



US Army Corps  
of Engineers  
Mississippi Valley Division

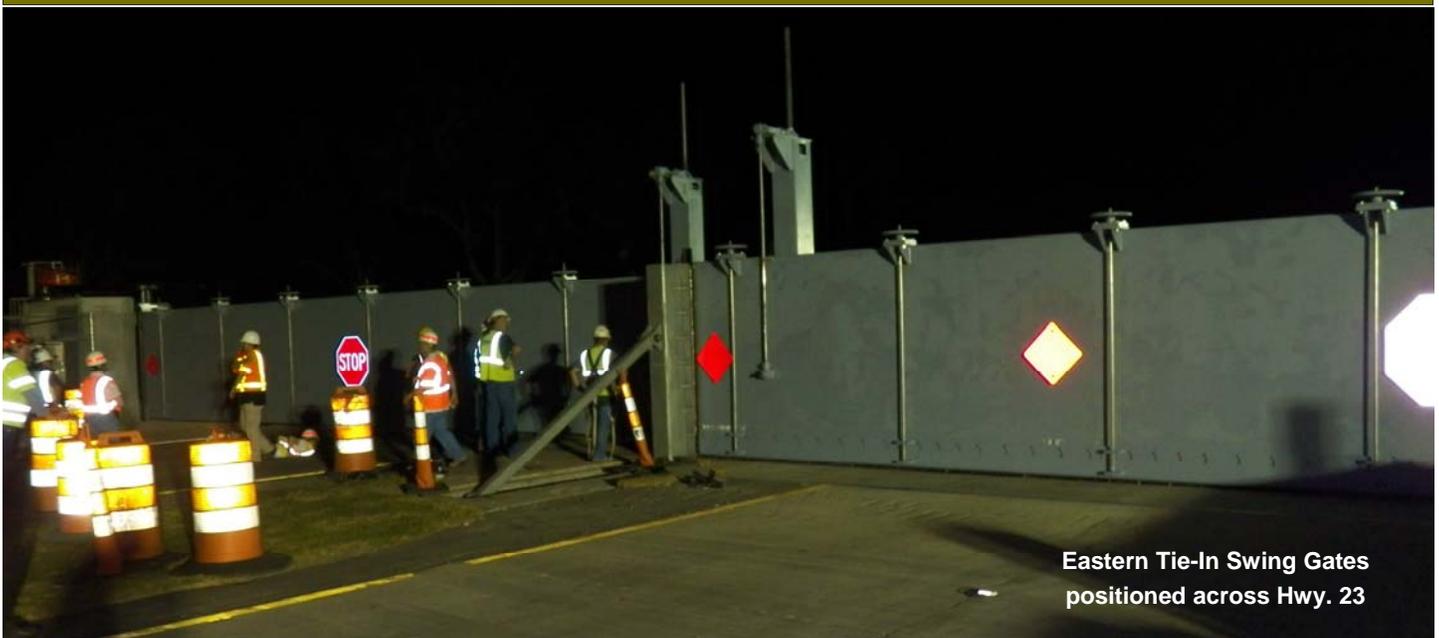


# Corps Hurricane Response

*Task Force Hope Status Report*

*August 29, 2013*

## Construction complete on all HSDRRS projects across storm evacuation routes



Eastern Tie-In Swing Gates positioned across Hwy. 23

*By Susan Spaht*

**I**f a tropical storm or hurricane takes aim at south-east Louisiana this hurricane season and an evacuation is called, it will be clear sailing along all evacuation routes that cross the Hurricane and Storm Damage Risk Reduction System structures. Whether your evacuation plans call for a northern route or a western or eastern route, there will be no sand baskets to encounter, no detour roads, nor temporary ramps. All permanent gates, ramps and bridges that cross

Crews lock down the Hwy. 23 steel swing gates during the nighttime final practice before turning over the 53-foot gates to the non-Federal sponsor. Hwy. 23 is the major storm evacuation route for Plaquemines Parish. USACE Photo by Ted Carr

