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Memphis District

News Release

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Corps Operates Birds Point-New Madrid

SIKESTON, Mo., May 2, 2011 – At the direction of Maj. Gen. J. Michael Walsh, President of the Mississippi River Commission, technicians detonated explosive charges tonight removing a portion of the Mississippi River mainline levee at the Birds Point-New Madrid Floodway at approximately 10 p.m. The decision to detonate was the final step of the operations plan for the Floodway.

Removal of the levee section was necessary to maintain the integrity of the National Flood Protection System located along the Mississippi River in southeast Missouri and western Kentucky, just below the confluence of the Ohio and Mississippi Rivers.

At the time of detonation the river gage at Cairo was 61.72 and by 11 p.m. it had dropped to 61.29 a actual decrease of .43 (almost half a foot in an hour).

“We executed the plan and it performed as expected,” Col. Vernie Reichling, Commander of the Corps’ Memphis District. “We are now moving to the next steps, which are opening the two outflow crevasses at the southern end of the floodway. We are transferring our command and control to New Madrid (Missouri).

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