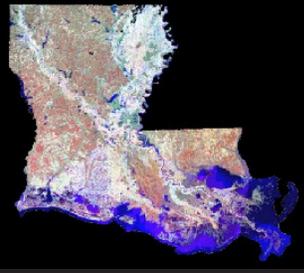


# Regional Planning Commission

Jefferson, Orleans, Plaquemines, St. Bernard, St. Tammany  
and Tangipahoa parishes

August 2013

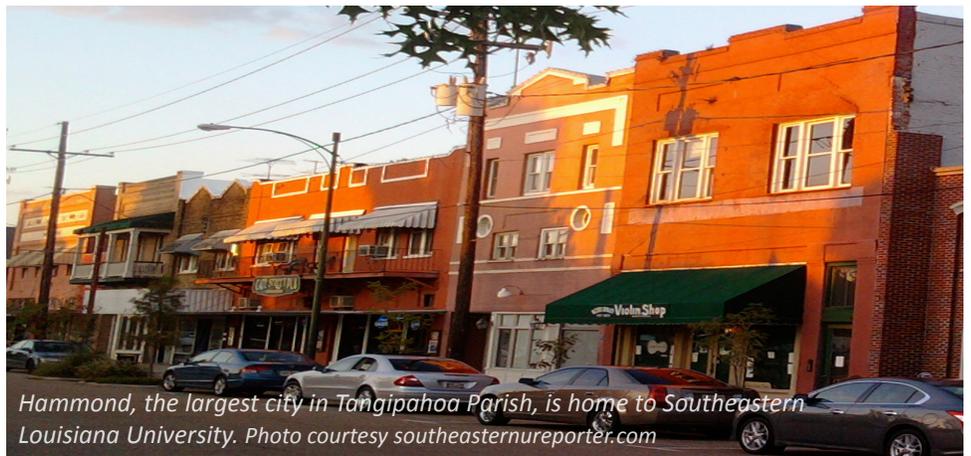


## Tangipahoa joins RPC

The RPC welcomes Tangipahoa Parish to its ranks. The parish is now the sixth full member of the commission and the organization's second north shore member.

Tangipahoa's eligibility to join the RPC reflects the parish's growth in recent years. The Hammond/Ponchatoula area easily exceeded 50,000 residents as of the 2010 census, meeting the threshold for an urbanized area.

The addition of Tangipahoa expands the commission's board by five members to 31. Tangipahoa will have five representatives on the RPC: Parish President Gordon Burgess; Parish Council Chairman Lionel Wells; Hammond Mayor Mayson Foster and Ponchatoula Mayor Robert Zabbia, who will rotate annually; and two citizen members.



Hammond, the largest city in Tangipahoa Parish, is home to Southeastern Louisiana University. Photo courtesy [southeasternreporter.com](http://southeasternreporter.com)



Among Ponchatoula's draws is the Ponchatoula Strawberry Festival, held in April. Photo courtesy [sweets.seriousseasts.com](http://sweets.seriousseasts.com)

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*The historic Magnolia Pedestrian Bridge over Bayou St. John suffers from a variety of structural deficiencies that the RPC is working to address.*

