



LOUISIANA GOOD ROADS & TRANSPORTATION ASSOCIATION, INC.

GOOD ROADS ALERT

www.louisianagoodroads.org

March 2012
Issue #01-12

Mailing Address:
P.O. Box 3713
Baton Rouge, LA 70821
Phone: 225/408-8279
Fax: 225/344-0458

OFFICERS

PRESIDENT KEN PERRET

FHWA Admin.-Arkansas (Ret.)
LADOTD Asst. Secy. (Ret.)

SR. VICE PRESIDENT

DAVID S. HUVAL
Huval & Associates

VICE PRESIDENT

JOHNNY BRADBERRY
LADOTD Secretary (Ret.)

SECRETARY/TREASURER

KEN NAQUIN, CEO
Louisiana AGC, Inc.

IMMEDIATE PAST PRESIDENT

W.P. WRAY, JR.
Attorney-at-Law
Wray & Pierce, LLP

DIRECTORS

ROBERT CANFIELD
EBR-DPW Director (Ret.)

JAN L. EVANS
Consulting Engineer

COURTNEY FENET
Vice President
R.E. Heidt Construction

AL FLETTRICH
Boh Bros. Const. (Ret.)

STEVE HACKWORTH
D & J Construction

SHELBY LASALLE
Chairman/CEO
Krebs, LaSalle, LeMieux

WAYNE MARCHAND
Const. Project Manager - G.E.C.

ROGER MELANCON
RDM Consulting

DANIEL E. MOBLEY
Executive Director - ACEC of LA

DR. KAM MOVASSAGHI
LADOTD Secretary (Ret.)

GORDON NELSON
LADOTD Deputy Secretary (Ret.)

BOB SCHMIDT
Director of Operations - AECOM

WILLIAM SUSSMANN
LA FHWA Division Admin. (Ret.)

WILLIE T. TAYLOR
LADOTD
District Administrator (Ret.)

BILL TEMPLE
Executive Director - CAAL

NEIL WAGONER
LADOTD Secretary (Ret.)

J. L. WAX
LADOTD Dep. Secretary (Ret.)

GARD WAYT
Executive Director
I-49 International Coalition

DON WEATHERS
Executive Director
La. Asphalt Pavement Assn.



DOTD Secretary Sherri LeBas and Senate Transportation Committee chair Robert Adley visit with Good Roads President Ken Perret after the two spoke at the February Good Roads meeting.

STATE ANNOUNCES TRANSPORTATION CUTS, NEW BOND PROGRAM FOR RURAL ROADS

Governor Bobby Jindal's administration is simultaneously steering dedicated transportation funds to other purposes while proposing a new scheme to generate up to \$325 million over a three year period to repair non-federal aid routes throughout Louisiana.

On March 1, DOTD Secretary Sherri LeBas told the LGRTA Board of Directors that the Legislature will be asked to divert more than \$40 million in dedicated state transportation funds (TTF) to the Louisiana State Police to alleviate general fund budget problems in the 2012-2013 fiscal year.

LeBas made the remarks in response to questions raised by board members concerning reports that a total of nearly \$100 million was to be transferred from the state TTF to the general fund. The exact extent of the cuts made to transportation is unclear and probably will not be known until the 2012 legislative session is fully underway.

In December, the department announced that the Administration would transfer \$24 million from the TTF to the general fund for the current fiscal year "in an effort to offset the budgetary effects on Louisiana's higher education and health care system." LeBas was quoted in that news release, saying that construction projects would not be affected and that the mid-year cuts would only affect department operations.

At the Board of Directors' meeting, LeBas said the department will attempt to keep its 2012-2013 regular program on track by requesting state capital outlay funds to make up for any shortfall in TTF funds to match federal highway dollars.

"These are tough times," LeBas said. "I wish I had better news."

One good bit of news for Louisiana's transportation industry is that Gov. Jindal plans to bond out half of a small state Highway Improvement Fund to generate \$325 million in projects over a three year period for work on nearly 1,000 miles of state roads that receive no federal aid.

This small Highway Improvement Fund was created years ago from the proceeds of commercial registration and license fees. The Jindal plan is to

use about half of the money to guarantee payments on the bonds, according to a DOTD news release.

"There's a major need to repair roads in rural parishes," Jindal said in the news release. "Many of these roads have been severely worn and are unsafe for drivers." State Representative Jim Fannin will author the legislation.

This program, of course, does not address the backlog of needs on our most heavily traveled roads. The buying power of the TTF continues to decline and the continued diversion of this fund for non-transportation items is bad, unacceptable policy. Louisiana needs an increase, not a decrease in transportation funding. LGRTA will continue to get our message of the value of transportation and the need for increased funding to the public and to our elected officials.

LEGISLATION ADDRESSES TRANSPORTATION ISSUES

Several bills introduced in the legislature for the 2012 session, which began on March 12, could have an effect on transportation in Louisiana.

The bill that could have the biggest impact on transportation is a proposed Constitutional Amendment that would begin indexing the motor fuels tax to the Consumer Price Index once a year, beginning in 2014. The legislation, HB 358 from Rep. Karen St. Germain, who also is chair of the House Transportation Committee, has been assigned to the House Ways and Means Committee.

The bill from St. Germain, who told the LGRTA Board of Directors at its annual meeting that she would file the bill, must get pass a two-thirds vote in the House and Senate garner the governor's signature before going to statewide voters in November 2012.

