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Charlotte A. Randolph, *Parish President*

Office of Emergency Preparedness

PRESS RELEASE

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President Obama Visits Fourchon Beach; Efforts to Close Beach Gaps Complete

President Barack Obama visited Fourchon Beach today with Lafourche Parish President Charlotte Randolph to obtain a first-hand look at the oil that has reached the parish beachfront. President Obama observed “tar balls” that had recently washed up on the shore and spoke with President Randolph about the impact this oil spill has had on the community.

“Our level of confidence in this operation was raised today by the President’s visit,” said President Randolph. “We feel that our requests will be answered in a timelier manner in order to provide a better response to this catastrophe.”

Also today, Lafourche Parish Unified Command reported that the five breaches along the shoreline at Fourchon Beach have been sealed off. At the most easterly and westerly breaches, rock and sand was used to dam off the water protruding from the Gulf of Mexico. The other three breaches were sealed off by a local contractor (*SBL Construction*) who installed vinyl sheet pile across the breach to form a PVC bulkhead. Primary and secondary boom will remain behind these breach areas for additional protection.

HESCO baskets are being deployed from the westerly-most near Bay Champagne for 2.25 miles eastward to the first PVC Bulkhead. These baskets will form an artificial “dune” to hold back water and oil if there is an abnormally high tide. Nearly all HESCO baskets for this operation have been erected (approx. 99% complete), and about 60% have been filled with sand.

Over 14,000 bags of oil and oil-contaminated boom have been recovered along Fourchon Beach by approximately 200 personnel cleaning the beachfront. A total of 54,500 feet (over 10 miles) of containment boom (hard boom) has been deployed to date at several strategic locations around the parish, with another 57,664 feet available. Nearly 20 miles (specifically, 103,600 feet) of sorbent boom has also been deployed to date.

The Lafourche Parish Unified Command is operating from the Greater Lafourche Port Commission Operations Center in Port Fourchon, and consists of representatives from Lafourche Parish Government, Lafourche Parish Sheriff’s Office, Greater Lafourche Port Commission and Harbor Police, U.S. Coast Guard, National Guard, BP and the Governor’s Office of Homeland Security and Emergency Preparedness.

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