

SOUTHWESTERN DIVISION

R E G I O N A L

APACESETTER



Recovering from Rita

November 2005

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Pacesetter
Southwestern Division Regional News Service

Serving the men and women of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Southwestern Division

Brig. Gen. Jeffrey J. Dorko
Commander,
Southwestern Division

Rhonda James
Chief, Public Affairs
Southwestern Division

Michele Thomas
Editor
Galveston District

Associate Editors

Mary Beth Hudson
Tulsa District

Valerie Buckingham
Little Rock District

Edward Rivera
Fort Worth District

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On the cover: Contractors moving debris to debris site in Orange County. As of Nov. 29th, over 2.77 million cubic yards of debris have been removed. Photo by Marilyn Uhrich.

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The Pacesetter team has done it again!



Brig. Gen. Jeffrey J. Dorko
Commander, Southwestern Division

The Southwestern Division regional team has once again proven itself as true Pacesetters! With Hurricane Rita's eye set on a course straight for Galveston Island in late September, this team showed its agility and expertly executed in the face of uncertainty.

The preparations taking place throughout the division gained in speed at much the same rate as Rita. We were prepared for the worst-case scenario, and, we knew our priorities: to support efforts to save lives and find people; to sustain lives; and, to set the conditions for recovery.

The safety of our own employees and their families in the storm's path was paramount. As a result, Galveston District headquarters was evacuated Sept. 21, with its Emergency Operations Center moving to an alternate site at Addicks and Barker Project Office, northwest of Houston.

Our division headquarters EOC began operations that day as well, and three of our staff reported to Austin to track our pre-declaration missions from the Department of Homeland Security's Federal Emergency Management Agency's Joint Field Office/Regional Response Coordinating Center. More Corps employees were also making their way to Austin to man the Emergency Response Team-Advance. And, with Galveston in the bull's-eye, Fort Worth District stood up

its EOC and assumed the lead role for executing our assigned missions.

We had some 110 personnel prepositioned to focus on executing our emergency response. At the same time, more than 160 of our team members were already deployed assisting in the Corps' Hurricane Katrina recovery missions.

So, with all of our teams in place performing 24/7 duty, and we were ready. As Hurricane Rita approached and made landfall during the early morning hours of Sept. 24, the storm veered further to the east than predicted, sparing

for the most part Galveston Island and the Jadwin Building. Other areas of southeastern Texas weren't as fortunate.

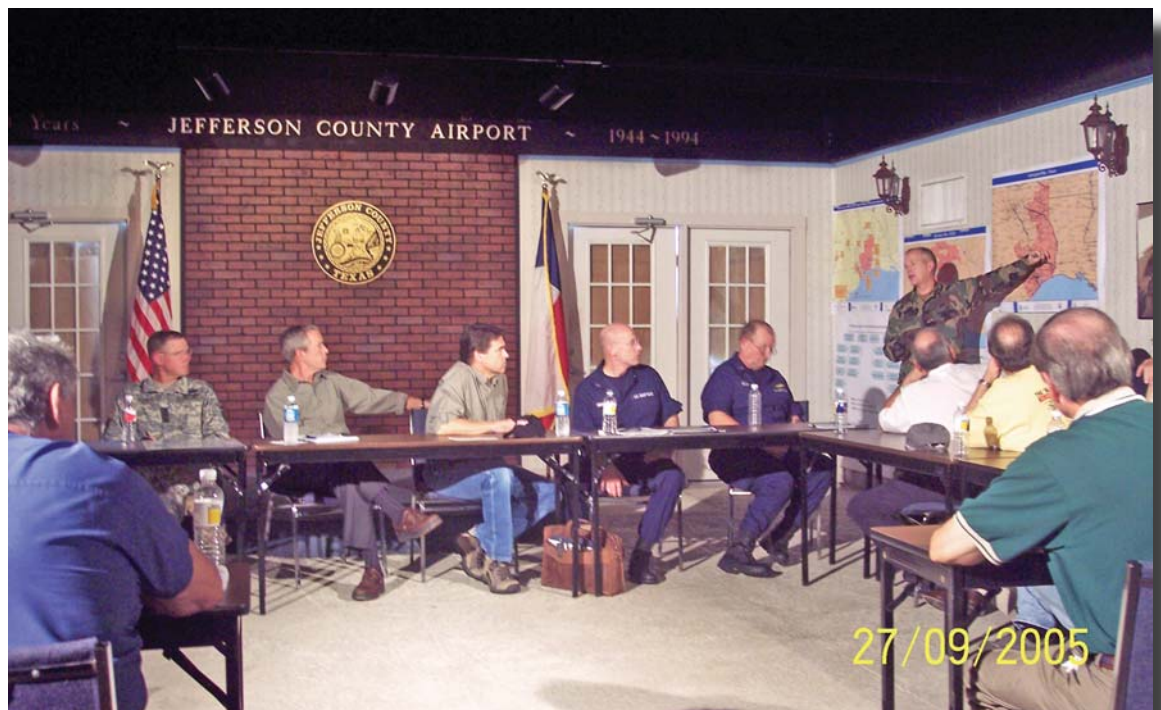
When the storm passed, attention first focused on accountability of our Galveston District employees and those Fort Worth District employees in the affected areas.

Then, faced with widespread power outages, wind damage and resultant debris, some flooding with more heavy rains predicted, we began to push ice, water and generators to those in need. We also continued to closely monitor our flood-control capacities throughout the region.

And, late in the day of Rita's landfall, the Trinity River Authority called upon us to offer some advice when wind and wave action displaced rock from its Lake Livingston Dam, located 75 miles north-east of Houston. This coordination with the TRA, Texas Department of Transportation, the National Weather Service and others led to emergency repairs to avert the problem.

I'll add here that this same type of close contact and coordination was maintained at all levels throughout our Hurricane Rita mission execution, with FEMA, Texas State and

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Brig. Gen. Jeffrey J. Dorko (standing) briefs the status of SWD's missions execution to (from left) Lt. Gen. Robert T. Clark, Commanding General, Fifth U.S. Army; President George W. Bush; Texas Governor Rick Perry; Rear Adm. Larry Hereth, Principal Federal Official to manage federal response to Hurricane Rita; Vice Adm. Thad W. Allen, PFO to manage federal response to Hurricane Katrina, and others at Jefferson County Airport, Sept. 27.

Effort

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local officials, and others.

The day following landfall, Sunday, Sept. 23, as soon as it was safe to do so, Col. Steve Haustein, Galveston District Commander, made an initial aerial survey of the hardest hit areas.

This first-look enabled him to determine no significant damage had occurred to the Galveston headquarters, the seawall or to other coastal infrastructure. Also during this flight he was able to assess the federal channels to pinpoint debris and possible navigational hazards. The next day, Galveston District launched survey boats to begin inspections.

Following the presidential post-disaster proclamation, our team ramped up their efforts even more. Col. John Minahan, Fort Worth District Commander, and a district advance team deployed to Sam Rayburn Project Office to establish a Forward Command to begin damage assessments in the Beaumont area.

By Monday, less than 48 hours after landfall, our teams had delivered 180 trucks of water and 127 trucks of ice to Reliant Stadium in Houston.

Water and ice delivery to Houston and Beaumont continued through late October. When these missions were closed out, 1,193 trucks of ice and 1,370 trucks of water were dispatched.

Also in less than 48 hours after landfall, the Power Planning and Response Team had received 62 requests for pre-installation inspections (some resulting in no requirement), completed 31 of those, provided four generators to the State of Texas, and installed five.



Contractors install a blue roof on a house in Beaumont. Operation Blue Roof is a FEMA-assigned mission of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, that provides temporary repairs to roofs in the 22 counties for damage done by Hurricane Rita.

By the end of the Power mission, the team had received 625 requests for pre-installation inspections; completed 594, and installed a total of 289 generator sets. The team also performed more than 280 de-installations.

And, the Houston Ship Channel opened to 32-foot traffic, with SWG completing side-scan surveys; the Gulf Intracoastal Waterway was open up to the Colorado Locks, which were open and operational, as were the Brazos Locks; and the Corpus Christi and Matagorda Ship Channels were both open at federal depths.

On Tuesday, Sept. 27, President Bush, Governor Perry, and others visited the storm-damaged Beaumont

area. There they had the opportunity to dialogue with local leaders, as well as Rear Admiral Larry Hereth, the Principal Federal Official responsible for the federal response to Rita in Texas.

By Wednesday, with power and water restored, the Galveston District resumed operations from its headquarters. The Houston Ship Channel was opened to 35 feet, and the Galveston, Texas City, Freeport, Corpus Christi and Matagorda ship channels were all open at federal depths.

By Sept. 30, we had completed structural assessments on several schools, and we received task orders to execute a debris and temporary roofing mission.

We also welcomed Lt. Gen. Carl A. Strock, Commander and Chief of Engineers, accompanied by Congressman David L. Hobson, Chairman of the House Energy and Water Appropriations Subcommittee, on Sept. 30. We provided briefings and an aerial tour of the damage, and then accompanied them to Austin where they visited the FEMA JFO/RRCC and the ERT-A teams Oct. 1.

