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# The LA 1/I-10 Connector

*The solution  
to Intracoastal Waterway  
Bridge safety, evacuation  
and bottleneck issues*



# The LA 1/I-10 Connector

## What is it?

A 3-mile road that bypasses the congested La. Hwy. 1 corridor at the Intracoastal Waterway Bridge and provides another access point to I-10 and the Mississippi River Bridge. The four-lane divided roadway will extend south from I-10 at the La. Hwy. 415 exit over the Intracoastal Waterway to North Line Road and connect with La. Hwy. 1.



**Over 45,000 vehicles a day travel down La. Hwy. 1. If we have an accident that blocks the highway or Intracoastal Bridge the only detour is through Iberville Parish on La. 77 back to I-10, which is a 53 mile detour.**

**The Intracoastal Bridge is over 50 years old, is rated F, and is over capacity.**

**This is a regional project. West Baton Rouge has a population of 24,000, but 45,000 vehicles travel over that bridge daily, and the plants along La. Hwy. 1 have announced significant expansions that will add to the vehicle traffic.**

*WBR Parish President  
Riley "Pee Wee" Berthelot*







**35,000 trucks leave the Dow site annually** traveling down La. Hwy. 1, and with the growth at our site **we could see another 7,000 more** trucks on the road a year.

There is a renaissance of manufacturing and engineering in our region, but **if we don't have the infrastructure then that future growth will pass us by.** Five to seven years from now will be too late.

*Stacey Chiasson - The Dow Chemical Co.*



## OVERVIEW:

La. Hwy. 1 is a principal artery of the national transportation system with an intermodal link to the nation's energy supply, and oil and gas industries. It connects to Interstate 10 in West Baton Rouge, crossing the Intracoastal Bridge. This bridge is the only unrestricted access for La. Hwy. 1 in the region.

44,700 vehicles travel over the Intracoastal Bridge daily – far exceeding its design capacity. The bridge has an F rating and is more than 50 years old. The La. 1 route, which is also exceeding its design capacity, is also a hurricane evacuation route for some 120,000 people in south Louisiana. The I-10/La. Hwy. 1 Connector is the solution to this critical traffic bottleneck.

**The I-10/La. 1 connector will play a critical role in the Port's growth. We have acquired 400 acres for expansion and surface transportation is important.**

*Jay Hardman, Port of Greater Baton Rouge*







# WHY AN ALTERNATIVE ROUTE IS CRITICAL:

## Economic Viability/Development:

- The population of West Baton Rouge is only 24,000, yet 44,700 vehicles travel on La. Hwy. 1 and over the Intracoastal Bridge daily. This shows **the La. 1 roadway is a major transportation route for this region and south Louisiana.**

- **Recently announced and expected projects at Westbank chemical plants total \$2.7 to \$3 billion, and will bring hundreds of jobs. This will further stress this already congested roadway.**

Approximately 35,000 trucks travel to and from the Dow Chemical Co. site straddling West Baton Rouge and Iberville Parishes on La. Hwy. 1 annually, and planned projects/expansions coming to the site will bring an additional 7,000 trucks traveling La. Hwy. 1 annually.

- A 1998 Executive Order by Gov. Mike Foster noted **95% of fish are shipped to market via La. Hwy. 1, sugarcane and vegetable harvests totaling more than**

**\$225,000,000 are transported over La.**

**Hwy. 1,** and the goods and services for the region's oil, gas and petrochemical industry are transported via La. Hwy. 1.

