



US Army Corps
of Engineers
Mississippi Valley Division



Corps Hurricane Response

Task Force Hope Status Report Newsletter

July 25, 2011

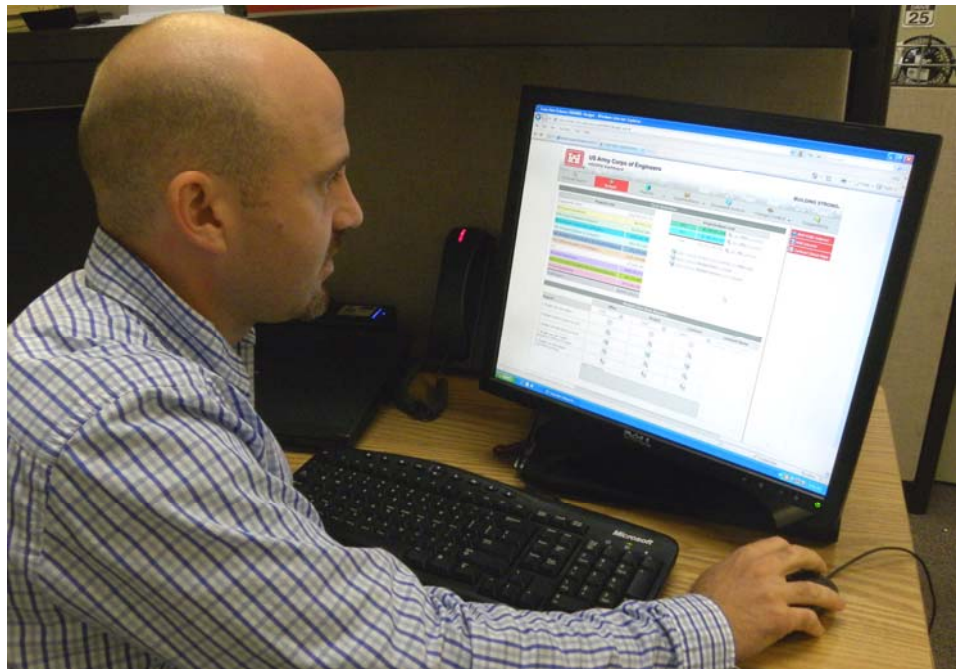
Dashboard manages Corps' No. 1 mission

New, innovative database used to manage and organize HSDRRS funding, scheduling, contracts

By Susan Spaht

When the Corps of Engineers took on the challenge of designing and building the Greater New Orleans Hurricane and Storm Damage Risk Reduction System after Hurricane Katrina, they knew it was not going to be “business as usual.” And nothing about this mission has been.

Immediately following the hurricane in August 2005, the response from Washington was quick and generous. Congress and the Administration gave the Corps authorization and funding totaling nearly \$15 billion through seven Emergency Supplemental Appropriations acts. That gave the Corps the go-ahead and upfront money to design and construct a real perimeter storm surge defense system for the Greater New Orleans area. The system includes 350 miles of levees, floodwalls,



Greg Gagliano, a HSDRRS Dashboard developer in Task Force Hope, updates a project's budgetary information on the Dashboard. USACE Photo

pumps and gates across a five-parish area along the Louisiana Gulf Coast. The Corps set itself an aggressive goal by vowing to finish the gargantuan effort in a mere six years – a timeframe unheard of in normal Army Civil Works programs.

So, where do you start?

How do you track the contracts and the money? How do you handle the schedules and the mountains of data for such a large and compressed mission? “We had to change the

whole control process,” said Bob Rowlette, a Senior Program Manager for Task Force Hope and an Evans-Graves Engineers contractor, who headed the program and project management team. “Our team designed computer programs that allowed real-time tracking of every

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HSDRRS contract and every dollar obligated or spent. We call it the **Dashboard** because you can look through that and navigate the entire world known as the Hurricane and Storm Damage Risk Reduction System.”

The HSDRRS Dashboard

The HSDRRS Dashboard was created as a tool for program and project managers to aid them in the execution of their general mission and contractual responsibilities as they designed and constructed the HSDRRS. The challenge was to develop a plan for communication of information and processes for Corps staff, contractors, decision makers, project delivery teams and the public, which included more than 10,000 people at the peak of program execution. The interface was developed using industry-standard technology that is browser-based and accessible over the Corps' intranet and internet domain depending on the target audience.

The Dashboard was programmed to be compatible with commonly-used commercial software to make mission-essential information available to the entire chain of command. The Dashboard integrated existing Corps of Engineers data management systems such as CEFMS, RMS, P2, REMIS and other commercial software such as Primavera, and data relationships into a user-friendly desktop and Web-based visual interface. The Dashboard eliminated the requirement for the Corps staff to access multiple, independently-secured databases by providing a single “log-in” to access data through a secure interface.