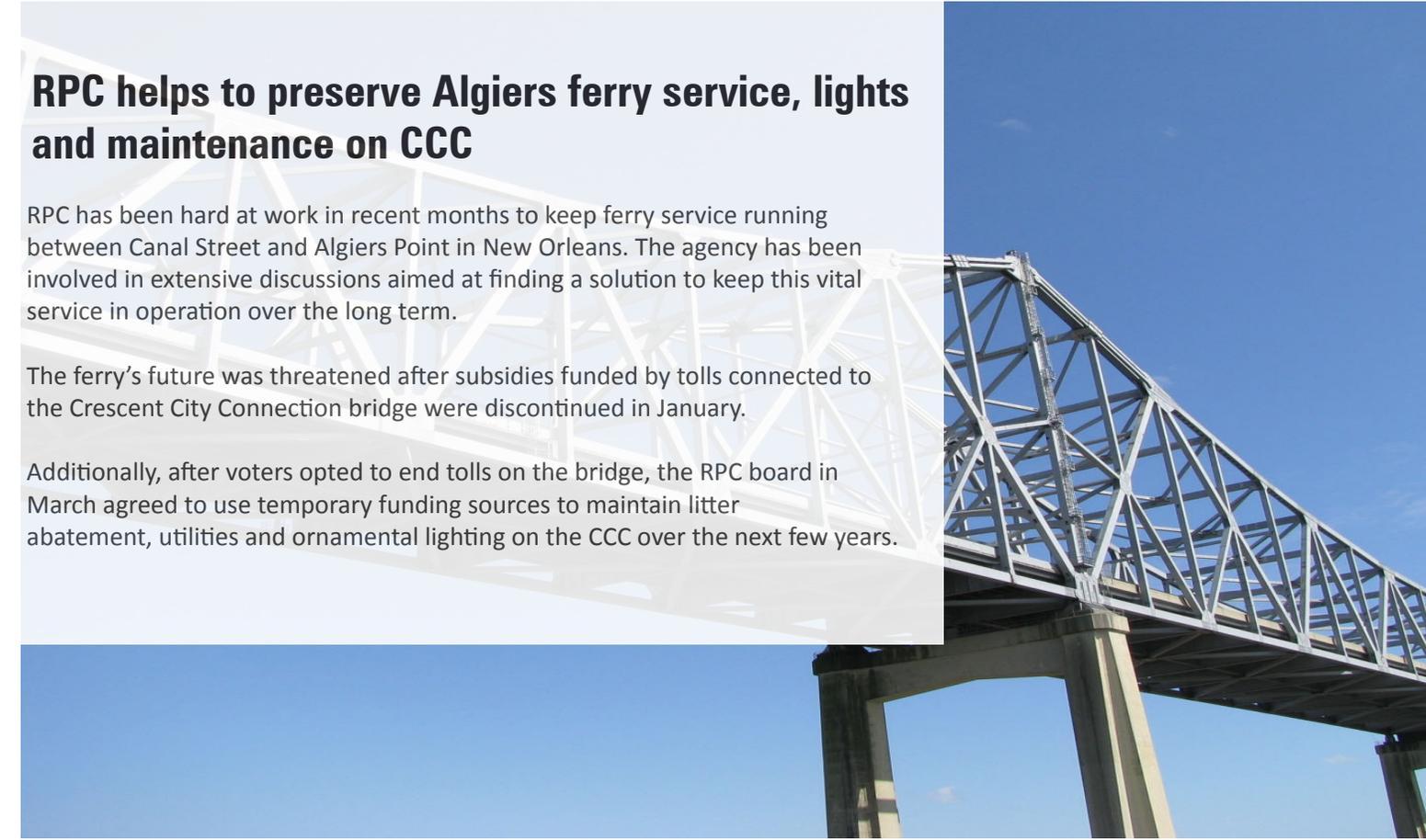


## **RPC works to rehab Magnolia Pedestrian Bridge over Bayou St. John**

The Magnolia Pedestrian Bridge over Bayou St. John is in line for rehabilitation. The popular bridge connecting East and West Moss streets across from Carrini High School was built in the late 19th century to accommodate a streetcar. Today it is used exclusively by pedestrians and bicyclists, and even as the occasional backdrop to weddings and other parties. It also suffers from various structural deficiencies.

A 2011 bridge inspection rated the bridge's condition "fairly poor," noting problems including rusting and rotting of critical components, the need for replacement of timber decking, repair of cracked pavement approaches and a new handrail system, along with the presence of lead-based paint. The RPC has subsequently funded a planning and environmental study related to rehabilitating the bridge, part of an ongoing effort to maintain connectivity and walkability in the Bayou St. John neighborhood while preserving a historic resource that has been listed among New Orleans' "endangered historic treasures" by the Louisiana Landmarks Society.

Currently, the City of New Orleans and the Louisiana Department of Transportation and Development are working toward a city-state agreement that will allow the design and construction on the rehabilitation project to move forward.



