US Army Corps of Engineers ®
Omaha District

Field Office of the Month

Fort Randall Dam and Lake Francis Case

Getting to know projects within the Omaha District

October 2001

Outside maintenance workers battle challenges

Article and photos by Monique Farmer/Public Affairs

Tyrone Peters, structures and facilities foreman in outside maintenance, recollects back to 1997 when vast amounts of land were barely visible or accessible at Fort Randall Dam.

High waters from Lake Francis Case consumed large areas of land just three years ago and made it extremely difficult or impossible for workers to perform maintenance on the embankment of the dam. Now, distinct white lines mark rock that surrounds the lake. They are the reminder.

"Our lake fluctuates," Peters says. "The typical operating level runs 1,355 to 1,362 feet above sea level and that can vary between ranges."

In 1997, the level of the lake rose to 1,372 feet above sea level. With water running over the roads, workers expended tiresome efforts to push loading equipment into mud banks as they tried to load rock. They decided to develop an alternative approach—a special barge-loading ramp, which would allow them to go up and down the lake despite fluctuating elevation.

"We recognized a need for the barge loading ramp before the high water, but it became evident when we had the high water that we needed to build something quickly," Peters said.

After consulting with other project offices to find out what had worked for them in the past, the outside maintenance crew decided that developing a special barge-loading ramp would be the best approach to solving the problem of accessing the embankment to conduct maintenance during high water. Peters says maintenance of the dam was even more critical during the high water episode.

Tyrone Peters, structures and facilities foreman in outside maintenance, prepares to load rock onto an excavator.

"When we had the high water in '97, the rock was a lot lower," Peters says. "We had strong winds where the waves were so forceful they got over and behind the top of the rock, eroding the earth away. When that happened, it ruined the integrity of the rock."

As a result, the rock began to roll off the embankment, putting the dam in jeopardy.

Because high water episodes are unpredictable, the loading ramp was developed as an emergency measure for possible future occurrences, Peters says.

"The problem would have come up again and we could have lost a portion of the dam, causing downstream flooding which would have created a lot of problems."

The loading ramp was constructed in-house. Construction began in 1998 and was completed last year. The ramp, which is a hydraulic pump, reaches 1,375 feet, allowing workers to travel virtually anywhere within the lake.

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Operations manager tells why Fort Randall project is filled with pride.

See words from the operations manager on page 4

Outside maintenance

Top row from left: Gary Swensen, Adam Cox and Ron Cizek. Bottom row: Mark Nelson, Dennis Clemens, James Reinbold, Tyrone Peters and Darrell Petrik (not pictured) make up the Fort Randall outside maintenance crew.

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"One of the things engineers came up with as a solution for controlling flooding is to raise the level of the rock and now the only way we can repair that is from the water," Peters says. The present elevation of the rock is 1,383 feet above sea level.

"The raising of the rock was in anticipation of possible additional high water because the top of the flood gates are at 1,375," Peters says. "So, now we're 8 ft. higher with the rock and the floodgates, which with wind action and other possible interruptions gives us protection."

The crew is currently working on filling an area near U.S. Highways 281 & 18 (located near the embankment) with rock. Primarily, the workers' responsibilities include dam maintenance and flood control. The crew also handles road maintenance and snow removal in the wintertime, works with threatened and endangered species programs at the project and plants food plots for wildlife.

"We just finished putting in new sidewalks and interpretive signs at cultural resource sites throughout the dam," Peters says. "We're kind of a catch all. Whatever comes up, we end up getting called in."

The goal of outside maintenance tries is to set the standard for responding to emergency situations as well as working to create a work force that is competent, Peters says.

"In fulfilling day-to-day supervisory tasks, my responsibility as foreman is to make sure the work gets done as far as balancing out the schedule and taking care of the

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The conceptual design for this special barge-loading ramp was developed in 1997 after high water covered the land near Lake Francis Case.

