

In the Levee Loop !



News of the Flood Protection Authority

May 15, 2020

Message From Commissioner Joe Hassinger

We have all been dealing with some unexpected and challenging circumstances over the past couple months. I hope that you and your families are safe and healthy. Covid-19 has significantly disrupted most people's lives; our routines are altered, perhaps our health is changed, some have lost loved ones. We pray for those who have died, and for their families.



Something struck me over this past weekend. While there is virtually nobody on the road, and things seem eerily quiet, who do I see out on a Saturday? FPA crews taking care of the levees along the Orleans Canal. On another day, while most are inside their homes, I see other crews working around the closure structure on Bayou St. John. I read emails among our staff, commissioners and board president, thinking about and planning for important operational and budget issues. I hear OLD Police on their loudspeakers, doing their jobs. I see the Lakefront Management Authority folks energized and in gear. I go to Receiving for a mask and end up having a great conversation with Julia (her daughter was just admitted to Boston University, a great story...perhaps we can talk about it another day). I read another reminder from Glenda for me to get this article written. And I know that these snapshots are not limited to OLD; I just happen to be in Orleans Parish for these particular examples. I would have the exact same experiences in Jefferson and St. Bernard. Why? Because this organization is united and has one culture.

It is said that adversity does not build character, it reveals it. And while virtually everything has been interrupted and disordered, I am privileged to see, hear from, and interact with people who don't buckle under pressure, but excel.

Thank you for being steady. Thank you for being professional. And, well, thank you for just being there, doing what you do.

Joe

THE FLOOD PROTECTION AUTHORITY—EAST COMMISSIONERS

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President

Mark L. Morgan, P.E. - Vice President
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K. Randall Noel
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* * *

*“You never know
how strong you are,
until being strong
is your
only choice.”*

Bob Marley

* * *



Get Ready - Hurricane Season Begins on June 1st!

National Hurricane Preparedness Week was observed on May 3-9, 2020, and drew attention to the need for early planning and proactive preparation measures. This year we face the challenge of preparing for hurricane season while complying with COVID-19 public health directives and taking the appropriate safety precautions.

The Flood Protection Authority is preparing as an organization and urges its team members not to neglect planning and preparing for their personal and family needs.

We should be familiar with the steps we must take every year, such as doing an insurance checkup, preparing homes and properties, stocking hurricane emergency supplies, and having a plan of action in the event of an evacuation. This year the National Weather Service recommends having a plan of action with multiple options, keeping in mind that we may have to adjust our plan based on health and safety guidelines issued by the CDC and local officials.

Be Smart. Plan ahead and be prepared.

Welcome New FPA Team Member

Best Wishes on Retirement



Glenda Winfield was hired as a GIS Analyst 1 in the Engineering Department - Orleans on April 20th.



Grady Bell retired on April 24th. At the time of his retirement, Grady was a Mechanic 3 at the Orleans Levee District with 25 years of service.

What is Employee Services Doing Now?

As we begin our second month of dealing with COVID-19, most administrative staff continue to work from home, including the Employee Services team. While we have been out of sight, we have not been out of touch and have continued to be available to all FPA employees and prospective employees. So, if you're wondering what we've been doing, we thought we'd provide you with a look into our virtual HR world.

Response to COVID-19 has been a top priority for Employee Services. At the start of the COVID-19 event, we established meetings regularly to discuss updates, initiatives, and communication plans.

Employee Services coordinated with employees, supervisors, and the leadership to prioritize employee safety and mitigate the spread of COVID-19. We developed channels for daily reporting on COVID-19 cases while preserving employee privacy rights. We established protocols to implement new Civil Service, CDC and federal guidelines as they applied to FPA employees.

Employee Services partnered with the CEO and department directors on the continuity of operations, ensuring they had what they needed to continue the FPA's mission, and we continued to hire, onboard, train, and offboard employees.

Employee Services embraced the new online meeting platform, Lifesize, using it to host group training for supervisors on PPEs and return-to-work protocols. In addition to hosting training and daily team meetings, we are using Lifesize to group-study for the SHRM Certified Profession Exam (SHRM-CP).

