



Col. Mark Toy, commander of the Los Angeles District, and Los Angeles Mayor Antonio Villaraigosa address members of the media, local elected officials, and other stakeholders during a press briefing marking the completion of the 10-year project. (Photo by David A. Salazar)

District completes POLA project

Greg Fuderer

LOS ANGELES – Standing on the fantail of the USS Iowa, dignitaries watched as a dredge lifted the final bucket of material from the water and emptied it into an adjacent barge, marking the end of a \$370 million channel deepening project at the Port of Los Angeles April 3.

“This project is the latest mutual effort in a partnership that began in the late 19th Century, where the very first project undertaken by the newly-formed Los Angeles District was to construct the San Pedro breakwater (at the port),” Col. Mark Toy, Los Angeles District Commander, told guests at the ceremony aboard the decommissioned U.S. Navy battleship.

Since that beginning more than 100 years ago, the Port and the Corps have worked together on numerous projects to ensure safe navigation and the expansion of dock facilities that are necessary for the port to maintain its status as one of—if not the—most important maritime facilities in the nation.

Los Angeles Mayor Antonio Villaraigosa hosted the ribbon cutting ceremony.

“This project was important to us because we understand that in order to compete with ports in the United States and

around the world, we’ve got to make investments,” Villaraigosa said. “And we’ve made \$1.3 billion in investments and some 20,000 jobs to make sure we’re competitive.”

To remain competitive in the global shipping industry, the port invests billions of dollars in port and shipping infrastructure, the mayor said. The 10-year project removed 15 million cubic yards of material, enough to fill Dodger Stadium twice over, and employed 880 people around the clock.

“The Port of LA is officially big-ship-ready,” Villaraigosa proclaimed.

“It’s important to note that when we say we’ve got to compete with (the Panama Canal), Panama will not be able to handle some of the ships of the size that we will with this dredging of the main channel, so we’re excited and we’re ready,” he said. “But don’t think for a moment that this is the end of the line. We’re going to continue to make the investments to stay competitive and to make sure that this Port remains the pre-eminent port complex in the United States.”

Throughout the project, the Corps, Port and other partners adapted to changes in personnel, laws, funding and other issues.

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The result is a state-of-the-art facility that not only meets the requirements of today, but maintains the Port's ability to anticipate, plan and construct a facility to meet the needs of tomorrow, not only for the port, but for people in the area and throughout the nation.

"It's not just about deeper waters, it's really about reviving the economy in this region and our nation," said Rep. Janice Hahn, an early champion of the project.

"The projects that we do require partnerships and alignment on all levels; we need people all working together to make it work," said Toy. "In the District, we have a motto, 'Building Strong and Taking Care of People.' We use that motto, because we want people to know that every project we do, every permit we issue, has--at its heart--the idea that we are taking care of people."

Dr. Geraldine Knatz, the executive director of the Port of Los Angeles, also spoke of the importance of deepening the channel.

"Size matters, and a port is defined

by the depth of its channel," Knatz said. "There are a lot of ports around the country trying to get to 45 or 50 feet, but this effort at 53 feet is a testament to our ongoing commitment to be the nation's premier gateway to international trade."

The project deepened the main channel from 45 feet to 53 feet and will improve the efficiency of operations and reduce the costs for transporting goods to and through the region. The contractor, Manson Construction Company of Long Beach, dredged about 12 million cubic yards of material, placing it at several sites within the harbor to support shallow water habitat and to expand piers and dock space.

"This isn't a project that belongs just to the City or just to the Corps--it belongs to the world, as it increases efficiency in the movement of goods around the globe," said David Van Dorpe, the deputy district engineer for programs and project management for the Corps' Los Angeles District. "Strong partnerships are key to the success of any project. From the City and the Port to our contractor, Mason, and our polit-

ical officials, the deepening project was successful because of the commitment by all the partners to see it through."

"Deepening the channels has not been an easy task," Toy said. "Over the course of the project, people have come and gone. Funds have been appropriated, and sometimes not. Agencies have responded to changes in regulations and responsibilities. But through teamwork and effort, we have met the demand: to enable the Port of Los Angeles to continue to lead the maritime industry into the 21st Century and beyond."

Toy told those attending the ribbon cutting ceremony that the number of jobs, the money that will flow into, through, and because of the port, and the volume of goods that will arrive and be distributed through the port are important numbers.

"But the true worth of the project we are dedicating today is the benefits it will provide for people. Directly or indirectly, locally or nationally, immediately or in the future, the work we recognize today will benefit the lives of many people," Toy said.

By the Numbers

Pre-dredging depth
of the Port of LA: **45** FEET

Post-dredging
depth: **53** FEET

Depth of second
largest U.S. port: **45** FEET (PORT OF NEW YORK)

Draft of
largest container
vessel: **48** FEET (MAERSK TRIPLE E CLASS)

Additional containers per shipment
transported by the Triple E Class
than the next largest vessel: **2,500**
(18,000 total)



Number of jobs related to
the Port of
Los Angeles
nationwide: **3.6** MILLION

Annual state and federal
tax revenue
generated
by the Port: **\$23** BILLION

Value of trade imported
through the
Port to the
U.S. economy: **\$260** BILLION

Graphic by David A. Salazar

COMMANDER'S MESSAGE

Dear District Teammates:

Last week, I attended the South Pacific Division's change of command, where Brigadier General Michael Wehr transferred command to Colonel Andrew Nelson. It was a nice ceremony honoring two great leaders and mentors.

May is here and if you're like me, you're probably looking forward to enjoying a much-deserved extended weekend to observe Memorial Day at the end of the month. I look forward to barbecuing, catching some rays at the beach, and most of all, spending time with my family. I also look forward to what lies ahead for the district in terms of our mission.

I'm sure you're all aware of what's been happening with the President's budget. The budget for fiscal year 2014 includes more than \$79 million in federal funds for studies, construction and the operation and maintenance of civil works projects in this district. Although next year's budget is frugal and reflects the priorities of a nation in the midst of a difficult economic climate, it recognizes the importance of Southern California navigation, flood risk reduction infrastructure and environmental restoration.

More specifically, the budget includes \$200,000 for a reconnaissance study for Salton Sea restoration and \$400,000 and \$800,000, respectively, for feasibility studies for Los Angeles River Ecosystem Restoration and for the California Coastal Sediment Master Plan. It also proposes \$42 million for continued flood risk reduction construction along the Santa Ana River Mainstem, as well as nearly \$36 million for the operation and maintenance of navigation and flood risk reduction projects.

In Arizona, we recently awarded a contract for more than \$475,000 to redesign a concrete I-Girder bridge in Nogales. The redesign will greatly reduce the overall cost of the project and allow us to award a construction contract for the bridge by the end of this fiscal year. The design we're going for is significantly different than previous designs because we will see far less in-channel disturbance to construct the bridge structure.

Regarding operations and maintenance, the budget provides about \$18.5 million for flood risk reduction projects at the Los Angeles County Drainage Area, Mohave River Dam and Santa Ana River Basin in California; at Alamo Lake, Painted Rock Dam and Whitlow Ranch Dam in Arizona; and at Pine and Mathews Canyons Lake in Nevada.

The budget also proposes a little more than \$17 million for navigation projects including project condition surveys and navigational dredging projects at Los Angeles-Long Beach Harbors, Morro Bay, Oceanside Harbor, Santa Barbara Harbor and Ventura Harbor.