Outside maintenance

Training day

Photo by Monique Farmer

"Developing successful workplace relationships and customer service"

Employees at Fort Randall Dam spend their morning in the Methodist Employee Assistance Program (EAP) training. Seminars focus on personal-management, team-management and workplace development. The training is offered every other year. Back row from left: Tom Curran and Tyrone Peters. Front row from left: Francis Kocer, Lisa Durham, Adam Cox and Ron Cizek.

MAINTENANCE
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people that assist me," Peters says. At the beginning of the day, Peters distributes work assignments to his crew, which currently consists of four full-time staff members and three temporary staff.

In balancing the workload and the number of situations that call for immediate attention, assignments are determined in regard to precedence.

Most emergency situations such as utility or water problems tend to arise overnight, Peters says.

"One of the most challenging aspects of the job is reduction in the number of workers," Peters says.

"Just about everything we do on a day-to-day basis is a challenge because of limited resources," he says. "We're constantly trying to make the best of the resources we have and stretch them as far as we can." Peters says trying to keep a good group of people together, motivated and focused has also been a challenge.

"It would be nice if we could finally get where our mission wasn't being altered on a regular and recurring basis so we could stay focused on something," he says. "It would be helpful for the Corps to focus on giving us more resources to accomplish our jobs."

Fort Randall: a project filled with pride

by Tom Curran
Fort Randall operations manager

What makes the Fort Randall Project different from the other main stem Missouri River projects? Maybe it's the rolling cedar-lined hills. A two-mile long dam. Or a powerhouse with eight generators supplying electricity to homes and businesses in eight states. Maybe it's an historic fort site that still displays parts of the chapel or a lake that annually fluctuates twenty feet. Of course all these characteristics describe the Fort Randall Project.

But what really makes this project unique are our employees both past and present. Each person has contributed to the impact of the Fort Randall Project, making it what it is today.

The most significant thing I have noticed in the two years I have been here is the enormous amount of pride employees have for this project.

For example, there are operators who fill shifts around the clock, 365 days a year, anticipating and correcting problems.

They switch power routes, make sure we are generating the right amount of electricity or releasing the right amount of water for flood control, coordinate work efforts within the power plant and make sure the little problems get fixed before they become big problems.

Their hard work ensures that each of us will see immediate results when we flip a light switch or turn on an appliance.

Our pride is also exhibited through the power plant mechanics that take care of the generators and equipment, plumbing, air compressors and heating and air conditioning systems. At times, they are called out at 2 a.m. to fix a shear pin.

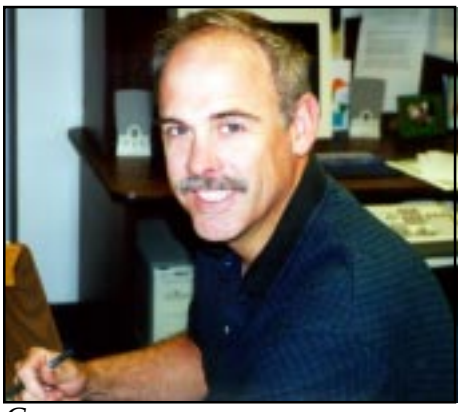
As a result, we all have lights to turn on when we get out of bed in the morning.

It's our power plant electricians who deal with complex and dangerous energy situations, keep the generators going, wire an extra outlet at someone's cubicle and keep the electricity running so we can watch the evening news.

It's our outside maintenance staff which keeps our vehicles and equipment running, moves snow for us in the winter, maintains the grounds and buildings, and keeps our dam and shorelines safe.

It's our natural resources staff that deals with the public, handles cultural resources issues, wildlife habitat, threatened and endangered species, recreation, shoreline use permits, water safety, agricultural and grazing leases, and our visitor center.

It's our technical support section that provides engineering support, contract and quality assurance oversight and computer support, while overseeing dam safety programs and providing environmental compliance support for our project. It's our administrative support section staff that makes time for everyone.


