" really keeps you marching forward and your spirits high. Opening and closing ceremonies were both very powerful moments. To see the crowd, which included walkers and supporters, was amazing. The thing that moved me most, however, was spending some quiet time in the remembrance tent. I really got a stark reminder of why we were walking, as I saw the names and faces of those who lost their battle with this disease.

Q: What were your training sessions like?

A: For me, training sessions were brief, and that probably wasn't the best idea. I am pretty active and was playing or coaching soccer five days a week, so I figured my athleticism would get me through a long walk without many problems. While I made it through the walk with only one relatively minor blister, I don't recommend doing what I did. Training walks would have built up some valuable calluses that my feet could have used. That being said, I don't know if any amount of training walks can prepare you for walking 60 miles in three days.

Q: What would you say to someone who has been



Jason Lambert taking a moment to remember his inspiration for walking 60 miles – his daughter. He hopes that she will grow up in a breast cancer-free world.

thinking about doing an event like this one?

A: Do it! I would tell people that training regularly and properly would be the key to any event like this one. The medical tents were full every night, and you don't want to be in there. Also, get good shoes!

For me, fundraising was the hardest part (in fact, I'm still about \$400 away from reaching my goal). I would be honest with people and tell them to start fundraising early, as it can be difficult. My Corps family was amazing and incredibly supportive, and I could not have done this walk without them!



Happy Safe Holiday Season

By Steve McCombs

LOS ANGELES — From the SPL Safety Office Staff, to all of you, our most sincere wishes for a safe and joyous holiday season. Regardless of what holidays you celebrate, there are some things to consider when planning your upcoming adventures.

Here's a question. If you were to be injured or even killed over the holidays, what do you think would be the cause?

- Fall from ladder while putting lights on your house.
- Fire in your home.
- Recreational injury.
- Traffic accident.
- All of the above, but most likely (d).

If you picked (e) then you're right on the money. Now go spend some of that money on gifts and help stimulate the economy!! But, I digress. Any of the accidents listed above are likely to occur during the holidays. We know this from organizations like the National Safety Council, the Home Safety Council and the Centers for Disease Control, just to name a few. They are predictable and they occur every year. That's the bad news. The good news is that when you can predict accidents, you can lower your risk with some easy-to-use precautions. Forewarned is forearmed!! Below are links to the above-mentioned organizations. Do yourself and your loved ones a favor – spend some time surfing them and put that information to good use.

When all is said and done, who, ultimately, is responsible for your safety?

- The Safety Office
- OSHA
- You

This is an easy question to answer, yes? Each of us bears the ultimate responsibility to keep ourselves safe. And there's an added bonus to this; as you take measures to protect yourself, you are helping keep others safe at the same time. So have a fabulous holiday season. Celebrate in your own fashion, rest, play, enjoy the time with your loved ones and take a good measure of safety with you. Best Holiday Wishes to All!

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

Helpful Holiday Safety Links

Centers for Disease Control
www.cdc.gov/family/holiday

National Safety Council
www.nsc.org

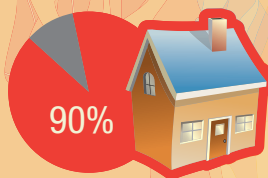
U.S. Fire Administration for Kids
www.usfa.fema.gov/kids

FIRE SAFETY

WHAT YOU SHOULD KNOW

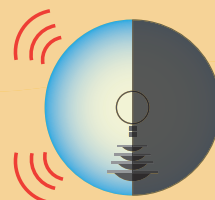
Every day at least one child dies in a home fire.

And every day, 293 children are injured by fire and burns.

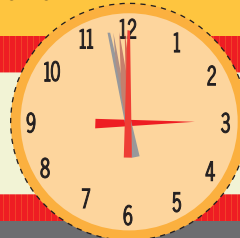


Home fires account for nearly 90 percent of all fire-related fatalities.

Working smoke alarms reduce the chance of dying in a home fire by half.



77% of families have **not** developed and practiced a home fire escape plan, one of the most important components to surviving a home fire.



Fire can spread rapidly through a home, leaving a family as little as two minutes to escape safely once the alarm sounds.

**HAVE WORKING SMOKE ALARMS.
PRACTICE AN ESCAPE PLAN.**



District Supports San Fernando Valley Veterans Day Parade

By Dave Palmer

PACOIMA, Calif. — The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Los Angeles District was among the more than 100 entries in the San Fernando Valley Veterans Day Parade Nov. 11 in Pacoima, Calif. Bands, drill units and service organizations from throughout the region participated in the ninth annual event.

