

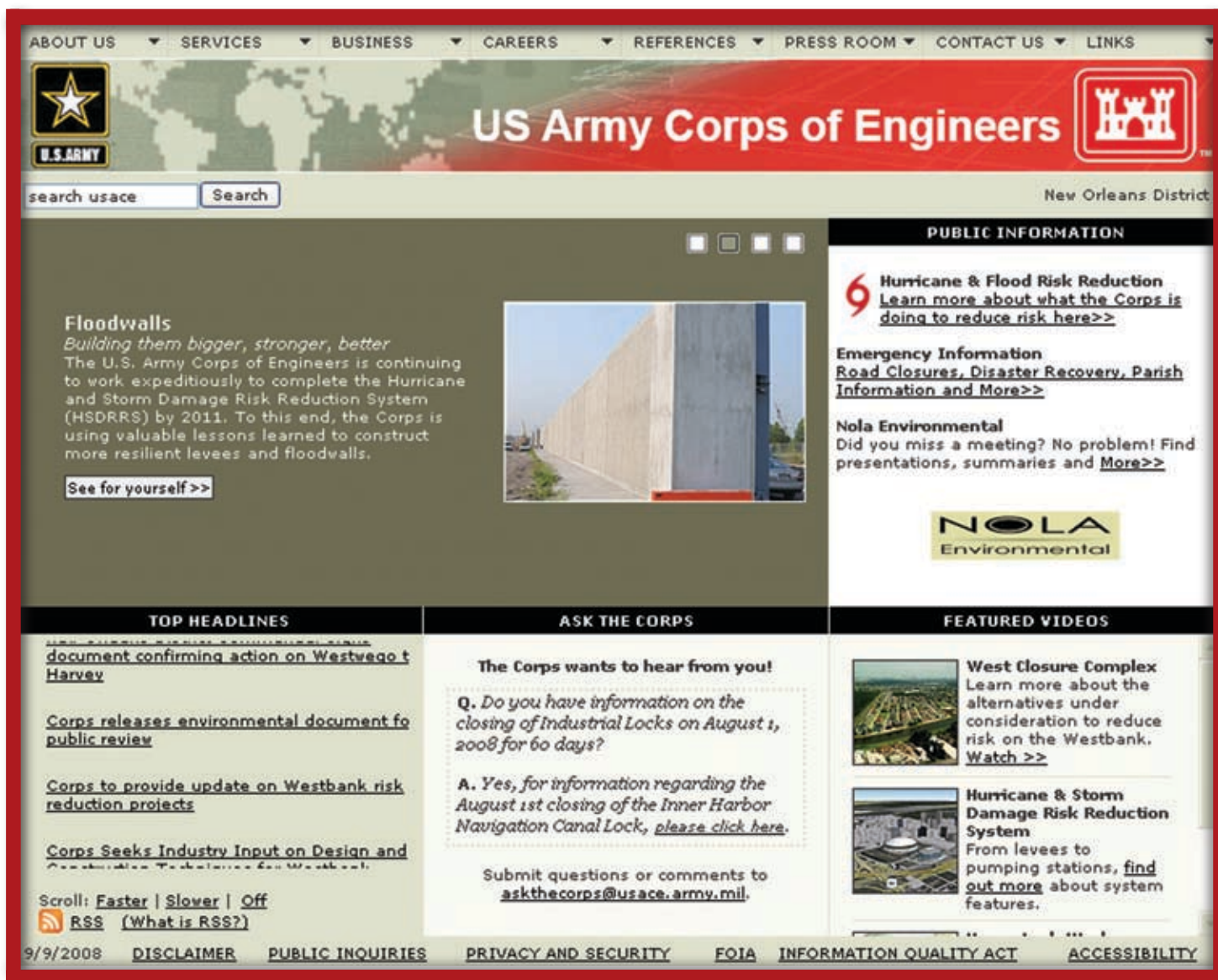
RIVERSIDE

DEDICATION OF A
NEW SAFEROOM

NSPS SELF AND
SUPERVISOR
ASSESSMENTS

IHNC WALLS
REINFORCED

INTRODUCING THE DISTRICT'S NEW WEBSITE



**US Army Corps
of Engineers**
New Orleans District

NEW ORLEANS DISTRICT SERVES AS THE PILOT PROGRAM
FOR THE CORPS' NATIONAL
WEB OVERHAUL PROJECT



RIVERSIDE

September 2008
Vol.22 No. 2

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USACE photo



On the Cover: A screen shot of the District's new home page.