As the COVID-19 event continues, Employee Services will continue efforts to refine protocols for remotely recruiting new talent to the FPA. We will continue to leverage the online platform for interviewing, onboarding, and training interactions, thereby ensuring all participants safety during the process.

While the Employee Services team may not be onsite, the entire group remains available by phone, text, or email and continues to be ready to assist with all employees' needs.

*“Keep your thoughts positive because your thoughts become your words.
Keep your words positive because your words become your behavior.
Keep your behavior positive because your behavior becomes your habits.
Keep your habits positive because your habits become your values.
Keep your values positive because your values become your destiny.”*

Mahatma Gandhi

Congratulations, Graduate!



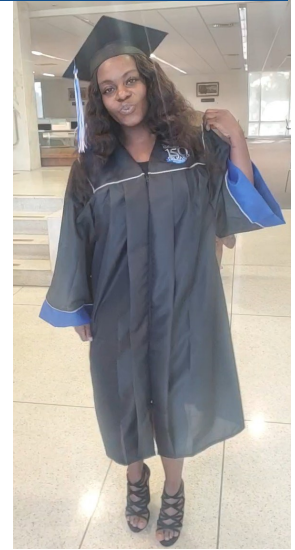
Please join the Levee Loop in congratulating Curtrell Charles, the daughter of Adele Charles in the Finance Department, on her graduation from Dillard University.

Curtrell earned her Nursing degree with a concentration in Public Health and a minor in Psychology, and she also earned a Bachelor's degree in Criminal Justice.

Dillard University will be holding a virtual graduation due to the COVID-19 public health emergency.

Upon graduation Curtrell has been offered a position at the CDC.

*"Education is the most powerful weapon which you can use
To change the world." Nelson Mandela*



Applauding Teamwork

I want to honor and thank all the FPA employees who have withstood this crazy time and continued to shine. Everyone has played a vital role within our agency and the teamwork displayed is second to none. We have some incredible people who work here and it's truly awesome to see the team all work together towards one common goal.

We have a long way to still go, but we are standing tall and fighting together. Times like this make us stronger.

Captain Terry Durnin, EJLD Police

GEM - Going the Extra Mile



Niki Owens

I would like to recognize Mike LeBlanc, Niki Owens, and Julia Lloyd for Going the Extra Mile!

Mike Leblanc – Working to get the old shelving removed and having the new shelving installed in the Store Room. Mike also took the time to help relocate items from old shelving to new. Thanks Mike!

Niki Owens & Julia Lloyd – Creating Care packages for everyone that included hand sanitizer, KN95 and cloth masks, and mixing the correct levels for disinfectant spray bottles that were handed out to wipe down vehicles and surfaces. We really appreciate both of you!

Christopher Lucas, Procurement Specialist



Mike LeBlanc



Julia Lloyd



*"Let us be grateful for the people who
make us smile, the people who make work
fun, and the people we can count on to get
the dang job done!"*

The Maintenance Team Plows Ahead During COVID 19 Crisis

At this time I want to sincerely thank all of our employees at the FPA-E for pulling together and continuing to accomplish our mission during this trying time. In one form or another, all of our employees have been touched or impacted by the Covid-19 virus situation that not only has impacted our FPA-E family but the world as a whole by this pandemic. At the FPA-E it truly takes all of our departments working together to keep our Authority functioning efficiently and properly in order to continue our mission, which is to protect our citizens and property from rising water whether that danger is from high river, high tides or storms.

I would like to take this time to recognize the efforts of our Maintenance employees in dealing with and adjusting to the impacts that the Covid-19 virus situation has had and continues to have on how we must conduct our daily duties. We have had some of our Maintenance employees directly affected by becoming ill with the virus and others affected by having members of their immediate family becoming ill with the virus. In order to restrict or stop the spread of the virus from affecting other employees of our departments, it became necessary to bench or side-line whole departments with several benched at the same time. The employees that continued to work and function, while other employees were benched, did an outstanding job by continuing to keep all aspects of our flood control system running.