Curran

They're never too busy to solve each employee's problem, no matter how large or small. They handle purchasing, developing our budget, scheduling training or travel, hiring, personnel issues, or making sure we all get our time in so we get paid. We couldn't get along without them.

Then there's me, the operations manager. I have the best job in the world because I get to coach all these fine men and women.

When I get to see how well they do, day in and day out, it makes me very proud to be part of the Fort Randall Project.

The following articles will further illustrate my point—so welcome to Fort Randall. Read on.

Tom Curran
Operations Manager
Fort Randall Project
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers

Historic resource sites undergo improvements

Article and photos by Monique Farmer/Public Affairs

Remnants of the old Fort Randall army outpost area are represented in a timeworn chalkrock chapel.

In the late 1800s, the chapel served as a combined church, library and lounge hall for soldiers and their families. Every day, it gradually deteriorates and it is lake manager Cody Wilson's job to pull together ideas that will help preserve it.

"We need to first decide what feasible options are available and second, which direction we want to go," Wilson says.

When Wilson transferred to the Fort Randall project a year and a half ago from Fort Peck, Mont., public meetings were instituted to solicit public comments and recommendations about what should be done with the chapel.

"Nobody has given us any specific recommendations about what to do at this point, they just want to see something done because they recognize that the chapel is deteriorating rapidly," Wilson says.

"Our plans are to coordinate the people who are interested and let them help us decide which direction we want to go with it."

In an effort to preserve the structure several years ago, the Corps put a protective coating on the building.

"It now appears that the coating has only accelerated the deterioration," Wilson says. "When you look at it, there are large pieces that are just falling off and have allowed the chalkrock to break apart."

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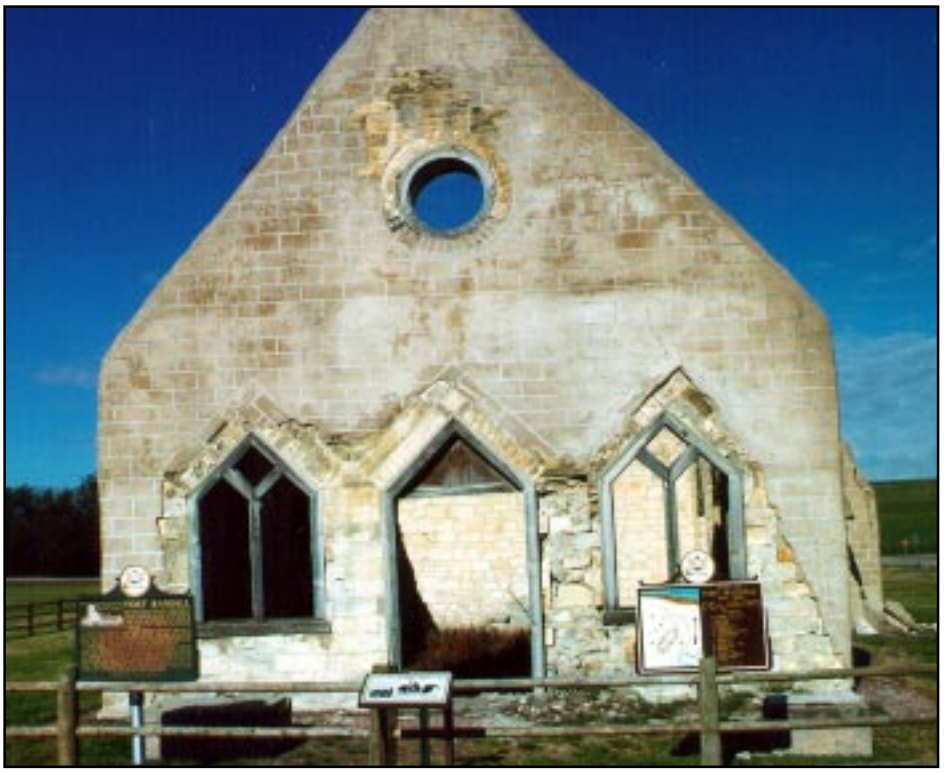

This chalkrock-covered chapel was built from hand-sawn chalkstone gathered from nearby quarries in 1875. The structure ministered to more than non-denominational needs. It also housed a library and social gathering lounge.