## **RPC helps to preserve Algiers ferry service, lights and maintenance on CCC**

RPC has been hard at work in recent months to keep ferry service running between Canal Street and Algiers Point in New Orleans. The agency has been involved in extensive discussions aimed at finding a solution to keep this vital service in operation over the long term.

The ferry's future was threatened after subsidies funded by tolls connected to the Crescent City Connection bridge were discontinued in January.

Additionally, after voters opted to end tolls on the bridge, the RPC board in March agreed to use temporary funding sources to maintain litter abatement, utilities and ornamental lighting on the CCC over the next few years.

## **Study redefines living wages for regional workforce**

Most households in the region that are headed by an individual with a high school degree or less are single-person or single-parent households, and many of these households do not earn enough to ensure basic economic security.

These are among the findings of a study commissioned by the RPC with assistance from the University of New Orleans. The study was conducted by the Greater New Orleans Community Data Center and Wider Opportunities for Women (WOW), a national non-profit focused on building pathways to economic security.

The study employed the Basic Economic Security Tables (BEST) index, a measure developed by WOW. Unlike the federal poverty threshold, which is calculated based on an estimate of a typical family's food budget, WOW's BEST index takes into account geographic variation in living costs and also includes saving for emergencies and retirement, health care costs, variation in family composition and local costs of food, transportation, housing and other expenses.

The BEST index is available for each parish in the region. According to the metric, a worker living alone in Jefferson Parish and receiving employer benefits would need to earn \$31,380 annually, or \$14.86 per hour, to achieve a basic standard of living. A single worker without employer benefits would need to earn \$35,436 annually, or \$16.78 per hour.

## Weighing the options for a new bridge in Plaquemines Parish

*A Plaquemines Parish resident looks over a proposed alternative for replacing the Judge Perez Bridge and Belle Chasse Tunnel during an RPC-sponsored public hearing in February.*



RPC is sponsoring a study to assess the impacts of building a new bridge to replace the Judge Perez Bridge and Belle Chasse Tunnel.

The tunnel and bridge are the primary access points for residents, businesses and industries on Plaquemines Parish's westbank to cross the Gulf Intracoastal Waterway. The replacement project, now under environmental review, aims to reduce delays associated with routine breakdowns and everyday operations, facilitate hurricane evacuation and provide opportunities for industry growth.

This project is being led by RPC and the Louisiana Department of Transportation and Development. It is being developed by Burk-Kleinpeter Inc. with assistance from HNTB, Trigon Associates and Earth Search.

An earlier feasibility study identified three bridge alternatives, all of which included four travel lanes and a bicycle lane.

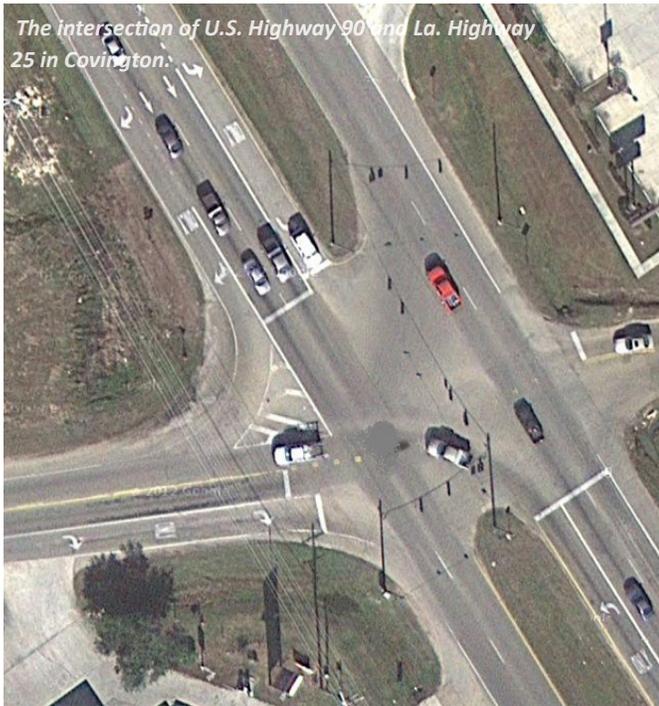
## RPC studies ways to mitigate effects of Arabi truck traffic on neighborhoods

RPC, in cooperation with the St. Bernard Port, Harbor and Terminal District, is sponsoring a study to assess options for reducing truck traffic through Arabi residential neighborhoods and improving truck access into the St. Bernard Port complex.

