

# water safety journal



Vol. 16 No. 1

Summer 2000

## COE works with tournament sponsors on safety

TULSA, Okla. — “We’re a large district with a lot of lakes, and a tremendous number of tournaments,” observed Arlyn Hendricks, Corps of Engineers and executive secretary for the National Water Safety Congress.

At some lakes, he said, there may be up to 150 fishing tournaments during a season. With that kind of traffic, boating and water safety are the chief priority, and assuring that safety may involve everything from managing traffic to doing presentations on boating safety.

Most of the activity on Corps projects after Labor Day is related to recreational fishing or fishing tournaments, Hendricks said.

“Fishermen are after crappie and black bass,” he explained. “We’ve got a good mechanism for working with them. We use mass media, do programs for sportsmen’s clubs if they have organized bass tournaments, and we preach water safety to them. They’ve been real good about (following) the requirements. Everybody has to have life jackets, and kill switches on their main motors.”

Depending upon who organizes the tournament, Hendricks said, “Sometimes we send someone down to talk safety. If they are repeaters we’ve dealt with in the past, we may not need to do that. Sometimes groups will request a presentation by one of our rangers to talk safety. Most of our organized fishing tournaments have been concerned with safety and there have been no serious accidents on any lakes that I’ve been managing.”

Hendricks said tournament requirements are so scrupulous that they even penalize anglers who injure or kill the fish. Figure that a contest requiring fish to be released unharmed is going to be

equally serious about following rules that keep anglers safe.

Because lakes that host tournaments are also usually popular for other recreation, Hendricks said organizers typically select a particular area from whence they stage the event, whether a private resort or a public ramp if there is more than one. In some areas, the Corps designates ramps for tournament headquarters.

“The public uses these when there is no tournament, and they typically have extra parking to handle the larger crowds,” he said.

Coordinating with tournament organiz-

ers has a direct benefit on everyone’s water safety because participants know the rules and they pay attention to other activities that may be going on at the same lake.

Meanwhile, Hendricks noted that high water conditions in some Corps projects led earlier this summer to the broadcast of public service announcements on radio and television to keep alcohol consumption down, and watch the kids. He expects most pools to drop back to normal levels by the Labor Day weekend.

## Boating safety on NTSB’s ‘Most Wanted’ list

WASHINGTON, D.C. — Recreational boating safety remains on the National Transportation Safety Board’s “Most Wanted” list, said NTSB’s Bill Gossard.

The first recreational boating safety action by the NTSB in February 1969 was to recommend that the U.S. Coast Guard include the presence of alcohol on boating

accident report forms. Gossard, Region 2 vice president for the National Water Safety Congress, said that in the years since, NTSB has made several recommendations, and conducted two major safety studies, in 1993 and 1998.

Over the years, NTSB recommenda-

*Continued on back page*



*Participants of the North Dakota Water Safety Days personal flotation device fashion show pose for a ‘thumbs-up’ for water safety. See article on page 4.*

## President's Column

by NWSC President Steve Fairbanks

I now have an appreciation for one of the tasks that Lu Christie performed for two years, namely writing the President's Column for our newsletter.

I have been searching for a topic for this column for the past two weeks, and kept coming up with zilch. Virgil Chambers and the National Safe Boating Council provided the inspiration for this column. Thanks, Virgil.

I received my complimentary copy of "Saved By the Jacket" in the mail yesterday. It was an appropriate time, coming during the middle of the July 4 holiday weekend. As I read the stories within, the wisdom of wearing a life jacket was readily apparent. Both of my daughters read the book, and it was readily apparent to them. It struck me that we in the boating and water safety community already have the technology and knowledge to reduce water-related fatalities by 80 percent. If any company was presented with a method to reduce their job-related fatalities by 80 percent, they would jump at the chance to implement such a strategy. This is the situation in the boating and water safety community today; we have the knowledge and the technology to make a significant impact on the safety of the boating public. But is the public listening?

