

Mitchell Returns to Terrebonne in New Capacity

By: Katherine Schmidt, *The Courier* (article modified by Jane Arnette)



Terrebonne's new public-safety director says he's making a sweeping review of operations that could result in changes at Houma's fire and police departments. "There's no secret that many of those departments have had some issues," Ralph Mitchell told business leaders gathered for a Tuesday lunch hosted by the South Central Industrial Association, a business group with members

in Terrebonne, Lafourche and St. Mary parishes. "We're going to put policies and procedures in place to make sure that those things never happen again."

Mitchell, a longtime State Police commander, started his new job in January. He oversees Terrebonne's four public-safety agencies - the Houma police and fire departments, Terrebonne's Office of Emergency Preparedness and the parish's juvenile-detention center.


He comes aboard in difficult times for some of those agencies. Last spring, six detention-center guards were accused of trading favors, like extra food and phone calls, for sex with female inmates. That facility is now being investigated by the U.S. Department of Justice.

Mitchell said his aim is not to meddle but to help departments examine the best way to keep the parish safe. A major goal is getting the police department accreditation from the Commission on Accreditation for Law Enforcement Agencies, a north Virginia nonprofit that develops professional standards for law-enforcement agencies. The process requires an extensive review of more than 400 policies and procedures.

He said he would also like to see Houma's fire-insurance rating, currently a 3, to improve to a 2. The rating, a number from 1 to 10, is based on things like manpower, equipment and training and helps determine how much residents and

businesses pay for property insurance. Parish officials continue to cooperate with the Justice Department's investigation of the Juvenile Detention Center, Mitchell said. "They're sending down experts we'll have access to free of charge," he said. "We'll be getting their recommendations and moving toward that."

The Emergency Preparedness Office is combing through its readiness plan for hurricanes and other hazards, such as chemical spills and flu outbreaks, he said. He also plans a thorough review of all of the departments' workplace policies, including sexual harassment and violence. Though tweaking rules is important, Mitchell acknowledges that changing workplace culture may not be easy. Some workers may have to change the way they've done things. For those who won't comply, he also plans a thorough review of disciplinary policies.

In his experience, a small percentage of offenders truly don't understand the rules or have external factors causing them to act out, Mitchell said. For the rest, it's a matter of motivation. "I'm not interested in blaming people," Mitchell said. "That's not going to get us anywhere. We're not going to tolerate incompetence or abuse to the public." 



Meeting with Col. Lee with the Corps of Engineers in Washington, D.C.

LA 1 Improvement Project Moves Forward Without Federal TIGER Grant

By: Henri Boulet, LA 1 Executive Director

The LA 1 Coalition will continue to aggressively pursue federal funding sources to complete the LA 1 Improvement Project and secure America's access to energy, despite coming up short in its attempt to garner a \$300 million construction grant as part of a U.S. Department of Transportation's (DOT) economic stimulus program.

On September 15, 2009, the Coalition and South Central Planning and Development submitted an application to DOT as part of the \$1.5 billion Transportation Investment Generating Economic Recovery Grant Program, known as "TIGER" for funds to construct Phase 2 of the highway project, which includes a two-lane elevated highway from the new Tomey Doucet Bridge in Leeville to Golden Meadow. The LA 1 grant application focused on the critical role that the highway corridor plays in this nation's energy security and the tremendous local and state support that the project has garnered over the past decade. On February 17, 2010, U.S. Secretary of Transportation Ray LaHood announced the recipients of the TIGER grants, and the LA 1 Improvement Project's \$300 million request was not among them.

The LA 1 Coalition is disappointed by the fact our well-drafted and compelling TIGER Grant application was not selected. In reviewing the list of projects that did receive funding, it is clear to me that a decision was made by the Department of Transportation to spread the money across the country versus focusing on large significant projects such as LA 1. We had hoped that the majority of funds would be directed to large-scale projects of national importance like ours. However, the largest TIGER grant awarded was \$105 million, and our need for the next phase of construction is over double that sum.

We do not view the TIGER Grant results as condemnation of the LA 1 project. Rather, this is simply a result of current political and economic realities. Late last month U.S. Secretary of Transportation Ray LaHood commented that the department was 'sitting on high-quality applications


worth billions of dollars submitted through the TIGER grant program that could be announced right away -if he had the funds.' We would like to thank the numerous local governments and public commissions, the Louisiana Department of Transportation, the U.S. Department of Homeland Security and the U.S. Minerals Management Service, and the plethora of regional business and non-profit agencies that supported our application.

