

# RIP RAP

## U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Albuquerque District

USACE SPA, 4101 Jefferson Plaza N.E., Albuquerque, NM 87109

Photo: The glory of the Rio Grande and Sandia Mountains at dusk.



**US Army Corps  
of Engineers**®  
Albuquerque District

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District Engineer,  
Lt. Col. Jason Williams

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## Corps Helps Dedicate New Border Station

In a small Texas town called Fabens, located about 30 miles Southeast of El Paso along the Rio Grande, the Corps is overseeing planning and construction of a new Border Patrol station. Deputy District Commander Maj. Richard Collins joined other officials March 17 to celebrate the project in a groundbreaking ceremony.

In his remarks, Maj. Collins said the celebration marks the culmination of three years of planning, environmental compliance, real estate acquisition, contract procurement for a Fast Track Design-Build facility and collaboration in support of the El Paso Sector's Project Management Office and Fabens personnel.

The construction contract for the station was awarded in September 2010, with a projected completion date of May 2012.



Photos by Jeff Firebaugh

*Left to Right: Fabens Patrol Agent in Charge Elizabeth Rosales, El Paso Sector Chief Patrol Agent Scott Luck, Nina Serna from the office of State Representative Chente Quintanilla, Karl McElhaney from the office of U.S. Congressman 16th Congressional District Silvestre Reyes, Deputy District Commander Maj. Richard Collins and SpawGlass President Chuck Calvin use ceremonial shovels to break ground for the new Fabens station.*



**This activity supports our Operations Plan: Action 7 (Capitalize on interagency and international services opportunities.)**



## Admin Staff Learns About Recruiting, Travel Rules

Quarterly, the District holds an administrative development session, and the class on March 9 was about the recruitment process, travel rules and guidance. These sessions are coordinated by Workforce Manager Angela Sims and are designed to enhance the technical skills of the administrative staff.

“The information was helpful to new employees and a great refresher for others,” said Executive Office Assistant Jeannette Alderette.

The classes are also a forum to discuss and develop soft skills in areas like communication, time management and conflict resolution.

“All development sessions are a great forum for receiving updates on the latest information, as well as sharing new ideas and thoughts with one another,” Alderette said.

She also commented that the Corp’s Administrative community of practice is working to get formalized professional development established through the Prospect training venue.



Photo by Lisa Lockyear

*Administrative professionals play a big role in helping the Corps accomplish its missions. Administrative Professional’s Day is April 27.*

## District’s Archaeologists Explain Corps’ Contributions at Conference

District archaeologists Gregory Everhart and Jeremy Decker attended the 2011 Colorado Council of Professional Archaeologists conference March 24-27 and led a pre-conference tour to the Hicklin Springs petroglyph site at the Corps’ John Martin Reservoir, located southeast of Las Animas, Colo.

In the photo, one of the conference participants, Greg Wolff, looks at some abstract mid-to-late Archaic petroglyphs.

According to Everhart,

the conference provided the perfect opportunity to interact with archaeologists in the northern part of the District and explain how archaeology plays a role in Corps’ work.

“We have plenty of opportunity to talk to peers in the New Mexico Archaeological Council, but distance prohibits frequent contact with peers in Colorado,” Everhart said. “This was the first time the Corps has ever presented at the Colorado Council of Professional Archaeologists conference, and it was an excellent experience.”



Photo by Gregory Everhart

# Remnants of U.S.'s Oldest Highway Crosses Corps' Galisteo Project

By Michael Logue, Public Affairs

Route 66 may have its kicks, but a dusty, mostly hidden and sporadic trail winding its way from Mexico City to Santa Fe, N.M. is still king, as the oldest of the Southwest highway systems.

For 400 years, *El Camino Real de Tierra Adentro*, the nation's oldest and longest "highway," was the only road into New Mexico and the Southwest, bringing thousands of settlers from Mexico and Spain into the region. Its name translates as, "Royal Road to the Interior."

Even the famed Santa Fe Trail did not come along until 1821, connecting New Mexico to the United States frontier for the first time.

Between Albuquerque and Santa Fe, a hard-to-see remnant of this important artery of Southwest colonization crosses the Corps' Galisteo Dam project and nearby Kewa Pueblo lands.

Elsewhere in the state, El Camino Real is a visible road, celebrated with tour stops and its own visitor center near Socorro. Other trail segments hop and skip across the New Mexico landscape.