“This parade is as energized and exciting as any Veterans Day event you’d find in America’s heartland,” said Lt. Col. Alex Deraney, deputy commander. “As a U.S. serviceman, I was personally grateful for the time and effort it took to recognize the sacrifices of our Veterans in such a meaningful way.”

Representing the District on the reviewing stand were Deraney and his wife Marisa. Bobber, the Water Safety Dog, and his escort Fany Anderson, safety specialist, drove the parade route in their customized awareness vehicle.

“Bobber and the safety team always support our outreach events,” said Jennie Ayala, outreach coordinator. “Real world events prevented us from having a larger presence. Our 47-foot Emergency Command and Control Vehicle and several staff members have deployed in response to Hurricane Sandy support.”

At the parade’s conclusion, attendees were treated to a carnival and information booths for community groups and service organizations like the



Lt. Col. Alex Deraney, Los Angeles District deputy commander, and his wife Marisa visited the San Fernando–Santa Clarita Valleys’ Habitat for Humanity booth to learn about volunteer opportunities with the Habitat for Heroes program. (USACE photo by Dave Palmer)

American Legion, Veterans of Foreign Wars and the Veterans Administration provided information for veterans and their families at the Richie Valens Recreation Center.

The Deraneys said they like to keep their family involved in the local community and what better way than helping veterans. Among others, they visited the San Fernando–Santa Clarita Valleys’ Habitat for Humanity booth

to learn about volunteer opportunities with the Habitat for Heroes program.

“A truly touching outpouring of support by the people and leadership of the San Fernando Valley and local communities,” said Deraney. “For those who think that Southern California has a cooler approach to supporting our troops, I would challenge them to attend the next San Fernando Valley Veterans Day Parade.”



Bobber, the Water Safety Dog, and his escort Fany Anderson, safety specialist, drove the parade route in their customized awareness vehicle. (USACE photo by Dave Palmer)

District's leaders meet at Seal Beach



Retired Lt. Gen. Robert Van Antwerp, former Chief of Engineers, speaks with current and future leaders Nov. 7 about his leadership experience and offers advice for attendees at the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Los Angeles District's Strategic Planning Meeting. During the three-day event, LA District team members heard from leaders in industry, public service and academia about the aspects of leadership and how they can apply them to their daily work life. (USACE photo by Richard Rivera)

By Daniel J. Calderón

SEAL BEACH, Calif. — Senior leaders and emerging leaders with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Los Angeles District met for a three-day planning meeting Nov. 7 - 9 to highlight District commander Col. Mark Toy's vision of "Building Strong and Taking Care of People!" and discuss plans to continue that District imperative along with implementing directives from senior commands over the course of the next year.

"This Strategic Planning Meeting is the culmination of more than two years of ... current strategic direction and vision," Toy wrote in a memorandum to attendees. "The goal of the training is to recognize the accomplishments of the past and inspire all SPL team members to be great leaders."

Toy pointed out the goal was not just to bring in the District's current

senior leadership. Instead, he ensured the meeting was open to Department of the Army interns, graduates of the Leadership Development Program and military service members within the District. In this way, he felt the messages discussed and the way forward decided on by attendees would be better carried forward and disseminated at all levels within the District.

The majority of the first day was dedicated to discussing accomplishments and learning about plans for the upcoming year from leaders within the LA District. In the afternoon, retired Lt. Gen. Robert Van Antwerp, currently the chief of Infrastructure and Executive Development for the Flippen Group, took the podium to discuss his views on leadership. Van Antwerp is a former LA District commander in the mid 1990s and was the Chief of Engineers from

2007 to 2011. He said leaders need to ensure their team members understand how they can be a full participant in the team's success.

"Every single person in your team is a vital puzzle piece," said Van Antwerp in his analogy. He likened the goals and participants of a team to a puzzle and the leader's vision to the most important piece – the box top. "Everyone should know where they fit into the puzzle and you, as the leader, should know where you want that team to be. You need to know what success looks like."

Van Antwerp also discussed how leaders need to ensure their team members are empowered to ensure the mission is accomplished and encouraged the attendees to take risks. He said leaders need to be accountable to their subordinates and to the community they serve.

The second and third days focused on how the District team members fit in to the overall USACE campaign plan. During day two, Nelson Cheng, the chief of the Business Management Division at South Pacific Division, talked about the plan at his level and how it affects District members. He said the District team should focus their efforts on meeting specific goals throughout the year.

