



Media Release

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Siren tests reveal more work needed on alert system at Tuttle Creek

MANHATTAN, Kan. - A Wednesday afternoon test of the new dam failure warning system at Tuttle Creek triggered six newly installed 125-decibel alert sirens but failed to activate the system's automated voice alert system.

The voice alert system broadcasts pre-recorded instructions from the system's six sirens, located at Sojourner Truth Park, the City of Manhattan Water Treatment Facility, Northeast Community Park, Eisenhower Baseball Complex, the intersection of Casement and Barnes roads and Tuttle Creek Outlet Park, to alert nearby residents in the event of dam failure after an earthquake.

"The test Wednesday helped us identify problems in the system," said Bill Empson, the Corps' project manager for the warning system. "We now know the warning tones work well. We now have to go back and determine why the automated voice system didn't work at full volume."

U.S. Army Corps of Engineers officials successfully tested the system at low volumes earlier in the morning but full volume tests shortly after 2:15 p.m. revealed the system wasn't fully operational.

Final tests are expected once a remedy the problem is identified, Empson said.

"It's better we find and remedy this now than to find out about it during an actual emergency," said Brian McNulty, the Corps' operations manager at Tuttle Creek.

The sirens and the voice alert system are part of the Corps' Dam Failure Warning System, a high-tech monitoring and alert system designed to inform the community downstream of Tuttle Creek Dam to evacuate in the event of a dam failure caused by an earthquake.

Although the chances of an earthquake of this magnitude occurring near Manhattan are small, the warning system will help protect the local community while the Corps of Engineers modifies Tuttle Creek Dam to meet current dam safety standards for earthquake effects.

Construction on the dam will begin in 2005.

For more information about the Tuttle Creek Dam Failure Warning System, call Mitch Frazier at (816) 983-3486.

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