Don Juan de Oñate received permission from the King of Spain to conduct the first colonization expedition far into the interior of what is today New Mexico, 1,500 miles north of Mexico City.

Oñate's trail from Zacatecas to Santa Fe became the third leg of the Royal Road. By the early 1600s, El Camino Real was in regular use bringing colonists, missionaries and supplies to the growing Spanish settlements along the Rio Grande.

The railroad's arrival in the 1880s made both the El Camino Real and the Santa Fe trails obsolete.

Interstate Highways I-10 and I-25, from El Paso to Santa Fe, are today's Camino Real, closely following the route of the historic trail, except between Las Cruces and Socorro. There, I-25 follows the Rio Grande, rather than the 90-mile waterless shortcut through the desert.



USACE Photo

*The Camino Real trail segments, known as the Los Alamos Road, cross the Corps' Galisteo Dam project. Portions of the road are still visible today downstream of the dam and also on private land north of the reservoir. This road was primarily used during the Mexican and U.S. Territorial Periods when large 4-wheeled wagons that carried as much as three tons of commercial freight required this route to bypass the La Bajada escarpment and the older Spanish Colonial horse and mule pack train trail up the rock strewn Santa Fe Canyon.*

*From Kewa Pueblo, known by the Spaniards as Santo Domingo, the Los Alamos Road crosses the upland to the northeast, reaching the south side of Galisteo Creek. The Camino Real is already a national historic trail, but it is also being considered for listing on the National Register of Historic Places.*



# Corps Enforces Title 36 at Project Locations

By Elizabeth Lockyear, Public Affairs

Stewardship is one of the guiding principles of the Corps of Engineers, which has the responsibility of managing close to 12 million acres of public lands and waters, on more than 400 lake and river projects in 43 states.

For the Corps, stewardship involves two main objectives: managing natural resources to ensure their continued availability and providing a safe and healthful environment for the more than 320 million visits made each year to Corps projects. Corps park rangers interact with the public in several ways to meet these objectives. Rangers judiciously issue citations when necessary to help protect public safety and health.

Compared with other federal land management agencies, such as the National Park Service, Corps rangers have limited authority. Corps rangers don't have the legal authority to enforce state and local laws on Corps property, have no arrest or search and seizure authority and can't carry weapons. Their authority is primarily limited to enforcing Title 36 of the Code of Federal Regulations that Congress enacted in the early 1970s.

Title 36 governs the public use of Corps recreation sites and includes things such as vehicle usage on public

land and water (cars, watercraft, aircraft), camping, sanitation, animal control (keep your pet on a leash and don't let your cattle graze on Corps projects), alcohol and firework use and hunting or fishing.

When someone violates Title 36, a Corps ranger can give a verbal or written warning, because the goal is not punishment but compliance at the lowest level of enforcement. If the violation continues or is egregious enough, the ranger can issue a written citation with one of two options: a fine or a Mandatory Court Appearance, or MCA, before a federal magistrate judge. Some violations automatically require an MCA because of their severity, such as destruction of public property like a boat ramp.

Rangers in the District don't write very many citations because verbal and written warnings are usually effective in dealing with Title 36 violations. In the past five years, 35 citations have been written at

six of the District's recreation sites, with the majority related to the use of restricted substances, such as alcohol. Alcohol is banned at both Abiquiu and Cochiti lakes.

Although not often used, the authority to write citations is necessary because it provides the "teeth" in enforcing the rules. Without it, some of the public will ignore the rules, according to Operations Project Manager David Dutton, at the District's



Photo by Lisa Lockyear

*Office of Counsel is able to provide a new service to the District now that attorneys Regina Schowalter and Jorge Avitia were appointed Special Assistant United States Attorneys in the district of New Mexico.*

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Abiquiu project.

After a citation is written, it is tracked by the project office. Each office receives a regular report monitoring citations requiring fines and who hasn't paid them. If a person hasn't paid, the project contacts the United States Attorney's office, and a notice to appear before arrest is issued, giving the person 60 days to pay the fine. If the person still does not pay, the court issues a bench warrant for the person's arrest. The U.S. Marshall's Office is contacted to pick up the person.

Recently, two lawyers with the District, Regina Schowalter and Jorge Avitia, were appointed Special Assistant United States Attorneys in the district of New Mexico.

This means that instead of the project office contacting the United States Attorney's office, they may now contact Schowalter or Avitia, who will coordinate the case and may handle the prosecution.