In dealing with the virus situation we have had and continue to have to adjust how we conduct our daily operations. These adjustments include, but are not limited to: doing a roll call to account for employees instead of using the time clocks, continued sanitization and disinfecting of common areas, vehicles and equipment, limiting employees to one employee per vehicle and the additional PPE that is required to be used to safeguard our employees against the virus. All of these adjustments have directly impacted our ability and the time it takes to accomplish our daily duties. I am proud to say that we have positively overcome the obstacles that we have been facing and continue to succeed with accomplishment of our mission.



Pictured above: Randy Carter, Plumber/Pipefitter Master, working with a flood valve actuator and ensuring the operability of the flood defense system



Francisco Valera, Trades Apprentice, O&M Facilities, performs detailed disinfecting of the restrooms and common areas in the Franklin Facility to help fight the coronavirus and keep fellow team members safe.

In addition to the many adjustments that had to be made as listed above, one of the biggest, and the one that has impacted our employees the most, is having to adjust the normal work schedules of the majority of our employees. The majority of our Maintenance employees are now working an adjusted work schedule where they are working three twelve-hour days and one four-hour day each week instead of the normal four 10-hour days Monday thru Thursday. I greatly appreciate the effort and dedication of our employees in dealing with this new schedule and understand the impact that it not only has had on themselves, but their families as well.

In summary, we all have been impacted and have had to adjust to changes in how we normally conduct our business to keep accomplishing our mission. I'm extremely proud and appreciative of and for the dedication of our employees with adjusting to the challenging times we are working in and the work that we have still been able to accomplish. Once again, this is only possible by all of us working together.

Earl Kugelmann
Director of Maintenance

The Maintenance Team Plows Ahead During COVID 19 Crisis



The Maintenance Team at Lake Borgne working hard to maintain the flood defense system amidst COVID-19 challenges.

Pictured: (row 1) Austin Menard, Bernard Thomas, Christopher Bailey; (row 2) Edwin Colar, Kenneth Enclade; and (row 3) Sean Boye, Randall Deny and Ross Debouchel.



The Maintenance Team Plows Ahead During COVID 19 Crisis



Members of the Floodgates Maintenance team are seen performing concrete repairs to the flood defense system — an important part of keeping the system in top condition.

Pictured (top row) Duane Gayden, Jason Glenn , Jeffrey Beverly, (middle row) Harrell Washington and Kholbey Reid



Operations and Maintenance - Facilities team members Rick Witcher, HAVAC Repair Master (pictured left), and Tim Pisciotta, Maintenance Superintendent, (pictured right) are seen working with components of the flood defense system.

When a hurricane comes, every component in the flood defense system must be operational.



The Maintenance Team Plows Ahead During COVID 19 Crisis



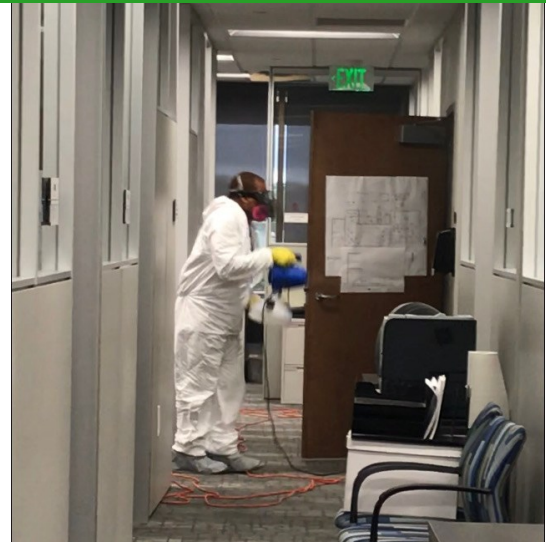
The Orleans Levee District and East Jefferson Levee District Mechanic Shops carry on the maintenance of the vehicles, trucks and equipment needed to keep the flood defense system in top shape and fulfill the FPA's flood protection mission.

