



US Army Corps
of Engineers®
New Orleans District

Riverside

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September - October 2004

*"Operation Blue Roof" missions
in Florida, Alabama and Georgia*
Hurricane emergency support

Category 5 protection study

Engineering promotions

Promotions

Engineering promotions fill nine seats

By Jennifer Nall



Louis Danflous is the new chief of Civil Branch. He started with the district in 1969, and was promoted from deputy chief of Civil Branch. "I will be doing less performance appraisals," he says, "and I expect to be more involved with our business processes, making sure the Civil Branch team provides

cost effective and quality products on schedule, and interfaces more with our sponsors and stakeholders. I also want to ensure that challenging work is available for the branch and that team members enjoy their work." Danflous enjoys golf and relaxing on weekends in Poplarville, Miss. He has been married for 35 years and has two children.

Tom Hassenboehler is the new chief of Structural Design Branch, promoted from lead structural engineer. He has been with the district 34 years, including six years as chief of General



Engineering Branch. "I want to challenge our people to continuously improve in the quality and technical excellence of the services and projects we provide," he says. "We must have an organization that is flexible and can adapt to future trends in engineering. If we don't, others will. We need to strive for development of all our people and especially our future leaders, while making sure there's balance in our work which includes having fun." Outside of the office, Hassenboehler enjoys golf, walking, traveling and spending time with his family. He is married with two children.

Mike Dupuy is the new Design Services Branch assistant chief, promoted from the Project Engineering Section. He has been with the district 29 years. He'll help run the day-to-day operation of the branch, he says, and reorganize some of the sections. In his free time, Dupuy enjoys volleyball, working on the computer and studying the stock market. He has been married 29 years and has three children.



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Contractors install a "Blue Roof" on a Florida home damaged by Hurricane Ivan.

Pensacola News Journal



Harley Winer is the new chief of the Coastal Engineering Section. He has been with the district 12 years. His responsibilities include determining stream gage, waves and currents data on projects. One of his goals, he says, is to increase and improve the training and education of the workforce. In his free time, Winer enjoys

swimming and playing the flute and saxophone. He has been married almost 16 years and has two children.

Also promoted were:

Daryl Bonura, to lead structural engineer. **Gary Hawkins**, to chief of Design Services Branch.

Mark Gonski, to lead structural engineer. **John Grieshaber**, to assistant chief of Engineering.



Richard Pinner is the new Structure Foundation Section chief, promoted from within the Geotechnical Branch. He has been with the district over 20 years. He'll be supervising geotechnical engineers and LCA projects. "I have an open door policy," he says. "I want employees to know I'm willing to assist

them." Pinner likes to exercise, fish, do home repairs and work on his vehicles. His is married with two daughters.



Susan Jackson



Corps volunteers spent two weekends in October repairing the house of Curtis Luket at 1825 Ogden Street as part of Rebuilding Together, a neighborhood revitalization program of the Preservation Resource Center. The program pays for repairs for eligible low-income elderly and/or disabled homeowners in targeted neighborhoods. This is the seventh year Corps volunteers have participated.

Volunteers were: *Helois Alphonse, John Breerwood (son of Greg Breerwood), Larry Dressler, Albert Favolora, Jim Gately, Mike Gately, Susan Jackson, Steve Keen, Todd Klock, Linda Labure, Kim LeSaicherre, Leslie Lombard, Marti and Joe Lucore, Anna Penna, Charlie Rome, Marco Rosamano, Alan Schulz, Jan Sutton, Frank Vojkovich, Stuart Waits, Elizabeth White and Harley Winer.* UNO ASCE students: *Kimberlee Benson, John David Bruce, Gavin Gillen and Mark Middleton.*

Old plans revived for Category 5 hurricane protection

By Eric Lincoln

Engineering and Project Management are determining costs for a hurricane protection feasibility study that could lead to a project to protect southeast Louisiana from Category 5 hurricane storm surges.

One of four alternatives to be investigated will include blocking tidal surges at the Rigolets and Chef Menteur Pass. The concept was part of the original Lake Pontchartrain and Vicinity Hurricane Protection project.