The Coalition's work is far from over, and we are looking at additional funding opportunities being proposed by Congress in the coming months. In the meantime, work continues to progress on vital preconstruction tasks for Phase 2 of the project, with a majority of rights-of-way offers having been made and millions of dollars of geotechnical field work under contract."

On July 7, the first completed component of the LA 1 Improvement Project -the Tomey Doucet Bridge in Leeville -opened to traffic. The remaining portion of Phase 1 construction -a two-lane elevated highway from the bridge to Port Fourchon -is scheduled for completion in November 2011.



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SCIA Host for Industry Workshop

SCIA sponsored a Terrebonne Levee & Conservation District project workshop for industry for more than 150 people at Weatherford. The Terrebonne Levee & Conservation District has designed several Flood Control structures as part of the Morganza project. SCIA provided a workshop on the design of these structures as well as the bidding requirements necessary to construct these facilities. The program provided the opportunity for regional businesses to learn the rules & regulations for doing business with the levee district. Presentations were made by state and local officials, and engineering project managers.

The end result was the extremely positive feedback we received from business representatives that attended the event. One of the continual goals of SCIA is to always remain focused on the industrial needs of its members. This workshop was a prime example of this concentrated effort of the organization. 





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Entergy Paves the Way for Careers in Nuclear Energy

Entergy Louisiana, LLC and Entergy Gulf States Louisiana, L.L.C. are fueling interest in nuclear science and power production through innovative learning materials provided to Louisiana schoolchildren.

Power Path to Nuclear Energy is a new academic curriculum that was shared with educators at the recent Louisiana Environmental Education Symposium in Baton Rouge and will be distributed statewide through other similar opportunities throughout the year.

“Part of Entergy’s commitment to customers is to help improve our communities,” said Renae Conley, president and CEO of Entergy Louisiana, LLC and Entergy Gulf States Louisiana, L.L.C. “By creating better educational opportunities for schoolchildren and expanding understanding of the importance of protecting our environment, Entergy is ensuring a better future for Louisiana.”

Nuclear energy is one of our nation’s most environmentally friendly sources of electricity. Because nuclear plants do not emit greenhouse gases in the conversion of fuel to electricity, the positive impact of just one of Louisiana’s nuclear power plants is equivalent to removing virtually all automobiles from the state’s roadways

With the *Power Path* program, teachers provide entertaining lessons in nuclear science using workbook games and puzzles and online resources. Entergy’s support includes teacher training opportunities and enhancement of lesson plans through guest teaching and other employee volunteer opportunities. By creating an early interest in nuclear science, Entergy hopes to steer Louisiana students toward career choices related to nuclear power production. 

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South Lafourche Airport in “Excellent Condition”: Many Improvements since Port Commission Acquisition


By: Leigh Guidry, Port Fourchon

The South Lafourche Leonard Miller, Jr. Airport has once again received an excellent Safety and Compliance Inspection report from Louisiana DOTD's Aviation Division, following a trend of growth and improvement since the Greater Lafourche Port Commission (GLPC) acquired the airport in late 2001.

The report's comments specifically mention the airport's recently opened partial parallel taxiway and the Port Commission's plans to extend it to full length. This taxiway is just one of the many projects implemented to improve the airport and open it up to larger aircraft traffic.

In the past eight years, the South Lafourche Airport has invested \$20 million from GLPC, FAA, and LADOTD funding for improvements including installation of fuel tanks, paving of airport roadways, construction of a 10,000 square foot hangar, and a runway expansion and overlay. The runway was expanded from 3800'x75' to 6500'x100', and the overlay increased maximum aircraft weight from 12,500 to 75,000 pounds. Thanks to these improvements, the airport is now capable of handling twenty-passenger jets, whereas its 2001 maximum aircraft capacity was 4-6 passenger piston-powered aircraft.

As a result of these aggressive improvements, the airport is showing aggressive growth. From 2008 to 2009, total aircraft activity at the South Lafourche Airport

has increased 19%. Jason Duet, Manager of the South Lafourche Airport, reports that improvements continue, and the airport is in the process of beginning the second phase of an Instrument Landing System (ILS) that will serve as an additional navigational aid to pilots. This type of system is used at major commercial airports and is especially useful in inclement weather. 



