

LEVEE SPONSOR NEWSLETTER

A COMPILATION OF GOOD THINGS HAPPENING FOR LEVEES IN THE
US ARMY CORPS OF ENGINEERS - ST. LOUIS DISTRICT



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NOTE FROM THE EDITORS

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SUCCESS STORIES FROM THE FIELD

A Unique Approach to Funding

Levees provide tremendous flood risk benefits to our region and nation. Every levee system is unique, but one thing most have in common is that their operations and maintenance costs often exceed available resources. Despite the economic benefits levee systems can provide to communities, coming up with the funds necessary to repair areas of concern is the greatest hurdle for almost every levee sponsor. Sometimes even the costs of adequately monitoring conditions of levee components, such as pipes and relief wells, alone can exceed annual operating budgets.

A collection of levee sponsors in Monroe County, IL decided to think outside of the box to address this problem. In September of 2021, representatives from the Columbia Drainage and Levee District No. 3, Fort Chartres and Ivy Landing Drainage District No. 5, Stringtown Drainage and Levee District, and Harrisonville Drainage and Levee District met with Monroe County Commissioners to seek funding assistance for necessary levee repairs estimated at \$1 million.



Picture Left: Damaged relief well. Picture Right: Levee Sponsors and County Representatives meet to discuss financial support.
Photo credit: Alan Dooley

SUCCESS STORIES FROM THE FIELD

A Unique Approach to Funding Continued..

The source of this funding -The American Rescue Plan Act, also called the COVID-19 Stimulus Package. Signed into law in March of 2021, this is the same act that resulted in \$1,400 per-person stimulus checks. Another section within this act, the Coronavirus State and Local Fiscal Recovery Fund provided direct aid to counties. From this, Monroe County, IL received \$6 million.

So how does economic recovery tie back to levee maintenance? These levee sponsors argued their proposed work was necessary to ensure the reliability of the levees during future floods. These levees provide approximately 88 million dollars in benefits, reducing flood risks to agricultural lands, approximately 470 buildings, railroads, and about 630 people. Additionally, following these initial investments, the sponsors are looking toward further improvements that would allow homeowners in the the leveed areas to receive reduced flood insurance rates in the National Flood Insurance Program. After presenting detailed project proposals, the sponsors were approved by the Board of Commissioners to receive 80% of the estimated need, \$802,884, in the form of a local grant.

This story shows that local governments appreciate the numerous benefits levee systems provide to those living and working behind them. Therefore, there are strong arguments for countless grants and funding opportunities. So, how could you find resourceful funding opportunities like this? There is no all-encompassing database of financial assistance sponsors might be eligible for. However, an excellent place to start looking at more traditional sources is the Federal Flood Risk Management search tool at <https://ffrmp.nfrmp.us/>.

Did you know...

Over 600 individual levee sponsor personnel dedicate themselves to operating and maintaining levees in the St. Louis District.



There are 700 miles of levee in the St. Louis District.

That is about the distance from St. Louis, MO to Jacksonville, FL.

FLOOD FIGHT TRAINING

Get your Community Involved

Is your community interested in learning how to flood fight? The Army Corps of Engineers offers customized Flood Fight Trainings for free at your request! Whether you're looking for just a refresher in applied flood fighting techniques, such as sandbagging or sand boil ringing, or a more in-depth training, the Corps of Engineers can tailor the training to what your individual community needs. If you are interested in scheduling a training, please contact:

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POLICY SPOTLIGHT

Restoring Levees to Authorized Height

Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) 208.10, alongside each levee's individual operations and maintenance manual, discusses the responsibilities of federal levee sponsors to ensure each levee continues performing its original function. This includes ensuring the levee reduces risk up to its federally authorized height. Over time, a number of things, such as settlement and erosion, can lower the height of a levee. Levee sponsors may restore levees back to their authorized height without the need for USACE approval. While permission by USACE is not required for sponsors to complete this type of maintenance, USACE can provide technical assistance and review of the work to ensure it is done safely and effectively. However, raising a levee above its authorized height is not permitted without receiving approval through USACE's Section 408 program.



THE ARMY CORPS OF ENGINEERS CAN PROVIDE TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE TO LEVEE SPONSORS UPON REQUEST. QUESTIONS CAN BE DIRECTED TO THE LEVEE SAFETY PROGRAM MANAGER AT 314-331-8057, OR MVS-LEVEESAFTY@USACE.ARMY.MIL.