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In the photograph above, workers fill Hesco baskets to add another layer of protection along the IHNC. Below, the baskets performed as intended during Gustav.



USACE photo

Carrollton Gage

I want to first thank everyone for your efforts over the past three years in the work done since Hurricanes Katrina and Rita. Your sacrifice, dedication, and perseverance has been extraordinary in providing Hurricane and Storm Damage Risk Reduction for the Greater New Orleans area, as well as in the many other key missions we have in the region.

Hurricane Gustav clearly demonstrated the critical nature of the work that we are doing to reduce risk and build the GNHSDRRS. In New Orleans, Hurricane Gustav was not a benign event, as evidenced by the 12 foot surges seen on television. This storm was a significant test of the system, especially the surge and wave run up that caused limited overtopping along the floodwalls in the IHNC. The work done by our team was critical in how the structures performed during the Hurricane. I am proud to say that the structures did their job. Built upon lessons learned, the repaired and replaced structures along the IHNC showed increased strength and resilience.

I would like to commend our Emergency Operations team's performance leading up to, during, and following the storm. This "team of teams" is comprised of thirteen local governmental liaisons in each of the affected parishes and three individuals working directly in the Governor's Office of Homeland Security and Emergency Preparedness. We also had a Rear Emergency Operations Center in Port Allen and an alternate command post in Vicksburg. Our three outfall canal teams and the Harvey Sector gate team were in place and reporting throughout the storm.

I also want to recognize our navigation and Operations Division teams for an outstanding job of assisting the navigation industry in moving their vessels to safe haven and then rapidly reopening our waterways fol-

lowing the storm.

I am also proud of your ability to attain 99.9% personnel accountability in three days. This amazing feat can be attributed to our team's planning, preparation, and execution of our Hurricane and Emergency process.

Since Gustav, our assessment teams have done an outstanding job in identifying damages across the state. These twelve teams have conducted assessments throughout the impacted area, and have identified thirty-two areas needing priority action. Of these areas, we are focusing on repairing five, in addition to armoring and strengthening nine areas in the IHNC, prior to the next tropical weather event.

I want our team to take this opportunity to celebrate the great things that we have accomplished over the last three years. I now need you to assist me in refocusing our efforts back to our number one domestic priority, the completion of the Greater New Orleans Hurricane and Storm Damage Risk Reduction System by 2011.

The United States Army Corps of Engineers has a brand new identity that has been approved and rolled out by the Chief of Engineers at the most recent Seniors Leaders Conference. We also have a new website redesign that the New Orleans District is the Beta tester for USACE. We will be rolling this new design out on September 15, 2008. I encourage you to explore the site as soon as it is launched and provide your assessment on how effective our efforts have been in the re-tooling.

There are many heroes that help make this possible. Please provide the names of our teammates that should be recognized at our next awards ceremony. Again, I congratulate you all on a job well done.

***Building Strong!
Through Disciplined Thought and
Disciplined Action
Essays!***

Colonel Alvin (Al) Lee



Self and Supervisor Assessments

by Richard Flores

As the end of the fiscal year fast approaches, and with it, the financial actions for the year's end, so too does the end of the annual performance evaluation period for National Security Personnel System employees. You may ask how these two events are related other than by sharing a date.

Simple, it boils down to a money issue.

For NSPS, it is your self assessment and your supervisor's assessment that controls your January pay raise and performance payout.

Self Assessments

With this in mind, do not wait until 1 October to begin writing your self assessment. What and how you state your accomplishments in your self assessment are critical in helping your supervisor do his/her assessment of your performance.

Use your self assessment and your supervisor's evaluation from your interim rating as the basis for your annual assessment. If they were done well, half the evaluation period has already been documented; just copy it into the annual evaluation and write your assessment for the remainder of the year. However, if they were not prepared well; still use them, but improve them.

