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“Carpe Diem!” (“Seize the Day”) Discussed at the recent Regional Senior Leader Training Conference held in St. Louis, Missouri, this mantra certainly rings true today as we begin to tackle an almost unprecedented surge in workload as a regional team in order to stay on track to meet our commitment of achieving 1 percent level of hurricane risk reduction for the greater New Orleans metropolitan area by 2011. At the same time, we are continuing to reduce hurricane and storm risk for south Louisiana, maintaining navigation, and protecting the environment. With this important responsibility to deliver quality projects and service, it is easy to focus on day-to-day tasks and lose sight of the bigger picture.

The USACE Campaign Plan and the supporting Mississippi Valley Division Implementation Plan (MVD IPLAN) and District Operations Plan (OPLAN) are meant to focus our efforts on a few key goals and objectives to move the entire Corps of Engineers forward as an organization to achieve the Corps of Engineers’ vision of “A GREAT engineering force of highly disciplined people working with our partners through disciplined thought and action to deliver innovative and sustainable solutions to the nation’s engineering challenges.”

We are in the process of developing our OPLAN to support the MVD IPLAN and ultimately the USACE Campaign Plan, intentionally linking our priorities and tasks to actions in the MVD IPLAN and objectives and goals in the Campaign Plan. The priorities and tasks in the OPLAN will not reflect a drastic departure from how we operate today. Rather, they will be further refined and focused around what I believe are our primary organizational priorities:

1. Deliver superior performance by achieving 1 percent level hurricane and storm risk reduction for the greater New Orleans area by 1 June 2011 and reducing hurricane and storm risk for South Louisiana.

2. Make a difference by strengthening our relationships with stakeholders, partners, customers, and the public while managing expectations.

3. Build to last by building the bench and collaborating regionally to enable mission accomplishment, improve business practices, and set the conditions for our future success.

These priorities will form the basis of our OPLAN and are already nested into the MVD IPLAN and USACE Campaign Plan.

Our OPLAN process, initiatives, metrics, and actions will be tracked continuously during the course of the year, our progress reviewed at quarterly Regional meetings, and in the Riverside. Upon completion of our OPLAN, it is my expectation that leaders at all levels within Team New Orleans will begin the process of chain communication throughout their organizations and the OPLAN will become a living, active future we are all striving to achieve.

**Building Strong! Essayons!**

Colonel Al Lee
At the end of January 2009, several members from the district’s executive team attended the Senior Leaders Training Conference in St. Louis, Mo. The focus of the conference was to finalize the Mississippi Valley Division’s Implementation Plan (MVD IPLAN) in support of the USACE Campaign Plan to the Chief of Engineers. The Campaign Plan is built on the “Good to Great” concept, and the conference was held to ensure that we all agree on what great looks like. Prior to the Senior Leader Training Conference, leadership of all the districts of the MVD met on several occasions to formulate the focus, goals and metrics of each objective.

The USACE Campaign Plan is an initiative developed under Lt. Gen. Van Antwerp. The plan sets the goals for the entire Corps under the vision of having “A GREAT engineering force of highly disciplined people working with our partners through disciplined thought and action to deliver innovative and sustainable solutions to the nation’s engineering challenges.”

At the headquarters level it is defined as:
1. Delivering superior performance in all missions
2. Setting the standards for our profession
3. Having a unique, positive impact on our Nation and other nations
4. Built to last

Each of the major subordinate commands or divisions was tasked with formulating their own plan to support the USACE Campaign Plan. The MVD IPLAN was born from this task and each district had input into the supporting actions. The decision was made to concentrate on the areas that we as a division can excel. This does not imply that we will not be doing work in the areas that are not highlighted, but the point is to be a great Corps, not just a good one.

The district’s plan to implement these goals is called the Operations Plan or OPLAN. Our district will have very specific supporting tasks and metrics linked to IPLAN actions. Once the OPLAN is complete, as a team member, you will be able to trace the links between

If you don’t know where you are going, you will wind up somewhere else.

-Yogi Bera
your daily tasks and performance objectives through supporting tasks and metrics in the district OPLAN and through MVD IPLAN actions and metrics, directly to one of the four USACE Campaign Plan Goals. This linkage will give you a better understanding of how what you do contributes toward overall mission accomplishment at the district, division, and USACE levels. The overall goal behind this effort is to focus our efforts to improve service and mission accomplishment.

The chart displayed below lays out the path forward for Team New Orleans in support of each USACE goal.

Each of you have an integral part in ensuring that the New Orleans District, the Mississippi Valley Division, and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers meets their goals.

