Yankee Engineer

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Building Strong®

District opens remodeled VA Medical Facility

Story on page 3

Yankee Voices

Mike Riccio, Diane Ray, Bob Desista and Steve Andon

Winter driving: Stay safe when roads are icy, slippery

Winter is far from over, and whether you drive on the job or just to and from work, safety on the road is trickier on icy or slippery streets. Avoid becoming another traffic statistic by following these basic winter driving tips:

• Slow down. Remember that you need more room to stop when roads are slick or visibility is poor.

• Check your engine. Make sure your battery is fully charged so it can start easily in cold weather.

• Get plenty of rest. Fatigue leads to accidents. Get a full night's sleep before getting behind the wheel.

• Watch your exhaust. Don't warm up your car in a garage or other small, enclosed space.

• Limit cruise control. Don't rely on cruise control when driving on slippery roads.

• Clean up. Make sure your lights and windows are clean and clear so you can see everything on the road, especially at night. Make sure your windshield wipers are in good condition.

(First Draft Magazine)

Important Thrift Savings Plan Contribution Change for 2015

The Elective Deferral Limit for Thrift Savings Plan (TSP) contributions is $18,000 for 2015, an increase from $17,500 for 2014. This limit applies to a combined total of traditional and Roth contributions.

The Catch-up Contribution Limit for employees reaching age 50 during the calendar year and contributing the full Elective Deferral Limit is $6,000 for 2015, an increase from $5,500 for 2014. To be eligible to participate in Catch-up Contributions, an employee must be contributing an amount which will reach the full $18,000 by the end of the calendar year or by his/her date of retirement, whichever is earlier.

Regular TSP contributions will continue from year to year but Catch-up Contributions must be re-elected each year. It is important to understand how the date you make your TSP change, the transaction effective date and the pay date impact your annual contributions so that you can manage your account accordingly. A TSP election is always effective on the first day of the pay period FOLLOWING the date the election is made. The PAY DATE for that pay period is a week to two weeks after the effective date (depending on your payroll office).

TSP contributions are based on the calendar year in which the pay date falls, not the calendar year in which the pay period falls. Therefore, end-of-year and beginning-of-year changes must be carefully calculated to make sure changes are made appropriately. FERS employees should plan so that contributions do not reach the IRS elective deferral limit before the last pay date of the year, or they will not receive all of the matching contributions to which they would otherwise be entitled.

The Army Benefits Center-Civilian (ABC-C) posts annual TSP charts to assist you in electing the correct dollar amount to reach the IRS maximum based on the date you make your election. Keep in mind that these charts assume NO DEDUCTIONS have already been made during the deduction year. So, if you wait until January to make your 2015 change, and you are already contributing to TSP, you will need to subtract the contributions made prior to the 2015 change from the annual deferral limit and divide that figure by the remaining number of pay periods. An ABC-C counselor can assist you in calculating the correct amount of TSP deductions. The ABC-C website is https://www.abc.army.mil/; the phone number is (877) 276-9287.

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The entrance of the New Bedford Community-Based Outpatient Clinic in New Bedford, Massachusetts.

Mike Keegan speaks to attendees during the ribbon cutting ceremony.

Photos by Brian Murphy

District, partners cut ribbon on renovated VA medical facility

The New England District is committed to the health and well being of the nation's Veterans. Team members have worked with great pride on many military medical facilities to ensure Veterans get expert care they deserve in state-of-the-art facilities.

Mike Keegan, Chief, Civil and International-Interagency Support Project Management Branch in the Programs, Project Management Division, represented the District in cutting the ribbon on one such facility, Dec. 22, 2014. He joined Dr. Susan Mackenzie, Director of the Providence Veterans Administration Medical Center and other customers at a ribbon cutting event at the New Bedford Community-Based Outpatient Clinic (CBOC) in New Bedford, Massachusetts. "This $3.5 million newly renovated facility will provide support in a better way to the Veterans of this region," he said. "It includes a 2,000-square-foot addition and renovation of another 5,400 square feet."