With Galveston and Fort Worth Districts heavily involved in this response, Little Rock and Tulsa Districts and division headquarters stepped up their support, providing more team members from a work force that was already thin from the Global

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Effort

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War on Terrorism and Katrina deployments.

To manage a similar response in southwestern Louisiana, Tulsa District answered a call from the Mississippi Valley Division for assistance. The district deployed an advance team to Lake Charles to establish an Emergency Field Office-West, 30 Sept. That team grew to nearly 100, providing response and recovery mission support in that area.

By Oct. 1, with the ice, water, power and debris (which has resulted so far in more than 2.77M cubic yards of material handled) missions continuing, estimates for temporary roof coverings began streaming in.

In response, an initial five Disaster Recovery Centers were opened to let the public know that they could begin applying for “blue roofs” that day. The first blue roof was installed Oct. 5. As I write this, more than 27,000 applications had been received and 20,624 blue roofs had been installed.

We were able to see some blue-roof installations in progress. One site we visited was a classic example of the service we provide and our preferred method to accomplish it ... there, a 93-year-old lady who lived by herself and rode out the storm alone, was having her blue roof put on by a team of local roofers who were subcontractors. The contracted for quality assurance for this particular installation was provided by a qualified and capable, but at the time, out-of-work framer and part-time college student

from a local construction company.

The Corps’ quality control oversight for this job was provided by one of our young, up-and-coming stars from Tulsa District ... a star who was gaining valuable experience.

At this same time, the Sabine-Neches was the only channel in Texas operating with U.S. Coast Guard restrictions in place. That channel is now open and Galveston District has completed its surveys to determine Hurricane Rita’s impact. Their preliminary analysis has revealed that Rita deposited more than 7.9 million cubic yards of material into the channels.

We had indeed made a lot of progress in just one short (although it sometimes seemed long) week after landfall. I was able to see much of this progress firsthand.

I also saw our top-notch, dedicated team members go the extra mile for FEMA, the State of Texas at all levels, for individual members of the public, and for their peers.

Just one example is Mike Carver and his Sam Rayburn Powerhouse staff. Not only were they “heroes” for successfully achieving a “black start” to provide power to critical facilities in Jasper County, they also took care of their own employees and other emergency responders. Their worthy story would take up this entire column ... instead you’ll find an article about those contributions in this edition of the Pacesetter.

And, with Galveston District quickly returning

to normal operations, command and control of the Recovery Field Office first established in Beaumont by Col. John Minahan and his team, transitioned to Col. Steve Haustein Oct. 10.

This transparent transfer of leadership and the RFO’s continued steady state of mission execution is another testament to this great regional team.

The preparedness, response and recovery actions executed by the SWD regional team far exceed those I’ve written about here. You’ll find this Pacesetter is full of those accounts.

All of your long hours and contributions ... whether you were deployed, served

on one of the management teams in Austin, took a shift in your EOC, sat in on the many conference calls to keep us in sync, or filled in behind those that did ... were vital to this team’s success.

And, importantly, those of you who weren’t directly involved in preparing for Hurricane Rita, or our response and recovery actions, ensured we were able to keep our on-going commitments to our customers and others.

I am proud to be part of your Pacesetter team; you continually raise the bar and you’ve done it yet again ... exceeding your past accomplishments with professional excellence. Essays!



Brig. Gen. Jeffrey J. Dorko at the recovery field office with Col. Steve Haustein, Commander, RFO and Randy Hathaway, Deputy commander, RFO.

Red shirts making the difference in Southeast Texas

Marilyn Uhrich
Pacesetter Staff

The shower of red shirts covering southeast Texas following the devastation by Hurricane Rita is a welcome relief for the storm-beaten residents..

The red shirts are worn by representatives of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers who are or were involved in a variety of recovery missions – ice, water, power, temporary roof repair, debris removal and in a small part, temporary housing. Corps people from 17 different districts are on site, working twelve hours per day, seven days a week. Volunteers also come from the USGS, Bureau of Reclamation, NOAA, and other federal agencies.

The category 3 hurricane called Rita roared into southeast Texas and southwest Louisiana in late September, plowing a road of destruction up the state line. Houses and buildings were flattened. Twenty-two counties in Texas were named a disaster area.

With FEMA in the lead, the Corps went into action. Water, ice and power were first priorities. Those missions are essentially over now. Power is back on with the exceptions of a few areas where the power lines are being rebuilt. The last FEMA generator has



Corps employees stationed at a ROE collection site in Beaumont.

returned. Operation Blue Roof, as of Nov, 29, had installed temporary roofing on 20,624 southeastern Texas homes. More than 500 homes per day are receiving the blue plastic sheeting provided by FEMA.

The Corps has received a total of more than 27,000 applications from 21 application sites scattered from the Louisiana border to Galveston, and from the coast north to Livingston, Texas.

An estimated 4.14 million cubic yards of debris covered the area under the Corps jurisdiction where cities and counties have requested Federal assistance with debris

removal. Other cities and counties have opted to do this themselves and be reimbursed by FEMA. Everything from downed trees to refrigerators, even boats, are scattered over the landscape. The Corps' contractors have carried more than 2.77 million cubic yards by Nov. 29 from roadsides and public property to more than 20 debris sites.

"We're making steady progress. It gets better everyday," said Col. Steve Haustein Commander at the Regional Field Office in Beaumont, Texas. "This is a large, complex task. But, we'll be here until the job is done."

The temporary housing mission provides temporary housing in

the form of travel trailers placed, in many cases, beside the resident's damaged home for use until the home can be repaired.

FEMA manages the program all the way until the trailer is installed in its final location. The Corps responsibilities lie in the final inspection, walk through with the tenant and the lease signing.

Most area residents and officials seem satisfied with the Corps actions.

When this is over, there will be two organizations that will be remembered for their service to the community, the Corps of Engineers and the power companies, a Beaumont, Texas, city official said at a recent city council meeting.

Sam Rayburn Lake a beacon of power for Jasper County, Texas

Edward Rivera
Pacesetter Staff

For a good part of the first day of October, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers contingent at the Federal Emergency Management Agency's Joint Field Office in Austin, Texas, was on the edge of their seats. Then came Oct. 2, and it was clear that there was a countdown under way. Phone calls were exchanged and the words "go, no-go" were common dialog that morning. The Corps wasn't about to launch a spacecraft; it was about to energize a county which had been without power since Hurricane Rita made landfall on the Texas Gulf Coast Sept. 24.

Once recovery operations were under way, a major dilemma was restoring power to some of the affected communities. After deliberating

with the local utility companies and local officials, it was decided the Corps would perform a "Black Start," from the Sam Rayburn Powerhouse, in order to restore electricity to parts of Jasper County.

"We normally get our transmission service from Entergy Power, but they were not able to restore service quick enough," said Mark Tamplin, director of engineering and planning for Jasper-Newton Electric Co-op. "We knew the Corps had fairly large units at Rayburn that would have enough capacity to get going until we could restore our normal lines."

According to Mike Carver, the powerhouse superintendent, the procedure had some elements of risk associated with it. "The Corps



Shift Operator Joe McMurrough manning the Control Room of Sam Rayburn Power Plant. (Photo courtesy of Sam Rayburn Project Office).

normally wouldn't attempt something like this, but due to the circumstances and the urgent need to get power to critical-need facilities, our commanders decided to just do it," said Carver.

The ominous sounding "black start" process generally involves the starting of a black start unit, diesel generator or combustion turbine, and supplying start-up power to a power plant along a given transmission path. As more power plants carry individual islands of customer loads, they are eventually connected and the power system becomes more stable.

"We had some overheating concerns, so we decided to load the generators lightly so as to have continuous operation and not have to shut down periodically to cool things down," said Tamplin.

This plan required careful

planning and coordination between the Jasper-Newton Electric Co-op, Entergy Power, Sam Rayburn Municipal Power Agency, Southwestern Power Administration and Corps team members at Sam Rayburn Reservoir.

The powerhouse, which is staffed 24 hours a day, is equipped with two generators each capable of transmitting 25 megawatts of power. The "black start" began on Oct. 2 at about 2 p.m. after the Corps received word that the line repair crews had restored power lines to the critical facilities. Within 30 minutes of being notified that the power lines were ready, the system "black start" was coordinated by the Jasper Newton Electric Cooperative and the Sam Rayburn Power Plant began charging the first section of power line.

See Black Start on page 24



The Powerhouse, which is staffed 24 hours a day, is equipped with two generators each capable of transmitting 25 megawatts of power. (Photo courtesy of Sam Rayburn Project Office).

Sam Rayburn Lake Project team both hurricane victims, responders

Edward Rivera
Pacesetter Staff

Amidst the Hurricane Rita recovery efforts, U. S. Army Corps of Engineers Fort Worth District members at the Sam Rayburn Lake Project Office had two main missions, one personal and one professional. As victims of the hurricane, their mission was to survive the storm and restore their lives to normal. As professionals, they made it a point to be there for those in need. One of their biggest contributions was helping restore power to Jasper County, Texas, but that was only a part of what the Project Office did in support of Hurricane Rita.

Victims themselves of the storm, they continued to show up for work to help their local communities as well as provide support to responders like the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department, the U.S. Forest Service and other Corps team members and missions.