Cultural resources

The parade grounds at Fort Randall provide visitors with an idea of the area where the actual fort used to stand. Adjacent to the chapel, the parade grounds were once surrounded by the town of Fort Randall.

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Until now, the Fort Randall project has done little with structural stabilization of the chapel.

However, efforts to improve and interpret the entire fort site have been implemented.

"This year we invested nearly all of our share of Congressional add money, earmarked for improvements prior to the Lewis and Clark Commemoration, into improving the historic Fort Randall site."

One improvement has been the upgrading of interpretive paths from gravel pathways to cement, making them Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) accessible. This has also greatly reduced the maintenance burden of keeping the paths clear of weeds and safe from tripping hazards. Another improvement was the transforming of all interpretive signs into self-guided interpretive tours which allow people to follow the path and read the signs in front of each particular site.

"While visitors are invited to come and view the chapel and the interpretive signs which have been posted outside it, they are instructed to stay away from the actual structure of the building due to its instability," Wilson says.

Next in line for an upgrade is the visitor center at Fort Randall. Currently, the center is open and manned only from Memorial Day until Labor Day.

"We'd like to improve it so that it meets ADA requirements and is more accommodating, more inviting," Wilson says.

"We desperately need to modernize it and upgrade it," he says. "I'd like to make it available to all our customers year-round and put some displays in there to tell the story of the Fort Randall project a little better."

Currently, most of the items featured in the center are photographs and some artifacts.

"But that doesn't tell the full story of all the missions of the Corps," Wilson says.

Because the visitor center is the primary first stop visitors make before exploring the rest of the project, Wilson says he would like to ensure historical exhibits are well-covered. His plans are to add more interactive displays that detail the general mission and duties of the entire Fort Randall project.

"What we want to do is add interactive water safety exhibits plus something brief about all the missions like wildlife and fisheries management," Wilson says.

Wilson also mentioned including exhibits that will tell stories about the prehistoric age.

"We want a lot of hands-on, interactive, really interesting things to get people really involved and from there, they can go out and tour the areas that really interest them such as the power plant or the fort site for example," Wilson says.

This summer, a conceptual design was developed to suggest possible improvement ideas.

While fabrication of the new visitor center has not started, Wilson says he would like to have the phase plan completed within the next few years.

Budgeting technician explores outside maintenance

by Monique Farmer/Public Affairs

After ten years as a budgeting technician with the Corps, Fran Kocer wanted the gratification of being able to look at something and say, "I did it."

Surely, his own position which entails handling financially-related matters at the project is gratifying. But at times, it gets to be a little too routine.

"I like variety," Kocer says.

Earlier this year, his involvement in the Corps Leadership Development Program (LDP) allowed Kocer to grasp that variety. LDP is a one-year program that compels employees to complete coursework which entails addressing conflict resolution tactics, leadership/motivation topics and analyzing case studies.

"The purpose is to develop future leaders out of employees who may possess qualities necessary for them to become leaders," Kocer says.

Besides coursework, employees are encouraged to take on developmental assignments which allow them to explore possible alternative career opportunities and ultimate career goals, he says.

Kocer took a number of surveys within the LDP program and discovered he had a desire for more variety in his career.

"So, I approached the operations manager Tom Curran and my supervisor Lisa Durham about my wanting to work with outside maintenance," Kocer says. Upon their approval, he was allowed to fulfill a period of detail with outside maintenance from April 8 to Sept. 8. However, he was required to continue to tend to necessary duties within his own position. Depending on what the outside maintenance foreman had lined up for the day, Kocer's duties varied tremendously during his outside venture.