We have had an upswell of recent legislation requiring mandatory wear of life jackets by children. Although the age requirement may vary slightly from state to state, in essence a majority of states legislate PFD wear for children under age 12. While noble in its intent, it doesn't address the fact that we are losing people aged 14-32 at a much higher rate than children. Are we in essence giving both kids and adults the inferred message that you don't need to wear life jackets after you turn 12?

We in the boating and water safety community need to make a decision and get off the fence. We need to mandate life jacket wear for everyone in a boat, regardless of age, swimming ability or any of the other

*Continued on page 5*

# Preparations in high gear for big 2001 conference

NASHVILLE, Tenn. — Preparations are underway for the big International Boating & Water Safety Summit to be held here April 9-12, 2001, and several proposals have been submitted for presentations before the National Water Safety Congress, according to President Steve Fairbanks.

That event coincides with the NWSC's 50th anniversary celebration. It's the fifth annual joint session for NWSC and the National Safe Boating Council, which co-host the summit. Next year's week-long event includes a core program covering nearly all aspects of boating and water safety, with agenda items targeting personal watercraft operators, paddlers, hunters and anglers.

Hundreds of boating safety experts from around the world are expected to attend this conference, and those offering presentations will have an opportunity to help shape the summit program.

Selected presentation applicants will be contacted to provide more information and a program abstract after they are selected.

The 2001 summit will feature a multi-track program. Those attending will represent a broad audience, including international, federal, state and local marine enforcement agencies; boating safety education organizations; college and university aquatic education programs; and boating safety equipment manufacturers and suppliers.

Ideally, presentations should support and complement the program in one or more of six subject areas in boating and water safety including: Risk Management, Education, Accident Prevention, Boating Under the Influence, Outreach and Awareness, and Paddler and Angler Safety.

Individual speakers or panels may participate. Breakout sessions are designed to run 40 minutes with an additional 10 - 15 minutes for a question and answer session and should address one of the track topics listed. General sessions are designed to be

a maximum of 50 minutes in length and address all the conference attendees.

Abstracts must be at least 100 words in length, with a detailed outline on paper.

If you plan a panel format, a complete list of all speakers must be noted, along with resumes for each panelist.

Please limit panels to three speakers.

The IBWSS registration fee for presenters will be at a reduced rate of \$125. This lower registration rate must be requested at the time the Call For Presentations proposal is submitted.

Separate applications are required for each session.

For information, call the program co-chair at (740) 666-3009.

Each presenter must complete this form. Send completed applications to:

Program Co-Chair International Boating and Water Safety Summit P.O. Box 1058 Delaware, OH 43015-1058



water safety journal

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## NASBLA will greet boating safety experts at Michigan conference

MACKINAC ISLAND, Mich. — Boating safety professionals from across the map will gather here Sept. 9-13 for the annual conference of the National Association of State Boating Law Administrations.

Members of the National Water Safety Congress and National Safe Boating Council will join the gathering. Hosted by the Michigan Department of Natural Resources and state Boating Law Administrator Lt. Lyle Belknap, the conference will be held on Mackinac Island at the west end of Lake Huron.

Early arrivals can take advantage of an NSBC certification course running 8 a.m.-5 p.m. Friday, Sept. 8.

The actual conference schedule begins Saturday, Sept. 9, with registration in the Mission Point lobby. The NSBC course is repeated that day, again beginning at 8 a.m.

Also that morning, the NASBLA Executive Board holds a meeting, 8:30 a.m.-5 p.m., and there is a meeting of the Education Standards Advisory Board from noon to 3 p.m.

The NSBC Executive Board meets that

evening, 5-7 p.m.

Sunday's activities start with an 8-10 a.m. BAIRAC Committee meeting, the NSBC annual meeting (9:30-11:30 a.m.) and three concurrent committee meetings, also running 9:30-11:30 a.m., Boats and Associated Equipment, Numbering and Titling and Environmental and Social Impacts.