In order to be ready to begin assistance operations as soon as the worst of the storm was over, TPWD game wardens and dispatchers were mobilized and deployed to several staging areas well before Hurricane Rita made landfall.

“The first wave of 54 officers from all across the state encamped at the Ebenezer Park Recreation Hall on Sam Rayburn Reservoir for a week,” said Mark Shaw, operations project manager for the Sam Rayburn-Town Bluff Project Office.

According to Shaw, their mission was to assist four county Sheriff offices in the affected area with humanitarian aid and law enforcement assistance, until relieved by a second wave of 54 officers who are currently on duty.

“Prior to the establishment of distribution centers for food, ice, and water, the officers’ main humanitarian



A view of the U.S. Forest Service with a base camp for about 600 firefighters in Mill Creek Park on Sam Rayburn Lake. (Photo courtesy of Sam Rayburn Project Office).

aid function was to make sure that the aforementioned three basic necessities reached the people in need,” said Shaw. “The game wardens’ law enforcement duties thus far have been to provide security and traffic control at gas stations, banks, and airports, and occasionally to provide escort duty for government officials.”

The Project Office also supported the U.S. Forest Service with a base camp for about 600 firefighters in Mill Creek Park on Sam Rayburn Lake. The firefighters were

able to assist the local electric cooperatives in clearing hurricane damage which allowed easier access to communities.

Not only did the Project Office help their community and other state and federal agencies, they were also a valuable asset to USACE missions. Shaw said approximately 50 Corps team members involved in various Rita recovery missions also stayed in the camp.

The Sam Rayburn Lake Project Office also served as a distribution point for

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Serving as a distribution point for the Federal Emergency Management Agency’s Blue Roof Program, Project members unloaded about 5,000 rolls of blue plastic Oct. 3 and awaited additional scheduled shipments. (Photo courtesy of Sam Rayburn Project Office).



A sunken barge on the Gulf Intracoastal Waterway at Bolivar.

Galveston District responds to Rita's damage on Texas waterways and navigational channels

Pacesetter Staff Report

On Sept. 24, Hurricane Rita came barreling in from the Gulf of Mexico, damaging the Texas and Louisiana coast -- the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Galveston District received the call and began assessing the damage that afternoon.

A flyover with the District Engineer and Commander of the Galveston District, Col. Steve Haustein and the U.S. Coast Guard to pinpoint debris and possible navigational hazards occurred also that afternoon.

"This helped us direct crews where to go to begin the side-scan surveying," said Joe Hrametz, Chief of Navigation, Galveston

District.

The district then began to survey federal channels for obstructions to navigation and shoaling in conjunction with US Coast Guard, port authorities and industry the next day. Such navigational channels and various waterways include the Houston Ship Channel, Gulf Intracoastal Waterway between Port O'Connor and the Louisiana border, Texas City Ship Channel, Sabine/Neches Ship Channel (Ports of Port Arthur, Beaumont and Orange), Galveston Ship Channel, Corpus Christi Ship Channel, Freeport Ship Channel, and Matagorda Ship Channel.

Inspection of coastal



Sabine Neches Waterway the afternoon after Hurricane Rita struck southeast Texas.

levee systems and the Galveston Seawall, for storm damage and integrity was also done.

"Along with six Corps survey boats, NOAA provided three, two from

Kirby Inland Marine, three contractor vessels and one Navy vessel to help. This was a massive surveying job," said Mike Kieslich, Chief of Operations Division, Galveston District.

It's going to be a *BLUE* holiday season

Corps receives over 27,000 "Right of Entry" applications for temporary roofs

Pacesetter Staff Report

Ten weeks after Hurricane Rita passed through southeastern Texas on September 24, nearly 27,000 homeowners interested in free temporary-roofing have signed the "Right of Entry" form necessary for the first step in the application process. Homeowners who suffered roof damage from Hurricane Rita were given the opportunity to sign up for Operation Blue Roof, a FEMA sponsored program free to all qualifying homeowners in the 22 county disaster area. The program provides for blue plastic sheeting to be installed over the storm damaged roofs of qualifying homes. Homeowners had to sign a "Right of Entry" form which gives the US Army Corps of Engineers, who are in charge of the temporary roofing program, the right to enter their property to qualify their roof for the program.

The Operation Blue Roof program is free to the homeowner. Home owners must remove any fallen trees from the roof and it must have less than fifty percent structural damage in order to qualify for the program.

At one point during the program, the Corps had 22 rights of entry collection sites within southeastern Texas. The right of entry collection sites were finally closed Nov. 26.

A new approach -- the U. S. Army Corps of Engineers hit the streets one weekend in October and went house to house in the badly damaged areas of Orange and Jefferson counties in order to make sure that all of the affected residents are aware of Operation Blue Roof. This operation ran for three days. By knocking on doors, the Corps hoped to reach those who had not yet signed up for the program. Dressed in the distinctive, red-knit shirt carrying the white logo of the Corps of Engineers and clearly marked "Emergency Operations", they were able to explain the program and gather the "Right of Entry" form, the first step in obtaining the temporary roofing. They did the first roof assessment of the home at that time.

"The house to house canvass is an unusual step for the Corps," said Col. Steve Haustein, commander of the Recovery Field Office in Beaumont. "We wanted to make sure that everyone eligible for help was aware and has the opportunity for the temporary roofing."

The program at this time is limited to homeowners. Businesses or other non-residential property do not qualify for the program.





A debris reduction site in Southeast Texas.

Corps contractors ramping up debris mission

Pacesetter Staff Report

“The mission timeline is based on results, not the calendar -- we will be here until we’ve removed all of the debris and the mission is over,” said Col. Steve Haustein, Galveston District Engineer and Commander, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers.

The Corps is handling debris removal in 14 counties; including San Augustine, Orange, Newton, Liberty, Polk, Nacogdoches, Jasper, Sabine, San Jacinto, Galveston, Jefferson, Hardin and Chambers. Corps contractors have already

completed Galveston county.

Debris removal, a FEMA mission assigned to the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, provides removal of trees and other materials from public property.

Currently, trees and wood debris left alongside the roadways, from public owned property are being gathered and hauled by Corps contractors to the debris site.

On-site the wood is fed into shredders and turned into shredded material, which can be beneficially used. It also includes materials manmade and of



Pile after pile of vegetative debris like this cloud the landscapes of surrounding communities in Beaumont.

natural origins, construction/ demolition – lumber, concrete, asphalt, masonry, metals and plastics and natural – vegetative – grass, shrubs, & trees and slide materials; clay, sand, gravel,

rock and earth.

As of Nov. 29, 2.77 million cubic yards had been gathered from surrounding areas. Debris removal is continuing.

USGS lend a helping hand by repairing roof

Marilyn Uhrich
Pacesetter Staff

After working seven days a week, twelve hours a day, for more than three weeks, a group from the United States Geological Service gave up their precious six hours of free time to lend a helping hand by repairing roof damage from Hurricane Rita.

Hurricane Rita had passed directly through the small town of Nederland, Texas, causing a huge tree to crash through the roof of a home belonging to Toby and Ruby Mahle. Ruby's identical twin, Ruthie, lives

next door and claims the tree was hers.

Actually the family had fell-to in Ruby's benefit and had gathered chain saws to attack the unfortunate tree.

By the time the operation Blue Roof crew from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers came to assess the roof for temporary roofing, the family had cleared the tree from the roof. Remnants of its thick trunk remained in the yard. But, the damage to the roof was too extensive for it to receive the temporary blue sheets of plastic that would have sealed it from the rain.

This crew happened to be made up of volunteers

from USGS working in southeastern Texas on Hurricane Rita recovery. Operation Blue Roof is a FEMA sponsored program, administered by the Corps, that puts, free of charge to the homeowner, temporary roofing in the form of blue plastic tarps over the leaking area of the roof.

The blue roof will last a few months until the homeowner and/or his insurance company can make arrangements for more permanent roofing. The USGS folks had to tell Ruby that her roof did not qualify for the program – it was too badly damaged. But, her plight worried

them. They went to a local lumber yard, Sutherland's Lumber, who donated the materials needed and on Sunday morning, were busy cutting and pounding as they got the roof back into a condition where the house would qualify for the temporary roofing.

All was completed by 1 p.m. when the crew had to report for its usual job, assessing roofs for Operation Blue Roof. There was one big benefit in addition to the satisfaction received from lending a helping hand – Ruby and Ruthie cooked up a big pot of gumbo and served them lunch.

Home Sweet Home: Corps assists FEMA with trailer inspections

The temporary housing mission provides temporary housing in the form of travel trailers placed, in many cases, beside the resident's damaged home for use until the home can be repaired. FEMA manages the program all the way until the trailer is installed in its final location.

The Corps responsibilities lie in the final inspection, walk through with the tenant and the lease signing. The program is just getting started; over 1,000 trailers have been installed and leased to local families in the Rita affected area.



As of Nov. 29, over a 1,000 trailers have been installed and leased to local families in the Rita affected area. FEMA is estimating over 2,000 trailers to be installed.