Our missions are diverse and so are our needs. The people in our organization remain our greatest asset and accomplishing our missions to the benefit of communities is our goal. I know the funding sounds significant and it is. It is significant because it allows us to continue doing what we do best: Building Strong and Taking Care of People!

Warm Regards,
COL Toy
Col. R. Mark Toy



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Corps continues innovative partnership

Daniel Calderon

LAKE HAVASU, Ariz. – The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Los Angeles District has helped develop a strong partnership at Alamo Dam and along the Bill Williams River to continue sustaining our nation's economic and water resources.

“Originally, the dam's functions were flood control, water conservation and recreation,” said Rene Vermeeren, the LA District's chief of Hydrology/Hydraulics Branch. “We found out ten years later that having a steady flow in the original prescription for the outflow, we found that we reduced the riparian habitat by as much as 70 percent.”

Although the Corps operated the flow releases for the dam according to available specifications, there were more factors to be considered. As the downstream habitat was affected, the Corps joined a partnership of interested agencies.

“Back in 1995, there was a partnership formed that included the Corps of Engineers, Fish and Wildlife Service, state and federal agencies that all had an interest in the Bill Williams River,” said Richard Gilbert, project leader for the Lake Havasu National Wildlife Refuge Complex. “They recognized a need to look at flows out of Alamo Dam to do good things for public use, fisheries, recreation, endangered species and habitat.”

Through the collaboration, known as the Bill Williams River Corridor Steering Committee, with other govern-

ment agencies and partners, the Corps ensured the flows from Alamo Dam maximized taxpayer dollars by maintaining a high level of sustainability for a variety of communities. Alamo Lake Park benefitted from the dam's reservoir, as did visiting boaters, fishermen and campers. Campers at the park share the land with the wild burros which live among the rugged terrain.

With more than 300 current species of birds and new species coming in every year, the wildlife along the river and at the Wildlife Refuge Complex benefitted from the controlled releases from Alamo Dam which are a part of the “flow regime” the Steering Committee developed. The managed flows to the 50 miles of the river serve to rejuvenate the native riparian habitat by mimicking natural flows. The Corps manages nearly twelve million acres of water and is consistently seeking innovative and environmentally sustainable solutions to the nation's water resources challenges to help strengthen the nation.

“The Corps of Engineers has been fantastic,” Gilbert said. “When the process started, we were fortunate to have a person with the Corps of Engineers that could really listen to us biologists, interpret what we were saying and turn it into something that engineers and hydrologists could understand.”

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers strives to protect, sustain, and improve the natural and man-made environment of our nation, and is committed to compliance with applicable environmental and energy statutes, regulations, and Executive Orders. Sustainability is not only part of the Corps' decision processes, but is also part of its culture.



The Bill Williams National Wildlife Refuge, currently home to more than 300 species of birds with at least two more species coming in every year and an array of native riparian flora, benefits from water contained and released from Alamo Dam by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Los Angeles District, which entered an innovative partnership with state and federal agencies in the 1990s. Through the innovative partnership, known as the Bill Williams River Corridor Steering Committee, the District helps maintain a state park which hosts thousands of visitors every year and sustain 50 miles of downstream riparian habitat along the Bill Williams River all the way to Lake Havasu. (Photo by Jay Field)

Study: One in five Californians face flood threat

Sacramento District Public Affairs

LOS ANGELES - One in five Californians lives in a flood plain and nearly everyone in California is at risk from flooding.

That's the warning delivered by a new, comprehensive report on flood risk throughout the state, developed by the California Department of Water Resources and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers' South Pacific Division. "California's Flood Future: Recommendations for Managing California's Flood Risk," released in draft for public review April 3, describes for the first time the specific flood threats and their consequences in every county in California.

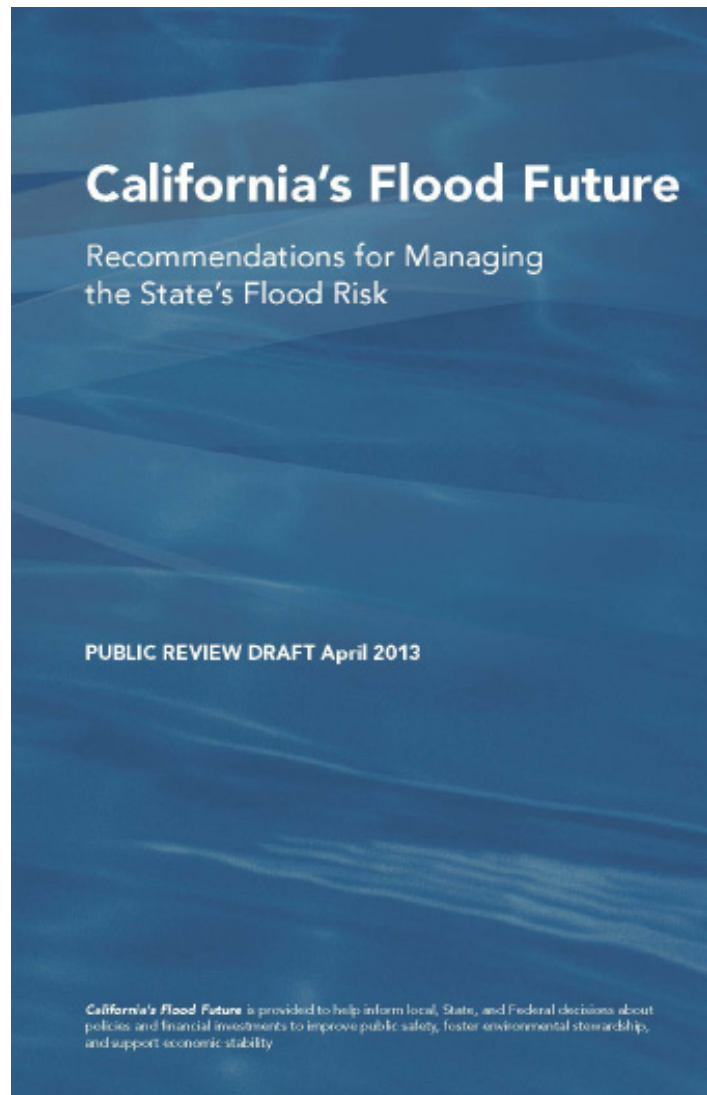
"What we found is that floods have the potential to affect just about everyone who lives in California," said Kim Carsell, the Corps' lead planner for the project. "Even if you're not flooded, things you depend on – utilities, hospitals, the farms that grow your food – could be. So a flood would still be a big problem for you; and really, for the nation."

The report is intended as a guide for how California can most effectively reduce the threat of its growing flood problem in the near and long term.

Every one of California's 58 counties has had a major flood during the last 20 years, the report revealed, and more than \$575 billion in infrastructure and \$7 billion in crops are exposed to flooding. California has one of the world's largest economies, so a major flood here would have national and even international impacts.

The report also concludes that existing flood risk reduction infrastructure in California does not meet the state's needs, and that even currently-planned future projects would not be enough to address its growing flood threats.

