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Power plant electrician Anna Bates tests a circuit at Bonneville Lock and Dam powerhouse. Bates, previously a park ranger, completed the 4-year training to become a power plant electrician. Sixteen employees graduated in 2006 from the hands-on experience and academic study program to become power plant specialists for the Portland District.





Welcome to 2007.

This year will bring many challenges, rewards and changes. These include a new personnel system being implemented this month that will affect all GS managers and supervisors. But that's just one challenge, and even though we've known it was coming and have had time to train and prepare, it will still be a challenge to change a system that has been in use for many years. On the other hand, we have other more significant challenges coming, which include changes in the war, natural disasters, turnover in personnel, and so on. These challenges have one thing in common for all of us: tough decisions.

Tough decisions are facing us in operations and maintenance, a major part of the overall District mission. No one likes to make a decision that might negatively impact someone's project, but sometimes it is unavoidable. We have successfully worked our way through several years of reduced O&M funding, mostly by making tough decisions, but there is a glimmer that we may see a change in the O&M funding trend. With projects that were built 30, 40 or 50 years ago, however, all of us together must do two things: put our best effort into getting the most done with what we have and making tough decisions. Those tough decisions extend beyond the District, as we work regionally to decide if a part that's needed to operate a spillway gate in Portland District is a greater priority than a part that's needed in a powerhouse halfway across the United States.

I've had to make some tough decisions about District overhead expenditures as well. I've had to tell each project and operations manager to limit spending as much as possible; how could I not do the same? Some of the decisions were disappointing, like cancelling last year's annual awards ceremony. I know it was a popular way to recognize the excellence of our teammates, but I must lead by example: I can't tell the projects to cut expenses and still pay administrative overhead costs for more than two hours of lost labor. I decided it was appropriate for that recognition to occur during the division-level meetings. That one decision saved those funds for our critical missions and people. That's just one example - I know many of you have had to make similar tough calls as you work to do things differently.

One thing is certain: we can't keep doing the same old thing, hoping for things to change;



Col. Thomas O'Donovan

that's like pounding nails with your forehead. It hurts, and there's a much better way to accomplish the mission. We will have to make some tough decisions this year, because we have to – not only because it's our job to face challenges head-on, but because the District requires it if we want to continue to strive for excellence.

Tough decisions are often difficult for everyone: the decision-maker must balance competing needs and reach a conclusion that could negatively affect someone; those most affected by a decision must sometimes support actions they know impact them. For myself, I know how hard it is to

implement a tough decision I was tasked with carrying out, but as hard as it is, I must do so. I know how hard it is for those of you tasked with the same action, but I also know you understand the realities under which we are operating.

We can manage the District's resources in the best and most efficient manner if we work together to first prepare for tough decisions, make them and then help carry them out. Luckily all of our decisions aren't tough. For those that are, let's make sure we keep our eye on the overall mission of the District and the Corps. We all see the benefits to the American people in the many areas where our mission impacts them, such as hydropower, ecosystem restoration, flood damage reduction, navigation and recreation. And those benefits are what make the tough decisions worth it. 

Essays!

CORPS'PONDENT

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Portland District

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Editor, Corps'pondent
Portland District
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
P.O. Box 2946
Portland, Oregon 97208-2946
Email: CENWP-PA@usace.army.mil
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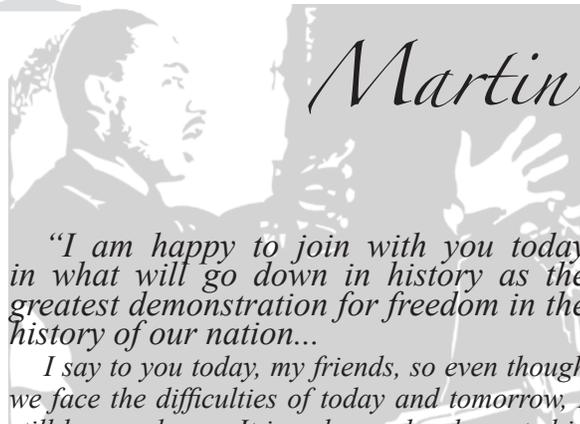
Commander
Col. Thomas O'Donovan
Chief, Public Affairs
Matt Rabe
Editor
Diana Fredlund

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In honor of Martin Luther King, Jr., excerpts from his famous "I have a Dream" speech are offered to our readers. King spoke these words to thousands of people from the steps of the Lincoln Memorial on Aug. 28, 1963. His speech was credited with mobilizing supporters of desegregation and prompted the 1964 Civil Rights Act. The next year, King was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize.



