



**US Army Corps
of Engineers®**
New Orleans District

News Release

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New covered canals now draining flood-prone N.O. area *Gravity returns with renewed vigor to fight Broadmoor's chronic rain floods*

NEW ORLEANS – Ready for occupancy, two Uptown New Orleans rooms: Soaring 13-foot ceilings, 19 feet across and the length of 125 spacious living rooms. Separated by a shared wall. Total cost, \$20.0 million. Décor, gray unadorned concrete.

The two rooms are covered drainage canals, ready for occupancy on short notice by the rain floods that regularly overflow into the Broadmoor neighborhood. Broadmoor is the city's most flood-prone neighborhood. And the rainy season of April and May is coming up, to be followed June 1 by the hurricane season.

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and its local partner, the New Orleans Sewerage & Water Board, built the two covered canals. They are part of the three-parish SELA or Southeast Louisiana Urban Flood Control Project. The contractor was James Construction Group LLC, formerly Angelo Iafate Construction.

The Napoleon canals are one of four SELA projects in the area. Three are complete and completion of the fourth is expected in September 2003.

The new canals, or box culverts, triple the capacity to move rainwater beneath the 3,150 feet of Napoleon Avenue between South Broad Street and South Claiborne Avenue. They parallel a similar covered canal placed in service in 1910.

“There is an important difference between old and new canals,” said Col. Peter J. Rowan, district engineer of the Corps’ New Orleans District.

“Ninety years of sinking in the surrounding neighborhood forced us to build the new canals five feet lower than the existing one,” Rowan said. “This should be a lesson to those who take lightly the flood threat to south Louisiana on the basis of the past. A lot has changed.”

The Corps’ Stan Green said the loss of elevation had been slowly robbing the existing system of the gravitational force that made it work so well in the past:

“The storm drains are now below the top of the old box (culvert). That means you can’t fill up the old box,” said Green, who is the senior project manager of the three-parish SELA project.

Rainwater now courses through Napoleon’s two canals. Soon, more rainwater will come from a new 1,600-foot canal on South Claiborne Avenue, from Nashville Avenue to Jena Street. Boh Bros. Construction LLC built the \$10.6 million project. Maximum dimensions of the single canal are 10 feet deep and 24 feet wide.

Construction of the Napoleon Avenue project is complete for drainage purposes. Surface work continues: This includes sidewalks, paving, streetlights and, later landscaping.

Only landscaping remains to be done on the Nashville to Jena canal. Its drainage will connect in a few weeks to the Napoleon canals through a manifold at the intersection of South Claiborne and Napoleon.

The manifold is a huge under-street cave that will eventually accept rainwater from three directions. It is a nearly completed portion of the \$14.5 million Jena to Louisiana Avenue project. The project’s single, 1,320-foot covered canal has maximum dimensions of 10 feet deep and 24 feet wide. Johnson Bros. Construction is the contractor, and completion is expected in September 2003.

Though rainwater now flows full blast through the completed canals, “Napoleon did well providing water storage during Tropical Storm Isidore (in October 2002),” Green said.

Flow, instead of mere storage, was made possible, Green said, by increasing the capacity of Pump Station No. 1, a Sewerage & Water Board facility on South Broad. The \$13.5 million project, completed in August 2002, increased the station’s capacity by 2,400 cubic feet per second to a total of 7,100 feet.

SELA information: <http://www.mvn.usace.army.mil/pao/pao-bro.htm> Six SELA Reports in right-hand column