Before you begin writing, read your NSPS performance objectives, the performance indicators for your career group and band, and note the weight of each objective. Next, look over the contributing factor identified with each objective and the corresponding benchmarks.

Now start writing your self assessment. I recommend you write it in Microsoft Word. Write each objective separately. Do not intermix accomplishments to objectives in the same write up. In other words, if an accomplishment applies to more than one objective – write it in each objective's accomplishments.

Start each objective assessment by identifying the objective number, and title in first sentence. (*Note:*

The evaluation tool is going to change after this article is written, so this comment may be overcome by events. The change may put your assessment and objective together on the same page). Pay attention to the objective's weight. Concentrate on objectives with the largest weight – they represent the most important aspects of your job and are the ones that truly control the overall rating.

However, do not neglect the objectives with low weightiness, they can be great tie breakers (move you over a hump). Just remember a 4 rating on a 10% weighted objective will not change the overall rating alone. You can also talk to your supervisor and discuss how he sees your accomplishments.

If you want a contributing factor to be considered, write it up separately from your objective assessment. Start a new paragraph with CF: The information you include as a contributing factor needs to be distinctly different from your assessment. If it matches or is similar to the performance objective, insert it into the regular assessment. Contributing factors are special, and they are reviewed that way.

When writing your assessment, concentrate on accomplishments and results. What was achieved? What was the value of this achievement? How did your office, division, and district benefit from your efforts? Were your actions useful outside the district; did the region, another district or the overall Corps of Engineers benefit from something you did? What did you do beyond the norm? What was the quality of your work? Doing more than the norm at improved quality or faster says a lot – but back-it-up. Lesser quality or at the same pace does not necessarily mean added value.

When preparing your assessment, do not focus on length. Be direct and get to the point quickly. Past experience has shown that the longest assessments are not necessarily the best.

Now it is time to evaluate yourself. Put that performance indicator on the desk and refer to it often. Go over each assessment as if it were someone else's. In a hard, *honest manner*, read and grade each objective. Basing your decision on only what is written, not what

you know, how would you grade the assessment? Is it well written? Does it clearly identify your accomplishments and results, or does it read like a task or job list?

If your critical evaluation meets what you believe is the appropriate rating, you are done with that objective. If the written assessment is lacking, rework it. Do not hesitate to ask a friend to further critique your assessment.

Plan to be done by 3 October. The chart below provides the due dates for the various regional pay pools.

Supervisor Assessments

As an employee and as a supervisor, you need to recognize that it is the supervisor's assessment that the pay panel uses to make its decision. Make your supervisor assessment count. Write to each objective separately. Use the performance indicators and contributing factor benchmarks from beginning to end as you write your employee assessments. Use

