



US Army Corps
of Engineers®
St. Paul District

Crosscurrents

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**District activates emergency response
for flash floods in southeast Minnesota,
southwest Wisconsin**





Photo by Gary Hazelton, retiree

Kevin Ressie, channels and harbors unit, Fountain City, Wis., travels south in the district's airboat on U.S. Hwy. 61 in Minnesota City, Minn. With him are three residents of Minnesota City. Flash flooding covered the highway and much of southeast Minnesota, Aug. 19. More, Page 4.

Command Corner by Col. Jon Christensen

District's disaster response: proactive, professional, determined

"In life, we don't get to choose which tragedies visit us or when, but we do get to choose how to respond to them..."
 – Gov. Tim Pawlenty, State of Minnesota

by Col. Jon Christensen
 District Commander

St. Paul District Teammates:

It has certainly been an eventful few months for the district. In addition to our regular work load, we had the opportunity to make a difference in the lives of those people touched by the recent string of disasters occurring within our district boundaries. As a district, we chose correctly on how we would respond – proactively, professionally and with great determination.



Our first test came when the Interstate-35W Bridge collapsed on the lower guide wall of the Lower St. Anthony Falls lock and dam on Aug. 1. Corps' employees James Crosby and Dave Nerva were on duty at that time and responded superbly in

the face of great uncertainty and chaos. They immediately launched boats in the water and started calling for re-enforcements.

LSAF lockmaster Tim Meers expertly managed the work force down at the lock, while Shelly Shafer coordinated our response in the Emergency Operations Center. The district played a major supporting role in the recovery effort – in a wide variety of missions ranging from vehicle removal to water control operations. As I visited the various supported and supporting agencies, I heard nothing but great comments in regards to the district's assistance.

Just as operations started to wane at Lower St. Anthony Falls, many areas in southeastern Minnesota and southwestern Wisconsin fell victim to record flooding. Eight of our St. Paul District teammates suffered some kind of damage to their homes and property – I ask that you keep these teammates in your thoughts and prayers as they try to personally recover from this tragic event.

Again, district employees and the EOC responded valiantly. The district responded to the crisis by dispatching flood engineers, sandbags and pumps to the affected areas in an effort to mitigate and prevent additional damage. As I toured the area, community leaders clearly were grateful for our support. I am extremely proud of everyone's efforts – you represented the district well and helped to ease the suffering of others.

I thank everyone involved in both operations – you clearly made a difference.



US Army Corps of Engineers
 St. Paul District

Crosscurrents

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Corps' personnel rescue residents from rooftops in response to flash floods

District delivers crucial response on I-35W Bridge collapse

by Shannon Bauer

The St. Paul District opened its uppermost three locks and dams to limited commercial traffic Sept. 6 for the first time since the Interstate-35W Bridge collapsed in Minneapolis Aug. 1.

With the exception of emergency traffic, the U.S. Coast Guard closed the Mississippi River to navigation between Upper St. Anthony Falls Lock and Dam and Lock and Dam 1, both in Minneapolis, shortly after the incident. In addition to debris blocking the channel, parts of the bridge fell on the lower guide wall of Lower St. Anthony Falls Lock and Dam, which is located between the latter two.

It took until Aug. 20 to locate the eight known victims (a total of 13 died but the others were located on land), and debris removal could not commence in earnest until then. A U.S. Navy dive team, being housed in the main building of the lower lock, had to be called in to assist the incident commander, the Hennepin County Sheriff, in locating the victims.

Greg Frankosky, physical support chief, said the district's maintenance and repair unit loaded



White House photo

Jim Crosby, left, and Dave Nerva, right, flank President George Bush during his visit to Lower St. Anthony Falls Lock and Dam in Minneapolis. Crosby and Nerva were on duty Aug. 1 when the I-35W Bridge collapsed during rush hour. The president commended their swift and heroic response.



Photo by Aaron Snyder

Bryan Peterson, St. Paul District's maintenance and repair unit chief, right, briefs Brig. Gen. Robert Crear, Mississippi Valley Division commander. They are at Lower St. Anthony Falls Lock and Dam, Minneapolis, in early August. Crear was at the lock and dam for a first-hand assessment of the Corps' efforts to support local, state and federal recovery efforts and debris removal from the collapse of the I-35 bridge into the Mississippi River Aug. 1. Part of the interstate bridge fell on the lower guidewall of the lock and dam.

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I-35W Bridge, continued from Page 8
and unloaded the Navy team’s five semi loads of equipment, set up barge dive platforms and lifted vehicles out of the water that contained victims. They also removed other vehicles, concrete and tress steel that were blocking in the occupied vehicles.