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Understanding Manufacturers' Recalls and Technical Service Bulletins

By: Jay de la Houssaye, *Enterprise Fleet Management*

With recent news headlines about vehicle safety recalls, it is important to understand the differences in terminology for recalls versus technical service bulletins (TSB), both of which are issued to detail a fix for a known concern and may include certain limitations. While both warrant attention, there are distinct differences.

The recall system for motor vehicles in the United States, enacted in 1966 by the Department of Transportation's National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA), allows the NHTSA to issue vehicle safety standards and to require manufacturers to recall vehicles that do not meet these standards or have safety-related defects.

After an issue is determined the NHTSA gives manufacturers the opportunity to announce recalls voluntarily. If this does not happen, the NHTSA has the authority to announce a mandatory recall. When a recall is issued, voluntary or mandatory, the manufacturer must correct the defect to meet Federal safety standards at no cost to the customer.

Because not every chronic vehicle problem is a safety or emissions issue or results in a recall, the manufacturers have developed TSBs. Since the TSB is not a recall, the manufacturer has no obligation to notify customers or make the repair at no cost. Thousands of bulletins are issued each year by car manufacturers with up-to-date factory fixes for difficult to diagnose problems.

Under certain conditions manufacturers are required to provide reimbursement for certain costs incurred by owners to remedy a safety defect prior to a recall, but there are specific closing dates for eligibility and documentation of costs is required for reimbursement. In addition, there may be limitations based on the age of the vehicle.



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Paul's Agency Expands to Houma

Paul's Agency of Morgan City is pleased to announce the expansion of its operations with the opening of Paul's Insurance Services, LLC in Houma, Louisiana on February 1, 2010. The new partners in Houma are:

- Ronny Sternfels, Jr, President (11 years commercial insurance)
- Lance Trotti, Vice President and General Manager (8 years claims and insurance sales)
- Jeremy Clement, Vice President (8 years claims and insurance sales)
- Heather Dominique, Commercial Service Representative (7 years commercial insurance)

Paul's Agency of Houma is a full-service commercial insurance agency specializing in Oilfield, Construction, Marine Transportation, Trucking and General Commercial Insurance.

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The new address for the Houma location is 307 Bayou Gardens Boulevard, Houma, LA 70364.

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Meet Your Regulator Day is Host to 150 People

By: John DeSantis, Senior Staff Writer, The Courier (modified by Jane Arnette)

The SCIA ICE Committee provided area businesses with excellent presentations as they relate to the business needs.


Immigration and Customs Enforcement Special Agent Blayne Bergeron told a gathering of about 100 business people at the Houma Municipal Auditorium that his agency can help a business determine whether workers have supplied true identification.

False driver licenses and Social Security cards are often used by people to falsely claim that they are legally in the U.S. "The program we have doesn't cost you anything, and it saves you unpleasantness," Bergeron said. "The unpleasantness is when you have 100 agents rounding people up on your site." During his address, Bergeron said many local businesses use immigrant labor, and some aren't aware that their workers might not be in the country legally. By working with immigration officials, Bergeron said, businesses can verify Social Security cards and licenses of prospective and current employees.

The presentation was part of "Meet Your Regulator Day," organized by the South Central Industrial Association, a local business group. Other speakers included Rear Admiral Mary Landry, commander of the 8th Coast Guard District, and other Coast Guard officials. The Louisiana State Police, Department of Natural Resources and U.S. Minerals Management Service also made. Coast Guard officers introduced the Outer Continental Shelf National Center of Expertise, designed to answer questions from businesses

about operating offshore.

The idea behind the program was to acquaint business people with the people who enforce the rules that govern their work. Chad Hebert of Safety & Training Consultants said the emphasis on safety inspections from several agencies was important and meshed well with his company's role. The Coast Guard portion of the presentation was not news to Mark Diebold of Galliano Tugs. But the marine company manager said it's consistent with the close relationship he has seen the Coast Guard build with his business and others. "They have done a good job of getting out and mingling with the employees, mingling with the company," he said.

Ron Bessette, Gulf Coast division director for the El Paso Corporation, a natural-gas firm with an office in Houma, said the presentations allow industry to "put a face to the regulation." Coast Guard officials and other agency representatives outlined self-inspection programs that allow businesses to ensure they comply with regulations with guidance from the regulating agencies. "It is an excellent message," Bessette said. "If we have a problem, we self-report. We want to self-report." 



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