The Task Force Hope/Evans-Graves Engineers contractor team that created the HSDRRS Dashboard are, from left, Greg Gagliano, Web IT Manager; Todd Grazier, Project Manager; Jim Annaccone, Senior Project Manager; and (seated) Phil Meric, Senior Technical Manager.
USACE Photo

The Dashboard was designed to integrate financial and budgetary information, project scheduling, program and projects management controls, real estate, personnel, utility relocations, public communications, construction status, and other systems.



Bob Rowlette

Change Control Process

Considering the fast-paced schedule of the HSDRRS, the number of contracts involved, and the fact that the largest projects were worked through design/build contracts, a change control process was essential. The Change Control Process on the HSDRRS Dashboard provides the

mechanism to document and incorporate changes in contract scope, cost, schedule and program acquisition as established by the Program Management Plan.

Each change in a contract requires a Change Control Request (CCR) which follows an established chain of command for approval. It's all right there on the Dashboard – in real time. Additionally, the HSDRRS Dashboard provides sophisticated project data, reporting and presentation. All interfacing parts of the project delivery team can access budgets, CCRs and schedule milestone information as well as generate custom reports to suit their needs, right from their desktop screen. This helps eliminate human error while increasing accuracy and consistency of reporting data. The Dashboard gives project managers the flexibility and

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short response times they need to be effective under any circumstance.

Tracking the Funds

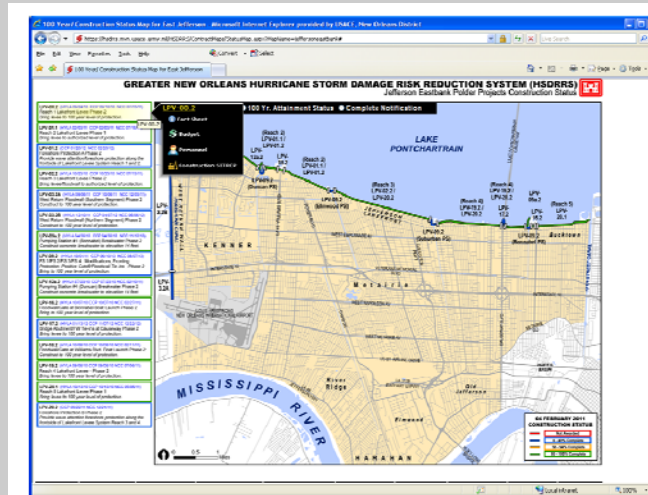
Funded at \$14.6 billion, the Hurricane and Storm Damage Risk Reduction System is the largest civil works mission in U.S. Army Corps of Engineers history. This is roughly *three times* the size of the organization's overall annual budget. "The addition of the Dashboard for this mission has been essential," said John Hess, Program Manager for Task Force Hope, "no Corps district or division has ever done anything on this scale before. The Dashboard puts financial information at the fingertips of managers and decision-makers that would not have been possible through the Corps' standard system. There is no way we could have kept track of our program control system without it."

Hess explained that because of the magnitude of the HSDRRS program and the timeframe the Corps established for it, all six districts in the Mississippi Valley Division were involved in some way or another, as were the Hurricane Protection Office and several other divisions and districts. "All parties engaged in the mission – from engineers to executives - had access to the same information," Hess explained. "Throughout the region and beyond, everyone had a graphical view of the same information, in the same format."

In a recent Army Audit Agency (AAA) audit, the HSDRRS Dashboard was

specifically cited as an effective tool for program management of funds valued at \$14.5 billion received from five public laws, according to Hess. The AAA returned that audit with a "No Comment" approval.

"I've never heard of that before," said Rowlette, a retired Army Colonel and former commander of the Louisville and Charleston Districts. "The AAA's job is to find what is wrong with your budget process and recommend ways to improve it. 'No comment'



"We call it the *Dashboard* because you can look through that and navigate the entire world known as the Hurricane and Storm Damage Risk Reduction System." - Bob Rowlette

means they couldn't find anything that needed improvement. We are very proud of that audit!"

According to Maj. Gen. Michael Walsh, Commander of the Mississippi Valley Division, "We were pleased with the AAA audit results. The positive report and lack of recommendations clearly indicate that the efforts and diligence expended on managing these funds have been successful, and duties have been carried out appropriately."

Hess explained that the Dashboard is most effective for very large programs over a definitive timeframe.

The Dashboard process "is not really feasible for routine civil works programs or those that are dependent on multi-year funding. The Dashboard requires broad resources that come with big missions," Hess explained. "You have to have a system like the Dashboard to monitor a mega program like this one. And you must have overall participation from all of your team members. That is essential."