That afternoon, running 1-3 p.m., both the Law Enforcement and Education committees gather, followed by a 3-5 p.m. Personal Watercraft and Long Range Issues committees sessions.

The President's Reception runs 6-8:30 p.m.

Monday's agenda finds the exhibits opening at 7 a.m., and official "Welcome to Michigan" ceremony starting at 8 o'clock. Appearing at the opening session will be Belknap, Michigan DNR Director K.L. Cool, Michigan Boating Industry President Van W. Snider, Jr., Mackinac Island State Park Chairman Dennis Cawthorne and Rear Admiral James Hull, 9th District commander, U.S. Coast Guard.

Following their presentations,

NASBLA President Paul Donheffner will give his report, and NASBLA Executive Director George Stewart will report on legislative activity.

The general session runs from 10 a.m. to noon.

That afternoon, Dick Snyder and Neal Mahan will report on the Crashed Boats project. Snyder is the director of Product Safety Engineering for Mercury Marine and Mahan is associate managing engineer for Underwriters Laboratories.

The remainder of the afternoon will be consumed with breakout sessions and a 5 p.m. Executive Board and Chairs meeting.

Tuesday begins with the annual BLA breakfast, and sessions open at 9 a.m. with a presentation on Investigation and Reconstruction of Accidents by Howard Scheinberg, Florida assistant state attorney. That is followed by two 10 a.m. programs, Exposure Data and Relative Risk on Accidents by Bruce Schmidt, Coast Guard data analyst, and U.S. Coast Guard Office of Boating Safety Update, with Capt. Ron Westin, chief of the Office of Boating Safety.

# North Dakota's 'Water Safety Days' a big hit

by Thomas O'Hara

U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Omaha District  
*Special to Water Safety Journal*

MINOT, N.D. — This past spring, those attending a special event at Minot AFB, and nearby New Town, N.D. got quite an education in safe water operations.

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Omaha District, co-hosted Water Safety Days to help educate the public of the dangers and hazards with work and play around the water.

The event was held in cooperation with the U.S. Air Force, and the following day at the Four-Bears Casino, New Town, with the Three Affiliated Tribes.

Last fall, the Omaha District Water Safety Committee analyzed the accident record along the main stem projects and recognized a disproportionate number of incidents and fatalities within the Native American community. Furthermore, in the Lake Sakakawea area, a high number of incidents involving military personnel using project lakes was also noted.

In response, Omaha District Commander Col. Mark E. Tillotson charged the district to reinvestigate its efforts in reaching the public with its water safety message. This event met that challenge head-on.

"The idea came about last October," said Joe E. Hall, lake manager for the Garrison Project. "I got with Tony Jacobson (natural resource specialist) and George Wolf (operations manager) and together we came up with Water Safety Days to address all aspects of water safety."

More than a dozen booths provided hands-on training on hypothermia, thin ice recognition, proper use/wear of personal flotation devices (PFDs), safe boating operations, drowning victim identification and more. The main theme of the event was "Reach, Throw, Don't Go!" - a motto to promote the safe way to assist a drowning victim.

"Time and again you read in the newspaper of a drowning tragedy that could have been avoided," said Keith Gordon, natural resource specialist for Garrison Project, Omaha District. "One person after another went out to help someone and instead of one victim you end up with five. That's what we're trying to prevent. We want to show you how you can avoid

dangerous situations and also how to safely help a water victim without jeopardizing yourself as well."

One way to demonstrate this was the construction and demonstration of inexpensive throw-bottles. Empty detergent bottles (donated by Jamestown Hospital, Jamestown, N.D.), and 50-75 feet of one-inch nylon rope were used to show how a valuable life-saving device could be constructed and used in the event of an emer-



David Vader, Native American Coordinator, explains to a young visitor how to use the throw bottle.

gency. A "Reach, Throw, Don't Go!" label was added and several hundred of these devices were given away during the two-day affair to help get this key water safety message out.

The throw-bottle booth wasn't the only interactive exhibit. Most booths utilized a hands-on approach to get the members of the public involved in the activities. Candy was given to the youngsters after understanding each booth's message.

