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City of Hartford receives FEMA Levee System Accreditation - GEI Consult. and Fuss & O'Neill assist

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The city of Hartford has received a letter of accreditation for the Hartford Levee and Flood Control System on the Connecticut River. The accreditation was received from the Department of Homeland Security's Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA). Consulting engineering firms GEI Consultants, Inc. and Fuss & O'Neill, Inc. led the team supporting the city's successful two-year effort.

"The city of Hartford was extremely gratified to receive our letter of accreditation for the Hartford Levee and Flood Control System from FEMA," said John McGrane, assistant director/city engineer for the city of Hartford. "This has been a critically important project for the City and its property owners. Meeting the criteria for accreditation by FEMA means that the City of Hartford, while lying adjacent to the Connecticut River, does not fall within a Special Flood Hazard Area. Instead, it is designated as a low-to-moderate risk zone with a less than 1-percent-annual-chance flood. It was critical to have the levee system work completed on time to meet FEMA's 24-month timeframe, including completion of any required repairs. Our consulting engineering team exceeded our expectations. As a result, we are also pleased to note that there is no requirement for property owners within Hartford to purchase flood insurance."

According to FEMA, flooding is the nation's number one natural disaster. The Hartford Levee System, one of the first levees in New England to receive accreditation, protects approximately 20% of Hartford's total land area, with a grand list value of approximately \$1.6 billion. Because the flood control system has received FEMA accreditation, property owners will not see their homes or businesses placed in high risk zones (called Special Flood Hazard Areas, or SFHAs), and as a result, will not be required to purchase flood insurance.

The Hartford Levee and Flood Control System, one of the most complex flood control systems in New England, includes a seven-mile earthen and concrete levee, multiple pressure conduits, and six storm water pumping stations. In late 2008, the City of Hartford had been granted Provisionally Accredited Levee (PAL) status indicating that FEMA and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) believed the system could provide flood protection from a storm event that has a 1% chance of being equaled or exceeded in any given year. Under the PAL agreement, the municipality was required to provide documentation to demonstrate this level of flood protection.

The GEI Consultants and Fuss & O'Neill team performed work on an expedited basis to meet FEMA's 24-month deadline. The team was engaged to collect the necessary data, perform the evaluations, and to provide a long-term plan for achieving compliance with FEMA regulations, which focused on the adequacy and condition of existing flood protection systems along the Connecticut River.

With similar significant experience in water resources projects throughout New England, GEI and

Fuss and O'Neill formed a strong, client-focused flood control team with a common goal of helping the City of Hartford gain FEMA levee system accreditation.

About GEI Consultants, Inc.

GEI's multi-disciplined team of engineers and scientists deliver integrated geotechnical, environmental, water resources and ecological solutions to diverse clientele nationwide. The firm has provided a broad range of consulting and engineering services on over 25,000 projects in 50 states and 22 countries. For more information, please visit the firm's web site at www.geiconsultants.com.

About Fuss & O'Neill, Inc.

Fuss & O'Neill is a full-service engineering and science consulting firm that has been serving both public and private sector clients for over 85 years. For more information, please visit the firm's web site at www.fando.com.

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