

NEWS RELEASE

U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
Mississippi Valley Division

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Army Corps of Engineers helps with I-35W bridge collapse recovery efforts

VICKSBURG, MISS., August 6, 2007 -- The commander of the Mississippi Valley Division, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Brig. Gen. Robert Crear and a team from the Vicksburg division arrived last week in Minneapolis/St. Paul to assist with recovery efforts.

Crear and representatives of various federal, state, and local agencies met with President Bush on Saturday and discussed federal help and aid in recovery efforts. The President praised the delegation for getting Congress to appropriate emergency funding to date and ended the meeting by thanking everyone for working together.



100-ton crane and barge

Currently the Corps is providing a 15 foot by 40 foot handi-flat barge with a steel hull and a 100-ton crane barge for recovery efforts. Seven Corps employees operate the barge. Corps' water regulators are working to keep the pool elevation in the Lower St. Anthony Falls area at an elevation that is roughly 2 feet

below normal, which greatly aides recovery divers. A U.S. Navy dive team is operating from the Corps' pilot house on the Lower St. Anthony Falls lock and dam.

"The mechanics are in place to facilitate smooth Corps' and Department of Defense involvement," said Crear. "The local commander and his team have done an exceptional job of staying engaged at every level." Crear will return to Vicksburg on Wednesday.



Brig. Gen. Robert Crear and Steve Lenhart, upper area lockmaster, survey the scene.

The investigation portion of the disaster is being led by the National Transportation and Safety Board and the Corps has provided valuable video tapes which capture the bridge at the precise time of the collapse. The Minnesota Department of Transportation is heading the recovery operation. At this point, there is no formal request for assistance from the Minnesota Dept. of Transportation, but Corps' subject matter experts are advising and helping coordinate debris recovery efforts.



Debris on lower guide wall

The division is responsible for water resources engineering solutions in a 370,000-square-mile area, extending from Canada to the Gulf of Mexico and encompassing portions of 12 states. Work is carried out by district offices located in St. Paul, Minn.; Rock Island, Ill.; St. Louis, Mo.; Memphis, Tenn.; Vicksburg, Miss.; and New Orleans, La.