After the recovery mission ended, the Minnesota Department of Transportation took over from the sheriff’s department as the lead agency on-scene. Their contractor, Carl Bolander and Sons, Co., who they hired to remove debris, initially focused on

removing items blocking the navigation channel. Although debris remains, they made enough room for a tow with barges to lock through.

Prior to opening for navigation, the district needed to make sure it was safe. Tim Meers, lockmaster at Lower St. Anthony Falls Lock and Dam, said the district’s survey team and Launch 20 did soundings in the channel. Then, Bolander’s subcontractor, Portable Barge, swept the river bottom with a 30-foot steel beam to ensure the channel was free of obstructions.

It’s still not quite business as

usual, though. The navigation channel currently remains closed to recreational craft in this area until a date yet to be determined.

“There has been less urgency now than during the initial search and recovery operations,” said Meers. “We’re still busy, though, supporting Minn. DOT and the contractors, running tows through the locks and providing tours to various officials wanting to visit the site.”

The Patrick Gannaway of Aggregate Industries was the first tow to lock through Lower St. Anthony Falls since the incident.



Photo by Al Van Guilder

Launch 20, the district’s hydrographic survey boat, conducted acoustic soundings in the navigation channel at Lower St. Anthony Falls Lock and Dam, Sept. 5. The soundings are read to check the depth and configuration of the channel, as well as wreckage and debris from the collapsed Interstate-35W Bridge. For more, see “Hydrographic survey crew maps river channel,” Page 10.



Photo by Tim Meers

The St. Paul District hydrographic survey boat, center left, scanned the bottom of the Mississippi River Sept. 5 to verify the nine-foot channel could be opened for limited navigation. The boat is over the area where the I-35W bridge collapsed, Aug. 1. The lock wall at Lower St. Anthony Falls, Minneapolis, is in the foreground.

Hydrographic survey crew maps river channel in wake of bridge collapse

by Lisa Lund

In order to open up the Mississippi River for commercial barge traffic after the Interstate-35W bridge collapse in Minneapolis, Aug. 1, debris needed to be removed and the channel needed to be surveyed.

As soon as the Corps was given the green light that the debris had been removed, the Channels and Harbors unit in Fountain City, Wis., deployed the hydrographic survey launch to the site just downriver of Lower St. Anthony Falls Lock and Dam in Minneapolis. This consisted of a two-man survey crew, Mark

Scholl and Steve Sing, and Launch 20.

The crew arrived at the site early morning on Sept. 5 and started the hydrographic survey. This survey was a typical job after an atypical event — collapse of a major bridge during rush hour. They activated the computer, lowered the survey booms over the water and began the hydrographic survey.

Hydrographic surveys record the water depths and position by using a commercial software program.

They recorded data for a 700-yard stretch from up-river of the railroad bridge, under the 10th Street Bridge and through the

I-35W debris field to Lower St. Anthony Falls Lock and Dam.

They electronically transmitted the raw data to the channels and harbors office for processing. Some of the data looked a little questionable due to the global positioning satellites and interference under the 10th Street Bridge.

Steve Tapp, operations manager for channels and harbors, along with the U.S. Coast Guard, decided to rerun the survey to verify the data.

Thursday morning, the crew started the process again. This time, better satellite readings allowed for tracking the data more accurately. So, again, the data was sent back to the channels and harbors office and processed.

However, before the channel could be opened for navigation, the USCG requested a beam sweep on the river floor by the debris removal contractor.

USCG also requested a quality assurance inspector from channels and harbors. Al VanGuilder, a survey technician from channels and harbors, assisted the contractor with that role.

With the knowledge and skills of the survey crew, the required data was collected and processed in a timely manner to allow Tapp to make the recommendation to the USCG to open the channel.

The channel had been closed from river mile 847.0 at Lock and Dam 1 to 854.0 at LSAF lock and dam for 36 days, from Aug. 2 through Sept. 6. The evening of Sept. 6, the Corps released its navigation notice to commercial interests that the channel was open again for shipping.

Postcard from Iraq

I am not sure if you guys are still interested in photos from Iraq, but I figured that one with Col. Michael Pfenning, Gulf Region North commander, and me would be a nice one to send – seeing that we both came from the St. Paul District. The location is at one of my projects, the Mosul passenger terminal. I gave a tour of the facility to Pfenning and Brig. Gen. Michael Walsh.

*Alda P.R. Ottley
Project Engineer
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
Mosul Resident Office*



Gulf Region Division
2007
Baghdad, Iraq

Postcard from Iraq

Here's a picture of an infrequent mortar detonating in our proximity. The photo was taken in July '07 at Camp Fallujah, where no body armor is required. Deployed to Baghdad and Fallujah for 13 months. A great experience, but I'm glad to be home with my family as of Aug. 18.

*Sincerely,
Paul Kosterman,
project management*



Gulf Region Division
2007
Baghdad, Iraq