Mackenzie expressed her pleasure at the opening of the newly renovated and expanded facility. Improvements that were made to the project include adding a physical therapy clinic, women's health exam rooms, a newly renovated area to support home-based primary care and an enhanced reception area where customer service representatives are now able to assist up to four Veterans at once. "Information technology services also received a significant upgrade, enhancing telemedicine capabilities, which helps reduce the need for local Veterans to travel to Providence or another specialty clinic for appointments," she said.

According to Mackenzie, every patient at the facility has a primary care provider who coordinates all their health care needs, including a select team of doctors, nurses, therapists, social workers, pharmacists and nutritionists. "If a Veteran needs care that we cannot provide here, we can facilitate easy access to any of the Providence VA Medical Centers," she said.

Keegan said that the successful completion of the project was based on team work. "Our team of partners includes the Veterans Administration, the Providence Medical Center, the New Bedford Community-Based Outpatient Clinic staff, our contractor Carrigg Commercial Buildings, LLC, our Architect-Engineer Colby Company Engineering and the Corps' project delivery team," he said.

City of New Bedford Mayor John Mitchell also made remarks during the event. Hugh Dunn, Esq, District Representative for Congr. William Keating; and Bob Carrigg, President of Carrigg Commercial Buildings, LLC of Manchester, New Hampshire, joined representatives from the Rhode Island Division of Veteran Affairs, New Bedford Veterans Services, Dartmouth, Massachusetts Veterans Town Officer and Veterans in the audience.

According to the Veterans Administration, the New Bedford CBOC provides a local primary health care option for Veterans in southeastern Massachusetts.

The improved facility is an example of VA Health Care's commitment to provide accessible health care to Veterans in the community.

The renovation and expansion of the New Bedford CBOC is in support of the Corps of Engineers Campaign Initiative, "Support the Warfighter."

NAE Team Members who accompanied Keegan to the ceremony were Jennifer Flanagan, Jim Morocco and Tim Rezendes.

Solutions-oriented, web-based iDams improves project management

When engineers come across a problem, they want to solve it. They see it as an opportunity for improvement. When the Engineering/Planning team found a problem with the time it was taking to produce Dam Safety Inspection Reports, they came up with a solution.

Dam Safety Manager Siamac Vaghar said that the creation of the Infrastructure, Design, Analysis and Management System (iDams) came about because of the fragmented process of getting reports done, resulting in increased time taken to get reports finalized. "The dam safety policy now requires report production within 90 days of inspection. It was taking much longer than that with the process we were using."

Vaghar and Michael Gu approached Francis Fung, the District's Lean Six Sigma Blackbelt, to come up with a solution. "We identified that many of the weak points in the current process came from report preparation," said Vaghar. "There are so many subdocuments and people working on them. Even the formats of the subdocuments were different."

The result of their investigation was iDams -- a flash-based web application built from the ground up by the NAE Development Team. It allows Project Managers and their teams to see who is working on what at any given time.

"We started with the first module, which is the periodic inspection builder tool," said Gu. "It is a multi-disciplinary report that we now do risk assessments alongside so it is now an even bigger periodic inspection report."

A Project Manager would create a folder for an inspection report in iDams and list team members who would be working on it.

Subdocuments created by team members would stay in the central location. When one team member is finished with a document and needs to send the document to someone else for editing or review, that team member would get an e-mail with the link to the document, so that everyone is working on the latest version. According to Gu, anyone with permissions can log in to see the progress of an inspection report. "This is helpful because some inspection reports can take a while before they get to milestone completion dates," he said.

Black Rock Dam

Photo by Kevin Burke

According to Gu, there are about 30 subdocuments that need to be compiled so that the master document can be built. iDams allows the Project Manager to keep track of who is working on what document as well as the workflows of the subdocuments. "Whoever is in charge can toggle the workflow forward for people or assign it to the next reviewer," he said. iDAMS also ensures there is consistency in the format of the report among the many sub-documents.

Program developers incorporated Microsoft Office tools already used by team members to make the transition to using iDams easier. Since implementing the iDams program, users have seen a time reduction for completing inspection reports.

Design on the program began in 2010 and a functional version was completed a few months later. The program is constantly evolving so that more and more information can be added to the iDams portal. Soon everything anyone needs to know about a dam, such as West Hill, will all be in one centralized location – modules for history, photos, emergency action plans, instrumentation data and other important information.