"I am among heroes, I couldn't be prouder."
- Brig. Gen. Jeffrey J. Dorko



The harding working employees of Operation Blue Roof.



Leo Sandoval, SWF, being interviewed.



Brent Little, SWD; Cassie Thompson, SWF, and Lynette Radcliffe, SWG.



Corps employees on a debris crews.



Mark Wolff, SAJ



Danny Wyatt, SWG



Alan Krapps and Paulette Wilson with Dept. of Interior



Jama Hatcher, SWL; Kathy Ray, SWL, Barbara Bazar, SWF and David Brown, SWG.



The "Blue Men" crew pose for the camera during a meeting.



Bob Richardson, SWG and another dedicated Corps member.



Tom Webb, SWF and Col. Steve Haustein, SWG.



Curtis Cole and Don Carelock, both with SWG.



Corps employees at morning meeting with Col. Haustein at the RFO.



Mike DeMasi, SWG cooks for the RFO's barbeque dinner in October.



Emily Siedel, SWF.



Chris Krause, SWF.



Lt. Col. Dudley Littleton, Reservist, with Rita.



Carl Pettijohn, SAJ.

Tulsa District establishes Emergency Field Office

Mary Beth Hudson
Louisiana Recovery Field Office

If the district's ranks seem a bit thin lately, blame it the hurricanes, particularly Rita. A visit to the Emergency Field Office-West in Lake Charles, La., is a visit to Tulsa District-Southeast.

Deployed employees are working long, arduous days cleaning up the western part of Louisiana devastated by the vicious storm. They are joined by employees from throughout the Corps and from other federal agencies for the massive recovery mission. The area is so damaged that more than two weeks after landfall, some residents are still unable to get back into their towns because water remains too deep to allow access.

FEMA has tasked the Corps with debris removal and, so far, 12 parishes have signed up for the program. The EFO-West is handling the work in some of the hardest-hit areas, the parishes of Beauregard, Jefferson Davis, Lafayette, Vermilion, Cameron, and Calcasieu, La.

When the unprecedented cleanup of the state is completed, estimates are that the total quantity of debris generated by both hurricanes will be more than 17,500,000 cubic yards – or enough to fill the Empire State Building 12 ½ times. EFO-West workers will handle almost two million cubic yards of that total.

They'll also be overseeing the installation of temporary "Blue Roofs" for residents fortunate enough to still have homes to roof. The temporary roofing program is off and running, and blue roofs are appearing throughout the area.

Col. Miroslav Kurka, temporarily standing in for Lt. Col. Brett Perry as commander of the EFO-West, said, "It is



As he waits to leave for a meeting of the Cameron Parish Police Jury, Col. Kurka speaks on his cell phone in front of one of the Deployable Tactical Operations Systems units. Police jury members are similar to county commissioners. At the meeting, the jury voted for the Corps to do debris removal from public roads and rights of way.

very inspiring to see so many people from different districts, different agencies, and different parts of the country working together seamlessly to help the people of southwestern Louisiana recover and rebuild their communities. We have a great Corps and a great federal workforce!"



On the road to Cameron -- This scene is typical on the drive to Cameraon, La. Much of the community was destroyed by Hurricane Rita. The Emergency Field Office - West, established by the Tulsa District, is responsible for debris removal in most several south-eastern Louisiana parishes.



Larry Flenniken, Information Management Officer, studies the communications challenges at EFO-West. The team has been working out of two Deployable Tactical Operations Systems in the parking lot while the building is readied. It's a big challenge, but Flenniken, whose last deployment was to Iraq, said, "This is just heaven – much better than I expected."



David Gade is serving as the NEPA Compliance Officer for the EFO-West debris removal mission. His team will evaluate potential burn areas and debris disposal sites to ensure they don't cover up archeological resources or damage wetlands.



Remaining a capable and ready work force

**Col. Miroslav Kurka
Commander, Tulsa District**

RELEVANT, READY, RESPONSIVE and RELIABLE – that is what we are, and we’ve proved that once again by our actions since Hurricanes Katrina and Rita have hit. As I write this column, we have 75 Tulsa District employees deployed in support of hurricane relief efforts in Mississippi, Louisiana, and Texas. This is down from a high last week of 89, and in addition to 11 folks deployed in Iraq and Afghanistan as part of the Global War on Terrorism. 86+ out of a 683 person district is quite an effort.

This attests to our RELEVANCE. We are a vital part of a massive effort to help the Gulf coast recover from the devastating effect of two Hurricanes. Our missions to restore emergency power, remove debris, provide temporary roofing, and help provide temporary housing and public facilities are key components of the overall federal, state, and local efforts. They are a visible and tangible reminder to the people of the Gulf coast that their countrymen and the Federal government stand with them, and that there is a better future to hope for. You can’t ask for a better example of relevance.

We are also READY. For the past six weeks, I have worked closely with Pete Navesky, Maj. Bob Corrales, and Kerri Stark – our emergency management crew. We have received countless requests for both individuals and teams. Our ability to fill these taskings on very short notice attests to our readiness. We have trained and ready emergency response teams and were able to expand and deploy these teams on very short notice. We also have a large number of folks who were ready to deploy on very short notice – and many did.

The best example of RESPONSIVENESS I can think of is our deployment of the river maintenance team with the “Mister Pat,” its barge and assorted equipment to the hurricane damaged region. Even before receiving an official USACE tasking, the river maintenance crew loaded pumps and generators onto trucks and trailers, conducted personal preparation, and drove to Little Rock to link-up with Little Rock District’s maintenance team. That team then deployed by road to New Orleans. While the “road” crew deployed via highway, the Mr. Pat with barge, crew, and equipment sailed to Arkansas, linked-up with the “Shorty Beard” and “Ted Cook” from Little Rock District, and then the entire McClellan-Kerr Arkansas River Navigation System flotilla sailed to New Orleans. In New Orleans, the combined Little Rock/Tulsa river maintenance team helped dewater New Orleans’ large pump houses (which in turn were used to dewater the city). The SWL/SWT also performed many other missions in support of relief efforts from both Hurricane Katrina and Rita.

Finally, our people are very RELIABLE. I had the opportunity to spend a week with some of the folks in Lake Charles, Louisiana, where Lt. Col. Perry is leading an Emergency Field Office that is providing emergency support to FEMA and the people of Southwest Louisiana. I was very impressed by the drive, the dedication, and the determination of all members, be they from Tulsa District or from other USACE Districts. Everyone was working together seamlessly to get the job done for the people of the hurricane ravaged region. We not only keep our commitments, we help FEMA and the President keep theirs.

After focusing on the hurricane mission and observing our people in action for the past six weeks, I am more convinced than ever that our RELEVANCE, READINESS, RESPONSIVENESS and RELIABILITY are the product of our expert, hard-working, and dedicated work force. All 683 members of this work force are serving in the Global War on Terrorism and the hurricane effort. Those who deployed are doing it in the most obvious way. Others are doing their part by working in the Emergency Operations Center or by providing technical reach-back support in the areas of contracting, engineering, and information management. Everyone else has had to shoulder a larger workload to make up for the 15 percent of the District that is not here due to deployments.

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers ethos of effort, dedication and devotion to the public service takes decades to build. We must be able to sustain it for the future – we cannot contract for it in private industry. It will be my task as District Commander to ensure these lessons from our hurricane relief effort are captured in the after action review. In our drive to be more efficient, we cannot afford to lose the capability to respond to the unknowns such as terrorist attacks and natural disasters that comes from an in-house dedicated, expert and flexible work force.

Thank you for your efforts. Please continue to focus on your mission and on those you serve, and to take care of yourselves and your people. Have a great Thanksgiving.

ESSAYONS!

Small Business & Sub Contractor Symposium Set

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers in Tulsa has scheduled a Pre-Proposal Conference and Small Business Symposium for December 1, 2005 at 9:30 a.m. CST, at Wichita Falls, Texas. The symposium will be held in conjunction with a Pre-Proposal Conference for an upcoming dormitory construction project at Sheppard AFB, Texas, and will be for the purpose of providing networking opportunities in the design/build industry and to encourage and enhance small business participation.

The Pre-Proposal Conference and Small Business Symposium will be held in the Texoma I & II Rooms at the Remington Hotel & Conference Center, located at 401 Broad Street, Wichita Falls, Texas. All interested prospective subcontractors and small business firms are encouraged to attend. The Pre-Proposal conference will familiarize those attending with the extent and nature of the project.

Prospective subcontractors and small businesses who plan to attend must register no later than November 22.

Registration information is available from Randy Bratcher, 918-669-7495.

What's Critical?

Mary Beth Hudson and Terry Holt
Louisiana Recovery Field Office

It's Stress Management

A U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Critical Incident Stress Management team arrived at the Louisiana Recovery Field Office recently to help employees cope with the unusual stressors of deployment and disaster recovery. The CISM program is designed to provide peer support and healthy life choices in response to stressful work environment incidents.

Gene Taylor, chief of Safety Office, said he requested the team due to concerns about the day-to-day stressors employees working the Louisiana recovery are facing. "It's the long hours, the long drives, the stressful atmosphere we're dealing with," he said. "My intent is to ensure we have the right people at the right time to help employees."

