

ONE to ONE

An Update on the Efforts of the LA 1 Coalition

Winter 2002

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LA 1 Makes The List

Millions of miles of state and federal highways stretch across the United States, but very few have been labeled critical to this nation's intermodalism, economy and security. LA 1 can now claim inclusion in this important class of highways, increasing chances for future federal funding.

In early December, Senator Mary Landrieu and Congressman Billy Tauzin announced that Congress had designated LA 1 as a "high-priority corridor," one of only 44 such designations in the country. Landrieu aggressively pushed for the inclusion of LA 1 on the federal government's highway priority list in a speech to fellow lawmakers on the Senate floor.

"Because Louisiana's transportation system is a vital link in moving imported and domestically produced energy to the nation, greater federal

spending to improve our highways and ports is a wise national investment," explained Sen. Landrieu.

"Fairness demands that the federal government return some of this money to the region that created it, and federal funding of LA 1 improvements would be a good start," she added.

When the Coalition mobilized in 1997, few people outside of our region knew the importance of LA 1. Finally, the highway receives attention it deserves.

According to Rep. Tauzin, the LA 1 project is critical to economic development in Louisiana.

"This corridor is one of the top ten industrial corridors—in terms of jobs per capita—in the U.S. and has more navigable water miles than any

other region of its size in the country," he said.

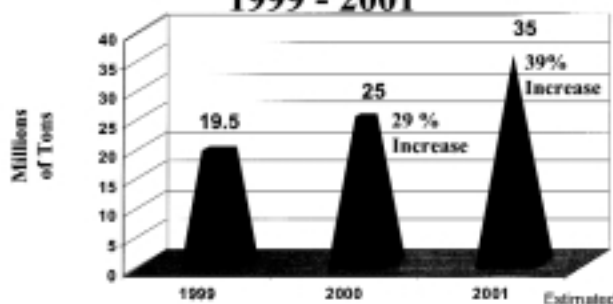
LA 1 is the only highway located in a small community to be included on the 44-highway list. However, its importance to the production and distribution of energy resources is what sets it apart from others.

"It is a tremendous feat to achieve this high-priority status over other major highway systems," said LA 1 Coalition Executive Director Roy Francis. "The recognition should go a long way in helping us achieve substantial funding for improvements in the next transportation bill cycle."

The six-year transportation authorization funds billions of dollars for highway projects across the nation. The next bill will be considered in 2003.

Port Fourchon, LA Intermodal Transportation

1999 - 2001



Last fall, a shrimp boat collided into the Leeville Bridge along LA 1, stopping traffic for three hours.

LA 1 TOP TEN Achievements in 2001

1. LA Highway 1 receives **High-Priority Corridor** designation from Congress.
2. Substantial state and federal funding is committed to preliminary design work for new **Leeville bridge**. This includes \$1.7 million in Coastal Impact Assistance funds, \$3 million from federal appropriations bill and \$60,000 from the state capital outlay bill.
3. La. Department of Transportation and Development commits to provide the **20 percent match** to federal funding received in 2001 for preliminary work on new Leeville bridge. DOTD also agrees to move as quickly as possible on all studies and design activities before the next federal transportation bill and possible additional funding is considered in 2003.
4. Port Fourchon is included in the **Millennium Port** Authority's "Work Plan for the Future," which also contained a recommendation to "support in all appropriate ways the work of the LA 1 Coalition in achieving a four-lane highway between Hwy. 90 and Fourchon by 2010."
5. A **Draft Environmental Impact Statement** for a new four-lane highway from Fourchon to Golden Meadow is issued for public review. The final EIS is expected by the summer of 2002.
6. A **Draft Feasibility Study** for an improved highway between Larose and U.S. 90 is issued for public comment.
7. LA 1 Coalition establishes its web site, **LA1Coalition.org**, to offer on-line information to interested parties around the world.
8. **Major oil and gas companies** continue their commitment to assist with the efforts of the LA 1 Coalition.
9. Senator Mary Landrieu delivers a speech on the floor of the **U.S. Senate**, advocating High-Priority Corridor designation for LA 1. In her twenty-minute speech, Sen. Landrieu uses photos of the highway and activity at Port Fourchon, along with oil and gas production statistics, to clearly show impacts and need for high improvements.
10. LA 1 Coalition assists with the development of the Louisiana Economic and Environmental Concept (LEERC), a feasible economic and environmental vision for the state of Louisiana.

