Falls City Engineers Louisville District

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Falls City Engineer

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On the cover: Work continues on the north lock chamber of McAlpine Locks and Dam on the Ohio River in Louisville, Kentucky, as part of the \$30 million miter gate replacement project. (USACE photo by Katie Newton)



Commander's Comments

Team Louisville,

As the end of the fiscal year quickly approaches, I appreciate everyone pushing hard and staying committed to executing our large workload to successfully deliver the program for our customers, stakeholders and the nation. COVID-19 has presented a significant challenge over the past several months; however, we continue to adjust at every turn to ensure the mission is complete. I am confident our workforce will shine as we start to close out FY20, despite our ever changing environment.

The health of our workforce remains our top priority. I urge everyone to continue to follow the latest health guidance from the CDC both in the office and in your daily lives practice social distancing and keep 6 feet physical distance from others; wear a face covering to protect yourself and those around you; exercise proactive personal hygiene by washing your hands frequently or using hand sanitizer; and stay home and away from others if you feel sick. We certainly have longer to go in this fight, but as a team, we can continue to flatten the curve while delivering for our stakeholders and partners. As a workforce, we are doing a great job of implementing health and safety protocols in the work environment, and these measures do work. Please keep up the good work!

In this issue of the Falls City Engineer, we highlight just a few of the many contributions you and your teammates are making to the nation, such as identifying locations for habitat improvement in Beargrass Creek, playing a vital role in the stabilization of Green River Dam No. 3, and working with our Regional Rivers Repair Fleet to replace the miter gates at McAlpine Locks and Dam. We'll also take a look at the workforce's commitment to delivering these projects while adjusting to a new norm of telework amidst the COVID-19 pandemic.

Lastly, I want to say thank you to the entire Louisville District team. During my time here,

Contents

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Col. Eric Crispino Commander and District Engineer Louisville District U.S. Army Corps of Engineers

I have seen dedicated, innovative and passionate employees striving to ensure that despite the challenges we face, we continue to execute the mission in support of our nation. You are a team unlike any other, and I personally look forward to the day when I can meet each of you and thank you for your service and willingness to be flexible and creative to ensure the district's success during this unprecedented time. I appreciate you all for what you do each and every day and we will continue to navigate this ever-changing environment together.

Thanks again for all you do!

Building Strong! Louisville Proud!

Col. Crispino

Eric D Crispino

Beargrass Creek surveys identify locations for habitat improvement	3
Gate replacement progresses at McAlpine Locks and Dam	4
Corps plays vital role in stabilization of Green River Dam	5
Public meetings in virtual environment: Meeting CERCLA milestones for FUDS projects	6
Louisville District welcomes new deputy commander	7
Louisville District employees adjust to new norm	7
USACE pilots virtual methods to train, test value officers amid COVID-19 restrictions	8

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Civil Works Beargrass Creek surveys identify locations for habitat improvement

Katie Newton, public affairs

Throughout June, several district employees could be found wading in Beargrass Creek conducting in-stream assessments for the Three Forks of Beargass Creek ecosystem restoration study being led by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Louisville District.

USACE and the local project sponsor, Louisville and Jefferson County Metropolitan Sewer District, partnered for a three-year comprehensive study to outline what is necessary to restore the ecological integrity of Beargrass Creek, which contains the South, Middle and Muddy Forks in Louisville, Kentucky.

As part of that effort, a multidisciplinary team of experts from both agencies, including approximately 18 biologists, archaeologists, engineers, plan formulators, real estate specialists and economists assessed 64 sites equaling about six miles of stream throughout the city this summer to gain valuable data.

"We're looking at the quality of the habitat and ways that we can improve it," said Laura Mattingly, project manager, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Louisville District, while standing in a section of the South Fork of Beargrass Creek during a site visit June 30.

"We surveyed both the riparian and instream quality of the mainstem of Beargrass, as well as smaller tributaries throughout the watershed. The riparian assessments included looking at riparian



Max Headlee (left), biologist, and Laura Mattingly (right), project manager, survey a portion of the South Fork of Beargrass Creek during a site visit June 30, 2020, as part of the ongoing ecosystem restoration study being led by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Louisville District.

width, canopy height, amount of snags and deadfall, and extensiveness of invasive dominance. For instream, we were focused on elements like the makeup of substrate, the sinuosity and morphology of the stream, the amount of bank erosion, and the amount of vegetation and organic material in the stream," Mattingly said.

