



## **NEWS from the LA 1 COALITION**

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### **Big Achievements for the LA 1 Improvement Project in 2011**

*(Thibodaux, LA)* The LA 1 Coalition achieved significant successes in 2011, despite losing out on its latest bid for a federal transportation grant to fund the next phase of the critical LA 1 Improvement Project. Major achievement and milestones over the past year include the December 13 opening of the new elevated LA Highway 1 between the Tomey Doucet Overpass in Leesville and Port Fourchon, a partnership with federal agencies that yielded an significant study on the national importance of LA 1, and a commitment by the State of Louisiana to move forward with design of Phase 2 of the project.

“The past year has truly been one for the record books,” says Coalition Chairman Ted Falgout. “After more than four years of construction, we celebrated the extraordinary completion of a two-lane elevated highway to Fourchon last week, securing access from Leesville to this nation’s energy port.”

“We also had amazing successes on the state and federal level as the Coalition worked with the U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS) to quantify the national impacts of a long-term closure of the existing LA 1 north of Leesville, and supported the state’s decision to move forward with design of the next project phase,” Falgout explains. “It’s an exciting time for the Coalition and the local community, all made possible by the great support we have had from officials at every level of government, business and industry, and the residents of Lafourche Parish.”

The Coalition learned Thursday that Phase 2 Segment A of the LA 1 Improvement Project was not awarded construction funding from the third installment of the federal grant process known as the Transportation Investment Generating Economic Recovery (TIGER) Program. The Coalition submitted a TIGER III application on October 31, 2011 for \$18 million to help construct a new two-lane elevated highway from Golden Meadow to Leesville. The request included matching fund commitments from the State of Louisiana and industry to fulfill an estimated project cost of \$45 million.

“Once again in our TIGER grant application, we stressed the critical role LA 1 plays in the nation’s economy and energy security, as well as the highway’s increased vulnerability due to subsidence and sea level rise. Clearly, there is no question as to the importance of the LA 1 Improvement Project to American jobs and our nation’s economy and the critical need to improve the highway north of Leesville,” says LA 1 Coalition Executive Director Henri Boulet.

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Boulet says the group was hopeful that funding match commitments by state government and industry would give their \$18 million grant application even greater weight.

“We are disappointed, but not deterred,” Boulet continues. “The Coalition continues to aggressively seek federal funding opportunities from multiple sources to advance construction of Phase 2 of the project. We are particularly interested in a congressional effort to dedicate royalties from expanded OCS energy production to critical infrastructure like LA 1, and the reauthorization of the SAFETEA-LU transportation program. It will be all hands on deck in 2012, with funding for Phase 2 as our primary focus.”

On December 6, 2011, the U.S. DHS released a report entitled, *Louisiana Highway 1/Port Fourchon Study*, concluding that a 90-day closure of 7.1 miles along the existing at-grade LA Highway 1 and a 90-day closure of Port Fourchon as a result of this loss of highway access could result in a reduction of up to \$7.8 billion in American gross domestic product. Domestic oil and gas production would also be significantly impacted for a period of ten years following such a closure. The study’s findings will be used by the Coalition as it makes its case for highway construction funding on Capitol Hill in the upcoming year. The report is available at [www.LA1Coalition.org](http://www.LA1Coalition.org).

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*The LA 1 Coalition is a 501(c)4 non-profit corporation working for highway improvements from U.S. Highway 90 to Port Fourchon/Grand Isle, Louisiana, along the Louisiana Highway One corridor. For more information, visit [www.la1coalition.org](http://www.la1coalition.org).*