Martin Luther King Day

January 15, 2007

"I am happy to join with you today in what will go down in history as the greatest demonstration for freedom in the history of our nation..."

I say to you today, my friends, so even though we face the difficulties of today and tomorrow, I still have a dream. It is a dream deeply rooted in the American dream.

I have a dream that one day this nation will rise up and live out the true meaning of its creed: "We hold these truths to be self-evident: that all men are created equal."

I have a dream that one day on the red hills of Georgia the sons of former slaves and the sons of former slave owners will be able to sit down together at the table of brotherhood.

I have a dream that one day even the state of Mississippi, a state sweltering with the heat of injustice, sweltering with the heat of oppression, will be transformed into an oasis of freedom and justice.

I have a dream that my four little children will one day live in a nation where they will not be judged by the color of their skin but by the content of their character.

I have a dream today.

I have a dream that one day, down in Alabama, with its vicious racists, with its governor having his lips dripping with the words of interposition and nullification; one day right there in Alabama, little black boys and black girls will be able to join hands with little white boys and white girls as sisters and brothers.

I have a dream today.

I have a dream that one day every valley shall be exalted, every hill and mountain shall be made low, the rough places will be made plain, and the crooked places will be made straight, and the glory of the Lord shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together.

This is our hope. This is the faith that I go back to the South with. With this faith we will be able

to hew out of the mountain of despair a stone of hope. With this faith we will be able to transform the jangling discords of our nation into a beautiful symphony of brotherhood. With this faith we will be able to work together, to pray together, to struggle together, to go to jail together, to stand up for freedom together, knowing that we will be free one day.

This will be the day when all of God's children will be able to sing with a new meaning, "My country, 'tis of thee, sweet land of liberty, of thee I sing. Land where my fathers died, land of the pilgrim's pride, from every mountainside, let freedom ring."

And if America is to be a great nation this must become true. So let freedom ring from the prodigious hilltops of New Hampshire. Let freedom ring from the mighty mountains of New York. Let freedom ring from the heightening Alleghenies of Pennsylvania!

Let freedom ring from the snowcapped Rockies of Colorado!

Let freedom ring from the curvaceous slopes of California!

But not only that; let freedom ring from Stone Mountain of Georgia!

Let freedom ring from Lookout Mountain of Tennessee!

Let freedom ring from every hill and molehill of Mississippi. From every mountainside, let freedom ring.

And when this happens, When we allow freedom to ring, when we let it ring from every village and every hamlet, from every state and every city, we will be able to speed up that day when all of God's children, black men and white men, Jews and Gentiles, Protestants and Catholics, will be able to join hands and sing in the words of the old Negro spiritual, 'Free at last! free at last! thank God Almighty, we are free at last!'"



Power plant training program generates

By Jim Duffus, Operations Division

The Corps needs many types of expertise to keep the Portland District running smoothly. One of the talents the District needs is skilled crafts- and tradespeople to operate and maintain a project's machinery. At the Corps' Columbia River projects electricians, operators and mechanics offer some of the most important skills.

After four years of academic study and hands-on experience, 19 trainees graduated in 2007. Each received a certificate of completion from the Corps of Engineers and a certificate of apprenticeship from the U.S. Department of Labor.

"This is a rigorous training environment, designed to challenge the students," Portland District Commander Col. Thomas O'Donovan said. "We want them to have confidence in themselves and their ability to excel in their new profession."

"The training offers hands-on experience, so trainees can see how the subjects they have been studying apply to real-world situations," said Rick Goodell, deputy chief of Operations Division, who oversees the program. "It's an entry-level trade apprenticeship program where the Portland

District receives a well-qualified power plant employee who's specifically trained in machinery and equipment used by our projects." There are 16 trainees currently enrolled.

Trainees spend the first nine months of the program rotating through the three craft specialties: power plant electrician, power plant mechanic and power plant operator. "Rotating through gives the students more appreciation for the other crafts and

builds a better human network into our workforce," said Ben Van Horn, mechanical crew supervisor at Bonneville Lock and Dam. Van Horn is a graduate of not only the District's power plant training program but also a program with in the U.S. Navy while at the Bremerton Shipyard.

