

East Branch Dam - Outstanding Performance and Safety Record

December 12, 2018



From left: Jeff Bean, Vice President, Bencor; Anthony Carnes, Safety Representative, Bencor; Steven Tomlinson, Site Safety and Health Officer, Bencor; Col. Andrew Short, USACE; Jeff Garon, Sr. Project Manager, Bencor; Craig Hamilton, Project Superintendent, Bencor.

The US Army Corps of Engineers recently awarded Bencor a Certificate of Appreciation for outstanding performance as prime contractor on the East Branch Dam rehabilitation project in Wilcox, PA. The Corps recognized Bencor's dedication and commitment to safety for its project safety record of 500,000 man-hours without a lost time accident since starting the work in 2014.

The award was presented by Col. Andrew Short, Pittsburgh District commander on September 19, 2018, during his visit to the jobsite, where Bencor is now installing a seepage cutoff wall along the top of the dam to a depth of 245 feet.

Over the span of the last four years, the work platform has seen an abundance of large equipment running simultaneously to install the required work features. First onsite were multiple drill rigs, grout plants, and silos for a grout curtain installation designed to mitigate potential slurry loss. This was followed by a secant pile drilling rig, slurry plants, desanding plants, centrifuges and two hydromills, with numerous concrete mixer trucks for the concrete placements of up to 750 cubic yards for the cutoff wall panels and secant wall critical area elements. The machines operate year-round, with temperatures ranging from 95 °F in summer to 0 °F in winter with wind chill below zero degrees, including heavy snow accumulation common to the area.

Overseeing the daily safety performance of personnel and equipment rests on the shoulders of the entire project team including Site Safety and Health Officer Steven Tomlinson, Safety Representative Anthony Carnes, Senior Project Manager Jeff Garon, Project Superintendent Craig Hamilton and numerous additional superintendents, who provide leadership to an onsite crew of 120 individuals, ensuring compliance with the site-specific safety and accident prevention plans.

"The Project has now exceeded 625,000 man hours without a lost time incident," commented Hamilton. "This accomplishment is due to our company-wide safety culture that emphasizes safe work habits and everyone onsite embracing the daily safety requirements and being vigilant about their own safety and watching out for their fellow crew members."



Sonic drilling in progress.



Concrete placement for cutoff wall panels.



Machines operate year-round.



Concrete placement for secant piles using concrete boom pump truck.



Mix of drills and hydromill along left embankment.



Safety briefing in progress.

An outstanding safety record doesn't just happen; it takes teamwork and participation. Crew members are encouraged by the project management team to make suggestions for improvements. This has not only resulted in upgraded Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) but has also refined multiple work activities to enhance overall site safety and efficiency.

Chad Athey, Bencor's Safety Director agrees. "The success of Bencor's Safety Culture is a result of collaborated efforts of executive management to field level employees. Our employees are passionate about the work they do and even more so about the way they execute it. Safety is embedded throughout everything we do."