**95%**

of fish shipped  
via LA Hwy. 1



**\$225,000,000**

of sugarcane and vegetable  
harvests travel LA Hwy. 1

- **Economic development and residential development of the area**

**are stifled because of the traffic issues** at the Intracoastal Waterway Bridge.

# WHY AN ALTERNATIVE ROUTE IS CRITICAL:

- Peak hour congestion, accidents and maintenance projects in the area of the Intracoastal Waterway Bridge **regularly create severe disruption to La. Hwy. 1 traffic flow. This cripples business efficiency** in numerous ways.
- In the last 50 years, the Baton Rouge area has more than doubled in population, and seen more than twice the growth of other Louisiana metropolitan areas. **Long-term projections anticipate an additional 217,799 residents will live in the area by 2035**, according to the CDM Smith Comprehensive Traffic and Toll Revenue Study commissioned by West Baton Rouge Parish.
- The Baton Rouge region is poised for relatively **strong economic growth and robust employment growth in the future** due to the presence of large-scale, relatively stable industries, emerging industries and advantageous transportation corridors. **A projected 383,474 jobs are predicted by 2035**, according to the CDM Smith Comprehensive Traffic and Toll Revenue Study.

## **Announced Westbank projects coming include:**

**Shintech expansion (WBR and Iberville) - \$550 million**

**Exxon Mobil expansion (WBR) - \$75 million**

**CF Industries expansion (Donaldsonville) - \$2.1 billion**

**Three to four other expansions and new business announcements are expected in 2013, all impacting La. Hwy. 1 in West Baton Rouge and Iberville.**

# WHY AN ALTERNATIVE ROUTE IS CRITICAL:

## Safety:

- The present Intracoastal Waterway Bridge is **more than 50 years old and has exceeded its design capacity, with 44,700 vehicles traveling over it daily.** Its **present level of service is rated F**, meaning it is well over capacity.
- By comparison, the I-10 interchange at Breaux Bridge has 41,054 vehicles per day and the I-10/US 61 (Airline Hwy.) route at Sorrento has only 36,324 vehicles traveling it daily.
- The **only other route back to La. Hwy. 1 if the bridge is closed is a 53-mile journey** on a winding 2-lane highway, and **with traffic it becomes a 2-3 hour ordeal.**
- The proximity of the Intracoastal Bridge to the I-10 bridge is so close that **when the Intracoastal Bridge is backed up with traffic, which happens daily, the traffic backs up on the I-10 bridge. This creates safety concerns** on both bridges and La. Hwy. 1.

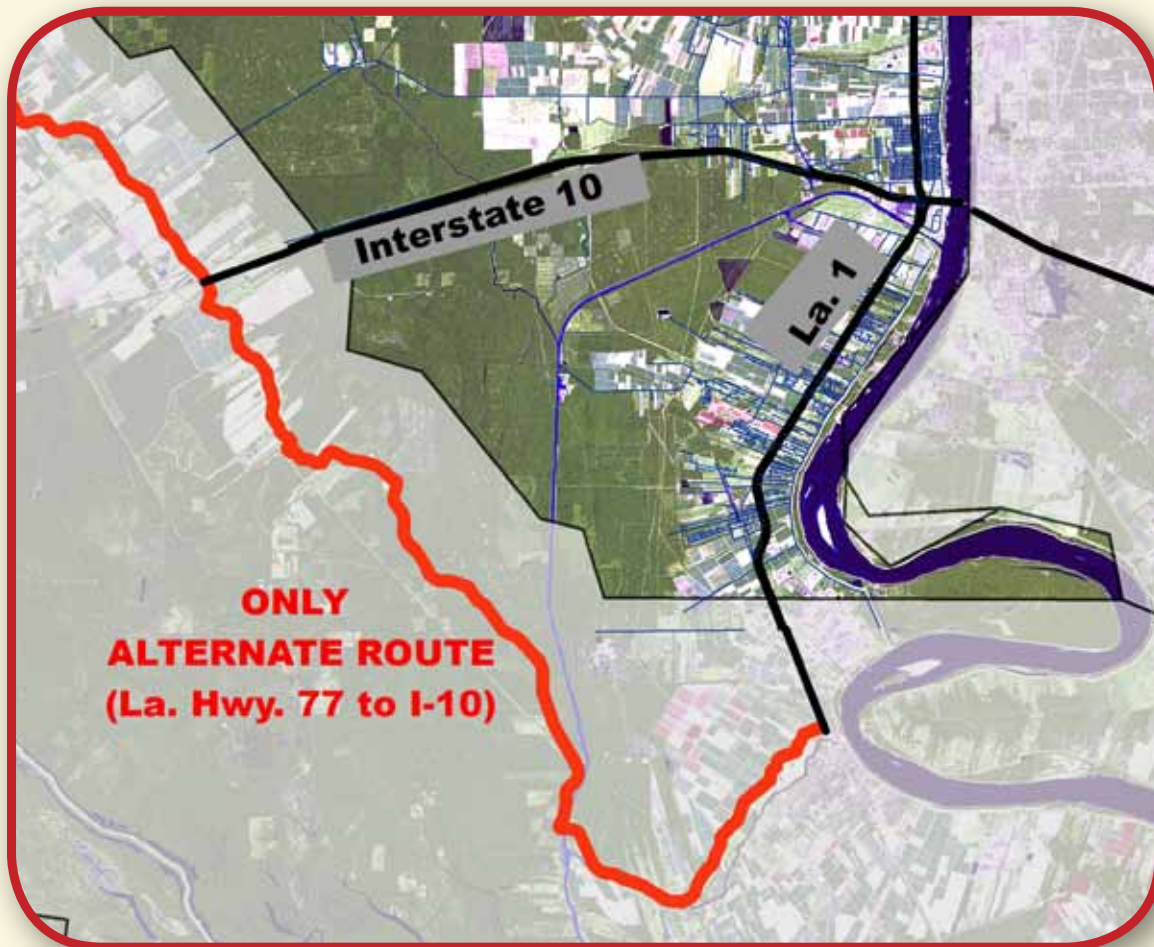
## Emergencies and Evacuations:

- The La. Hwy. 1 route over the Intracoastal Waterway Bridge is **the hurricane evacuation route for some 120,000 people in seven parishes.** It is estimated that evacuation would take 24 to 36 hours on this route!
- La. Hwy. 1 is also the **evacuation route if a release occurs at one of the many petrochemical plants** in the region.
- There is **no emergency treatment center in West Baton Rouge or Iberville, so emergency patients must be transported to Baton Rouge hospitals.** Traffic delays and Intracoastal Bridge lane closures can be life threatening for these emergency ambulance patients south of the Intracoastal Bridge.





*Map showing the only existing route to the interstate if the Intracoastal Waterway Bridge is closed – a 53 mile detour on a 2-lane highway!*



We have a great propensity for hazardous materials releases here and **with only one crossing over the Intracoastal Waterway, that provides huge limitations to us in mass evacuation situations.** Often motor vehicle accidents block both lanes of the Intracoastal Bridge in one direction, and so **often we have to shut down the other lanes unaffected by the crash in order to get emergency vehicles and patients over the bridge. It's a dangerous maneuver.** Our greatest fear is that we will be unable to access in a timely fashion accidents that may be life threatening to our citizens due to the traffic issues and that one access."

*Rick Boudreaux, Port Allen Fire Chief*



# Parish of West Baton Rouge



## Office of the Parish President

**Riley Berthelot, Jr.**  
Parish President

January 7, 2010

I appreciate the opportunity to present West Baton Rouge Parish's number one priority project, the LA 1/I-10 Connector, a bridge over the Intra Coastal Waterway. This proposed project first started with a feasibility study by La DOTD in 1989. The West Baton Rouge Parish Council got involved by having the stage 0 study Federal Aid Project No. CBI-6103(501) completed in February, 2002 with joint participation of Demo funds from Congress providing \$500,000, the State providing 100,000.00 and W.B.R.P. providing \$25,000 in local funds. In 2006 we saw the completion of the Environmental Inventory, Final Line and Grade Study and Final Environmental Assessment with a finding of no significant impact (FONSI) being completed in March 2007.

Presently, the only existing bridge on LA 1 crossing the Intra Coastal Waterway in West Baton Rouge Parish has one of the highest traffic counts in the Metro area. That number was 44,700 in August 2007. By way of comparison, see the traffic counts below.

