



Commander's Desk

MRC low water inspection

Public meetings promote communication



Recently, I attended my first Mississippi River Commission inspection tour. Twice a year, during the tradition high and low water seasons, the MRC travels the Mississippi River and its tributaries. This tour provides the opportunity for the commission members to receive updates on projects throughout the Mississippi River Valley. Additionally, public hearings are scheduled throughout the trips so that the MRC, Corps leadership and project managers have the opportunity to hear the concerns and needs of the men and women that live through the valley. To paraphrase commission member R.D. James, these proceedings are democracy in action.

Traditionally, each inspection tour culminates with a public hearing in the New Orleans District's area of responsibility. Last Friday's hearing was held aboard the MV Mississippi in Houma, La. As the new commander of the New Orleans District, it was a great opportunity for me to return to the area and meet with local officials and residents living and working throughout the area.

As I spoke with those

in attendance, it came as no surprise that their greatest concerns were safe and reliable navigation, flood and storm risk reduction, and coastal protection and ecosystem restoration. The waters of the Mississippi and Atchafalaya rivers, as well as the Gulf of Mexico are the foundation for the communities in the area. Their livelihoods depend heavily on the navigation, commerce, and resources provided by these waters. However, the greatest threats to their communities often come from these very waters. River and storm flooding threatens their safety, subsidence and salt water intrusion threatens their homes, and sedimentation of important transportation channels threaten their jobs.

The water and geography of South Louisiana has also contributed greatly to the growth of a culture of resilient and determined people. In speaking with the resident's of these communities, their stand is clear: They are not asking for someone to address these concerns for them. They can and will do everything within their abilities to protect their families, homes and communities. In

the words of Reggie Dupre, director of the Terrebonne Levee and Conservation District, "We will take a stand and fight."

No, they are not asking for someone to address these concerns for them. Instead, they are asking for someone to take this stand with them. The issues they face are far too great for them to address alone. I would like to take this opportunity to assure Mr. Dupre, the residents of Terrebonne and South Louisiana that they are not alone in this fight. The New Orleans District shares their commitment and will do everything in our ability to help these communities. We are determined to ensure that these communities and way of life are around for many years to come.

Building Strong
Col. Ed Fleming



\$2.3 billion in small business contracts

28 percent of all HSDRRS dollars go to small business

Since Team New Orleans began work on the Hurricane and Storm and Damage Risk Reduction System (HSDRRS) four and a half years ago, the Corps has awarded nearly \$2.3 billion in small business prime construction HSDRRS contracts.

Nearly 65 percent of all HSDRRS contract dollars, \$5 billion, have been awarded to Louisiana-based companies, and 28 percent of HSDRRS contracts dollars have been awarded to small businesses.

Small business contracts go to small, small-disadvantaged, women-owned, HUB Zone, vet-

eran-owned, and service-disabled veteran-owned businesses.

This commitment to working with small businesses has recently been both locally and nationally recognized. For two years in a row, the New Orleans District received the Small Business Administration's Crystal Award for leading Louisiana federal agencies in the number of dollars awarded to small businesses. In 2008, the district also earned two national awards recognizing the use of women-owned small businesses and the pursuit of small businesses



Clockwise from top: Col. Fleming speaks with Windell Curole, general manager for the South Lafourche Levee District. The six attending members of the Mississippi River Commission (below) prepare for the public comment portion of the hearing. Reggie Dupre, director of the Terrebonne Levee and Conservation District (far left) provides the commission with the current status of the Morganza to the Gulf project.





ARRA

Iberia Parish Wastewater Treatment Facility

Groundbreaking set for August 31, 2010

Next Tuesday, August 31, 2010, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, in partnership with the Iberia Parish government, will conduct a ground breaking ceremony for a wastewater treatment facility near the Acadiana Regional Airport in New Iberia, La. When complete, this facility will exceed the current treatment requirements for the area, easing the demands currently placed upon the City of New Iberia's facilities. The larger treatment capabilities will also strengthen the economic potential of a large industrial and commercial area adjacent to the airport.

The New Orleans District's assistance in the construction of this project has been made possible through funds available in the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act, commonly known as the "stimulus act." Through a 75/25 partnership with the Iberia Parish government, the Corps awarded a \$3.2 million dollar construction contract on June 30, 2010. The federal portion of this partnership is fully-

funded by ARRA.

The construction of the wastewater treatment facility embodies the spirit of ARRA. In addition to addressing an infrastructure need for the area, the Council of Economic Advisors estimates that 35 jobs will be created and maintained by the construction of this facility. Additionally, as



more businesses are able to locate within the commercial area, even more employment opportunities will be available.

This groundbreaking also signifies a great milestone and transition in operation for the New Orleans District. The contract for the construction of the wastewater treatment facility was the final contract to be awarded by the New Orleans District using ARRA funds. In total, the district has awarded 137 contracts for

approximately \$197 million.

With the awarding of this contract to Integrated Pro Services, a service-disabled veteran-owned small business in New Orleans, La., the New Orleans District is able to shift its focus to completing these ARRA-funded projects. However, completing these projects and establishing these new jobs takes more than the commitment of the Corps. The timely execution of any project demands the equaled dedication of the Corps partners and project sponsors. With the notice to proceed granted less than ten days after awarding the contract, Iberia

Parish has demonstrated that it has the level of dedication needed to complete their new wastewater treatment facility.

Anyone interested in this project or the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act is invited to attend Tuesday's ceremony at SugArena. For more information, please contact the New Orleans District Public Affairs Office by telephone at 504-862-1524 or by email at askthecorps@usace.army.mil.

New technique in levee construction

Helping minimize impacts to surrounding community

This month the Corps began constructing a demonstration section with a new technique to raise and cap portions of Mississippi River levees in Plaquemines Parish.

The cap will be made with a stabilized soil mixture that has been successfully used on levees in Vicksburg, Miss. and Memphis, Tenn., but would be used for the first time in Southeast Louisiana.

Stabilized soil is being used to build a steeper slope to stay within the existing right-of-way and minimize impacts to the surrounding community.

Currently, clay from the Bonnet Carre Spillway is being excavated and mixed at the spillway to produce the stabilized soil mixture. The material will later be transported to the demonstration site after grass is removed on a 1,000 ft. stretch of Mississippi River levees near F. Edward Herbert Blvd. in Plaquemines Parish, approximately two miles north of Belle Chasse.

The 1,000 ft. demonstration section will help the Corps and the nonfederal sponsor, the Office of Coastal Protection and Restoration, to fully understand the construction and operations and

maintenance requirements of the stabilized soil mixture.

The majority of the demonstration section will be unvegetated and will appear similar to clay. This area currently sits at approximately 18-19 ft. above sea level and the section will be raised with the stabilized clay to approximately 22 ft. The demonstration will take approximately six weeks to construct and will include construction of an asphalt inspection road and curbs on top of the levee. It will remain in place and become part of the 2011 commitment, if successful.

One of the advantages of the stabilized soil is that it is highly resistant to erosion without grass covering, which could relieve the nonfederal sponsor of grass cutting costs.

The Mississippi River levee system was designed to protect against a high water river event, not hurricane storm surge. However, to reduce the risk from storm surge events, the Corps is using new techniques and analysis to increase the size and function of the Mississippi River levees co-located with the Hurricane and Storm Damage Risk Reduction System.

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Update on the Louisiana Coastal Area project

Upcoming September 2010