



US Army Corps  
of Engineers  
Mississippi Valley Division



## Corps Hurricane Response

Task Force Hope Status Report Newsletter

April 11, 2012

# Safety always a top priority at Corps

HSDRRS Safety Record  
surpasses general  
construction business average  
for man hours worked  
and lost time accidents

by Susan Spaht

“**P**ublic Safety is our top priority,” said Mike Park, Chief of Task Force Hope, “and job site safety is our every day duty.”

“Building defense structures for the Hurricane and Storm Damage Risk Reduction System to reduce the public’s risk of storm surge is a very important mission, and providing a safe worksite for our contractors and employees is just as important.”

### **Building Strong. Building Fast. Working Safe!**

Over the past six years, the Corps of Engineers has amassed a remarkable Civil Works record while accomplishing its mission to design and construct the Hurricane and Storm Damage Risk Reduction System for the Greater New Orleans area. The Corps has established many Civil



This safety sign greets all visitors to the Corps of Engineers New Orleans District offices on Leake Ave. As the sign says, “Safety is a Job Requirement.” Safety signs are also found throughout all Corps construction sites and structures.

Works firsts in this mission, received numerous accolades for its effort, and attracted the attention of engineering professionals and academics worldwide.

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While designing and building the levees, floodwalls, pump stations and surge barriers for the HSDRRS, the Corps created more than 60,000 jobs and logged approximately 36 million man hours. (And the number is still growing.) Producing all these imposing, state-of-the-art structures and putting in all these man hours over such a short period of time is also a major Corps Civil Works accomplishment. Contractors worked especially long hours to meet their goals and deadlines; they worked in unfavorable weather conditions; they often worked holidays and week-ends; and many times they worked at night under portable lights in determination to meet their deadlines.

In the beginning, many skeptics said these kinds of construction feats could not be done within such a demanding schedule. Yet, there is surely no other government construction mission that has accomplished so much so fast and established so many Civil Works records along the way.



Mike Park

But the record that many Corps leaders are most proud of, and one that is perhaps the least touted, is the incredible **record of safety** for this mission.

Private construction businesses, and likewise the Corps, keep count of man hours and “lost time accidents”

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## PPE = Personal Protective Equipment

Construction workers on all USACE work sites are required to wear PPE: *hard hats, steel-toed boots, gloves, reflective vest, goggles (eye protection) and, depending on location, a flotation safety vest.*



Construction workers at the IHNC Surge Barrier wear their PPE while working on steel piles. Since this job site is over water, the workers are required to wear flotation safety vests.



*Safety reminders are prevalent around all Corps work sites and buildings.*

The board at right, at the West Closure Complex, serves as an Emergency Response Center, complete with First Aid Kit and gurney.

The safety warning signs below are posted at the Seabrook Floodgate Complex (middle) and the West Closure Complex pump room.



WCC Photos by Matt Soraghan

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when determining how successful a job is. In the 36 million man hours worked on the HSDRRS, the log shows just 39 lost time accidents. That is a mere one per cent per 990,000 man hours with a frequency rate of 0.22%. That is an amazing statistic when you consider the amount of work, the number of man hours, and the short time period in which those were accomplished. It is **seven times below** the National General Industry's safety average for heavy construction.

**Here are some Amazing Stats**  
*(partial listing only)*

- The enormous Inner Harbor Navigation Canal Surge Barrier project was built in 18 months utilizing more than one million construction man hours with no lost time accidents.
- The 23-mile St. Bernard floodwall was built in 20 months utilizing 3.8



million construction man hours with no lost time accidents.

- The Bayou Dupre (LPV 146) portion of the St. Bernard floodwall was built by St. Bernard Levee Partners utilizing 1.5 million construction man hours with no lost time accidents.
- Cajun Constructors, LLC built the Verret to Caernarvon portion of the St. Bernard floodwall in seven months utilizing more than 1.5 million



construction man hours with no lost time accidents. Cajun won the Mississippi Valley Division's 2011 Superior Safety Performance Award for Large Contractors (see page 5).

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## Visitor Safety

In addition to worker safety, the Corps also pays close attention to visitor safety. Over the past six years, thousands upon thousands of people have visited HSDRRS work sites to examine the risk reduction structures up close and personal, to see how they are being constructed, and to learn how they will defend the area from storm surge. Domestic and foreign dignitaries, elected officials, community leaders, school groups, business organizations, and local citizen groups have been welcomed to Corps work sites. The IHNC Surge Barrier Safety Office, for example, handled over 380 construction site tours over an 18-month period with more than 3,800 visitors.

“We want everybody to have a safe, uneventful visit to our construction sites,” said Sherry Scott, the Senior Safety Specialist for the New Orleans District.

Scott and her team have a standard safety procedure for all visitor groups. Before touring a work site, visitors must sign in, attend a safety briefing, wear appropriate apparel and wear appropriate Personal Protective Equipment. “Safety is everybody’s responsibility.”