The study will evaluate conceptual alternatives for improving access to the Domino Sugar Refinery and minimizing commercial vehicle operations on Arabi streets. These alternatives will be based on a complete streets approach, providing opportunities for the inclusion of bicycle and pedestrian access, water management, safety and other design considerations.

Plans will be prepared for each study intersection, identifying measures for enhancing traffic safety and operations. These might include modifying existing parking schemes, and the addition of crosswalks, signals and signage.

## Exploring traffic-management strategies for St. Tammany



RPC has commissioned a study exploring the feasibility and potential benefits of constructing a traffic circle at the intersection of U.S. Highway 90 and Louisiana Highway 25 in Covington. The study will determine whether the use of a traffic circle at this high-volume intersection is a viable alternative to conventional transportation system management strategies - such as turn lanes and improved traffic signalization - to improve efficiency and reduce crashes.

RPC is also funding a study to assess the potential for improving safety along the Gause Blvd. corridor in Slidell. Specifically, the study will look at the high-accident section of the corridor running from Robert Blvd. (La. 1091) to Pearl Drive.

## RPC presents at National Hurricane Conference

RPC participated in the 2013 National Hurricane Conference, held in New Orleans in March.

Chris Laborde, who oversees RPC's Emergency Preparedness Public-Private Partnership, participated in a panel focused on business and industry preparedness.

Panelists discussed ways that collaboration between the public and private sectors can improve a community's ability to rebound quickly following a disaster. In addition to Laborde, the panel included Brant Mitchell, an associate director of LSU's Stephenson Disaster Management Institute, and Anthony Canale, vice president of Verisk Crime Analytics in New Jersey.

The National Hurricane Conference aims to improve hurricane preparedness, response, recovery and mitigation. It also serves as a national forum for federal, state and local officials to exchange ideas and recommend new policies to improve emergency management.



*Chris Laborde, head of RPC's Emergency Preparedness Public-Private Partnership, was among the panelists at this year's National Hurricane Conference, held in March in New Orleans.*

# WATCH OUT

# WHEN OPENING CAR DOORS



These ads are among several featuring the 610 Stompers rolled out as part of an RPC-sponsored campaign to promote bicycle safety and awareness.



## RPC launches bike-safety campaign

On the heels of a pedestrian-safety campaign that concluded last year, RPC reenlisted New Orleans' satirical all-male dance troupe the 610 Stompers to help spread the word about bicyclists' rights and safety.

In a series of print, video and online ads launched in April, the Stompers remind motorists of bicyclists' rights to the road and advise them on how to properly navigate roads shared with cyclists. The ads also alert bicyclists of the rules governing their behavior, including requirements that they yield to pedestrians, ride in the direction of automobile traffic, come to a complete stop at stop signs, and maintain reflective gear on their bicycles.

New Orleans has made headlines in recent years for a spate of investment in bicycle infrastructure and policies that have helped to propel the city to ninth among the nation's large cities for the rate of residents bicycling to work. But the region continues to suffer from higher-than-average rates of bicycle and pedestrian crashes.



*The bike lane along F. Edward Hebert Blvd. was Plaquemines Parish's first when it was striped this spring. It will improve public health and safety and expand transportation and recreation options.*

**LEAVE  
THREE FEET**

**WHEN PASSING  
CYCLISTS**

**IT'S THE LAW.**

DESTINATION ZERO DEATHS DOTD STATE OF LOUISIANA

*The newly-renovated Esplanade Avenue includes more space for on-street parking and a dedicated bike lane, a first for the stately corridor.*



## **Esplanade Avenue renovations mean smoother, safer, more accessible route**

Esplanade Avenue's facelift is now complete.