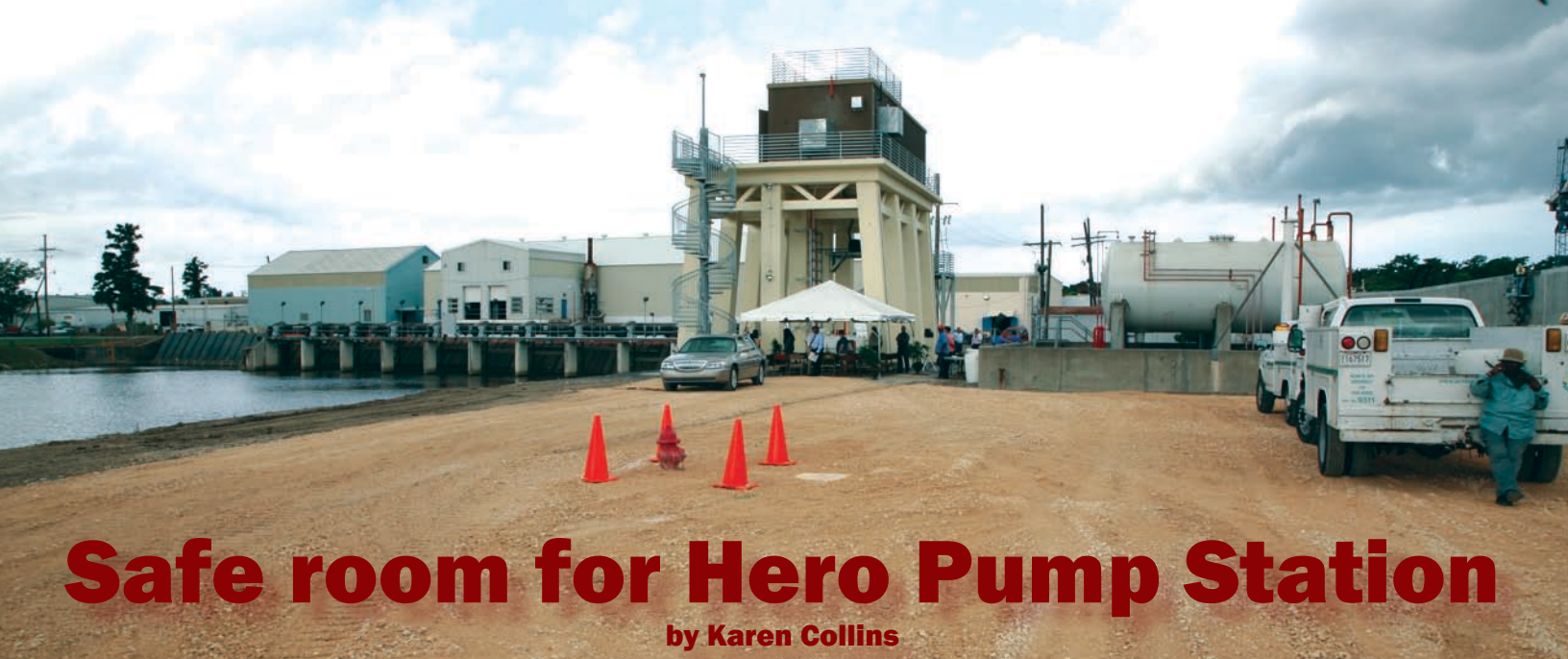
the employee's assessment as a tool to prepare your assessment.

As a supervisor you should not just copy the employee's self assessment. Neither should you say, "I concur with the employee's assessment." You don't know if the pay pools will use the employee's assessment in their discussions. Instead, you need to evaluate it, build on it, and bring objectivity to it. Is it accurate, correct, over or under stated and did accomplishments occur that merit mentioning? Feel free to use parts of it in your evaluation. Repeat what is said if it is valid, but make it your own. If you believe something is overstated, show it in the value you believe it is worth. Add what is missing. As said in the employee's assessment portion, concentrate on accomplishments, results and benefits to the organization. Work the largest weighted objectives more than the lesser weighted objects, but don't ignore the lower weighted objectives.

Address contributing factors separately from the objectives. Make sure your comments don't overlap

Continued on page 9

PAY POOLS	Self Assessment Due Date	Rater Assessment Due Date	HLR Due Date	Pay Pool Dates	Location
Regional Supervisory	10-Oct	22-Oct	10-Nov	18-20 Nov	Vicksburg
Regional Non-Supervisory Pay Pools					
Small Office	6-Oct	14-Oct	20-Oct	28-30 Oct	Vicksburg
Engineering	6-Oct	14-Oct	20-Oct	27-31 Oct	St. Louis
Construction	10-Oct	22-Oct	28-Oct	3-7 Nov	Millington TN
Design	TBD	TBD	TBD	TBD	TBD
H&H	6-Oct	14-Oct	20-Oct	27-31 Oct	Vicksburg
GeoTech	3-Oct	17-Oct	24-Oct	3-7 Nov	Rock Island
Operations	6-Oct	14-Oct	20-Oct	17-21 Nov	New Orleans
Natural Resource Mgt	6-Oct	14-Oct	20-Oct	27-31 Oct	St. Louis
Regulatory	6-Oct	14-Oct	20-Oct	3-7 Nov	St. Paul
Environ & Econ	6-Oct	14-Oct	20-Oct	17-21 Nov	St. Paul
Prj/Prog Mgmt & Plng	6-Oct	14-Oct	20-Oct	27-31 Oct	Memphis
Supervisory Pay Pools					
MVP	10-Oct	20-Oct	27-Oct	10-14 Nov	St. Paul
MVR	10-Oct	20-Oct	27-Oct	10-14 Nov	Rock Island
MVS	10-Oct	20-Oct	27-Oct	10-14 Nov	St. Louis
MVM	10-Oct	20-Oct	27-Oct	13-14 Nov	Memphis
MVK	7-Oct	14-Oct	21-Oct	4-7 Nov	Vicksburg
MVN	3-Oct	14-Oct	21-Oct	12-14 Nov	New Orleans