Terry Holt, CISM team leader, and his four-person team of peer supporters. They will provide "one-on-ones, pre-deployment education, and crises management briefings," he said. "Our expectation is that we will try to visit all the remote field offices often as well as maintain some presence at the RFO."

What is critical stress management? It is a process designed to lessen the overall impact of acute or cumulative stress and to accelerate recovery in people who are having normal reactions to abnormal events.

A critical incident is any situation faced by employees which causes them to experience unusually strong emotional reactions which may have the potential to interfere with their ability to function either immediately or post-event. Any incident, regardless of the type, may be defined as "critical" if unusually strong emotions are generated in the people involved, for example:

- High-impact recovery operation, exposure to grieving public
- Traumatic events including disasters
- Line of duty death or serious injury
- Employee suicide or unexpected death
- Significant events involving children
- Extended negative media exposure

What is a Critical Incident Stress Management Peer Support Team?

Your local CISM Team consists of U.S. Army Corps of Engineers employee volunteers trained in CISM interventions. The CISM Team provides information about critical incidents and stress reactions that employees can use to help identify healthy life choices. The team provides an atmosphere of concern and caring as well as identifying personal options for dealing with stress.



Maybe stress is being photographed with the nation's most powerful leaders.

On Oct. 9, former President George H.W. Bush visited Cameron, the most devastated town in southwest Louisiana, and FEMA asked the Corps of Engineers to attend as partners in the recovery effort. The President was escorted by Lt. Gen. Honore.

After the briefings President Bush shook hands with everyone involved in the effort. It was all over in 30 minutes and everyone enjoyed his friendliness.

Here, Bush (in the blue jacket) accompanied by Honore (left), board a vehicle while Tulsa employee Earl Groves (in red shirt) looks on. Groves is serving at the Emergency Field Office (West) at Lake Charles, Louisiana.

As a Member of the Debris Mission Team

Carolyn Niceley
Tulsa District

I worked in Hancock County, Mississippi, on the debris mission. I was amazed when I got there at the amount of total devastation and could not believe the news media seemed so focused on New Orleans when Mississippi took such a hard hit. The people I encountered lost everything including friends and family members yet still had hope and were all thankful to be alive.

Lunch time at the relief station in Pearlinton, Mississippi, was a great time to sit and listen to the many stories of survival from those who decided to brave it out, after all, they said, they had made it through Camille. Not one of those who stayed said they would ever do it again.

One woman spent the night in a tree top fighting off water moccasins who evidently wanted to seek refuge in the same tree she had clung to for her life.

A young single father of three loaded his small children, mother, neighbor and dogs into a small ski boat. The boat was

still hitched to its trailer and tied to an old pecan tree. Fortunately the rope held, the boat didn't flip and the shallow rooted tree held to the ground. The young man recalled squeamishly all the leeches that were climbing up the sides of the boat, and how the dog scrambled over his mothers back trying to make it to the boat before she did as they all swam for safety and their house quickly became submerged.

I met one particularly salty old fellow, a self-proclaimed pirate. He told how he decided it was time to head for one of his boats when the water at his front steps rose from knee high to hip high in a matter of minutes. He grabbed his personal identification and important papers, put them into a plastic bag and started pulling himself along the tree branches in an effort to reach his boat. He had a couple of hitch hikers on his shoulder, I can't remember what he called them but they are especially large water rats about the size of an otter. He said they hitched along

I saw this drum and needed to take the photograph for my husband "the drummer".



until they found something else to jump on. Everything and everyone was seeking a life raft that day.

Another fellow who managed to survive in the second story of his house recalled having to shoot a 15-foot alligator and several water moccasins that awaited him at the bottom of the stairs after the water went back down.

The 30-foot wall of water that was sucked out of the Pearl River found its way well into center of town leaving nothing but mud and destruction in its path. The water receded back into the river bank almost as quickly as it rose but not without leaving

behind the scars of lost lives, memories and belongings.

The most valuable lesson I've learned is that all people are good at heart. Whether they had little to begin with or much, they all displayed kindness, a willingness to help one another, a shared sense of oneness and a resolve to "get 'r" done. I appreciate the experience, as tragic as a disaster is, because it strengthens my faith in our amazing Creator, the power of His might and the beauty and diversity of the people He has placed here solely to love and care for one another.



The sign on the wall of a surviving house says it all, "Gotta have faith."



This house was in Pearlinton, Mississippi. Actually, it was found in the roadway in Pearlinton.

Corps campgrounds opened to displaced

Mary Beth Hudson
Pacesetter Staff

Shortly after Hurricane Katrina hit, the Corps of Engineers offered no-cost, short-term camping accommodations to evacuees. Parks at Lake Texoma hosted several evacuees, particularly following Hurricane Rita. About 20 stayed at Corps parks on the lake, while Eisenhower State Park provided spaces for 12 more.

Brad Kuykendall of Kingwood, Texas, was one such visitor. He arrived at Buncombe Creek Park about a week after Rita struck, having evacuated twice – the second time from the storm’s aftermath which included rolling blackouts and the lack of groceries.

Kuykendall, a retired engineer, said he had experienced enough – evacuation, the hurricane, a large oak tree being ripped from the ground where he was sheltering, and the loss of his cat “Baby.” He helped fellow evacuees while on the road and neighbors once he got home. There was lots of damage in the area, and he said store shelves were completely empty. When his power once again went out, he loaded up his camper and headed for Buncombe Creek, remembering friendly park attendants and a peaceful place to recoup.

Unaware of the no-cost camping offer, Kuykendall was touched and grateful. He said he planned to stay through the Columbus Holiday and then make his way home once again.



Brad Kuykendall of Kingwood, Texas, shares his evacuation story with a public affairs specialist following his arrival at Lake Texoma. He was surprised and moved by the Corps offer of no-cost camping.

Tulsa Commander lifts Lake Texoma shoreline permit moratorium

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers in Tulsa partially lifted the moratorium on the issuance of Shoreline Management Permits at Lake Texoma -- a moratorium that has been in place since November 2004.

The moratorium was partially lifted so that requests for permits received during the moratorium could be processed. New applications will be processed after those existing applications have been completed.

Shoreline Management permits cover a wide-range of activities including mowing and trimming of vegetation on government property and construction and placement of private boat docks on the lake.

The moratorium was initiated in November 2004 to allow for a 30-day public comment period concerning the anticipated update of the Lake Texoma Shoreline Management Plan (SMP). It was to remain in effect until the plan was reviewed and a revised SMP was approved. Due to the volume and nature of comments received, Tulsa District Commander Colonel Miroslav P. Kurka determined that a Supplement to the Final Environmental Impact Statement would be required before the SMP could be modified. That environmental study would take up to two years and cost \$1.5 million or more. Rather than

delay all applications, Kurka approved a partial lifting of the moratorium.

Under the partial lifting, the Corps of Engineers will allow changes to existing permits such as major repairs or additions to private docks and replacement of existing mooring buoys with single-slip docks. New boat dock permits may also be issued under the partial-lift guidelines. However, these actions will only be considered in coves that have existing private docks already in place. No changes or issuance of new permits will be considered in coves where no development exists or where only mooring buoys are presently in place.

Since the moratorium was initiated, waiting lists have been maintained by the Lake Texoma lake office. These applications will be addressed first and the Corps will begin to activate the process for new permits. Many of the lists are long and the process may take some time. The delay may be compounded by the deployment of Lake Texoma staff who are assigned to FEMA relief work in hurricane devastated areas.

Requests for shoreline permits may be mailed to the Texoma Lake Office, 351 Corps Road, Denison TX 75020. Questions on the shoreline management program may be addressed at 903-465-4990.

Chipping Away at Formerly Used Defense Sites

Former Advanced Twin Engine Flying School Investigation Concludes

On November 3, a public meeting was held to share the conclusions of completed Environmental Studies at the Fire Training Area, Former Advanced Twin Engine Flying School in Grandfield, Oklahoma. This area is a Formerly Used Defense Site.

The Fire Training Area at Grandfield is now part of the Grandfield Municipal Airport.

Throughout the investigation, Corps study managers involved the City of Grandfield, the Grandfield Municipal Airport, the Oklahoma Department of Environmental Quality (ODEQ), and the public in the process.

Investigations at the site began with the Corps performing a site visit in 1991. During the visit, it was determined that the Fire Training Area was a potentially contaminated site associated with DoD activities at the former school. Subsequent activities included a site inspection in 1996, a remedial investigation and feasibility study in 1999, a supplemental remedial investigation in 2000, and a human health and ecological risk assessment in 2005.

The goal of the final human health and ecological risk assessment was to determine if site contaminants pose an unacceptable risk to human health or the environment.

Future Actions

Based on the results of the risk assessment, it was concluded that no further action is required to address environmental impacts from the Fire Training Area associated with DoD activities. Further action to address arsenic in soil may be warranted. However, the locations where arsenic was detected in soil samples indicates the use of chemicals after DoD

vacated the site. The Corps of Engineers is not authorized to address non-DoD environmental impacts.

ODEQ has reviewed the Risk Assessment and report and provided concurrence with the conclusions.