Pictured: Brett Brignac (O.L.D.), Joe Bailey (EJ), Frank Alfonso (EJ), and Charlie Morgan (O.L.D.)

Fogging the Franklin Facility



Soon after issuance of COVID-19 directives, JanPro was brought in for a one time fogging of the Franklin Facility to ensure that the more heavily populated and extensively utilized offices prior to the stay at home order were properly disinfected.



The Finance Team Takes on COVID-19 Challenges



Government agencies do not have a reputation for being nimble in decision making or quick in reacting to changing events, especially when compared to the private sector. I am thankful to say that for the FPA, the opposite is true. From the time the Pandemic was first identified in the United States to the day Louisiana began shutting down schools and business, new information and guidance seemed to be coming at lightning speed. On top of the rapid development of this pandemic, it was an event unlike any that we had ever faced before. In response, each team had to quickly develop a plan to adjust to the guidelines being issued.

For Purchasing, this meant turning our focus to locating, purchasing, and distributing PPE (or personal protective equipment) to the various teams. This proved to be very challenging due to the short supply of face masks. Purchasing kept looking, and we have a large enough supply to give each employee at least four N-95 masks and four cloth masks in addition to hand sanitizer and gloves. And they managed to accomplish this while still making every day purchases and continuing to overhaul the store room. Excellent Job!



For Finance it meant a shift to working remotely, which brought another set of challenges in exchanging documents such as invoices, checks, deposits and reports. With tremendous support from IT, we successfully made that transition and have been able to continue to conduct business. Each morning we check in through a video conference call, and we always start our day with some great music that has developed into an ever growing COVID-19 playlist.

I want to send a huge thank you to everyone in Finance and Purchasing for the flexibility.

Kelli Chandler, Regional Finance Director



Pictured left top down:
Chris Lucas on staff video conference call;
Niki Owens preparing care packages for employees that include hand sanitizers and masks, and Julia Lloyd mixing correct levels for disinfectant spray bottles being handed out to wipe down vehicles and surfaces.

Pictured right: Chris Lucas cleaning floors.



EJLD/O.L.D. Police Departments

Community Assistance During COVID-19



During these times of concern and protective measures, we as both Public Service and Enforcement Agencies have had our share of logistical hurdles. COVID19 has presented unprecedented circumstances for police departments throughout the country.

The Levee District Police Departments work within guidelines of back up and support for all our personnel. When we were confronted with questions on how to protect our on-duty and patrol personnel with sanitization and disinfection measures, we at Police Administration had to move away from conventional practices and learn how to think “out of the box.”

On April 20th, 2020 Nola.com published an article stating that local alcohol distilleries were moving away from liquor beverage distribution and into the realm of hand sanitizer and liquid disinfection supplies. ***“Hand Sanitizer is a vital tool in the Coronavirus fight, and that has spurred a global shortage for the once ubiquitous product. New Orleans companies have begun their own home-front production efforts, selling or donating their new products to health care providers and direct customers through their storefronts. And their numbers are growing.”*** (Nola.Com Ian McNulty - Staff Writer 04.01.2020)



We in Police Administration saw this opportunity as an entryway, to not only network with new corporate partners, but to also support the needs of our police officers during COVID19. I would like to Honor the following Local Distilleries who stepped up and answered the call supporting the Levee District Police Departments and the Flood Authority with donated distilled sanitation products:

Sazerac Co. 101 Magazine Street New Orleans La.

Ms. Jana Ritter, Ms. Ashlee Mixson, Ms. Rebecca Dorsky and Ms. Brooke Ethridge allowed for a donation of grain alcohol distilled base agent. This base agent was utilized to produce multiple bottles of surface disinfects, supporting not only the police departments, but the Flood Authority personnel agency wide. This group of representatives were welcoming in all of their communications and were very assistive when we arrived on site!

Celebration Distillation 2815 Frenchmen Street New Orleans La.

