

The Post and Courier

Haitian water tower designed by Hanahan volunteer holds up to quake

By Bo Petersen

The Post and Courier

Saturday, January 23, 2010

The workers in the remote Haitian village of Gorman had poured the wrong foundation. Twenty tons of water would be suspended 40 feet overhead on four concrete columns with no real support. The engineer who had designed the tower had gone into the seminary.

George Greene IV didn't need a miracle — he needed an engineer. After a frustrating round of phone calls on a late Friday afternoon, he stepped from his office at Water Missions International in West Ashley. Out on the warehouse floor, a new volunteer was pushing a broom. Scott Horton, it turned out, is a structural engineer whose work includes foundations and conveyor belt towers.

He drew up a modification to reinforce the foundation, and calculated that the foundation itself needed to be bigger. One year later, a 7.0 magnitude temblor proved him right.

The earthquake Jan. 12 devastated the village, flattened the concrete church next door to the water tower. But the tower didn't have a crack on it.

Read more in Sunday's editions of The Post and Courier.

Copyright © 1995 - 2010 Evening Post Publishing Co..