Photo courtesy of Tyrone Peters

Budgeting technician Fran Kocer operates a tractor with an attached tree transplanter. Kocer used the transplanter to relocate about one hundred trees.

Kocer's tasks included tree transplanting, pay loader operation, dozer operation, planting, disking and working with asphalt.

"I got the opportunity to transplant a bunch of trees right away this spring and that's something I can say I did," he says.

The crew also spent a lot of time developing the South Shore Recreation Area at Fort Randall. Kocer helped fence the area.

After working with outside maintenance for the bulk of his day, Kocer would go into the office to complete end of the month reports, operating budgets, alternate purchasing and any other budget concerns.

"A lot of times, I worked about nine hours a day," he says.

Kocer says the experience gave him more appreciation for what the field workers do.

"I saw a lot of different leadership styles," he says. "Now, when outside maintenance requests something and indicates they need it done quickly, I can understand why because I got to see how things can come up. It gave me a feel for all the hard work they do and all the work they put into it."

The biggest challenge for Kocer was proving he could perform in outside maintenance.

"Coming out of the office, it's kind of difficult to prove that you can do something other than what you've been doing," he says.

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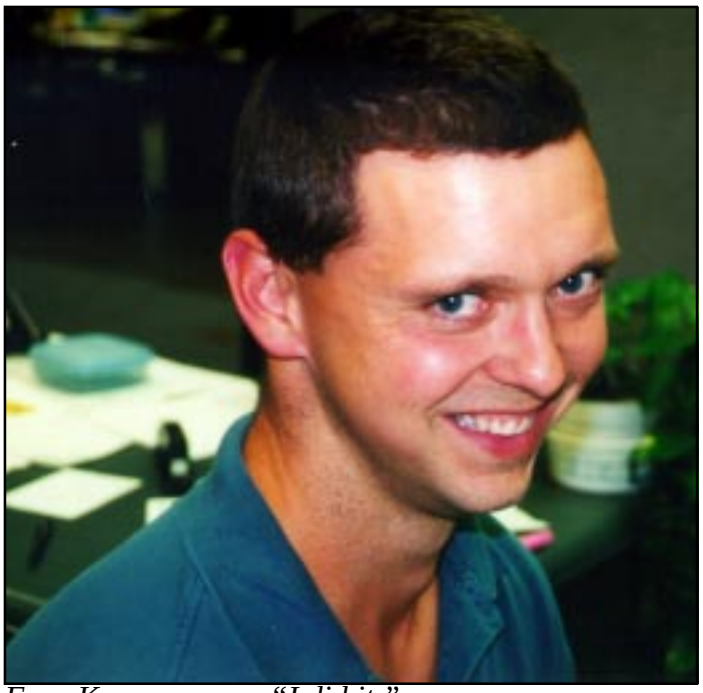
Back into the routine of his position as budgeting technician, Kocer says he tries to create more variety and serve as more of a team player.

"I try to do whatever I can to create more variety in the office and try to help out," Kocer says. "But a lot of times, if people don't want variety and don't have something to strive for, they can become stagnant."

Kocer feels employees should strive to better understand the variety of different positions throughout the Corps.

"I would like to see more developmental assignments being completed because if you walk a mile in somebody else's shoes, you gain a certain level of respect for what goes on," he says. "I think it would also help in creating more of a commonality, especially within the office. Then, if somebody is gone, there is always someone who can fill-in and help out."



Fran Kocer can say "I did it."

Shift operator exhibits year 'round dedication to powerhouse

Article and photos by
Monique Farmer/Public Affairs

He works closely with mechanics and electricians at the powerhouse, making sure the generators and associated equipment are up and running. Most of the time his job requires twelve hour shifts.

"I think my job is very important," says shift operator Dan Kibler. "Without an operator here running the plant, there wouldn't be any electricity produced."