Year	Location	Traffic Count
2007	I-10 @ US Hwy. 61 in Sorrento	32,718
2007	I-10 @ Breaux Bridge	40,218
2007	I-10 between LA Hwy 30 & 44	44,712
2006	I-10 West of Grosse Tete, La	40,400

If, for any reason, the bridge crossing the Intracoastal Waterway is blocked, your only option is a 50 mile detour that takes you through the City of Plaquemine in Iberville Parish, to LA Hwy 77 through the City of Grosse Tete before arriving at I-10 to travel east into the city of Baton Rouge.

Besides the difficulty in even temporarily closing the existing bridge for badly needed repairs, stopping the flow of traffic here could prove disastrous during an emergency hurricane evacuation or an evacuation because of a chemical spill. Recently an minor accident caused the temporary closure of only the southbound lane of this bridge resulting in major traffic delays with officials scrambling to accommodate school busses loaded with children on their way home from school.

To attest to the importance of the project to this region, at the Transportation Policy Committee of the Baton Rouge Metropolitan Planning Organization on May 13, 2008, my request to have the project moved from Stage III to Stage II received unanimous approval.

The LA 1/ I-10 Connector project does have the support of the Port of Greater Baton Rouge, local municipalities and neighboring parishes. In Louisiana's recent legislative session, the Capital Region Legislative Delegation also secured \$3,000,000 for the project in HB 2.

In an effort to attract private investors to complete this project as a toll bridge, West Baton Rouge Parish has contracted with Wilbur Smith Associates, Inc. to secure an investment grade study at a cost of over \$120,000 to W.B.R. Parish.

Should funds for infrastructure projects be available I respectfully request that you keep the safety and well being of the people of Louisiana in mind by helping to secure funding for this project. I deeply appreciate the support of the Louisiana Delegation.

*Riley L. Berthelot, Jr.,*  
West Baton Rouge Parish President

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Volume 74 Number 19  
THURSDAY  
DECEMBER 10,  
2009

PORT ALLEN,  
LOUISIANA

## FEATURES

### LOCAL

Local couple to  
tie the knot



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Meet our  
Baby of the Week



Page 4

### SPORTS

Redemptorist squeaks  
past Brusly  
62-61



# WEST SIDE Journal

THE OFFICIAL JOURNAL OF WEST BATON ROUGE PARISH

## Lime spill causes major delays

Officials think fast after spill causes 3-hour bridge closure; drivers irritated



photos and story by  
Aaron Williams/The West Side Journal

On Wednesday, December 2, a dump truck carrying a load of lime slurry lost some of its load on the Intracoastal Canal bridge, causing a traffic delay lasting about three hours.

On December 2, a truck, loaded with lime slurry, a non-hazardous agricultural product used to make soil more fertile, hit a gap entering onto the Intracoastal Canal bridge, causing a bracket on the tailgate of the truck to malfunction, spilling the lime slurry over the bridge.

Port Allen Fire Chief, Rick Boudreaux, said that the spill occurred around 2:30 p.m., and the fire department responded immediately.

The spill caused traffic to come to a stand still on the Southbound lanes of La. 1 to the Intracoastal Canal bridge, backing up into mid-Port Allen; and the Westbound lanes of the I-10 Mississippi River bridge.

Though the lime slurry was non-hazardous, not posing a safety risk in the air, according to the on-scene DEQ agent, Holly Maynard, the substance is slippery and if not handled with care, could have been the cause of crashes on the bridge.

"We would rather take the time and handle it this way than let people go across and be back to handle an accident," said Fred Smith, Port Allen Police Chief. "It's a matter of public safety."

The Northbound La. 1 lanes were shut down around 3:30 p.m., allowing school buses to cross over Southward, in order to pick up students in the First Student parking lot on Rosedale Road in Port Allen.