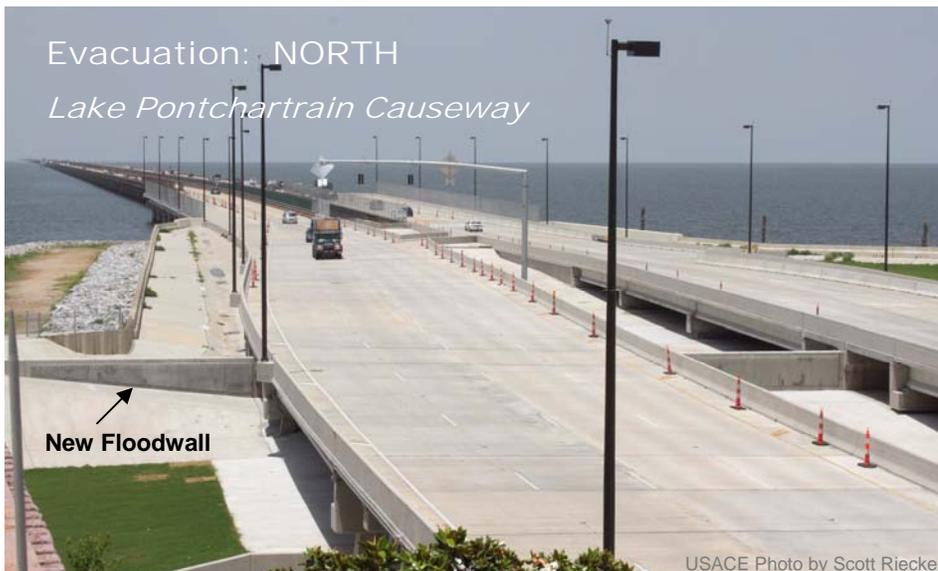
the HSDRRS are in place as designed.

### Construction Complete

On August 16, the Corps of Engineers officially turned over the major components of the Eastern Tie-In project to the Louisiana Coastal Protection and Restoration Authority, the non-Federal sponsor. This project included, among other components, construction of two 53-foot-wide steel swing gates that cross State

Highway 23, the major evacuation route for residents of Plaquemines Parish. It was the final HSDRRS structure to be completed that crosses an evacuation route. When Hurricane Isaac came ashore last year, Hwy. 23 was closed with a temporary earthen ramp that tied into the adjacent floodwall because the steel gates were not quite complete. That won't be necessary for the next

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**If a tropical storm evacuation is called in the future, thousands of people will head north across the Lake Pontchartrain Causeway Bridge. Drivers will easily pass over a 10-foot floodwall, a new section of the HSDRRS.**

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storm. The new gates are in place, they have been tested, and are fully operational (see photo, page 1).

### Evacuating North

If your storm evacuation plans are to head north over the Lake Pontchartrain Causeway Bridge, you will pass over a 10-foot high HSDRRS floodwall on the south shore of Lake Pontchartrain by way of a newly-constructed bridge/ramp. The \$43 million project included construction of the floodwall as well as extending the two existing lanes by several hundred feet in each direction, and adding a third lane in both directions to ease transition areas.

In the past, sandbags were used across the Causeway roads to defend against surge. This closure prevented emergency vehicles from re-entering the city after a storm until the sandbags were cleared. That will no longer be necessary with the new bridge/ramp.

The project, which was completed by

the Corps of Engineers and its contractor in advance of the 2013 hurricane season, required intense and continuous coordination with state and parish governments, as well as the Lake Pontchartrain Causeway Commission, to keep traffic moving throughout the construction period.

The Lake Pontchartrain Causeway Bridge is one of the busiest bridges in the country with some 40,000 vehicles traversing it every weekday. When a storm evacuation takes place, that number jumps considerably - with all vehicles heading north.