A \$2 million project to renovate the famed, tree-lined New Orleans corridor between Moss Street near Bayou St. John and North Claiborne Avenue in Treme began in March and was completed in late June.

The work entailed roadway resurfacing, curb repairs, the installation of ramps that comply with the Americans with Disabilities Act, and the restriping of the travel lane in both directions to accommodate a bike lane and extra space for on-street parking.

The project was part of the federally-funded Paths to Progress program, a \$90 million slate of roadway-renovation projects that targets more than 60 roadway segments in Orleans and Jefferson parishes. The program represents a collaborative effort between RPC, the Federal Highway Administration, the Louisiana Department of Transportation and Development, and the City of New Orleans.



*Workers put the finishing touches on a turn-lane marker on Esplanade Avenue.*



### **Rethinking Ramps**

DOTD and HNTB in March hosted a workshop for Paths to Progress contractors focused on standards for constructing handicapped-accessible ramps in compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act. Topics included the types of ramps allowed, best practices in installation, and the inspections process.

# EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS PUBLIC-PRIVATE PARTNERSHIP

The Regional Planning Commission's Emergency Preparedness Public-Private Partnership brings together a variety of stakeholders to support emergency management in Southeast Louisiana. Recent gatherings of the RPC's Emergency Preparedness Public-Private Partnership have centered on topics ranging from hurricane preparedness to coping with the aftermath of the Boston Marathon bombing. For more information, contact Chris Laborde at [claborde@norpc.org](mailto:claborde@norpc.org).

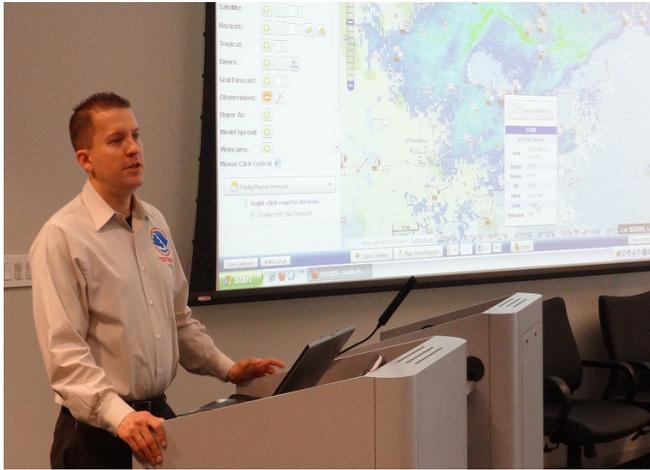
## Partnership gets national recognition

RPC's Emergency Preparedness Public-Private Partnership was recently recognized by U.S. emergency management officials as a "best practice" in leveraging public and private sector support toward community emergency preparedness. The U.S. Department of Homeland Security highlighted RPC's efforts during its third annual Building Resilience through Public-Private Partnerships Conference, held via webcast July 30 and 31, in collaboration with the Federal Emergency Management Agency, the United States Northern Command and the American Red Cross.

RIGHT: Partnership members including Ellis Cattan (foreground), a railroad industry consultant, listen in to a May conference call featuring Meg Mainzer-Cohen, of the Boston Backbay Association. Mainzer-Cohen discussed lessons learned during the Boston terrorist attack. Her group worked with businesses located in the vicinity of the bombings.



ABOVE: Kurt Amacker, left, of New Orleans UASI/Homeland Security; Lauren Booksh, with Greater New Orleans Home Builders Association; Suconda Smith, with the Louisiana Department of Health and Hospitals; and Maureen Gallagher, with the American Red Cross, were also in attendance at the May partnership meeting.



LEFT: Matt Moreland, of the National Weather Service, in June discussed the latest technology being used to predict weather conditions in specific geographic areas.



LEFT: Texas State Fire Marshal Chris Connealy spoke to the group in June via conference call about the West, Texas fertilizer plant explosion, which killed 15 people and scattered debris as far as 2 miles from the site.