Ms. Katie Darling and the Michalopolous Foundation were instrumental in assisting our Police Departments with a fully formulated, alcohol based, hand sanitizer product. Ms. Darling allowed for an open-rapport though her office for the pick-up of these products and assisted other police agencies locally as well. It should be noted that Ms. Darling’s husband is currently a Law Enforcement Officer for New Orleans Police Department. Ms. Darling stated knowing what her husband does for the community, she and her company wanted to do the same!

Atelier Vie 1001 Broad Street New Orleans La.

Mr. Jedd Hass was also a corporate liaison who assisted our agencies with a formulated, alcohol based, sanitizer product. Mr. Hass went out of his way to contact us and advise us that his distillery has been formulating this product and was willing to donate these supplies on site. Mr. Hass brought his donated product to the East Jefferson Levee District Safe House, wearing protective materials so we could accept this donation as well!

All of these products have been distributed throughout the FPA East Administration and for the Orleans and East Jefferson Levee District Police Departments. We are Thankful for the entities answering the call of Community Assistance and Supporting Our Departments!

Captain Donald Juneau
East Jefferson Levee District Police

EJLD Police Meet COVID-19 Challenges

I want to commend all East Jefferson Levee District Police Department employees for their professional service during this COVID virus. You have made me proud with the manner you have carried yourselves. Thank you!

Terry Durnin, Capt.
EJLD Police Department



Capt. Don Juneau wearing the PPE gear that can be worn by Levee District Police Officers when handling calls for service.

Safety Message - Hot Days Are Here!

Hydration is your first line of defense against heat related illnesses. Working in hot humid conditions is a definite safety concern. Many employees become sick every year from exposure to heat and dehydration. Heat illness can strike any employee whether they work indoors or outdoors. Employees who are exposed to hot humid conditions are at greater risk, especially those doing heavy work and those who have not built up tolerance to hot humid conditions. Heat illnesses can range from prickly heat, cramps to heat exhaustion, heat stroke and even death. Heat illnesses can progress quickly. A body temperature can escalate to 104 degrees within 10 minutes if heat related illnesses go unchecked. The risk of heat related illness resulting from dehydration becomes greater as the temperature and humidity rises.

Heat Index Degree - Risk Level

91-103 - Moderate

103-115 - Heavy

115 & Above - Extreme



Heat Illness Prevention:

Hydrate: Before leaving home drink 6 to 8 ounces of water and at least 30 minutes prior to starting working in hot humid conditions. Do not drink coffee or carbonated drinks.

- ◆ **Stay hydrated:** Drink 6 to 8 ounces of water or sports drink every 15 to 20 minutes even if you are not thirsty. Do not drink more than 6 cups of water or sports drink per hour. Do not drink caffeine, carbonated beverages or alcohol.
- ◆ Employees should take frequent 10 minute breaks every two hours in the shade when possible.
- ◆ Contact your supervisor if you have cramps or feel sick.

The FPA Safety Team's next safety release will describe Heat Rash, Exhaustion and Stroke conditions.

Your FPA Safety Team safety@floodauthority.org

Levee District Police Departments' Officers of the Month



Matthew White, PO 2A

Matthew White was selected by the EJLDPD and Terrol-Lynn Gray was selected by the OLDPD as their Police Officers of the Month.

An officer is selected by the EJLDPD and OLDPD each month who demonstrates professionalism, accountability, proactiveness, adherence to the highest ethical standards, and remains focused on the FPA's mission and organizational integrity. The officers' names are placed on a plaque in their respective departments.



Terrol-Lynn Gray, PO 2A

Levee District Police Officers Receive Commendations



Sergeant Vance Bieniemy, Officer Terrol-Lynn Gray, Officer Gabriel Faucetta, and Officer Ryan Frazier (pictured left to right) were commended by O.L.D. Police leadership.