In addition to the runway exhibits and a water safety coloring contest, a PFD "fashion show" was conducted throughout the day to demonstrate the variety of devices available, including the proper wear and use of such devices.

"Some of the newer flotation devices are very comfortable and look like hunting jackets," said Tex G. Hall, Chairman of the Three Affiliated Tribes in North Dakota. "We've come a long way. Using the life jackets, making them available, and educating our

membership of the potential dangers of going out on the water without taking the proper precautions is very important."

Dozens of lifejackets, adult and children sized, donated locally, were given out as door prizes during the two-day event.

"Anytime we can have an opportunity to have fun and learn something in the process, that's a great event, particularly in a family environment," said Col. Dick Newton, commander of the 5th Bombing Wing and Minot

Base Commander, who attended with his daughter, Addy. "We get the little ones to start thinking safety, then they become adults who think safety. Anytime we can make safety fun, rather than a hassle, then we're saving lives."

Recreational material and park information were also provided at the exhibit. Popular outdoorsman Tony Dean held two seminars each day that helped draw in the outdoor recreation crowd.

"I think this is a remarkable idea," said Dean. "North and South Dakota may not be large in population, but per capita, boat ownership is very, very high. Boating is new, and many who jumped into the boating boom are probably not properly prepared."

The two-day event was so successful that Corps personnel are already planning for future events.

Hall intends to repackage the exhibits into portable units that can be used individually as well as in a combined effort such as the safety fair.

The Omaha District Water Safety Committee has noted the positive results of the water safety days.

"Without question this has been very successful," said Wayne M. Freed, Outdoor Recreation planner, Omaha District. "We reached well over 300 people in Minot and several hundred more in New Town."

In addition to the Corps, Air Force and Three Affiliated Tribes, several other agencies also participated, including: North Dakota Game & Fish, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Department of Interior/Bureau of Indian Affairs, local dive teams, local law enforcement agencies, Trinity Hospital, U.S. Red Cross, Four Bears Casino & Lodge plus others.

*O'Hara works in the Public Affairs Office, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Omaha District.*

# Safety refresher held at Kansas Canoe Assoc. annual rendezvous

READING, Kan. — With an eye on accident prevention, the Kansas Canoe Association gathered for a safety refresher course during the group's annual rendezvous, held at Melvern Lake in east-central Kansas.

KCA Safety Chairman Mick O'Shea led the two-hour course, which kicked off the weekend event.

Most of the weekend was spent providing members a chance to try each others' canoes, kayaks, and whitewater pontoons on the lake, an impoundment along the Marias des Cygnes River northeast of Emporia. Paddling trips, a Dutch oven cooking contest, herb walks, and sing-alongs were also part of the program.

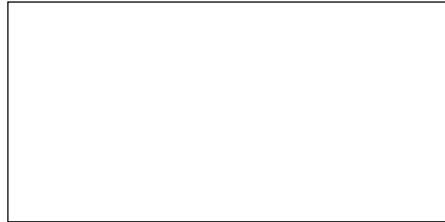
O'Shea is a native of Manhattan, Kan. He has 17 years experience in white water canoeing, three years experience in kayaking, and he spends summer rafting with Outward Bound in Colorado. When queried on which American Canoe Association instructor certifications he maintains, O'Shea shrugged and said "all of them."

Safety tips were directed to both the flatwater and whitewater paddler. One rule O'Shea taught about hypothermia is to add the water temperature to the air temperature. If that number is less than 100, there is the possibility of hypothermia. He stressed the importance of watching ca-

noeing and kayaking companions for signs of hypothermia.

Paddlers on flatwater were told to be aware of wind and waves. He advised flatwater boaters to know the access points of the area that are considered public or being sure to gain permission before using a private access point.

Moving water paddlers were told to



*Kansas canoe enthusiasts take course on Marias de Cygnrd River.*

research river classes, and check the height and flow of water before going out on the river. Access is a little different in Kansas, as a landowner owns the surface of the water in a river, not just to the river bank, as in most states. Kansas has only three navigable rivers.