This would mean no power and no one to direct the opening of flood gates to prevent possible overflows.

As shift operator of the control room at the Fort Randall powerhouse, Kibler is one of the points of contact for everything that takes place inside the plant.

"If a breaker needs to be opened or a piece of equipment needs to be operated on, they come in and let us shift operators know," Kibler says.

All controls are run from a computer system, the Power Plant Control System (PPCS).

Shift operator Dave Kibler closes a breaker on a high-voltage transmission line.

The control room is staffed 7 days a week, 365 days a year.

"We feel we are understaffed," Kibler says.

"When I first started, we had 12 operators; now we just have five. But, I guess a lot of things have changed also. Everything is all pretty much push-button now."

Kibler has been in his current position since 1987.

Prior to working at the Fort Randall project, Kibler held a position at Fort Gibson Dam. There, he underwent the first year of his shift operator training.

His second year of training was spent at Webbers Falls Lock and Dam and Navigation River in Sallisaw, Oklahoma. He then transferred to Robert S. Kerr Dam, where he finished his training.

In 1980, Kibler applied for a journeyman position at Fort Randall. He held that position for seven years.

When a shift operator position opened up in 1987, he applied and was hired.

Administrative officer attributes success to team players

Article and photo
by Monique Farmer
Public Affairs Assistant

Lisa Durham, administrative officer at Fort Randall, is responsible for personnel, budgeting, purchasing, training and other administrative duties.

But without the support she receives from her staff, Durham isn't quite sure how she would manage.

"I think it's important to note that we have a team here," Durham says. "There's myself—I'm basically the team leader so to speak. I have supervisory duties, but it's not just me. We all work together as a team and I feel that's very important. A lot of credit is due to everybody."

A winning staff

Durham's staff consists of Fran Kocer, budgeting technician, Cheryl Specketer, purchasing agent, Laura Beatch and Caroline Pheasant, office automation clerks. Administrative duties are distributed among the group and each staff member contributes to the overall administrative process, Durham says.

In the midst of personnel duties, directing the staff and working through a pile of tasks daily, Durham says she tries to maintain flexibility, which can be a challenge.

"You have to be very flexible," she says. "I feel we have an excellent administrative team and it is important that we are flexible."

Many times, her duties require that she handle various tasks daily.

In balancing her responsibilities, two of her primary tactics are strong organizational skills and time-management.

The secret to her success

"I take lots of notes and keep a task list, crossing things off as I go," she says. "Then, when a new task comes, I write it down."

The office has also adopted an office systems list that keeps track of all reports that are due as well as deadlines for all correspondence, which is very helpful, Durham says.

She reviews the list once a week.

Outside of hands-on experience, one of the things that has helped Durham develop the skills necessary to fulfill her position has been the attending of administrative conferences every other year in Omaha.

Lisa Durham touts the team.

"All the administrators from different projects get together and come to Omaha to share their ideas," she says. "It's really helpful because they teach you the latest on purchasing, CEFMS (the USACE financial management system) and budget."

Because the administrative team supports the entire project, it is necessary for these skills to be well developed among the staff, she says.

"In addition, we handle all timekeeping, training, travel orders and vouchers, MAXIMO (the USACE work order system), hiring and correspondence," Durham says. "We also support the operations manager."

In her current position for seven years, Durham previously held a position as the elementary secretary at Wagner Community School in Wagner, S.D. for 13 years.

"The Corps has been very rewarding," Durham says. "Nothing stays the same and there are lots of challenges. You're always learning something new and that's why I enjoy working here."

Power plant workers juggle providing electricity, troubleshooting

Article and photos by
Monique Farmer/Public Affairs

What do a senior mechanic, an electrician and an electronics mechanic all have in common? Simply put—troubleshooting.

Dan Gruenewald, electronics mechanic at Fort Randall, says the secret behind keeping troubleshooting to a minimum is taking precautionary measures that will eliminate the necessity for troubleshooting in the long run.