Safe room for Hero Pump Station

by Karen Collins

Photos courtesy of Jefferson Parish

On July 31, 2008 representatives from the Federal, State and Local governments, contractors, and media gathered in the shadows of one of the newest features on the West Bank, the Hero Pump Station Safe Room, to dedicate it and the four other new safe rooms on the West Bank in Jefferson Parish. The five new United States Army Corps of Engineers built safe rooms allow the pump stations to continue operations through the worst tropical events by protecting the pump operators and allowing them to remain on site.

“Today, we’re here to celebrate the dedication of this safe house,” stated Task Force Hope Director Karen Durham-Aguilera. “Public safety is our number one priority, but it is also important to provide safety for those that will remain behind to ensure the pumps are operating efficiently.”

Parish President Aaron Broussard called the project, “a great example of collaboration between local and federal officials to provide hurricane and flood protection for parish residents.” He emphasized the importance of the safe rooms in allowing the parish to help protect its employees and in fighting flooding immediately after a storm.

The maintenance and operation of a typical pumping station during a storm calls for two operators and a team of up to eight screen cleaners, who clear the debris that constantly accumulates at the station during a flood. Jefferson Parish has 47 drainage pump stations with 130 pumps that have an entire capacity of more than 35,000 cubic feet per second—the equivalent of 16 million gallons of water per minute.

Pump operators were evacuated to Washington

Parish for Hurricane Katrina, leading to flooding in Jefferson Parish when water backed up in drainage canals. Parish President Aaron Broussard has since revised his emergency operations procedures to provide shelter for operators at pumping stations and water plants.

Now Operators will evacuate to the safe rooms when the wind reaches 74 mph where they can remotely control the required functions of the pumps and closed circuit TV cameras for monitoring the station and perimeter. Safe rooms are equipped with food, water, A/C, communication equipment, bunk beds, life rafts, medical supplies, and backup generators on the deck with six to eight days of fuel supply.

These five new structures bring Jefferson Parish to a total of thirteen safe rooms. Eight were built by the parish (four on the East Bank at Duncan, Elmwood, Suburban and Bonnabel, and four on the West Bank at Ames, Cousins, Bayou Segnette and Whitney Barataria). USACE has constructed five additional safe rooms at Cataouatche, Estelle #2, Hero, Planters and Westwego #2.

Colonel Jeff Bedey illustrated his thoughts on teamwork by calling several members of the USACE and contracting team forward. “It takes a team to achieve what we have accomplished today and it will take a team of everyone, including the state and local sponsors, working together to complete what needs to be done to provide 100 year level protection by 2011.”

As part of the ongoing pump station storm proofing, USACE will be providing additional automation of the vertical pumps and ancillary equipment at five

of the existing safe rooms: Bonnabel, Suburban, Elmwood, Duncan and Ames. All pumps at Parish Line pump station will be remotely controlled from Duncan and all pumps at Westminster pump station will be remotely controlled from Ames.

Below: Karen Durham-Aguilera, Director of Task Force Hope, presents Jefferson Parish President Aaron Broussard with a certificate commemorating the dedication of the Hero Pump Station Safe Room while Col. Bedey and others look on.



Photo by Karen Collins



Left: Though the amenities may be sparse, the pump operators are well protected during a tropical weather event.

Below: At a cost of \$18.2 million, the Corps built five safe rooms that will allow pumping operators to safely stay at the stations during a tropical event.

Average Height Above Ground:
25ft

Average Pile Depth:
92ft

Max Wind Speed:
250 mph

Maximum Accommodation:
12 people

New and Improved!

The New Orleans District goes online with a complete web re-design

By Sarah McLaughlin and Mallory Moore

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers has crossed the threshold into a new phase of development, one in which the re-positioning of its brand has become a fundamental point of focus. An integral part of this re-branding will be to create a more uniform presence on the World Wide Web, an effort that has the potential to increase the level of familiarity and trust between the agency and the public it serves by providing the most relevant, accurate and timely information. As a precursor to the organization-wide roll out, the New Orleans District launched its revamped Web site in early September.

