

**For Immediate Release  
December 1, 2009**

## **Bioengineering Group Plays Pioneering Roles on Historic \$1.3 Billion Hurricane Surge Barrier Project on New Orleans Coast**

**Salem, MA – December 1, 2009** – Bioengineering Group is providing engineering, program management, and construction management services on the largest design-build civil works project in US history – the \$1.3 billion Inner Harbor Navigation Canal (IHNC) barrier to protect Greater New Orleans from hurricane surges. The two-mile IHNC surge barrier is now in construction at the confluence of the Gulf Intercoastal Waterway and the Mississippi River Gulf Outlet. Working as a prime contractor for the US Army Corps of Engineers Hurricane Protection Office within the New Orleans District, Bioengineering Group and its multidisciplinary team is racing to meet a June 2011 target completion date.

“Aside from the project’s sheer size, our biggest challenge has been introducing the first major closure gates in the US while simultaneously pioneering new contracting mechanisms for the first major civil works design-build project,” said Bioengineering Group President Wendi Goldsmith. “This project represents many layers of innovation for engineering, contracting, and stakeholder engagement, all of which are necessary to meet our timeline.”



In order to stay within the program’s aggressive schedule, preliminary design and regulatory review had to be performed simultaneously. The final design and execution is being accomplished using a formal design-build project delivery process. Despite a five-month delay in the start of construction, the IHNC team is projecting an on-time performance. They recently reached a major milestone in their quest to protect those living on the Gulf Coast from hurricane flooding. The last of the project’s 1271 concrete piles, each measuring 66 inches in diameter, was driven into the ground beneath the waterway on October 21. A new, 150-foot navigation gate will be completed and open for traffic next spring, allowing barges to pass through the surge barrier while affording a tightly sealed closure structure when storms threaten the region.

In addition to managing the engineering, regulatory, and construction processes, Bioengineering Group staff have been responsible for:

- Coordinating with special community interest groups and the media
- Facilitating international experts for technical brainstorming sessions, and-
- Leading partnering sessions with the construction industry to allow early resolution or avoidance of potential implementation problems.

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The \$1.3 billion IHNC storm surge barrier is considered the most critical component of the Greater New Orleans Hurricane and Storm Damage Risk Reduction System (HSDRRS), which consists of 325 miles of earthen levees, concrete floodwalls, pump stations and gate structures. Each day, there are 350 people working on the project site, with another 2,000 working off site to support the team’s urgent timeline. The IHNC barrier includes the two mile steel-braced concrete wall, a sector gate, bypass barge gate and navigable sector gate.

The barrier is designed to block storm surge at what many consider the Achilles’ heel of the system, the confluence of Gulf Intracoastal Waterway (GIWW) and the Mississippi River Gulf Outlet (MRGO). The three waterways and the low lying Lake Borgne wetlands form a geographical funnel that concentrates the impact of storm surge into the city from the East when storms follow the most dangerous track, similar to Katrina’s in August of 2005.



“The Lake Borgne Surge Barrier is a marvel of engineering but also a bold feat in terms of accelerated implementation, remarks Tony Ferruccio, Alternative Project Deliver Director with Bioengineering Group. “All parties working on this historic initiative deserve special credit for stretching into uncharted territory in order to protect New Orleans and complete the project at such unprecedented speed.”

**About Bioengineering Group**

Bioengineering Group, Inc. is a woman-owned science and engineering consulting and design firm headquartered in Salem, Massachusetts. The firm of 75 provides a full range of science, engineering, landscape architecture, and construction management services with a mission of “Building sustainable communities on an ecological foundation”. Their project work spans sustainable design for sites such as public works facilities, academic campuses, and day care centers, with a long track record in green methods for landfill closure, highway stormwater management, and flood control solutions featuring habitat restoration and watershed health. While primarily federal contractors, they work for a range of public and private clients seeking to successfully embrace sustainable design for large scale public infrastructure and development projects. For more information about Bioengineering Group, visit [www.bioengineering.com](http://www.bioengineering.com).

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