

**PCA Signing Ceremony, Lafitte
Comments for Col. Michael Burt
3 July 2002**

It is a pleasure to be in Lafitte today, standing in for Col. Julich, who was unable to attend due to a previous commitment.

This ceremony is noteworthy for two reasons. First, the citizens of Jean Lafitte are finally getting a much-needed flood protection system. And second, the project represents a new and improved way of doing business for the Corps. I'll say more about that in a few minutes.

Let me start off by recognizing (??VIPS??)

and thanking the West Jefferson Levee District, in particular, Chip Cahill and Jerry Spohrer, for their involvement in this project from the beginning. They worked closely with us throughout the feasibility stage and were truly accommodating during the entire planning process. Their cooperation kept this project on track.

I'd also like to thank Lafitte Mayor Tim Kerner who worked with residents when we encountered potential problems. He sure made our job easier.

The new levee planned for Lafitte will provide a closed flood protection system using earthen levee and floodwalls. It will close all gaps and increase existing levee heights by as much as six feet in some areas. The first of four contracts will be awarded in November. The work should take about three years to complete.

I mentioned earlier that this \$13 million dollar flood control project represents a new way of doing business for the Corps. It is our first project to be constructed under Section 205 of the Continuing Authorities Program. Section 205 allows federal participation in small flood control projects and takes a fraction of the time that regularly authorized projects take to perform study and design work.

With the signing of this project cooperation agreement today, the West Jefferson Levee District indicates its willingness to serve as sponsor on this worthwhile project. Likewise, the Corps assumes certain responsibilities and stands ready to begin construction.

I'd like to once again thank Chip Cahill and the West Jefferson Levee District, Mayor Tim Kerner and other officials who have worked together with the Corps to make Lafitte a safer place to live.