In the coming months the division’s IPLAN and district’s OPLAN will be briefed and discussed throughout the district and the Hurricane Protection Office.
During the early hours of September 24, 2005, the most intense storm ever recorded in the Gulf of Mexico slammed into the southwestern corner of Louisiana. One day earlier, the storm surge of this massive hurricane drove into Terrebonne Parish, overwhelming the southern reaches of a nonfederal levee system associated with the parish’s drainage system. The separation of bayou and building vanished as 6 to 9 feet of floodwater engulfed homes and businesses.

When Hurricane Rita’s waters receded, nearly 10,000 homes had been inundated. Damaged sections of the levee system no longer provided adequate risk reduction, leaving residents and businesses in several communities at even greater risk for future storm damage. Moreover, key hurricane evacuation routes of Louisiana Highways 56 and 57 are exposed to a higher potential for flooding during a tropical weather event.

Responding to the devastation suffered by South Louisiana during the 2005 hurricane season, the United States Congress authorized the Emergency Supplemental Appropriations Act for Defense and Hurricane Recovery. This law included $30 million “for repairs, replacements, modifications, and improvements of nonfederal levees and associated protection measures in Terrebonne Parish at full federal expense.”

However, with over 100 miles of nonfederal levees in the parish, the funding appropriated for the task proved insufficient to repair and strengthen the entire system. With this understanding, the United
States Army Corps of Engineers requested that local authorities identify the areas in the most critical need of this support.

In the parish’s October 2007 “Levee Selection Process Report,” Terrebonne officials selected two sections of levee near the community of Dulac, La. This decision was based on a process of elimination that prioritized the degree of structural damage to the levee system with the resultant property damage from Rita. These two reaches, near the Suzie Canal and Orange Street residential areas, were determined to have suffered the most severe damage during Hurricanes Katrina and Rita.

Committed to completing the repairs as expeditiously as possible, the Corps set forth an extremely accelerated schedule for the design and construction of these earthen levees. Furthermore, the Mississippi Valley Division organized a regional team comprised of members of the New Orleans and St. Louis districts that is solely dedicated to implementing this aggressive timetable.

Nevertheless, the demands of this agenda are too great for the Corps to meet alone. Extensive cooperation between the Corps, the Terrebonne Parish Consolidated Government, and the Terrebonne Levee & Conservation District (TLCD) is needed to make this schedule a reality.

Dedicated to the project’s success, the nonfederal sponsors are providing the needed borrow from a previously identified site in an effort to eliminate the time associated

(Continued on page 14)
The Corps hosted an industry day on January 22, 2009 to discuss plans for permanent structures at the outfall canals with members of engineering, design, construction, and project management firms.

The design-build contract award, expected in the first quarter of 2010, will provide an opportunity for the design and construction team to work cooperatively on a fast track schedule. The completed project will reduce the risk of surge from a storm event that has a 1 percent chance of occurring in any given year.

Currently, dredging is underway in the Calcasieu River Bar Channel and will continue through the end of March. During this time, the hopper dredge Newport will work 24 hours a day, from anywhere inside the jetties to the sea buoy.

Beginning in early March, Dredge 32, a cutterhead dredge, will be working for approximately 30 days in Freshwater Bayou. This work will occur anywhere between the lock to the sea buoy.

During these times, mariners are urged to transit at their slowest safe speed to minimize wake and proceed with caution after arrangements are made.

As a result of the flood event that occurred during Hurricane Ike, the Corps decided that a flood proofing initiative for the Catfish Point Control Structure should be considered and implemented.

In response to this initiative, the electrical system of the facility is currently being modified in an attempt to prevent future damages. This modification includes elevating all electric panels and motors 30 inches higher than the highest flood on record.

This modification will improve the recovery time after natural disasters, allowing the Corps to return to normal operations.
During a ceremony hosted by the Southeast Louisiana Flood Protection Authority-East, St. Bernard Parish, and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, the Corps transferred control of #2 (Guichard), #3 (Bayou Villere), and #5 (EJ Gore) pump stations to the Lake Borne Basin Levee District on February 9, 2009. The ceremony highlighted the completed repairs to the pump stations and included an open house tour of the Guichard Pump Station #2 in Chalmette, La.

On February 6, 2009, the Terrebonne Parish Consolidated Government, the Terrebonne Levee & Conservation District, and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers held a ground breaking ceremony for work on two levee reaches in Terrebonne Parish. On February 11, 2009, construction began on the $30 million project to repair, replace, modify, and improve the nonfederal levees near the residential areas of Suzie Canal and Orange Street.

