



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

# News Release

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## **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**Public Affairs Office, Task Force Hope - New Orleans**

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## **Corps of Engineers to Restore Pre-Katrina Protection in New Orleans**

NEW ORLEANS Sept. 29 – The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers announced today it is establishing a new team here to begin restoring federal elements of New Orleans' battered hurricane-flood system to provide pre-Hurricane Katrina protection.

The team – dubbed Task Force Guardian – consists of a cadre of Corps personnel from the Mississippi Valley Division's St. Louis District as well as a larger group from the New Orleans District. Initially, this mission has been assigned to Col. Lewis F. Setliff III. Setliff normally serves as commander and district engineer in St. Louis.

As the New Orleans District reconstitutes its work force, many of whom have lost damaged or destroyed homes, the District will take over the missions.

"I've known Col. (Richard) Wagenaar since 1982," Col. Setliff said. "We have been talking daily, and I came down to New Orleans to be with him Wednesday. We are working side by side with the New Orleans District until they take over the mission.

"Many of the people in my St. Louis contingent remember well how their New Orleans colleagues came to St. Louis in our time of greatest need, during 1993's Great Midwest Flood. They stood shoulder to shoulder with St. Louis and we're here to repay that debt. We will stay as long as they need us," Setliff said.

Although today marks the arrival of the team in New Orleans, much initial engineering work and research has preceded this milestone, primarily in St. Louis and Vicksburg. This work started during the early days of the Corps of Engineers response to Hurricane Katrina.

The Task Force has already taken initial steps, including coordinating with personnel from the New Orleans District and Task Force Unwatering, who are currently working on the ground in New Orleans. They have also over flown the damaged levees and canal walls to make visual assessments of visible damage.

In addition, Task Force Guardian has contracted for and carried out a detailed scientific survey of the levees with a technology called LIDAR. LIDAR is comparable to RADAR, except that it uses laser beams instead of radio beams and records returning data on optical sensors vice radio detection systems. LIDAR provides three-dimensional data which in turn can be used to determine such information as volumes of material that will be needed to repair the levees.

The Task Force's target to finish restoring New Orleans federal hurricane and flood protection elements is June 1, 2006, the official start of next year's hurricane season.

Current work to repair breaches to the hurricane and flood protection system caused by Hurricanes Katrina and Rita is being carried out as part of the unwatering mission.

Use of task forces is an accepted process in the Corps of Engineers. Previously, Task Force Unwatering took over control of New Orleans' initial emergency response to stop flooding and pump flood water out of the city and region. In this case, personnel from the Mississippi Valley Division's Rock Island District came together with New Orleans District counterparts to carry out that mission.

The elements involved in this unfolding mission are all parts of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Mississippi Valley Division's Task Force Hope, under command of Brig. Gen. Robert Crear, USA.