



Corps Hurricane Response

Task Force Hope Status Report

April 27, 2007

Hurricane Preparedness Plans Well Underway

Corps of Engineers joins other government and civic groups to form JCAC

By Susan Spaht

The 2007 hurricane season is a little more than a month away. Citizens in the metro New Orleans area are anxious to learn what preparations are being made for what could be an active summer.

While hurricane protection system improvements proceed at an unprecedented pace, the Corps of Engineers is also participating in hurricane preparedness plans with other government and civic organizations involved with protecting lives and property in the metro New Orleans area.

Working together, these organizations and government entities have established the **Joint Communication Advisory Council (JCAC)**:

- New Orleans Sewerage & Water Board,
- Jefferson Parish Drainage Department,
- Southeast Louisiana Flood Protection Authorities – East and West,

- Federal Emergency Management Agency,
- City of New Orleans,
- New Orleans Business Council,
- Corps of Engineers
- St. Bernard Parish,
- Jefferson Parish,
- Plaquemines Parish,
- Flood Protection Alliance
- Governor's Office,
- Louisiana Department of Transportation and Development, and
- U.S. Department of Homeland Security

The JCAC consists of communication professionals representing area agencies, civic organizations and government entities involved in storm preparedness and protection. The purpose of the JCAC is to provide the public with coordinated, inter-agency information on public safety in advance of the 2007 hurricane season.

"All the major players involved in

protecting the greater New Orleans area from storms have been working together behind the scenes since Hurricanes Katrina and Rita," said Merritt Lane, a member of the New Orleans Business Council. "We saw the need to let the public know that all these agencies are working in a

coordinated effort for their safety."

The JCAC participants have agreed to share information with each other and present it to the public in a unified manner, sometimes through joint news releases, to avoid confusing the public and/or releasing contradictory information.



The JCAC members held their first coordinated media briefing on April 2, during the National Hurricane Conference in downtown New Orleans.

The next briefing will be a press con-

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U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Awards Contracts to Local Companies

The Corps of Engineers recently awarded two priority-interim contracts for the West Bank & Vicinity. These are contracts that will be completed during the 2007 hurricane season.



1. **V-Line Floodwall work:** awarded to Allen Wright Enterprises, Inc./Hamp's Construction, LLC, a joint venture, New Orleans, La., for \$1,336,000.
2. **Pump Stations and Utility Crossings work:** awarded to Progressive Construction of Alexandria, La., for \$993,305.

The newly-formed Joint Communication Advisory Council (JCAC) will provide the public with coordinated, interagency information on public safety in advance of the 2007 hurricane season.



Prior to the 2006 hurricane season, Lt. Gen. Carl Strock, Commander of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and Chief of Engineers, gives the media an update on Corps readiness. (USACE Photo)

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ference on May 3. At that conference, JCAC members will focus on emergency preparedness, presenting essential region-wide preparations such as coordinated emergency evacuation plans, overall emergency planning status by parish, emergency operations plans,

and any *other* related updates.

The JCAC is committed to providing public and media informational updates throughout the Hurricane Season. Members of the JCAC hope the membership will continue to grow to include other agencies and organizations responsible for public safety.



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The *Status Report Newsletter* supports the information program for Task Force Hope and its stakeholders. It also serves as the primary tool for accurately transmitting the hurricane recovery work to stakeholders.

This is an online publication and open to public distribution.

This issue and past issues can be found at:

www.mvn.usace.army.mil/hps

Comments and questions may be sent to the

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Status Report Newsletter

Task Force Hope

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Pump Capacity Report

17th Street Canal.....approx. 4,000 cfs
London Ave. Canal....approx. 2,800 cfs
Orleans Ave. Canal...approx. 2,200 cfs

As of April 27, 2007

Note: The Status Report Newsletter will give regular reports on the pump capacity of the three temporary outfall canals under construction. For more details, please visit:

www.mvn.usace.army.mil/hps

Faces of Hope

U.S. Army Corps of Engineers

The Emerging Leader Program is designed to identify people in the Corps of Engineers who have the ability, skills and talent to become leaders in the organization.

By *Tamitha Evans*

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers' Emerging Leader Program encourages and promotes future leaders of the Corps. The Emerging Leader Program accepts only government employees who have demonstrated exceptional leadership qualities, management skills and advanced personal development. Once accepted into the program, individuals participate in a two and a half-day intense and rigorous leadership development workshop. Participants also have the opportunity to interact with senior leaders of the Corps whose Senior Leadership Conference runs concurrent with the annual Emerging Leader Workshop and Conference.

After completing the workshop, participants begin the "program" phase. The program includes opportunities to shadow senior leaders, to be placed in developmental assignments and to return to the Emerging Leader Workshop as team leaders and advisors.

Emerging leaders represent every discipline in the Corps, e.g., engineering, finance, law, navigation, real estate, hydrology, environmental science, logistics and management.