"Actions [in the plan] are what you want to accomplish," he said. "Measures are your metrics and outcomes are your deliverables."

Following Cheng's discussion, Rep. Grace Napolitano gave her views of leadership. Napolitano represents California's 38th congressional district and has served since 2003. She talked about her time in Congress and her dealing with the Corps of Engineers.

"Working with Col. Toy has been great. He's like my son now. He's been so open and so helpful to the people in my district," Napolitano said. "I thank you so much for the work you [in the Corps] do for the people of the United States. You're like a combination of the Red Cross with engineers."

Napolitano discussed her career

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and urged attendees to follow their goals. She said her education reached high school level, but she took it upon herself to learn about whatever topics she was interested in or needed to ensure she was doing the best job she could. She also encouraged attendees to continue doing the best job possible in service to the nation and to communities around the district and across the country.

"If I had to choose just one person to speak to you about inspired leadership, this is that one person" said Toy when he introduced Napolitano. "She's not just a person who represents her district. She represents everyone."

The rest of the day was dedicated to break out sessions in which the attendees broke into groups to discuss how to best implement the aspect of the South Pacific Implementation Plan throughout the LA District. Groups then re-assembled and presented their plans with short question-and-answer sessions following each presentation.

The final day was a series of discussions on the art and implementation of leadership. Thomas Sy, PhD, with the department of Psychology at the University of California-Riverside, was the first speaker. He discussed how attendees could make the most of their leadership potential.

"Leadership is very much an art. And if you think about great artists, they don't photocopy," he said. "The same is true of great leaders. Think about what you think are aspects of great leaders and paint your own masterpiece. You have to be original and sincere. No one follows a copycat."

Sy also discussed how preconceived notions can color leaders. He said there has long been a "romance" with leaders, but only recently has any real study been given to followers. If leaders want to maintain good followers, they must first believe that their team members are good team members, he said. Otherwise, the notion that they have "bad" followers will become a self-fulfilling prophecy.

"Higher expectations lead to higher results," Sy said. "Small positive effects accumulate over time to huge effects."

Following Sy's discussion, retired Maj. Gen. Randal Castro, AECOM senior vice president for federal services, talked with attendees about his vision of leadership. Castro is a former USACE Division commander and was later the commandant of the U.S. Army Engineer School.

"One thing I want to you to remember is the acronym TIPS," he said. "T is talk with your people. I is inform your people. P is for predictability. People should know what to expect from their leaders. S is for sensitive. This is most important. You need to be sensitive to your people's needs."

Castro encouraged the members of the LA District to look inside themselves and see what kind of a person they are so they could figure out the best kind of leader they could be for both members of their team and for the overall District. He said each member of the team should be encouraged by their leader's example of striving to make a positive difference each day.

"Great leaders develop teams," Castro said. "In order for your team to do well, it is imperative that you have great teams within each of your teams that know how to work well with each other. If you bring in your team to everything you do, there is nothing you can't do."

After Castro talked with the current and future leaders, retired Lt. Gen. Robert Flowers, senior vice president for federal programs directorate for Arcadis, took the podium as the final speaker. Flowers was the 50th Chief of Engineers from 1996 to 2000. Before assuming command of the LA District, Toy served with Flowers as his aide when Toy was a Major.

"I would not be here as your District commander without General Bob Flowers," Toy said when he was introducing the general.

Flowers reminded the assembled leaders that the potential for leadership was in each member of their team.

"Anyone can be a leader," he said. "Good leaders all have common



Tomas Beuchamp-Hernandez writes notes while Teri Kaplan speaks with her team during a Nov. 8 breakout session at the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Los Angeles District's Strategic Planning Meeting in which various teams worked through workable applications of the South Pacific Division's Implementation Plan. (USACE photo by Richard Rivera)

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characteristics. Good leaders recognize and appreciate the people who work well within the team. Good leaders step up when they see a need that needs to be filled. Good leaders let their people know where they stand. Leadership can come from anywhere in a command.”

Flowers recalled the “Do it” card he unveiled and distributed during his tenure as Chief of Engineers. The card asked three questions:

1. Is it good for the customer?
2. Is it legal and ethical?
3. Am I willing to be held accountable for my actions?

Team members who could answer all three questions positively were encouraged to go forward with the actions needed to accomplish the mission. Flowers said the idea was met with some resistance; but, he feels subordinates need to feel a sense of ownership in any mission in order for it to succeed.

