



Corps Hurricane Response

Task Force Hope Status Report

May 18, 2006

The US Army Corps of Engineers established Task Force Hope immediately after Hurricane Katrina hit the Louisiana and Mississippi coasts. Task Force Hope's mission is to manage the work on levees and floodwalls, debris removal and all emergency response efforts that Federal Emergency Management Agency requested the Corps to carry out. Task Force Hope oversees the efforts of Task Force Guardian and Recovery Field Offices in Louisiana and Mississippi. Task Force Guardian is repairing damages to the Greater New Orleans federal hurricane and flood protection system resulting from Hurricane Katrina, restoring the system to pre-storm levels of protection by June 1, 2006.

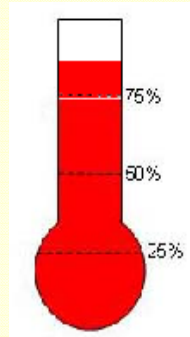
Hurricane Protection System Restoration

Percent of Pre-Katrina Protection Restored

87 % complete

33 of 59 contracts complete

The Hurricane Response
Web site is located at: <http://www.mvd.usace.army.mil/hurricane/>



Contingency plans set for hurricane season for canal gates, pumps

Work on Orleans Ave canal – to include the temporary closures and pumps – is on schedule; however, London Avenue and 17th Street canals are two weeks behind schedule.

“We have contingency plans in place to close the canals with sheet piling in case an early storm occurs,” said Dan Hitchings, Task Force Hope director.

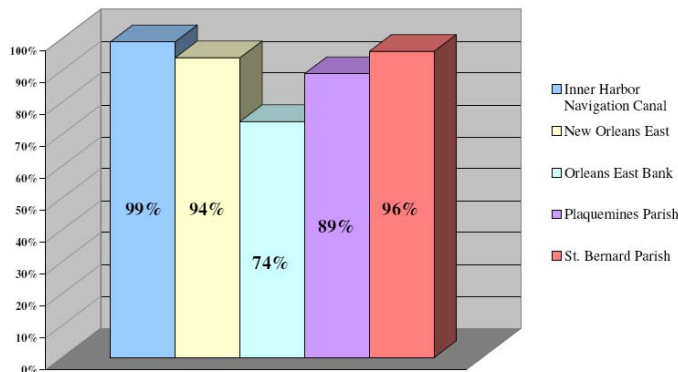
Slower progress has been attributed to a congested work site which inhibits the contractor's ability to work as quickly as expected at the 17th Street Canal.

“Just like when you do restoration work on your home, you will occasionally happen upon unanticipated work; with this project – one that has not been attempted before – some unexpected factors have deferred our progress,” Hitchings said. “Our commitment, however, to complete and ensure this system is better, safer and stronger is unflinching.”

Twelve temporary pumps have been installed at London Avenue Canal. Ten pumps have been delivered to the Orleans Avenue Canal and five of the pumps have been installed.

See Contingency, page 6

Hurricane Protection System Repair Status



The percent figures represent actual construction. The reason Orleans East Bank shows only 74 percent is that the construction there includes additional improvements (temporary gate closures and pumps).

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The Faces of Hope:

Storm victim

Story by Lois Jackson, USDA public affairs specialist, and Brenda Beasley, Memphis District public affairs specialist

In the months since Hurricane Katrina hit Aug. 29, 2005, New Orleans District's Jackie M. Callender Sr., and his family have seen it all. He was in Indianapolis, Ind., at a U.S.A. Track and Field Workshop when he first saw the news. He called his son, Jackie Callender, Jr., and told him to get the family out before the storm hit and arranged to meet them in Dallas.

Life long New Orleanians, Jackie and his wife Connie have three grown children (Tamara, Kia, and Jackie Jr.), and two grandchildren (Mariam and Leah). Daughter Kia lives in Baton Rouge and was not affected by the storm.

Upon returning to the Baton Rouge area Sept. 3, Jackie and "all the fam-

ily" moved into Kia's one bedroom apartment. Jackie jokingly remarked, "Yeah, there were eight of us, two cats and a 'damn' dog." He finally acquired an apartment of his own Oct. 15.

It was only after water levels had finally receded that Jackie and his wife returned to New Orleans to retrieve what may be left of their home. He spoke of his house and the devastation to his community in a straight forward kind of way. He said he will never forget his reaction to the sight of his home.

They did a room to room inspection and the first thing he thought of was the loss of the tokens of memories they had of their children and life together. He saw pieces of one daughter's first ballet recital, his son's first basketball, another's band instrument, and a picture of one daughter as the "Little School Queen" — all destroyed, the furniture tussled and the refrigerator full of flies.



Photo by Brenda Beasley

Jackie Callender, Sr. works as a Corps program analyst.

Even though this devastation was almost too much to bear, Jackie was able to keep in touch with his New Orleans District Office through their website and emergency phone num-



Photographs by Jackie Callender.

