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BAHEP president clarifies recent publicity about \$4B funding for 'Ike Dike'

By Bob Mitchell
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The lead story in the *Houston Chronicle* on Friday, July 6, 2018, was confusing and misleading. The headline of the article read, "Feds OK \$4B for 'Ike Dike' as July 4 storm raises questions about region's preparedness."

Reporters Zach Despart and Nick Powell wrote, "A long-discussed plan to create a 60-mile coastal barrier, known as the 'Ike Dike,' to protect Texas' Gulf Coast from major hurricanes received a major boost Tuesday when the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers said it would provide nearly \$4 billion for the project."

They wrote further down in their article that, "The 'Ike Dike' funding came in response to a state request for \$12 billion for what the governor's office called the 'Galveston County Coastal Spine Project,' according to a state presentation on post-Harvey needs."

We at the Bay Area Houston Economic Partnership have been working on the coastal spine, or "Ike Dike," for more than nine years. It is great news that funding will be made available to protect areas along the coast, but to say that the "U.S. Army Corps of Engineers said it would provide nearly \$4 billion for the project" (Ike Dike) is, in my mind, a bit misleading.

The article noted that \$3.9 billion has been "set aside" for the "Sabine to Galveston project." The project's title is misleading, as well. This project and funding are for Jefferson, Orange, and Brazoria counties ONLY.

While one could make an argument that one day this could be a piece of the future coastal spine, to think it is the "Ike Dike" is incorrect.

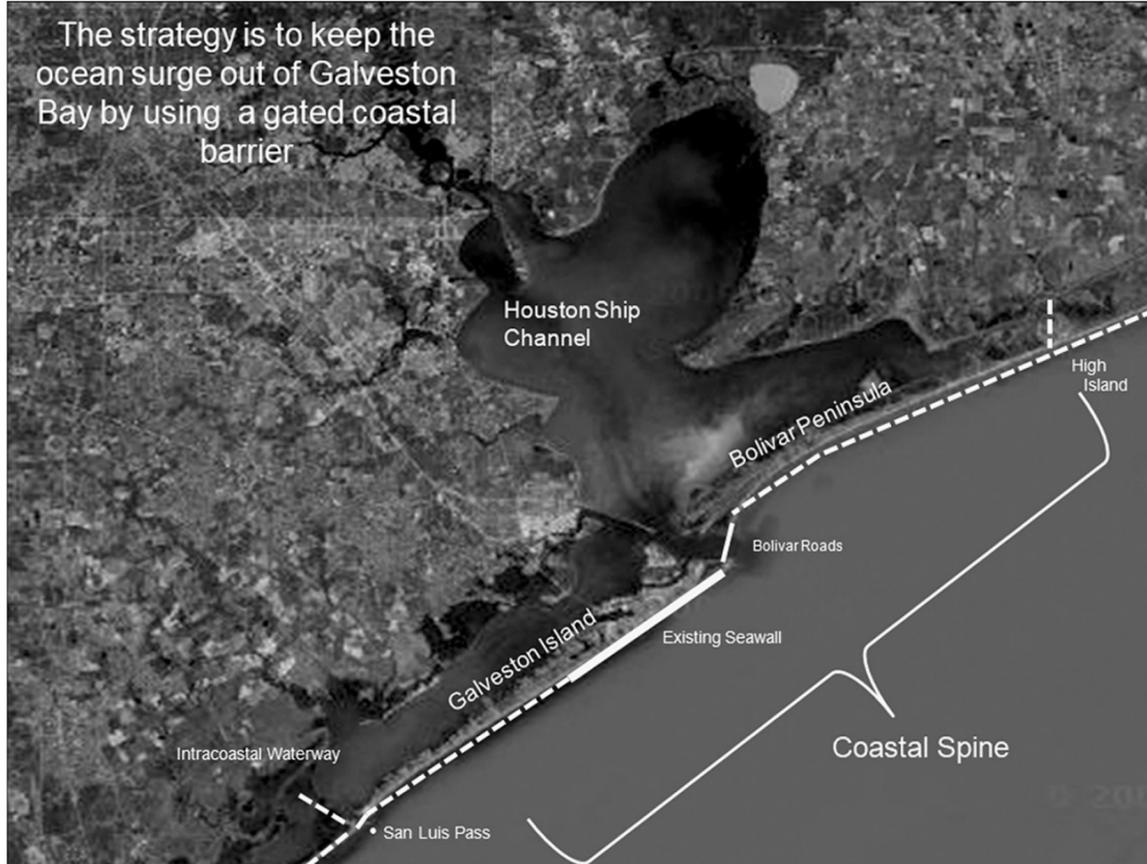
The Sabine Pass to Galveston Bay project has been in the works for over

a decade. A July 7th updated article by Nick Powell quoted Sharon Tirpak, deputy chief of project management for the Galveston District of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers.

According to the article, she stated that the Army Corps of Engineers will allocate the \$3.9 billion to local contractors to help carry out the design and construction on a series of upgrades and improvements to 30 miles of coastal levees in Port Arthur and Freeport and the construction of nearly 27 miles of coastal levees in Southern Orange County.

Tirpak also said that the portion of the coast included in the levee project does not include what everyone considers the "Ike Dike" solution.