In 1977, plans for hurricane protection structures at the Rigolets and Chef Menteur Pass were sunk when environmental groups sued the district. They believed that the environmental impact statement did not adequately address several potential problems, including impacts on Lake Pontchartrain's ecosystem and damage to wetlands.

Ultimately, an agreement between the parties resulted in a consent decree to



Lane Lefort

“The point is to eliminate that storm surge threat with one of these plans.”

Al Naomi, senior project manager

forego the structures at the Rigolets and Chef Menteur Pass. Instead, a “high-level plan” resulted, amounting to construction of a levee system around St. Bernard, Orleans, East Jefferson and St. Charles parishes.

The new initial feasibility study will look at protecting the area between the Pearl River and Mississippi River from a Category 5 storm. Subsequent studies will look at the area between the Mississippi River and Morgan City.

Four alternatives that would be studied in the initial feasibility report are:

- Construction of floodgate structures, with environmental modifications, at Rigolets and Chef Pass, along with levees extending from high ground on the

north shore to the Mississippi River.

- Raising existing levees for greater protection.

- Construction of a gated structure and new parallel span to the existing I-10 twin spans to Slidell. The additional lanes could be used for evacuations and, during normal days, alternating traffic-flow during the morning and evening to aid Slidell commuters. This structure would include higher levees extending to high ground on the north shore and to the Mississippi River.

- Raising all existing levees except those in the Inner Harbor area. A structure at Seabrook and a navigation gate at the Mississippi River-Gulf Outlet (MRGO)/ Gulf Intracoastal Waterway (GIWW) would close off the Inner Harbor area when storms threaten.

The impacts of coastal restoration projects will also be included as part the studies.

“Simply restoring the coastal wetlands and barrier islands will probably not be sufficient to protect the city from a Category 5 event,” said Al Naomi, senior project manager, “but it could reduce the surge elevations and result in cost savings to the Category 5 project.

“I hope that one of these alternatives will prove feasible and will be constructed. We would then have the only Category 5 protection system in the

country.”

With that system in place, says Naomi, it would make sense to build shelters and other buildings to withstand Category 5 winds. Right now, few if any buildings in the city are capable of surviving a strong storm, and if they did, the water from the storm surge might finish them off.

“The new convention center or Saints stadium could be constructed to these standards, with electrical generators and other emergency equipment built in at a relatively small initial cost. Including the upgraded levees, we’re talking maybe \$2 billion for a system that would protect the city.

“Compare that to damages from the storm, which

could be as much as \$100 billion, and 100,000 lives lost.

“A Category 5 hurricane hitting the city may be a once-in-a-500-year event . . . A Category 3 like Hurricane Betsy in 1965, or less, is more likely, and the existing levee system should be able to handle a storm like that.

“But there are no guarantees. One failure or overtopping of a levee could be catastrophic.

“The point is to eliminate that storm surge threat with one of these plans. Then we can build stronger buildings and stay in local shelters with the Red Cross, instead of spending eight hours in traffic trying to leave.

“The philosophy of what we do during a hurricane would change. We could spend more time protecting

our homes and less time trying to get out of the city in these desperate evacuations.”

The cost estimate for the study will be discussed with the state Department of Transportation and Development (DOTD), the local sponsor, before being submitted to headquarters for funding. Right now, there is no money for the study in FY05, even though it is one of the most vital for a city threatened more every hurricane season by a potential Category 5 storm.

With federal funding, a cost sharing agreement could be arranged with DOTD, and the feasibility study could proceed, taking about five years to complete, with another 10 to 20 years for construction.

Emergency bunker ready for Ivan

By Eric Lincoln

For emergency operations employees who stayed behind during Hurricane Ivan, it was nice to know they had a safe haven to run to if things got rough.

As it turned out, the district's new “hardened structure” was used only for a good night's rest for three employees who stayed at the district overnight.

But the bunker is fully stocked with supplies and ready to be utilized to its capacity during the next big storm.

The steel-walled shelter, completed in September, is similar to those used in embassies in “hot” areas to provide protection from small explosives. It is strong enough to withstand a Category 5 hurricane, says Michael Lowe, chief, Readiness Branch.

It took one year to have the bunker fabricated offsite. It was transported to the district in sections, then assembled in the warehouse at the south side of the reservation, the most practicable space available.