The Harvey Canal (photograph below) closed from February 18 to 21, for gate repairs. During this time, the Algiers Lock was used as an alternate.

During Hurricane Ike, a levee breach occurred for the Catfish Point Control Structure. A new repair was implemented.

The Bayou Sorrel Lock will receive miscellaneous repairs during the daylight hours of February 5 through 28.

The Bayou Boeuf Lock is undergoing monolithic repairs, closing from February 17 through 27, during daylight hours.

The Harvey Canal (photograph below) closed from February 18 to 21, for gate repairs. During this time, the Algiers Lock was used as an alternate.

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USACE

Sarah McLaughlin

Amanda Jones

On February 6, 2009, the Terrebonne Parish Consolidated Government, the Terrebonne Levee & Conservation District, and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers held a ground breaking ceremony for work on two levee reaches in Terrebonne Parish. On February 11, 2009, construction began on the $30 million project to repair, replace, modify, and improve the nonfederal levees near the residential areas of Suzie Canal and Orange Street. (For more information on this project, please see the article beginning on page 5 of this issue.)
One of my favorite things about New Orleans,” he pondered as he leaned away from the conference table. “The food...but,” he quickly interjected, “not necessarily the food in the city. I mean the food here at the district. Everyday, someone brought something to work that was absolutely delicious.”

If you have ever attended an office party, you are certainly familiar with his bloodhound-like ability to sniff out a jambalaya or carrot cake. But alas, potlucks will soon be safe once more. Sadly, this month, the New Orleans District must say goodbye to one of its finest, Major Timothy Kurgan.

From the moment he arrived in 2006, Kurgan was tasked with the most unenviable jobs. Yet, with his “just another opportunity to excel” approach, he took on each challenge with a smile. Nothing seemed impossible or capable of breaking his spirit (though, he’ll probably have parking ticket-related nightmares for years to come).

Perhaps it was this determination that earned him yet another unenviable job in April 2008: the position of Chief of Public Affairs. And the timing couldn’t be better.

“I had just started in Public Affairs everyday, he guided the Public Affairs team through a flood fight and two hurricanes. Meanwhile, he grew to be a powerful asset in getting the Corps message out to the public.

“The dedication and character of every member of Team New Orleans is remarkable,” he spoke as he leaned forward once more. “What we are doing here is monumental and I am honored to have been a part of it. I only hope that in my short time here, I have been able to adequately relay this commitment to the people of New Orleans and Louisiana.”

Now, Kurgan has the opportunity to pursue life in the private sector. When asked of his decision to leave the military, he remarked, “I love being in the Corps and being a Soldier. It has given me the opportunity to earn three degrees and see the world.

“Yet, when it came down to it, the decision was easy. My son is now four and a half, and I have missed a lot. Leaving allows me to see him more often and on our terms and schedule. It was really not a decision that needed to be made. It was simply something I had to do.”

Maj. Kurgan’s last day at the district was February 19, 2009. For those of us that had the opportunity to work with him, we could not have asked for a better general leading the charge. We wish him the best of luck. The individual that follows will have some great boots to fill.

To say goodbye to Maj. Kurgan, join us at Southport Hall for 6-9:00 on March 20, 2009. Admission is $35 per person and includes food and an open bar. Please pay Sandy Habbaz no later than March 13. There will be no pay at the door admittance.
On November 30, 2008, Lieutenant Colonel Amanda E. Ford deployed to Iraq to serve as the infrastructure chief on the Provincial Reconstruction Team in Karbala Province.

His mission is to work toward establishing a stable and legitimate government in Karbala by rebuilding, reconciling, and reporting on the provincial government’s capability to deliver essential services. During this mission, he’ll focus on areas where the provincial government can sustain and build its infrastructure capacity to deliver essential services through the use of design and/or consultant-based services and training, such as master planning, engineering, project and construction management training.

As the deputy commander for the Greater New Orleans Hurricane and Storm Damage Risk Reduction System and the Readiness Branch at the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, New Orleans District, Ford is no stranger to rebuilding and construction efforts.

He is currently working on constructing 24 new school bathroom facilities throughout the Karbala, Hindiyah, Husainiyah and Ein Tamur districts; repairing the auditorium at the agricultural college and building a dormitory; and purchasing and installing a water purification unit to service more than 50 families.

Future efforts include the construction of five additional schools, a medical clinic, and three courthouses; all valued at more than $27.5 million.

