



## LOUISIANA GOOD ROADS AND TRANSPORTATION ASSOCIATION

### NEWS RELEASE

News Release

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#### DOTD put public safety first, transportation leader says

BATON ROUGE, La. - While hundreds of thousands of motorists were stranded on frozen roadways across the south, the Louisiana Department of Transportation and Development kept its citizens safe by being proactive in its operations and communications, according to the leader of the state's top transportation group.

"The true performance measure in this kind of situation is, 'Did you protect the public?' Secretary Sherri LeBas and DOTD made public safety a priority over convenience, and the result was that we had far fewer problems than other states," said Kenneth Perret, president of the [Louisiana Good Roads and Transportation Association](#).



*DOTD clears ice from the I-10 bridge in Baton Rouge. Photo provided by DOTD.*

Perret said DOTD was well prepared for the sub-freezing weather and utilized a wise strategy of concentrating on a smaller number of priority routes to keep open to take full advantage of its limited resources and manpower.

"Louisiana has more than 11,000 bridges and overpasses, and trying to keep all of them open would have been a fool's errand," Perret said. "Their strategy of keeping priority routes open was a good use of public resources. And, when those routes became impassable, DOTD quickly shut them down and got the word out effectively."

Perret said DOTD also reached out in advance to truckers by advising them early in the week of the probability of road and bridge closures. By partnering with the Louisiana Motor Transit Association, DOTD made truckers aware of potential closures and gave them alternate routes, Perret said.

"We still had some truckers who were stranded in south Louisiana, but the proactive steps DOTD took in letting the LMTA leadership know what was likely to happen really helped keep that to a minimum."

Because road conditions literally changed with the weather, DOTD was constantly opening and closing roads and bridges. Keeping the public informed of those changes is challenging, but the agency worked hard to update people, putting out more than 70 news releases and photographs around the clock.

"I thought they communicated well with the public, not only in telling people what was open and what was closed but also in stressing the danger in traveling in conditions that we don't see too often in Louisiana," Perret said.

Louisiana should be proud of the work DOTD employees performed. "It's easy to find public officials who are villains; we should be thankful for those true public servants who worked hard to keep us safe," Perret said.

*Louisiana Good Roads and Transportation Association is a statewide, non-profit organization dedicated to fostering and promoting a program of planning, design, construction and maintenance of an adequate transportation system, sufficiently financed, which will conveniently and safely serve the transportation needs of the people of Louisiana.*

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