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An Update on the Efforts of the LA 1 Coalition

Fall 2001

The tragic events of September 11 left a nation in grief and a government grappling with serious homeland security issues. From increased airport screening to irradiation of U.S. mail, life in this country may have been changed forever. For the LA 1 Coalition, the attacks on

American soil shed a new light on this region's role in the U.S. energy supply and, more important now than ever, securing this energy supply in a time of terrorist threats. From the Coalition's anticipated postcard campaign to the national energy bill, America's war on terrorism has affected much of what we considered to be priorities just over two months ago. Now, we stand united in our nation's efforts to protect the people, places and institutions that make the United States our sacred home.

SPECIAL EDITION
A Nation on Alert
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Focus Shifts from Energy Supply to Energy Security

National Newspaper Article Details Significance and Vulnerability of Port Fourchon

Associated Press reporter Doug Simpson has visited Port Fourchon in the past and has spoken with Fourchon's Executive Director Ted Falgout on numerous occasions over the telephone. But in the wake of the September 11 attacks on New York and Washington, a story the national writer penned describing the importance of the port and LA 1 to the national energy supply carried greater weight than Simpson or Falgout might have imagined before the tragic day.

In his article, Simpson details

the amount of truck traffic over fragile LA 1 and the highway's vulnerability to hurricanes. "Few Americans know it, but they depend on that narrow road.... If a hurricane left LA 1 underwater, energy analysts say, gasoline and natural gas prices could easily shoot out of control," he writes.

Simpson's timely piece stresses the significance of Port Fourchon to the rest of the country and the 12,000 people who work on hundreds of rigs in the Gulf of Mexico. According to the article, "Analysts say losing access to Fourchon could easily choke supply and send gas prices well over \$3 per gallon."

With the nation now at war, the security of ports like

Fourchon have become an urgent consideration for national and state leaders. The important role of LA Highway 1 in servicing the port, and its dire need for improvements, should also warrant national and state attention.

"Doug Simpson's article is right on target," said Falgout. "It's the message we've been delivering for the past several years. Maybe with national coverage like this, more people will come to realize why our efforts to improve LA 1 and sustain Port Fourchon are so critical."

Simpson's article was published locally in at least one newspaper, the *Bayou Business Review* on September 17.

Landrieu Bill Uses OCS Revenue for Energy Security Measures

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U.S. Senator Mary Landrieu has filed a bill to direct \$2 billion annually from revenue collected from offshore oil leases to increase security for the nation's oil and gas pipelines, refineries and power plants. Under the bill's provisions, the money would be appropriated to the new federal homeland security office and then distributed to individual states for added security measures detailed in state plans submitted to the homeland security office. Thirty percent of the total funds would be earmarked for the seven states, including Louisiana, that have federal leases offshore and the rest would be available to all 50 states. In light of the terrorism threat, "I think it's absolutely crucial that Congress take up an energy infrastructure bill before we leave this year," Landrieu told The Associated Press. The federal government receives an average of \$4.4 billion a year from offshore oil leases, and nearly 75 percent of that is generated off of Louisiana's coast.

Energy Supply Postcard Campaign Put On Hold

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After returning to work following the Labor Day holiday, Coalition Executive Director Roy Francis and Armand Communications' Jennifer Armand decided that September 13 would be a good date to begin mailing the first in a series of postcards designed to inform congressional members about the importance of LA Highway 1 to the national energy supply. The timing would give senators and representatives ample time to get back to work after the break and would coincide with debate on the national energy bill in the Senate. Then tragedy struck.

"At that devastating time in America, we knew that our public

relations campaign would have to wait. Congress as well as the entire country had much more pressing issues on its mind besides our efforts to secure much-needed funding for LA 1 highway improvements," Francis said. "Protecting our nation from terrorism was and remains everyone's top concern."

Today, the energy bill as written before September 11 remains tabled in the Senate Energy Committee, but hopes are that the proposal, as well as the LA 1 Coalition's awareness campaign, will be revived in the coming months. We'll keep you posted.

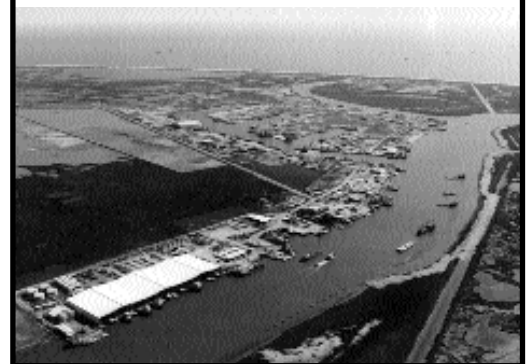


LA 1 Reps Tout Coalition's Work at Superport Meeting

LA 1 Coalition Executive Director Roy Francis and Chairman Ted Falgout value any chance to explain the need for improvements to this fragile highway. On August 24, they had a special opportunity to tell the Coalition's story during a meeting with Ron Brinson, the former chief of the Port of New Orleans who is now charged with expediting the state's efforts to build a superport in South Louisiana. Francis and Falgout know that if Port Fourchon is selected in the state's Millennium Port plan, infrastructure improvements will be critical.

