

ONE to ONE

An Update on the Efforts of the LA 1 Coalition

Winter 2005

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Support on the Hill

New Members of Louisiana Delegation Put LA 1 on Their Priority List

Some are new to Capitol Hill. Others have returned to Washington with a new title. But regardless of their previous experience and political party affiliation, the newest members of Louisiana's congressional delegation have at least one thing in common: a commitment to infrastructure improvement in the state and preserving our valuable coast.

"One to One" recently spoke with three members of the state delegation who, while getting settled in new offices, are also eager to proceed on some of the state's top priorities, including the LA 1 improvement project. Following are samples of our interviews with U.S. Senator David Vitter and U.S. Congressmen Charlie Melancon and Bobby Jindal.

SENATOR DAVID VITTER

On priorities for his first Senate term:

I will focus on securing critical federal funding for Louisiana transportation infrastructure projects – like LA 1, LA 28 and I-49 – as well as work on restoring our coast and protecting social security. In the Senate, I have been assigned to the Commerce, Science and Transportation; Environment and Public Works; and Small Business and Entrepreneurship committees. These committee assignments will allow me to address our most important Louisiana priorities by focusing on jobs, infrastructure and economic development for every region in the state. Specifically, through my role on the Senate Committee on Environment and Public Works, I will have a hand in crafting key legislation impacting the Louisiana priorities of highway development and coastal restoration.

On the importance of LA 1: LA 1 provides a vital link to Port Fourchon, which provides our nation with 18 percent of its oil and gas supply. It also serves as a pivotal artery for the area's 30,000 residents as a hurricane evacuation route. As evidenced by the trouble experienced during the Hurricane Ivan evacuation last year, it is clear that Louisiana needs more highways to help move people out of harm's way during emergency situations.

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CONGRESSMAN CHARLIE MELANCON

On his first-term priorities: My priorities reflect the priorities of the voters in the Third Congressional District. Obviously, these include LA 1, I-49, coastal restoration, modifying the Mississippi River Gulf Outlet and providing affordable health care for our citizens.

On the importance of LA 1: It is easy for us to see how important LA 1 is to, not only this region, but the entire country. It is a critical corridor for moving our valuable energy supply out of Port Fourchon and into the rest of the country, along with the manpower and materials needed to get the job done. LA 1 also provides an important evacuation route for these workers, as well as local residents. But this highway must be improved to protect this significant corridor. I really believe we are about twenty years behind in adequate road service. It's a matter of us demonstrating to others in Washington the amount of energy focused at Fourchon and the need for a stable LA 1 to secure this energy supply.

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CONGRESSMAN BOBBY JINDAL

On his first-term priorities: I am excited to be a new member of Congress and I am excited for both the opportunities and challenges that this new position will bring. I want to create better economic opportunities in Louisiana, so our children don't have to leave the state to find a job. I want to keep America safe and strong, defending our homeland from those who seek to do us harm and winning the War on Terror. I want to improve our healthcare system, so everyone can have access to quality, affordable health care. I want to protect the natural treasures of Louisiana, preserving our beautiful coast and enhancing our role in supplying oil and gas to the rest of the country.

On the importance of LA 1: I am a strong supporter of improving Louisiana's infrastructure, including LA 1. It is important for the

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David Vitter (from page 1)

On the speed at which the LA 1 EIS was completed: This is the kind of process I would like to encourage in Washington. I am a strong supporter of public-private partnerships. The federal government's timetable doesn't always move as quickly as states need the money. But it can be helpful when private companies can assist local and state governments to make sure that federal funding can be used in the most efficient ways once it becomes available.

His advice to the Coalition for gaining federal funding: It is crucial for the LA 1 Coalition to educate members of Congress about the importance of this project. It is especially important for the Coalition to meet with members on the House and Senate Appropriations Committees about securing federal funding.

