

## **WORKING TO RESTORE CIVIL SERVICES IN IRAQ**

In July of 2004 Melissa Head volunteered to go to Iraq to be one of 400 staff members of the Army Corps of Engineers working to restore civil order there. She returned to the US in February 2005 then volunteered to work again in Iraq during May through August last year. Head works for the Corps as an attorney. She obtained her law degree from Creighton University and is a member of the Iowa Bar Association. Head explained while she was in Iraq she handled legal aspects of American military and civilian groups who leased property there to be used by the American forces. Also, as there was a major rebuilding effort of schools, hospitals, power plants, water supply, and other civic facilities, Head explained she had to be sure the property papers were in order so that transfer ownership to local agencies could be accomplished since only citizens of Iraq can own property there. Head traveled in escorted armored vehicles to all parts of Iraq with a team dealing with lease arrangements and property reconstruction. She noted that much of the daily work of providing for the American military was done by civilian contractors. Even the rebuilding efforts employed local citizens as much as possible, although quality control was an issue due to lack of skill. Head noted American currency is used throughout Iraq. The government is not yet stable enough to establish their own economic system. Some of the money to pay for reconstruction costs comes from oil revenues and some comes from American money stockpiled by Saddam Hussein. Head expressed her feeling that progress is being made in restoring Iraq and the media is not showing the progress. She is planning to return for a duty tour there and expects we will be helping citizens of Iraq for a long time.