Public Involvement

Public involvement is an important part of the FUDS program. Public involvement activities include public meetings, maintaining mailing lists and sending fact sheets and other information to members on the list, and making technical documents available to the public for review and comment.

Copies of documents related to the former Fire Training Area project are available at the Grandfield Public Library, 101 West Second Street.

Throughout the process, the public was encouraged to ask questions and make comments and their input became part of the public record. For more information about the former Fire Training Area, please contact Ms. Carol Wies (Tulsa District, CESWT-EC-ER).



Aerial photograph of the airport and investigation area.

In 1980, Federal legislation assigned responsibility for the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to perform environmental restoration activities at properties formerly controlled or used by the U.S. Department of Defense. The Formerly Used Defense Sites (FUDS) program involves thousands of sites throughout the United States.



The investigation site is at the current Grandfield Municipal Airport, 2 miles east of Grandfield, Oklahoma.

Employees commended for hurricane support

(Pacesetter Staff) -- Forty-three employees of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers' Little Rock District were recognized with certificates of appreciation Nov. 1 for their work in the Gulf Coast states to assist recovery efforts in the wakes of Hurricanes Katrina and Rita.

The Honorable John Paul Woodley, assistant secretary of the Army for civil works, was in Little Rock attending the National Waterways Conference and came to the ceremony to address the group before the awards were presented.

"I am so proud of the response as a whole that the Corps and Little Rock District in particular made to help our fellow Americans," Woodley said. "I'm grateful, and this country is grateful for everything you've done."

The award recipients were among 139 district employees who have deployed, mostly on 30-day rotations, to assist with temporary roofing, debris removal, temporary housing of storm victims and unwatering the city of New Orleans.

Each volunteered to go. Many have returned, while others are still there. The employees worked 12- to 16-hour days, seven days a week. All employees who take part in the recovery efforts will receive certificates.

Among missions Corps workers took part in were providing drinking water, helping restore navigation, providing temporary housing for storm victims, clearing debris, providing temporary roof repairs and unwatering the city of New Orleans.

Maj. Gen. Don T. Riley, the Corps' director of civil works in Washington, attended the ceremony and thanked the award recipients. He said their response to this disaster was evidence the Corps is "relevant, ready, reliable and responsive."

"It's an amazing benefit the Corps provides to the nation," Riley said.

Brig. Gen. Jeffrey J. Dorko, commander of the Corp's Southwestern Division in Dallas, also was on hand and added his praise.

"It was selfless service on the parts of all the individuals who went out the door when the call came," the division commander said. He pointed out how the whole Army team, both uniformed soldiers and civilian Army employees such as those with the Corps, worked together as one.

Col. Wally Walters, Little Rock District engineer, presented the certificates and noted that more than 20 percent of his district's 650 or so employees had deployed to assist, to include the Arkansas River maintenance fleet and a road convoy of equipment and personnel. After the ceremony, Terry James, park manager at the Corps' Toad Suck Ferry Field

Office in Conway, described some of his work in Baton Rouge, La., to help locate and contract temporary housing for displaced storm victims.

He said his team "looked for anything short of a closet that could house people." This included options that ranged from RV parks to mobile homes, from commercial buildings to former military installations and more. He said he volunteered as soon as Katrina hit because he felt a need.

"There are some things you just have to do," James said. "I slept in a tent the first week, but I didn't worry about it. I just kept thinking of those in the Superdome." He said he appreciated the chance to go and realized "take up the slack" while he was away.



Courtesy photo

Michael Johnson, a project manager in Little Rock District's regulatory division, was guest speaker at an Arbor Day ceremony at Little Rock Air Force Base on October 12. (From left to right) 1st. Lt. Shawn Christensen, 314th Civil Engineer Squadron; Col. Travis Balch, commander 189th Air National Guard ; Jacksonville Mayor Tommy Swaim; Col. Dave Watson, vice-commander 314th Air Lift Wing; Johnson and Jim Grant of the Arkansas Forestry Commission.



Hurricane Rita “What a Team”

Col. John R. Minahan
Commander, Fort Worth District



I have always been impressed with the folks in the Corps of Engineers. I have developed this respect through my years working at USACE, and as a customer. When I think of typical characteristics of Corps employees, I think of their technical competence, strong values, and responsibility as stewards of public trust. They tell it like it is and are willing to stand up and do the right thing which is not always popular with our customers. Most of my experience has been in military construction, civil works and operations. These areas are challenging, but there was a certain degree of comfort in terms of work space and routine hours. Most of these projects involved Corps people from one district who had worked years together on similar projects.

I always find the pride that districts have in being the best quite interesting and have observed this in many districts. Typically, these proud district members even caution customers or new district members

that they will not find the same quality of support from other districts. I am intrigued with the depth of pride people have in their districts, but I have found this same level of quality at all of our districts.

Hurricane Rita hit the Texas coast on September 24. The Fort Worth District was assigned the lead district for USACE recovery efforts. More than 16 districts responded. Words cannot express the pride I have for these men and women who worked incredibly long hours, drove long distances to their work sites, and lived in very austere conditions--in gymnasiums, in school classrooms (sometimes without running water or electricity). Many deployed with little more than 24 hours notice and responded quickly because they knew help was desperately needed. Some of these folks were on their first disaster response mission and had to learn their jobs as soon as they hit the ground. Certainly with disasters, the pressure is intense and the need to provide basic services

as quickly as possible to the folks who were hit hardest made a tough job even tougher.

During the recovery operations, I made a few observations:

1. The caliber and attitude of the people in the Corps stretches across district and division boundaries and the entire Corps of Engineers. Every district should take pride in knowing that this wonderful culture is not exclusive to a few districts – it is the common thread that binds us and makes us the strong Corps that we are.

2. Our Corps employees are more than just federal workers. The persistence, work ethic, and hardships you cheerfully endure remind me of our Soldiers in the field – the ultimate compliment. The warrior spirit endures in our Civilian workforce.

3. I was amazed at the cooperation and professionalism exhibited during these challenging times. The same traits I typically see in Fort Worth under normal conditions, I saw in the much more demand-

ing environment in east Texas.

4. Nobody complained and all handled their jobs with positive attitudes. I saw people run into challenges or get off track for a moment and get right back and continue on with their mission.

5. The Corps should take great pride in knowing the incredible service we provide to our citizens. We were certainly appreciated by those on the ground who needed help. As Teddy Roosevelt said, it is not the critic that counts, but the warrior in the pit trying to make a difference and there are many in the Corps who can be proud of the difference they have made.

My thanks, appreciation and respect goes out to all who answered our Nation’s call for Hurricane Rita response. Not only those who deployed, but those who worked long hours back in your home district to provide critical support to those down range. We have a great organization and great folks across the entire Corps.

Robson was the face of the Corps to City of Bridges, Texas

Clay Church
Pscsetter Staff

Most people do not normally worry about the internal workings of the plumbing in their city, but a hurricane can change the routine into a disaster. To Jerry Jones, the disaster never happened due to some very responsive Corps of Engineers employees, deployed to help in the Hurricane Rita recovery efforts.

“You guys really saved our backsides,” said Jones, Chief of Public Works for the City of Bridges. He was right, too, according to Charlie Robson, Chief of Internal Review for the Fort Worth District. Another couple

of hours and the streets of Bridges would have been flowing with what ever was in the almost full sanitary sewers at the time.

“It was amazing to watch the Corps members work as a team to offload, set up and get generators running so most of our 29 lift stations could have power and keep ‘that stuff’ off the streets,” said Jones. “They even came out every day and serviced them for us until power was restored.”

This was only a couple of days following the devastation wrought by Hurricane Rita on the small community

of Bridges in Orange County, Texas.

Robson was there to oversee the proper execution of contracts for the Corps and to monitor the job the quality assurance evaluators were accomplishing. He was also the recipient of a great amount of gratitude displayed by the people of Orange County.

“I was stopped more than once by people who recognized my U.S. Army



Charlie Robson

Corps of Engineers shirt, just so they could say ‘Thank You,’” said Robson. “At a gas stop on my way to Baton Rouge, the clerks would not let me pay for coffee.”

For Robson, it was rewarding

how often people expressed their appreciation for the Corps being there helping out however they could. Jones summed up his feelings by saying, “Give ‘em all a big thanks for us.”

Rayburn

Continued from Page 8

the Federal Emergency Management Agency Blue Roof Program.

“Project members unloaded about

5,000 rolls

of the blue plastic Oct. 3 and awaited additional scheduled shipments. Unloading of trucks was not new to the staff. One week earlier, they unloaded water, ice and meals that had arrived at the Jasper County pavilion on the lake,” said Shaw.

The supplies were on pallets but there were no personnel or equipment to unload it and local residents were arriving, he said.

“When the doors of the trailer were opened, it was discovered that much of the canned water had shifted off the pallets,” said Shaw.

He, along with Park

Rangers Jason Gramlich and Kiel Downing and Maintenance Worker Bobby Hadnot, responded by restacking the water and using a project forklift to unload the trailer. After three hours of steady work, the trailer was emptied and the supplies had been distributed.