The bunker is only for use during an emergency. It will shelter up to nine workers for five days.



“The biggest issue for any tenants might just be adjusting to the cramped facilities until the hurricane blows over,” says Lowe. “It’s sort of like living in a submarine.”

Inside is a bathroom with shower, washer and dryer, work area with televisions, nine bunk-beds and a fully-equipped kitchen. An emergency generator is separated by a small hallway from the main room.

The time to utilize the bunker is a judgment call, says Lowe.

“The wind factor is critical. Emergency employees will have to get from the main building to the bunker, and they don’t want to try that while debris is flying through the air.

“Communication with the outside would be difficult during a storm. It’s mainly for shelter, to allow our mission critical employees to ride out the hurricane.”

One of the bunker’s thick steel doors leads to a tightly arranged room of bunk beds.

Relief work setting records Deployed volunteers pull together for hurricane recovery

By Eric Lincoln and Susan Jackson

Providing support for hurricane relief work in Florida and Alabama is proving to be “beyond tough,” says deployed member Hebert Wagner, Readiness Branch.

“We’ve been through Charley, Frances, then Ivan ... we hunkered down for that, and now we have Jeanne to contend with. It’s unlike anything I’ve ever seen. This is probably one of the biggest disaster events the Corps has undertaken.”

Corps teams have been working in Florida, Alabama and Georgia for eight weeks for Charley, Francis and Ivan, and are now responding to Jeanne, their fourth hurricane. The Corps’ effort is, as are the hurricanes themselves, unprecedented.

Wagner is one of the Emergency Support Function assistant team leaders responsible for coordinating taskings from the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), including the ice, water, power, housing and debris missions, and “Operation Blue Roof,” buying and distributing blue tarps to cover damaged roofs.

The tarp program provides homeowners with a temporary fix until a contractor can permanently repair roof damages. Over 560,000 tarps have been ordered so far just for Florida. Cost for the tarps covering homes in both Alabama and Florida is close to \$7.5 million.

Proclamation of Appreciation

The mayor of Sebastian, Fl., issued a Proclamation of Appreciation to the Corps for succeeding with “Operation Blue Roof.”

An excerpt reads: “We have found (Corps members) to be compassionate, genuine and hard-

working and we wish to thank them for the example they set for all who have had the pleasure of working with them. They are a true example of good government.

“We commend the members of the Corps who have assisted this city and given its residents hope.”

The approval is hard-earned for members of the support teams.

“This is probably one of the biggest disaster events the Corps has undertaken.”

*Hebert Wagner, Readiness Branch
deployed to Florida*

“The truth is, we’re smashed to the wall,” said Wagner. “We’re working the FEMA mission, and we have team leaders out here running roofing crews day and night. We set up help centers at strategic locations

in the area, and we’re giving home inspections and quality and cost estimates.

“It’s stressful. We have 15,000 people we’re trying to take care of right now. We’re just trying to get back up and running ... The citizens don’t have time to recoup.

Honestly, they’re all doing a good job of keeping their spirits up. It’s hard to fathom what they’ve gone through.”

“We’re getting it under control, though” says Wagner. “As long as there are no more hurricanes, we should be able to wrap it up in a couple of months. The teams on the ground are putting in a lot of hours.”

Alabama relief work

Emergency Management Team members, working hand-in-hand with FEMA, had already made their way to Alabama within 48 hours after Hurricane Ivan struck on Sept. 16.

Contractors working with the Federal Emergency Management Agency and the Corps install an “Operation Blue Roof” tarp on a damaged Florida home.



Persepolis News Journal

They aided in delivering over 15 million pounds of ice and 1.5 million gallons of bottled water to needy areas. Corps contractors were dispatched to install emergency power generators in public facilities like hospitals, emergency shelters and water treatment plants, supplying emergency power for two weeks until electricity was restored across the state. As power returned, the generators were de-installed, serviced, and moved on to Florida and Georgia where they were still needed.

Meanwhile, debris teams coordinated the clearing of roads, emergency facilities and other public access areas of an estimated 3.5 million cubic yards of debris in Mobile and Escambia counties. In the first two weeks, teams collected nearly 500,000 cubic yards of debris—about 14,000 dump truck loads.