Word about the iDams program is spreading throughout the Corps. New England is currently adapting the program to fit the needs of the Fort Worth District. "The program can be modified easily to accommodate any district that would want to use it," said Gu.

The iDams program received a U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Innovation of the Year Award in August 2014. The New England District Development Team also adapted for the WEB a sister application to iDams called the Dam Safety Management Tool for the National Dam Safety Program, which is used by all USACE districts and divisions.

The team members who created the iDams program are Siamac Vaghar, Francis Fung, Michael Gu, Chris Scabia, Michael Andryuk and Kristen Paul.

Holiday party attendees take their seats and begin the festivities.

Richard Fortuna and Judy Antonellis cut the cake during the party.

Festive Scene

District celebrates the season with special holiday gala

Commentary by Jess Levenson
Public Affairs

The New England District team filled Concord Park's cafeteria on Friday, Dec. 19, 2014 to enjoy the holidays with a lunch-time party. This year's party was co-hosted by Engineering and Planning and the Work Environment Association (WEA), and over 200 current team members, retirees and family shared one another's company and entertainment.

WEA also subsidized a portion of the cost of the party with breakfast fundraising leading up to the party. WEA and Engineering and Planning produced coffee and bagels twice a week, a popular option for those who need a little extra pep in their step.

This particular Friday morning also began in good cheer. My own Public Affairs office came together for a traditional group breakfast and Secret Santa exchange. I unwrapped a "Game of Thrones" book collection! It's a series that I'm very excited to start. Jokes were cracked and news was rationed around the conference table, surrounded by Christmas and Hannukah decorations.

At lunchtime, streams of "merry" folk waded into a winter landscape expertly decorated by the host offices, complete with snowflakes, candy, gift-wrap, and even an awesome miniature train above the main doors.

Everyone found their table, sat down, and the gift of gab resounded through the room. Familiar faces were spotted in the crowd and made to feel as if they had never been gone. Greg Buteau, Ken Paton, Joe Bocchino, Bill Herland, Amal Guirgus, Joan Gardner, Dave Lubianez and Susan Rodkey were among the retirees that attended.

The hungry were soon called into action, and satiated. The meal included turkey, ham, potatoes, stuffing and sides. Those who are vegetarian had the option of eggplant parmesan. The meal was catered by our very own "Home Sweet Home" service providers.

On the way in and out, one could look at the long line of gift baskets up for auction. The most anticipated, and most successful, annual fundraiser for WEA is the gift basket auction, and this year 10 gift baskets were donated by District offices of various sizes and themes that New England District Team members could take home as the highest bidder. One gift basket was stocked with tools and appliances for home improvement, whereas others had food, drinks and movies. The fundraiser took in $782 with the proceeds going to offset the costs of the numerous WEA events held throughout the year to include the holiday party and Founder's Day.

Corps clothing was ready for sale in the lobby, featuring: Corps t-shirts, stocking stuffers, Corps sweatshirts, golf shirts and fleece jackets.

The 2014 Holiday Party Committee members who organized and ran the daytime party included: Scott Acone, Dave Margolis, Greg Penta, Sally Rigione, Paige Kimbrough-Rowan, Kirsten Traver, Judy Antonellis, Bonnie Ortiz, Angie Vanaria, Leanna Martin, Drew Cattano, Karen Wolfe, Kane Turmelle, Mary Daley, Santos Lara, Ruthann Brien, Bill Hubbard and Grace Bowles.

WEA also held its successful Toys for Tots toy drive in conjunction with the U.S. Marine Corps, collecting 320 new and unwrapped toys for children in need. Jerry Nunziato and Janet Brayden organized the event for WEA. Toys for Tots is one of many charities listed in the Combined Federal Campaign booklet.

Joe Redlinger (second from right) poses with his family during his lunch.

Photos by Brian Murphy

Real Estate Chief retires with 30 years of service

A retirement celebration was held in Joe Redlinger's honor, Dec. 15, 2014 at Waxy O'Connor's in Lexington, Massachusetts. Nearly 60 family friends, co-workers, retirees and special guests came out to celebrate the Chief of Real Estate's many years of service to the Corps.