Less is more

In addition to a new look and feel, the New Orleans District site has been drastically consolidated, shrinking from more than thirty-thousand pages to about a thousand pages. Condensing content is one of the most challenging tasks associated with a monumental Web site transition, but in doing so, the Corps has achieved an environment that will no longer overwhelm a user with an overabundance of information nor disorient a user with redundant or conflicting information.

Yet another major development is the integration of post-Katrina knowledge into the content. The new site showcases the Hurricane and Storm Damage Risk Reduction System and details post-Katrina repair and construction. Users will also see a brand new information system, which presents geographically referenced data using Microsoft Virtual Earth.

Streamlined navigation

One of the most significant improvements in the new site design is the addition of features that allow a user to navigate through different

sections. The new site has a static top horizontal navigation menu from which all of the key public touch points are accessible. The user can also see a "breadcrumb trail," which indicates how he or she arrived at the current page. A new search mechanism powered by Google is yet another function that makes this site so innovative.

Usability Testing

Throughout this process, the team has worked methodically to ensure that the site is equally informative and helpful to the layperson as it is to a project stakeholder. In an effort to test the site for ease-of-use and perceived efficiency, the District engaged the services of Perceptive Sciences, experts in usability testing and, in particular, human-computer interaction, to peruse the Web site with thirty stakeholders. Those interviews have given the site's design a sense of clarity.

Content Management

As part of the web migration, all district sites will ultimately incorporate a Content Management System (CMS) powered by Microsoft Sharepoint. The CMS component will allow designated personnel to publish approved content to the website. This new feature should result in the timely presentation of accurate information. No longer will the public need to look to the press for updates on Corps activities. With a CMS, progress can be reported directly from the Corps as it happens.

The new site accomplishes the kind of environment conceptualized by the Corps' leadership, successfully communicates our key messages, and presents the most current information in a consistent manner. Please visit the New Orleans District Web site at www.mvn.usace.army.mil.



US Army Corps of Engineers

New Orleans District CONTRACTING

One Team. Relevant. Ready. Responsive. Reliable

To access information contained in these pages You Must Have:
Adobe Acrobat Reader and MaxView Reader (4.7 MB)

HUBZONE construction MATOC links to the RFP specifications and plans (FEDTEDS)

8a construction MATOC links to the RFP specifications and plans (FEDTEDS)

15 February 2008 MRGO Market Survey Feedback Meeting Handouts and Sign-In Sheets

13 February 2008 Pre-Proposal Conference slides and sign-in sheets for the construction Multiple Award Task Order Contract (MATOC) - New Orleans and Southeast Louisiana Hurricane Protection Restoration Acquisition

Click here for the Borrow Information Pages

NEW - Gulf Intercoastal Waterway (GIWW) South Closure Project Industry Day

FedTeDS and FedBizOpps combined effective April 1, 2008

FedTeDS Vendor Accounts were moved over, but have to be 'activated' with a password reset.

1. Go to <https://www.fbo.gov/> the Vendor ID and click the Password Reset link; enter your old FedTeDS User ID. You'll get an email with the UserID and temporary password.
2. Once you get the password reset email, you need to go to <https://www.fbo.gov/> and enter in your login and password on the "Vendor" side.
3. You'll get a message similar to the following:

SBA Business Size Specialists

Procurement Opportunities

Contractor Forum

Award / Bid Results

News

SF 330

En
Please

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US Army Corps of Engineers



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[The Corps acts to further strengthen levees and](#)

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- [Small Business Administration](#)

FEATURED VIDEOS



West Closure Complex
Learn more about the alternatives under consideration to reduce risk to communities and businesses on the Westbank. [Watch >>](#)



Hurricane & Storm Damage Risk Reduction System
From levees to pumping stations, [find out more](#) about system features.

Before and after: To the left is a glimpse of the District contracting page prior to the web re-design. Below is a look at the same page under the new template.

This new design is oriented towards creating a user friendly method for disseminating important information by the district.