Throughout the three-day meeting, attendees asked questions of each of the speakers and had the opportunity to engage each other in discussions sometimes limited by distance throughout the wide-ranging district. From the newest intern to the District commander, attendees felt the time spent learning about leadership and forging even stronger bonds was worth the time spent.

“We assembled a group of great leaders whose mission was to inspire our current and future leaders of the District,” Toy said. “Our attendees were extremely engaged throughout the three-day event and definitely benefited from the coaching, teaching, and mentoring by our dynamic and charismatic speakers. Without question, “mission accomplished!”



U.S. Representative Grace Napolitano speaks with current and future leaders Nov. 8 about her experiences as a national-level leader at the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Los Angeles District's Strategic Planning Meeting. During the three-day event, LA District team members heard from leaders in industry, public service and academia about the aspects of leadership and how they can apply them to their daily work life. (USACE photo by Richard Rivera)



Members of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Los Angeles District pause Nov. 9 during the District's Strategic Planning Meeting for a photo with retired Lt. Gen. Robert Flowers, senior vice president for federal programs directorate for Arcadis, who was the 50th Chief of Engineers from 1996 to 2000. (USACE photo by Richard Rivera)

Toy said the initiatives discussed during the breakout sessions and the lessons learned will continue to build within the team and will allow each

member of the District to continue **“Building Strong and Taking Care of People!”**



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Around the District



welcome home

Col. Mark Toy, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Los Angeles District commander, welcomes back Tracy Brunson (in striped white shirt) during a Nov. 1, Arizona-Nevada Area Office's Roadrunner Resident Office ceremony in which Toy recognized Brunson's work for the Corps in Afghanistan and thanked his family for their service in allowing him to deploy.

Toy and David Van Dorpe, the LA District's Deputy District Engineer for Programs and Project Management presented awards and welcomed back team members who had recently returned from deployments overseas.



Stephanie Morgan, received a Commander's Award for Civilian Service.



Troy Olson, received a Commander's Award for Civilian Service.



David Gaynor, received a Commander's Coin his for service in Afghanistan.



Susan Hill, received a Commander's Award for her service in Afghanistan.



Kevin Thomas, received a Commander's Award for Civilian Service.



Gwen Meyer, received a Commander's Award for Civilian Service.

professional pride

Diane Taylor, a civil engineering technician for the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Los Angeles District Arizona-Nevada Area Office's Tucson Resident Office, receives a Commander's Award for Civilian Service from Col. Mark Toy, the LA District's commander, and David Van Dorpe, the LA District's Deputy District Engineer for Programs and Project Management during a Nov. 2 awards ceremony.



Shari Brandt, resident engineer for the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Los Angeles District Arizona-Nevada Area Office's Tucson Resident Office, receives a Commander's Award for Civilian Service from Col. Mark Toy, the LA District's commander, and David Van Dorpe, the LA District's Deputy District Engineer for Programs and Project Management during a Nov. 2 awards ceremony.



Christina Hansen, a project engineer for the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Los Angeles District Arizona-Nevada Area Office's Fort Huachuca Resident Office, receives a Commander's Award for Civilian Service from Col. Mark Toy, the LA District's commander, and David Van Dorpe, the LA District's Deputy District Engineer for Programs and Project Management during a Nov. 2 awards ceremony.



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farewell too

My career with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers:

"I will always cherish my time with the Corps and I feel so blessed to have worked for the most professional and best supervisors anyone could ask for; Project Engineer Stan Fujimoto and Resident Engineer Eleanor Encinas." ~ George Okumura



Deputy District Commander Lt. Col. Alex Deraney presented retiring civilian employee George Okumura an Army Commander's Award for Civilian Service and the commander's coin at the District headquarters Nov. 27. Dereany bid farewell to Okumura after 25 years of federal service, 19 of which was as a Construction Control Representative in the District's Construction Division. In the Commander's Award for Civilian Service, District Commander Col. Mark Toy said, "Mr. Okumura demonstrated exceptional skill in the interpretation and enforcement of specifications, safety requirements, and quality standards for the construction of many Military and Civil Works construction projects." (USACE photos by Richard Rivera)



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District helps clean up Papago Park Military Reservation



Jesse Laurie (right), a project manager with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Los Angeles District's Arizona-Nevada Area Office, works with Mike Berman, a senior engineer with Oneida Total Integrated Enterprises, Oct. 24 at Papago Park Military Reservation on the newly-revitalized dual-phase soil vapor extraction system. (USACE photo by Daniel Calderón)

By Daniel Calderón

PHOENIX — The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Los Angeles District began clean up operations Oct. 24 of the remnants from a decades-old underground fuel tank at Papago Park Military Reservation.