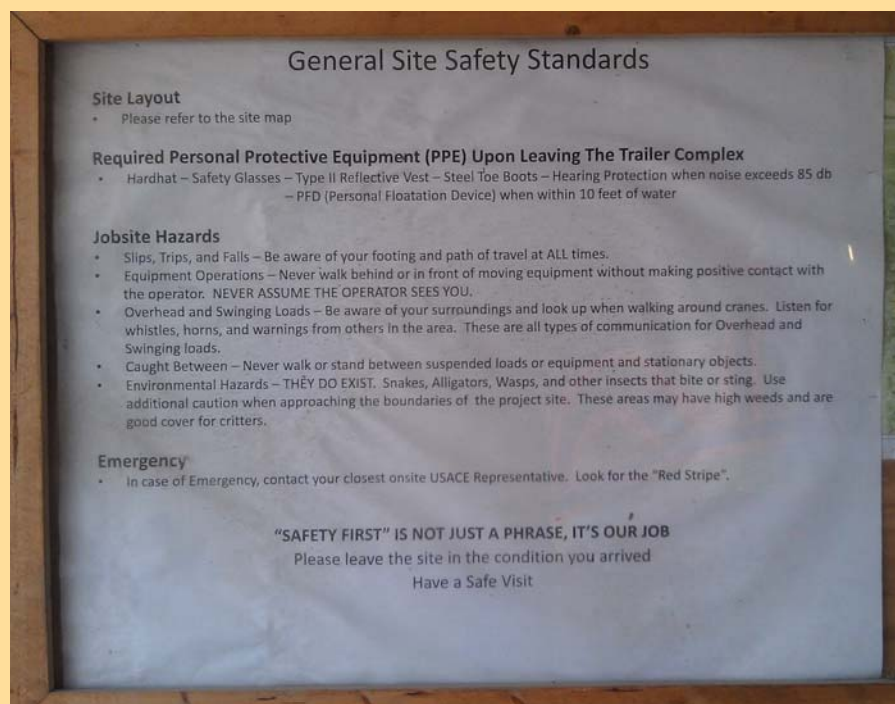
## History in the Making

“I don’t know of another Civil Works mission that has accomplished so much in such a short time period,” said Park.

“Even though we have worked very hard to make ours the safest working environment we can, it has not totally been without incident. We will not



**Sherry Scott, Senior Safety Specialist for Team New Orleans**



**Posted Safety instructions at IHNC construction site**

forget that two men died working this mission, and our hearts go out to their families.

“We value our work force; they are the real people getting this massive job done for the people of the

Greater New Orleans area. I’ve never known a more dedicated and determined team.

“We are Team New Orleans, we are Building Strong, and we are making history here.”







US Army Corps  
of Engineers

## MVD 2011 Superior Safety Performance Award for Large Contractor

**Winner: Cajun Constructors, LLC**  
**Project: LPV 148.02, Chalmette Loop Levee**



The Mississippi Valley Division Corps of Engineers awarded its 2011 Superior Safety Performance Award for a Large Contractor to Cajun Constructors of Baton Rouge, Louisiana. The prestigious award was given for construction of the Verret to Caernarvon portion of the St. Bernard floodwall.

This unique contract was a fixed price incentive contract that required Early Contractor Involvement. Working on a compressed schedule of seven months and with more than 1,400 employees, Cajun constructed 8.2 miles (43,406) of pile-supported, concrete floodwalls; installed six

**At the peak of construction, Cajun Constructors had 118 cranes on site to get the work done on LPV 148.02, the Verret to Caernarvon portion of the 23-mile St. Bernard Floodwall.**

steel gates; performed modifications to the existing St. Mary's Pump Station and demolished the Creedmore Drainage Structure.

**The company completed more than 1.5 million construction man hours without a lost-time injury.**

"This project was the largest under-

taking in Cajun's history," said Todd Grigsby, President, "and it was awarded to us with a very challenging schedule. At Cajun Constructors, we work very hard to deliver a quality product on time, and we work just as hard to ensure that our em-

ployees are working in the safest conditions that we can provide.

"This award by the Corps of Engineers is a testament that our efforts at both have paid off. I congratulate each and every one of our employees for a job well done – we are very proud of our employees and very proud to receive this award."



## NEWS RELEASE FROM LOUISIANA DEPT. OF INSURANCE

LA Insurance Commissioner and Insurance Executives  
Given Tour of HSDRRS

Insurance Commissioner Jim Donelon, left, and TFH Chief Mike Park at West Closure Complex pump engine structure.

Commissioner of Insurance Jim Donelon has touted the progress of federal hurricane mitigation efforts for several years. On March 29, he got the opportunity to show the insurance industry exactly what he's been talking about. Commissioner Donelon and Mike Park, Chief of Task Force Hope, took more than a dozen insurance industry executives on a seven-hour tour of the Greater New Orleans Hurricane and Storm Damage Risk Reduction System (HSDRRS).

The HSDRRS includes 350 miles of levees and floodwalls, pump stations and surge barriers across the Greater New Orleans five-parish area. The project is fully funded at more than \$14 billion and it's designed to reduce the risk associated with a storm surge event that has a one percent chance of occurring in any given year, or a 100-year storm surge.

Park briefed tour participants on the system then took the group on a tour

of the inner workings of the West Closure Complex in Belle Chasse (the largest pumping station in the world); then to the 17th Street Canal and the Lakefront; the Seabrook Floodgate Complex at the north end of the Inner Harbor Navigation Canal (IHNC), known locally as the Industrial Canal; the Hayne Boulevard Floodwalls; and the IHNC Surge Barrier, located about 12 miles east of downtown New Orleans.

"The purpose of this tour was to show the representatives of the insurance companies who write business in this state that southeast Louisiana is protected better than ever and well prepared for another Hurricane Katrina-type event," Commissioner Donelon said. "I believe that all of the tour participants were impressed with the additional level of storm surge protection that now exists for Orleans, Jefferson, St. Bernard, Plaquemines and St. Charles Parishes."



## Contact Information

## U.S. Army Corps of Engineers

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 Corps' hurricane risk reduction efforts to stakeholders.

*This is an online publication that is open to public distribution.*

This issue and past issues can be found at: <http://www.mvn.usace.army.mil/hps>

Comments and questions may be sent to the Status Report Newsletter editor at: [b2fwdpao@usace.army.mil](mailto:b2fwdpao@usace.army.mil)

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