

[<< Back](#)

## Company shows off Gunderboom to protect bays from oil

Posted: Jul 02, 2010 3:41 PM PDT

Updated: Jul 02, 2010 4:27 PM PDT

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GULFPORT, MS (WLOX) – Oil has already coated the rocks at the jetty by Ken Combs Pier in Gulfport. Eight other jetties across Harrison County are also being threatened by oil.

On Friday, mayors and supervisors in Harrison County heard pitches from Anchor OEA of Ocean Springs. The company demonstrated a product that can cover the jetties and offer three layers of protection. The first layer acts as a fence.



"You would take a material like this and drape it over the rocks, so you would have a smooth surface," said David Keith, a scientist with Anchor OEA.

The other layers are made of geo-composite materials, aimed at preventing the oil from penetrating.

"This is very, very strong. This is what we call the abrasion resistant layer. This just provides some extra cushioning and this is what actually keeps the oil out," said Keith.

"It makes sense. It's strong, it's durable. We got to do something," said Harrison County Sand Beach Director Bobby Weaver. "We're going to move forward with entering into a contract, get a quick design done on one site, come up with a cost estimate. Then we're going to push it through Unified Command and BP to fund them."

Anchor has teamed-up with the maker of the jetty protection system -- Gunderboom of Florida. The company's creation, the Gunderboom, is a 36-inch flotation device that can withstand strong winds and choppy waves.

"This would float on the surface high enough that oil would hit this, deflect down towards collection points," said Keith, as he pointed to the large padded foam. "The skirt would be underwater. The chain at the bottom of the skirt keeps the skirt weighted down so it gives full water column protection."

Chains, lines and concrete block anchors would keep the boom secured, and the bottom curtain would have a gap to allow water and sea life to pass through.

"These can withstand about 60,000 pounds of force," said Keith.

Anchor has already been hired by the city of Ocean Springs to design a system to place the Gunderbooms at the mouth of the Biloxi Bay. It would stretch from the east tip of Deer Island to the south side of Davis Bayou. The company has all the necessary permits, but no funding yet from BP. That's why Harrison County leaders are throwing their support behind the project.

"BP has not provided us with one solution to protect anything on the Mississippi Gulf Coast, other than 18 inch boom. And we know it's not working," said Weaver. "So they've put us in a position to where we're having to start going out and spending some of our own funds to

try to get some concepts on the table and start pushing to get these things approved for protection."

That protection that could cost millions of dollars. A Gunderboom costs about \$200 a foot, installed. The county is awaiting cost estimates for the jetty protection system. Both products are custom-made to fit the jetties and depths of each water way.

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