After checking out each type of work, the trainees select the craft in which they would like to specialize and their training is focused on those skills. Each trainee is matched with a mentor from their selected craft who can provide guidance in both technical aspects and the Corps' work environment.

"The mentoring process helps to shape a more trusting culture in the workforce, an important key to developing trusting relationships," said Eric



Jacob Keizur, a power plant mechanic trainee at the John Day Lock and Dam alternates between study and work.

Thatcher, a power plant mechanic worker-in-charge at The Dalles Dam Lock and Dam.

"The actual hands-on component of learning a task while being guided by a craft worker is the most important part of my training," said Dan Zachariasen, in his final year as a power plant electrician trainee. "That, and not being afraid to ask questions." There is no question that Zachariasen had an important role model for his choice of career. Leo Zachariasen,

TRAINING PROGRAM

tes talented employees



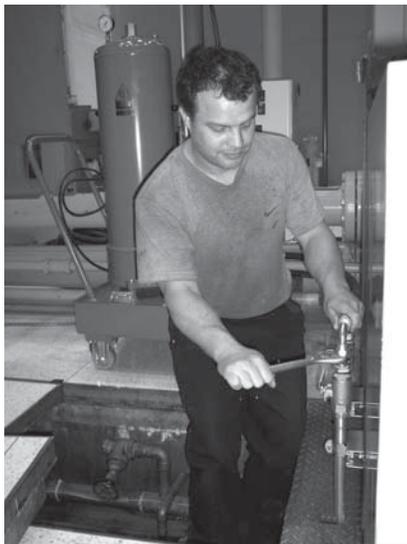
TRAINING PROGRAM

Dan's grandfather retired as a power plant electrician from John Day Lock and Dam in 1987.

Trainees are accepted into the program as external and internal candidates. One newly enrolled trainee applied after finding herself included in the A-76 manpower study. Michelle Fagen worked at the Willamette Valley Project in Information Management before applying. Although she is not

the program when she was a member of the park ranger staff at Bonneville. She was accepted into the program, traded in her ranger's hat for a hard hat and completed her training in 2002. Her location didn't change, however; she's still working at Bonneville, only now she works in the powerhouse instead of the visitor center.

Trainees work at Bonneville, The Dalles or John Day dams during the program. "Most of the training



Clockwise, from top: Elias Sexton, Jonathan Bryan and Alberto Marquez, were accepted into the 4-year technicians training. Sexton recently completed his training, Bryan and Marquez will graduate soon.



certain if her position will be affected by A-76, she felt it was a good time to gain new skills. Fagen is still a Willamette Valley Project employee, but for now she's studying and working at Bonneville Lock and Dam. Once she finishes the training, she will return to the valley as a power plant operator.

"Anna Bates is another excellent example of an internal candidate," Goodell said. Bates applied for

is done at our Columbia River projects because trainees can experience all elements of power plant operation, from hydropower generation to fish passage," Goodell said. "The students gain all the skills necessary to work anywhere in the District."

Training doesn't end after graduation, said Gene LaDouceur, The Dalles/John Day/Willow Creek operations manager. "Completing this training is only a first step in a learning experience that will last throughout their careers," he said. "Most of the equipment they are using now will be upgraded that may change processes and systems and there will always be something more to learn." 