Meg Mainzer-Cohen, of the Boston Backbay Association.

ABOVE: Ron Perry, left, with the St. Charles Parish Office of Emergency Preparedness; Charles Hudson, with Jefferson Parish's Office of Emergency Preparedness; Mavis Early, with the Greater New Orleans Hotel and Lodging Association; and Captain Curtis Parker, with the Louisiana National Guard, participate in Matt Moreland's June presentation.



Ray Castle, an LSU professor and athletic trainer, shared his experience treating casualties at the Boston bombing site.

## Nungesser talks emergency response in San Francisco

Plaquemines Parish President and RPC Vice Chairman Billy Nungesser traveled to San Francisco in July to serve as a keynote speaker at a conference focused on emergency readiness.

Nungesser spoke about the federal and local response to hurricanes Katrina and Isaac and to the Deepwater Horizon Oil Spill.

The conference, sponsored by the The University of San Francisco (USF) School of Management and held for the first time this year, was geared toward emergency-response personnel from California's nine Bay Area counties. It included presentations and panel discussions on earthquake preparedness, domestic terrorism, lessons learned from Hurricane Katrina and the BP oil spill, and decision-making strategies in crisis situations. Participants included emergency response personnel from across the Bay Area, as well as leaders from PG&E, Chevron, Verizon, the U.S. Coast Guard, California's Public Utilities Commission, Department of Justice, and Department of Homeland Security, and the San Francisco fire and police departments.

Nungesser presented at the conference at the recommendation of the RPC. Other speakers included Chief Joanne Hayes-White of the San Francisco Fire Department, Dan Haverty, formerly of the California Department of Homeland Security, San Francisco Police Chief Greg Suhr, and Raymond Zelinskas, director of the Biological Weapons Nonproliferation Program.

*Plaquemines Parish President and  
RPC Vice Chairman Billy Nungesser*



# AROUND THE RPC



ABOVE: Twenty-four area residents were trained as League Cycling Instructors as part of an RPC-sponsored program this spring. They will now serve as instructors for a variety of bicycle education initiatives.

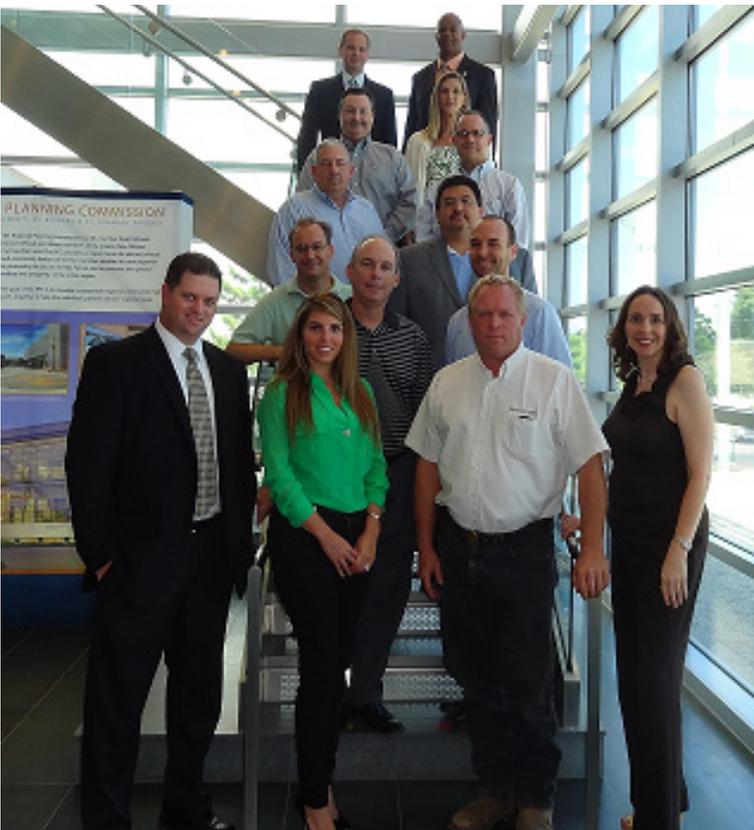


ABOVE: LADOTD designated April as Highway Safety Awareness Month, a campaign to promote safe driving practices that emphasized the need to use extreme caution while driving through work zones in particular. The safety cone memorial shown here was set up outside the Regional Transportation Management Center at 10 Veterans Blvd. in New Orleans in recognition of work zone casualties across the country.