Above, this "family room" used to hold a big screen TV; oversized sofa, loveseat, chair and recliner; two large bookcases; a coffee table and two end tables; and two large stereo systems. It was here that his family joined for their times together. Above right, a side by side refrigerator freezer didn't stand against the hurricane.



Photographs by Jackie Callender.



Jackie checks out the damage in his garage.

Jackie's first view of his house located in New Orleans East in November 2005. It was an unforgettable moment for Jackie.

bers. When he was in Dallas, someone brought a laptop to use. Jackie was able to log onto the Corps' website to see that the Corps was supporting their staff.

This support allowed Jackie to return to a job when others had lost everything and had no job to return to. He was able to report for his regular job as a program analyst in the Programs, Planning, & Project Management Division via teleworking at the Louisiana Recovery Field Office in Baton Rouge, one of eight alternate worksites that the Corps' had arranged for hurricane devastated employees.

In December 2005, Jackie attended the U.S.A. Track and Field National Convention in Jacksonville, Fla. As

the South Zone Representative for the Track and Field Associations Committee Jackie had to give a report on issues in his zone. But, the audience of almost 300 people was more concerned about how he was doing after the hurricane than his zone report. So, he stopped and began answering their many questions.

"How's your family?" they asked. "My immediate family is safe, but my great nephew may have drowned," he replied. "Was there much damage to your house?" they asked. "My house is totaled, it's gone, and everything with it," he replied.

A big sigh came over the room.

Upon hearing this, Jackie said "Wait. Don't sigh. I feel too blessed to be stressed. I'm here. In spite of everything, I'm exceptionally blessed. And, I have to give credit to this organization (the Corps) because I never missed a paycheck."

Since that time, Jackie has also worked on getting information to others regarding available resources and assistance to hurricane victims. A mission he can take to new heights with his April 10 acceptance of a deployment position at the LA-RFO as the assistant debris manager.

The mission of the **Status Report Newsletter** is to support 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 work of not only Task Force Hope, but the efforts of Task Force Guardian and the Recovery Field Offices in Louisiana and Mississippi to the Gulf Coast community and its citizens. This is an online publication and open to public distribution. This issue and past issues can be found at: <http://www.mvd.usace.army.mil/hurricane>.

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

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

Photographer desires to capture New Orleans' will to come back

by Amanda Jones
Public Affairs, New Orleans District

He's been to every Corps construction site in the New Orleans metro area, numerous retirement parties, town halls, district seminars and meetings, and just about every major district event. But much like Mr. Wilson on the once popular television show "Home Improvement," his face is most often half hidden, usually behind a digital camera. Lane Lefort, however, is a straightforward man and a "behind-the-scenes kind of guy."

"It's awkward to be in the forefront," said Lefort, who's often the one taking photos of his friends and coworkers receiving awards and meeting dignitaries, never in the spotlight himself. "That's just part of the job," he said with a humble smile.

Lane has been working at MVN for five years following a laundry list of jobs early in life.

"I was a carpenter, an A/C man, a pipe fitter, a draftsman...I did a lot of different things," Lefort said. He never took to any of them because of his passion for photography.

When he was 18 years old he began to realize his potential and bought his first 35 mm camera just after high school. All of those early jobs were just to make ends meet until he could afford to go professional in 1982.

"At least I have things to fall back on after the A-76 announcement," he chuckled, knowing that he would never give up photography.

In fact, choosing the photography profession took a huge leap of faith for both him and his wife Diane, whom he met on a blind date in high school over thirty years ago.

"It's not steady work. I freelanced for the West Bank Guide and then got on permanently. I worked there for two years until they sold the company. Then I did convention work for Lagniappe Studios for six months. After

that I freelanced for the Times Picayune, the Children's Museum, West Jefferson Hospital, United Way, and the Associated Press, to name a few," Lefort said. "Freelancing allowed me to be with my daughter as she was growing up."

"He was able to go to all of my basketball games and track meets and just be there for me, which was really nice," said his daughter Kelly. "When I was younger, I was able to go with him on some of his assignments, which was fun. I was able to see what he did all day. I also learned a lot about photography because we used to go places like the zoo and Jean Lafitte National Park to take pictures."

But when Kelly became an adult, Lefort and his wife decided they could use a little more stability. They felt that the Corps could provide that.

Michael Maples, Lefort's supervisor said, "The first time I spoke to Lane was by phone to set up an interview. He seemed laid back, which is something I don't need in my shop. But he seemed sure of himself. He seemed to be of the "old school" with photography. So many upcoming photographers today don't have a clue about the science of photography, but he did. Plus he seemed generally interested in his craft."

"There are houses that are completely collapsed with writing that says, 'We'll be back!' It's my job to make those images memorable."