Historically, projects to reduce flood risk in California have often been built to address isolated, local problems – a levee here, a dam there – not always considering the connections between flooding issues within their larger watershed. Among its seven major recommendations, the report concludes that the future of flood risk reduction is about



PUBLIC SAFETY

ENVIRONMENTAL STEWARDSHIP

ECONOMIC STABILITY



"California's Flood Future: Recommendations for Managing California's Flood Risk" saw the Corps' expertise in flood management utilized in the collaborative effort.

designing and prioritizing projects with multiple benefits: projects that reduce flood risk throughout a watershed, while also restoring the environment and improving water supply reliability.

Staff from each of the three South Pacific Division Corps districts in California – San Francisco, Los Angeles and Sacramento – contributed to "California's Flood Future," which received technical review from the division's fourth district in Albuquerque. The study team, including Corps staff as well as staff from the California Department of Water Resources, consulted 142 local

agencies throughout the state to compile the data that informs the report's conclusions. The report was funded by the state of California.

California's lead planner for the report, Terri Wegener, said it is just the first phase in a long-term effort to re-imagine how the state manages flood risk and plan projects that make the most efficient use out of limited resources.

"It is much smarter and more cost effective to reduce flood risk now than to spend billions of dollars trying to recover from a major flood," Wegener said.

Holocaust survivor shares somber story

Kristen Skopeck

LOS ANGELES — Employees of the Los Angeles District of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers gathered April 9 to listen to Albert Rosa, a Jew and Holocaust survivor from Greece, recount his tragic story of survival and endurance for the purpose of Holocaust remembrance. Coincidentally, the day marked the 73rd anniversary of Germany's assault on Denmark and Norway.

"I owe my life to the U.S. Army," Rosa said. "If it wasn't for the Army, I wouldn't be here today."

A spunky, fiercely patriotic and proud-of-his-heritage man in his late 80s, Rosa shared horrifying memories from six years of slavery and human indignity that began when he was 15 years old and resulted in the deaths of 70 of his family members.

He spoke of how, although young, his passion and training to be a professional boxer like his older brother probably helped save his life. It gave him the stamina to survive the day in 1939 when he was roughly awakened from sleep to witness his grandmother and mother being bludgeoned and then being separated from his siblings, herded onto a cramped truck, then a train, for a 10-day trek without food, water, or facilities, only to arrive at a concentration camp in Poland where the majority of youth under 16 were taken to the gas chambers and killed because they had no value as slave labor. He said he went on to endure years of hard labor, while continuously surrounded by death and the smell of burning bodies, and he only ate two-to-three days a month. Understandably, it was just too much for many of the other detainees who succumbed to the cold, malnutrition, beatings, illness, and degradation.

The camp was overseen by "capos" (comrade police force) made up of killers, rapists and criminals who were released from jails and given guns to control the Jews. Rosa said they had no compunction against brutality and, for fun, would sometimes bet each other to see how far away they could hit a target, and the targets were the laborers.

The Jews were dehumanized in every



Albert Rosa, a Jew and Holocaust survivor from Greece, visited the Los Angeles District April 9 to tell his tragic story of time spent in concentration camps during World War II. (Photo by David A. Salazar)

way and, like all the rest, Rosa's name was replaced by a tattooed number on his arm, which he ended up hiding or making excuses for later.

Rosa showed the District employees bumps and scars all over his body—a few were the result of an attack by a guard dog, one large one was from being stabbed in the stomach by a bayonet, and another was from a bullet grazing his knee. During several scuffles, he tried to "give as good as he got" by using his boxing training, but he always ended up outnumbered and incapacitated and has the disfiguration to prove it. He kept telling himself that he needed to survive, so he could avenge the deaths of his family and friends.

At one point, he was ordered to pull the gold teeth from a pile of bodies, and he surreptitiously stole and hid enough teeth so that he could eventually make himself a ring in the shape of the Star of David when the war ended.

When Germany was defeated in 1945, Rosa was caught in the melee and chaos when Allied troops opened the gates of his camp. He joined a small band of men who ran from the camp into a forest, but two of the group froze to death while fleeing and two others died from gorging on food they stole from a farm. Rosa said that eating rich food after starving for so long made all of them sick.

He and three others eventually came across an Hispanic-American

soldier who directed them to a military encampment where Holocaust survivors were being helped. There, Rosa scrounged for clothes and ended up with castoff uniform items. Ironically, at one point, he was mistaken for a regular soldier when he was willingly fighting alongside active-duty soldiers in an attempt to round up Nazis. He was even given an unofficial award for his bravery, when he was shot while trying to rescue an Army colonel who badly needed medical attention. He was also given the honorary rank of Master Sergeant.

After the war, Rosa spent time in the arms trade helping to equip people in Palestine, before applying to come to live in the United States. In 1948, he arrived, via ship, in Louisiana and traveled to Denver. After determining Colorado was too cold, Rosa came to live in Santa Monica, Calif., and he proceeded to open a delicatessen and liquor store. He considers himself to be a moderately rich man today.

"When I heard I would be able to come tell my story to people in the Army Corps of Engineers, I was happy to do it," he said. "I owe my life to the Army, and I've done well for myself through very hard work."

Rosa said he is proud to be an honorary sheriff of Los Angeles County and an honorary member of their SWAT team. He also said he is still boxing today, but only with his grandchildren.

Partnerships bring recognition, success

Greg Fuderer

COSTA MESA, Calif. – The first three rules of real estate may well be “Location, location, location,” but when it comes to getting potential projects through the planning phase and into construction, one simple rule appears to evolve: Partnerships.

That fact became evident as several hundred watershed management professionals gathered here April 11 to discuss the benefits of consolidating efforts for maximum benefit in the present and anticipated times of fiscal limitations.

“You only need to look as far as the title of the conference, ‘The Power of Partnerships,’” said Col. Mark Toy, commander of the Corps’ Los Angeles District. “I talked about how our budgets are really flat, and so you’ve got to look at innovative ways you can bring people together so you can create synergy. People in D.C. want to see sponsors representing a region, not just one project.”

The conference, hosted by the Santa Ana Watershed Project Authority, introduced speakers from federal, state and regional government agencies and from private industry who discussed the future of integrated watershed management and how its implementation increases the chances of getting projects approved and funded.

“When you come together in a way where you’re all on the same sheet of music and you’re budgeting for a watershed series of projects, there’s strength in that,” Toy said, “because the value to nation is greater when it affects more than just one sponsor, more than just one city, more than just one stakeholder. It’s really just making the most of those partnerships

that are out there.”

Josephine Axt, chief of the District’s Planning Division, agreed.

“You don’t just go to D.C. anymore and say ‘I want this,’” she said. “Members of Congress are looking for people who say, ‘We’re working with X, Y and Z in a collaborative fashion, and this is what the region needs, and this is how the region is working together.’”

That philosophy proved successful in two regards: the inclusion of \$42 million in the president’s fiscal year 2014 proposed budget for construction along the Santa Ana River mainstem and the selection of the Santa Ana River watershed by Corps headquarters as a primary example of how collaboration among agencies can lead to project success.

“I’m really happy that in the Corps, the Santa Ana River watershed has been identified as a model effort of collaboration,” Toy said. “That’s the reason it went forward as the study that’s going to represent USACE in the next iteration of what watershed-based budgeting is going to look like. They could have chosen anything, but they chose SAWPA because of the great collaboration that exists.”

According to Axt, one can expect that collaboration will continue not only along the Santa Ana River, but with similar projects throughout the Corps.