ABOVE: RPC staffers Emilie Bahr, left, Karen Parsons and Meredith Soniat pose outside the Regional Transportation Management Center after biking to work in commemoration of New Orleans Bike to Work Day, held April 9th.

# AROUND THE RPC



RPC has sponsored several workshops this year aimed at improving collaboration between the public and private sectors and universities around science, technology, engineering and mathematics education. TOP LEFT: Susana Schowen, left, with LED Fast Start; Rick Koubek with LSU; Mark Crowell with Eva Klein & Associates; and Norm Whitley from UNO gather at a session focused on ways to better meet the needs of advanced manufacturing. TOP RIGHT: Sanjeev Munshi, left, Robert Zivin, Mark Crowell and Marcia Mellitz sit on a panel focused on ways to strengthen ties between industry and universities involved in life sciences research and development.

ABOVE: Regional organizations using alternative fuels in their vehicle fleets or otherwise working to reduce dependence on foreign oil were honored in July as Clean Fleet Leaders. In this photo, representatives of Airport Shuttle, Coca-Cola Refreshments, Dr. Pipe, Entergy, Jefferson Transit, Limousine Livery, the New Orleans Public Belt Railroad, Progressive Waste, RTA, RPC's Bicycle and Pedestrian Program and Solar Alternatives pose with RPC's Clean Fuels Coordinator Rebecca Otte (bottom right).

## Congratulations and farewell to DOTD's Steve Strength

After more than three decades of service to the Louisiana Department of Transportation and Development, Steve Strength is retiring as DOTD's District 2 traffic operations engineer, a position he has held since 1991.

Strength will soon begin working for the Louisiana Transportation Research Center's Local Technical Assistance Program, or LTAP, in Baton Rouge. The program, a cooperative effort of LADOTD, the Federal Highway Administration and Louisiana State University, is one of 57 centers throughout the country that aim to promote the transfer of highway technology through training, workforce development and technical assistance.

"He's going from being an Auburn Tiger to an LSU Tiger," said Gail Boudreaux, Strength's long-time administrative assistant.

Strength is a graduate of Auburn University.

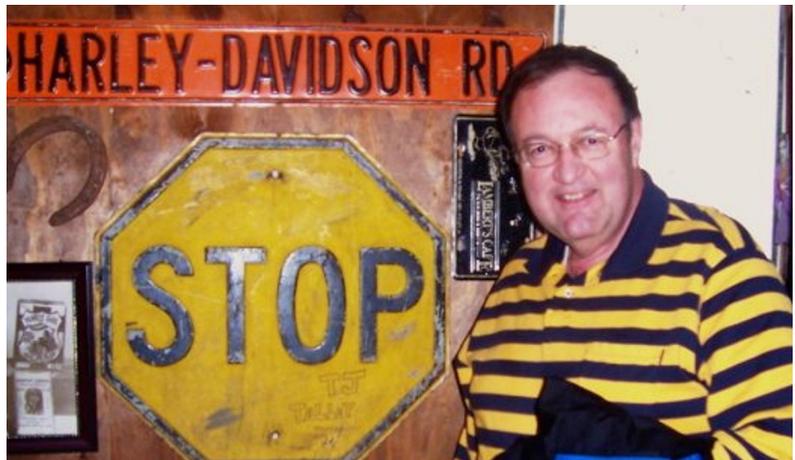
Strength was first hired by DOTD in 1981. Chris Morvant, assistant administrator of operations for DOTD District 2, praised Strength's professionalism and his passion for traffic engineering. Among his notable achievements, Morvant cited Strength's work in 1988 handling the re-configuration of traffic flows with the opening of the second span of what is now known as the Crescent City Connection.

