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**Louisiana Post
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MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

AUGUST 2020

Dear SAME Members,

Charles Dickens once penned the famous line “It was the best of times, it was the worst of times” for a novel set in the 19th Century. It seems the same general sentiment is as true today as it was then with all the challenges we've experienced in the last three months across the globe and here in the states. While there are certainly a lot of things that compete for making it the worst of times, there are definitely others that inspire hope. And those are what I want to focus on as I start my tenure as our newest chapter president. There's always an element of gratitude in hope so I want to start off by saying “thank you” to Troy for his tireless leadership and energy during his tenure as chapter president as well as to our other leaders. We are better for your service. Thank you to all my fellow board members who are now carrying the torch with me. I look forward to serving with you.

I wanted to share what I'm seeing in USACE and especially here in South Louisiana in regards to the Corps of Engineers, its program, and what it's seeing as COVID-19 continues to impact daily life, especially with hurricane season upon us. This week the New Orleans District is beginning its 21st week in a mass telework posture in response to the COVID-19 pandemic and there is no clear end in sight. I'm sure this mirrors many of your experiences. Last month saw a 35% increase in COVID-19 cases in Louisiana but thanks to diligently practicing social distancing and other CDC recommended risk reduction measures, the New Orleans District has seen a very small percentage of COVID-19 positive cases (less than 1%) and all of these employees are recovering or have fully recovered. In spite of mass telework and working almost completely in a virtual environment (WebEx, Skype for Business, and now Microsoft Teams), the New Orleans District continues to deliver on its \$1.1B fiscal year 2020 program. The district recently executed its first ever Virtual Industry Day on July 30th via Facebook Live. I hope many of you were able to dial in. We received positive feedback but welcome ways you think it could be better next time. In other big news, the Corps recently signed a project partnership agreement with the state of Louisiana for the \$271 million deepening of the Mississippi River from 45 to 50 feet. While five feet may not sound like much, it translates into significant benefits economically for both the state and the nation. Our 2018 BBA-18 supplemental projects program is also picking up momentum as we've awarded or will award many contracts before the fiscal year ends on many of these projects. I could go on but suffice it to say that the New Orleans District is not hurting for work. There are incredible opportunities to partner. Finally, we are now in a record breaking 2020 hurricane season so far, with plenty of historical "firsts" occurring. Thankfully, the Mississippi River is now well below flood stage, always a welcome condition, but one that was not the case during Tropical Storm Cristobal when the season started in June. The massive \$14.65 billion investment in the Hurricane

and Storm Damage Risk Reduction System performed well again. Almost completely owned and operated now by the State, the Corps is nearing completion on the final portions of the project and will hand it over within the next few years. This will be significant as it represents the largest civil works project ever executed in USACE history.

I'll close by focusing on what I think is one of the greatest benefits of SAME – relationships. A general I once knew said, “relationships determine results.” He used the acronym “RDR” to describe this, often adding that it’s not “competence determines results” (though it helps), or “money determines results” (though it can). What matters most is always the relationships. I think that the benefit of our chapter and of SAME at large as we move through this COVID-19 pandemic and into whatever our new normal will be, will not be determined by the size of our chapter or the bona fides or our members per se. Instead, our value and resilience will be established in the close, personal and professional relationships we develop through the challenges of a virtual and constrained meeting environment. These relationships will allow us to better use our competencies, expertise, and resources to do what engineers do best: solve problems, even and especially in this COVID-19 environment. I look forward to serving with and for you over the next few years as your chapter president. I aim to balance my duties as the New Orleans District Commander with my duties as president to help us maximize on our relationships. I look forward to seeing you at our next meeting.

Sincerely,
COL Stephen F. Murphy

HOST SUSTAINING MEMBER INFORMATION

We still have some luncheon meetings available for Sustaining Members to host. Hosting our monthly meetings is a great opportunity to put your firm in the limelight and showcase your firm’s experience and abilities. If your firm is interested in hosting one of these meetings, please contact Charlie Settoon at (504) 889-0182.

We would like to thank all the Sustaining Member Firms who have hosted a monthly meeting in the past. If it has been a while since your firm hosted a meeting, you are welcome to host another meeting. Let’s continue to show our support for the Louisiana Post through this great professional opportunity.



MEMBERSHIP INFORMATION AND NEWS

MEMBER INFORMATION

LOUISIANA POST MEETING

WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 12, 2020

POST LUNCHEON - 12:00 P.M.

LOCATION: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/89909732153>
Meeting ID: 899 0973 2153

GUEST SPEAKER: **JOHN R. MONZON, P.E., REGIONAL DIRECTOR
SOUTHEAST LOUISIANA FLOOD PROTECTION
AUTHORITY – WEST (SLFPA-W)**

TOPIC: **LEVEE LIFT COMPLETION, ALL-WEATHER ACCESS
ROADS, HURRICANE PREPAREDNESS**

THIS WILL QUALIFY AS 1.0 PDH

**DON'T FORGET THAT EVERY MONTH YOU CAN EARN 1.0 PDH (PROFESSIONAL
DEVELOPMENT HOUR) FOR ATTENDING S.A.M.E. LUNCHEON MEETINGS.**

SPEAKER'S BIOGRAPHY

John R. Monzon, P.E. Regional Director, SLFPA-W

Mr. John R. Monzon, P.E. graduated from the University of New Orleans in 1994 with a Bachelor of Science in Civil Engineering. He spent 14 years working at the Louisiana Department of Transportation and Development (DOTD) designing and constructing bridges, highways, drainage and flood protection features. He spent the next six years at the Coastal Protection and Restoration Authority (CPRA) as the Operations Division Chief and oversaw the construction and implementation of hurricane protection and coastal restoration projects in coastal Louisiana; including the \$14 billion Hurricane Storm Damage Risk Reduction System in the greater New Orleans area.

Since 2014, Mr. Monzon has been the Regional Director of the Southeast Louisiana Flood Protection Authority – West (SLFPA-W). This flood protection authority was created in 2007 to manage and provide oversight to 80 miles of riverine and hurricane protection levees and flood protection features on the West bank of the greater New Orleans area.