“So in terms of the success of this conference, it was a great opportunity for Col. Toy to announce that the Santa Ana River watershed was selected as the model,” Axt said. “Headquarters said, ‘We like what they did. We like how they did it. We’re holding them up as what people should try to replicate.’”



Following “The Power of Partnerships” conference, Col. Mark Toy, commander of the Corps’ Los Angeles District, converses with (l to r) Phil Anthony, chair of SAWPA and a member of the Board of Directors of the Orange County Water District, Mike Marcus, general manager of the Orange County Water District, and Celeste Cantu, general manager for SAWPA. The Santa Ana Watershed Project Authority sponsored the conference held April 11 in Costa Mesa, Calif. (Photo by Greg Fuderer)

Earthquake specialist shares insights about California's next 'big one' with employees

Kristen Skopeck

LOS ANGELES — Renowned California seismologist Dr. Lucy Jones spoke to Los Angeles District employees April 15, at the invitation of the District's Emergency Operations Center. As the U.S. Geological Survey's Science Advisor for Risk Reduction, Jones spends a lot of time analyzing the world's earthquakes and aftermath in an attempt to help minimize the impact of future quakes.

Jones confirmed it is only a matter of time until an earthquake with a magnitude greater than 7 is experienced in Southern California and causes damage throughout the entire region. She said, according to predictive models, the area is already overdue.

Concerns about the inevitable damage following such a quake led to the development of the ShakeOut Earthquake Scenario, a comprehensive study of a magnitude-7.8 earthquake by scientists at the U.S. Geological Survey, Southern

California Earthquake Center, California Geological Survey, and by various experts. The study formed the basis of The Great Southern California ShakeOut, the largest earthquake readiness campaign in U.S. history.

The study scenario involved a rupturing of the southern San Andreas Fault for more than 200 miles, with an epicenter on the northeast side of the Salton Sea in Imperial County, producing more than 100 seconds of shaking throughout Southern California. In some areas, the shaking and shifting of ground would likely shove houses off foundations and send unsecured furniture flying. It was estimated that the shaking would be more than 50 times worse than the shaking caused by the Northridge earthquake and would inevitably result in fires, twisted roads and rail, power outages, communication failures, and loss of food and water supplies.

"The San Andreas Fault was selected because it is the biggest and fastest moving of the hundreds of other California faults that could produce earthquakes larger than a magnitude of 6," Jones said. "The high concentration of faults in and around Los Angeles County translates into the area having one-fourth of all the seismic risk in the United States. At any given time in Southern California, a person is within 10 miles of an active fault."

The study can be found in a document called Putting down roots in earthquake country at: <http://www.earthquakecountry.info/roots/index.php>.

Jones acknowledged the devastating impacts the scenario quake would have on modern society. She said the fires will double the losses, both deaths and financial. People's dependence on utilities, including cell phones, will leave them in the dark, figuratively and literally. Food conveyance will be interrupted, and stores no longer have large storage capacity for refrigerated items. Finally, water will be the biggest problem of all. The study estimates that it will take six months to get water restored, and much longer where entire water systems need to be reconstructed.

"Understanding possible destruction allows us to make choices today," she said. "We need to strengthen our infrastructure, implement earthquake early warning systems and include disaster planning in our decisions."

Both Jones and the study tout the importance of "preparing" to survive a disaster and promote seven steps to follow: create a plan; secure items in the home; strengthen the home; prepare disaster kits in advance; survive by dropping, covering and holding on during a quake; check for injuries afterward; and follow the plan.

"The majority of earthquake deaths come from falling 'things,'" Jones said. "If I was in this building during an earthquake, I would get away from the windows and get under a desk, or table; or, I would go to a stairwell."

Unfortunately, she said, the best building codes in the world do nothing for buildings built before the codes were enacted, and, while codes have been updated, many older buildings are still in place.



California seismologist Dr. Lucy Jones spoke to Los Angeles District employees April 15, at the invitation of the District's Emergency Operations Center. Jones is the U.S. Geological Survey's Science Advisor for Risk Reduction. (Photo by Kristen Skopeck)



Col. Mark Toy (left), commander of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Los Angeles District, welcomes members of the Society of American Military Engineers to a meeting held April 25 at the LA Hotel Downtown. Members participated in several panel discussions that addressed potential upcoming business opportunities for civil works and military projects in Southern California, Arizona and Nevada. (Photo by Greg Fuderer)

District commander briefs military engineers at conference

Greg Fuderer

LOS ANGELES – About 100 military engineers met with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers here April 25 at the LA Hotel Downtown to discuss the district's proposed fiscal year 2014 budget, the potential impacts of sequestration on Corps projects and upcoming business opportunities.

Col. Mark Toy, commander of the Corps' Los Angeles District, told members of the Society of American Military Engineers that the budget provides more than \$79 million in federal funds for studies, construction and the operation and maintenance of civil works projects in the district.

"The availability of these funds has a direct impact on you and your business opportunities," Toy said.

Toy said the majority of the funding supports restoration studies and the construction and the operation and maintenance of flood risk reduction and navigation projects. He also advised members that, while the district is attempting to minimize the impacts of the sequestration, it has the potential to affect military projects more than civil works projects.



Col. Mark Toy (left), commander of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Los Angeles District, welcomes members of the Society of American Military Engineers to a meeting held April 25 at the LA Hotel Downtown. Members participated in several panel discussions that addressed potential upcoming business opportunities for civil works and military projects in Southern California, Arizona and Nevada. (Photo by Greg Fuderer)

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Good ergonomics are not a pain in the neck!

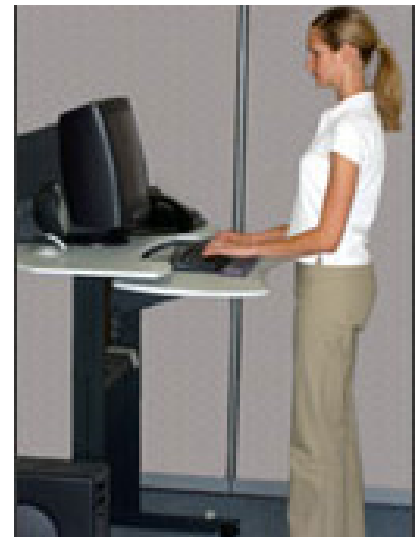
Steve McCombs

Most of you have probably heard the term, “ergonomics”, at some point. Some of you actually understand what it means. However, when I walk the spaces here in the District Office and out in the field, I often cringe when I see the lack of understanding in practice. I’m not poking anyone in the eye, mind you. If you have never had a good ergonomics class or an ergonomic evaluation of your workplace, there’s a good chance you are simply lacking the proper information. So it is my humble task to help bring you up to speed.

Simply defined, ergonomics means “The Laws of Work.” It’s the science of adapting the job and/or the equipment and the human to each other for optimal safety and productivity. We all too often try to “fit” ourselves into a workstation. This is a big mistake and many occupational injuries - such as Carpal Tunnel Syndrome - are often the result. Rule number one is: “Fit the workstation to the employee, not the other way around!!”

Classic example; how many of you are typing away on your keyboard while you are simultaneously talking on the phone by holding the phone to your ear with your shoulder scrunched up and your head tilted to the side? Come on, be honest. Now, if you are one of those who answered ‘yes’ ask yourself if you have shoulder, neck or upper back pain on that same side. We folks in the ergonomics business refer to this as “Taco Neck” (a term derived from the position one places their head in order to eat a hard-shelled taco). Now imagine holding your neck in that position for hours! That’s exactly what you’re doing if you have that phone pinched up between your neck and shoulders for long periods of time. A simple solution to this is using your speaker phone. If you don’t have that option, a headset is an inexpensive solution for those of you who spend significant amounts of time each day on the phone.

