



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

Press Release

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1222 Spruce Street, St. Louis, Missouri 63103-2833

MEDIA ADVISORY UPDATE

U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Announces Continued Delay to Lock Gate Removal

Alton, Ill – The St. Louis District, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers is continuing to delay their attempt to remove the first of two damaged miter gates at the Melvin Price Locks and Dam.

There are two causes for the delay. Predicted weather conditions, including rain and wind, coupled with problems with the “strong back”, or lifting device that couples the giant gate lifting crane “The Hercules” to the 220-ton gates, are being blamed.

When technicians attempted late yesterday to attach the coupling device to the Missouri-side gate (the gate furthest from the Illinois bank), they were unable to do so because of misalignment between pins in the device and the holes into which they are supposed to fit in the gate. An area heavy machine shop has assessed the situation and has moved the device to their shop to fix the problem.

Weather also continues to pose problems, especially predicted wind conditions in coming days. Since the lift is actually accomplished from a single lift-point, winds must be low to prevent the 57 ½-foot high, 62-foot wide gate from acting like a large sail.

Until technicians can properly mate the lifting device to the damaged lock gate, it will be impossible to predict when the lift will be made. However, Corps experts point out that personnel safety and safety of the equipment must be paramount in that decision. Therefore it is extremely difficult to predict very long in advance, when this may occur.

Because of the safety factors involved, a lift may be executed on short notice or possibly outside normal hours. We will make every attempt to provide as long a notice as possible to enable your organizations to be present to observe and take photographs if you wish. We recommend that you keep the following points of contact for our Public Affairs Officer at hand, and he will make every attempt to give you as much notice as possible. If you have desired points of contact for him to use for this notice after normal hours or on the weekend, please provide them to him at the work phone number or work e-mail address in the final paragraph of this advisory.

We understand that this is inconvenient for your organizations and appreciate your interest. We will try to keep your needs in mind at all stages of what will probably be a lengthy process.

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2-2-2-2 ADVISORY UPDATE – MEL PRICE LOCK GATES

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Note: The strong back lifting device is a steel box-like structure approximately 12-feet long. A high-resolution color image (300 dpi, 6x10) of its attempted use yesterday is available from our public affairs office: 314-331-8002, or alan.j.dooley@mvs02.usace.army.mil.