



**US Army Corps
of Engineers** ®

Public Release of Data on New Orleans Levees and Floodwalls



(For more information, please contact Headquarters, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Public Affairs at 202 761-4715 or 202-761-0011.)

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers on Oct. 29 begin publicly releasing available data relevant to the performance of the hurricane and storm protection system around New Orleans during Hurricane Katrina.

The current releasable data will be posted on a publicly accessible web site, <https://ipet.wes.army.mil>. Additional data will be added to the web site as it becomes available.

Because the Corps of Engineers wants to find out what happened from an engineering perspective to the New Orleans protection system to ensure optimum designs for its reconstruction and for future projects, the Chief of Engineers commissioned an Interagency Performance Evaluation Task Force (IPET) to perform the engineering evaluation. The American Society of Civil Engineers (ASCE) is supporting with an External Review Panel, which will provide an independent oversight of the IPET evaluation.

The IPET is gathering data and will perform the analysis. All other groups, including the National Science Foundation (NSF) (comprised of the University of California – Berkeley), are working to learn what they can about the levee system and what can be applied to levee systems in California and elsewhere.

The data released will include design memorandums, dating back to the 1960s, and the associated reports for the Lake Pontchartrain, Louisiana and Vicinity High Level Plan, which includes 17th Street Outfall Canal and London Avenue Outfall Canal. This information being released includes the project plan, hydrology and hydraulics, geology, foundation investigation and design (including the field exploration, soil borings, and laboratory testing) and the structural design.

The IPET and several other engineering and professional organizations are studying the performance of the levees and floodwalls during Hurricane Katrina. Hopefully, the data that is being publicly released will help all interested organizations in reaching engineering-based conclusions as to how the protective structures performed during the hurricane.

Eventually, all releasable documentation from the New Orleans protection system will be available on the web site.

Much of the pre-Katrina documentation on the New Orleans levees and floodwalls was done before digital office equipment became available and includes large design and construction drawings and reams of paper related to contracts and other records. IPET personnel are working to digitally scan the documentation as quickly as possible.

The data collection teams have also been doing field work in the New Orleans area to secure as much data as possible related to the performance of the levees and floodwalls. Data collection efforts have been ongoing to gather as much data as possible before it was covered or destroyed by cleanup or reconstruction efforts.

The IPET is collecting pre-Katrina documentation (design and construction drawings, soil sample records, etc.), post-Katrina documentation (hydrographic surveys, soil samples, concrete cores, etc.) and other performance

data (eyewitness accounts, photographs, etc.).

The data collection effort included teams from IPET, ASCE, NSF (comprised of the University of California – Berkeley) and additional members from Louisiana State University.

IPET will use collected data, laboratory testing, and modeling activities in its analysis. Their final report will be released in June 2006. However, any important findings will be continually shared with those doing the New Orleans levee and floodwall reconstruction work.

The Secretary of Defense has also directed the Secretary of the Army through the Assistant Secretary of the Army for Civil Works to convene an independent panel of national experts under the direction of the National Academies to perform a high-level review and issue findings based on the IPET, ASCE panel and other data. This panel will release its report in July 2006.

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