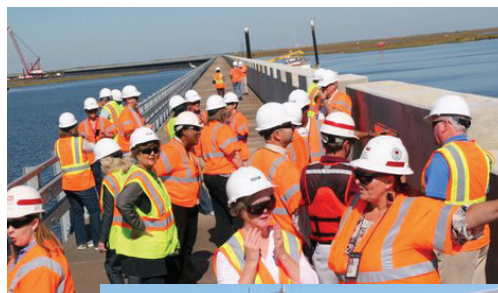


Relocation Assistance Committee Experiences Post-Katrina Reconstruction Efforts



In October, the International Relocation Assistance Committee held its Fall 2010 meeting in New Orleans. On the second day of the meeting, the Committee was afforded the opportunity to tour the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers' post-Hurricane Katrina efforts through projects associated with its Greater New Orleans Hurricane and Storm Damage Risk Reduction System, which has resulted in approximately 200 successful relocations to date.

The Committee is grateful to the Corps for authorizing the tour and for the level of education gained by being guided, in real time, through the right of way projects. The Relocation Assistance Committee's thank you letter to the Corps of Engineers is printed here along with selected pictures to highlight just how impressive the projects are, and the important work that continues to be accomplished every day in New Orleans.



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2 - Karen D Angelo, R/W-RAC
3 - Robert Merjman, R/W-RAC
4 - Michael McFarland, R/W-RAC
5 - Yocani
6 - Lisa Barnes, SRWA, R/W-RAC
7 - Michelle Colby, SRWA, R/W-RAC
8 - Yocani - Canada
9 - Christine Gaudin-Burke, SRWA, R/W-RAC
10 - Yocani - Canada

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2010-2011 Committee Liaisons
IEC - Lisa Harrison, SRWA, R/W-RAC, R/W-NAC, R/W-URA

IPDC - John Reed, SRWA, R/W-RAC

Federal Partners

Joan Morgan - HUD
Marianne Fisher-Smith - FTA
Marshall Wateright - FHWA
Rick Zier - FEA

October 26, 2010

Colonel Edward R. Fleming
District Engineer, MVN
P O Box 60267
New Orleans, Louisiana 70160-0267

Colonel Robert A. Sinkler
Hurricane Protection Office
P O Box 60267
New Orleans, Louisiana 70160-0267

Dear Colonel Fleming and Colonel Sinkler:

Thank you for authorizing the International Relocation Assistance Committee's impressive and eye-opening tour of many of the post Hurricane Katrina projects and community efforts undertaken by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. The Corps of Engineers has accelerated the re-birth of the City of New Orleans and we commend all of the men and women under your respective command and their contributions to the tremendous progress that has been accomplished.

We also share with you the names of seven outstanding individuals that were invaluable in making our tour a success and to whom we are especially grateful for their time and illumination of the historical events and the moving forward plan of *risk avoidance*.

- Mark Spillers, Protocol Specialist
- Ray Newman, 17th Street Canal Team Captain
- Sherry Scott, Safety Officer
- Darla Strother, Safety Officer
- Jason Ragolia, IHNC Deputy Resident Manager
- Deanna Walker, Chief, Federal Acquisition, Real Estate Division
- Janet Cruppi, Deputy Chief, Real Estate Division

It is apparent that The Corp has an "A" Team; one that is dedicated to working with the community, ensuring empathetic relocation of necessary businesses and residents and has the expertise to design and construct state of the art infrastructure for the Greater New Orleans Hurricane and Storm Damage Risk Reduction System.

Each of us walked away from our October 15th tour with a broader perspective than our previous exposure to the complexity in the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina. We learned about the Corps of Engineers' silent heroes; saw its new design of levees and floodwalls, and were astonished at the IHNC/GIVWW Surge Barrier Project's 18 month construction schedule utilizing over 1 million human resource hours, which typically would have taken 13 years. The Corps of Engineers is creating jobs in New Orleans.

Colonel Edward R. Fleming and Colonel Robert A. Sinkler
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As a retrospective to the tour, let me lament quoted impressions of the afternoon from members of the International Relocation Assistance Committee who were asked to share one of their defining moments from the tour:

- ...complexity of what happened during Katrina – a number of systems failed not just what was touted in the newspapers
- ...heard the real story – system weaknesses and agency responsibilities – Corps is restricted to authorization and approvals by Congress [its governing body]
- ...have a new picture of the City and it looks pretty good – opposed to the same pictures of the City of devastation as had seen in the press...
- ...humanistic side of spirited responses by spouses of the Corps employees
- ...caring for the community...over 200 community meetings; responsibly cutting trees only where absolutely necessary
- ... I would like to meet the person that was the designer of the pumps and levees; impressive how the gate and wall tie into the levy; ...common commitment occurred- lessons learned and a huge level of commitment to the success of the project
- ...incredible!... massive coordination of people skills working through the devastation; ...cooperative of people and systems
- ...my narrow perspective is widened as to the flood walls and pumps; impressed with redesign and the strategic construction...
- ...obtainment of a construction permit in two months...the Corps found a better way in ramping up standards, human element and rebuilding...
- ...the magnitude of projects – excellent job at how rebuilt New Orleans is ... "In spite of all of the work; this could happen again."
- Impressed with the Corp being able to obtain a construction permit in 2 months – finding a better way and ramp up of standards; human element; rebuilding
- Loved the fact that the video "Building the T-Wall"; was not just over the wall but also dealt about what was behind the construction of the wall

On behalf of the entire International Relocation and Assistance Committee, your participation in this opportunity is greatly appreciated. We look forward to the Corps of Engineers continued project successes affecting the people and tourism of New Orleans.

Respectfully,

Vivian D. Howell, Chair
International Relocation Assistance Committee