For more information on the Causeway project, click on this link: [http://www.mvd.usace.army.mil/Portals/52/docs/task\\_force\\_hope/June%202013.pdf](http://www.mvd.usace.army.mil/Portals/52/docs/task_force_hope/June%202013.pdf)

### Evacuating West (photos, page 3)

If you plan to take Interstate 10 West to evacuate before an oncoming storm, you might not even notice that you are crossing a major HSDRRS surge defense structure: the West Return Floodwall. This \$137 million project runs under the raised interstate highway along the St. Charles /



Jefferson Parish line, extending from the Louis Armstrong New Orleans International Airport to Lake Pontchartrain. Constructed on the floodside of the existing floodwall, the new West Return Floodwall is a larger, more robust T-wall that was built to the Corps' new and more stringent standards.

Those who choose to evacuate west along U.S. Highway 90, will also pass over a HSDRRS floodwall (WBV-73) which is part of the Western Tie-In. This is the western portion of the HSDRRS perimeter that ties into the Mississippi River below Ama, La. Evacuees will drive over the floodwall by way of a brand new four-lane overpass (two lanes north, two lanes south) which was completed last spring. During Hurricane Isaac last summer, vehicles heading along this western evacuation route had to use a temporary detour road while construction on the bridge was finishing up.

For more information on WBV-73, click on this link: [http://www.mvd.usace.army.mil/Portals/52/docs/task\\_force\\_hope/January%202013.pdf](http://www.mvd.usace.army.mil/Portals/52/docs/task_force_hope/January%202013.pdf)

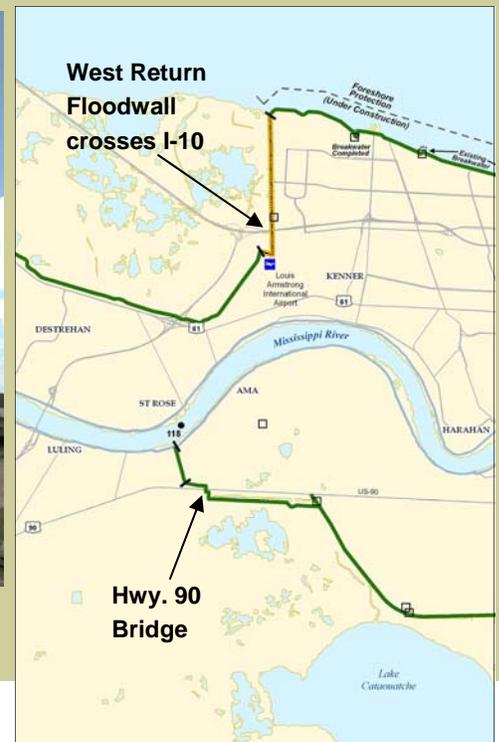
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Vehicles travelling west during a tropical storm evacuation will pass over the West Return Floodwall, a concrete T-wall that straddles the Jefferson Parish/St. Charles Parish line.



This is the new Hwy. 90 bridge that passes over a new floodwall which is part of the recently completed Western Tie-In section of the HSDRRS. USACE Photos



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**Evacuating East** (photos, page 4)

If you take Interstate 10 on an east-erly evacuation route, you'll breeze over a gradual ramp in New Orleans East that takes you over the eastern-most section of the HSDRRS perimeter. This portion of the HSDRRS

levee was raised to meet the Corps' new and more stringent design criteria; it was completed in 2011. Raising the interstate highway required very specific guidelines from and special coordination with the Louisiana Department of Transportation and Development. The DOTD required the Corps to maintain a grad-

ual bypass lane at all times along the interstate section under construction. The Corps alternately closed east and west lanes during construction with extended bypass lanes to ensure uninterrupted traffic flow.