Gruenewald is responsible for taking care of electronics equipment at the Fort Randall Powerhouse. He handles radio communications equipment, telephone systems and Power Plant Control Systems (PPCS) equipment.

"Keeping our powerhouse very reliable is important to the Corps as well as the country," electrician Bill Reiser says.

Reiser's position entails troubleshooting of general electrical maintenance and installing equipment upgrades.

Likewise, senior mechanic Jeff Archambeau works to keep the electricity-producing units running on schedule and "with a minimum amount of outages," he says.

Archambeau has devoted 28 years to serving the Corps. He began his career with the Corps as a summer hire and moved to a laborer position. As a laborer, he applied for training in the powerhouse. He completed training and was promoted to a mechanic position. He now serves as senior mechanic for the Fort Randall Powerhouse.

"The powerhouse needs someone with experience to work through problems with the units and to help the new people that are coming in," Archambeau says.

Dan Gruenewald is an electronics mechanic at Fort Randall Dam. He takes care of electronics equipment at the powerhouse.

From left, senior mechanic Jeff Archambeau operates a stainless steel water supply header for turbine pit equipment. Bill Reiser is in charge of trouble shooting and installing equipment upgrades.

In his 28 years, he says he is most proud of the major repair jobs he has conducted on some of the units.

"Not everybody can do those types of things and it's something I'm really proud of," Archambeau says.

Keeping systems running consistently and troubleshooting problems in the early stages provides Gruenewald with a sense of ac-

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Employee Profiles

Electronics mechanic Dan Greunewald repairs an electronic circuit board.

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complishment, he says.

"There are a lot of people who rely on us for electricity and if we don't produce it, there is that much less," Gruenewald says.

Upon his arrival at the plant each morning, Gruenewald checks to ensure all quarters are working properly.

"I make sure flow meters are working and I look around the computer room to make sure nothing looks abnormal."

Avoiding power outages and breakdowns are major concerns among all three men as well as their coworkers, Archambeau says.

"If we have a major breakdown or units are down for several weeks, a month or two months, we lose power production," he says. "We also lose the water flow."

One of Reiser's personal tactics in exerting effective troubleshooting techniques is keeping current with advancements in electrical technology.

Reiser says the Corps can assist the power plant employees in remaining successful by offering more training in technical fields.

While training is already a requirement for power plant employees, there can never be too much, he says.

Gruenewald agreed.

"The Corps need to focus on providing all the training we need."

Specifically, computer training seems to be the least formal at the project, he says.

Most of what the power plant workers learn is gained from hands-on experience.

Gruenewald graduated from Devry Technical Institute in Phoenix, Ariz. As a newcomer 16 years ago, he underwent additional training once he was hired as an electronics mechanic with the Corps.

"The Corps training program was especially beneficial in relationship to the plant, the units and learning all things about the powerhouse itself," he says.

The learning aspect of working in the powerhouse can be a challenge, Archambeau says.

"It's hard for people to just come in and do the job," Archambeau says. "However, there are plenty of opportunities for people to learn something every day because there is always something new to learn."

Satisfied with his current status at the plant, Archambeau says his future desires are to "stay at the plant and do a good job until it's time to retire."

Though each of the three mens' positions require maintaining a separate aspect of ensuring the power plant is running successfully, the overall collaboration between the workers makes the workplace a comfortable atmosphere, Archambeau says. "Our crews work really well together, so if we run into problems, we work together to get things done."

"Working with the other guys is quite enjoyable," Gruenewald says. "We joke around and kid around, but when it comes to work we're pretty dedicated."

Archambeau poses near a radial arm drill press. He uses it to drill holes into mechanical parts, which are used to repair units throughout the power plant.

Powerhouse trainee Rod Bergin conducts generator maintenance on generator brushes. His training consists of learning theory through coursework, hands-on experience and shadowing power plant employees.