Plans for Willamette River channel maintenance underway



By Jennifer Sowell, Public Affairs Office

FEATURE

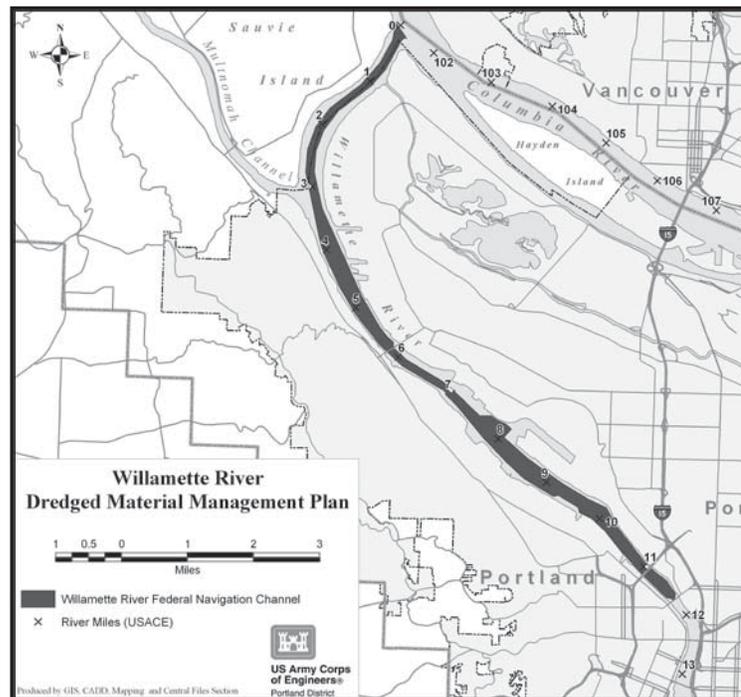
The stretch of the Willamette River that bisects Portland is Oregon's primary seaport. Portland Harbor is not only a major import and export center for goods into the Northwest; it also generates thousands of jobs.

The Corps of Engineers is congressionally authorized to maintain the federal navigation channel at the lower Willamette River in order to provide safe navigation. The channel runs 11.6 miles from the Broadway Bridge in Portland, downstream to the confluence with the Columbia River.

Portland District is developing a long-term plan for maintaining the channel to a depth of 40 feet. Developing a dredged materials maintenance plan is a lengthy process that requires coordination and consultation with federal, state and local agencies, Native American tribes, and other interested parties.

The Port of Portland is the local, non-federal sponsor for the project and is responsible for providing, without cost to the U.S. government, all lands, easements and rights-of-way required for maintenance of the project, including any disposal sites.

The channel historically required maintenance dredging every three to five years to maintain adequate depth and width. However, dredging was suspended after 1997 due to issues regarding dredging within the boundaries of the Portland



Harbor Superfund site, which was listed with the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency in 2000.

“The lack of maintenance dredging over the past nine years has resulted in significant shoaling of the channel,” said Don Erickson, project manager for the DMMP. “Many areas of the channel are now less than 40 feet deep, creating a navigation hazard for large cargo ships that require at least that depth.”

The DMMP will help the Corps provide safe passage for cargo ships by maintaining the navigation channel in the least costly manner, which employs



sound engineering practices and meets all federal environmental standards, Erickson said.

“The Corps typically dredges to maintain the channel, but we want to be thorough in our study of this project, so other methods of channel maintenance will also be examined,” Erickson said.

Other methods of channel maintenance could include reducing the amount of sediment coming into the channel, which could lessen or eliminate the need to dredge, said Erickson.

Even if dredging is chosen as the preferred alternative, there are still several options to look at. The first choice would be to determine whether to dredge the full federal navigation channel, or only those segments of the channel that meet the needs of terminal owners and Columbia River pilots, who guide the ships to port, Erickson said.

Once that is decided, the Corps and the Port of Portland must choose to dispose of dredged material as either in-water or upland material. The disposal method is dependent on the quality of the material that is dredged.

Unconfined in-water disposal places the material in the river’s flowlane, where the current carries it away from the problem area; confined in-water disposal places contaminated sediment in a hole, which is covered with clean material to protect the site. Similar processes occur for land placement, with contaminated sediment transported to landfills authorized to accept such materials.

“These disposal methods go from cheapest to most expensive,” said Erickson. “In-water disposal of dredged material is the least expensive method of disposal while hauling contaminated material to a landfill is the most expensive.”

If dredging is selected as the preferred alternative, the Corps also must look into possible beneficial uses for the material, which can include wetland creation, beach nourishment or capping material for landfills, said Erickson.

The Portland District will develop an Environmental Impact Statement as part of the process required by the National Environmental Policy Act in order to evaluate any potential impacts the reasonable alternatives may pose to the river. NEPA also requires analysis of the “no-

action” alternative. The no-action alternative for the Willamette River DMMP is no change from past maintenance of the channel.

The District is examining all its options so it may develop a comprehensive EIS and make an informed decision on the preferred channel maintenance alternative. The choice must be the least-cost, most technically-feasible alternative that meets all federal environmental standards to remove the estimated 5.7 to 7.3 million cubic yards of sediment over the next 20 years.