Regarding the importance of being appointed a Special Assistant United States Attorney, Avitia said that "when a case is referred to an Assistant U.S. Attorney (AUSA), the discretion to prosecute shifts to the AUSA, who must then prioritize the case with all others in his or her docket based on policies, interests and concerns

“I am looking forward to partnering with the rangers and seeing issued citations through to the finish,” Schowalter said.

specific to the Department of Justice.

This appointment allows the Office of Counsel to devote more resources to the case to address the Corps' imperatives, including giving legitimacy to our rangers' citation authority and deterring repeat offenders - and issues important to the rangers, who are on the front lines protecting the public and public resources."



## Boaters Asked to Help Protect Lakes From Mussels

The Bureau of Reclamation is reminding boaters to take extra precautions in the coming months to ensure they do not transport invasive mussels from infested water bodies in neighboring states into New Mexico waters.

Zebra and Quagga mussels can attach to all recreational watercraft and equipment and cause significant damage to aquatic ecosystems, water system infrastructure and aquatic recreational equipment.

Mature mussels attached to watercraft or trailers and mussel larvae in water left in boat engines, bilges, live wells and hulls can be transported and spread to other water bodies. Mussels are prolific breeders and

attach themselves to hard and soft surfaces, such as dams, boats and aquatic plants. Mussel infestations can lead to potential boating closures in affected waterways, and their spread could result in millions of dollars in damage to water storage and delivery facilities.

Reclamation continues to work closely with the New Mexico Department of Game and Fish, the New Mexico Energy, Minerals and Natural Resources Department's State Parks Division and the Army Corps of Engineers to educate boaters, monitor for Aquatic Invasive Species and assist with boat inspections and cleaning during holiday weekends on some New Mexico reservoirs.

**For information on Aquatic Invasive Species please visit: [www.wildlife.state.nm.us](http://www.wildlife.state.nm.us) and look under "Quick Links," and click on the Stop Aquatic Hitchhikers stop-sign.**

This activity supports our Operations Plan: Action 5 (Develop collaborative approaches to address watershed-based, multi-stakeholder and multi-benefit regional water resource challenges).

District Happenings

## District Monitors Success One Fish at a Time

By Ariane Pinson, District Technical Writer / Editor



*Corps biologist Michael Porter measures a Rio Grande Silvery Minnow during Spring 2010 monitoring activities.*

If you build it, will they come? That is the question being asked by the Corps and other organizations that have come together to form the Middle Rio Grande Endangered Species Collaborative Program. If suitable habitat is built in the Middle Rio Grande, and river flows are adjusted to more closely mimic natural flows, will the endangered Rio Grande silvery minnow become abundant once again?

The silvery minnow is a small, three-inch-long fish with a tiny mouth and eyes. In the early 20th century, the minnow was common along the Rio Grande, from above its confluence with the Chama River almost to the Gulf of Mexico. The river throughout much of this stretch was a wide, braided stream with shifting sand bars and a wide, regularly inundated floodplain.

However, dam construction, jetty jack installation, channel straightening and other projects built during the last century to reduce flooding have altered the river's flow. Where once peak spring flows overtopped the river banks and flooded the valley, now the flows are confined to a narrow, rapidly eroding channel. The result has been the development

of a single-channel river with relatively swift current, a dry floodplain that is too high above the river to be inundated by spring floods and a river with few back channels and eddies creating suitable minnow habitat. Predictably, the minnow's range steadily contracted. By 1994, the minnow was present in only 5 percent of its former range and it was officially listed as a federally endangered species.

Biologists were unsure what could be done to save the minnow from extinction. Not enough was known about the biology of this fish to discern which changes to the river had been most damaging. One idea that river managers had was that damming and channelization had eliminated shallow channel and overbank habitats essential to minnow reproduction.

To test this idea, the Corps joined with other members of the Collaborative Program, including the New Mexico Interstate Stream Commission (ISC), the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, the Albuquerque-Bernalillo County Water Utility Authority, the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation, the New Mexico Department of Game and Fish and the Middle Rio Grande



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Conservancy District. Together, they organized the construction of a series of high and low flow channels cutting across islands and river banks to help restore a dynamic, complex floodway in the Middle Rio Grande.

Such a floodway has a diversity of channel habitats and flows suitable for silvery minnow reproductive and early life stage needs.

In collaboration with water users, the Corps has also experimented with artificially lengthening spring high flows and re-introducing native floodplain vegetation. All of these actions should, in theory, have dramatically improved minnow habitat and led to increases in minnow populations. But did they?

