

South Dakota National Guard

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National Guard Soldiers continue roadwork at Orman Dam

By Pfc. Alexis Stevens – 129th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment

BELLE FOURCHE, S.D. – Soldiers with the 842nd Engineer Company, South Dakota Army National Guard, of Belle Fourche, Spearfish and Sturgis, continue work on a road project at Orman Dam near Belle Fourche, Oct. 1-2.

The new and improved road is expected to benefit local communities by bringing more people to the area allowing for easier access to the dam in the southeast corner and along the reservoir's east side.

Previous access to the area consisted of a network of old trails that weren't easily accessible for the public.

The SDARNG is partnering with the Bureau of Reclamation on the project, which is in year three of a five-year agreement permitting the Guard access to reclamation lands to conduct military training.

The road work began in June during the Golden Coyote training exercise and included work by multiple National Guard units from other states and the Danish Home Guard.

During this phase of the project, the 842nd provided stability to the road by leveling it to prevent erosion from storms. Future plans include the construction of a cul-de-sac at the end of the road for use as a turn around point for larger vehicles and campers.

"We're doing soil reclamation and final shaping to get it all dressed up," said Staff Sgt. Jeff Sorenson, one of the equipment section supervisors at the site.

As an engineer company, the 842nd primarily consists of heavy equipment operators and works with their machinery as often as possible to maintain their skills.

"Our mission is to go out and move dirt," said Sorenson. "Any time we get the chance to come out here and do this, it just hones our skills."

The project also provides the unit with an opportunity to train their newer members.

"This operation is a good opportunity for the younger members to gain experience and confidence in their abilities," said Sgt. Darnell Whitte, a senior equipment operator. "We don't get to go out and do these kinds of operations during the winter, so we use every chance in the summer to get out and actually use the equipment."

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High resolution photos are available at www.flickr.com/photos/southdakotationalguard



161001-Z-WF991-131: Soldiers of the 842nd Engineer Company, South Dakota Army National Guard, work on a road construction project at Orman Dam near Belle Fourche, S.D., Oct. 1, 2016. The SDARNG is partnering with the Bureau of Reclamation on the project to allow for military training on reclamation lands that will benefit visitors to the dam allowing for easier access to its southeast corner. (U.S. Army National Guard photo by Pfc. Alexis Stevens)



161001-Z-WF991-142: U.S. Army Staff Sgt. Jeff Sorenson, 842nd Engineer Company, South Dakota Army National Guard, advises Sgt. Darnell Whitte during a road construction project at Orman Dam near Belle Fourche, S.D., Oct. 1, 2016. The road project provides realistic training for the Soldiers and will benefit local communities allowing for easier access along the dam's east side. (U.S. Army National Guard photo by Pfc. Alexis Stevens)



161001-Z-WF991-147: U.S. Army Sgt. Darnell Whitte, 842nd Engineer Company, South Dakota Army National Guard, operates a scraper during the a road construction project at Orman Dam near Belle Fourche, S.D., Oct. 1, 2016. The SDARNG is partnering with the Bureau of Reclamation on the project to allow for military training on reclamation lands that will benefit visitors to the dam allowing for easier access to its southeast corner. (U.S. Army National Guard photo by Pfc. Alexis Stevens)



161001-Z-WF991-232: U.S. Army Sgt. Darnell Whitte, 842nd Engineer Company, South Dakota Army National Guard, drives a scraper during a road construction project at Orman Dam, near Belle Fourche, S.D., Oct. 1, 2016. The road project provides realistic training for the Soldiers and will benefit local communities allowing for easier access along the dam's east side. (U.S. Army National Guard photo by Pfc. Alexis Stevens)



161001-Z-WF991-240: Soldiers of the 842nd Engineer Company, South Dakota Army National Guard, discuss the next phase of a road construction project at Orman Dam near Belle Fourche, S.D., Oct. 1, 2016. The SDARNG is partnering with the Bureau of Reclamation on the project to allow for military training on reclamation lands that will benefit visitors to the dam allowing for easier access to its southeast corner. (U.S. Army National Guard photo by Pfc. Alexis Stevens)

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