Members of the House and Senate have filed bills concerning to the expected expiration of tolls from the Crescent City Connection bridge in New Orleans. Once the tolls have expired, the bills provide for the abolishment of the Crescent City Connection District, an office that handles the operations, maintenance and administration of the bridge, several feeder roads in Orleans and Jefferson Parish, the ferries in Orleans Parish and the police force that monitors traffic on the bridge. The bills provide language that would transfer responsibility of the upkeep of the facilities directly to DOTD, which would allow all expenses to come from the state Transportation Trust Fund instead of from the revenues that have been generated through tolls.

Other transportation-related bills are included in this year's session, including legislation by Rep. Austin Badon of New Orleans, who is proposing the ban the use of cell phones while driving. The current state law bans drivers from texting or reading text messages, but HB 695 bill also would ban talking or listening on a wireless phone while driving. Such a measure has been endorsed by U.S. Department of Transportation Secretary Ray LaHood.

Rep. Stephen Ortego of Carencro proposes that DOTD be required to build bike lanes on new construction and spend 1 percent of TTF funds

GOOD ROADS ALERT

LGRTA
P.O. Box 3713
Baton Rouge, LA 70821

PRSRT STD
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
BATON ROUGE, LA
PERMIT 935



Rep. Karen St. Germain, chair of the House Transportation Committee, addresses questions at the Good Roads annual meeting.

on bicycle facilities. Current law says DOTD has the option of including bicycle facilities on roads, but HB 530 would force DOTD to add bike lanes.

Rep. Jerry Gisclair of Larose has filed a bill that proposes that drivers must turn on their headlights when driving through a tunnel. Motorists already are required to turn on their headlights at night or when it is raining, but HB 162 would add tunnels to the list.

Rep. Franklin Foil of Baton Rouge is proposing to change the name of the just-completed John James Audubon Bridge to the "Generals John A. Lejeune-Robert H. Barrow Bridge." Foil's HB 576 would honor the late generals from the St. Francisville and New Roads areas.

ENGINEERS RELEASE LA. REPORT CARD

The Louisiana Section of the American Society of Civil Engineers released its first-ever Report Card for Louisiana's Infrastructure. Roads received a "D," and bridges received "D+."

The report card, which can be viewed online at www.lasce.org, chronicles the capacity, condition, funding, future need, operations and maintenance, public safety and resilience of nine infrastructure categories. The other seven categories and their grades include aviation (C), dams (B-), drinking water (D+), levees (C-), ports (C-), solid waste (C+) and wastewater (C-).

Dr. Kam Movassaghi, executive director of the project, said the goal in producing the Report Card "is to inform the public and our elected leaders and the state of our infrastructure in one easy-to-understand document."

LGRTA President Ken Perret and Board of Directors member Gordon Nelson co-chaired the roads committee. The Board of Directors is currently working on a Resolution of Support for the findings of the Report Card related to transportation.

HPL BRIDGE NAMED CIVIL ENGINEERING LANDMARK

The Huey P. Long Bridge in Jefferson Parish has been named a National Historic Civil Engineering Landmark by the American Society of Civil Engineers.

The designation makes the New Orleans structure one of fewer than 250 ASCE landmarks in the world, including the Eiffel Tower, the Panama Canal and the United States Capitol Building. A full list of the landmarks is available at <http://bit.ly/AoZDOR>.

The Huey P. Long Bridge is now in the final phase of a \$1.2 billion widening project. When completed in 2013, the bridge will have three 11-foot lanes in each direction with eight-foot outside and two-foot inside shoulders. The total width will more than double the current 18-foot wide driving surface to a 43-foot wide driving surface.

The project also includes construction of new elevated bridge approaches and ramps. Additionally, new intersections with traffic signals at Bridge City Avenue and Jefferson Highway are being constructed.

The Huey P. Long Bridge was a remarkable construction and engineering feat. Design of the bridge began in 1926. At that time, engineers had limited tools for measuring and calculating unlike today. They designed the bridge to be extra strong to deal with difficult soil conditions and to err on the side of safety.

"The Huey P" was the first Mississippi River Bridge in New Orleans when it opened in 1935. It was the longest railroad bridge in the world for about 15 years. Prior to the bridge being built, railroad cars had to be ferried across the river.

Louisiana Governor Huey P Long was responsible for the addition of driving lanes for automobiles during construction of the bridge, which began in 1932. He provided the New Orleans Public Belt Railroad with \$7 million to build the two narrow lanes in each direction. The lanes were adequate for the types of vehicles and limited traffic of the time, but are not wide enough by current standards.

A five-minute video telling the story of the Huey P Long Bridge is available at www.youtube.com/hueypbridgewidening. For more information go to www.hueypbridge.com or follow the project on Facebook and Twitter.

The \$1.2 billion Huey P. Long Bridge Widening Project is one of 16 projects in the \$4.6 billion Louisiana Transportation Infrastructure Model for Economic Development (TIMED) Program, managed by Louisiana TIMED Managers (LTM), a joint venture of GEC Inc., Parsons-Brinckerhoff Inc., and THE LPA GROUP INCORPORATED. It is the single largest transportation program in Louisiana history and is designed to enhance economic development and improve evacuation routes and safety through an investment in infrastructure.

The program is funded by a dedicated \$0.04 per gallon gasoline and motor fuels tax. It was created by Act 16 of the 1989 Louisiana Legislature and was approved by a vote of the people. Projects include widening 536 miles of state highways, new construction or improvements to three major bridges and the improvements to both the Port of New Orleans and the Louis Armstrong International Airport.