

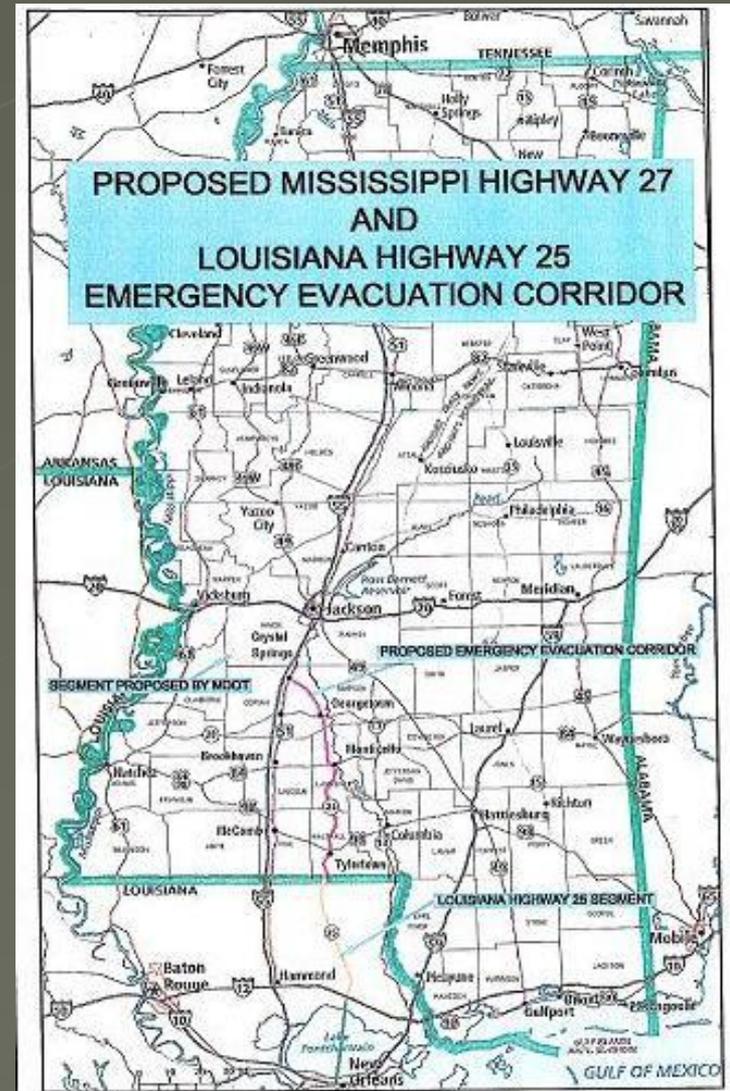
# LA25/MS27 4-Lane Project



Project Overview  
and Request for Support

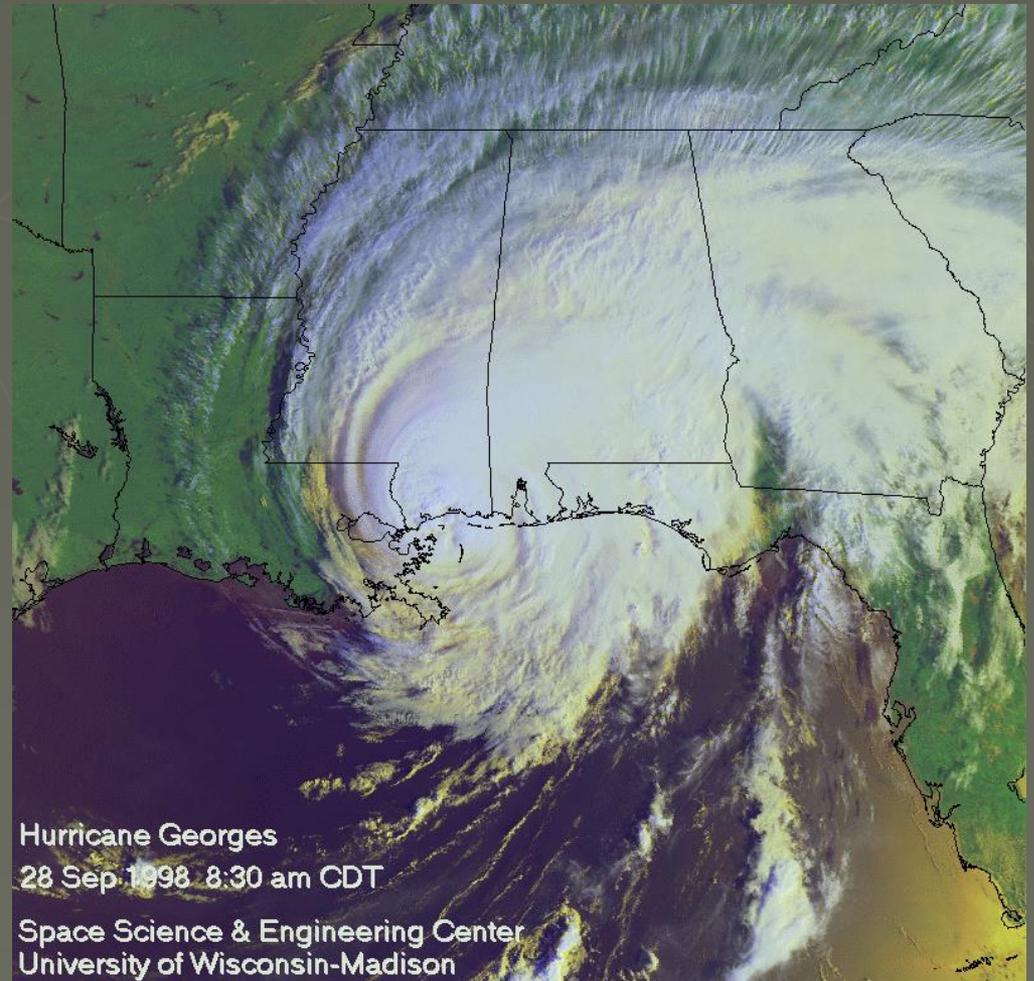
# Project Description

- ▶ The project involves the construction of a limited-access four-lane designed from the start to aid in the evacuation process by providing a DUE NORTH route with the ability to implement contra-flow.
- ▶ The four-lane would provide the Northshore (St. Tammany Parish) of New Orleans, LA with a direct route to Crystal Springs, Ms, where four-lane access to Memphis, TN is in place.