Jason Manola, WBR School Board President and Executive Director for the Parish President, said that they operated a plan issued by the city of Port Allen.

See Traffic, Page 3.



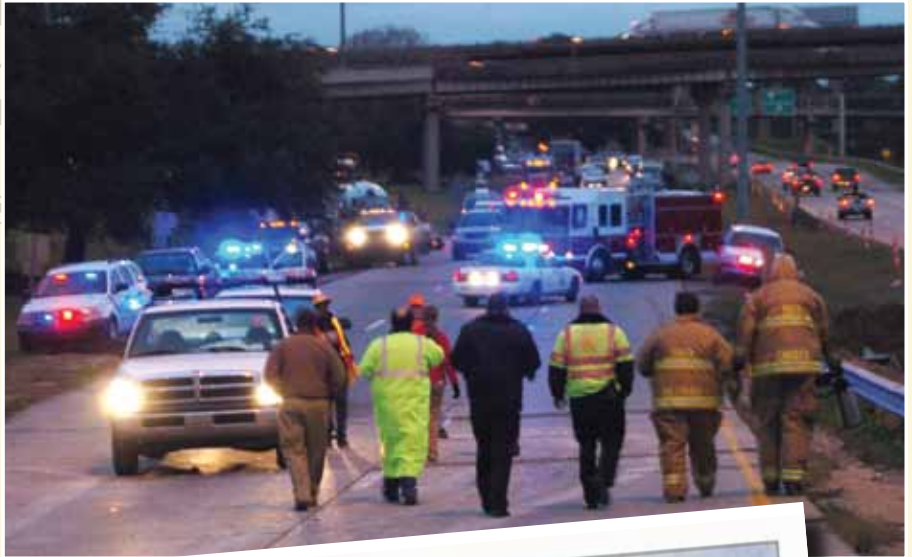
Newspaper  
coverage of  
a closure of  
Intracoastal  
Waterway Bridge  
that lasted some  
6-8 hours.



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*More coverage  
of one  
Intracoastal  
Waterway  
Bridge closure*



Advocate staff photo by LIZ CONDO  
Crews clean up a lime-slurry spill on the Intracoastal Canal Bridge south of Port Allen. The spill closed the southbound lanes of La. 1 for three hours late Wednesday afternoon.

## Truck spills lime; traffic snarled

Westside bureau

**PORT ALLEN** — A dump truck carrying a load of lime slurry, a nonhazardous agricultural product, accidentally dumped its cargo Wednesday afternoon on the Intracoastal Canal Bridge, causing a three-hour closure of La. 1 and major traffic jams. The spill snarled traffic from the westbound lanes of the Mississippi

River Interstate-10 Bridge to the southbound lanes of La. 1 on the Intracoastal Canal Bridge, Fire Chief Rick Boudreaux said. The lime slurry, or lime mixed with water, did not pose a safety risk to the public, said Rodney Mallet, spokesman for the state Department of Environmental Quality. The substance was too slick for vehi-

cles to drive over safely, so authorities closed the road from about 2:30 p.m. to 5:30 p.m., Boudreaux said. Authorities eventually opened one northbound lane to southbound traffic to ease road congestion, Police Chief Fred Smith said. No injuries were reported and the road was reopened at 5:30 p.m., Smith said.



# PROGRESS ON THE CONNECTOR ROUTE:

The La. Hwy. 1/La. 415 connector route was first proposed in the 1960s, and numerous studies have been completed on the alternative route.

## **Studies completed include:**

- ▶ La. DOTD feasibility study (1989)
- ▶ Initial Corridor Study and Phase II corridor study (2002)
- ▶ Environmental assessment study (2006)
- ▶ Line and grade study (2006)
- ▶ Final environmental assessment study with finding of no significant impact (2007)
- ▶ Investment grade comprehensive traffic and toll revenue study
- ▶ 30% Preliminary Plan

In addition, this alternative route has been deemed worthy by both the federal government (Federal Aid Project No. CBI-6103(501) and the La. DOTD (Project No. 700-61-0113).