Each site received scores based on the quality and quantity of these elements. "We also recorded qualitative observations and took multiple photos of



USACE and the local project sponsor, Louisville and Jefferson County Metropolitan Sewer District, partnered for a three-year comprehensive study to outline what is necessary to restore the ecological integrity of Beargrass Creek, which contains the South, Middle and Muddy Forks in Louisville, Ky. BUILDING STRONG®

each site that will be useful when analyzing each one during the screening and alternative formation process," she said.

"The field work was a crucial part of the planning process. Not only were we able to collect useful data, it also gave us a chance to start visualizing how the management measures could be applied and get a better handle on the restoration potential of each site."

Since completing the field work, the team has compiled all of the scores, photos and notes for each site.

"This enables us to start the site screening process where sites that have more opportunity for restoration and less constraints will be carried forward in the plan formulation process. In addition to the site selection, we will also be looking at how we can increase the connectivity of the overall system through instream work. Once we have our best sites and areas to increase connectivity, we will be able to develop our alternatives and perform detailed analysis to come to our final plan," Mattingly said.

Upon completion in winter of 2022, the study will identify innovative restoration techniques and engineering solutions that are compatible with floodplain management to improve ecosystem structure, function and processes that have been lost over time and be used to guide an ecosystem restoration plan for the Beargrass Creek watershed.

Gate replacement progresses at McAlpine Locks and Dam



The 1950s-era miter gate leaf from the north chamber is lowered by the Henry M. Shreve Crane Aug. 6, 2020, as part of the Miter Gate Replacement project at McAlpine Locks and Dam.

Katie Newton, public affairs

Work continues on the north lock chamber of McAlpine Locks and Dam on the Ohio River in Louisville, Kentucky, as part of the \$30 million miter gate replacement project.

The five-month closure of the lock allows the Great Lakes and Ohio River **Division Regional Rivers Repair Fleet** to replace the 1950s-era miter gates and related equipment on each end of the chamber.

According to Tim Fudge, Louisville District Operations Division chief, major maintenance projects such as this are critical to ensure reliability and efficiency on the inland waterways system — a vital artery, which fuels America's economy. The aging gates were a growing concern. With more than 54 million tons of commodities moving through McAlpine Locks and Dam annually, a failure would have far-reaching impacts.

"The old gates were showing significant signs of fatigue," said Craig Moulton, Louisville District project manager for the McAlpine Miter Gate Replacement project. "By replacing them with new, 320-ton steel miter gate leaves and conducting other necessary repairs it should reduce the need for extended maintenance closures for years to come."

Most of the heavy lifting is being performed with equipment from the Heavy Capacity Fleet conveniently ported at the Louisville Repair Station at McAlpine Locks and Dam, but the condensed project schedule calls for all hands-on deck. Nearly 100 fleet employees and laborers from across the region are onsite each day to ensure the project is completed on time.

"Everything is on schedule and running pretty smoothly," Moulton said. "As of early August, the chamber has been dewatered, all four old miter gate leafs have been removed, and significant progress has been made on repairs to the pintle ball bases where the new gate leaves will rest."

Simultaneously, a contractor is onsite replacing floating mooring bitt tracks, where vessels tie off when locking, to increase safety for vessel traffic.

"There is a significant amount of work going on, and doing it in five-months is really unprecedented," Moulton said.

Cost-savings and efficiency drove the decision to combine the repairs into one

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condensed project versus two projects in consecutive years as slated.

Fudge, responsible for the Operations and Maintenance program for the district's nine locks and dams, said the comprehensive project is a win-win. "It saves the American taxpayer by providing an estimated cost savings of \$15 million and lessens the impact on our industry partners by reducing the time the lock will be out of service in half, cutting the closure from a total of 10 months to only five."

The chamber is scheduled to reopen in mid-November.



Scan to watch the July time lapse video of McAlpine Lock Miter Gate **Replacement Project**

Corps plays vital role in stabilization of Green River Dam

Katie Newton, public affairs

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers' efforts to manage water resources within the Green River System have extended to support the rehabilitation of Green River Dam No. 3, known locally as Rochester Lock and Dam, in Rochester, Kentucky.

