

For Immediate Release

Contact: Jessica L. Sellers
+1 651 225 6982
jlsellers@ifai.com

Levees reinforced with geosynthetics perform exceptionally well

(Roseville, Minn. – April 25, 2008) –As public debate continues to evaluate the construction designs of New Orleans area levees, the geosynthetic industry offers the following:

Geosynthetic-reinforced levees challenged by Hurricane Katrina performed exceptionally well, the U.S. Army Corp of Engineers has reported. The St. Charles and Jefferson levees are reinforced with geotextiles. The Corps cite the use of geosynthetics as a factor that allowed the levees to perform well under the most severe conditions.

"Both the St. Charles and Jefferson levees were loaded (filled by the storm) during Katrina and performed exceptionally. They were stable and the geosynthetic was inherent to their strength," said John Bivona, Deputy Chief, Engineering Division, New Orleans District, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers.

Geosynthetics are a family of civil engineering materials that are often used in infrastructure construction. Many durable polymers (plastics) common to daily life are found in geosynthetics. Introduced in the 1960s, geosynthetics have proven to be versatile and cost-effective ground modification and environmental protection materials. Most of these materials come in roll form and are delivered to the site in trucks. The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers was one of the first agencies to put geosynthetics to use, and geosynthetics are now used in nearly all areas of civil, geotechnical, environmental, coastal, and hydraulic construction.

"Geosynthetics allow us to design and build in areas that would be very difficult if using only natural materials," said John Henderson, chairman of the Geosynthetics Materials Association (GMA). "The soft soils in and around the Gulf Coast region can pose some very challenging problems. Geosynthetics allow for construction of levees, roadways, and commercial projects by strengthening the base on which these structures are built."

"No reason to say that they [geosynthetics] won't continue to be used in our designs and continue to benefit us in the future," Bivona concluded.

For information on the innovative use of geosynthetics contact the Geosynthetics Materials Association managing director Andrew Aho, +1 651 225 6907, amaho@ifai.com.

The Industrial Fabrics Association International (IFAI) is the premier business trade association for the specialty fabrics industry, and offers a high-touch connection to thousands of qualified business resources worldwide, including its membership base of 2,000 in over 50 countries. IFAI proactively represents and promotes the products and innovations of the specialty fabrics industry worldwide. www.ifai.com www.ifaiexpo.com

