

Press Release



East Bank Levee Improvement Initiative

For Immediate Release – July 8, 2009

Parish President Billy Nungesser has set in motion an aggressive plan of action to address the critical flood protection needs on the East Bank of Plaquemines Parish. The action plan calls for two simultaneous efforts to confront both the short-term and long-term requirements of the 18 miles of non-federal levees.

In describing this initiative, President Nungesser stated that, “It is imperative that we address the immediate needs of the East Bank while not losing sight of the longer-term goal of getting this levee into the federal system and providing more substantial resistance to hurricane flooding. The program that we have launched will do just that.”

The first part of the effort will involve an increase in the height of the existing levee to provide improved protection for hurricane threats within the next year. To determine the height to which the existing levee can be raised, an extensive program of soil borings and analyses has been initiated by President Nungesser to provide scientific data on the structural capability of the levee to support additional fill. Without accurate soils engineering, placing significant amounts of additional soil on the levee could worsen the situation by causing levee failures. The soils analysis program will take approximately 3-4 months to complete.

Following the acquisition of the soils data, Nungesser has directed his engineering team to immediately initiate the design of improvements that can be implemented on the existing levee and raise the height before the 2010 hurricane season.

This first portion of the program will result in a much improved levee system that will provide enhanced protection for the residents of the East Bank, but within the budgetary capabilities of the parish to initiate and complete in a relatively short period of time.

The second part of President Nungesser’s initiative is to address the longer term needs of the East Bank by examining the alternatives and costs involved in satisfying the more rigorous federal standards for levee construction. This effort will include a detailed engineering analysis of the 18-mile levee to determine how the levee can be re-constructed to meet federal requirements.

President Nungesser has directed his engineering team to complete a comprehensive report—based upon the same soils analyses being used for the short-term construction—that will describe the alternative construction methods, alignments, heights, and costs that will form a basis for seeking federal status and funding. The engineering report is expected to be ready within 2-3 months of completion of the soils analysis.

“We expect to involve the Corps of Engineers throughout the development of our plan to ensure that what we do satisfies federal requirements and brings about their support for the flood protection needs of the East Bank,” said President Nungesser.