“It gives me great pride to be able to provide a glimmer of hope and a future for the youth of Iraq,” said Ford. “Upgrading the schools and technical centers will definitely provide a better environment for students to study and learn as they are the future leaders of a free and prosperous Iraq. Equally so, building capacity in engineering is key to future development and economic well being.”
From New Orleans to Venice

Hurricane and storm risk reduction in Plaquemines Parish

by Stacy Mendoza
The hurricanes and subsequent nonfederal levee breaches in 2008 demonstrated just how vulnerable Plaquemines Parish is to the threat of tropical storms.

As directed by Congress, the Corps has been working to adopt and incorporate a portion of the nonfederal levee along the West Bank in Plaquemines Parish into the New Orleans to Venice Project. The intent is to reduce risk from storm surge and to preserve evacuation routes in Plaquemines.

$671 million has been authorized for the 32 miles of nonfederal levees between Oakville and St. Jude to be raised to a height of 12 feet. Congress has authorized the Corps to “repair or modify” the existing nonfederal levee. Alternative alignments are being evaluated and considered to minimize impacts to cultural resources, the natural environment, cost and real estate.

These levees will be built with the new, stringent design standards. While this stretch of levees will be federalized, the new elevation will not meet the 100-year level of risk reduction.

The Corps continues to incorporate feedback from local and state government groups and other stakeholders while working to reduce risk to population centers, evacuation routes and key critical facilities.

“Part of our environmental process requires us to evaluate and consider alternative alignments,” said Bill Maloz, Corps senior project manager for Plaquemines Parish Levees, Floodwalls and Armoring. “Public comments, such as those received during the January public meeting, will certainly be considered.”

A Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement (SEIS) regarding the potential alignment of nonfederal levees is scheduled to be released for public comment in Spring 2009.

“Once we get through the environmental process, we’ll be able to firm up our construction dates. The goal for project completion is in 2013,” said Maloz.
According to the United States Census Bureau, the average one-way commute time for the greater New Orleans area is 25.8 minutes. Over a five day work week, that means you will spend 4.3 hours either going to or coming from your place of employment. Over a year, it is nearly 9 days. That’s not even including the 18 hours we lose each year because of traffic delays.

Furthermore, it is estimated that nearly 78 percent of New Orleans’ commuters are alone during their commute. Each morning, nearly 368,000 cars are on the streets with only one passenger. Only 12 percent of our commuters car pool and 3 percent use public transportation.

Beginning in 2009, the traffic and congestion in the area is expected to increase as shipments of essential construction materials, such as steel and borrow, rise to meet the needs of the massive number of greater New Orleans Hurricane and Storm Damage Risk Reduction System construction projects. Though essential to meeting our 2011 goal, Team New Orleans realizes the inconveniences that this increased traffic will cause and is striving to do everything possible to reduce its impact to the area.

One way for New Orleans team members to assist in mitigating this swell in congestion is by taking advantage of the Department of the Army’s Mass Transportation Benefit Program (MTBP). Begun in 2000, the MTBP was instituted to provide reimbursement for mass transit commuting costs for all Army employees—military, civilian, and non-appropriated fund personnel—“in order to reduce federal employee’s contribution to traffic congestion and air pollution and to expand their commuting alternatives.”

However, reducing the amount of traffic in New Orleans is far from the only reason to consider participating in the MTBP. Taking advantage of mass transit has been shown to reduce stress and the risk of an auto-related injury while increasing job satisfaction. Furthermore, employees that use mass transit save on an average of $800 a year in transportation costs while avoiding driving 3,300 miles per year. However, if you opt for the van pool, the greatest incentive may be that you get a reserved parking spot.

Under the guidelines of the MTBP, any eligible participants can receive a subsidy of up to $120 per month tax free to assist with their commuting expenses. This subsidy is provided via one of two methods:

1. “Fare Media” or vouchers, are provided to “pay” the organization providing the means of transportation, or
2. If the transportation providing company does not accept vouchers, the participants may purchase the fare and then request reimbursement for the costs.
The employee is then responsible for any amount above the allowable $120.

When considering taking advantage of the program, it is important to remember that the MTBP is not a car pool program. Personal vehicles, car pools, motorcycles, airplanes, bicycles, and/or feet do not qualify as acceptable means of transportation. Here in the greater New Orleans area, the primary means of utilizing the Mass Transportation Benefit Program is by traveling to work via the city bus, our historic street cars, or, if you have enough willing participants in your area, a van pool.

For our employees that reside on the Northshore, the van pool may be the most attractive option. At present, there are two van pools commuting from the Northshore. In these arrangements, a company provides the vehicle, typically a 15-passenger van, and the participating employees provide the licensed driver. There is currently a waiting list for these two active van pools. However, if there are enough interested employees to justify expenses, another pool could easily be added.