"Mr. Brinson is keenly aware of the conditions of LA 1 and we were happy to be able to share with him the plans we have pushed and the progress we have made toward four-laning the road leading to Port Fourchon," Francis said.

The meeting may have had some impact already. As indicated in "Chairman's Report" (page 3), the Millennium Port Authority's work plan issued in October calls for support of the LA 1 Coalition's work in achieving an elevated four-lane highway.



Chairman's Report

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



Highway Effort Gets Boost from Millennium Port Report

A potentially historic action occurred on October 10, 2001, as the Millennium Port Authority approved its work plan for the future. This in itself may not be so historic, but for the first time we have the authority charged with locating a major container port in this state presenting a plan that includes a recommendation to "Support in all appropriate ways the work of the LA1 Coalition in achieving a four lane highway connector between highway 90 and Fourchon by 2010."

This could be very significant! Our highway project is now an integral part of a state plan for future economic development. Inclusion in the Millennium Port report is one more piece of

"legitimacy" that can be added to our arsenal of weapons in seeking funding. It now up to us to utilize this to its full potential.

"Our highway project is now an integral part of a state plan for future economic development."

For the highway construction goal to be achieved, we must continue our efforts on a fast track. After all, 2010 is only eight years away!

On another note, I just recently had the privilege to speak to the National Ocean Industries Association (NOIA) about the need for us to partner in support of an energy policy that ensures land-side infrastructure accessibility.

This group, which is comprised of all the major offshore oil and support companies, has tremendous influence in Washington, D.C. (where we need the most help). I want to express special thanks to Hugh Depland with BP for arranging this opportunity. I was well recieved and feel we have laid the groundwork in obtaining the group's support for the LA 1 Coalition's efforts.



Funds for Leeville Bridge Preliminary Work Could Be Here in New Year

Nearly \$1.7 million for engineering and design work on a new Leeville Bridge was earmarked in the state's plan for spending federal Coastal Impact Assistance funds, and now with a completed grant application sent in to Washington, receiving the money could be only a few months away.

The Greater Lafourche Port Commission submitted the grant application this summer, detailing the need for the new bridge and the preliminary work that could be performed with the federal funds designed to provide relief to coastal zone areas. The program was authorized last spring following the defeat of CARA legislation. Louisiana's portion of the 2001 CIAP money could be distributed as early as the first of 2002, and the Leeville Bridge work could begin soon after.

MMS Officials Visit Fourchon To Talk Impact Assistance

Onshore impacts of OCS activities was the topic of a July 26 meeting at Port Fourchon between officials with the Minerals Management Service (MMS), the port, LA 1 Coalition and industry groups. The visit by Carolita Kallaur and Chris Oynes of the MMS came as a response to comments made by the coalition and port director Ted Falgout regarding the environmental assessment for lease sale 182.

"Port Fourchon and Lafourche Parish are experiencing new and significant impacts far beyond the levels documented in the five-year EIS," wrote Falgout in his June 13 letter.

After the meeting, during which MMS officials heard detailed accounts about the burdens borne by the parish's highways and water system, the federal agency acknowledged the

impacts of offshore drilling in a letter to U.S. Senator John Breaux.

"Port Fourchon is one of the Gulf of Mexico's main service bases for OCS activities... the port's importance to our nation's energy infrastructure is significant. LA 1, the main land-based mode of transport to and from the port, is also vital," writes MMS Acting Director Thomas Kitsos. "We are very much aware of the importance of the port and a desire for impact assistance to ameliorate the effects of the OCS program."

For Falgout, the meeting and the subsequent letter is a move in the right direction. "We are pleased with this commitment from the MMS. Now, we wait and watch for serious efforts to help mitigate the impacts we all recognize as serious," he says.

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***Legislators Hear From Citizens About
Local Highway Priorities***

Representatives of the LA 1 Coalition were among other residents of southeast Louisiana who voiced their support of local highway projects during an annual public hearing conducted November 6 by the Joint Legislative Committee on Transportation, Highways and Public Works at the Alario Center. Executive Director Roy Francis stressed the fact that the LA 1 Coalition, through the financial support of its membership, has worked vigorously to come up with creative funding sources to move the LA 1 improvement project forward. The future of the highway is important, Francis told legislators, not only to local communities, but to the entire nation.

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