In spring 2010, the Corps and other members of the Collaborative Program wanted to find out. But unforeseen and unavoidable obstacles to the contracting process meant the contractor could not be hired in time to conduct low-intensity monitoring during the critical spring runoff season. So, the co-chairs of the Collaborative Program Monitoring Plan Team, Ondrea Hummel (Corps) and Anders Lundahl (ISC), rapidly fielded a multi-agency team of biologists, hydrologists and geomorphologists to assess

whether minnows are living and breeding in their recreated habitat, and whether the target stream flow levels have been achieved in the different kinds of restored channel environments.

What they learned is encouraging: the habitats designed with minnows in mind were exactly what the minnows liked. More than 1600 minnows and countless minnow eggs were identified at the 20 restoration sites monitored in 2010. Flows in various channel features were within their target ranges, and native vegetation was becoming established to the exclusion of non-native species.

According to Corps biologist, Michael Porter, who is an expert in silvery minnow biology, “the habitat that was restored turns out to be just what the minnows need for spawning and rearing their young.”

The low-intensity monitoring effort was so successful that the Collaborative Program has decided to keep it “in house” in the future.

According to biologist Hummel, “performing the monitoring ourselves allows us to be aware of how the sites are maturing each year and how they are being used. This knowledge informs future habitat restoration efforts and techniques.”



## Earth Day Posters Now Available in PAO; Earth Day is April 22

*The Public Affair Office has a supply of the 2011 Army Earth Day poster, which celebrates sustaining the environment for a secure future; net zero 2011. Please call ext. 3171 to arrange for a copy.*

*The Army’s vision is to appropriately manage our natural resources with a net zero strategy. This strategy is to manage our installations not only on a net zero energy basis, but net zero water and waste as well. Energy security and sustainability are operationally necessary and financially prudent. We are creating a culture that recognizes the value of sustainability measured not just in terms of financial benefits, but benefits to maintaining mission capability, quality of life, relationships with local communities and the preservation of options for the Army’s future.*



This activity supports our Operations Plan: Action 1 (Prepare and deploy civil response teams in support of domestic incidents and all-hazard contingencies).

## District Happenings

# When Disaster Strikes, We'll Bring the Ice!

By Elizabeth Lockyear, Public Affairs



Photos by Lisa Lockyear

In the event a disaster such as a hurricane hits the U.S. this year, Albuquerque District will ensure that ice is purchased and delivered to the affected area, when requested.

In disaster affected areas, especially those without electricity, ice provides life-sustaining functions. Ice keeps perishable food from quickly going bad and also serves essential medical-related uses, such as medication refrigeration.

As a commodity, ice presents many unique challenges. It must be kept frozen while in transport, creating a challenge as there are limited numbers of immediately available trucks with refrigerated trailers, also known as "reefers." Reefers require refueling and must run their cooling units at all times because ice just dropped off and left at a staging area will melt rapidly.

Additionally, there are only

a few big ice plants in the country capable of handling orders for several tons of ice. Not the only agency providing ice, the Corps competes with state and local governments and non-governmental relief agencies, such as the Red Cross, for reefers and ice contracts.

The government's emergency response starts with the local government and goes higher when an incident overwhelms abilities. It's up to the state's governor to ask the federal government for assistance.

The Corps executes emergency response activities under two authorities, the Stafford Act and the Flood Control and Coastal Emergency Act. The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) has the responsibility of coordinating government-wide relief

Every year the Charleston and Albuquerque districts trade off the lead of the Corps' National Ice Team. This year, the lead transferred to the District March 31 during a ceremony where ice was handed from Charleston to Albuquerque symbolically via video teleconference.

efforts. FEMA uses the National Response Framework (NRF) to provide a unified national response to disasters and emergencies.

Under the NRF, there are 15 Emergency Support Functions with listed protocols. ESF #3, Public Works and Engineering, covers the Corps' emergency response, and one of the activities is to provide ice.

District Commander Lt. Col. William's reaffirmed that the Ice mission is a "joint team-effort" between the two districts, while Charleston's Lt. Col. Jason Kirk said that they would backup and



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## 2011 SPA National Ice Team

support Albuquerque.

The District's team is composed of three cells that work together to contract for ice delivery and ensure that it's delivered according to the contract. The first cell is the mission manager, mission specialist and contractor specialist who work out of Albuquerque.