Joaquin Mujica, debris action officer, Operations, helped spearhead missions in Alabama.

“It’s a learning experience every single day,” he said. “It’s vital that the Corps coordinate with FEMA, state, county and municipality officials ... everyone has to agree on what steps need to be taken, and no single agency can do it alone.”

The Alabama debris team is actually two teams working together: Louisville District provides environmental, real estate and contracting expertise, while New Orleans District provides quality assurance and oversees debris mission execution.

Gene Taylor, chief of Safety, Security and Health, recognized the hazards that could injure people: downed trees and electrical wires, debris filled roadways, damaged structures and water-related threats, to name a few. Taylor and his team ensured the best safety measures were planned and executed.

The Ivan-Alabama team also provided “blue roof” tarps for residents and distributed over 46,000 tarps to county emergency management centers across the state.

Going into the third week of the Ivan-Alabama mission, with over 400 homes completely destroyed and

another 1,200 uninhabitable, FEMA tasked the Corps to inspect possible travel trailer sites and potential staging areas for trailers. The travel trailers will be used as a short-term solution to housing shortages in the hardest hit areas.

Volunteers still needed

Approximately 72 people have deployed from the district so far. Quality assurance and debris team volunteers from New Orleans are still needed, says Jim Walters, Catastrophic Disaster Manager in the Emergency Operations Center (EOC).

Training is provided to volunteers who don’t have experience.

“The Corps role during an emergency is not to do the physical labor, it’s to manage those doing the physical labor,” Walters explained. “We supervise to make sure it’s done right.”

Walters notes that support to the EOC goes beyond what is seen in the field.

“Every office has a hand in it—Engineering, Human Resources, Operations, Public Affairs, Construction, Real Estate, everyone. For instance, we have ‘pre-dec’ and ‘post-dec’ funds that have to be entirely shifted before and after the president declares an emergency. It’s an incredibly complex process. We couldn’t do it without Resource Management’s help.

“These are the ‘hidden investors’ supporting emergency operations, enabling us to do the job we do, so the people who need assistance get it.”

For more information about volunteering, contact Walters, Michael Lowe, Jim Perry or John Agan at x2358.



Susan Jackson, Public Affairs, right, stands with a co-worker near a damaged house and a swimming pool displaced by Hurricane Ivan in Alabama.

Courtesy Photo

Self-development “360” tells you about yourself

By Eric Lincoln

The 360 self-development program, first introduced four years ago but never implemented, has returned and is about to make its debut for the district.

The program, championed in 1999 by Robert Tilsdale, then chief of Project Management, never took off for several reasons. But about eight months ago, Maj. Gen. Don Riley, former division commander, reintroduced the idea, saying that MVD needs to begin using the 360 program soon.

Col. Peter Rowan, commander, directed the 360 program team, made up of representatives from various offices, to have the program implemented in October.

“The district decided that rather than wait for the directive, we would start now,” said Chris Gilmore, project manager and program committee member.

A team of employees from Project Management, Construction and Resource Management—the first

offices that will use it—are helping with coordination, and the pilot is being reviewed by a steering committee.

The program works by peer review:

- ❑ You pick 15 people (this number may vary) from different categories who you want to appraise your performance. Depending on your grade level, guidelines determine who can be an appraiser.

- ❑ A supervisor approves your

“This program is purely a self-development tool, for personal review,” says Chris Gilmore, program committee member.

choices, and an anonymous computer survey is sent to the group. Once a questionnaire is sent, it should take two to three weeks for responses to come in.

- ❑ The survey returns a consolidated report to you, and you use the report to determine what changes to consider in your performance.

There’s also a section that allows you to answer questions about yourself, to see how your answers compare with others.

Emails with instructions for completing the survey will be sent to employees in October, and the pilot program should be underway by mid-November.

For now, says Gilmore, “This program is purely a self-development tool, for personal review. It is not tied to performance appraisals.

“Hunsville District tied it to appraisals, but without a pilot phase to introduce it, and they went through some headaches. We want everyone to get comfortable with it now, in the event that it may be used for performance appraisals.”