The Willamette River continues to flow into the Columbia River, bringing sediment from upstream to



The Port of Portland relies on its river system for imports and exports of valued at millions of dollars. The Corps of Engineers is responsible to maintain the federal navigation channel to an authorized depth of 40 feet.

lodge where humans are trying to do business. The Corps will do what it can to develop a cost effective, best-fit method to allow the business of business to flow through Portland like the river itself. 



FEATURE



LDP goes to Washington



Portland District 2006 – 2007 LDP members standing in front of the White House during their Washington D.C. trip.

By Mike McAleer, Public Affairs Office

Fourteen Portland District employees traveled to Washington, D.C. in November for the national policy process segment of the year-long Leadership Development Program. The group consisted of the LDP members and co-facilitator Davis Moriuchi, five members of Bonneville Power Administration's Executive Candidate Development Program and five commissioners from the Columbia River Intertribal Fish Commission. Portland State University professor Jeff Hammarlund and his assistant, Nicole Braman, from the Mark Hatfield School of Government led the trip.

The stage was set for the trip by the outcome of the midterm elections held the week before. For the first time in 12 years, there would be a power shift in Congress as the Democrats gained control of both the House and the Senate. "This will be a very unique and interesting time to be in Washington, D.C.," Hammarlund told the class.

Each student would be challenged as they listened to speakers from both government and non-governmental groups and agencies explain the role they play in developing national policy. Prior to the trip, the group studied several national

policy models that illustrated how, depending on the issue and the atmosphere of the nation, a policy could be adopted or changed. Keeping in mind the principles discussed in class, the group will apply what they learned from these speakers as they prepare to write their final papers on the subject.

The activities in the nation's capitol began Sunday with a whirlwind bus tour of Washington D.C. One of the highlights of the tour was stopping to view "The Awakening," a new piece of artwork located at Haines Point.

The national policy process program kicked off Sunday evening when the group met at Hunan Dynasty on Pennsylvania Avenue, known to have been a favorite of Sen. Mark Hatfield when he represented Oregon. The evening's topics were "Life in a city of vagabonds" and "The role of BPA's national office." Sonya Baskerville, manager of BPA's national office and The Dalles Lock and Dam park ranger Eugene Goff, on detail to the Corps' Headquarters water safety office, spoke about what it was like to work for an agency in the middle of the policy circle. "I was sitting where you are a couple of years ago with an LDP class," Goff said. "That's when I knew I could become part of the process." He reflected on what it was like and how the class led him to apply for the detail assignment at headquarters.



Hammarlund, a veteran of life in Washington, a past political insider and leader of the LDP Washington trip for several years, was able to gain access to places and people in Washington that few ever experience. During the week-long trip, the LDP group met with House and Senate members and staff, agency officials who support the work of the national policy process, trade groups, environmental groups, lobbyists, a think tank and the Canadian Embassy.

“It’s amazing that we could meet with that broad of a group on that tight of a schedule and be able to pull it off without missing any meetings,” said Sean Askelson, Engineering and Construction Division and an LDP member. “I think we all appreciate that effort by Jeff.”

What the LDP group found during their week in Washington was that the policy process is a

The not-so-obvious policy process influencers were a think tank group and a foreign embassy. Paul Conners, energy counselor with the Canadian embassy, talked to the group about his role in keeping up-to-speed on issues in the energy field that effect both the U.S. and Canada, as well as representing his country’s interests in U.S. policy. Stan Wellborn from Resources for the Future gave the group some insight to how think tanks influence the policy process and how they work on issues before they ever appear on the national horizon.

The LDP group also met with organizations seeking that their interests be part of the national policy process. They met with government watchdog groups, environmental groups, energy and trade groups, lobbyists and media.

Everyone was pleasantly surprised at the openness of the speakers at each of the meetings. “I am still fascinated by the candor of some of our speakers,” Askelson said. Joe Lapeyre, Hydroelectric Design Section agreed, adding, “At the end of each meeting I walked away thinking I was lucky to spend an hour listening to this speaker.”

The one statement heard from almost every speaker was, “I am looking forward to the next session of Congress and looking forward to continuing to work in a bipartisan spirit.”