Power plant trainee learns ropes of operating powerhouse

Article and photos by
Monique Farmer/Public Affairs

After a five-year tour as a heavy equipment operator with outside maintenance, powerhouse trainee Rod Bergin wanted a different taste of activity.

So, when a position for a powerhouse trainee opened up, it was the perfect opportunity for Bergin to test the waters.

"It's really educational because I work with everybody," says Bergin as he nears the end of his first year of training.

The first year in the program, all four-year powerhouse trainees are required to shadow electricians, mechanics and operators. The goal is to afford Bergin the opportunity to learn various aspects of power plant operation responsibilities.

"It's good because you learn everything that goes on in the plant," Bergin says. "If something happens, you have to troubleshoot what it is and if you understand a variety of the power plant positions, you can do that."

Since the beginning of his training, Bergin has followed a bi-weekly schedule of alternating between positions. The first two weeks of the month are spent with mechanics. His next two weeks are spent with electricians and the following two weeks are spent with operators.

"Shadowing the different employees is pretty critical," he says. "You have to know what you're doing because if you don't, you are going to leave a lot of people without power."

Once trainees have completed their first year, they are also required to select an area of focus. They are also required to gear their training toward that area

Employee Profiles

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focus whether it be electricity, mechanics or operating powerhouse equipment.

Bergin has not yet decided which focus he will take, he says.

In comparing the three positions, Bergin says each covers a more specific task that needs to be cared for within the plant.

"Operators do a lot of the computer work," he says. "Their work is pretty technical. In emergencies, they really have to know what's going on."

Bergin also says the operators' training appears to consume more time.

On the other hand, electricians seem to do more moving around, he says.

"They never do the same thing day after day. It's always something different," he says. "I've been fortunate because last year we had to tear down all the units (electricity-producing units). During my first six months, I got to see more of the units than a lot of trainees ever see."

As a transition phase from the first year into the second, Bergin will be required to take his second comprehensive exam over all the information he has acquired this year. He will take the test at the end of this month. The exams are given every six months.

While Bergin feels the coursework and tests are beneficial, he finds the hands-on training more effective.

"The best thing we have right now is hands-on training," he says. "If I can't take all the book information in right now, I can at least go back to the books and find it."

Bergin says he learns different aspects of necessary information about the powerhouse from different people.

"Everybody teaches things in different ways," he says. "I like to work with different people."

Moving from second in charge in outside maintenance to powerhouse trainee has been an adventure, Bergin says. However, the warm welcome he has received from his fellow power plant workers has helped create a smooth atmosphere.

"As a trainee, the co-workers are very accepting of me," he says. Bergin began his training Nov. 5, 2000. His personal goal as a Corps employee is to do some good for the power production plant, he says.

Trainee Rod Bergin checks current temperatures and voltages for the powerhouse.

"My goal in life is to better myself," he says.

In his youthful years, Bergin devoted much of his time to assisting his father with construction.

"I always thought it would be nice to work for the Corps," he says. "They have good benefits and good wages which goes back to when I said my goal in life has always been to better myself."

Before obtaining a position with the Corps, Bergin was employed as a maintenance highway worker for the Charles Mix Highway Department in Lake Andes, S.D.

Almost into his sixth year with the Corps, Bergin says his current primary goal is to finish his training at the powerhouse. In his spare time, he does his own construction work at his home.

"Whenever I want some construction work done at my home, I don't hire anything out," he says. "I do it all myself."

Bergin recently built himself a new shed.

He also volunteers as rescue captain and training officer for the Lake Andes Fire Department. He is the president of the community building board in Lake Andes and a football/youth and wrestling coach at Andes Central High School. Both he and his wife, Ruth, are active in the Lake Andes Central Athletic Booster Club and he also enjoys fishing, camping, boating and skiing. Bergin is also the father of two children, Ricky, 11 and Rachel, 16.