- ▶ The LA parishes (Orleans, Jefferson, St. Tammany, Washington) and MS counties (Walthall, Lawrence, and Copiah) have worked together over the years to advance the project.



# What caused the need for this project?

**Hurricane Georges** showed the vulnerability of New Orleans to hurricanes and the need for a due north route capable of utilizing contra-flow out of the city.



# Federal Funding Received

- ▶ Louisiana

On July 29, 2005 the TEA-21 Bill allocated \$400,000 for the study of LA 25.

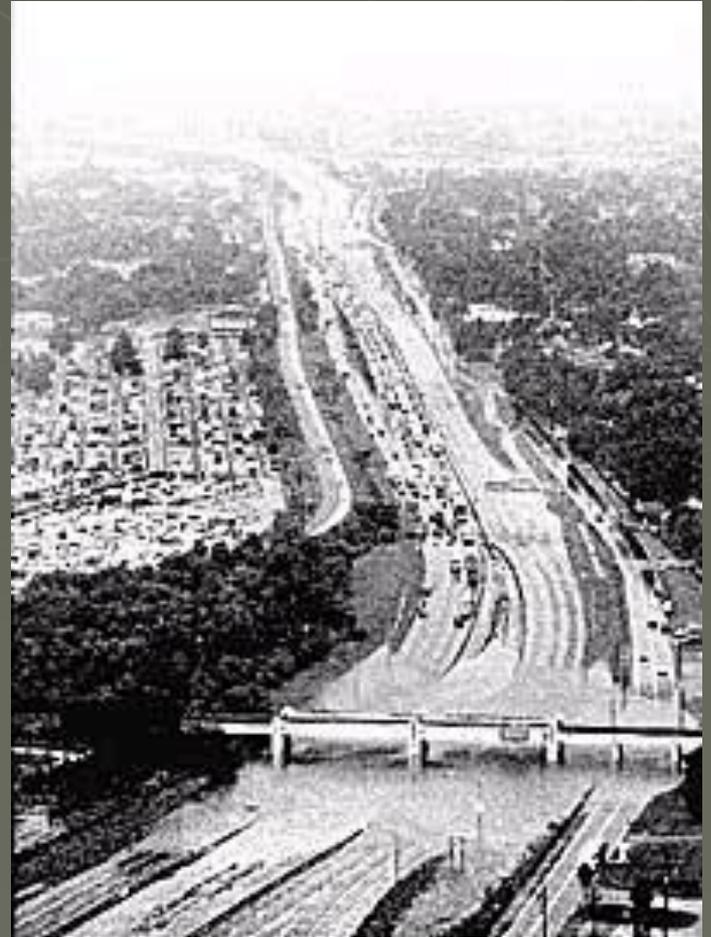
- ▶ Mississippi

In December of 2007 the omnibus bill (HR 2764) included \$ 98,000 to start the Mississippi study.

