



**US Army Corps
of Engineers**
New Orleans District

News Release

Public Affairs Office
504-862-2201

www.mvn.usace.army.mil

Corps contacts:

New Orleans District: Susan Jackson, (504) 862-2201

ERDC: Bobbi Galford, 601-634-2505; Wayne Stroupe, 601-634-2404

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Workshop brings international hurricane experts together

Vicksburg, MS – Some of the world’s foremost experts in storm surge, wave, and frequency modeling brought their expertise together to address Louisiana hurricane protection issues at the Hurricane Protection Design Workshop held at the U.S. Army Engineer Research and Development Center (ERDC) in Vicksburg, Miss., Dec. 20-21.

Co-sponsored by the Corps of Engineers’ New Orleans District and ERDC, more than 70 attendees shared ideas and a wealth of knowledge in storm modeling, protective designs, and related topics. Attendees represented various government agencies (Corps, National Oceanographic and Atmospheric Administration, etc.), universities (Louisiana State, Notre Dame, Florida, Delaware, North Carolina, and the Massachusetts Institute of Technology), private engineering firms, and research and engineering organizations in the Netherlands.

Due to the urgency to get short- and long-range protection plans working for Louisiana, the workshop was put together in only a few weeks and was held just before Christmas to expedite the process.

“The number of attendees was not so surprising in light of the importance of the job at hand,” said Dr. Bruce Ebersole, the workshop’s moderator and chief of the Flood and Storm Protection Division in ERDC’s Coastal and Hydraulics Laboratory. “I was delighted with the turnout, the spirit of openness and candor, and the overwhelming desire to contribute and be a part of improving the level of protection for coastal Louisiana.”

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The first day of the workshop centered on presentations on the New Orleans flood protection system and designs, Dutch sea defenses and modeling, hurricane climatology and forecasting, hurricane windfields, wave predictions and modeling, storm surge modeling, and methods to estimate storm frequency. The modeling techniques discussed included some of the most advanced programs available.

The workshop's second day moved into discussion and interaction focusing on three broad areas: various protective design concepts; modeling schemes for hurricane waves, storm surge and water levels to use in evaluating design concepts; and risk/statistical methods to examine tradeoffs between different design concepts, levels of protection, storm frequency, etc. Many of the workshop attendees agreed to support three teams that will individually focus on the three areas of discussion.

“An important outcome from this workshop was the engagement of considerable intellectual horsepower and many key constituencies in what I expect will be a rather open design process that will aid in developing the best protection scheme,” said Ebersole. “I expect this workshop will be the first of several that will address other design issues. They will help foster a sense of openness and transparency in the design process, which I think is valuable and essential.”

Edmond Russo Jr., chief of the Coastal Engineering Branch of ERDC's Coastal and Hydraulics Laboratory, attended the workshop in his capacity as the Corps of Engineers Project Manager, South Louisiana Hurricane Protection Study. Russo was also complimentary of the workshop's achievements.

“One of the greatest benefits of the workshop was timely identification of complex coastal and hydraulics problems and the needs of the South Louisiana Hurricane Protection Study. To accomplish the required tasks in the study, we will be integrating the capabilities and resources of Corps' districts and laboratories, academia, the consultant community, as well as experts from other governmental agencies, nationally and abroad, many of which attended the workshop,” Russo said.

“The workshop attendees recognized that hurricanes Katrina and Rita have changed the landscape across the Gulf Coast, as well as the nation's mindset on how we approach large, complex, and significant water resources problems. The South Louisiana Hurricane Protection Study is a strategic opportunity to integrate the best science and engineering talents and organizations worldwide in addressing some of the major civil works problems of this century for our nation.”