

Dear Mr. Wells:

Thank you for your statement filed for the record of the public meeting of the Mississippi River Commission in Morgan City, Louisiana, on August 23, 2001. In your statement you discussed the development of inland waterways navigational charts in electronic format, or electronic nautical charting (ENC).

The Corps of Engineers is committed to pursuing ENC as evidenced by our efforts on the Atchafalaya River. The Atchafalaya River ENC was a venture into a new technological field for the Corps. The New Orleans District has successfully converted the chart data from printed paper products to a full hydro version of a Geographic Information System and digital data production for the internet. During May 2001, the District conducted field tests on 160 miles of the Atchafalaya River, from the Old River Control Structure to Eugene Island near the Gulf of Mexico. The data proved to be exceptionally accurate, and the conversion was deemed highly successful.

Currently, the District staff is initiating an extensive electronic chart for the lower Mississippi River. The District is in the very early stages of working with the contractor, 3001, Inc., on this effort. The contractor will be responsible for taking the survey data, flying the aerial photography, and developing a number of products to include electronic nautical charts for the portion of the Mississippi River within the boundaries of the New Orleans District.

The Corps views this effort as a pilot project for electronic charting of all inland waterways and a needed navigation tool for this area. The District is now finalizing the proposed scope of work to define the contract products and expects to have the contractor in the field by January 2002.

Beyond this initial phase, the New Orleans District will continue to plan for long-term maintenance in order to keep the system current and viable and looks forward to the involvement by the various pilots' organizations in providing comments and suggestions. Your assistance is vital to the success of this program.

Thank you again for submitting your statement for the record of our hearing. The Commission appreciates receiving your views and will be pleased to hear from you at our future public meetings.

Sincerely,

Edwin J. Arnold, Jr.  
Brigadier General, U. S. Army  
President Designee, Mississippi  
River Commission