It is currently used for GS-13 and above job selections at some districts, including New Orleans. It will soon be required for all MVD

employees GS-13 and above for job selections, and voluntary for everyone else.

Mark Wingate, senior project manager and program committee member, agreed that, “Eventually, the program could be tied to performance

See **FEEDBACK**, page 10

District hosts Retiree Day, Nov. 9

The New Orleans District is hosting a Retiree Day Tuesday, Nov. 9, at the district. Col. Peter Rowan invites retired employees to visit and hear about current events within the Corps and to share their ideas and expertise.

The event begins at 10 a.m. with short briefings on current projects, followed by a pay-as-you-go luncheon. After lunch, retirees are invited to visit their former offices for informal discussions. One purpose of these visits is to solicit retirees’ insight and expertise, and to share experiences with current employees.

Col. Rowan believes employees can learn a great deal from retirees’ institutional knowledge. “There

probably isn’t anything we’re facing today that these retirees haven’t faced before--and overcome. There’s a lot we, especially our young folks, can learn from them.”

Col. Rowan hopes retirees will consider forming a mentoring partnership that continues throughout the year, culminating in an annual Retiree Day.

Persons interested in attending Retiree Day must RSVP no later than Nov. 3. Family members may attend also. The lunch buffet is \$8 per person, or pay-as-you-go in the cafeteria. Please call (504) 862-2201 for reservations.

In their comfort zones

By Keisha McGee

On one Friday afternoon, I decided to take a walk at the district to find any cubicle that caught my eye. I wanted to know what items employees use to feel more comfortable in their workspace.

John Bivona, Engineering, has decorated his cubicle with miniature construction toys and baseball figures. Bivona, a cost-engineer,

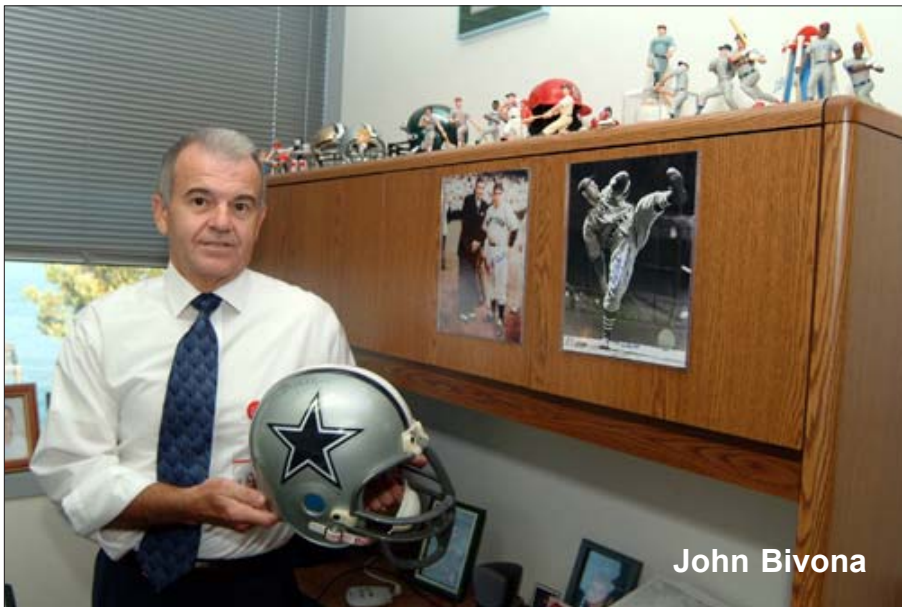
says he uses the small cranes, dozers, draglines and excavators to assist others, particularly young engineers and Project Managers, in visualizing job-site construction practices.

Christie Nunez, Engineering, has LSU paraphernalia through every inch of her cube. “Once you step foot in Tiger Stadium, hear the band and feel the excitement of the

crowd, you’re hooked on LSU,” she says.

It looks like employees prefer to surround themselves with things that are familiar so they are more comfortable in their job. Some turn their cubicle into a home-away-from-home.

Mark Huber, Engineering, has an area rug on the floor and two chairs. A few years ago, Huber was informed by the Safety Office that his cubicle was a fire hazard and he needed to clean it up. The result is his cubicle today, which reminds one of a living room area.