Paddlers must be aware they need to gain permission from landowners on each side of the river for the length of their trip to paddle on any of the other rivers in

Kansas. Paddlers were also cautioned about low head dams and rivers that may have fencing across them to keep livestock contained.

O'Shea also taught the group about WORMS (Water, Obstacles, Route, Markers, and Scenarios):

- Water: Where is the water going? Look for the "V."

- Obstacles: Is it okay for me to follow this line or are there holes, strainers, rocks, etc.

- Route: What are the possible routes. Can I follow the current or are their obstacles?

- Markers: Figure out where you will be in the rapid before going through, then look for an on shore marker. If you have to maneuver a different path than planned you can sight your marker. (Example would be: The strainer is on river left near the fallen tree).

- Scenarios: What can go wrong when I run this rapid? What is my plan "B?" Play "what if."

O'Shea talked about state laws, then gave members a list of his favorite equipment to have along (windproof, water proof clothing, PFD, drinking water, throwable, first aid kit, extra paddles, sunscreen, Z-drags, helmet, and a knife). He ended the class by having students practice a canoe-over-canoe rescue on the water.

## Idaho's Ann Van Buren Joins NWSC board 'at large'

BOISE, Idaho — Ann Van Buren, public affairs specialist for the Idaho Department of Parks & Recreation, has been named to an "at large" spot on the National Water Safety Congress Board of Directors.

A native of Waterloo, Iowa, she has lived in Idaho for about 15 years, previously working as a public information officer for the Bureau of Land Management and public affairs specialist and fire incident information officer for the U.S. Forest Service in the Boise National Forest.

As a teenager, she worked on a USFS

forest fire crew, and was once a member of the All-Woman Chainsaw Timber Thinning Crew. Prior to moving to Idaho, she had lived in Utah for about eight years, working in radio broadcasting in the Salt Lake City area.

Van Buren has been with the Parks agency for the past 6½ years, and has been involved in boating and water safety issues during that period.

She told *Water Safety Journal* that she brings to the board her experience and skills in developing interagency partner-

ships. Van Buren has worked to develop visitor centers and interpretive projects, plus education events for youngsters.

She was a canoe instructor in Iowa, where she participated as a leader in youth canoe trips along the upper Iowa River. She is also a self-described "avid outdoors-person" who hikes, canoes, and backpacks.

She holds a Bachelor of Science degree in psychology.

Van Buren and her husband live in the Boise area. Her term on the NWSC board is for two years.

## President's Column

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extraneous factors brought up in support or opposition to this idea. We did it with seat belts, and the lives saved are real and measurable. If we know the problem, and we know a workable solution to the problem, don't we have the responsibility to implement it?

Offering boating courses to the public, educational efforts aimed at boaters, and our

other efforts to educate the public are worthy and should be continued. However, I would rather spend my time telling the public why life jackets are the law than to continue to give multiple programs to the public, extolling the virtues of life jackets and attempting to persuade boaters, swimmers and other aquatic users to use them. Enforcement and education should complement each other and work side by side, but education alone is not enough.

When I accepted the position of President of the Congress, I told *WSJ* Editor Dave Workman that I intended to use this column to provoke discussion among our members and others that read *Water Safety Journal*. If you have a differing viewpoint, please submit it to the *Water Safety Journal* at: [dworkman@outdoor-empire.com](mailto:dworkman@outdoor-empire.com). I will ask Dave to review any responses and print the best one in the next issue of the Journal.

# Wappapello's 'Ranger Willie B. Safe' stays in limelight to push safety

POPLAR BLUFF, Mo. — Introduced in the spring issue of *Water Safety Journal*, Ranger Willie B. Safe continues in the forefront of the water safety effort at Lake Wappapello, and the entire surrounding region.