Charlie Melancon (from page 1)

His perspective on LA 1 Coalition efforts: The LA 1 Coalition is a model of how best to communicate with lawmakers and policymakers in order to secure approval for a project. You have done very well getting your message out and "working the Hill," so to speak. Also, what the LA 1 Coalition has been able to do in partnering with the private sector and government agencies has enabled the project itself to move along so well.

On his first months in office: With the late run-off election in Louisiana, I had one month less than all other new congressmen to get situated in new offices here. However, I have been moving quickly to set up my staff in Louisiana and in Washington. I am also getting up to speed on the status of the Transportation bill and related federal appropriations and will work to ensure money is there to address the needs of my district.

Bobby Jindal (from page 1)

economic development of the entire region that we enhance access to all parts of the state, especially by connecting our ports in the south, like Port Fourchon, to the rest of the country. The easier it is to get oil and other products from dock to distribution, and the easier it is for new industries to have ready access to the services they need, the more those industries can grow. As they grow, so does the economic base of our state.

His suggestion for gaining support on Capitol Hill: As in so many parts of life, knowledge is key. Just as we need to make sure our children have the best possible education in school, advocacy groups should be working to make sure decision makers have the best possible access to information. In many cases we are not arguing with the funding organization, but against other states who are seeking the same money. It is the state with the best argument, supported by the best information, that will win the day.

On getting Louisiana's "Fair Share": There is much that needs to be done to make sure Louisiana is receiving its fair share of federal dollars. For instance, we need to fight to make sure Louisiana gets a greater share of the nearly \$5 billion a year the federal government collects from oil and gas drilled along our coastline. We are a state with advantageous conditions for the country to improve its energy development. So we need to work to leverage our advantages to a mutual gain for the country and Louisiana.

We, as a state, also have a responsibility. We need to work to preserve the very coast that can provide so much for us. We need to invest in coastal restoration so as to ensure that our oil and gas fields, and the ports and regions that service them, continue to be productive. We must invest a small portion of the proceeds our nation derives from its energy resources to protect the very same coast that is generating those energy resources in the first place.

I will work hard in my position on the Resources committee to including funding provisions in the energy bill or other relevant legislation to protect and enhance our coast.

GOVERNOR BLANCO AND SENATOR LANDRIEU VISIT PORT FOURCHON

Louisiana Governor Kathleen Blanco and the state's senior U.S. Senator, Mary Landrieu, were among a group of state and national officials who made a stop at Port Fourchon on October 22, 2004, during a helicopter tour of coastal Louisiana. Also participating in the tour were staffers from the U.S. Senate and House Energy and Public Works Committees, as well as representatives from the National Science Teachers Association, National Governors Association, National Association of Counties, National Wildlife Federation and Ducks Unlimited. Presentations on the state's urgent need for funding to address coastal restoration and critical infrastructure like LA 1 were given by La. Department of Natural Resources Secretary Scott Angelle, Greater Lafourche Port Commission's Ted Falgout and other advocates of Louisiana's coastal issues.



Top: Sen. Mary Landrieu and Gov. Kathleen Blanco address a crowd at Port Fourchon. Right: Blanco meets with members of the Greater Lafourche Port Commission.



Chairman's Report

-by Ted Falgout, Executive Director, Greater Lafourche Port Commission



Congressional Delegation Has LA 1 in Focus

The first session of Congress after an election is always an interesting one as new senators and congressman shuffle to find staff and their way around Capitol Hill. Fortunately for Louisiana and the LA 1 Coalition, while we did lose two of greatest champions this year to retirement, the new faces representing our state in Washington, D.C. seem to have our top priorities clearly in focus. And they are moving quickly to make their voices heard in a system where states often compete against each other for project approval and associated federal funding.

As you read in this issue of "One to One," U.S. Senator David Vitter and U.S. Congressmen Charlie Melancon and Bobby Jindal cite Louisiana's need for comprehensive coastal restoration and improved infrastructure, particularly to critical energy ports like LA 1 to Port

Fourchon, as not only state priorities, but national priorities as well.