The Corps strengthens levees and floodwalls in the IHNC area

by Randy Cephus

The Inner Harbor Navigation Canal (IHNC) Surge Barrier project, when complete, will provide a critical piece to the overall Hurricane and Storm Damage Risk Reduction System (HSDRRS). Interim measures are scheduled for completion in 2009, with permanent protection in place in 2011.

The IHNC surge reduction barrier will be located at the confluence of the Gulf Inner Coastal Waterway (GIWW) and the Mississippi River Gulf Outlet (MRGO).

As this project gets underway, the Corps is re-evaluating the system in its entirety using new, more stringent design standards, as well as lessons learned from Hurricane Katrina.

During this process, the Corps, in collaboration with its stakeholders, determined the need to do further investigation in two areas. Both areas are located within a half-mile of the Seabrook bridge, where the IHNC meets Lake Pontchartrain.

The first area (1 on map) the Corps identified is

a stretch of floodwall that needs strengthening along the west side of the IHNC. This 1,800-foot stretch of floodwall is seven tenths of a mile north of Interstate 10 adjacent to the Gentilly Woods neighborhood.

According to Rick Kendrick, Chief for Program Execution in the Hurricane Protection Office, "In the reevaluation of this area, we saw an issue, decided it needed work, determined the best solution, and we are taking care of it."

The initial plan was to drive sheet piles to provide increased stability. However, Corps officials determined they could not complete that plan during the present hurricane season. Therefore, they initiated an interim measure that will increase the level of safety during this hurricane season.

The interim measure involves placing sand-filled HESCO baskets along the unprotected side of the floodwall along France Road to alleviate pressure on the wall should the area experience a high water event.

The Corps currently has all required HESCO



baskets on site and a hired labor team from the Corps' Memphis District has begun installing the baskets. The work should be completed in early September.

As part of a longer-term solution for this section, the Corps plans to drive sheet piles on the protected side of the floodwall.

"We have finalized the Plans and Specs for the sheet piles and put them out for bid on August 18," said Ron Elmer, IHNC Branch Chief. "The work should begin in about 45 days and should take around 60 days to complete."

The second area (2) of concern is on the east side of the IHNC. Initial analysis on this stretch of floodwall indicated a potential seepage issue. After further investigation and visual inspections, no actual seepage was observed. Additional testing and analysis confirmed that no corrective work was needed.

However, as an extra safety measure, the Corps will extend the line of relief wells that were placed near that area during emergency repairs immediately after Hurricane Katrina and will continue to monitor the area. Relief wells serve to stabilize the ground by draining excess water from the subsurface sand strata.

The Corps will continue to work closely with state and local partners and stakeholders as it completes the upgrades to the HSDRRS.



USACE photo

NSPS, continued from page 3

the objective. If they do, the pay pool may ignore the contributing factor or consider it part of the objective assessment.

Rate employees fairly, when you're done with your assessments, ask yourself if the results as a whole, reflect the correct value your employees contributed. Do an honest and critical review on what you wrote; be tough on yourself. Ask yourself, if the employee and my assessment truly merit the rating I am recommending? If not, correct the rating or the assessment now. Don't wait for the pay pool to return it to you for clarification or improvement. Does the employee that contributed the most have the highest overall rating? Does that top rated employee have the strongest assessment? Do the ratings track from top to bottom with their respective accomplishments? Do your assessments support your ratings?

