



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

# News Release

Release No. 11-05

Contact: Public Affairs Office  
314-331-8002/8095

For Release: **IMMEDIATE** – July 1, 2005

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

## Melvin Price Auxiliary Chamber Returning to Operation

Alton, Ill., -- The 600-foot auxiliary chamber at the Melvin Price Lock and Dam is being returned to operation Friday, July 1. The chamber has been out of operation since October 3, 2004 when the downstream miter gate was damaged when mechanical equipment failure resulted in the gate leafs swinging past the secure closed position known as miter. Both leafs were heavily warped, metal was torn and there was substantial damage to concrete anchorages and other mechanical parts.

The \$12 million repair operation has been conducted without causing a bottleneck for commercial river commerce, with the 1200-foot-long main chamber absorbing the entire load during the repair operations.

U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, St. Louis District Chief of Operations Peggy O'Bryan said today that the chamber is ready to handle recreation pleasure boats expected during the Independence Day weekend, but that some minor adjustments remain before the chamber will be used for the larger commercial tow lockages. "We want to be sure that the gates are recessing into the walls properly before we lock the 105-foot-wide commercial tows through. But the remaining adjustments will not have any impact on smaller vessel lockages and we want to be able to make it more convenient for those users who have awaited the completion of our work," O'Bryan added.

The repair operation involved a great deal of flexibility on the part of St. Louis District personnel, many of whom were temporarily reassigned from other jobs to add their efforts to the mission.

Several innovative approaches such as heat straightening of the warped gate leafs vice cutting and replacing steel, and bringing in regional equipment assets such as the cranes Hercules from the Rock Island District and the giant floating crane Henry M. Shreve from the Louisville, Ky. District, as well as timely work by local contractors all came together to ensure the project's success.

"This has been a tremendous team effort," O'Bryan noted. "I am proud that we have accomplished this job while keeping safety of our people and doing the job correctly at the top of our priorities," she added.

For additional information on this matter, contact St. Louis District Public Affairs Chief Alan Dooley at the following numbers:

(work) 314-331-8002  
(cell) 618-939-5985  
(res) 618-939-5985