To take advantage of the MTBP, please submit a completed and signed “Mass Transportation Benefit Program Application” and “Mass Transit Commuter Expenses Calculation Worksheet” to Team New Orleans’ MTBP point of contact Sabine Walker in Resource Management. The application and Mass Transit Commuter Expenses Calculation Worksheet can be downloaded from the MTBP website http://www.asafm.army.mil/rabp/masstrans/masstrans.asp.

The approval process takes approximately 30 workdays, from application submission to receipt of fare media. However, the U.S. Department of Transportation only accepts submissions from the district between the 20th and 25th of each month. Therefore, to be sure to have your completed application and worksheet submitted prior the 21st to allow for district processing of all van pool information.

(Continued from page 6)

with clearing a new site. The parish and TLCD further assisted the Corps by granting key Right of Entry and Right of Way permissions and executing a Cooperation Agreement in accordance with the aggressive schedule. It is this high level of commitment by the Corps and our local partners that have allowed every key milestone date to have been met or completed sooner.

Seven days ahead of schedule, the Corps awarded two Multi-Award Task Order Contracts for construction on the project January 26, 2009. The construction period is estimated at 118 days.

“Because the project area is separated by Bayou Butler and each reach has different characteristics, we broke the project into two contacts,” said Senior Project Manager Darrel Broussard. “This also allows us to maximize resources to meet the aggressive schedule.”

As a result of the early award, the Notice to Proceed for construction was issued on February 4, 2009 followed by a groundbreaking ceremony on February 6, 2009.

While the work being completed on the two reaches will not result in 100-year risk reduction for the communities of Suzie Canal and Orange Street, it will advance the local plans for improved flood damage reduction measures. With the next hurricane season only four months away, maintaining the accelerated schedule becomes even more important.
# Countdown to 2011 Hurricane Protection

A program to address the status of the Greater New Orleans Hurricane and Storm Damage Risk Reduction System in support of National Engineers Week

**Two Day Session - District Assembly Room**

### Session 1
**Monday, 02 March 2009**

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| 8:00 AM | Welcome  
Colonel Alvin B. Lee  
Commander, New Orleans District |
| 8:15 AM | Keynote Speaker  
Hon. Steve Scalise  
U.S. Congressman, Louisiana - District 1 |
| 9:00 AM | Overview of GNOHSDRRS  
Ms. Karen Durham-Aguilera, PE, SES  
Director, Task Force Hope |
| 9:30 AM | Overview of PRO Projects  
Walter Bauny, PE / Chief, Engr Division  
Thomas Fodary / Chief, PRO |
| 11:00 AM | A Geotechnical Perspective - Investigation, Design and Construction*  
Dr. Rai Mehdiratta, PE  
Sr. Vice President, Fugro/FFEJV Mgmt |
| NOON | Lunch |
| 1:15 PM | West Closure Complex  
Robert R. Hoffman, PE / Rock Island District  
Thomas R. Ruf, PE / St. Louis District  
David P. Lovett, PE / New Orleans District |
| 3:00 PM | FFEJV Field Demonstration of Equipment:  
Drill Rig, CPT Truck  
North Gate |

### Session 2
**Thursday, 05 March 2009**

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<th>Time</th>
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| 8:00 AM | Welcome  
John Bivona, PE  
Assistant Chief, Engr Division |
| 8:15 AM | Overview of HPO Projects  
Dr. John Grieshaber, PE  
Chief, Execution Support, HPO |
| 9:00 AM | Status of IHNC - Lake Borgne Barrier  
Angela DeSoto Duncan, PE, HPO  
Lead Engineer, IHNC-LBB |
| NOON | Lunch |
| 12:45 PM | Availability of Steel and Concrete  
Don Foster  
Sr. Vice President, Construction Products  
LB Foster  
Sam Ditta & John Uhl / Carlo Ditta Concrete Materials Associates |
| 2:00 PM | Rebuilding / Reopening of New Orleans Restaurants  
Tom Fitzmorris  
Food Critic Extraordinaire  
Host of New Orleans Menu Website |
| 2:45 PM | Media Perspective / Roundtable  
Angelle Bergeron  
Engineering News-Record  
Mark Schleifstein / The Times-Picayune  
John Snell, News Anchor / WVUE-TV |

* FFEJV Open House at St. Rose Lab Facility: 3-6 PM - Monday (2 Mar) & Thursday (5 Mar)

**POC**: John.C.Bivona@usace.army.mil

**Engineers earn 7.0 PDHs per session**