“The Sam Rayburn-Town Bluff Project team members were victims themselves. We were without power, telephone, potable water, etc. at our homes. Several of our homes and outbuildings were damaged by fallen trees and the work required to clean up our property was extensive,” said Shaw. “However, our folks continued to report for work and perform recovery operations at the two lakes and power plants.”

Sam Rayburn-Town Bluff Project team members, like all the other Hurricane Rita victims continue to slowly recover from the storm, but their other priority is responding to their community and their Corps.

Black Start

Continued from Page 7

“We expected that some adjustments would need to be made along the way, but the Jasper-Newton Co-op had limited the jumpstart to only the most critical facilities so as not to overload the generator and to maintain the island’s stability,” explained Carver.

The generator was first used to charge the Mill Creek Substation near Jasper, then the Peachtree Substation, then the Union Substation, and was finally halted by a failed circuit switch at the Kirbyville Substation. At 11 a.m., Oct. 3, the Sam Rayburn Power Plant was carrying 1.7 million watts of load, powering the Jasper City Hall, Police Department, Sewage Treatment Plant, Super Wal-Mart, and Lowe’s and was expected to be further loaded as the power lines and switchmen were made available.

“Our goal was to focus on places that were critical to the recovery efforts,” said Tamplin. “This way, Jasper County residents could start getting back to their homes and begin the process of getting their lives back to normal.”

Designing for a deluge

Jeff Boutwell

Waco Lake Project Office

In this day and age of flat or declining budgets, it's a rare opportunity to basically start from scratch and rebuild a park from the ground up. This was the case for the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers at Waco Lake in Texas. This 9,000-acre flood-control project recently went through a seven-foot rise to its conservation pool evaluation at the request of the city of Waco. In order to become a regional water supplier to the area's growing population, the state of Texas required the city to increase the available water supply that it owned, hence increase the amount of water stored in Waco Lake. This increase flooded an additional 1,000 acres of park and wildlife habitat.

While the main purpose of the Waco Lake project is water conservation, new parks and recreation facilities would have to be designed and



The Waco Lake project's main purpose is water conservation, but new parks and recreation facilities also had to be designed and constructed. These facilities had to meet a specified budget and the expectations of campers, bikers, picnickers, boaters, swimmers, and fishermen. (Photos courtesy of Waco Lake Project Office).

constructed as well. These facilities would not only have to meet a specified budget but also would have to meet the demands

and expectations of campers, bikers, picnickers, boaters, swimmers, and fisherman.

"It was basically a once-in-a-career opportunity," says William Haferkamp, civil engineer technician in the Waco Lake office.

Planning for new facilities started in 1997 with the evaluation of the facilities and the development of cost estimates for their replacement. The cost of replacement came to \$5.4 million out of a total project price tag of \$31 million financed by the city of Waco.

The planning team then went about the process of developing plans for specific facilities and parks with the premise of not if they will be flooded but when. This team had considerable experience in watching park facilities be inundated and reacting to water and wave action. One of the team's primary goals was not only to design and construct facilities that would withstand getting wet and drying out with little damage but also to construct them to withstand wave action driven by the high winds common in Texas.



Plans were developed for specific facilities and parks with the expectation that they would experience flooding. A primary goal was to design and construct facilities that could handle getting wet and drying out with little damage in addition to withstanding the wave action driven high winds.

The location of facilities was one aspect of the design process. Two goals of the team had to be met: to give the users what they desired, to be as close to the water as possible; and, to minimize repair work necessary after a flood event. This was accomplished by setting a minimum elevation that all facilities would be constructed above. Using existing flood frequency charts—estimating how often a lake reaches a certain elevation—all new facilities were constructed at least 12 feet above the old pool elevation. Everything below the new pool elevation in the parks, trees included, was bulldozed.

Construction materials and methods for the facilities was another focus of the team. Experience had shown that shade shelters constructed of wood warped after they were inundated. The roofing decks want to float when submerged due to their buoyancy, adding pressure to the joist and support post. This along with strong wave action is enough to pull 4-inch-by-4-inch posts, both steel and wood, concreted three feet in the ground completely free.

Therefore, all new campsite and picnic shade shelters were constructed of 4-inch-by-4-inch-square steel tubing with welded joints. This enables the entire frame to act as one solid structure for added support and strength.

The roofing is 16-gauge sheet metal. This does not have any of the warping or buoyancy problems of wood and is relatively simple and inexpensive to replace or repair if damaged by wind or wave action. Construction costs were actually cheaper than that of wood framing and decking.

The design and the construction of restrooms were extremely important. The most expensive facilities in the parks, they have to be functional for the users and highly durable for maintenance and repair. Wood-frame construction of restrooms has the same problems previously mentioned. Rock or brick veneer exacerbate the damage by wave action due to it sloshing around between the veneer and the wood-frame walls, causing the veneer to collapse into the wood framing.

Quite by accident one day, the team found the solution rolling down Interstate 35 on the bed of a semi-tractor trailer:

precast concrete, modular restrooms. Water has no effect on the structure, and the design team has taken great care in the placement of the structures to shield them from open water and long wind fetches with the use of grassed berms and stands of trees.

Construction on most of the new facilities was completed in October 2003. Since that time, there have been five occasions when floodwater covered portions of the new areas, once with an 11-foot rise. On all of these occasions, there were no structural damages to any of the new facilities.

“The team worked extremely hard to come up with designs and plans that would fit into the budget all the while providing the general public with quality facilities,” Haferkamp says.

Jeff Boutwell is a recreation specialist for the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers in Texas. He is a graduate of Texas A&M University with a B.S. in recreation and parks and has been with the Corps for 18 years. He can be reached at jeff.t.boutwell@swf02.usace.army.mil.

Ordnance removal team takes monthly PDT honors

The Five Points Outlying Field Ordnance Removal Action Project Delivery Team was selected as the Fort Worth District September Team of the Month. The project, a joint PDT effort between HNC, SWF, and the contractor.

Field work for the ordnance removal action commenced on April 12 and was

completed, with the contractor demobilized, almost a month ahead of schedule.

The PDT faced numerous challenges in executing the project to include the fully built-up urban environment, the high visibility of the project by the public, other agencies, and the media and obtaining hundreds of rights of entry.

Perhaps the biggest measure of success is the fact that 262 bombs were removed from neighborhood areas, with 58 of the bombs considered to be live. The PDT members will be officially recognized at the next Team Recognition Ceremony, to be held December 2.

Fort Worth District

Permits, Environmental and Regulatory Division
**Tim Bohannon, William Crump, Wayne Elliott,
Debra Hildreth, Eric Kirwan, Dan McClendon,
Emily Seidel and Harmon Slappy**

Real Estate Division
**Brandi Betts, Misti Biondi, Blake Bryant,
Sylvia Cabello, Jean Dillon, Sandy Fitch,
Lillie Gilbeaux, Barbara Hastings, Clay Rickard,
Trista Schweitzer, Thurman Schweitzer and
Shirley Strickland**

Programs and Project Management Division
Janice Alexander, Debbie Castens, Irvin Davis,

Dwayne Ford, Randy Niebuhr, Pat Slutz and Brenda Smith

**Clay Church
Jane Holt-Duecaster
Leslie Guy
Beverly Johnson
Doris Steere**

Public Affairs Office
Office of Council
Contracting Office
Contracting Office
Resource Management

Other Districts

**Hank Counts
Mike Gooding
Mike Hunter**

St. Louis District
Hunstville District
Hunstville District



Col. Steve Haustein
Commander, Galveston District

Hurricane Rita

It's getting better every day

Greetings from Beaumont! It's no surprise that the focus of my column this edition is Hurricane Rita. I think most folks share my feelings that I never want to have to do this again. I'm proud of the way the district responded before and after the hurricane. While we are still engaged in the recovery effort, it's not too soon to take credit for some of our accomplishments and take note of some lessons learned.

I issued a District evacuation order Sept. 22 and most of you joined the great migration north.

The stories from that trek have been remarkable. Some of us reported for duty at the alternate emergency operation center at Addicks Project Office where we prepared for the storm, initiated the first response to restore navigation along the Texas coast and facilitate the reconstitution of the district.

The restoration of navigation went extremely well.

Most Texas channels were open with limited restrictions within 72 hours of landfall. The economic impact to the nation was significantly less than it could have been without the joint efforts of SWG, Coast Guard, NOAA and industry partners. The Sabine-Neches Waterway was the last channel to open six days after landfall. This was made possible by the heroic efforts of the crew of the *Vollert* who surveyed the off

shore reach of the channel in very high seas. The restoration of the district didn't go as well as I expected. We struggled to get accountability of all of our folks, before and after the storm. We need to work on that. What I need every employee to understand is that personnel accountability is essential in a disaster.

Ultimately that responsibility falls on the individual employee to contact their supervisor or a Corps office.

My hat is off to Col. Minahan and the Fort Worth District for taking lead district response in the disaster area while we were reconstituting. When I arrived in Beaumont to assume command of the Recovery Field Office, I found that the operation was already in full swing providing ice, water and emergency power to meet the immediate needs of the disaster area. Col. Minahan put together a team that satisfied the emergency response, and his team's effort did the Corps proud.