# Tropical Storm Frances

During Tropical Storm Frances in 1998 Traffic on I-10 westbound comes to a halt at the point where the interstate dips under a railroad trestle.

The highway, a key evacuation route, drops 12 feet below sea level near the Orleans/Jefferson parish line.

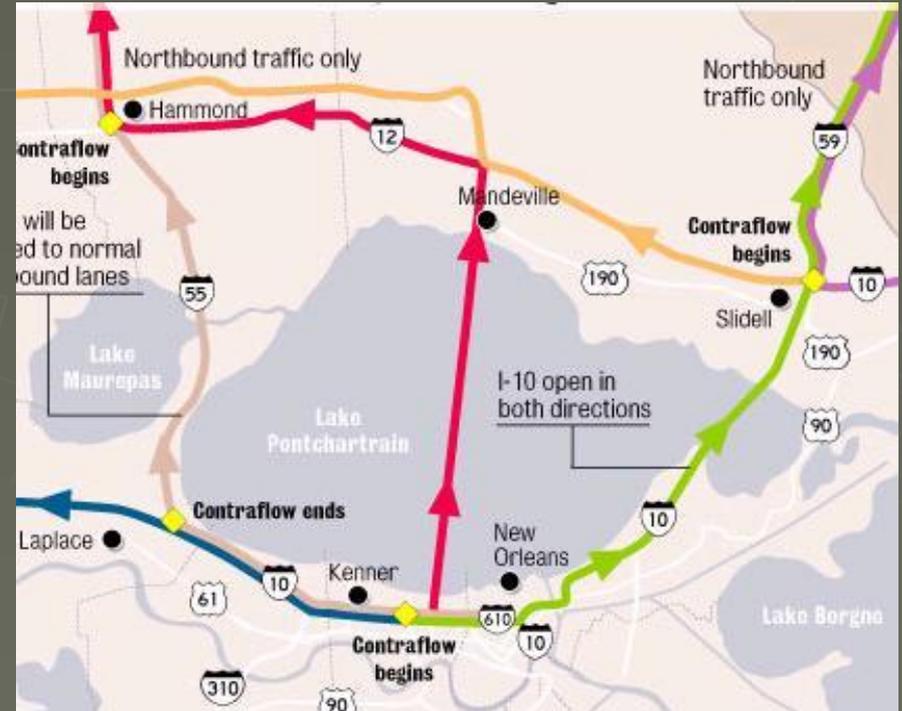


# 1998

- ▶ “Once it’s certain a major storm is about to hit, evacuation offers the best chance for survival. But for those who wait, getting out will become nearly impossible as the few routes out of town grow hopelessly clogged.”
- ▶ “Hurricane evacuations rarely go as planned. Storm tracks are hard to predict, and roads *are not designed to handle the traffic flow*, so huge traffic jams are a common result. **In 1998 it took six hours for people leaving the New Orleans area in advance of Hurricane Georges to reach Baton Rouge, 80 miles away.** The following year, Hurricane Floyd’s constantly changing course spurred evacuations and bumper-to-bumper traffic on highways from Florida to North Carolina.”
- ▶ “Moving entire populations out of harm’s way is a time-consuming and unpredictable operation complicated by geography, demographics, human psychology, the limits of weather forecasting, and transportation problems that tie many cities in knots even in perfect weather.”
- ▶ “Because the entire region is susceptible to storm-surge flooding, hurricanes pose more danger to those left behind than in places where the coastal profile is higher.” Times Picayune

# 2000

- ▶ After Hurricane Georges the move for an upgrade to LA HWY 25 is discussed as one of the primary ***Hurricane Evacuation Routes*** from New Orleans.
- ▶ The route would provide a MUCH NEEDED due north route, freeing the existing routes of excess traffic.



# Louisiana Highway 25 (LA 25)

- ▶ **LA 25** is a state highway that serves St. Tammany and Washington Parishes. It spans 35.61 miles and is bannered north/south.
- ▶ From the south, **LA 25** begins at a junction with U.S. Highway 190 in Covington and heads **due north** through St. Tammany Parish, then enters Washington Parish, where it continues due north and ends at the Louisiana/Mississippi state line, where **LA 25** becomes **Mississippi Highway 27**.