Because it is no longer needed for its original purpose of navigation on the Green River, the Corps will soon transfer ownership of the 184-year-old structure to the Rochester Dam Regional Water Commission, which uses the pool behind the dam as water supply for approximately 50,000 residents. In the interim, the dam has been leased to the commission so a vitally important stabilization project could begin.

On July 16, 2020, at an event hosted by the RDRWC celebrating the rehabilitation project, Louisville District Commander Col. Eric Crispino said, "Rochester is one of five other locks and dams that the Corps owns on the Green River that are no longer operated for commercial navigation. So while we don't see barges moving up and down the river through this section, the Corps understands that the long-term stability of Rochester Dam is an important component of the economic vitality of this region of the commonwealth."

Also making remarks at the event were Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell, Congressman Brett Guthrie, and Weymouth Martin, chairman of the RDRWC.

Collaborative efforts with numerous



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John Dix (left), Secretary of the Rochester Regional Water Commission, Sen. Mitch McConnell (center), and Col. Eric Crispino (right), Louisville District commander gather along the bank of the Green River near Rochester Lock and Dam, in Rochester, Kentucky, prior to a celebratory event held onsite July 16, 2020.

stakeholders have taken place to bring the project to fruition. USACE initially completed a Planning Assistance to States study in 2011 to identify stabilization alternatives for the dam. The Green and Barren Disposition Study, completed in 2014, was a key component as it recommended to Congress the deauthorization of commercial navigation at these facilities. Ultimately, the RDRWC signed a management lease with USACE enabling them to protect and preserve



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the pool that is a vital water supply for the region. An amendment to the lease in 2019 allowed RDRWC to proceed with the stabilization work prior to the final transfer of the lock and dam.

"This piece of critical infrastructure has been at the forefront of Corps decisionmaking on how to manage the full lifecycle of the locks and dams that are no longer required to be used for navigation," Crispino said. "Removing navigation as one of our responsibilities has allowed for the rehabilitation work that is going on now to occur."

The dam's transfer to the RDRWC ensures that the long-term stability of the dam rests with the communities that depend on it for their water supply.

The Corps and the RDRWC also partnered on a number of components of permitting for the dam rehabilitation, such as cultural resource surveys, so that efforts could be streamlined.

"We understood that timing for permitting was critical, and I am happy that we could quickly move through our review processes, while meeting our statutory obligations. This type of creative thinking and partnership building are essential to tackling water resource challenges in the future."

The restoration project is now underway and scheduled for completion in November 2020.

Environmental Public meetings in virtual environment: Meeting CERCLA milestones for FUDS projects



An Air Force instructor listens to his class work through a discussion on negotiating during a virtual lesson at Sheppard Air Force Base, Texas. Virtual classrooms and public meetings have become the "norm" during the COVID-19 pandemic

Shatara Riis, public affairs

For environmental cleanup projects, public involvement is required at specific stages of response actions by the Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation and Liability Act provisions.

Traditionally, this stipulation is met by holding in-person public meetings, where the Corps of Engineers' project manager, subject-matter experts, along with the contractor, make a presentation, and allow stakeholders the opportunity to ask questions and provide comments.

With restrictions on travel and public gatherings due to the COVID-19 pandemic this year, the project development team for the former Kincheloe Air Force Base site, had to come up with an alternate solution to meet this requirement to present the Proposed Plan.

According to Louisville District project manager Clayton Hayes, initially, there was some resistance and uncertainty, but following many discussions and guidance from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Headquarters, the project development team came to a resolution and began coordinating a virtual public meeting in lieu of and in-person meeting.

"Having a virtual public meeting seemed to be the only way we could meet this requirement and for the project to remain somewhat on schedule," Hayes said. "Being this was the first virtual public meeting in our Formerly Used Defense Sites program for the Louisville District, it was difficult at first."

While this was treading new ground for the Louisville District, for the contractor, Jacobs, it wasn't out of the ordinary.

"Jacobs has successfully hosted multiple virtual meetings for other clients, and those experiences would easily translate for a FUDS virtual meeting," said Kim Amley, Jacobs project manager.

Yet, it wasn't jump in feet first. Appropriate coordination and collaboration had to be done.

