



METRO EAST LEVEE IMPROVEMENT INITIATIVE REACHES ANOTHER KEY MILESTONE

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FPD Council releases details of plans to improve Metro East Levees

Edwardsville, Ill., June 17, 2011... The Southwestern Illinois Flood Prevention District Council (FPD Council) this week released a draft plan outlining the design and associated cost estimate for the Metro East levee improvement project.

Les Serman, chief supervisor of construction and the works for the FPD Council, noted that this plan signifies another important milestone for the levee improvement initiative because, for the first time, it brings together the design, cost estimate, financing plan and schedule for the project. "The plan is a comprehensive report that describes the specific improvements to be made, how much they will cost, how we will pay for them and when they will be done," he said. "The report is in draft form and will be subject to change as the design and cost estimates are further refined in the months ahead."

The design, while still a work in progress, is the product of an intensive and extensive effort that started last October to assimilate data from hundreds of soil borings, surveys, inspections and tests to fully understand the condition of the levee systems. The draft plan review by Council members on Wednesday includes changes to the preliminary design and cost estimate presented to the FPD Council in May. These cost-reducing changes resulted from additional analysis done by the Council's engineering team, led by AMEC Earth & Environmental, and its discussions with representatives from local levee districts and the U.S. Corps of Engineers.

Overall, the proposed plan includes additional underseepage controls, gravity drains and closure structures that will assure that the Metro East levee systems will meet FEMA

standards for adequate flood protection. Several pump stations will also be improved throughout the system to handle increased flows from various underseepage controls. Specific planned improvements to each individual levee system include the following:

- * seepage berms, which will involve the placement of approximately 285,000 cubic yards of material; clay caps; 156 new relief wells and the rehabilitation of 33 relief wells in the Prairie DuPont and Fish Lake Levee Districts;

- * a deep cutoff wall in the Metro East Sanitation District levee system near East St. Louis, along with 60 new relief wells, 42 rehabbed relief wells, seepage berms and a clay cap near the southern end of the District to address through-seepage issues; and

- * a large deep cutoff wall at the "elbow" formed by the intersection of the Mississippi and Wood Rivers, along with 65 new relief wells and the strategic placement of seepage berms to support the District's flank levees .

The total cost of the project is estimated at nearly \$161 million and, according to the Council's financial advisors, can be paid for by the money raised from the quarter-cent sales tax that was implemented in Madison, St. Clair and Monroe counties beginning in January 2009. The preliminary schedule optimally provides for construction to begin in 2012 and be substantially complete by the end of 2014, with the submittal of certification documentation to occur in 2015.

Patrick McKeehan, executive director of the Leadership Council Southwestern Illinois and administrator for the St. Louis Metro East Levee Issues Alliance, commended the FPD Council for its latest action. "Having a plan in place is an essential ingredient in helping businesses and citizens prepare for the future, restoring investor confidence in the area and assuring taxpayers that their money is being spent effectively," he said. "We look forward to sharing additional details about the plans to improve our levees as additional progress is made."

Copies of the presentations made at the June 15th FPD Council board meeting are available on the FPD Council's website at www.floodpreventiondistrict.org<<http://www.floodpreventiondistrict.org>>, along with a wealth of additional information.

The St. Louis Metro East Levee Issues Alliance serves as the organizational framework for the regional, public/private effort to help prevent the unintended economic consequences produced by FEMA's update of the flood insurance rate maps in our region. While the Flood Prevention District Council is charged with improving the levees, the Alliance is working to eliminate the proposed designation of the levee-protected areas in the American Bottom as Special Flood Hazard Areas (SFHA) and reduce the economic damage produced by the new insurance requirements and construction restrictions.

To learn more about the Alliance efforts, visit www.stlmetrocastlevees.org<<http://www.stlmetrocastlevees.org>>. The site makes it easy for individuals and organizations to officially join the Alliance, while also providing helpful tools for those who would like to support the legislative or outreach efforts in the coming months. For more information, visit the website or contact the Leadership Council at 618-692-9745.