Frank Fedele, Chief of Operations, served as Master of Ceremonies for the event. Many speakers made presentations at the lunch. John Brown, Chief of Real Estate for North Atlantic Division (NAD) presented Redlinger with a crystal castle from the Division. Brig. Gen. Charles Sheehan and Lt. Col. Gerald Lukowski of the Connecticut Army National Guard presented Redlinger with a jacket and golf shirt in appreciation for the work he accomplished on the organization's behalf. Lukowski also presented Redlinger with a book of the Connecticut National Guard's rich history.

Col. Joseph Danao and Maj. Dawn Works-Dennis presented Redlinger with a mug and a framed photo that featured the installations that Redlinger worked on for the Connecticut National Guard during his career in the six state region.

Noreen Dresser, New York District's Chief of Real Estate, praised Redlinger's integrity and presented him with a biography of Joan of Arc .

Retiree Martin Curran presented Redlinger with a book of Natural History. Molly McCabe talked about working with Redlinger for the past 15 years. She presented him with a flag that flew over the U.S. Capitol and framed photo from his service in Afghanistan.

Redlinger's brother, Chuck, presented him with a shirt with the logo of the survey vessel, "REDLINGER," named for their late brother, Jake.

Col. Christopher Barron, New England District Commander, spoke and then presented Redlinger with his retirement certificate and pin.

Redlinger ended the official part of the lunch by talking about his long and distinguished career and by thanking

Lt. Col. Gerald Lukowski presents gifts to Joe Redlinger during the lunch.

Joe Redlinger and the Real Estate Division team.

Col. Christopher Barron presents Joe Redlinger with his retirement certificate and pin.

Joe Redlinger holds the flag presented to him that flew over the U.S. Capitol.

everyone who attended his lunch for coming.

Redlinger began his career with the New England District in 2000 as Chief of Real Estate. Prior to coming to New England, Redlinger served in the Kansas City District and private industry before that.

During his career in New England, Redlinger has a long list of impressive accomplishments to include the acquisition and disposal of property for the Base Realignment and Closure Program; acquisitions of property for Army Reserve Centers and National Guard units throughout the region; leasing and managing more than 200 military recruiting offices as well as residential housing for eligible military personnel. Redlinger also is credited for providing real estate services for many federal agencies to include Bureau of Prisons, Homeland Security, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and Immigration and Boarder Protection. Redlinger also deployed overseas for seven months in 2011 to 2012 working with Corps team members and local nationals to provide real estate services in support of U.S. Coalition Forces.

Redlinger comes from a family of Corps of Engineers employees. His father, Jake Redlinger, Sr., is a member of the Kansas City District's Distinguished Civilian Gallery. His brother Chuck is currently employed at the Corps' Risk Management Center in Denver, Colorado. His late brother, Jake, had a long career in several Corps Districts, with the Portland District honoring his memory by naming a survey boat after him. Redlinger's brother-in-law Bill Sobolewski served as an engineer in the Portland District.

Redlinger's wife, Anamaree, son Philip and brother Chuck accompanied him to the lunch. In addition to the special guests that made presentations, Ray Palima of the 99th U.S. Army Reserve and Charlie Cavanna and Rick Rhodes of NAD also attended. New England District retirees who came to wish Redlinger well were Bob Batt, Greg Buteau, Fred Coleman, Ray Cottongaim, Mary Dunn, Joan Gardner, Kevin McKelvey, Farrell McMillan, Richard Roach, Donna Russell and Joan Shok.

Basin Manager Faloretti retires from service

Nearly 100 people traveled to Waxy O'Connor's Irish Pub Restaurant in Keene, New Hampshire on Dec. 30, 2014 to wish Joe Faloretti well on his retirement. Faloretti, Operations Manager for the Lower Connecticut River Basin, retired from federal service after 40 years.

Jeff Magnum served as Master of Ceremonies for the lunch. He introduced the retirees and Faloretti's family members before turning the floor over to Ralph Gendron. Gendron hosted a quick "Faloretti Trivia Game" much to the enjoyment of attendees. Gendron presented Faloretti with a Corps flag that hung at the Barre Falls Dam and a book of scratch tickets. Gendron also presented gifts to Faloretti's wife and daughter.