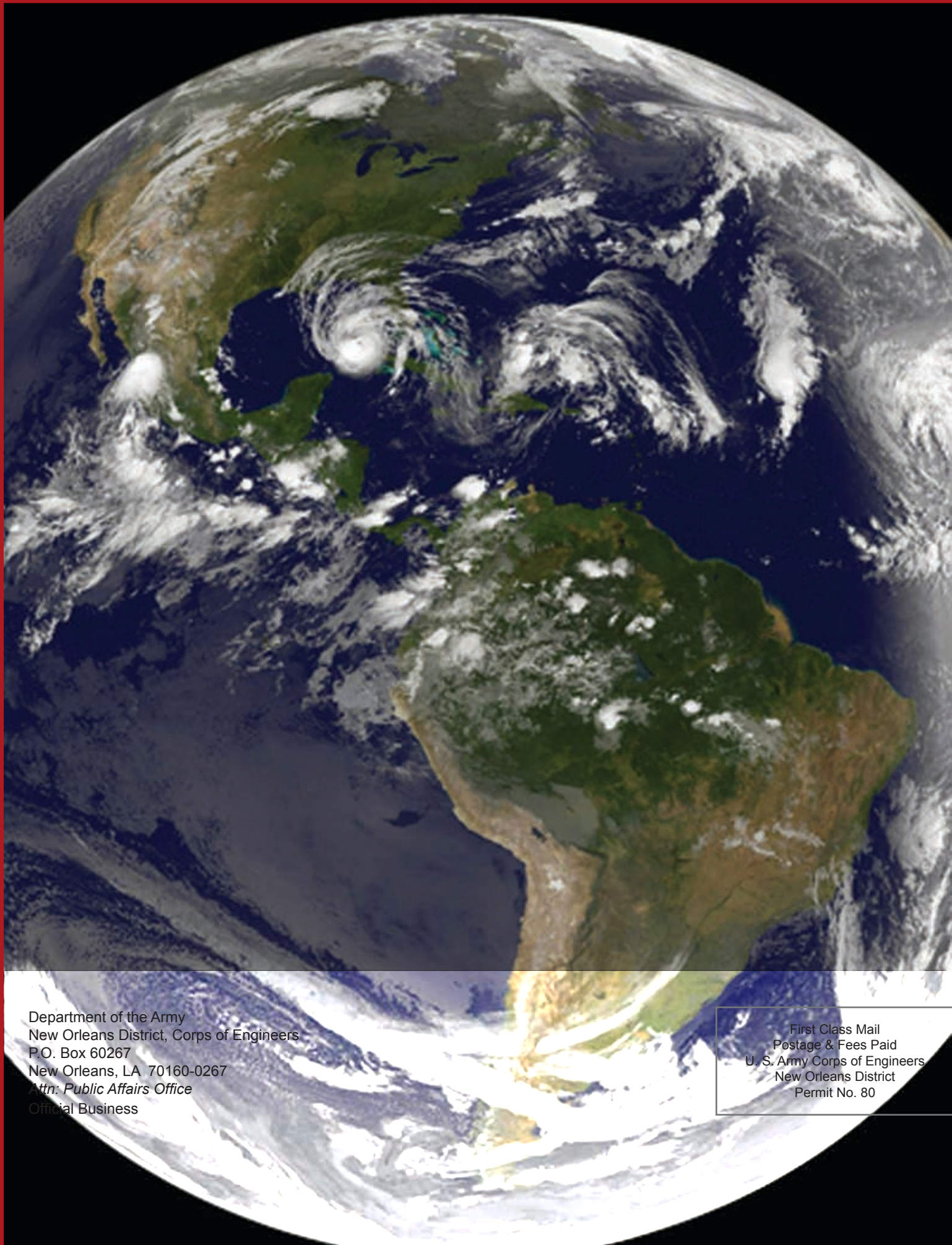
Remember, it is your assessment that determines the employee's rating. What you write counts, it is all the pay pool has to make its decision. This year, the pay pools are regional; don't expect someone on the pay pool panel to clarify your comments from their personal knowledge. They probably don't know your employee, they only know what you write and what you write will drive their decision.

Higher Level Reviewer and Pay Pools

From here, the assessments move to the higher level reviewer (HLR) who will review all the assessments assigned to them and bring a group consensus to those ratings. This will cross supervisors and there will be differences in evaluations. Some raters are easy, some are hard, and it is the HLR's job to bring a common basis to those ratings. Supervisors should expect that some ratings will be returned for corrections, improvement or further explanation.

The last step is the pay pool. The pay pool is not your rater. The pay pool is not out to knock down everyone's rating. It is surprising the number of times a pay pool will question the rating because it looks low. The pay pool brings standardization to all assessments in the pay pool. The pay pool will use the performance indicators and contributing factor benchmarks in detail to reach consensus on the ratings. The biggest challenge the pay pool faces are assessments that don't match the ratings.

In closing, when you write your employee or supervisor assessment, ask yourself one more question. Are these objectives good enough for 2009 or do they need to be improved?



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