For those who may not have seen the follow-up article, it's important for everyone to realize that the \$3.9 billion is entirely being spent outside of the Galveston Bay region. None of this funding will be spent on protecting the Galveston Bay region, which encompasses 5.5 million people, the #1 export port in the nation, and produces more



than 42% of the chemical feed stock for the entire nation. Studies have shown that the cost to benefit ratio for the Galveston region is a positive 6+ to 1.

The Corps has allocated \$1.9 million for continued studies of a coastal spine barrier. By late September 2018, a draft report and an environmental impact state-

ment on the coastal spine proposal are expected to be released. However, the final coastal spine study is not expected to be completed until April 2021 — three

more hurricane seasons. This region should be protected first and foremost. So, please do not think that we have solved the problem. **We have not.**

BayTech offers fiber optic technician training to veterans while developing workforce pipeline through student engagement

BayTech was formed by BAHEP and has built a network of partners across multiple industries and academia, creating a resource pool which will be drawn on as collaborations are identified and research funding is pursued.

BayTech is currently executing a Wagner-Peyser grant for 2018, awarded through the Texas Governor's Office, to provide fiber optic technician training to unemployed military veterans followed by placement into the telecommunications industry. Through BayTech's training partner, EDS Technologies LLC,

five 40-hour fiber optic technician courses have been completed (December 2017, January, March, April, May 2018), and a total of 47 students (military veterans) have been trained, all of whom completed the course successfully and passed the Fiber Optic Association industry certification exam.

Of the 47 students trained, the Wagner-Peyser grant funded 44. BayTech was able to train three additional veterans by leveraging grant funding from the Houston Urban League. Of the 47 veterans who have been trained,

approximately 11 have been placed in companies in the telecommunications industry. BayTech is working to place the remaining students and partnering with Workforce Solutions and Playsmint, a veteran's organization, to offer placement support services to its students.

The next, and final, fiber optic class for 2018 is scheduled for the August timeframe. The BayTech team continues to work with industry, Workforce Solutions, and Playsmint to place the other participants.

Additionally, BayTech has been awarded a grant

from the Governor's Office to continue this fiber optic training and placement activity for military veterans in 2019. The first fiber optic class under that grant will take place in the January 2019 timeframe.

BayTech is also looking to the future as it works to develop a fiber optic workforce pipeline through engaging high school students in a hands-on class held at NASA Johnson Space Center's Receiving, Inspection and Test Facility (RITF).

Earlier this year, students from Clear Brook High School learned practical applications for fiber

optics technology from NASA instructors in the RITF. "The high school instructors love to do this," said Kim Morris, BayTech director, who made it possible for the students to attend the training through a Space Act Agreement.

Morris hopes to work with additional schools. He stated, "It benefits RITF by giving it exposure and encourages students to pursue STEM education and careers."

For more information, contact Morris at kim@bayareahouston.com or call 832.536.3255.

North American aerospace, national security company and trilingual real estate team join BAHEP

Peraton

Peraton provides innovative, reliable solutions to the nation's most sensitive and mission-critical programs and systems. As a trusted provider of highly differentiated space, intelligence, cyber/SIGINT, defense, electronic warfare, homeland security, and secure communications capabilities, Peraton is a critical partner to NASA, the Intelligence Community, De-

partment of Defense, and select federal agencies and commercial entities. Headquartered in Herndon, Va., the company employs approximately 3,500 people across the U.S. and Canada.

Bob Mitchell, president of the Bay Area Houston Economic Partnership,

commented, "When you think of Peraton, you think of NASA and national security. Through an advanced technology portfolio, they offer solutions to their customers' most complex mission needs. Their capabilities are arguably second to none. We welcome them to the organization and look forward to working with them."

Rick Hashop, a member of the company's Bay Area

leadership team, represents Peraton within BAHEP. He stated, "Our vision is to be the company that NASA and national security customers consistently rely on to solve their most daunting challenges, to create solutions supporting their most

vital missions, and to manage their most valued assets. I look forward to engaging with BAHEP and its members toward the achievement of that vision."

For more information about Peraton, visit www.peraton.com or call 281.217.8394.

David Kane TEAM of REMAX 1st Source

With over two decades in real estate, the David Kane TEAM of REMAX 1st Source is experienced in residential, commercial, office, land and some industrial services.

Bay Area Houston Economic Partnership President Bob Mitchell welcomed the Kane Team to BAHEP saying, "In late April, the Houston Association of Realtors named cities on the southeast side of Houston, including the Lomax area, La Porte / Shoreacres, Deer Park, Southbelt / Ellington, and

Pasadena, among Houston's fastest-selling neighborhoods. The David Kane TEAM is at the right place at the right time, and we're happy to welcome them as

becoming involved with BAHEP, which has been doing a great job for a long time in serving the entire region."

Located at 7219 Fair-

mont Parkway, Suite #135 in Pasadena, Texas, the David Kane TEAM handles real estate portfolios for various local and international clients, offering services in English, Spanish, and Japanese.

For additional information, call 281.330.5295 or visit www.har.com/davidkane.



For membership information, contact Membership Director Harriet Pilgrim at 832.536.3250.

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