Another common ergonomic no-no is typing with your wrists bent up



backwards. This creates a great amount of friction and pressure in your wrists, which just happens to be where that aforementioned Carpal Tunnel is located. A simple adjustment of your keyboard position is often all that is needed.

The most common factors in ergonomic injuries are Awkward Positions, Pressure and Repetitive Motion. There are more, but these three are the main culprits for many common ergonomic problems. Let’s go back to your wrists. If they are bent backwards while you type, and you spend most of your day on your computer; well, you’ve got all three risk factors at once!

OSHA.gov

The tools of your trade, whether they are heavy construction equipment or a computer workstation, or anything in between, don’t need to be the cause of you having a workplace injury. Take a brief amount of time and check out the link below to OSHA’s computer workstation information page. And don’t forget that your Safety Office is a great resource. “The Force is Safety Strong with us!”

For more information on ergonomics, visit OSHA’s website by clicking [here](#).

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

Safety Steve

Units join forces for STEM outreach

David A. Salazar

TORRANCE, Calif. – Leaders from the Corps of Engineers' Los Angeles District and the Los Angeles Recruiting Battalion met with community officials to bolster the interest of local youth in careers in science, technology, engineering, and math—also known as STEM.

The meeting, which was held April 26 at the Toyota Museum, was hosted by the recruiting battalion to foster collaboration amid the multitude of existing STEM outreach initiatives in the area. The meeting was attended by dozens of educators, community leaders, and other Army advocates as part of a larger program meant to assist local Army recruiting programs.

The agenda for this particular meeting concentrated mainly on how schools, the recruiting battalion, and the district, could join forces to meet the nation's growing need for scientists and engineers in the coming years.

Army Lt. Gen. Thomas Bostick, commanding general of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, addressed the need in a video clip played as part of the panel discussion.

"The challenge is very clear: we need approximately 1 million more STEM graduates from college by the year 2020. That's an increase of 35 percent in STEM graduates that we're getting today," Bostick said.

"Out of 100 ninth graders that go to college across the country, only about six will study STEM (programs.) So if we're going to reach that one million additional STEM graduates by 2020 requirement, we really need programs across the country that inspire—that ignite a passion—in our youth that this is something they can do—that they must do—in order for this country to enjoy the peace and the prosperity that we've enjoyed for so many years."

Bostick, who previously served as commanding general of the U.S. Army Recruiting Command from 2005 to 2009, was the catalyst for kicking off the burgeoning partnership.

"Lieutenant Gen. Bostick understands what's out there and he knew that there were ways of bringing all of these people together," said Army Col. Mark Toy, commander of the Corps of Engineers' Los Angeles District. "So he actually gave me an order when he visited the district on Jan. 18, he said 'I want you to attend the next (Grassroots Advisory Board) meeting.' He recommended that the LA District partner with the LA Recruiting Battalion and the board because he knows that this is a great organization and this is something that he is very passionate about."

A recurring theme of the discussion brought about another good reason for organizations to work together: fiscal uncertainty. As funding dries up for many programs, it only makes sense to pool resources to meet similar goals. Such teamwork would ultimately allow the Army to pool its resources in order to consistently reach out to area schools.

Visiting schools on a regular basis and with a consistent message will help bridge the gaps often left by larger initiatives and may help make Army recruiters more accessible to



Col. Mark Toy, commander of the Los Angeles District, speaks with local educators and community leaders during the panel discussion on STEM. (Photo by David A. Salazar)

teenagers curious about military service.

"Here's my vision: There are some unbelievable national-level programs out there that support what we want to do, but the honest truth is those national-level programs are tough to bring to bear consistently in the same area," said Army Lt. Col. Scott Peterson, the commander of the Los Angeles Recruiting Battalion. "The national stuff—as awesome as it is—can't touch everybody with the level of consistency that is demanded in the recruiting business. Being in the school routinely—where they get to know educators and students routinely and consistently—is huge."

Toy presented a number of initiatives the district already undertakes in the local area, including an outreach program focused on the Boyle Heights neighborhood of Los Angeles, which hosts activities in 13 elementary schools, three middle schools, and four high schools. The district also supports numerous activities in other areas, including school field trips to local dams, speaking at school career days, and providing judges for science fair competitions.

Toy's presentation included a number of videos of past outreach events hosted by the district that capture the reactions of students and educators who participated.

Leo Megallon, a STEM teacher at Roosevelt High School, who attended a field trip with his students hosted by the district at Prado Dam, gave credence to STEM outreach efforts in a video played during Toy's presentation. "I have a degree in physics and I was given a few opportunities like these when I was in high school, so I understand the benefits of a program like this. It really opened my eyes to the opportunities that are available out there."

The next steps for the partnership between the two LA-based units include standing up a speaker's bureau of notable STEM leaders to speak at high schools and to create a STEM committee to help synchronize efforts and engender support from schools. The recruiting battalion will begin work on its 2013-2014 school engagement plan, which Peterson hopes will include a multitude of STEM engagements for high schools in the battalion's area.

The ABCs of fitness, nutrition goals

Cecy Ordenez

To “Build Strong” in fitness and nutrition, the single most important factor that will determine your success is setting a goal. Goals can be very personal and can vary depending on what you are trying to achieve. When you set out to get healthier or fit without a goal, it's much like taking a drive with no end point. At the end of the day, you end up burning a lot of gas (energy) and you never arrive to your destination.

The ABCD model to goal writing is a simple way you can learn how to set a goal. A is for Audience – it describes the intended learner, in this case, it will mostly be “I”. B is for Behavior – it describes the skill that you want to accomplish that is both observable and measurable. C is for Condition – this is where you choose what will be changed in order to accomplish the goal. D is for Degree – clearly state the standard for acceptable performance (time, accuracy, proportion, quality, etc). An example would be: I (A) will lose 10 lbs of body weight (B) by eating 1500 calories every day (C) for 10 weeks (D). The goal can vary from weight loss, to bench pressing more weight, decrease body fat percentage or increase your speed of running a mile by 30 seconds. That being said, there are a few goals that would benefit just about every single one of us. Keep the following goals in minds along with your specific goals you tailor for yourself:

1) Drink more water - you will be amazed at how many of us don't drink enough water. Every cell of your body depends on water and not having enough can impact everything from the amount of energy you have, how much hunger you feel, your ability to concentrate and how quickly you recover from a workout session. Sticking to 100% pure water is the best form of staying hydrated.

2) Remember the importance of rest days – once you get in a routine and your motivated to exercise, it can become real easy to over train. In order to have optimal progress, your body needs rest. Overtraining can actually make you weaker, lower your immune system,



District deputy engineer Lt. Col. Alex Deraney and his family set a goal to complete the Down and Dirty Mud 10K to support Operation Gratitude. From Left to Right: Marisa Deraney; friend and costume designer, Tanja; and sons Timon and Leo Deraney, take a picture to commemorate their accomplishment (Photo courtesy of the Deraney Family)

decrease your lean muscle mass, and slow your metabolic rate. Make an effort to listen to your body and know the difference between slacking off and pushing when you should be resting.