In 1988, three 2,000-gallon underground storage tanks containing gas and diesel fuel were removed from PPMR in an area near Bldg. 331. Based on the lab results from soil samples taken at the site, the Arizona Department of Environmental Quality determined that fuel had been released from the USTs. Following ADEQ's determination, members of the Arizona Army National Guard provided contractor oversight to clean up the fuel release.

A dual-phase Soil Vapor Extraction system was designed, based on site conditions, as a network of wells using vacuum pressure to remove hydrocarbon vapors from the ground while pumping out contaminated groundwater. Around 2008, the system was constructed at the site and began initial removal of vapors and contaminated groundwater.

"Unfortunately due to budget constraints, no money was originally budgeted for operation and maintenance, the system was turned off until a reliable funding source could be obtained," said Joellen Meitl, remediation program

manager at PPMR. AZANG received funding from Army Environmental Command for the system restart and O&M. "We determined that the Army Corps of Engineers could provide the expertise and contractor support to aid AZARNG with this environmental remediation project."

Once the AZARNG contacted the Corps for support, the LA District contracted with Oneida Total Integrated Enterprises to provide support, restart the SVE system, provide quarterly groundwater monitoring and prepare required documents to ADEQ.

"It was important that we got moving on this as soon as we could," said Jesse Laurie, the project manager for the Corps. "The facility (PPMR) was in danger of receiving a violation notice and fines from ADEQ if this project was delayed any longer. We got a new team together and have gotten the project back on track and put the facility back in compliance."

Laurie said the Corps awarded the contract modification to rehabilitate the system on Sept. 30.

"The praise for such a quick execution of the restart really belongs with the Technical Engineering Support Branch, especially Diane Clark who is the contract representative for the project," he continued. "We are very fortunate to have a contractor who is working as an integral part of the team."

OTIE made repairs to the system that had already been installed and began operations with the dual-phase extraction system on Oct. 24. They began extracting "product," or gasoline, from five of the six wells in the project area. The sixth well does not have any measurable contamination.

"We've gotten about two gallons of product out of the ground," said Mike Berman, a senior engineer and project manager for OTIE toward the end of the first day of extraction. "We're expecting to extract about six gallons a day during full operations."

Berman said there is no way to know how long the project will take, since he can't be sure how much product is underground. Meitl said the project has moved along well since the Corps got involved.

"It's been very easy to work with the Corps," she said. "They've taken care of all the legwork and let me focus on my other projects here."

The contract for the work is scheduled for two years. Laurie said he is looking forward to working with the team to complete the project.

"The goal of this project is to clean the groundwater at the site to the levels agreed upon by the state as described in the approved Corrective Action Plan for this site," he said. "Achieving that goal is one more way the Corps of Engineers is working to take care of the people of Arizona by improving the environment."

Project earns District an environmental design award

By Daniel J. Calderón

PHOENIX — Col. Mark Toy, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Los Angeles District commander, presented the Chief of Engineers Award of Excellence for Environmental Design to the City of Phoenix and representatives from the District's Arizona-Nevada Area Office, Archer-Western Contractors, Ltd., and Jacobs Engineering Group, Inc., for work done at the Tres Rios Environmental Restoration project, Phase II Flow Regulating and Overbank Wetlands, during a ceremony held Nov. 1 at Phoenix City Hall.

"In 2002, then-Major Toy came to work with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. I remember one of my very first trips was to Phoenix and we visited a demonstration wetlands project in the West Valley," he recalled. "I find it so wonderful to be back here now to see how that project has grown."

Toy, along with Rep. Ed Pastor and Phoenix Mayor Greg Stanton, gave remarks during the ceremony about the project.

"The Army Corps [of Engineers] does so much for the country and we certainly appreciate it," said Stanton. "We are certainly ahead of our time with this project."

Stanton went on to praise the project's level of sustainability and highlighted how it makes use of effluent in ways that are beneficial to the environment. The Tres Rios Environmental Restoration Project evolved from an early proposal for advanced nitrogen removal of effluent discharged from the 91st Avenue Wastewater Treatment Plant into a large scale habitat restoration, environmental education, flood control and public recreation project.