According to Andrew Jefferson, information officer with the Corps of Engineers, the Willie B. Safe persona was prominent during the lake's Fourth of July Wet & Wild Waterfest. And he'll continue to stay busy through the summer, right up to Labor Day.

Jefferson said area youngsters warm up to the Willie B. Safe persona. He's not a mascot, but somewhat of an icon, and Wappapello rangers are his "helpers." Evidently, youngsters listen to their water

safety message, and that's important.

"Corps of Engineers projects do not have lifeguards at any of the beaches," Jefferson noted. "We want to get the message to parents or guardians to be sure someone is there watching at all times."

As part of the project's outreach program, several off-site activities are scheduled during the year. Jefferson has personally taken programs to local communities, and he hosted 150 youngsters at a recent appearance at Poplar Bluff.

"We've been averaging on our off-site programs around 80 to 100 kids per program," he said.

While most programs come to an end after Labor Day, Jefferson noted that a



National Public Lands Day program will be held at Wappapello Sept. 21, and water safety will

be part of that program.

And, during the holidays, "We have a Christmas Festival of Lights tour, co-sponsored by the Wappapello Lion's Club," he said.

## Paul Crawford new Region 8 vice pres., practices 'no nonsense' enforcement

BOULDER CITY, Nev. —Joining the National Water Safety Congress as Region 8 vice president, Paul Crawford with the National Park Service is currently assigned to Lake Mead.

He replaces Fred Messmann in that position. Messmann stays aboard the NWSC as an at-large member of the board. He is also the boating law administrator for Nevada.

A 19-year veteran of the Park Service, Crawford has been at Lake Mead for the past seven years. He supervises a combined public safety operation that involves law enforcement, fire suppression, emergency medical aid and search-and-rescue.

"I think what we need to do is get people understanding that there are a lot less 'ac-

cidents' and a lot more 'incidents,'" Crawford observed.

Boating, he explained, is a "risk" activity, same as water skiing.

"We need to get people to understand that when they go out on the water, they are taking a risk," he said. "There are consequences associated with every risk people take."

Crawford said it is "okay to take risks if you have the proper equipment to do it with," but when people simply go out on the water, without preparation or proper equipment, they are creating potential problems for themselves.

In response to carelessness, about three years ago Lake Mead rangers created a Drowning Awareness Response Team (DART). This combined enforcement with

an education effort, and an approach that there are "no valid excuses" for being foolish on the water.

Prominent on their radar screen are personal watercraft. Crawford said PWC operators constitute one of the major problem groups on Mead.

"They are a source of big frustrations," he said, "... a multitude of violations going on all the time."

But foolish behavior is not limited to PWC operators.

Noted Crawford: "We have a great number of boaters who proclaim a great level of ignorance when they get stopped. These people just don't have any common sense. We're getting the point across. There are no more excuses."

## Higher fuel costs are having an impact on operations in Tennessee

KNOXVILLE, Tenn. — Higher gas prices are having an impact on boating safety operations on the Tennessee River Waterway, according to Ron Riberich with the Tennessee Valley Authority.

"The U.S. Coast Guard issued an order this spring to curtail operations by roughly 25 percent in their inland waterway operations because of the increasing fuel cost effects on the budget," said Riberich, executive vice president of the National Water Safety Congress. "This has affected our boating safety operations significantly this season. We had three boating safety exercises planned this sum-

mer for various sections of the Tennessee River. This year, we will do only one exercise ... on Kentucky Lake."

That exercise already took place in mid-June.

Soaring fuel prices have prompted a Congressional investigation of possible price gouging by the oil industry, but that's not going to bring quick relief for agencies that budgeted nearly two years ago, and never anticipated the price hike. Gasoline prices have jumped in some places nearly 100 percent over where they were a year ago.

"At the moment," he assured, "the fuel cost

is not going to cut into our ability to respond to emergency calls, but it is possible."

He could not say whether rising gas prices have cut into recreational boating traffic.

Riberich said the TVA, Coast Guard Auxiliary and U.S. Power Squadrons occasionally conduct cooperative boating and water safety efforts to advise the public about safe boating courses that are available.