3) Strength train – most of us focus on cardio to burn calories, however, you burn more calories when you strength train because your body continues to burn calories as your muscle repairs over the next few days after you have trained. Since the mind tends to be easily distracted by the sights, noises and your thoughts, you can easily neglect the actual squeezing of the muscle you are working on. Stay focused on proper form, minimize any helping muscles and focus instead on recruiting the muscle fibers of the muscle you are working on.

4) Choose at least one health goal – it is easy to think that people who exercise or look fit are healthy, but this is not always the case. Although living a healthy lifestyle incorporates exercising, it is also about the foods we eat. Maybe you want to improve your cholesterol, your blood pressure or decrease your

gluten intake, etc. It can also be as easy as making sure you are eating a variety of vegetables and fruit. The idea is ensuring you live free of illness and a serious health condition.

5) Try at least one new activity – many of us get into the habit of doing the same type of exercise day in and day out. This can be as simple as changing the cardio you normally do, trying a different strength training technique for a biceps curl, or going out in the weekend and trying hiking, kayaking, cross country skiing or beach volleyball. The different movement patterns of the new activity will make your muscles respond since they react best to constantly changing stimuli.

Have you ever heard of the saying “a goal without a plan is just a dream?” Dreams are nothing more than wishful thinking whereas goals are concrete and are something you expect to achieve. You can do just about anything you set your mind to if you believe that you can and you pave the path to get there. You are only one goal away from a happier and healthier you.



Before



After!

Liz Thomas, Construction Division, set out to lose weight. With proper goal setting for weight loss and increase of activity (through Zumba and walking using her Striiv gadget), Liz was able to lose 20+ lbs in 4 months. (Photos courtesy of Liz Thomas)

INTERACTIVE!
Click image to
play!



**I was a 47-year-old
disabled Veteran**

...and I had basically given up.

An inspirational story of a veteran achieving the impossible by setting goals. He states "Never underestimate what you can accomplish when you believe in yourself." (Video still from youtube.com)

Three events planned to focus on heritage month

Priyanka Wahdawan

Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders have made unique and extensive contributions to American history and will continue to play a role in the future.

These people are comprised of several ethnic groups and countries, 48 countries and 65 ethnic groups to be exact, and have a rich heritage and culture. Broadly, Asian-Pacific encompasses all of the Asian continent and the Pacific islands of Melanesia (New Guinea, New Caledonia, Vanuatu, Fiji and the Solomon Islands), Micronesia (Marianas, Guam, Wake Island, Palau, Marshall Islands, Kiribati, Nauru and the Federated States of Micronesia) and Polynesia (New Zealand, Hawaiian Islands, Rotuma, Midway Islands, Samoa, American Samoa, Tonga, Tuvalu, Cook Islands, French Polynesia and Easter Island).

Like most commemorative months, Asian-Pacific Heritage Month originated in a congressional bill. In June 1977, Reps. Frank Horton of New York and Norman Y. Mineta of California introduced a House resolution that called upon the president to proclaim the first ten days of May as Asian-Pacific Heritage Week. The following month, senators Daniel Inouye and Spark Matsunaga introduced a similar bill in the Senate. Both were passed. On October 5, 1978, President Jimmy Carter signed a Joint Resolution designating the annual celebration. Twelve years later, President George H.W. Bush signed an extension making the week-long celebration into a month-long celebration. In 1992, the official designation of May as Asian-Pacific American Heritage Month was signed into law.

The month of May was chosen to commemorate the immigration of the first Japanese to the United States on May 7, 1843, and to mark the anniversary of the completion of the transcontinental railroad on May 10, 1869. The majority of the workers who laid the tracks were Chinese immigrants.

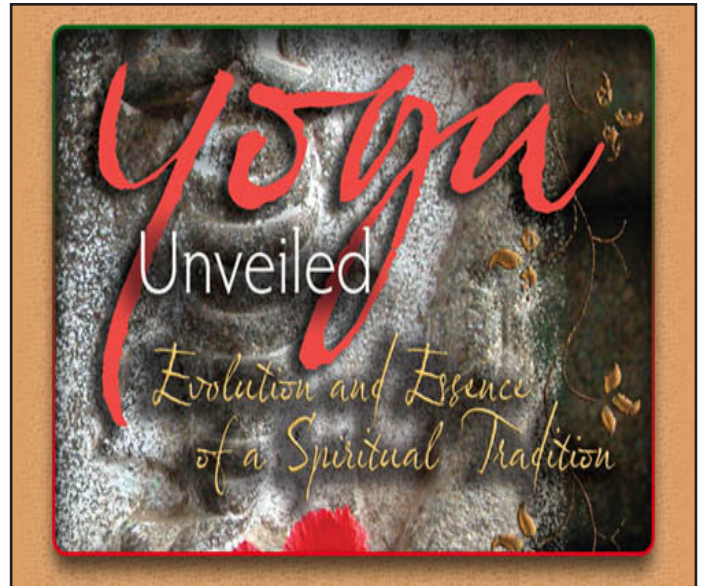
As the Los Angeles District gears up to celebrate Asian American and Pacific islanders' Heritage Month, let's take some time to remember the

history, heritage and challenges of this diverse group of people. To that end, our committee is proud to present two events with dynamic guest speakers and a cultural food tasting this month.

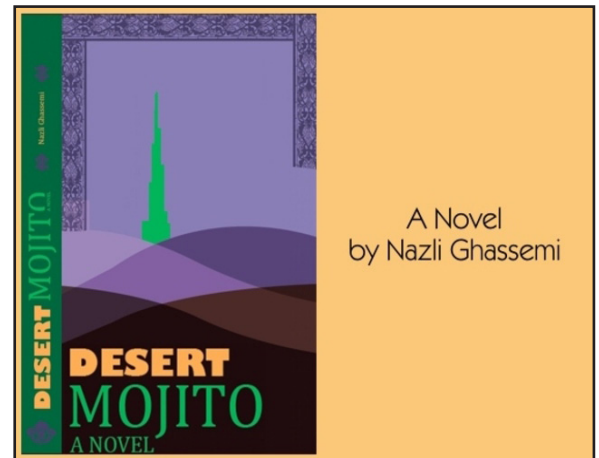
The first event will be May 7, from 12 p.m. to 2 p.m., with the Los Angeles District hosting guest speaker Gita Desai, a film maker and writer who will screen clips of her PBS shown documentary "Yoga Unveiled" and then engage in audience discussion. Harnessing the colorful commentary of the most prominent yoga scholars, teachers and medical experts, "Yoga Unveiled" reveals how yoga began, tells the story of yoga's passage to the West, describes its numerous branches, recounts the fascinating biographies of the foremost yoga masters, and explores yoga's astonishing medical potential.

Then, there will be a cultural food tasting on May 16, from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m., and we hope it will be a fun and social gathering for employees to come together and taste the various cuisines of Asia. The dishes will be set up buffet style and grouped according to regions. Participants will have a flier next to their dishes with the name of the entrée/dessert, region of origin and key ingredients. It will be the choice of participants to wear ethnic dress.

The third event is a presentation and discussion by guest speaker Nazli Ghassemi, author of the book "Desert Mojito." The book is a humorous fiction, which brings into light the



"Yoga Unveiled is a one-of-a-kind documentary film that covers the most comprehensive overview of the yoga tradition in its true essence. An artistic and inspirational triumph. It should be viewed by all!" — Deepak Chopra, M.D.