Lane Lefort

Lefort has proven his abilities to the district, according to Maples. "Lane does outstanding work. He will only do his best. It doesn't matter if it is a 'grip and grin' award shot or an all day hot and dirty assignment out in the field, Lane gives it his all," said Maples.

His daughter didn't mind him going back to work full time either. "He's a wonderful father and one of my best friends," said Kelly, who joined the Corps team or the "family business" in 2002. "I'm very proud of his accomplishments. He's an amazing photographer and I admire him greatly."

But the Corps has also afforded Lefort many great opportunities, including his most recent endeavor.

"I was taking ID pictures for Task Force Guardian and after talking to some of its members, it sounded like something I'd like to get into. There was a need for documentation that might otherwise get overlooked," said Lefort.

"I enjoy working for TFG. Everyone is so professional and I like being able to see progress at the job sites," Lefort said.

Continued on page 5



Lane Lefort holds his camera to his eye during a photography shoot. He has said he loves photography and considers it his work and his hobby. Hurricane recovery duty takes a large portion of his time.

Continued from page 4

Having seen it all he said, "Next hurricane season there's not much that I'd do different from any other hurricane season."

The Westwego native scathed by relatively minor damage to his home and no flood water admits how impressed he is that people haven't lost their patriotism or positive attitude.

"There are houses that are completely collapsed with writing that says, 'We'll be back!' It's my job to make those images memorable."



Contact us with your comments and questions:

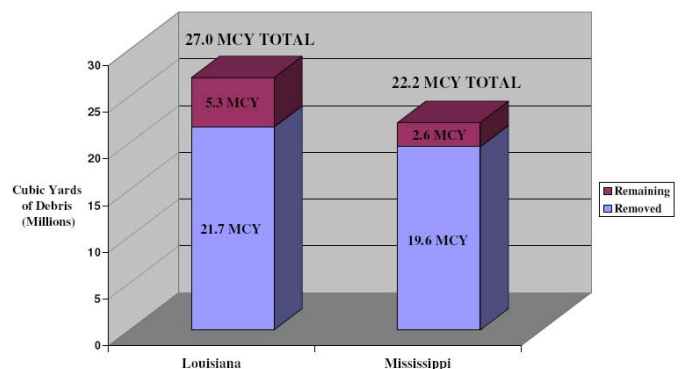
b2fwdpao@usace.army.mil

Task Force Hope Mission Overview

- **Repair:**
Return pre-Katrina protection to hurricane-damaged components by June 1, 2006. This is the sole mission of Task Force Guardian, as overseen by Task Force Hope.
- **Restore:**
Restore undamaged levees/ floodwalls to originally authorized heights by September 2007.
Correct Floodwall Deficiencies
- **Complete:**
Accelerated completion of unconstructed portions of authorized projects by September 2007.
- **Improve:**
Make improvements to optimize the performance of the existing system.
- **Certify:**
Raise system to provide 100-year level of protection by 2010
- **Evaluate Higher Levels of Protection:**
Louisiana Coastal Protection and Restoration Report - preliminary report due June 2006, final December 2007.

Note: red text indicates funding not yet provided

Hurricane Debris Removal



Flag of words communicates voices from community



At left, Mississippi Valley Division Commander Brig. Gen. Robert Crear reads comments from property owners that made up a flag displayed by EFO-North. The flag served as the back drop to the EFO-North Partnership Appreciation Ceremony on May 11, 2006. From left to right, EFO-North Resident Engineer, Don Simpson, Crear, and MVK Commander, Col. Anthony Vesay read comments from the flag.

Contingency plans set for hurricane season for canal gates, pumps

Continued from page 1

Five of the twelve pumps for 17th Street have been delivered but none have been installed.

“We are currently testing the performance of these pumps,” said Peg O’Bryan, Task Force Hope program manager. “We are working closely with the Sewerage and Water Board to develop an operation plan to ensure water elevations do not affect the integrity of the system.”

The Corps is taking actions on all of the unfinished repair projects to ensure they are completed as quickly as possible by having contractors add crews, and or shifts, where necessary. Contingency plans are in place to provide the pre-Katrina level of protection in all areas.

Where can you find the latest information about the Corps’ Hurricane Katrina work?

The Hurricane Response website is located at:

<http://www.mvd.usace.army.mil/hurricane/>

Points of Contact for Information

Topic	Phone	Organization
Overall information about work being performed by the Corps of Engineers in the New Orleans District	504-862-2201	New Orleans District Public Affairs
Levee construction being performed to restore the hurricane and flood protection system to pre-Katrina condition by June 1, 2006	504-862-2076	Task Force Guardian Public Affairs
Debris Removal in Louisiana	225-218-9325	Louisiana Recovery Field Office
Debris Removal in Mississippi	601-631-5065	Mississippi Recovery Field Office
Overall Task Force Hope Information	504-862-1836	Task Force Hope Public Affairs