The project took shape in the early 1990's as a collaborative effort involving multiple stakeholders including the Corps, City of Phoenix, U.S. Bureau of Reclamation, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Arizona Department of Game & Fish, City of Avondale, Gila River Indian Community, the Flood Control District of Maricopa County, and the Environmental Protection Agency.



Rich Fontanilla, the Area Engineer for the Los Angeles District's Arizona-Nevada Area Office, receives the Chief of Engineers Award of Excellence for Environmental Design Nov. 1 from Col. Mark Toy, the LA District commander, for work done at the Tres Rios Environmental Restoration Project, Phase II Flow Regulating and Overbank Wetlands. (USACE photo by Daniel J. Calderón)

According to Stanton, the project treats effluent in a more natural way at one-tenth the cost of a wastewater treatment plant. He credits the idea for the wetlands to Pastor.

"You were sustainable before being sustainable was cool," Stanton said. "We, as a city, are way ahead of our time with this project."

The Tres Rios project is a portion of a chain of ecosystem restoration projects throughout the Phoenix metropolitan area that use available resources like treated effluent to restore riparian habitat along rivers that once flowed naturally through the "Valley of the Sun." During his university days, Pastor and his classmates looked at the decimated river systems and tried to envision a way to bring them back to a level usable by both the people and the wildlife in the area.

"At the beginning, people didn't believe we could do this," Pastor said. "Now, they can see this project serves many purposes. It takes the water from the treatment plant, filters it naturally and restores it to the environment.

It also offers flood protection to the community."

Treated effluent from the 91st Ave. treatment plant is pumped into the flow-regulating wetlands. The regular flow of effluent entering the system is between 15 and 120 million gallons per day, and the wetlands can support up to 450 mgd during storm events. As the water flows through the system, a second tier of water "polishing" removes total residual chlorine, ammonia, and whole effluent toxicity. "Polished" water passes through the wetland system over the course of several days before being discharged into the Salt River.

The Corps of Engineers, the City of Phoenix and other principles gathered in 2010 to dedicate the wetlands after completion of the initial project. In the intervening two years, bobcats, bald eagles, beavers, turtles and other wildlife have either made homes or visited the wetlands and overbank areas. More than 147 species of birds have been spotted and identified in the restored riparian corridor. Officials believe the renewed diversity and abundance of wildlife species should increase over the years. Toy said the level of cooperation required to complete the project is a par for the course for the Corps.

"Anyone familiar with the work our District has done knows this collaboration fits right into my motto emphasizing our dedication to **'Building Strong and Taking Care of People!'**" he said. "That commitment guides how we operate and how we ensure we keep faith with residents across our District."

The Chief of Engineers Awards of Excellence program dates to 1965 when it was first held as the Chief of Engineers Distinguished Architectural Achievement Awards with ten entries, for which two awards were given. Since that time, it has evolved to include landscape design, the environment and sustainability initiatives. The combination of disciplines supports the Corps' commitment to implementation of Executive Order 13514, Federal Leadership in Environment, Energy, and Economic Performance.

District helps dedicate Tucson project



Col. Mark Toy, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Los Angeles District commander, speaks at the Nov. 2 ribbon-cutting ceremony for the Tucson Arroyo Project Phase II B Park Avenue Basins project while a group of students from the nearby Highland Free School watches. (USACE photo by Daniel Calderón)

By Daniel J. Calderón

TUCSON, Ariz. — Members of the U. S. Army Corps of Engineers Los Angeles District were on hand Nov. 2 for a dedication ceremony of the Arroyo Chico Tucson Arroyo Project Phase II B Park Ave. Basins.

To open the ceremony, two local children led the assembly in the Pledge of Allegiance. Before LA District Commander Col. Mark Toy spoke, he thanked the two children and acknowledged the students who had come from the Highlands Free School near the site of the ceremony. Each of the students gathered came to the front and Toy led them in a round of in-place marching. He said it was great to lead a unit like that again.

"It's really exciting to be here," said Toy. "It's not often that I get to see a project go from inception to completion."

Toy thanked Hunter Contracting Co., the District's contractor, and talked about the history of the project. In 2010, using a continuing contract clause, the Corps awarded the construction of Phase II B, which consists of the final three basins. The Corps also awarded

Phase III channel improvements, and Phase IV High School Wash confluence improvements. Within the Fiscal Year 2010 appropriation cycle, The LA District received funds allowing for construction of Basins two and three. In the FY11 work plan, the Corps received funds allowing for construction of Basin one. The ribbon cutting ceremony for Phase II B was for Basins one, two and three.

