

NEW LA 1 TOLL BRIDGE IN LEEVILLE OPENING TUESDAY

LEEVILLE, La. – Federal, state and local officials joined the Louisiana Department of Transportation and Development (DOTD) on Tuesday, July 7 to officially celebrate the completion of the new LA 1 toll bridge in Leeville.

“The completion of the LA 1 fixed-level bridge near Port Fourchon is a significant milestone for the residents of south Louisiana,” said DOTD Secretary William D. Ankner. “The completion of this bridge introduces an enhanced evacuation route, business corridor and tourism link over Bayou Lafourche. It also commemorates the completion of the first section of the LA 1 Expressway, which when complete will consist of 19 miles of elevated roadway from Golden Meadow to the Gulf.”

Officials including Louisiana Governor Bobby Jindal, United States Representative Charlie Melancon and Louisiana Department of Transportation and Development Secretary William Ankner will be in attendance.

The new LA 1 toll bridge at Leeville is the first phase of the LA 1 Expressway, which ultimately will consist of 19 miles of new elevated roadway from Golden Meadow to the Gulf of Mexico. The elevated highway from Leeville to the Gulf is now under construction and should be completed in late 2011. Pre-construction work is proceeding on the expressway from Golden Meadow to Leeville, but that portion of the project has no construction funds. The LA 1 Coalition, a regional business coalition based in Lafourche Parish has spearheaded funding efforts for the project for the last 12 years. “Without the focused day-to-day work of the LA 1 Coalition to improve the highway infrastructure along this critical energy corridor, citizens of our state and nation would not be benefitting from a needed, secure crossing of Bayou Lafourche at Leeville,” said LA 1 Coalition Board Chairman Ted Falgout. “The existing bridge has long been identified as the weakest link in our transportation system to the coast.”

Tolls will not be collected on the bridge until after the Grand Isle Tarpon Rodeo weekend. Tolling will commence on July 27th. For information on how to acquire toll tags or single-trip tolls, go to www.geauxpass.com or call (866) 662-8987 or email customerservice@geauxpass.com. All funds from the tolls will go toward retiring approximately \$166 million of debt that was incurred to build the bridge.

The LA 1 Expressway, designated by Congress as a “high-priority corridor” for its role as critical energy infrastructure, is the only land access to Port Fourchon, which services 18 percent of the nation's daily crude oil needs. The highway is also the only evacuation route for up to 35,000 people, including 6,000 offshore workers and residents of Grand Isle. A critical transportation route, LA 1 provides access to more than 1,200 trucks per day that travel in and out of Port Fourchon.

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