Local Newspaper Urges Residents to Get Involved in LA 1 Improvement Efforts

In a January 2, 2002, editorial, Houma's daily newspaper *The Courier* echoed the LA 1 Coalition's plea for a share of offshore oil royalties to help improve the ill-fated highway, as well as encouraged area residents to pressure Congressional members into making the road a priority.

"An improved LA 1 would boost the economy of the entire south Louisiana region and provide quicker, more reliable evacuations to escape hurricanes. Everyone in Terrebonne and Lafourche parishes stands to be affected," writes the newspaper.

The editorial also recognized the efforts of LA 1 Coalition members for giving the area a strong voice in lobbying for highway improvements.

"But the work has only begun," continues *The Courier*. "It will take a unified voice from throughout the region to persuade the federal government and Congress to pay for LA 1 improvements amid competing interests in Washington."

We couldn't have said it better ourselves.



Chairman's Report



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



The Fish Is Getting Closer to the Boat

As we begin a new year of efforts to improve our highway infrastructure, I would like to reflect back on the accomplishments of this Coalition over the past year. When we formed the LA 1 Coalition, many of us made a commitment to give an all-out effort for three years and then evaluate if, in fact, it was worth the time, money and effort to continue.

That is now history and the almost astonishing list of accomplishments clearly show that our effort has not only been worthwhile, but must continue if we ever expect to land the "big fish," which is a four-lane highway system connecting the Gulf of Mexico to U.S. Highway 90. The good news is that, largely because of our relentless and aggressive angling capabilities, the fish is getting closer to the boat. The bad news is that as it gets closer and we see it more clearly, it gets even bigger than we imagined and will take even greater

skill to land. I feel we have a well-seasoned angler at the fighting chair with Executive Director Roy Francis, and I hope the rest of us can position the boat just right to land this fish. It will take a well-executed plan and a lot of luck.

This analogy paints the picture of our battle to improve our highway system and the increasing costs that are resulting from the detailed construction information now being gathered.

"More and more people are recognizing the significance of this strategic highway system and are pledging their support."

Our accomplishments of last year alone are nothing short of phenomenal, and a complete list of those accomplishments can be found in this issue of "One to One." I would like to take this opportunity, however, to give special thanks to our state's congressional delegation and their staffs for the untiring effort and huge part they have played in moving our project forward, providing funding and now a high-priority designation. Without their commitment to this much-needed project, we would not have

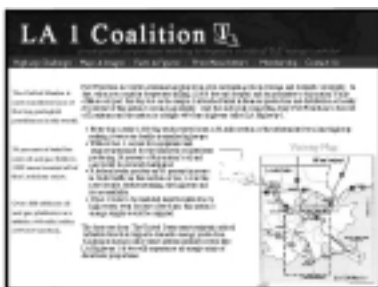
progressed nearly as far as we have. Transportation Secretary Kam Movassaghi, DNR Secretary Jack Caldwell and their respective departments should also be recognized for their efforts and support, as well as the U.S. Minerals Management Service. Senator Reggie Dupre and Representative Loulan Pitre have also courageously carried the LA 1 banner and assisted in so many ways.

More and more people are recognizing the significance of this strategic highway system and are pledging their support. Few people would have ever imagined that the LA 1 project would leave other projects that have been in the books for decades in the dust. The same goes for having a completed Environmental Impact Statement by 2002, funding for preliminary engineering of a new Leeville overpass, a feasibility study from Larose to U.S. 90, and the designation of LA 1 from the Gulf of Mexico to U.S. 90 as one of only 44 "high priority corridors" in the nation. The year 2001 was truly a year of accomplishments for which we can all be proud!



We're on the Web!

LOG ON TO LA1COALITION.ORG



- Highway Statistics
- Impacts on Highway System
- Area Maps and Proposed Highway
- Illustrations
- Back Issues of "One to One"
- Membership List
- Contact Information

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THANK YOU!

LA 1 Coalition
General Membership Meeting

Mark Your Calendar

Thursday, February 28

6 pm

Edison Chouest Offshore, Galliano

See you There!

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. Editor: Jennifer Armand