Joe Faloretti and members of the Lower Connecticut River Basin during Faloretti's lunch.

Photos by Brian Murphy

Retiree Joan Gardner said she remembered many occasions of talking with Faloretti in Italian and that they agreed on almost everything. One sticking point was that he was a Yankees fan and she is a die-hard Red Sox fan. Gardner presented Faloretti with a Red Sox bumper sticker, which he promptly regifted to his daughter, and a framed picture of all the Operations managers that had attended a San Antonio Conference in years past.

Joe Faloretti receives a Commander's Award for Civilian Service from Frank Fedele.

The New England District Ranger Color Guard (Brad Clark, Jen Samela, Matt Coleman and Jamie Kordack) presented Faloretti with an American Flag that was flown over the USS Constitution as well as a certificate signed by the ship's Commander Sean Kearns for his four years of duty in the U.S. Navy and 36 years with the Corps of Engineers.

Retiree Mike Curran said he commuted to work with Faloretti for many years and how they discussed family and work during their journeys. He called Faloretti a perfect friend – but he's a scary driver and a Yankees Fan. Curran said he valued the commutes they had together and their friendship.

Retiree Bob Hanacek recalled when they met in the late 1970's, when Faloretti met his wife at Hop Book Lake and their University of Connecticut (Hanacek) versus University of Massachusetts (Faloretti) rivalry. Hanacek mentioned that Faloretti has almost encyclopedic knowledge on most types

of planes and his love for cardinals. Hanacek concluded by presenting Faloretti with a picture of a cardinal.

Cape Cod Canal Manager Larry Davis talked about some of the more interesting assignments he had shared with Faloretti – OpsSail 2000 and the Canal's 100th Anniversary. He presented Faloretti with a picture of the Cape Cod Canal with a Tide Table Chart, a framed picture of the Railroad Bridge with fireworks in the background and another picture of the Railroad Bridge at sunset.

Steve Dunbar thanked Faloretti for his contributions to the Leadership Development Program, and how they have enhanced the program and the people in it. He said that Faloretti offered to build a model of a WWII plane that Dunbar's late father piloted. Dunbar concluded by wishing him the very best.

James West talked about Faloretti's dedication to his profession, family and friends. He called the retirement lunch a celebration of a magnificent career. West said Faloretti was a by-the-book manager well-versed in every Army regulation. He said he worked hard as Basin Manager and had a personality that was well appreciated by his co-workers. West welcomed him to come visit any time.

Jeff Magnum said that when he first came to the Corps as a college student, Faloretti was his first impression of the Corps of Engineers. Magnum called Faloretti a true professional in every facet of the job. He also called him one of the most influential people in his life. He presented Faloretti with a framed photograph of Faloretti's five dams, and a framed photograph of his basin personnel from last August.

Frank Fedele, Chief of Operations, remarked on the amount of people present at the lunch and said that Faloretti touched a lot of lives, calling him the "real deal." Fedele also described

Jeff Magnum presents Joe Faloretti with a picture of the five dams that make up the Lower Connecticut River Basin.

Faloretti as skillful, a real professional, a leader, respectful and a gentleman. Fedele presented Faloretti with a Commander's Award for Civilian Service and his retirement certificate.

Faloretti thanked many people when it was his turn to speak – his grandmother, his supervisors and many individuals who either worked with him or helped him during his career.

Faloretti's wife, Mary, daughter Jessie, sister Roseanne, brothers Al and John all attended his retirement lunch.

Distinguished Civilian Gallery members Andy Andreliunas, Jack Boyea, Bobby Byrne, Fran Donovan, Paul Marinelli, Bernard Manor, Dick Reardon, Ron Tryba and Jim Wong came to wish Faloretti well.

Other retirees in attendance were Joe Bocchino, Greg Buteau, Rick Casano, Mike Curran, Joan Gardner, Bob Hanacek, Dave Hebert, Tony Mackos, Rick Magee, Rob Shanks, Dave Shepardson, Claire Sullivan, Jan Szwed, Frank Turner and Delia Vogel.

Larry Davis gives Joe Faloretti a picture of the Railroad Bridge.