"He orchestrated the job over the course of a weekend, taking the traffic off one bridge and putting it onto two bridges. It was a major deal," Morvant said.

Beyond his professional abilities, Boudreaux appreciates Strength's approachable demeanor.

"He's been the most wonderful boss a person can have," said Boudreaux, who has worked with Strength for more than 17 years and considers him part of her family. "He's made coming to work every day a pleasure for me. I could go in his office and discuss anything with him."

Congratulations, Steve. You will be missed.



# The RPC

Is a 31-member board of local elected officials and citizen members of the greater New Orleans metropolitan area. The RPC provides an open forum where elected officials and community leaders of the six member parishes -- Jefferson, Orleans, Plaquemines, St. Bernard, St. Tammany and Tangipahoa -- come together, in partnership, to discuss how regionalism can promote the general welfare and prosperity of the entire region.

## Officers:

|                           |   |                                      |                               |                             |
|---------------------------|---|--------------------------------------|-------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| David Peralta<br>Chairman | Mitchell J. Landrieu<br>1st Vice Chairman | Billy Nungesser<br>2nd Vice Chairman | Patricia Brister<br>Secretary | John Young Jr.<br>Treasurer |
|---------------------------|---|--------------------------------------|-------------------------------|-----------------------------|

### Jefferson Parish

John Young Jr.  
*Parish President*

Chris Roberts  
*Councilmember-at-Large*

Vinnie Mosca  
*Mayor of Harahan*

Lee Giorgio  
*Citizen Member*

John F. Stumpf, Jr.  
*Citizen Member*

### St. Bernard Parish

David Peralta  
*Parish President*

Casey W. Hunnicutt  
*Councilmember*

Ray Lauga  
*Councilmember*

Charles Ponstein  
*Citizen Member*

David Munn  
*Citizen Member*

### Orleans Parish

Mitchell J. Landrieu  
*Mayor of New Orleans*

Jacquelyn Brechtel Clarkson  
*Councilmember-at-Large*

Stacy Head  
*Councilmember-at-Large*

Jeffrey Schwartz  
*Citizen Member*

Ronald Carrere, Jr.  
*Citizen Member*

### St. Tammany Parish

Patricia Brister  
*Parish President*

Steve Stefancik  
*Councilmember*

R. Reid Falconer  
*Councilmember*

Richard Kelley  
*Citizen Member*

Maureen Clary  
*Citizen Member*

### Plaquemines Parish

Billy Nungesser  
*Parish President*

Keith Hinkley  
*Councilmember*

Byron Marinovich  
*Councilmember*

Darren Barrois  
*Citizen Member*

Mike Ford  
*Citizen Member*

### Tangipahoa Parish

Gordon Burgess  
*Parish President*

Mayson Foster  
*Mayor of Hammond*

Lionel Wells  
*Parish Council Chairman*

Appointment pending  
*Citizen Member*

Appointment pending  
*Citizen Member*

**La. Dept. of Transportation and Development:** Sherri LeBas, *Secretary*

**Transportation Policy Committee (MPO)** full RPC membership plus:

Jeff Davis  
*N.O. Public Belt Railroad*

Salvador Longoria  
*Regional Transit Authority*

Cathy Gautreaux  
*La. Motor Transport Assoc.*

Freddy Drennan  
*Mayor, City of Slidell*

Larry Rase  
*Greater N.O. Expwy. Comm.*

Iftikhar Ahmad  
*N.O. International Airport*

V.J. St. Pierre, Jr.  
*St. Charles Parish President*

Donald Villere  
*Mayor, City of Mandeville*

Ryan Brown  
*Jeff., Dept. of Transit Adm.*

Pat Gallwey  
*Port of New Orleans*

Natalie Robottom  
*St. John Parish President*

Mike Cooper  
*Mayor, City of Covington*

**Executive Director:** Walter R. Brooks



### Regional Planning Commission

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