



"We made history today."

Corps signs contract for IHNC Surge Protection Project

*IHNC Project
largest design-build
civil works project
in Corps history*

By Susan Spaht

On April 3, 2008, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and the State of Louisiana's Coastal Protection and Restoration Authority (CPRA) announced the awarding of the Inner Harbor Navigation Canal Surge Reduction Project contract, the largest design-build civil works project in the history of the Corps.

History Making

"We made history today," said Karen Durham-Aguilera, Director of Task Force Hope. "We are delighted to reach this historic milestone. The IHNC surge reduction work will reduce risk and provide increased safety for the people of Greater New Orleans."

The structure(s) is expected to be located at the confluence of the Gulf Intracoastal Waterway and the Mis-



This aerial photo shows the confluence of the Gulf Intracoastal Waterway (GIWW) and the Mississippi River Gulf Outlet (MRGO), the general location of the Corps' proposed surge protection project. (USACE Photo)

issippi River Gulf Outlet, generally between Paris Road and the shore of Lake Borgne from New Orleans East to St. Bernard Parish. (see photo this page)

Advance Measures

The design-build contract also includes an "advance measures" requirement, a construction feature that will reduce the current risk in Metro New Orleans, New Orleans East, the Lower Ninth Ward and St. Bernard Parish. The goal is to construct this work in 2009, prior to com-

pletion of the total project during the year 2011.

Award Winner

The contract was awarded to Shaw Environmental and Infrastructure, Inc. of New Orleans, La., for an amount of \$695,489,766.00. The total project is estimated to cost in excess of \$850 million.

"This project is the largest element in the overall 100-year level of protection for the greater New Orleans

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area," said Col. Jeffrey Bedey, Commander of the Corps' Hurricane Protection Office. "We welcome the firm of Shaw as our newest teammate. Shaw brings a wealth of knowledge and expertise to the team."

The Team

The Shaw team consists of these firms: INCA/Gerwick of Metairie, La.; Linfield Hunter & Junius of Metairie, La.; Eustis Engineering of Metairie, La.; Boh Bros. of New Orleans, La.; Cajun Constructors of Baton Rouge, La.; M.R. Pittman of Harahan, La.; and J. Ray McDermott of New Orleans, La.

"It's very exciting that all these Louisiana companies will be involved in this project," said Karen Durham-Aguilera. "These firms will be participating in the recovery along with adding to the economy of the state."

PPA First Step

The Corps and the CPRA recently negotiated and signed a Project Partnership Agreement (PPA), which is required by law. The signed PPA allowed the Corps to proceed with awarding the design-build contract.

100% Federally-funded

Construction of this project is 100% federally-funded. After construction is complete, the State of Louisiana will be fully responsible for operation, maintenance, rehabilitation, replacement and repair of the project.

As with all major construction projects, the Corps will engage external peer review to ensure that this project is providing the best product possible for the citizens of Greater New Orleans.

The completed Greater New Orleans

Faces of Hope

Guess who signed the contract for the largest design-build civil works project in Corps history?

When you look at the signature on the \$695 million IHNC Surge Reduction Project contract, you'll see one government employee's name. That's right, one name, from the Corps of Engineers. And who is it?

It's Missy Arnold.

"I'm responsible for everything that happens with this contract," said Arnold, a Contracting Officer for the Corps of Engineers for over 25 years, "It's a huge responsibility."

According to Arnold, the IHNC contract is the largest *fully-funded* design-build civil works contract in Corps history. "Usually, extremely large civil works projects are funded as continuing contracts, or funded incrementally, over the life of the contract," she said. "For this project, all the money is available at

the start - all \$695 million is fully-funded."

Living in New Orleans since October 2006, Arnold is part of the Corps' Vicksburg Mississippi District. Vicksburg is her hometown.

Before coming to New Orleans to assist in the contracting office, she was Chief Contracting Officer for the

Mississippi Recovery Field Office.

She has the special distinction of having "unlimited warrant" status. That means she has the authority to sign any contract of any dollar amount. Only a handful of contracting officers in the Army have that

level of authority, which is essential for the huge IHNC project contract.

"This is undoubtedly the highlight of my career."



Missy Arnold



Hurricane and Storm Damage Risk Reduction System will consist of a combination of floodwalls, levees, gates, pump stations and closure structures. The Corps estimates the total cost at approximately \$14.6 billion.

NEPA Compliance Vital

Over the next four months, the Corps will be completing its environmental

compliance requirements which will include several public meetings. In accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), the public will have the opportunity to continue providing input on the ultimate location and the full design of the project. After the Corps completes the NEPA process, construction will begin.



IHNC Surge Protection Contract is signed, now...

Corps will complete the NEPA process and all environmental requirements to arrive at final design

"The final design concept will be determined when the Corps of Engineers completes its environmental compliance and public involvement process in accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). The NEPA process is expected to be completed within the next four months, or around July 2008. After the NEPA process completes, we proceed with the full project design."

- Karen Durham-Aguilera, Director, Task Force Hope

National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) compliance for this project is being achieved in a two-step, or tiered, process. The first step was completed on March 14, 2008 when, after a 30-day public comment period, Col. Alvin Lee, Commander of the New Orleans District Corps of Engineers, signed the Decision Record for Individual Environmental Report (IER) #11. This IER investigated a number of alternatives for providing improved protection on the IHNC.

The Decision Record selected an alternative which included construction of two storm surge protection barriers – one to protect from Lake Borgne storm surge and one to protect from Lake Pontchartrain storm surge-- and particular location ranges within which such structures could be built.

Now that the design-build contract has been awarded, the Corps will begin the second step of the NEPA process. The second step, referred to as IER 11 Tier 2 Borgne, will investigate a range of possible alignments and designs to provide surge protection from Lake Borgne within the location range selected in IER #11.

A second Tier 2 NEPA document, IER 11 Tier 2 Pontchartrain, will investigate alternative alignments and designs to provide surge protection from Lake Pontchartrain. Construction cannot begin on either of these storm surge protection structures until Decision Records are signed for their respective Tier 2 NEPA documents.

The public will continue to have the opportunity to provide input into this decision-making process through upcoming public meetings and the 30-day comment period on the Tier 2 NEPA document.

The next public meetings for this project are scheduled for **April 17 and 29**.



To learn more about environmental requirements and upcoming public meetings, go to this Web site: <http://www.nolaenvironmental.gov/>

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