Adam Durando presents Tom Chamberland with a citation from the Massachusetts House of Representatives.

Park Ranger retires with more than 40 years of service

Tom Chamberland, Park Ranger at East Brimfield Lake, Westville Lake and Conant Brook Dam, dedicated over 40 years of his life in service to the Corps of Engineers, New England District and his country. He served those years with faithfulness and great dedication. When he decided it was time to slow down and join the District's retirement community, almost 40 family, friends, co-workers and retirees traveled to Admiral T.J. O'Brien's Restaurant and Pub in Sturbridge, Massachusetts, Dec. 18, 2014, to celebrate his career and wish him the best.

Keith Beecher, Project Manager at East Brimfield Lake, served as Master of Ceremonies for the official portion of the lunch. He talked about Chamberland's career with the Corps and presented him with a Bunker Hill plaque in appreciation of his many years of service.

Bill Reid, Chief Ranger at the Last Green Valley, got up and spoke about the successful partnership efforts between the two agencies that Chamberland coordinated.

Adam Durando, Operations Manager, Thames River Basin, also recognized Chamberland's efforts throughout his career and presented him with a citation from the Massachusetts House of Representatives citing appreciation for his dedicated and distinguished career. After the lunch, Chamberland also received a citation from the Massachu-

Bill Reid praises Tom Chamberland at the retirement lunch.

Lt. Col. Charles Gray officially retires Tom Chamberland.

Photos by Brian Murphy

setts State Senate, expressing their gratitude for his service.

Bud Taylor, union representative, spoke at length about Chamberland's significant contribution as union leader during union contract negotiations.

Park Ranger Glenna Vitello thanked Chamberland for years of guidance. She presented him with a gift from all the attendees present at the lunch.

Lt. Col. Charles Gray, New England District Commander, spoke and recognized Chamberland's career and the contributions he has made to the New England District. He officially retired Chamberland by presenting him with his certificate and pin.

During his career, Chamberland was a tireless and determined interpreter for the New England District, aggressively seeking and cementing partnerships with organizations such as the Last Green Valley, the Regional Grand Trunk Trailblazers and local communities. Together they hosted such enormously successful initiatives such as National Trails Day, National Get Outdoors Day and Earth Day.

Chamberland took great pride in the many children's programs he initiated during his career. He was an active supporter of the Girl Scouts and Boy Scouts, assisting them with earning badges and awards while teaching them about environmental stewardship.

Chamberland's high visibility profile made him a local personality and he has been a Community Celebrity Reader in local schools for over a decade. Chamberland was also a frequent contributor to the District's monthly newsletter, YANKEE ENGINEER, as well as the weekly bulletin, advertising upcoming events and covering events that took place at his projects.

Chamberland also was a big advocate of community service. Not only was he Tree Warden for the town of Sturbridge, he also served as Veterans Agent, Town Assessor and Emergency Medical Technician.

A small sampling of awards Chamberland received over his career includes more than a half dozen Commendations for Outstanding Service as a Park Ranger. He received a Special Civilian Service Award for his two months of service deployed during the Hurricane Katrina cleanup, where he served as an arborist expert. After returning from Katrina, Chamberland went on to head and train a task force for tree emergency work with the U.S. Forest Service. He continued to impart his expertise and experience by speaking for the U.S. Forest Service. He was also recognized for his work following the deadly tornado that ripped through Sturbridge and other parts of central Massachusetts on June 1, 2011. He has numerous commendations and certificates for his service to Buffumville Lake in Charlton, Massachusetts on many Public Lands Day events. The honor that Chamberland is most proud of is his Chittenden Award for Interpretation, Interpreter of the Year in 2009.

Chamberland's wife, Diane, mother Wanda and daughter Christine accompanied him to the lunch. Distinguished Civilian Gallery member Ron Tryba attended the lunch. Other retirees included Dave Hebert, Jan Szwed and Bob Hanacek.

Friends of Tom Chamberland enjoy the speakers at his retirement lunch.

Dredging up the past

New England District Ranger Color Guard members Joe Faloretti (from left), Mike Curran, Robert Hanacek and Gary Rogowski march in the town of Concord, Massachusetts' Patriot's Day parade in this April 17, 2000 photo.

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