The mission focus has shifted now from emergency response to disaster recovery. The Corps delivered over 740 truckloads of ice and 909 truckloads of water to FEMA Points of Distribution following the storm. These missions are over. We now have the Blue Roof Temporary Roofing, Debris Removal and Temporary Housing missions that are in full swing. To date, we have completed over 20,000 of the

estimated 30,000 temporary roofs, removed over 2.77 million cubic yards of debris of the estimated 4.14 million cubic yards and installed over 1000 temporary housing units. The task is going well due to the dedication of USACE employees giving their best and making it happen.

"It's getting better every day!" -- that's the motto of the Recovery Field Office in Beaumont where we're executing the response mission following Hurricane Rita. There are Corps employees from 17 different districts among the 380 RFO staff. Additionally, we have a large contingent of 60 folks from the Department of Interior (USGS and Office of Surface Mining). This is regionalization at its finest. It has been a joy to watch the professionalism and caring attitude of the people here. The hours are long and the living conditions have been less than luxurious, but morale is high because the mission is rewarding.

The regular work of the Galveston District continues

on simultaneously with the disaster recovery effort. While 25 percent of the district is deployed, those left at their normal work locations are pulling extra weight to minimize the impact of Hurricane Rita to our FY06 program execution. These dedicated folks are the ones that are making sure that our focus is not lost on our responsibilities along the Texas Coast.

No doubt, hurricane season has had a significant impact on the district, Southwestern Division and the Corps of Engineers.

We will need to aggressively attack the FY06 program the rest of the year to reach our 100 percent execution target. I need the help of every employee to reach this goal. I know we will, and I thank you for your personal contribution and sacrifice in accomplishing both the disaster recovery mission and the FY 06 civil works program. I have never been more proud to be a member of Team Galveston.



Marilyn Uhrich

Col. Haustein talks with Sen. John Cornyn and FEMA Director, Phil Parr, on the power mission in Beaumont.

District hosts annual dredging conference

Pacesetter Staff Report

On Sept. 21, the Galveston District hosted its 2005 Dredging Conference.

The purpose of the conference was to present the FY 2006 and FY 2007 proposed dredging and planning schedules to various Federal and State agencies involved in the dredging program, as well as representatives of the dredging industry and local sponsors.

This year this district held its first annual Dredge Conference Golf Tournament at the Galveston Municipal Golf Course with much success.



Operation Manager Ben Boren gets ready to putt during the first dredge conference golf tournament.

Lending a helping hand with CFC

The Combined Federal Campaign is underway and your contributions are more important than ever with the unprecedented disasters in the Gulf states. This year's goal of \$29,000.

Office Coordinators is Pat Agee for Programs & Project Management/Exec Office; Lisa Johnson for Engineering; Maria Green for Planning; Ryan Fordyce for Regulatory, Grace Procter for Operations; Lile Henkel for Real Estate; Tencha Deckard for Office of Counsel; Pat Salinas for Logistics; Carol Nelson for Contracting; Dan Wyatt for Safety and Johnnie Simmons for Resource Management Office.

Rep. Cuellar and Corps announce funding for Colonias

Pacesetter Staff Report

Over 30 residents attended a joint media event with Rep. Henry Cuellar (TX-28) and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Galveston District in the community of La Presa, Oct. 31 and announced funding in the amount of 250k made available by the Corps to continue contracting for plating, road design, and water supply in the La Presa Colonia.

Corps Project manager, Byron Williams and public affairs officer, Michele Thomas were attendance, along with Webb County Engineer, Tomas Rodriguez, and Secretary of State Liason, Jorge Negrete.



Corps Project Manager, Byron Williams, Rep. Henry Cuellar (TX-28), Secretary of the State Liason, Jorge Negrete, and Webb County Engineer, Tomas Rodriguez talking to members of the community of La Presa.



Bill Krampe demonstrates his sand bag design, as Ranger Ken McDonald looks on.

Thinking outside the *bag* literally

Kristine Brown
Houston Project Office

Emergencies and water can trigger flooding that can't be contained with normal defenses. Some of our worst nightmares are the 50- or 100-year storms and the dreaded hurricane season.

While sandbags are the first line of defense against unexpected fast-rising water, they can take time to fill and be awkward to transport.

But, according to Bill Krampe, a hard working, dedicated employee located at Houston's Addicks Project Office, "it doesn't have to be this way."

His latest creative invention is called the "triple action sandbagging

loading chute." He admits that it is very economical, costing \$10.00 for screws and 12 man hours, more efficient, and easy to transport.

Park Ranger Kenneth McDonald notes that Bill's redesign of the old single sandbag loader is definitely an improvement.

The catalyst for Bill's redesign of the sand bag loader was prompted by Hurricane Rita's storm winds and rain that adversely impacted Lake Livingston's 2 1/2-mile-long earthen dam.

A conference call, between the Trinity River Authority, owner and operator of the dam, and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Fort Worth and Galveston Districts, led

to a request for sandbags. The Galveston District Alternate Emergency Operation Center, located in Houston at the Addicks Project Office, was tasked to provide and deliver sand bags to the sight.

Project Manager Richard Long directed Bill, along with his trusty front-end loader, in loading two crates of sand bags and a single chute sandbag loader (hand made back in the 1970s) onto a trailer. McDonald and Andy Williams, Regulatory, were assigned the task to deliver the valuable cargo to Lake Livingston's seriously damaged dam.

Exactly one week later, in the heated confines of the project garage, Bill began the process of redesigning

the single chute sand bag loader. He is most proud of the fact that his new design utilizes (on-hand) recycled project building materials "it minimizes project costs and increases productivity."

Bill's triple action sand bagging loading chute is 6'4" long x 24" wide x 35" tall and weighs less than 100lbs.

The desk sized device has three asymmetrical hoppers to keep the individuals bagging away from the individuals shoveling or the loader bucket."

The asymmetrical design is a safety feature, not normally found on baggers of this type. The entire process requires 6 individuals, 2 individuals per chute to fill 3 bags at one time.

The recycled materials he used to construct the sand bagger, are one 2"x4", one 2"x2", one 1"x4", and two builder advertising signs, removed from encroachments on Corps property.

Bill's redesigned triple action sandbagging loading chute is ready and available to assist regional teams' battling a critical flooding situation within the Houston-Galveston region.

Emergency workers and volunteers will be able to fill more sandbags in a couple of minutes—a fraction of the time it usually takes for hand-shoveling wet or dry sand one bag at a time.

Pacesetter Points

Baby on Board

Tina Ybarra and *Jacob Wilson* are the proud parents of *Soleil Elena Wilson*, who was born Sept. 9. Tina works in the information management office for *Galveston District*.

HR News

Southwestern Division welcomes *Ronn Brock*, Civil Engineer, Programs Support Division, Programs Directorate, Oct. 30; and *Dan Plugge*, Geologist, Military Integration Division, Brownfields Program, Programs Directorate, duty station Oklahoma City, Oct. 30.

Congratulations to *Lee Conley*, Civil Engineer, on his promotion to GS-14, Business Technical Division, Regional Business Directorate, *Southwestern Division*, Oct. 2.

Dr. Jeff Waters, planning lead for the *Galveston District* will be joining the

ERDC team as a research physical scientist. Dr. Waters' last day with the district will be Nov. 22.

In Sympathy

Lillie Orr, the mother of Colorado River Locks Maintenance Mechanic *David (Paul) Orr*, passed away the morning of Nov. 7. Please keep Paul and his family in your prayers as they go thru this very difficult period. Funeral services were held in Bay City, Texas.

Mike Bragg's mother-in-law passed away Nov. 5. Funeral services were held at the Saint Theresa Little Flower Church in San Antonio. Mike is a project manager for the *Galveston District*.

The son of *Galveston District* retiree, *Cleta Powers, Wayne Powers*, passed away Nov. 6 after suffering a heart attack. Funeral services were held in Dickinson, Texas.

Bonnie Ray Cannon, a retired core driller of *Galveston District* when the District had a soils laboratory and core drill crews, passed away Nov. 5.

Elijio Garza, Jr's mother, *Mrs. Teresa Garza*, passed away Oct. 30. Funeral services were held at the Santa Rosa De Lima Church in Benavides, Texas. Elijio is the project engineer for the *Galveston District's* Southern Area Office.

Darrell Johnson's, Northern Area Office, *Galveston District*, grandmother, Bettye Sachtleben, passed away on Oct. 14 in Yorktown, Texas. She passed away after a lengthy battle with cancer. Funeral services were held at St. Paul Lutheran Church in Yorktown.

Robert Lubbering, a retired *Galveston District* Party Chief to Survey Crew of the Port Arthur Project

Office, passed away on Friday, Oct. 14. Lubbering evacuated from his residence in Bridge City, Texas during Hurricane Rita and was hospitalized due to complications and was unable to recover. Please keep your thoughts and prayers with his family at this difficult time.

Arthur A. San Miguel, who retired in 1973 as the *Galveston District's* Mechanical Engineer, passed away Oct. 14.

Erwin Dean "Coop" Cooper who retired in 1986 as Chief, Real Estate Division for the *Galveston District*, passed away Oct. 14.

Wanda Hollman's grandmother passed away the morning Oct. 11. Wanda is the commander's secretary, *Galveston District*.