John Bivona



Mark Huber



Christie Nunez

Which brings me to Mike Murphree, Information Management, who is known as a collector of all things. Murphree has any and everything inside his cubicle: computer mouse balls, collectable cars, cartoons, computer gadgets, you name it. And he has something new every month.

All photos, Lane Lefort



Eric Lincoln

WHOLE LOT OF SPLASHING GOING ON—Maintenance of the Mississippi River’s underwater bank is a constant need along hundreds and hundreds of miles. It includes the laying of revetment—concrete slabs linked by steel cables—and placement of rock. Usually, only a few district employees see it happening. Now it’s our turn. We’ve all had a front row seat lately as the Choctaw Transportation Co. places rock in front of the district headquarters.

Operations

EMERGENCY DREDGING -- Three dredges were dispatched in late September to begin restoring the Mississippi River-Gulf Outlet (MRGO), reduced from 36-feet to 24-feet from shoaling caused by Hurricane Ivan. A Coast Guard order stops deepwater ships and shallow-draft traffic, such as offshore-oil craft, fishing boats, towboats and barges, from using the channel while aids to navigation are being repaired. Deep-draft ships should be allowed through by late October, but further restoration will require months. The emergency dredging costs are expected to be about \$17 million.

BONNET CARRE VOLUNTEERS -- A group of volunteers helped with trail maintenance, trash pick up and removal of invasive plants from fishing ponds in the Bonnet Carré Spillway Oct. 16 as part of a rescheduled National Public Lands Day. National Public Lands Day is America’s largest annual

grassroots volunteer event, giving volunteers an opportunity to improve and preserve public natural resources such as national parks, wildlife refuges, forests and grasslands.

Project Management

BAYOU SORREL LOCK RECOMMENDED -- The Mississippi River Commission (MRC) voted unanimously to recommend implementation of the \$88.5 million Bayou Sorrel Lock Replacement Project during a public meeting Sept. 27. Flood control would be a major feature in the replacement of the lock, which was built to allow vessels to pass through the East Atchafalaya Basin Protection Levee. The district completed the project feasibility report and EIS in December 2003.

HURRICANE FLOODGATE WORK -- The Harvey Canal closed to navigation for 40 days on Oct. 4 to drive pilings for a \$36 million floodgate to protect the West Bank

from hurricane storm surges. “This floodgate is the biggest single step toward achieving a closed system of hurricane protection for 250,000 people in metro New Orleans who live west of the Mississippi River,” said Carol Spraul Burdine, senior project manager. Completion of the gate, a centerpiece of the \$314 million West Bank and Vicinity, New Orleans Hurricane Protection Project, is expected in 2006.

FEEDBACK, from page 8

appraisals as it is at other districts, so it’s important for everyone to understand what it does and how it benefits us.”

The 360 Degree Team created the survey using computer software and other leadership documents, tailoring the questions to suit the district.

360 team members include: *Bonnie Pouyadou, Mark Wingate, Durund Elzey, Jeff Heap, Christophor Gilmore, Charles Everhardt, Lee Guillory, Randall Ridgeway, Sylvia Robinson, JoAnn Rosenfeld, Bruce Terrell, Stuart Waits.*

Around the District

Congratulations

to **Scott Riecke** (IM), who won a Professional Videographers Association award for Weddings & Events from the Videographers Association International.

to **Dan Hibner** (CD), who was promoted to major in August.

to **Brook Brown** (CD) and his wife, Sherry, on the birth of their fifth child, Victoria Ann, on Sept. 9.

to **Timothy Ruppert** (ED), who was awarded the President's Medal by the Louisiana Section of the

Guest speaker and former Saints kicker Tom Dempsey signs an autograph for Michael Escarra (ED) at the CFC kick-off, Oct. 6 in the DARM.

American Society of Civil Engineers, and was also installed as vice president of the Louisiana Section in October.

to **Eric Lincoln** (PA) and his wife, Anna, on the birth of their second daughter, Emma Lee.