"We also have a law enforcement presence," he said of the TVA, "but it is low-keyed. We try mainly to stress the educational aspect of the exercise."

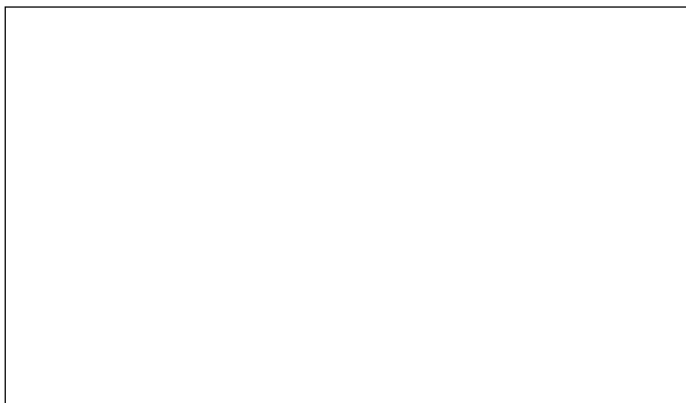
## Football coach billboards score opportunity for similar efforts

NASHVILLE, Tenn. — When a trio of revered college football coaches from universities in three neighboring states lined up in support of water safety, that may have been simply a first quarter play.

At least, that's the indication of Steve Foshee, Corps of Engineers safety officer with the Nashville District. He coordinated the project which brought together Coaches Mike Dubose from the University of Alabama, Hal Mumme from the University of Kentucky and Phil Fulmer from the University of Tennessee at Knoxville.

This project was first reported in the Winter issue of *Water Safety Journal*. Foshee said Fulmer is so enthusiastic about water safety that he's promised to support similar efforts in different regions of the country that might involve other college coaches.

Stearns provided uniquely-finished life jackets for each of the three coaches to wear during photo sessions that were used to illustrate a series of billboards placed in



*These water safety billboards are going up across Alabama, Kentucky, and Tennessee with a message from the Universities' head football coaches to "Be on our team, wear a jacket!"*

several locations in the three states. Each coach received a one-of-a-kind life jacket bearing the colors of his respective team, his name and the team's mascot/logo.

Foshee said 25 billboards are up in the Corbin, Ky. area, another 20 in Decatur, Ala., 30 in the Nashville area, and ten each in Knoxville and Chattanooga. Another five are posted in Tennessee's Tri-Cities area, he added.

In addition to the billboards, which carry the message "Be on our team, wear a life jacket," Foshee said signs are also showing up on metro buses in the Nashville area.

"If anyone would like to copy this idea, I can help them get on line," Foshee said. "We've had a lot of calls."

He may be reached at (615) 736-7161.

Meanwhile, Foshee and the COE have been working with the Tennessee Wildlife Resources Agency and Triton Boats to pro-

duce a series of public service announcements airing on one of the state's major television stations. Some radio spots have also been recorded.

## Kids in Little Rock hosted by Corps of Engineers in business, career course visits

LITTLE ROCK, Ark. — A program aimed at introducing middle school-age youngsters to business and the job environment has allowed the Corps of Engineers to also educate them about water safety.

According to Little Rock District information officer P.J. Spaul and outdoor recreation officer Chris Smith, the Vital

Link program brings youngsters in the 12-13 year age group to see what the Corps operation is all about. It is a partnership effort between the Little Rock Chamber of Commerce and City of Little Rock, with support from several businesses.

"These kids have applied to be in the

program," Smith explained. "They go to different businesses and learn about them and how school relates. We have a group of five kids working with the Corps, and we went out to one of the locks and showed them about locks, and high flows."