Nazli Ghassemi has a degree in Biomedical Engineering from the Univ. of California. She is now working on her next book.

new meanings that love, seduction, romance, religion and tradition take on as the 'mysterious' East clashes with the 'wild' West in the middle of the desert, in the Middle East, in Dubai. Nazli Ghassemi (a former engineer herself) will discuss the creative process as healing, a writer's journey, growing up in the Middle East and the competitive world of publishing. For those of us in the technical fields who would like to unleash our inner writer or artist, this is a must-attend event.

SCAM report: TSP app could target accounts

MilitaryHandbook.com

Don't download the new TSP app from the Apple App store. It's bogus, and may be an effort to steal your account information.

According to a notice posted on the official Thrift Savings Account website, the Thrift Savings Plan has no official connection with any third party mobile or Web application.

These apps typically ask you to input confidential account information. While there are some legitimate applications out there, it is also possible for criminals to create a cell phone app, use it to lure individuals into giving up account numbers and passcodes, and then use the information to steal from your accounts. Any use of a third-party app may jeopardize the security of your Thrift Savings Plan accounts, warn TSP officials.

Bogus apps aren't the only security threat out there. There are a number of ways criminals could potentially target the money in your thrift savings plan. It behooves plan participants to understand the ways that TSP officials communicate, so you can more reliably identify any attempt at fraud.

1.) Don't give up your passcode, account number, PIN, Social Security number, or any other sensitive information to any contact from email, telephone or direct mail. Some scammers will try to convince you that they are doing a 'security update' of TSP accounts and email or call you, and direct you to a convincing-looking Web site to 'verify' your account information. You will never see any such request from the TSP.

2.) Never follow a link from an email account. The official TSP Web site is www.tsp.gov. If it doesn't have a '.gov' domain, it's not the TSP.

3.) You will get mail from the TSP from time to time. All TSP mail comes postmarked Birmingham, Alabama. Also, all correspondence you receive from the TSP will already have your account number on it. Any correspondence from the TSP that doesn't include your account number should be viewed with caution.

4.) No one at the TSP needs to know your password and PIN. Never give it out to someone contacting you claiming to be with the TSP.

5.) Know the official TSP contact info.

* ThriftLine (1-TSP-YOU-FRST, 1-877-968-3778)

* Fax number (1-866-817-5023)

* TDD (1-TSP-THRIFT5, 1-877-847-4385)

* TSP website, www.tsp.gov or By writing to the TSP at P.O. Box 385021, Birmingham, Alabama, 35238

6.) Never call the TSP directly from a number provided to you in an email. Always go to the TSP Website (or bookmark this article) and get the phone numbers from there.

7.) Don't worry about threats to your account status. You will never hear legitimate TSP officials tell you your account will be closed if you don't provide sensitive information to a Web site or telephone representative.

8.) Use a secure browser. Per the TSP:

The TSP website is secured with an "extended validation certificate." This simply means that if you visit www.tsp.gov and attempt to access your account using a high-security browser, the color

green will appear in one of the following forms (depending on the type of browser you are using):

* The address bar may turn green.

* An icon from the Web server may appear with a green background.

* "Thrift Savings Plan" may appear with a green background.

* The appearance of the green color is a sure indication that you are NOT on a bogus TSP website. If the green does not appear, it could indicate a bogus website or it may simply mean that your browser cannot use the extended validation feature. In this case, stay suspicious and move on to the following verification steps.

* The address bar at the top left on your browser should display www.tsp.gov.

* When you enter account access to input your account number (or user ID) and password, the address bar on your browser should change from "http://" to "https://" and the security lock padlock icon should appear.

If the padlock icon appears somewhere else on the page (such as at the bottom) but it does not also appear in the address bar at the top of your browser page, you are not on the TSP website.



Graphic by David A. Salazar

Liability – the new way to say ‘It’s not my fault’

Daniel Calderon

Who is responsible for the things you do? Who is responsible for the fact that you like to drink four or five beers with dinner three or four times a week? Who is responsible for the fact that you can’t help but stop what you’re doing when someone asks for your help and do everything in your power to fix the situation? Who is responsible for the fact that you like red so much that you had the interior of your car and house done in a blazing inferno of color that could scorch the retinas if someone looked at it when the sun struck it at just the right angle without wearing tinted and polarized safety glasses? Who is responsible for all of those things and more?

“You can choose a ready guide in some celestial voice. If you choose not to decide, you still have made a choice. You can choose from phantom fears and kindness that can kill. I will choose a path that’s clear. I will choose Free Will.” – Rush, from their song “Freewill”

You. That’s really the easiest and most applicable answer to the questions I posed. You “choose your own adventure” and are responsible (even though I would imagine the aforemen-

tioned examples do not apply to the vast majority of you, but the principle behind the queries is the same) for the things you do and the things you don’t do. You are responsible for the good, the bad and everything that fills the shaded area in between. You are, as an adult, responsible for the choices you make in life and the reactions to life around you. You can choose how to deal with what has come before in your life, what is currently happening and what will happen in the future.

On shows like Jackass or Fear Factor, there really shouldn’t be any need for “Do not try this at home” to be said or shown. People of reasonable intelligence should know those things are, at the very least, dangerous and should not be attempted. Likewise, items like shampoo, shower gel or something similar should not need a label saying they are for external use only. Products used to kill rats, mice, bugs or other household pests should not need labels that spell out just how lethal they can be if ingested. If they are meant to kill something, it should be evident they are deadly.

For many, though, there is much more concern about the liability of others. There is a sense that “THEY”

are the cause for the ills in your life. In an oversimplified way, this is a cause for many of the liability claims going on today and the reason there are so

many ridiculous disclaimers. Instead of choosing to accept responsibility, people choose to lay blame – often where it is not warranted.

Because of this, there is now an overabundance of caution. We are so concerned with assigning and avoiding any sort of liability that people are afraid to have friends and friends of friends over at their house for a party. From what I understand, the law is saying that I, as a homeowner and host, am responsible for grownups who come over and get hurt either at my pool or in my home even if they’re doing something they know is unsafe. I can also be held legally responsible if someone comes over, imbibes alcoholic beverages, leaves my house and gets into an accident because of that inebriation.

I find that both offensive and pathetic. The former is simply because of the absurdity of the idea that adults are given the legal ability to pawn off responsibility for their actions. The latter is because there are people who actually buy into this. People, businesses, cities and such should not have to bear the responsibility when people elect to do something that is obviously going to get them hurt. Of course, there are the scores of people who will say that business should be held liable when someone is hurt on their property. Yes. I understand and that’s not what I’m talking about. I’m talking about people who choose to do things they really should know will hurt them and then seek redress for their own actions.

I think we were once a really great nation. I think we once took responsibility for our actions. We once held ourselves accountable for things we did



You may want to play the blame game, but ultimately, your decisions are yours and yours alone.

and didn't seek an easy payday when things went wrong and we got hurt because of our own action or inaction. There's a clip (it's got language in it that's NSFK- Not Suitable for Kids – and probably not appropriate for an office environment. Not knowing the rules on this sort of thing, I suggest that if you do choose to listen to it at work that you either turn the sound really low so any easily-offended cube neighbors can't hear or that you wear earphones) from a show called "The Newsroom" that I really like. In it, the main character, played by Jeff Daniels, discusses how the United States of America really isn't the greatest nation in the world any more – but we can be. I can't say whether the fact and figures he quotes are correct; but, the message resonates.

