



## Corps Hurricane Response

### Task Force Hope Status Report

June 25, 2006

# Corps Committed to Communicating with Public

## Community Meetings Give Public Opportunity To Ask Questions

**B**rig. Gen. Robert Crear, Commander of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Mississippi Valley Division, has made this pledge to the American people and particularly to the people directly affected by Hurricanes Katrina and Rita:

**“The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers is committed to informing the American public about its on-going hurricane and flood protection work in New Orleans and the Gulf Coast.”**  
- BG Crear

The Corps of Engineers uses its internet site, publications and the news media to keep the public informed of its ongoing work along the Gulf Coast. But one of the most successful ways of informing the public, and answering questions directly from them, is its participation in community meetings.

“We send Corps representatives to community meetings about three to four times a week,” said Dan Hitchings, Director of the Corps’ Task Force Hope. “We consider it our duty to inform the public of our work and how we are spending our allocated funds, and these community meetings give us an excellent opportunity to keep the public up-to-date on our progress,” he added.

“We know that many people have concerns about their homes, their



**Col. Richard Wagenaar (right) discusses Corps issues with a group of Jefferson Parish citizens at a recent community meeting** (USACE photo by Michael Maples)

businesses and their communities, and they need to know how work on the floodgates, levees and canals is proceeding so they can plan their rebuilding and plan their lives,” Hitchings said.

For example, the Corps has sent representatives to these community meetings:

**June 19** Jefferson Parish Community Meeting with Sen. David Vitter, East-bank Library  
*Corps Rep: Col. Wagenaar*

**June 21** Neighborhood Planning Network, Musician’s Union Hall, Esplanade Ave.  
*Corps Rep: Dan Hitchings*

**June 21** Tulane University Business Council, Tulane University, St. Charles Ave.  
*Corps Rep: Col. Wagenaar*

**June 22** New Orleans City Council Meeting, 1300 Perdido Street  
*Corps Rep: Col. Wagenaar*

**June 23** Orleans Levee District Board Meeting, 6500 Spanish Fort Blvd.,  
*Corps Rep: Dan Hitchings* 

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# Corps Announces New Orleans and Southeast Louisiana Hurricane Protection Decision Chronology Study Under Way

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers expects a report will be released late this year giving details in design, implementation and state of the storm damage reduction system as it existed prior to hurricanes Katrina and Rita.

The Hurricane Protection Decision Chronology (HPDC) was commissioned by the USACE Directorate of Civil Works in December 2005. The report will document the chronological record of planning, economic, policy, legislative, institutional and financial decisions that influenced the design, scale, configuration, construction, governance and maintenance of the system in place prior to Hurricane Katrina's landfall on Aug. 29, 2005.

"The Hurricane Protection Decision Chronology will enable the Corps and the nation to fully understand the long history of federal, state and local decisions that led to the design and construction of the New Orleans-area flood and storm damage reduction system," said Maj. Gen. Don T. Riley, USACE director of Civil Works. "This important record of planning, policy and fiscal decisions will complement the technical engineering studies recently completed by the Corps and other organizations that examined the system's performance during Hurricane Katrina.

"The engineering studies provided critical answers to questions about what happened to the system. This chronology will document the facts regarding the sequence of decisions that resulted in the system that was in place pre-Katrina," said Riley.

The HPDC team is composed of experts with extensive experience in national-level water resources policy, project evaluation and decision making from within and outside the Corps. The team includes independent contractors, a Corps economist, and former representatives of local flood and storm protection management agencies in Colorado and California who provide expertise from the non-federal project sponsor perspective. The USACE Directorate of Civil Works is providing executive oversight of the study in coordination with the IWR director.

The Hurricane Protection Decision Chronology will be reviewed by an independent technical review (ITR) panel prior to release. There will be a 30-day public comment period prior to completion of the report. In keeping with the Corps' stated policy of full and open disclosure of all information related to the New Orleans-area storm damage reduction system, the final report, including ITR comments and HPDC responses to those comments, will be available on the internet when completed.

## Points of Contact for Information

Topic	Phone	Organization
Overall information about work being performed by the Corps of Engineers in the New Orleans District, or To be included on the Newsletter e-mail list	(504) 862-2201	New Orleans District Public Affairs
Overall Task Force Hope Information	(504) 862-1836	Task Force Hope Public Affairs
Debris Removal in Louisiana	(225) 218-9325	Louisiana Recovery Field Office
Debris Removal in Mississippi	(601) 631-5065	Mississippi Recovery Field Office

The **Status Report Newsletter** supports the information program for Task Force Hope and its stakeholders. It also serves as one of the Task Force Hope's primary communication tools for accurately transmitting the hurricane recovery work. This is an online publication and open to public distribution. This issue and past issues can be found at: [www.mvd.usace.army.mil/hurricane](http://www.mvd.usace.army.mil/hurricane). Comments and questions may be sent to the Status Report Newsletter editor at: [b2fwdpao@usace.army.mil](mailto:b2fwdpao@usace.army.mil).