"Timing was everything. We had to first cancel the original public notice, then determine what platform/technology we could use (what was acceptable to meet the government security requirements, and did our contractor have that capability?)," Hayes said. "We had to revise the specific language for the new public notice, which we wanted to give 45 days advance notice, and determine the logistics of how we would present the same information in a virtual environment. We had to revise the slide presentation and hold several practice runs, in advance of the scheduled

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meeting, to make sure everything worked, since we would have to rely 100 percent on technology."

The team faced many challenges to bring the virtual public meeting together.

"Anytime you cut new ground, it's a challenge with many unknowns. Everyone had different ideas on what we should do. The PDT had to sort out what was important and organize the presentation to fit a virtual environment," Hayes said. "Also to mention, our contractor was very patient and cooperative. Jacobs had to adapt to using an acceptable government platform for the virtual meeting, which they did not already have."

Amley agreed with Hayes on the limitations of which meeting platform USACE would allow for the meetings was a challenge, along with longlead advertisement, and limitations on confirming public attendance.

Even with the challenges, the team worked to come to a successful end.

"Conducting internal dry runs to establish the narrative for each meeting, determined procedures for introducing project team members, and established protocol for technology failures (are what made the former Kincheloe AFB virtual public meeting a success)," Amley said.

So while there are no handshakes to establish rapport, and nonverbal body language is nonexistent to aid in communication, the content – words – play a huge part for a virtual public meeting.

According to the Environmental Protection Agency, holding public hearings and meetings virtually aid in continuing to provide meaningful public participation and engagement during the current circumstances.

So for now, the virtual public meeting setting has become the new "norm," in place of in-person meetings for projects in the Louisville District FUDS program.



Spotlight Louisville District welcomes new deputy commander

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Louisville District welcomed Maj. Latoya Manzey as the new deputy commander when she arrived in Louisville, July 31.

Although the Louisville District is her first USACE assignment, Manzey has a diverse career as an engineer officer.

"Prior to coming here I served as the XO (executive officer) for the deputy commanding general at Army Central," Manzey said. "My most rewarding assignment to-date has been serving as an XO and operations officer for a brigade engineer battalion because it was there that I truly learned the importance of empowering people to realize their true potential and really getting teams to work together."

Manzey was handpicked by Louisville District Commander Col. Eric Crispino and former Louisville District Commander Col. Antoinette Gant from several very qualified applicants, according to Crispino. part of the Louisville District.

"What I'm looking forward to most during my time here at the Louisville District is the opportunity to continue to broaden professionally by learning the business of the district and USACE," Manzey said. "I am excited and truly feel privileged to have this opportunity to work amongst professionals and continue to develop professionally."

Manzey comes from a military family and is married with three children.

"My hobbies include crafting. Yes, I Cricut," Manzey said. "I also enjoy finding fun new activities to do with my kids and reading."

Manzey said she is excited for the challenge and experience she will gain from this assignment.

"I would like to express my thanks to the Louisville District," Manzey said. "The entire team has worked hard to 'get me smart' quickly while making me feel welcomed."



Manzey says she is very happy to be a

Louisville District employees adjust to new norm

Abby Korfhage, public affairs

Like most businesses and organizations across the country, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Louisville District continues to adjust to the new norm in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic.

In early March, the Louisville District followed suit with the U.S. Army and the rest of the USACE enterprise by encouraging maximum telework to care for the safety and well-being of their employees and families while still executing USACE missions.

"The health of our workforce remains our top priority across all levels of USACE leadership," said Louisville District Commander Col. Eric Crispino.

For many employees, working remotely is a new way to do business. Balancing workload with family needs at home has required district employees to be flexible.

"As working parents, we continue to deliver the mission without fail, despite juggling so many different stresses in life," said one employee.

"I think 2020 is teaching me to stay adaptable and be comfortable with not knowing," said another employee.

District leadership developed a workforce reintegration plan, which is constantly evolving in response to the everchanging pandemic.

"I am very proud of the Louisville District," said Denise Bush, Contracting Division chief. "They are leading the way with telework and innovative means to make this work."

District leaders work hard every day to take care of their employees while ensuring business continues as usual.