When did we forget how to care about each other? When did corporations attain the same status as people, able to donate money and have their "right" to free speech (among others) protected in the same way as actual living, breathing human beings? When did blame become more important than responsibility?

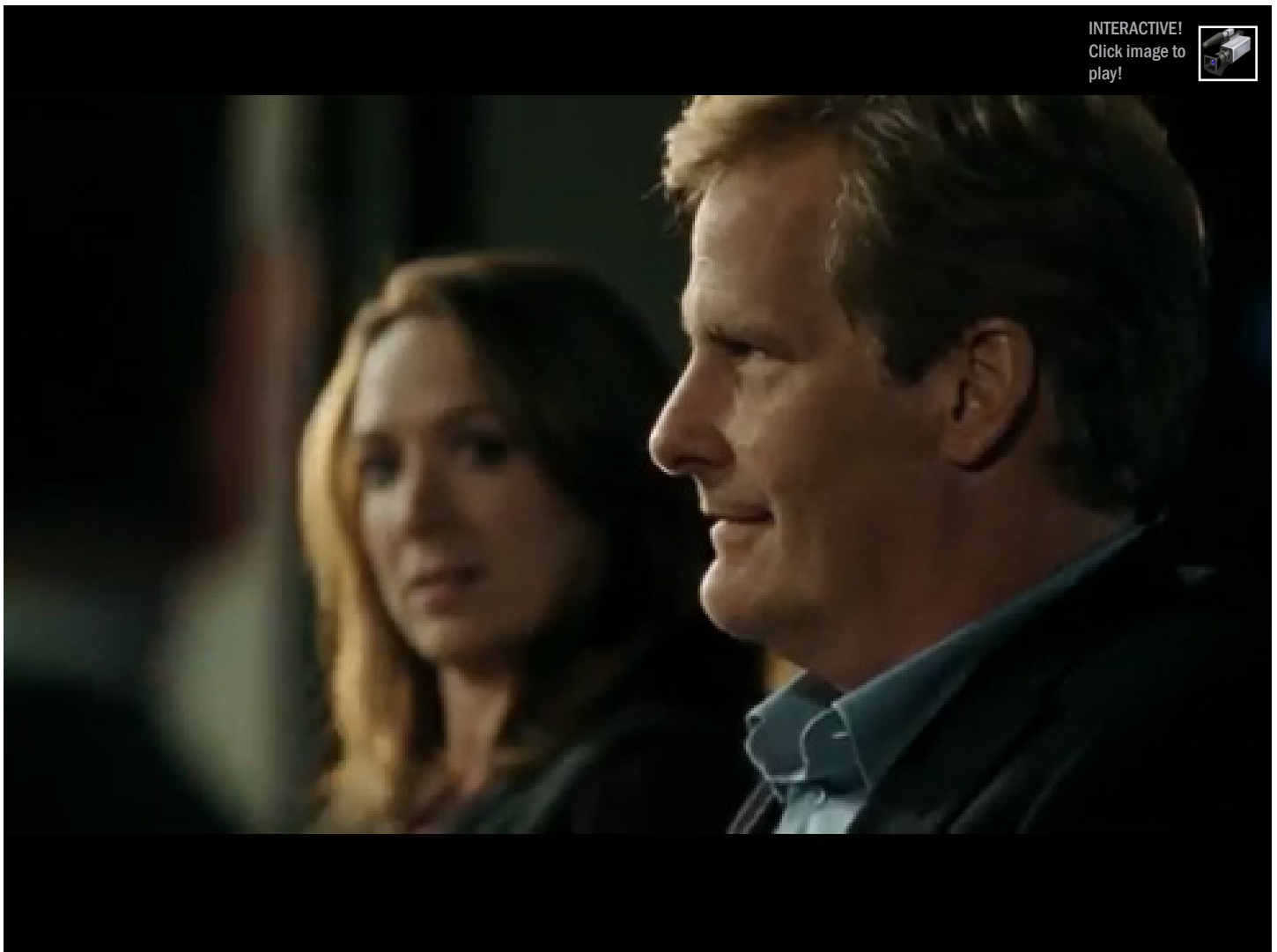
I understand the concept of liability. But, we, as people,

tend to take things too far. We have stopped trying to take responsibility for things we should know better about and instead look to how we can cash in on someone (or something in the case of corporations – I don't think I'll ever be able to consider a corporation a person) else's perceived liability.

I know there are those of you out there who are ready to cut my hands off (because clawing my eyes out would do no good. I can still type blind – Ha! Ha!). Those are the folks who can't see there are always at least two sides to every story and that even those sides have sides. Taking responsibility doesn't absolve everyone (or everything for businesses) else of their responsibility. It's not that simple. Few things that matter are really that simple.

Liability is a tricky thing. Sometimes, it's tough to find a place where yours ends and someone else's begins. But the trying is key. Don't simply assume that someone else is responsible for your well being. Take charge of your own fate as much as you can. Choose free will. Otherwise, if you choose not to make any decisions, that's a choice and you will have to live with the consequences.

Just a thought...



INTERACTIVE!
Click image to
play!



Jeff Daniels plays a news anchor in HBO's "The Newsroom." In this clip, Daniels' character, Will McCoy, voices his opinion on the state of America. **WARNING:** This clip contains strong language. (Courtesy of HBO)

Around the District



professional pride

COL Mark Toy presents Mary Spencer, the district's small business specialist, with a civilian medal for civil service for her hard work. Spencer received the award during the SAME conference in Los Angeles April 25.

David Van Dorpe, the district's deputy engineer for programs and project management, and Lt. Col. Alex Deraney, the district's deputy commander, present the achievement medal for civilian service to Drew Savage.



COL Mark Toy and Dave Castagnon, the district's regulatory division chief, present Michelle Mattson, a regulatory project manager from the Carlsbad, Calif., office, with a certificate of appreciation. Mattson left the Corps of Engineers and was recognized for her service during a farewell event April 15.

BUILDING STRONG® and Taking Care of People!



Congratulations!

KEVIN INADA EMPLOYEE OF THE QUARTER

Aaron Tieu works tirelessly to maintain and improve the district, and he personally takes on everything from repairs to the building and equipment to managing multiple contracts for upgrades to facilities. He responds and works to fix any issue or problem, from setting up conference rooms to repairing the broken ventilation system. Most recently, Aaron has been coordinating the activities of the contractor installing new carpeting. Thanks for all you do, Aaron!!



• Aaron Tieu

Employees recognized as district award winner

COL Mark Toy presents a coin to Erin Jones, a planning specialist from the Santa Ana Resident Office, to commemorate her selection as the district's Planner of the Year, April 18.



In Memoriam

The district bids a fond farewell to **Joe Luna**, who worked in the district's Office of Administrative Services, Reproduction Branch. Many thanks for your years of service to the district and the nation.

The district also bids a warm goodbye to **Steve Fine**, who worked for the Los Angeles District as well as others in US-ACE. Our thoughts and prayers go out to his loved ones.



LEADERSHIP

*Asian
American
and
Pacific Islander
Heritage
Month*

BUILDING LEADERSHIP:
EMBRACING CULTURAL
VALUES AND INCLUSION