On March 9, 2020, Sergeant Vance Bieniemy, Officer Ryan Frazier, and Officer Gabriel Faucetta responded to a carjacking on the University of New Orleans campus. While effecting a perimeter, a vehicular pursuit ensued with the suspects. The carjackers, who were trailing one another in two separate stolen cars, refused to stop for officers. The vehicles eventually fled in different directions. Sergeant Bieniemy pursued the vehicle that was carjacked, while Officer Frazier and Officer Faucetta pursued the other vehicle. The carjacking perpetrator crashed and fled on foot while discharging a firearm at Sgt. Bieniemy near Interstate 10 and Bullard Avenue. Sgt. Bieniemy continued trailing the perpetrator despite being fired upon. The perpetrator and weapon were apprehended with the assistance New Orleans Police Department.

On April 15, 2020, Officer Terrol-Lynn Gray responded to a call from the 911 Communications Center regarding a suspicious silver SUV in the Lake Terrace Subdivision. The vehicle was occupied by several male subjects who were pulling on door handles. Officer Gray observed the vehicle stopped on Killdeer Street and observed an occupant opening the door to a parked vehicle. The suspect immediately retreated to the SUV and fled. After a brief pursuit, the vehicle crashed into a fire hydrant on Eastern Street near Filmore Avenue. Three subjects exited the vehicle and fled on foot. Additional Orleans Levee District Officers and New Orleans Police Department Officers, including a K9 Officer, were able to set a perimeter and apprehend all suspects. The driver had fifteen active warrants and the SUV was found to be stolen from Jefferson Parish.

OLDPD Partners with NOPD for a Safe Mardi Gras

Superintendent of Police Kerry Najolia received the following letter from New Orleans Police Department Superintendent Shaun D. Ferguson thanking the OLDPD for its assistance during the 2020 Mardi Gras season.

Dear Chief Najolia,

On behalf of the New Orleans Police Department and the City of New Orleans, it is a true privilege to extend to you our sincere thanks for your continued partnership and the excellent service members of the Orleans Levee District Police provided during the 2020 Carnival Season.

The assistance of the Orleans Levee District Police was instrumental and vital in providing a safe and secure environment for all Mardi Gras related events. It has been proven over the years this large scale event has been extremely successful only as a result of your continued, dedicated and valued partnership.

We look forward to next Carnival Season as being another banner year because of your exceptional service and support!

Sincerely, Shaun D. Ferguson, Superintendent of Police

Calendar of Events

May

May 21 (Thursday) - Board/Committee Meetings

May 25 (Monday) - Memorial Day (Legal Holiday declared by Governor John Bel Edwards)

June

June 18 (Thursday) - Board/Committee meetings

July

July 3 (Friday) - Independence Day Observed (July 4 Saturday—Independence Day)

July 16 (Thursday) - Board/Committee meetings

August

August 20 (Thursday) - Board/Committee Meetings

Reminders

Submit your Employee of the Month Nomination Forms by the last day of each month

Louisiana State Civil Service advised that the 2020 version of the Preventing Sexual Harassment course is available on the LEO website.

2020 Performance Evaluation System (PES) Timeline

- * Employee Services (ES) host refresher classes for all supervisors - June 22 - June 25
- * 1st & 2nd level evaluators prepare evaluation and planning forms (signed and dated) and submit to ES - July 1 - July 24
- * ES Review Period - July 27 - July 31
- * 1st level evaluators conduct evaluation and planning sessions with employees and submit signed PES forms to ES - August 3 - August 28
- * ES to prepare PES report for Civil Service - August 31, 2020

Employee Assistance Program (EAP) - New Directions

In addition to helping with personal issues, the EAP has trainings available for all employees and supervisors, 24/7. Take advantage of all the EAP has to offer, from building skills on personal and professional growth, such as communication, professional development, and developing leadership and interpersonal skills. Take the first step and call or visit the website: Visit the website www.ndbh.com

- Select Individuals & Families and select Employee Assistance Program
- Enter your login code: Flood Protection
- 800-624-5544

Suggestions, comments, news items (weddings, births, significant anniversaries and other events you wish to share with your coworkers), original articles and other submittals are welcomed.

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