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Images from Google Earth



Evacuation: EAST  
U.S. Highway 11  
U.S. Highway 90



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There are two other easterly evacuation routes along the HSDRRS in more remote areas: Highway 11 and Highway 90, the Chef Menteur High-

way. Both of these routes cross the HSDRRS levee in New Orleans East (see map) and both are outfitted with new floodgates. The gates are left open except when a tropical storm is

expected in the area. At that time the gates are closed to reduce the risk of flooding from storm surge.

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### The Eastern Tie-In

The Eastern Tie-In is a major project of the West Bank & Vicinity and an important link in the Hurricane and Storm Damage Risk Reduction System. On August 16, the Corps of Engineers turned over the major components of the project to the state of Louisiana, the non-Federal sponsor, for operation and maintenance.

This portion of the HSDRRS ties in the West Bank & Vicinity levees to the Mississippi River levees in Plaquemines Parish. Construction of



the Eastern Tie-In included a new pump station, a new bulkhead closure structure, two new 53-foot wide steel swing gates across State Highway 23 (see page 1), a new steel swing gate across the railroad tracks that parallel the highway, and a levee around Oakville. The \$105 million project also included construction of an emergency road that runs along the side of the Mississippi River levee. This road is for the use of emergency vehicles when the highway gates are closed.



Ted Carr

"This has been a significant accomplishment and a notable team effort" said Ted Carr, the Corps' lead Project Manager for the Eastern Tie-In,

"to get this project accomplished, from concept to turnover, in less than five years.

"Highway 23 is the only road running the length of the parish," said Carr, "and it serves as the evacuation route for parish residents during tropical events.

"The closure plan for the swing gates during a tropical event," explained Carr, "is to close the southbound gate first while evacuation is taking place. The northbound gate goes over the evacuation lanes, so that gate would be closed last allowing a longer period for evacuation. The whole gated structure can be closed in several hours, so there is a good safety window there.

"And then, of course, we have the new emergency lane that runs along the side of the levee. That was built

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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.

This is an online publication that is open to public distribution.

This issue and past issues can be found at:

[http://www2.mvn.usace.army.mil/hps2/hps\\_newsletters.asp](http://www2.mvn.usace.army.mil/hps2/hps_newsletters.asp)

and

<http://www.mvd.usace.army.mil/Media/PublicationsTaskForceHopeNewsletter.aspx>

Comments and questions may be sent to the Status Report Newsletter editor at: [b2fwdpao@usace.army.mil](mailto:b2fwdpao@usace.army.mil)

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Pump Station

USACE Photos by Ted Carr

Components of Eastern Tie-In

Plaquemines Parish



Emergency Road



Bulkhead Closure Structure

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to provide emergency response and evacuation after the highway gates are closed.

"From the beginning of this project," Carr added, "the people of Plaquemines made it known that they

wanted us to construct features to reduce the risk of flooding from storm surge, but would not prevent emergency vehicles from entering or exiting the lower parish when the highway gates are closed. Our team has accomplished that goal."





Gulf Intracoastal Waterway - West Closure Complex

*A Message from the Chief of Task Force Hope*

**It** has been eight years since the devastation of Hurricane Katrina.

In that time, the Corps of Engineers and its contractors have strengthened and improved virtually all of the levees, flood-walls, gated structures, and pump stations that form the 133-mile Greater New Orleans perimeter system as well as ap-

proximately 70 miles of interior defense structures. The new system is stronger and more resilient than it has ever been in the area's history.

The Hurricane and Storm Damage Risk Reduction System is capable of defending against a 100-year level storm surge, or a storm that has a one percent chance of occurring in a year. And now we have completed all HSDRRS construction projects that cross evacuation routes, as we illustrate in this Newsletter.

It is a formidable system; but the dangers of storms will always be with us.

We strongly urge you to have an evacuation plan for you and your family. And if a tropical storm threatens our area, please follow the instructions of your elected officials. If an evacuation is called, please *evacuate*.

*Mike Park*

Michael F. Park  
Chief, Task Force Hope