The objective of the Emerging

EMERGING LEADER PROGRAM BUILDING FUTURE LEADERS OF THE CORPS

Leader Program is to provide participants with unique experiences to identify and further develop their strengths. Whether that unique experience is in the emerging leader's specialty or not, the aim is to show how that part fits into the whole.

Participants in the program inevitably ask the question: "Where are we emerging to?". The answer is: to challenging positions within your district or, quite often, another location where your talents are needed.

In my case, the answer was Task Force Hope and the Hurricane Protection System in New Orleans.

The work within the Hurricane Protection System is important, the mission paramount and the dynamics exciting. Our mission in the greater New Orleans area is the number one domestic priority for the Corps of Engineers. In this assignment, I have had the unique opportunity to contribute to future policy and procedure. I have also been able to see first-hand how what I am doing will benefit the local community and the nation.


Part of my assignment here is Strategic Resourcing which focuses on

"building the bench", i.e. developing and maintaining core competencies and leadership abilities to ensure the quality, capacity and commitment of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers' mission in New Orleans. Building the

bench contributes significantly to the Corps mission by infusing it with new ideas and fresh perspectives while enriching the experiences of the emerging leaders as well. The emerging leaders benefit by building relationships, facing public chal-

lenges, and having exposure to high level meetings and individuals.

With approximately 15 per cent of the Corps workforce eligible to retire now, 30 per cent eligible to retire in the next five years, and 50 per cent eligible within the next 10 years, the Corps has a vital interest in building the bench and in the success of the Emerging Leader Program.

Being part of a high level, fast action team like we are at Task Force Hope, is a great career enhancer and valuable experience for the future leaders of the Corps. The environment of the Hurricane Protection System is unique and dynamic. There are not many similar opportunities within the Corps for this level of involvement and contribution. 



Qiana Davis, left, and Tamitha Evans are emerging leaders assigned to Task Force Hope in New Orleans. (USACE Photo)

Students Spend Spring Break Volunteering for Debris Mission in New Orleans



St. Olaf College students, from left, Janet Sully, Ashley Lundsald and Gabby Coolidge study a map of New Orleans before setting out on their next house-gutting assignment. (USACE Photo)

When the words “college students” and “Spring Break” appear in the same sentence, it usually involves indulgence in less than scholarly activities. But not always.

This past spring, 140 students from St. Olaf College in Northfield, Minn., headed to New Orleans on their Spring Break to “have some fun” painting drywall, pulling out floors, taking out debris, stripping walls and other nasty jobs in Katrina-damaged houses.

“It was so much fun!,” said Janet Sully, a freshman at St. Olaf. “It was really hard work, and I was tired every day; but I’m so glad I had the experience.”

Janet and her volunteer classmates paid for their own transportation to and from New Orleans. They were “housed” in trailers for the week at the Atonement Lutheran Church in Metairie, and prepared their own meals on site with food that was pro-

vided by the church.

Janet was asked how she decided to travel some 1,200 miles from home to volunteer for five days of manual labor. “My school set up meetings in the cafeteria and explained what was needed in New Orleans. We had all seen on TV what had happened, and I thought it would be pretty cool to go down and help.”

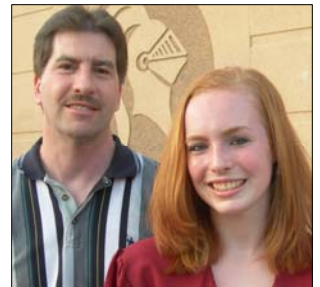
The young freshman explained that she and her classmates wanted to see another part of the country “that was different from Minnesota”, but all felt that it was mainly “a chance to help some people and do something really meaningful.”

According to the Louisiana Recovery Field Office (LaRFO), a division of the Corps of Engineers, about 4,500 homeowners in metro New Orleans requested assistance with gutting their homes before the spring volunteers arrived. By law, a resident cannot move back into a flooded house until the structure is gutted to a

height above the waterline. Many of these homeowners are unable to, or cannot afford to, do the work themselves. This is when the volunteers are needed.

“There were some 25,000 volunteers in New Orleans over Spring Break from all across America,” said Jessica Vermilyea, deputy state coordinator for the Lutheran Disaster Response mission. St. Olaf, a Lutheran college, coordinated their volunteer group through the Lutheran Disaster Response mission.

Janet, whose father works for Task Force Hope, said the best part of her volunteer experience was talking to the homeowners themselves who were openly grateful for the assistance. “You can’t get that on TV.”



Janet Sully is pictured here with her dad, Tom Sully, who is the Hurricane Protection System Program Manager with Task Force Hope in New Orleans.

Also, while digging through the damaged homes, the young volunteers occasionally came across important items that they salvaged from the debris for the homeowners. “We found a marriage license, a last will, old letters and journals...things I know I would hate to lose.

“Everyone in our group was so glad they had the experience in New Orleans,” said Janet. “What happened there is a huge part of our nation’s history now. We can tell our grandchildren that we were there, and we helped.” 