"This is a project that will make a difference for a lot of people," said Ramón Valadez, Pima County Board of Supervisors chairman. "Most of us understand how important the Army Corps of Engineers is to this project and it wouldn't have happened without them."

The project provides flood risk management in the area and it is also an ecosystem restoration project. The project runs along the Tucson Arroyo in the Arroyo Chico watershed. Among the project's many improvements are 1.33 miles of paved multi-use pathways, more than half an acre of turf areas for recreation and culverts connecting the basins with enough room for passage by people.

"It's a great example of the federal

government partnering with local government," said Brandon Bragato, senior legislative assistant for Rep. Raúl M. Grijalva. "I'd like to congratulate everyone involved."

The dedication ceremony marks the latest success in a project that has been in the works for some time. In 1990, Insurance Study maps identified significant flooding problems in several areas, including Tucson Arroyo and Arroyo Chico Wash, which drain through central and downtown Tucson. Before Pima County completed construction of the Randolph Golf Course detention basin complex in 1996, some areas of the city were flooded as frequently as once every two years.

"I know it took a while to get where we are today; but, I appreciate everyone's patience and determination," Toy said. "Now, we have a project that will last a long time and will benefit generations to come."

Other representatives from the City of Tucson and Pima County spoke of the project's importance to the neighborhood and the residents. The completed project will provide protection to property, structures and the environment. More than 1,300 residential, multi-family, commercial and industrial structures are now out of the FEMA 100-year floodplain. The completed project will also provide protection to 16 acres of active Union-Pacific railroad track and nearly five miles of major streets – including the I-10 corridor. And, it will provide protection to Tucson's future with the proposed Tucson Modern Streetcar TIGER Grant.

"I am proud of the members of my team who worked tirelessly to take this from an idea to the reality here today to benefit the community," Toy said. "We look forward to strengthening our partnerships and we look forward to continuing projects, like the Tucson Area Drainage project, that will benefit the American people throughout our District. We look forward to being able to sustain our dedication to **'Building Strong and Taking Care of People!'**"

Recycling effort saves money and space

By Victoria Guilloty

LOS ANGELES — The disposition of excess equipment and materials has long been a challenge for the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Los Angeles District. Prior to 2010, excess equipment such as electronics and non-expendables were disposed of via the Defense Logistics Agency Disposal Services, formally known as the Defense Reutilization and Marketing Office which is about 100 miles away.

In 2009, the District executed a space compression project which produced large quantities of excess equipment and furniture. With this compression, storage became extremely limited. The District needed to come up with a cost effective plan that would enable it to dispose of the items as efficiently as possible and, at the same time, reduce storage space and minimize the disruption of daily operations.

“The DRMO staff at Camp Pendleton was always helpful, but they were very limited in what they could do,” said Carlos Urbina-Tafoya, District supply technician. “And being so far away without any packing materials or shipping support meant we had to find another solution.”

In order to meet the District’s needs in a cost effective manner, an alternate agency needed to be explored.

UNICOR, also known as Federal Prison Industries, a wholly owned U.S. Government Corporation, was determined to be a more efficient resource. With seven different factories throughout the U.S., they are not only able to dispose of a wide variety of equipment, but they also provide transportation services to pick up the excess equipment from any location. And, within a reasonable commute, UNICOR also can provide pallets, boxes or speed packs and other packaging materials at no cost.

“Labor and delivery costs have been significantly reduced compared to costs associated with delivery to and excessing to DRMO, which is 100 miles away,” said Warren Quesnell, director of Logistics Management. “Also, DRMO will not accept all kinds of excess equipment, nor do they accept salvage materials.”

Not only does UNICOR provide materials and transportation, but they also find Eco-friendly ways of disposing of or recycling the excess equipment. All items are thoroughly tested and evaluated before sold to other federal agencies or donated to local schools for reuse. Nonfunctional equipment is broken down and recycled to save precious



In this file photo, computer parts and accessories are packaged in tri-wall boxes prepared for shipment to the Defense Reutilization and Marketing Office at Camp Pendleton, Calif. (U.S. Air Force photo by Darnell Gardner)

resources.

Recently, UNICOR picked up 32 pallets of material including furniture, worth approximately \$122 thousand, from the District’s Baseyard in El Monte, Calif.