The capstone of the week for the LDP group was dinner with the Corps’ Steve Stockton, Deputy Director of Civil Works. Stockton and his wife graciously hosted a dinner for the entire group at

his home. Conversation focused on the group’s reflection of the past week, Vision 2012 and the value of relationship building.

Like the man trying to pull himself up from the Earth, each LDP member experienced his or her own awakening in Washington. The experiences during the trip to Washington will be with the group for a long time to come. As future leaders they will be called upon to play a role in the national policy process and will be ready and able to apply what they learned. 

Photos by Nicole Braman, Portland State University.



The Awakening, a five part cast aluminum statue, depicts a 100-foot man half-buried alive trying to free himself from the earth.

complex, tangled dance of interests and opportunity by dedicated and knowledgeable people trying to do the right thing.

Some of the more obvious influencers that met with the group were the Office of Management and Budget, responsible for assembling the President’s budget and representing the executive branch. The group also met with Rep. David Hobson, Chairman of the Subcommittee on Energy and Water Development and Related Agencies, as well as Oregon representatives David Wu and Earl Blumenauer. All were very candid in their views of the Water Resources Development Act, Corps reform and other issues.



New Year, new Corporate Team member

By Diana Fredlund, Public Affairs Office

There's a new face in the crowd: Portland District welcomed Dwane Watsek as the new Operations Division chief on Jan. 8. He stepped in to replace Debby Chenoweth, who retired from the Corps of Engineers Jan. 3.



Watsek is no stranger to the Pacific Northwest, although he is moving his family from an overseas assignment in Grafenwoehr, Germany. As a self-proclaimed Air Force brat, Watsek and his family had lived in Hawaii, Utah and Oklahoma by the time he was 7. The family settled at McChord Air Force Base near Tacoma, Wash., where he lived until he graduated from Bethel High School.

Watsek followed the military tradition set by his father, although he switched military branches of service and attended the U.S.

Military Academy at West Point, N.Y., where he was commissioned as a second lieutenant in 1982.

After his first assignment operating dune buggies with the 2nd Battalion, 1st Infantry at Fort Lewis, Watsek moved into military engineering in 1986; his first assignment with the Corps of Engineers was with Louisville District as a project manager for Olmsted Lock and Dam. He also returned to school and received a master's degree in Civil Engineering.

Watsek retired from active duty as a lieutenant colonel in 2004. He continued his military service in civilian clothes as the Plans, Analysis and Integration officer for the U.S. Army Garrison at Grafenwoehr and later as the Director of Public Works.

With a daughter in college and a son ready to graduate from high school, Watsek and his wife are looking forward to returning to the Pacific Northwest.

*“Be ready for anything ...
just when you think you've
seen it all, something new
will happen. Just enjoy it
— you have great people
working for you.”*

Debby Chenoweth to Dwane Watsek



In Memoriam

Ann Carroll, 87, died Nov. 27, 2006. Carroll started her working career as a kindergarten teacher during the Depression. After packing parachutes during World War II, Ann worked for the Army Corps of Engineers for the next 30 years, retiring in 1975. She is survived by her husband, John; her son, son, sister and grandchildren.

Lloyd Wright, 82, died Nov. 26, 2006. Wright served in the Army for a year and the Navy for three years during World War II. He worked for the Army Corps of Engineers at various sites, beginning at Beaver Army Terminal and the Columbia River dredges. He retired from Bonneville Dam as a rigger in 1980. He is survived by his wife, Pauline; a son, two daughters, two sisters and brothers, four grandchildren, four great-grandchildren and many nieces and nephews.

Walter Johnson, 80, died Dec. 17, 2006. Johnson moved to Albany in 1959, where he worked for Camp Adair for 11 years. He was hired by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers in 1970. He was involved in the operation of John Day, Cougar, Green Peter, Foster and Lookout dams. During his 35 years of service for the Corps of Engineers, he received numerous awards for sustained superior performance. His wife, Alice, died in 1997. Johnson survived by two sons and three daughters, a brother and two sisters, eight grandchildren and 10 great-grandchildren.

COMING NEXT MONTH:

**Face-to-face
with the Corps**



2007 Federal Holiday and Pay Calendar



January

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Pay Day
 Federal Holiday
 End of pay period

Portland District Public Affairs Office