



**US Army Corps
of Engineers**
St. Louis District®

Media Advisory

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Work Accelerating at Corps of Engineers Locks 27

Granite City, Ill., August 9, 2004 -- Engineers and operations experts with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, St. Louis District are reporting today that they are making good headway in emergency repairs to the main 1200-foot lock chamber near Granite City.

Corps experts now say that the lock may be returned to full operation by this week. This is instead of being delayed as long as two more weeks beyond an earlier hoped-for finish today, Aug. 9.

Situation reports from the lock indicate that a decision by engineers to authorize welding repairs to be carried out at the same time as operations to retension the diagonal braces on the lock gates may have saved two days in the critical path leading to completing the necessary work.

The Corps repair force has been unable to completely dewater the lock chamber due to continuing high ground water and river water pressing in on the concrete lock chamber from outside. This has made it impossible to reach the bottom tensioning rods on the gates to replace them.

However, engineers and operating personnel have decided to replace the top bolts and defer replacing the bottom bolts for a later time. They feel that this is a prudent risk since a recent inspection had indicated that 15 of 16 bolts were still intact. On the top of the gates, loss of several bolts and tensioning rods had made these repairs more critical.

Corps of Engineers personnel will keep a close watch on the gates when they are put back in operation and to save wear and tear on the main chamber, the auxiliary chamber will be used at all times it offers efficient lockage.

The lock gates at Locks 27 are 51 years old. They were built in place when the lock was constructed after World War II and are items that have been identified to be replaced if funding can be identified for a major rehabilitation in the near future.

- 30 -

Note to Editors: We will advise you of any changes in the situation or schedule at Locks 27. In the meantime, if you need additional details or updates between our releases, please contact the St. Louis District Public Affairs Office at 314-331-8002. You may also reach District spokesman Alan Dooley at his personal cell phone: 618-719-9039 or home at 618-939-5985.