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US Army Corps of Engineers®

Release No. IPET-07-01

For Immediate Release

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March 26, 2007

IPET: Katrina investigation team releases final versions of selected report volumes

VICKSBURG, MISS. – The Interagency Performance Evaluation Task Force (IPET) today released the final versions of Volumes II, IV, VI, VII and IX from its June1, 2006, draft report on how the hurricane protection structures around New Orleans performed during Hurricane Katrina. IPET is also releasing an interim final version of Volume I.

The final volumes are available on the IPET public Web site, https://ipet.wes.army.mil.

All IPET findings are peer reviewed by an External Review Panel of national experts from the American Society of Civil Engineers and by the National Academies - National Research Council Committee on New Orleans Hurricane Protection Projects. The finalized volumes released today address comments and suggestions made by these two review panels on the IPET draft volumes released June 1.

There were no major revisions of IPET technical findings or lessons learned as a result of the review panel comments. The work accomplished in response to the comments from the review panels largely expanded or augmented the earlier analyses. This resulted in more comprehensive data and results, confirmation of initial findings and more effective presentation of results.

The volumes released today are

Volume I: Executive Summary and Overview (*Interim Final)* – summary of findings and lessons learned.

Volume II: Geodetic Vertical and Water Level Datums – update of geodetic and water level references for the region and determining accurate elevations for all critical structures.

Volume IV: The Storm – surge and wave environments created by Katrina and the time history and nature of the forces experienced by protection structures during the storm.

Volume VI: The Performance -- Interior Drainage and Pumping – performance of the interior drainage and pumping systems with regard to extent and duration of the flooding.

Volume VII: The Consequences – the economic, human safety and health, environmental, and social and cultural losses due to Katrina.

Volume IX: Supporting Appendices – documentation of information resources and management, program management, and communications.

Volumes to be released later

Final versions of IPET Volume III: The Hurricane Protection System and Volume V: The Performance – Levees and Floodwalls will be released in the near future.

An interim version of Volume VIII: Risk and Reliability will be released later. Once this volume is peer reviewed by the two committees of experts and IPET addresses their comments, final versions of Volumes I and VIII will be released.

Summary of revisions

Each final volume released today has a short narrative at the beginning addressing the significant revisions addressed as a result of the peer review panel comments. Brief synopses of the areas addressed by each volume follow.

Volume I: Executive Summary and Overview (*Interim Final*) - IPET deleted its reference to potential on negligence and malfeasance as being beyond the IPET charter and instead focused on the design versus as built materials and specifications examined (sheet pile lengths, material properties, etc.), the volume was restructured to address the five IPET task questions, more information was included on the risk and reliability model, more information on the protection system – history, maps, structures and breaches – was added, an appendix was added on geologic conditions relating to performance, uncertainties for mission questions were discussed, and discussion on the spectrum of floodwall and levee breaching was added.

Volume II: Geodetic Vertical and Water Level Datums - other than minor editorial changes, there were no major changes. IPET is following up with

the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, as suggested by the review panels, to implement Volume II recommendations.

Volume IV: The Storm - computer modeling grid resolution (from Texas to Alabama) was enhanced coupling storm surge, tides, river flows, and waves (2.17 million computational points computed every second); computer modeling and graphics production were streamlined and automated; wind, surge and wave modeling was improved; additional modeling was done for possible use in future designs; improved wind fields were added to hurricane modeling method; wave velocities and overtopping were examined to help develop damage thresholds for earthen levees; and an integrated system to apply the IPET suite of models was developed to estimate hurricane waves and water levels. This work greatly advanced the modeling capabilities for storms and hurricanes.

Volume VI: The Performance -- Interior Drainage and Pumping – additional modeling was done on levees and floodwalls, models will be maintained and used with risk models, and pump curves for pumps in all parishes (approximately 300) were included.

Volume VII: The Consequences - revisions were primarily style and minor elaborations.

Volume IX: Supporting Appendices - no significant revisions.

IPET was established by the Chief of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and includes more than 150 nationally recognized experts from over 50 different organizations (federal, state and local government agencies; universities and the private sector).

IPET was specifically tasked with gathering and analyzing data to answer five basic questions:

The System (*what was the status of the protection system on August 29, 2005*),
The Storm (*what exact forces did Katrina put on the system*),
The Performance (*how did the system respond),*
The Consequences (*understanding the flooding and the losses – both economic and loss of life), and*
The Risk (*what is the risk and reliability of the system after June 1, 2006)?*

More than 4,300 documents, including IPET reports, data, and research information are available on the public Web site, https://ipet.wes.army.mil.