“Since 2010, the District has been able to save approximately \$20 thousand in transportation costs alone and have freed up more than 5000 square feet of storage space,” said Urbina-Tafoya.



Learn how reducing, reusing, and recycling can help you, your community, and the environment by saving money, energy, and natural resources @ epa.gov/recycle

**Reduce
Reuse
Recycle**

Time: It's the gift that keeps on giving... and taking...

By Daniel J. Calderón

There are times in my life when I just have to stop, take a look at things and wonder, “Wait. What? What just happened?” This is one of those times. I have reached a milestone in my life. Benjamin Franklin is quoted as saying (or maybe he wrote it), “At 20 years of age, the will reigns; at 30, the wit; and at 40, the judgment.” I’ve hit that magical 40th year. I say magical with more than a little sarcasm. You can’t hear it unless your hearing-impaired assisted speakers have that special sarcasm mode and that usually costs a lot extra, so trust me when I say I’m using “magical” sarcastically.

My deployment-damaged lungs, knee and back are letting me know that they aren’t happy with my treatment of them as I do my three-times-a-week (and every now and then I throw in extra) jog around the neighborhood. The clothes in my closet are shrinking at an alarming rate. I have to assume that the manufacturing standards when I bought them (because I really don’t have too many new things – my kids get the bulk of the new wardrobe funding) had to be at low levels or maybe the materials are shoddy. As I think I’ve noted before, the music I listened to as a kid and still enjoy to this day has been deemed “Oldies” by my kids’ friends and I really can’t tolerate much of the cacophony coming from the radio stations playing Top 40 songs today. I’m more a fan of singers or bands and less of AutoTune-designed, pre-packaged pop “stars.”

I’m at a place in my life where I’m taking stock of what was, pondering what is and trying to figure out what will be. I look back on the piece I wrote for the January 2012 issue where I was talking about my bucket list and I see I really didn’t make a lot of headway. I’m not too surprised, though. It’s a bucket list for a reason. I think if I ever truly emptied it, I would find myself quite bored.

Robert Herrick once wrote,
“Gather ye rosebuds
While ye may
Olde tyme is still a’flying
And this same flower
That smiles today
Tomorrow will be dying.”

It’s a sentiment attributed to the “Cavalier Poets,” they who espoused the notion of Carpe Diem or “Seize the Day!” Not sure if too many of you are aware; but, that’s a shortened version of the Latin “Carpe diem quam minimum credula postero,” which

translates roughly to “Seize the Day, putting as little trust as possible in the future.” The Cavaliers basically espoused the notion that life is a transient condition at best and we, who are living our transient lives, should dedicate ourselves to making each moment count, because once that moment passes, it can never be recovered. No amount of money, fame or power can bring back even a portion of a second once it has gone by.

I’ve found myself running head-on into middle age and I can hardly believe I’m at this point.

The middle is kind of an odd place to be sometimes. Middle children tend to feel like they, for some reason, aren’t as special as the oldest or the youngest. Middle management is almost a no-man’s land where upward mobility is balanced precariously with a downward spiral. Middle Earth was a rough place to be in spite of (or maybe because of) magic and elves and the whole lot. The Middle East is a mess and don’t even get me started on the middle finger. That just opens up a whole different can of worms.

So, yeah, the middle of things can be a difficult place. Middle age is really no different.

So, as I embrace 40 and stride into middle age, I find myself re-thinking my life (reviewing the situation, as Fagin might say)

in the past, present and future. I’m less afraid and annoyed about turning 40. I guess it’s just another phase of my adventure aboard starship Earth. For another tune, I recommend taking a listen to “End of the Line” by The Traveling Wilbury’s. It’s a great little sing-along song for those of us who have reached a certain point in life. I think I’ve finally reached a point where I don’t feel guilty about calling 20-somethings “kid” or “Sparky.” My body still hasn’t reached the age of my mind; but, it’s getting there.

I guess I’ve done enough pondering out of habit that the idea of turning 40 isn’t such a gut-wrenching prospect. For my fellow mid-lifers, I join your ranks with a little trepidation and a lot of stories to tell. For the youths I have left behind, I encourage you to learn from experience; but, don’t be afraid to try something new on your own. For the golden agers, I am, as always, ready to hear your tales of days gone by. After all, anyone can learn from their own mistakes. I want to learn from yours so I can make all new ones on my own. And now, onward and upward. It’s 40 down and who knows how many more left ahead. Steady on the helm, my friends, and let’s see where we can have another bit of fun.

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