US Army Corps of Engineers
Mississippi Valley Division

Corps Hurricane Response

Task Force Hope Status Report Newsletter *May 31, 2013*

HURRICANE SEASON: June 1– November 30

Corps Commander declares *"system complete"*

On May 15 and 16, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers conducted "hurricane exercises" with its partners, the State of Louisiana and the local levee authorities. These practice drills, to which the media were invited, were conducted at several structures within the Hurricane and Storm Damage Risk Reduction System. When the giant pumps were cranked up at the Gulf Intracoastal Waterway-West Closure Complex, Col. Ed Fleming, then Commander of the New Orleans District, announced to the assembled crowd, "I'm confident in saying by the first of June this hurricane season, the entire system will be complete."

West Closure Complex Gates and Pumps
Hurricane Exercises, May 16, 2013
USACE Photo

by Susan Spaht

It's been eight years since Hurricane Katrina caused extensive damage to the Greater New Orleans area and along the Gulf Coast. In that time, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, its partners, stakeholders and contractors have designed and constructed the Hurricane and Storm Damage Risk Reduction System for the five-parish area around New Orleans. The new system is capable of withstanding a 100-year storm surge. The system includes 133 miles of perimeter levees, floodwalls, gated structures, and pump stations as well as approximately 70 miles of interior defense structures and retention basins.

"For the first time since we began this mission," said Mike Park, Chief of Task Force Hope, "there will be no need for engineered or interim closures to close construction openings. The system is ready for operation."

In recent years, the Corps used Engineered Interim Structures or Engineered Construction Closures (sand baskets, sheet pilings, etc.) during tropical events to close any remaining construction openings in the system. Those measures will not be

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needed this hurricane season since there are no construction openings left to close.

Shared Responsibilities

In the event of a tropical event this hurricane season, the Corps will work in concert with its partners – the State of Louisiana and the levee authorities - to close the 504 openings in the system, such as road and railroad openings, navigable openings, access openings, and drainage openings.

Mike Park

"This year we will be running a joint operation working with our partners," said Mike Stack, Chief of Emergency Management. "The Corps is still responsible for the major structures, and the State of Louisiana and the levee authorities are responsible for almost all of the smaller openings." Stack pointed out that "there has been a lot of preparation over the past months – including training and exercises – involving the Corps and our partners. Everyone is ready, and the system is ready."

Mike Stack

Members of the East Jefferson Levee District guide road closing exercises at Williams Boulevard.

Hurricane Exercises - May 15-16, 2013

East Jefferson Levee District demonstrates a road closing

at Williams Boulevard

Outgoing New Orleans District Commander Col. Ed Fleming, left, and incoming Commander Col. Richard Hansen, right, check the road closing procedure at Williams Boulevard with Mike Stack, the Corps' Chief of Emergency Management.

USACE Photos by Anne Marino

Hurricane Exercises - May 15-16, 2013

Pontchartrain Levee District demonstrates a railroad closing

at the Canadian National Railroad swing gate in St. Charles Parish

Bart LeBlanc, PLD Maintenance Shop Superintendent, pushes the buttons to close the railroad swing gate during hurricane exercises on May 15. The gate closed flawlessly.

USACE Photos by Anne Marino

Corps operator Stacey Hodnett, left, mans the controls to close the gates at the Orleans Ave. Outfall Canal.

Hurricane Exercises - May 15-16, 2013

Corps of Engineers exercises pumps and gates at Orleans Ave. Outfall Canal

USACE Photos by Anne Marino

Change of Command

On stage during the Change of Command ceremonies are, from left, Col. Richard L. Hansen, incoming New Orleans Commander; Maj. Gen. John W. Peabody, Commander of the Mississippi Valley Division; Col. Edward R. Fleming, outgoing New Orleans Commander; and Thomas Holden, Deputy District Commander for Project Management.

On May 23, Col. Richard L. Hansen assumed command of the New Orleans District, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, during formal ceremonies at district headquarters. He steps in as the 62nd commander of the district and replaces outgoing commander Col. Edward R. Fleming who has served as the district's commander since July 23, 2010. Both men are graduates of the United States Military Academy at West Point, and both have received numerous awards and decorations.

The ceremonies were overseen by Maj. Gen. John W. Peabody, Commander of the Mississippi Valley Division, who officiated at the "passing of the colors" which symbolizes the transfer of command responsibility.

Col. Richard L. Hansen

All the members of Task Force Hope welcome Col. Hansen to the New Orleans District; we look forward to working with you. And we bid a fond farewell to Col. Fleming who has served this district and the people of Louisiana with distinction. It has been an honor and a pleasure to have been part of your team.

The Corps is Ready

"The Corps is prepared and ready should we have a storm this season," said Mike Park. "Team New Orleans has designed and built the best hurricane surge defense in this area's history. We have trained and rehearsed for a tropical storm or hurricane to be sure our team members and our partners know exactly what to do.

Are you ready?

"Protect your family the best way you can. Have a fly-away kit ready, keep your car gassed up, and have a plan for where you will go if local officials advise that we evacuate. We want everyone in Southeast Louisiana to be safe."

US Army Corps of Engineers

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The Task Force Hope *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.

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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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