As freshman Congressman Jindal tells our newsletter's editor, "We need to invest in coastal restoration so as to ensure that our oil and gas fields, and the ports and regions that service them, continue to be productive. We must invest a small portion of the proceeds our nation derives from its energy resources to protect the very same coast that is generating those energy resources in the first place."

To this end, he says he will push for federal legislation that will allow Louisiana to receive it's "fair share" of money generated off of our coast. This is a mission championed by U.S. Senator Mary Landrieu and embraced by all of us in Louisiana who care about the future of our working coastline: America's Wetland.

This fair share of revenue could go a long way in helping to complete the entire LA 1 improvement project and ensuring the safe transportation of nearly twenty percent of this nation's oil and gas supply. Thanks to the unmatched cooperation among federal, state, and local agencies, the port commission and landowners, all of the necessary permits for Phase 1 were received in December. The port commission has also agreed to conduct required mitigation, reducing the project's total cost and timetable. This clears the way for construction of a portion of highway that we could be driving on as early as 2009.

As Congressman Melancon says, "It's a matter of us demonstrating to others in Washington the amount of energy focused at Fourchon and the need for a stable LA 1 to secure this energy supply." Our work continues...

Environmental Permits Awarded for Phase 1 of LA 1 Project Port Commission Leads Mitigation Effort

Months of continuous communication and extensive cooperation among LA 1 project team members have resulted in an exceedingly efficient permitting process for the LA 1 project. In December 2004, the first phase of the LA 1 improvement project received environmental clearance, a little more than a year after submittal. Permits now in hand for the project include two Coast Guard Bridge permits, the Corps of Engineers Section 10 and 404 permit, and two La. Department of Natural Resources Coastal Zone permits for construction and mitigation.

"The intensive interagency cooperative effort, which began with the Environmental Impact Statement (EIS), was specifically continued during the design phase of the project," says Michele Deshotels of the La. Department of Transportation and Development (DOTD).

One particular area addressed during the design phase was mitigation of disrupted wetlands. Ironically, as the proposed end-on construction method limits environmental impact, it also limits options available for meaningful mitigation. Therefore, the one area where conventional construction techniques would be used—the bridge crossing at Bayou Lafourche—was targeted as a possible mitigation site. It is also

one of the areas of Louisiana's coast suffering the highest rate of subsidence, so mitigation efforts here were considered to be highly desirable.

Spoil generated from canals, dredged to provide site access for constructing the new Leeville bridge, will be used to create wetlands in the mitigation plan. Implementation of this plan will be carried out by the Greater Lafourche Port Commission, which has agreed to enter a cooperative endeavor agreement with the DOTD to create and maintain the required 42.3 acres of wetlands necessary to offset the impacts of Phase 1 of the project. This partnering effort by the Port Commission will save the project up to \$5 million dollars in costs.

"Again, multi-agency cooperation led to out-of-the-box thinking that has resulted in a novel approach to facilitate construction and assure that the LA 1 Improvements project has meaningful mitigation," explains Deshotels. This effort required input from the project team, permitting and resource agencies, and affected property owners.

Permitting documentation and coordination was handled by Sigma Consulting Group, a subconsultant to lead engineering firm Wilbur Smith Associates. Sigma is also assisting Wilbur

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CONTRIBUTORS TO THE COALITION
As of January 31, 2005

Abdon Callais Offshore, LLC
Allied Shipyard, Inc.
ANS Engines, Inc.
ASCO
Bank One
Barriere Construction Co.
Belle Terre Erosion Control, LLC
Betty Roth Hebert
Bilco Tools, Inc.
Bayou Civic Club
Bayou Industrial Group
Bayou Supply & Chemical, Inc.
Bollinger Shipyards, Inc.
BP Corporation North America, Inc.
Breux Petroleum Products, Inc.
Buquet Distributing Company, Inc.
C & G Boats, Inc.
Caillouet Land Corporation
Cajun Trucking, Inc.
CanDo, Inc.
Constantin Land Trust
Coastal Commerce Bank
Coastal Environments, Inc.
Community Bank
Crosby Tugs, Inc.
Danos & Curole, Inc.
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Delta Testing & Inspection, Inc.
Deramee, Allemmand, Pitre & Richard, LLP
DMF Enterprises