It is currently included in both the Metropolitan Transportation Improvement Plan (Priority #2 list) and the Louisiana Transportation Improvement Program.



**“A second access point is vital to public safety. In a mass casualty incident where you need extensive resources, it could mean life or death with any delayed response because of that one access point.”**

*Daniel Lennie, Acadian Ambulance*



## **The Connector Project is endorsed by:**

Capital Region Planning Commission

Iberville Parish Council

St. James Parish Council

Greater Baton Rouge Port Commission

West Baton Rouge Chamber of Commerce

West Baton Rouge School Board

Louisiana Congressional Delegation

Louisiana House & Senate Delegations





**CONTACT INFORMATION:**

**Riley Berthelot, Parish President**

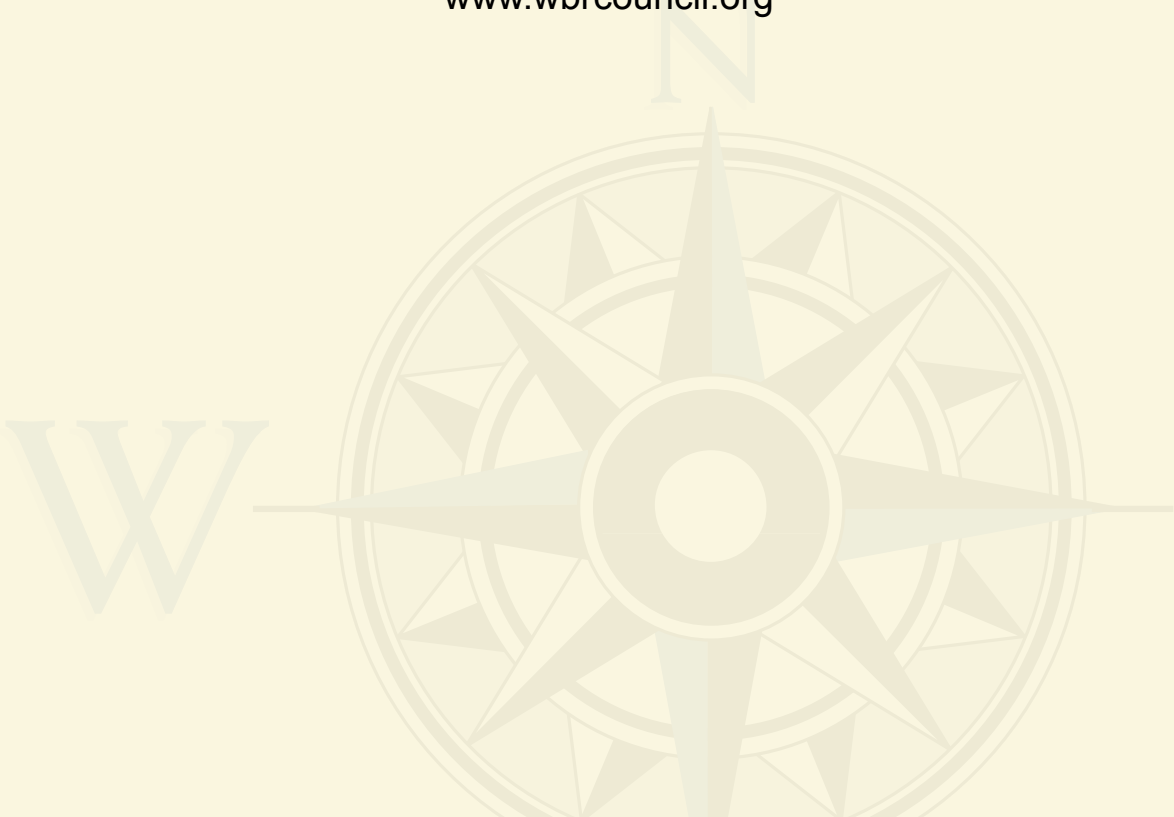
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