**Status Report Newsletter**  
Task Force Hope  
Public Affairs Office MVD-FWD  
7400 Leake Ave., Room #388, New Orleans, LA 70118  
(504) 862-1688

## Faces of Hope

***“Most of us live in this area. We wanted the job done right... failure was not an option” - Ernie Murry***

**W**hen Hurricane Katrina hit New Orleans and the Gulf Coast on August 29, 2005, it caused immense damage and changed the lives of millions of people. And another hurricane was on the way.

Taking almost the same path as Katrina, this storm was the fourth-most intense Atlantic hurricane ever recorded. Her name was Rita, and she hit New Orleans on September 24, 2005.

In the midst of Hurricane Rita's fury, Ernie Murry was leading four sand trucks against the evacuating traffic, past the State Troopers, and into the devastated Lower Ninth Ward where the temporary levees were being overtopped by surging storm water.

Ernest "Ernie" Murry is the Quality Assurance Representative for the Corps of Engineers at the Inner Harbor Navigational Canal (IHNC) at the Lower Ninth Ward.

"It was a little hairy being in that area that day," said Murry. "We had pumped the water out of the area after Katrina, but Rita was bringing water back."

Murry led the four trucks to the appropriate area to dump their loads of sandbags.

"We drove through two feet of water," Murry said, "and the water was still coming. At the time, we didn't know how high the water would go – but we had to get the job done."

Murry has been with the Corps of Engineers in New Orleans for seven years. When Katrina hit New Orleans, he was assigned to unwater the area at the 17<sup>th</sup> Street Canal. When Rita hit he was assigned to unwater the area at IHNC. He stayed on there, working with the contractor, to complete repairs to the floodwall and add the permanent scour pads.

The Corps' work at IHNC is almost finished now, and Murry is very proud of the job he and his fellow workers have done. They completed their assignment in record



**Ernie Murry drives along the floodwall at the IHNC-01. "I watched the construction of the floodwall every step of the way," Murry said, "and I would not hesitate to live behind that wall myself." (USACE by Paul Floro)**

time, working long hours and taking little time off to be with their families. "I'm only one of many who went through this ordeal," he said.

"Most of us live in this area. We wanted this job done right....failure was not an option."

Chris Wagner, Murry's supervisor, is the Resident Engineer for IHNC. Speaking of Murry, he said, "Ernie is a really dedicated employee, a credit to the Corps.

"He's our go-to guy in the field." 

**President Signs 2006 Emergency Supplemental Appropriations Act for Defense,  
the Global War on Terror, and Hurricane Recovery**

## Emergency Supplemental Appropriations Act Gives Corps of Engineers Go-Ahead to Continue Hurricane Repair and Construction Work

### **Some \$4 Billion Now Available to Fund Hurricane Projects in New Or- leans and Other Critical Areas**

**T**he President signed the fiscal year 2006 Emergency Supplemental Appropriations Act for Defense, the Global War on Terror, and Hurricane Recovery into law June 15.

The Act provides additional resources needed to fight the war on terror, help citizens of the Gulf States recover from devastating hurricanes, and protect Americans from a potential influenza pandemic.

The bill provides nearly \$4 billion to fully fund the President's request for levee improvements and flood control projects around New Orleans and other critical areas nationally.

Among the specific provisions in the act for the New Orleans area are:

**\$1.584 billion** to reinforce or replace floodwalls in the New Orleans metropolitan area;

**\$530 million** for permanent pumps and gated closures at the three outfall canals;

**\$495.3 million**, to be cost shared



A major portion of the new Appropriations Act will fund the continuation of construction to hurricane damaged floodwalls in the metropolitan New Orleans area. (USACE photos by Paul Floro)



**New funding includes: permanent pumps and gated closures at the three outfall canals, reinforcement or replacement of floodwalls in New Orleans, armoring to critical areas of the levees, and much more.**

with Louisiana, to raise levee heights for the Lake Pontchartrain

and West Bank levee projects;

**\$350 million** for construction of navigable closures on the Industrial Canal and the Gulf Intracoastal Waterway (GIWW);


**\$250 million** to flood proof interior pumping stations;

**\$215 million** to replace, modify and incorporate non-federal levees in Plaquemines Parish into the federal system;

**\$170 million** to armor critical areas of the levees;

**\$30 million** to repair, replace, modify and improve non-federal levees in Terrebonne Parish;

**\$20.2 million** for coastal restoration to minimize future storm damage.

**\$3.3 million** to develop a comprehensive plan to de-authorize deep draft navigation on the Mississippi River-Gulf Outlet. 

***For more information on the 2006 Emergency Appropriations Act, go to this website:***

<http://whitehouse.fed.us/news/releases/2006/06/20060615-14.html>