The commodities site manager, data specialist and up to 12 quality assurance specialists comprise the second cell.

The action officers are the third cell and work out of FEMA headquarters in Washington. They coordinate among the District, the affected area and FEMA.

Stephanie (Whatley) Parra is the team's Contract Specialist and has been on the team for four years. She works with the Mission Manager and Mission Specialist "to determine what should be ordered and when." She then coordinates the orders with the contractor and assists the team in ensuring that contract requirements are met.

A standard truckload of ice equals 40,000 pounds and, based on eight pounds of ice per person per day, can serve 5,000 people per day. The general idea is that one truckload supplies one Point of Distribution (POD) for one day. The POD is where the ice ultimately ends up to be distributed to those needing it.

Emergency Management Specialist Craig Lykins has more than 15 years experience

**AO:** MAJ Rick Collins, Capt. Phil Bundy, Craig Lykins

**MM:** Steve Wagner, Greg Allen, Capt. Ryan Robinson

**MS:** Rebecca Perez, Curtis McFadden, Rich Banker, Kathy Skalbeck

**CS:** Madeline Livermore, Todd Dornberger, Erica Talley, Linda Anderson, Stephanie (Whatley) Parra

**SM:** Mark Doles, Becky Miner, Brian Jordan, Van Truan

**DS:** Don Gallegos, Christine Redick, Doug Bailey

**QAs:** Grace Procter, Mark Stewart, Rick Buttz, Jeff Lindemann, Leslie Rodriguez, Kim Martinez, Ben Miranda, Mick Porter, Robert Garcia, Chris Grosso, Tim Kreitinger, Jerry (Sean) Moore, Erin Larivee, Victor Reynoso, Debra Gallegos

on the ice team. He said that while ice team members may not get to see the end results of their efforts, what they are doing behind the scenes does have a very positive impact on those affected by the disaster.

This is why civil engineer Curtis McFadden joined the team this past year. He lived in the Houston area and said he wants to help people affected by hurricanes.

Usually an ice team deployment lasts around two weeks. Program Analysts Christine Redick and Doug Bailey are two team members who have deployed. Redick deployed to Houston for 17 days after Hurricane Ike in 2008. Bailey was busy in 2005 with three deployments: Alabama, after Hurricane Dennis; Texas, after Hurricane Rita; and Florida, after Hurricane Wilma.

The past two hurricane seasons produced no significant storms to hit the U.S. and no other major disasters required the activation of the ice team.

While the team hasn't deployed recently, they are on alert and ready to go if the need should arise.

"Everyone's plan is to deploy at some point," said action officer Capt. Bundy.

To apply for a position on the National Ice Team, talk to your supervisor and then contact Tom Ryan, Craig Lykins or anyone in RCO. They will provide the required paperwork and medical clearance needed and also help you start the online training.

Being on the team requires a commitment. According to Lykins, those on the ice team can't deploy on other Corps disaster response teams like the blue roof team or a debris removal team.

"It's a chance to do a short-term deployment, get out of the office, make a little extra money, meet different people from throughout the Corps and participate in something meaningful," Parra said.

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## Longest Walk 3 Participants Stay at Cochiti

By Ronnie Schelby, Public Affairs

On the weekend of March 19, Cochiti Lake had the unique opportunity to play host to participants of “The Longest Walk 3, Reversing Diabetes.” Participants began the walk Feb. 14 in La Jolla, Calif., and expect to complete the walk during the week of July 8, by arriving in Washington D.C.

Dennis Banks is the founder of the walk. Banks, a member of the Anishinabe from Minnesota, is a well-known leader, teacher, lecturer, actor, activist, author and cofounder of the American Indian Movement. Banks was diagnosed with diabetes two years ago and decided then to treat the disease through nutrition and exercise, rather than drugs.

The Walk was conceived to raise awareness about diabetes, the number of people who have the disease, and how the effects can be reversed or improved with exercise and nutrition.

Diabetes has reached epidemic proportions in this country, especially within the Native American population. According to Chief Harry Goodwolf Kindness, leader of the walk, almost 100 percent of the Pima-Papago tribe has the disease. However, Chief Kindness points out that this is not just a Native American disease; all races of people have it.

“We are doing the walk to raise awareness for all people,” said Chief Kindness.