"Our managers have taken great strides to implement the right protocols and to help ensure that we remain in alignment with local, state and federal guidelines," said Tim Fudge, Operations Division chief. "We have been able to place first priority on protecting our employees in Operations Division, ultimately helping to protect reliable operation and maintenance of our critical infrastructure."

The district is currently in Phase 2 of the reintegration plan, meaning that up to 50 percent of the workforce is able to return to the office, while following the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention recommended guidelines for social distancing and using prevention measures such as wearing face coverings.

Although change can be difficult for some, Louisville District employees have risen to the challenge.

"It was a struggle at first adjusting to the

inability to walk up to someone and have a face-to-face conversation. I have adapted by using the Skype and Jabber feature and following up more frequently on emails," said Jennifer Ott, Louisville District Financial Management analyst. "The largest adjustment for me has been taking care of my 4 and 6-year-old children. I still have to work, and they need to be respectful of my work time."

Ott says there are several advantages that come along with telework.

"The amount of time I save on preparing for and travelling to and from work has allowed me more time for family activities and chores around home. It has also saved me significant amounts of money on fuel and vehicle maintenance. And, the lack of travel has increased my level of safety in the fact that I am not on the road, in traffic, and in danger of being involved in accidents," Ott said. "While working in the office I had regular visitors with questions that would cause me to pause what I was working on. Telework has shifted a lot of those questions to some form of written communication. This has allowed more time to focus on tasks and answer questions based on priority."

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There have also been disadvantages, which have been challenging for employees.

"It is difficult to work without dual monitors. Connectivity issues and lack of hard copy documents that are in the office have made some tasks more difficult," Ott said. "A very big hardship with telework is the inability to interact in-person with coworkers, who are often considered more like close friends or family than just coworkers," she added.

Bush agreed that the lack of resources and face-to-face interaction has been a downfall.

"I do miss having a printer," Bush said. "And you cannot see facial expressions (in meetings) to know if something is well received or not."

Supervisors agree it is still important to see people face-to-face to make sure they are okay and not stressed, which is harder when teleworking.

"The primary downside to telework for me personally is not being able to see my employees in person and visually verify that they are doing ok and have some faceto-face interaction (6' apart of course)," Fudge said. "We do utilize Skype quite often to touch base."

This new way of doing business has changed the perspective of some senior leaders.

"My perspective of telework has changed," Bush said. "I am more open to those employees who work independently to allow them to telework more often."

Fudge says he has always been a proponent for telework and breaking out of the normal, traditional day-in day-out office setting.

"This pandemic has proven that telework is a viable option for our workforce and provides maximum



Matt Lowe, Louisville District Veterans Affairs Division chief, poses with his family while working from home during the COVID-19 pandemic.

flexibility for us as an organization," Fudge said. "Having the ability to work remotely is a great recruitment and retention tool and definitely enhances work-life balance for our people."

Many employees applaud the district's flexibility with employees to make the decision that works best for them, whether that be telework or coming into the office.

"While teleworking was a great option for many of our employees, I thought it was important that, if we did have employees here still working in the building, we always had someone from upper management here in case of an emergency," said John Allison, Engineering Division deputy chief who has continued to come into the office. "I really have appreciated the district's willingness to be flexible to all situations during this pandemic."

The Louisville District's number one priority is the health and well being of the workforce. With the uncertainty of what lies ahead with COVID-19, they will continue to take great care in thoughtful action and do all they can to provide the right kind of support to employees while using all of the tools at their disposal to continue executing the mission, according to Fudge. Courtesy of Matt Lowe

Crispino recently thanked employees for their service in an e-mail address and applauded their flexibility and creativity to ensure the district's success during this unprecedented time.

"We certainly have longer to go in this fight, but as a team, we can continue to flatten the curve while delivering for our stakeholders and partners," Crispino said. "Throughout the first months of my command, I have seen dedicated, innovative and passionate employees striving to ensure that despite the challenges we face, we continue to execute the mission in support of our nation."

USACE pilots virtual methods to train, test value officers amid COVID-19 restrictions

Abby Korfhage, public affairs

To maintain operations amidst COVID-19 travel restrictions, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers partnered with the private sector to conduct this year's annual training and necessary qualification exams for USACE's value officers.