The Corps has been recognized within the public sector as a model for delivering a mega program, according to Hess. And the Dashboard has been so successful that other Corps districts and some private companies are imitating it. "We have already shared this knowledge of the HSDRRS Dashboard with the Department of Energy, the U.S. Forces Korea Relocation/Far East District, the Trans Atlantic Division and FEMA who all have similar mega missions. The Dashboard model could be a really good fit for those programs too."

Unique Challenge, Unique Solution

Design and construction of the Hurricane and Storm Damage Risk Reduction System within a compressed timeframe presented the Corps of Engineers with a unique challenge. Corps teamwork, sponsor and stakeholder participation, real determination, and a customized tool called the HSDRRS Dashboard provided the unique solution that brought this mega mission to reality.





The Corps' steel warehouse team poses with the last sheet pile to leave the warehouse yard. From left, are Jerry Johns, Ali Aljaberi, Dennis Forvendel, Don Lovett, Partick Barry, Ernie Koehler, David Kearney, William Montelius, Jr., Melvin Marsalis and Christian Clivens. The warehouse project saved the HSDRRS mission in excess of \$40 million. USACE Photos by Tom Durel

By Susan Spaht

After Hurricane Katrina, the Corps of Engineers determined that it needed to construct approximately 33 miles of floodwalls as part of the Hurricane and Storm Damage Risk Reduction System. These floodwalls would require over 100,000 tons of steel sheet piles. Taking a tip from private industry, the Corps devised an innovative plan, one that was unique to government: buy steel sheet piles in bulk and warehouse those materials until needed. At the time, the market price of steel was at an all-time low, so the plan was perfectly timed.

An Evans-Graves Engineers team developed a high tech database system, called the Materials Inventory Management System, to track the

comings and goings of the steel sheet piles. This system provided strict check-in and check-out monitoring, ordering, delivery, warehouse management/operations, and inventory tracking. The steel sheet piles were trucked directly from the mill to



the Corps' warehouse already marked with government bar codes. Upon arrival, a Quality Assurance inspector checked the steel for product quality using a number of specifications; any defective pieces were rejected at that time. Handheld bar-code scanners were used on the

spot to scan the barcodes and document the supply contractor, size, shape and length of the load for inventory tracking purposes. These devices also provided printed receipts for transactions on the spot.

Similarly, a construction contractor would make arrangements for picking up a load of steel sheet piles from the warehouse for his authorized Corps project. This information was conveyed wirelessly to all handheld devices to ensure the order was filled for the correct amount and type of steel piles.

It is estimated that the Steel Warehousing Project saved the Corps and the HSDRRS mission in excess of \$40 million, and also saved an unknown quantity of waiting time on the part of the Corps' contractors.



Col. Sinkler relinquishes command of Hurricane Protection Office



By Susan Spaht

In a formal ceremony on July 21, Col. Robert Sinkler relinquished command of the Hurricane Protection Office. The HPO project delivery teams are in the process of integrating into the New Orleans District with the continued support of the Mississippi Valley Division.

The Hurricane Protection Office was part of the larger U.S. Army Corps of Engineers team established to deliver the Hurricane and Storm Damage Risk Reduction System following Hurricanes Katrina and Rita in 2005. The HPO, an expeditionary project execution task force, was created to assist the Mississippi Valley Division

Commander in designing and constructing a quality HSDRRS on an aggressive timeline for the areas hardest hit by the 2005 hurricanes.

The HPO team was made up of supporting Corps districts from the MVD (St. Paul, Rock Island, St. Louis, Memphis, Vicksburg and New Orleans) as well as Chicago, Portland, Huntington, Walla Walla and other districts and divisions around the nation. The HPO team was also supported by experts from Corps laboratories and research centers, and by dedicated contractors, all of whom were committed to delivering a quality HSDRRS on schedule and under budget.



Congratulations to Col. Robert Sinkler and the Hurricane Protection Office team for successfully completing your mission of providing 100-year level risk reduction by June 1.

The HPO successfully provided a perimeter system to the areas hardest hit by Hurricanes Katrina and Rita. The team faced a wide range of challenges in changing times - and HPO delivered! Although some finish-up work still remains, your achievements to date are simply incredible and historic.



Michael Walsh

MG Michael Walsh, Commander
Mississippi Valley Division

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The *Status Report Newsletter* supports the information program for Task Force Hope and its stakeholders. It also serves as the primary tool for accurately transmitting the Corps' hurricane risk reduction efforts to stakeholders.

This is an online publication that is open to public distribution.

This issue and past issues can be found at:
<http://www.mvn.usace.army.mil/hps>

Comments and questions may be sent to the Status Report Newsletter editor at:
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Status Report Newsletter
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