

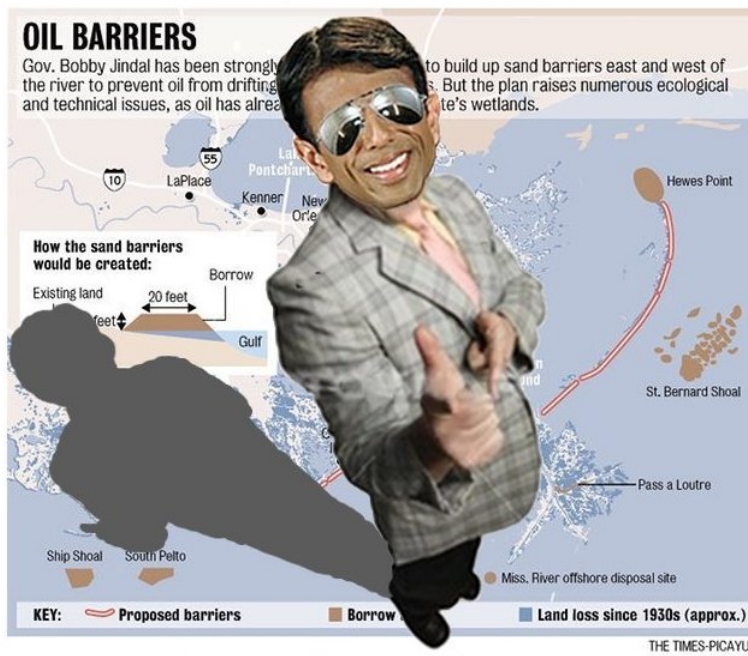
Bobby Knows Best!

in People Issues by Admin
by Len Bahr, PhD*
LaCoastPost
June 15, 2010 at 8:00 am

From family values salesman....



to Sandy Band-aid salesman



I'm old enough to remember the late Robert Young, (1907-1998) star of a popular fifties black and white TV show called *Father Knows Best*. Young played Jim Anderson, a squeaky clean mid-western father – and insurance salesman. Since those simpler, black and white times** one would think that in 2010 Americans would be more sophisticated and cynical about huckster hype.

But nooo...

Most residents of south Louisiana and the main stream media have swallowed, hook, line and sinker, the fish story from Governor Jindal and his staff that we can dredge our way out of the B.Pocalypse by constructing sand barriers around our sinking deltaic coast. The sand berm sales job has clearly been an outstanding success.

But wait, a new Robert Young has now emerged as a media figure, not an actor playing a salesman but a coastal scientist playing the critical role of a policy advocate. This modern Robert Young, a coastal geology professor at Western Carolina University, has weighed in on Governor Jindal's sand berm solution for saving our coast.

Professor Young wrote an Op/Ed Column in The New York Times on June 11 about this controversial and curious concept, the idea of preventing **BP spoilage** of the Mississippi River delta, not with shrink wrap but with sand berms. His column lists the very same concerns about going through with this project that have been expressed in LaCoastPost [here](#); [here](#); [here](#); [here](#); and [here](#).

As stated repeatedly, the science community is virtually united in opposition to building a notoriously ill-defined sand barrier project that seems to morph (expand) every week. Dr. Young, despite being from out of state, has become a chief spokesman for this august group.

Last week Garret Graves, the Governor's coastal advisor, accused me of opposing a project about which I know very little. I had to agree, because details on the sand barriers are impossible to obtain.

Rumors are currently circulating*** that, after receiving limited permits from the Corps of Engineers for a part of the proposed \$360 million project, the governor's office now plans to expand the scope to \$950 million, for a project that would require three years to complete, not 6-9 months. How in Hell's name can such a time line be rationally justified on the basis of keeping BP oil out of marshes that have already been slimed?

Now that Bobby Jindal and his Dutch consultants have won the sand berm wars and construction is underway I'm very curious who's going to monitor the impacts. I certainly wouldn't depend on the Louisiana Department of Environmental Quality (LDEQ) from which no comments have been heard since April 20. I have great respect for Bob Barham, Secretary of the Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries (LWL&F) but his staff has grown very silent on wildlife mortality and fish kill statistics. I don't expect to hear much from the Louisiana Department of Natural Resources

(LDNR), always conflicted because of its oil and gas leasing role as well as its coastal use permitting authority. The Louisiana Oil Spill Coordinator's Office (LOSCO) is likely to remain silent.

The new Louisiana Office of Coastal Protection and Restoration Authority (OCPR) is the obvious state unit to monitor the impacts (good and bad) of constructing the Sandy Band-aid project. I can't imagine anyone who serves at the pleasure of Bobby Jindal say with a straight face that an objective monitoring program will be carried out over the next three years or so.

I'm very curious to hear what Garret Graves says on this subject tomorrow morning at the June meeting of the Coastal Protection and Restoration Authority (CPRA). That will be agenda item number two.

*Founding Editor (leonardbahr@gmail.com)

**Simpler for Caucasians like me; segregation based on skin color, although illegal, was still in vogue.

***Information on this mysterious and extremely important plan, that could change the entire face of coastal protection and restoration, has mostly come from leaks, not public documents. There is information on the CPRA website, such as this map, but it's very low resolution.