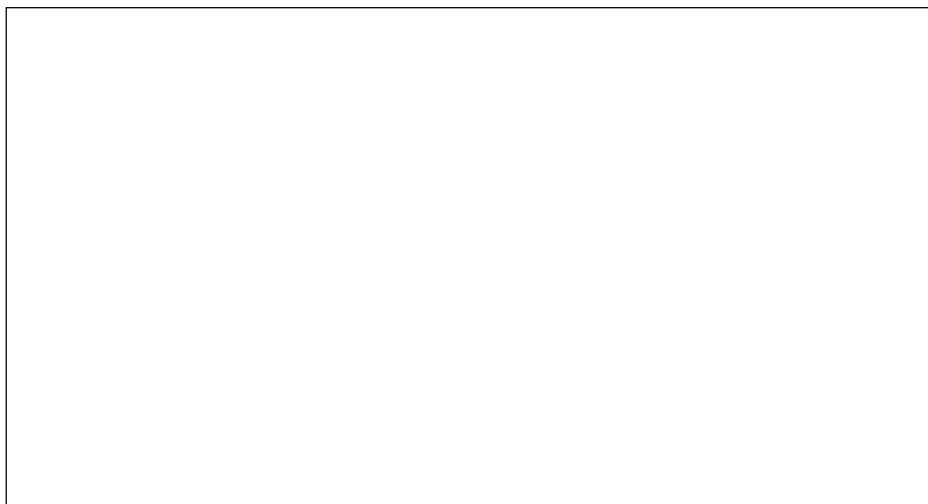
Park Ranger Danny McKinney gave them a water safety program and tour of the lock and dam at Toad Suck Ferry on the Arkansas River, she added.

This is a new segment of the Vital Link program, Smith noted.

"We can actually get these kids to do water safety work in the park," she said. "There is a big push in Arkansas on getting kids ready for careers, with an emphasis on finishing school."

Added Spaul: "It is sometimes difficult to relate getting up and going to school, to being a grown-up, and having a job, money, care and independence. Sometimes it is hard to understand how getting a good education leads you to this."

Participants in the program do not come wearing jeans and T-shirts, either. Smith said they "dress for business," as though they were dressing to go to work.



*Clever sign greets visitors at Toad Suck Ferry in Arkansas.*

# Emmett Forte retires from Corps of Engineers, vows to stay active with Nat'l Water Safety Congress

NASHVILLE, Tenn. — After 43-plus years on the federal payroll, including nearly 22 months with the Air Force during the Korean War, Emmett Forte retired from his post as safety engineer and safety manager for the Corps of Engineers Nashville District.

One of the longest-serving members of the NWSC Board of Directors, having been first appointed in 1973, Forte will remain active with the organization as a member at large. He is at home in Nashville, where he noted, "I am not sure if I am enjoying

retirement or not. Been too busy."

Forte retired in early June, but only from the Corps of Engineers. He is actively working on the 2001 NWSC 50th anniversary conference, which will be part of the International Boating and Water Safety Summit.

During his career with the COE, Forte

stayed in the Nashville District, a period of over 41 years.

"I asked one of the retirees what he does since he retired," Forte quipped. "He said 'Anything I damn please, and I enjoy every minute of it'. My reply was, 'There won't be much change for me, then'."

## NTSB's 'Most Wanted' list

*Continued from front page*

tions have resulted in significant action at the state level. For example, by early this year, every state except New Mexico had strengthened their boating and alcohol laws, Gossard noted. These laws include a minimum blood alcohol concentration definition of "boating while intoxicated."

Forty-one states have adopted implied consent provisions applicable to boaters.

By June of this year, 25 states had adopted requirements that children under age 12 wear a personal flotation device, and 11 other states were applying that rule to children even younger. Kentucky and West Virginia joined that list this year.

Gossard also said 11 states have mandatory education requirements, and one state has implemented a boat operator licensing system. Kansas and New Hampshire enacted education laws this year.

Four years ago, NTSB conducted a study on personal watercraft, resulting in a recommendation that information on PWC safety be included in all state boating education materials. Another recommendation was to require PWC riders to wear life jackets. Since releasing that report, 34 states and the District of Columbia have completed action on the Board's recommendations.

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