The message of the walkers, as listed on flyers they distribute, states: “Eating and exercising in accordance with the laws of nature, such as eating raw vegetables and



Photo by Ronnie Schelby

*Navajo Artist Julius Badoni, a member of the Longest Walk team, creates a sign to be used on a truck accompanying walkers.*

walking daily, will help mitigate, stop, or reverse diabetes, save lives and protect the Seventh Generation to come.” (The Seventh Generation refers to all Native Americans).

Each morning, Chief Kindness, of the Mohawk/Oneida tribe from Green Bay, Wis., gets up at 4:30 a.m. and starts the walk alone. He walks about 10-15 miles, setting the trail for the day, and the others catch up to him. The leader, Dennis Banks, decides how far the group will walk each day. Depending on the day and the location, the size of the group of walkers changes. While at Cochiti Lake, this diverse group was comprised of 45 individuals, including participants from France and Japan.

“Anyone is welcome to join the walk, and stay for as long they wish,” Chief Kindness said.

Even though the overall path of the Walk is laid out, the actual route changes, depending on where they stay for the night. They stayed at Cochiti Lake as a result of the partnering agreement Cochiti Dam has with Cochiti Pueblo.

“We expect several hundred, or even thousands of individuals to join the Walk as we get closer to D.C.,” Chief Kindness said.



## District Gains Engineering & Construction Chief

Mr. John Moreno has been selected as the District's Engineering and Construction Chief, effective May 8.

Moreno will be joining us from the Fort Worth District where he has served as a Supervisory Engineer since 2006 in a number of roles, to include Deputy Director of the Fort Bliss Program Office, Construction Manager of the Fort Bliss Hospital Project and Fort Bliss Area Engineer.

A graduate of MIT (Masters Degree - Building Technology) and Stanford (Bachelors Degree - Civil Engineering), Moreno started his Corps career in Los Angeles District in

1992. Some of his additional experience includes serving as a Project Manager, Project Engineer and Resident Engineer in Los Angeles and Europe District, before joining Fort Worth District.

Moreno is a professional civil engineer in the State of California. He has been married 14 years to his wife JoAnn, and they enjoy traveling and spend much of their time visiting family and friends in Arizona and Calif.

Moreno loves to golf, and he said he and his wife are looking forward to some of the active outdoor life that is available in Albuquerque.



*John D. Moreno*



*By James Jaffe, Safety Office*

**W**hat do the following trees have in common in the City of Albuquerque: Juniper, Cedar, Mulberry, Cottonwoods and Poplars?

The answer is that the City of Albuquerque made it illegal to grow, import, sell or plant any of these trees in Aug 1997.

The rationale behind this prohibition is an attempt to reduce allergens at their source. Failure to comply can result in a \$500 fine or other punishment.

As many allergy sufferers

know, it's allergy season again. Because of this state's low humidity and lack of precipitation, allergy season is almost a year round occurrence. The best way to control allergies is through engineering controls. That means you should make some changes to your environment to reduce allergens. For example:

- Encase pillows and mattresses
- Use allergen© impermeable covers for your pillows and wash the pillows in hot water bi-monthly
- Wash all bedding, blankets, sheets, pillowcases in hot water bi-monthly and avoid

- down and wool blankets
- Remove or treat carpeting with a cleaning solution to inactivate allergens
- Buy cleanable furniture such as leather, wood, metal, plastic or vinyl in place of upholstered furniture
- Avoid dust collectors such as wall hangings and throw pillows



## Deputy Swears in New District Employees



Photo by Lisa Lockyear

*Left to Right: Chris Parrish (archaeologist/regulatory); Robin Holbrook (real estate); Angela Mobly (office of counsel); and Joseph Almers (architect) take the employment oath on April 11.*

### Writing Tip: Is it Federal or federal?

This question comes up rather frequently. For some reason, many people think the word federal always warrants a capital F. Actually, you should capitalize federal only when it is part of a proper noun, that is, the official name of a particular or unique person, place, or thing.

So, you would only capitalize federal when you use it in the name of a federal agency, an act, or some other proper noun. For example:

Federal Bureau of Investigation  
Federal Insurance Contributions Act  
Federal Trade Commission

When writing about the Federal Government in its official capacity using the term as an official title, you should capitalize both Federal and Government.

Most of the time, we use federal simply as a form of general classification, which would not require us to capitalize it. For example: Once a year, federal employees have an opportunity to choose a different health care provider. Or, many issues we address each day are subject to federal, state, and local laws. So, the next time you are writing about federal programs or issues, think twice about capitalization. More often than not, the correct answer is lowercase.