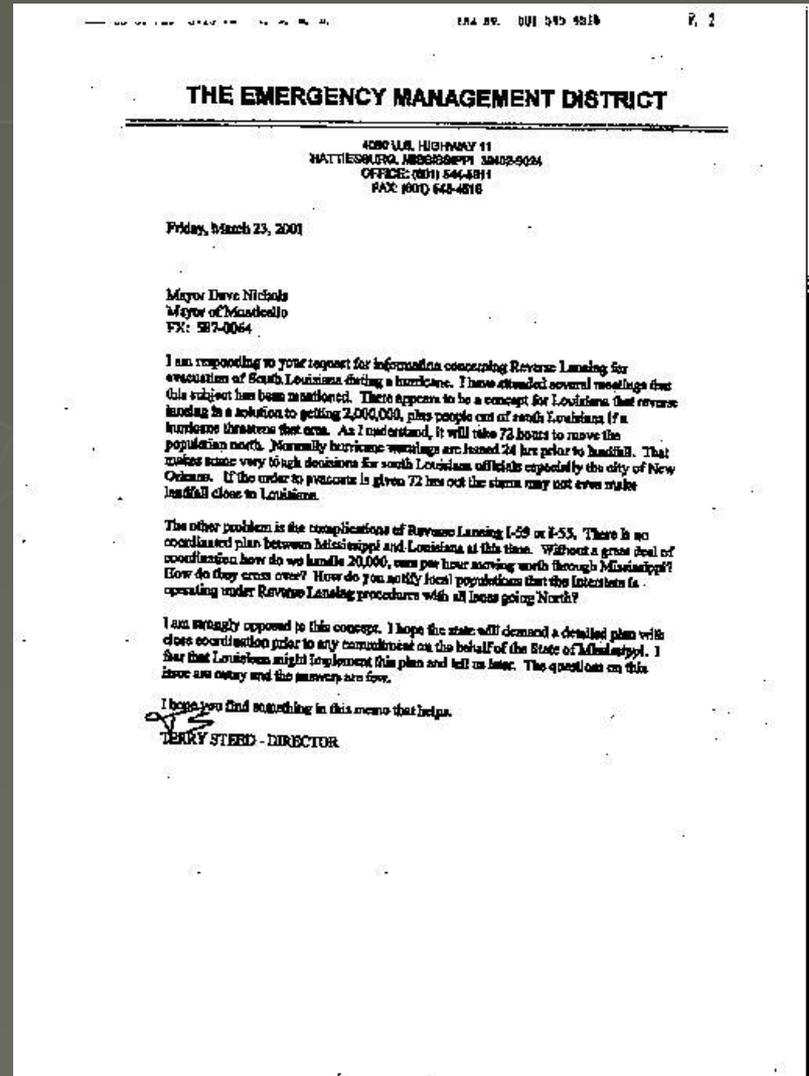
# Mississippi Highway 27 (MS 27)

- ▶ **Mississippi Highway 27 (MS 27)** is a state highway of approximately 80 miles and runs north/south. This project will involve 3 Mississippi counties: Walthall, Lawrence, and Copiah.



# 2001 (March 23)

- ▶ EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT DISTRICT DIRECTOR – Terry Steed writes a letter outlining the problems created by Reverse Laning I-55 and I-59 in Mississippi.



# 2001 (May)

- ▶ US Representative (at the time David Vitter (LA) and US Senator Trent Lott (MS) both supported the idea of the project and worked to secure funds for the project. (attached)
- ▶ Officials from Covington, Folsom, Franklinton, Tylertown, Monticello, Georgetown and Crystal Springs met in Tylertown, MS to review the details of the project.

Wednesday, May 16, 2001

Our 91st Year, No. 20

Franklinton, Louisiana

Price: 50¢

## Four-lane forecast may be on the fast track

Proposed storm route would widen LA 25

By MOGGIE BICKHAM

Although conceived as a hurricane evacuation route, if a proposed four-lane highway becomes a reality it will likely blow a storm of economic development towards Franklinton.

The proposed four-lane route would follow Highway 25 from Covington to Franklinton and then extend into Mississippi.

Mayor Earle Brown said he not only thinks the approval of the project is likely, but will move with great speed.

"They are talking about it being complete in eight to 10 years," said Brown.

Because the proposed corridor would be utilized as an emergency route, it will take priority over all other proposed federal highway projects, said Brown.

Last week, the mayor and the Franklinton Board of Aldermen approved a resolution of support for the corridor and a \$5.5 million study of the project by Mississippi.

