

APR07-2007-020169

Abstract for an Invited Paper
for the APR07 Meeting of
the American Physical Society

The Failure of the 17th Street Canal: Anatomy of an Engineering Disaster

DAVID KESTENBAUM, NPR Radio

The levee failures in New Orleans rank among the worst engineering failures of all time. The city depended on hundreds of miles of levees and floodwalls which had been carefully designed, with safety margins. But in some cases things went badly wrong; structures that should have been able to keep back the storm surge gave way. An entire city paid the price. David Kestenbaum (who was trained as a physicist) covered the story for National Public Radio. He'll talk about one critical structure - the 17th street canal - and how it failed.