Doucet & Adams, Inc.
E S & H Consulting Services, Inc.
Edison Chouest Offshore, LLC
Edward Wisner Donation Advisory Cmte.
Entergy Louisiana
Francis Drilling Fluids, Ltd.
Galliano Marine Services
G&A Barge Rental & Construction, Inc.
G&B Marine Transportation
Grand Isle Port Commission
Grand Isle Shipyard, Inc.
Greater Lafourche Port Commission
Guidry Brothers Towing Co., Inc.
Halliburton Energy Services
Hibernia National Bank
Houma Armature Works and Supply
John W. Stone Oil Dist., Inc.
J. Wayne Plaisance, Inc.
L & M Botruc Rentals, Inc.
Lady of the Sea General Hospital
Lafourche Parish Council
Landry House Bed and Breakfast
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Leonard Miller Insurance
Louisiana Machinery Co.
Louisiana Offshore Oil Port, LLC
Magnum Mud Equipment Co., Inc.
Martin Terminal, Inc.
Mid Continent Oil & Gas Association
M.I. Drilling Fluids
Morgan City Rentals
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NEFF Rental
Ocean Marine Operators, LLC
Offshore Towing
Orgeron Properties
Picciola & Associates, Inc.
Pointe Fourchon, Inc.
Reggie Melancon
Regions Bank
Ronald Adams Contractor, Inc.
Rousse Marine, Inc.
SJI, Inc.
South Central Industrial Association
Southern Guard
Southern Scrap Recycling, LLC
South Lafourche Bank & Trust
South Lafourche Levee District
State Bank & Trust Company
Suard Barge Service, Inc.
Superior Shipyard Fabrications, Inc.
Sureway Supermarket, Inc.
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T. Baker Smith & Son, Inc.
Terrebonne Motor Co., Inc.
Tetra Oil & Gas Services, Inc.
Theriot, Duet & Theriot, Inc.
Unocal Corporation
Valentine Sugars, Inc.
Venture Transport, Inc.
Welch Sales and Service

THANK YOU! If you have any
comments or suggestions about any item in the
newsletter, please call us at (985) 448-4485.

Permits (from page 3)

Smith in the bridge and highway design and plan preparation phases of the project.

"Our underlying goal was to create a project that would have a positive impact to both the transportation infrastructure and sensitive environment," says Sigma permitting coordinator Robbie Lear.

The following individuals played a vital role in the successful permitting of the LA 1 Improvement Project: LA DOTD: David Miller, Michele Deshotels. FHWA: William C. Farr, Robert V. Mahoney, Jerry Pitts. US Army Corps of Engineers: Dr. James Barlow. LA DNR: Tim Robertson, Rocky Hinds. US Coast Guard: Marcus Redford. National Marine Fisheries Service: Richard Hartman. US Fish & Wildlife Service: Derek Hamilton, Patti Holland. LA Dept. of Wildlife & Fisheries: Maria Davidson. Greater Lafourche Port Commission: Ted Falgout. LA1 Coalition: Roy Francis. Wilbur Smith Associates: Bill Huffstetler, Doug Gremillion, Melvin Brown. Sigma Consulting Group, Inc.: Robbie Lear, Susan Douglas, Miles Williams.

*La. DOTD's Michele Deshotels and Sigma Consulting Group's Robbie Lear
contributed to this article.*

For Your Information...

If you would like to receive additional copies of "One to One" or more information on the LA 1 Coalition, call Roy Francis, Executive Director, at (985) 448-4485 or write to us at P.O. Box 2048-NSU, Thibodaux, LA 70310. Our office is located on the campus of Nicholls State University in Thibodaux, LA, within the offices of the South Louisiana Economic Council. The LA 1 Coalition is a non-profit 501(c4) corporation. Donations are not tax deductible.