Lane Lefort

Kudos

to **Kirk Dietrich** (OD), whose daughter, Hannah, won her school's Halloween Mini Fair T-shirt design contest for the second year in a row.

to **Larry Hayes** (LAO), whose daughter, Christy Hayes, an Air Force sergeant, won Athlete of the Year in the Air Combat Com-

mand in September. She goes on to compete for a chance to represent the Air Force when the Military Sports Association honors the male and female Athletes of the Year.

Condolences

to **Glen Lemoine** (LAO), whose mother, Rita Lemoine, passed away Aug. 2.

to **Gaynelle Chopfield** (RM), whose father, Waldren C. Joseph Sr., died Sept. 22.

to the family of **Charlie**

Thorsen (ED, retired), who died Sept. 7.

to **Margaret Tucker** (CD), whose brother, Frank Palmisano, passed away Oct 10.

Farewell

to **Perry Torregano** (IM), who retired Sept. 30.

to **Hugh Howat** (ED), who retired July 30.



Courtesy photo

Hugh Howat (ED) is joined by his family on July 31 for his retirement celebration. Howat said he plans to travel, work on house projects and enjoy retirement.

HERMAN® by Jim Unger



"I asked him what he wanted for our anniversary and he said, 'two minutes of silence.'"



Courtesy photo

This deer, trapped by strong currents at Old River Control Structure on Sept. 7, was lucky to be seen by lock workers Quinn Humphries and Gene Eldridge, who temporarily adjusted the gates to allow her to climb to safety. The whole operation took about an hour, said Paul Averitt, maintenance mechanic supervisor.

This month, concerned readers discuss when to evacuate during a hurricane and what to do about handicapped parking.



Evacuation probabilities

I have some suggestions to improve the hurricane evacuation procedure for the district.

Without question, New Orleans needs 72 hours to evacuate. Unfortunately, not one single forecast will show a 20-50 percent strike probability at 72 hours. Sometimes, we won't even see that until 48 hours of projected landfall.

Mobile had a whopping 39 percent probability at 12 hours before landfall for Hurricane Ivan. When New Orleans was ordered by many city officials to evacuate at 24 percent, Mobile was at 27 percent. We were never in the projected path for a direct hit, at anytime whatsoever, during Hurricane Ivan's trek across the Gulf.

I stayed home in Pearl River until 6 p.m. on the night of Ivan striking Gulf Shores, evacuating from my Zone-3-constructed mobile home (135 mph winds max allowable) to a safer second floor motel only seven miles away. I would not expect everyone to do what I did, but their early evacuations made it very easy for folks like me who chose to remain until the last minute.

Here are two ideas for the district:

1) Find out more details from the National Weather Service (NWS) on how probabilities are established. I believe there is much room for improvement. We may need to convince them of creating probabilities for the 72-hour landfall projection.

2) Use existing websites, such as Intellicast and Weather Underground, to determine NWS probabilities up to the 72-hour warning level. The graphic used will depend upon how wide the 20-50 percent probability band is.

Personally, I think the current NWS probabilities are too open to interpretation.

At any rate, between both extrapolations, we should get a better picture of the 72-hour probabilities.

I think less than 20 percent should not qualify for evacuating the district. Conversely, more than 35 percent qualifies for definite evacuation. The 20-35 percent probability band is the grey area, and should be used in conjunction with as much other information as possible to reach an informed decision.

The safest way? There will be more false alarms, but evacuate the district any time the probability reaches 20 percent.

The bottom line is that we need better probabilities at the 72-hour forecast. We have the tools now to produce this information ourselves, and we should.

Paul Bellocq
Engineering



Handicapped parking

Recently I discovered that handicapped personnel not requiring a wheelchair would be

losing their numbered parking spots in the rear of the building. They will be assigned new reserved and numbered parking spots in the unsheltered front of the building to create covered parking spaces in the rear for the upper management to use.

I doubt any of the non-wheelchair handicapped will complain because they are proud and have endured more hardship than this will pose. But something about it just doesn't seem right. There are people here who, by no fault of their own, take longer to travel from point A to point B, and are having covered protection from the elements taken away from them. I do not know who initiated this change, but it would be a selfless and honorable gesture for any managers standing to gain a covered parking place to exchange it for a numbered handicapped spot in front.

Kirk Dietrich
Operations

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