USACE conducted the first-ever virtual Value Methodology Fundamentals 1 training course June 1-5, 2020. The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers holds this course annually in coordination with the USACE Learning Center, but this year it looked a little different. "This course was delivered virtually as a trial run for the international value engineering industry as a whole," said Corey White, of the Office of Value Expertise, also referred to as OVx. "USACE has one of the most effective VE programs in the world, so the industry is looking at us in regard to how we're overcoming the challenges of the virtual environment during the pandemic."

Completion of this course and obtaining Value Methodology Associate, also known as VMA, certification is a minimum qualification requirement for district

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and regional value officers in USACE to obtain their initial warrant authority. These employees make decisions on all procurements larger than \$2 million; therefore, it is crucial they are trained and qualified to make those decisions.

However, VE staff weren't the only attendees of the course. Professionals from across USACE representing the cost engineering, contracting, and project management communities also attended this session and successfully completed course requirements. According to the

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instructors, the students' participation was everything they could have hoped for.

"When we offer it in person, this is normally a very dynamic course," White said. "So we were concerned with how well that would translate in the virtual environment. The students were engaged and energetic, so we couldn't have asked for more."

Melissa Boyd, a member of the OVx out of Huntington District, took the lead with planning the course and partnering with SAVE International to conduct the virtual pilot. This included tasks such as familiarizing instructors and students with the virtual meeting environment; developing group rules for the course specific to the situation; and revising course materials to accommodate the virtual environment.

To give students more personalized instruction, the course used five instructors from across USACE with individual breakout rooms. This allowed private work time and individual discussion with instructors that doesn't always exist in virtual meetings.

"At the conclusion of each day, instructors compiled feedback on the day's events to address what was planned, what actually happened, opportunities for improvement, and progress made toward measures of success," White said.

The course concluded June 5, with students taking the VMA exam. Currently, SAVE International requires applicants to complete the exam at a local proctored testing center. However, many of these testing centers remain closed due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

To ensure our students had the opportunity to complete this exam, Jeff Hooghouse, USACE chief Value Officer, and Nick Turpen, OVx out of Louisville District, worked closely with SAVE International to setup and deliver an online VMA exam.

"This was the first and only online VMA exam executed by someone outside of SAVE," White said. "And this demonstrates the trust relationship that USACE has built within the industry."

SAVE provided USACE with the 60-question test (and non-disclosure agreement), which was used to create an online VMA exam through the use of ClassMarker online software. This software allowed the exam to be setup and administered to meet SAVE International's testing standards. Hooghouse was able to fulfill the proctoring requirement by having each student take the exam while logged in to a webcam-enabled Cisco Webex meeting.

Considering the uncharted territory, the results of the exam would not only demonstrate the students' understanding of the material, but also the effectiveness of the virtual delivery. As such, the efforts of Hooghouse and Turpen played a critical role in the success of the virtual course. The results show that effort paid off; the USACE students had a pass rate of 94 percent, compared to the industry-average

78 percent.

"We [USACE and SAVE International] are very pleased with the execution of this course," Hooghouse said. "Improvements can be made to solidify this as an alternate means of presenting training materials in the future, regardless of the state of travel restrictions."

Course evaluation feedback received from this course has been shared with SAVE International, and this information has already been used to see how SAVE can replicate USACE's success going forward.

Course attendees included Louisville District staff Quyet La, Shelby Hogan, Carmen Felten and Heather Bauer. Other USACE participants were Peyton Abernathy and Derek Gray from Nashville District; Ben Sakmar from Pittsburgh District; Scott Pittman and Larry Brotherton from Great Lakes and Ohio River Division; Chris Dols from New York District; Pat Devine from New England District; Erica Stephens from Norfolk District; Liz Norrenberns from St. Louis District: Derrick McCollum from Fort Worth District; Chris Norton from Wilmington District; Kenneth Kamp from Kansas City District; and Matthew Scrivner from Europe District.

Instructors included Melissa Boyd of OVx/Huntington District, Corey White of OVx/Louisville District, Lee Danley of South Atlantic Division, Neal Newman of Memphis District, and Jeff Hooghouse of Headquarters USACE.



USACE conducted the first-ever virtual Value Methodology Fundamentals 1 training course June 1-5, 2020. Value engineering staff and professionals from across USACE representing the cost engineering, contracting, and project management communities also attended the session.