# 2001 (September 11)



**September 11, 2001** changed many things in our country, including the scope of this project, which was appropriately renamed the ***LA/MS EMERGENCY EVACUATION CORRIDOR***

- ▶ The security of New Orleans is of the utmost importance due to the port and the Mississippi River. The area along the Mississippi is particularly vulnerable due to number of chemical plants and the fact that the river plays a major role in transporting goods to and from many areas of the U.S..

# 2002 (February)

- ▶ The parish and county officials continue to work together and the project is embraced by many of the legislators in Washington. News articles quote US Rep. David Vitter "The upgrading of HWY 25 is a key component of a safe and effective hurricane plan for Southeast Louisiana." (attached)

**The Era-Tribune**  
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 SEMI-WEEKLY  
 FEBRUARY 01/23/02  
 FRIDAY, February 15, 2002 • Our 92nd Year, No. 7 • Franklinton, Louisiana • 50¢

## Congressman committed to upgrading Highway 25

**Improved roadway would become evacuation route; Mt. Hermon School would serve as evacuation center**

U.S. Rep. David Vitter (R-Michoud) said last week that he remains strongly in favor of a proposal to upgrade Louisiana Highway 25.

The proposal would make Hwy 25 one of the primary hurricane evacuation routes from the New Orleans area.

First announced in 2000, the proposed upgrading would produce a hurricane evacuation route extending from New Orleans all the way to Crystal Springs, Mississippi, which is south

ized much more quickly on an emergency basis.

In the Franklinton area, the project would progress using Mount Hermon school as an emergency shelter for evacuees from this area and from areas south of here.

Vitter said that 2002-2003 will be crucial to the project. "Our best chance lies with the reauthorization of federal highway funds during the coming year," he said last week. "I plan to continue working with Sen. Lott and other members of Congress on this project this year."

For Vitter, the project is a natural for his Congressional district. Not only would the

U.S. Rep. David Vitter go through Tyler town before

**•Vitter: Hwy 25 project still a priority**

*Continued From Page One*

"The upgrading of Highway 25 is a key component of a safe and effective hurricane evacuation plan for Southeast Louisiana," said Vitter.

"Currently, there are no shoulders on Highway 25 and the road is deteriorating," he added. "Upgrades to Highway 25 would provide approximately 20% more volume for those evacuating Southeast Louisiana in the event of a major hurricane."

"One of the most important facets of a hurricane safety and evacuation plan is the establishment and maintenance of effective and efficient evacuation routes. While our area roads are equipped to handle heavy traffic, we must make certain that we take every nec-

essary precaution to ensure a safe and smooth evacuation for our residents," Vitter said.

**WHEN THE PROJECT** was first proposed, Lott was Majority Leader of the U.S. Senate, and it seemed relatively assured that he could push the project through. Since then, the alignment of the Senate has changed to a Democratic majority, and Lott is now the Minority Leader. However, Vitter remains optimistic that Lott can continue to be a major force in helping to push the project through.

Franklinton Mayor Earle Brown Sr. said Friday that he has heard of no changes in the proposal, since Lott lost the Majority Leader's position. "As far as I know, the plans are

unchanged," he said.

Questions that would still need to be answered are whether or not the route would be merely upgraded in terms of better paving and better shoulders, or whether a complete four-laning could be provided with new bridges where required. In Franklinton, heavy evacuation traffic would be bottlenecked if the evacuation route follows Highway 25 through town. Instead, the only way to provide smooth passage through town would be to build a Highway 25 bypass to the west of Franklinton.

"Nothing is final, nothing is definite," said Vitter. "Nothing has been authorized, but nothing has been ruled out. I am committed to this project. I am making it one of my priorities."

**Map:** A stretch of Hwy Franklinton. Inset Map shows location along Coast Hwy 25.

# 2002 (April)

- ▶ The parish and county officials continue to work together and the project is embraced by many of the legislators in Washington. News articles quote US Rep. David Vitter "The upgrading of HWY 25 is a key component of a safe and effective hurricane plan for Southeast Louisiana." (attached)

Push still underway for La. 25/Miss. 27 route 4-18-02 Tyertown Times

## Hwy. 27 included in state's 'Vision 21'

The Hwy. 25/Hwy. 27 project isn't dead.

At least, that's the word from Blotch Brown, director of the state Department of Transportation, and Monticello mayor, Dave Nichols.

Brown says Hwy. 27 is included in the state's Vision 21 program, Senate Bill 2000, the latest version of the state highway construction program which includes highways set for four-laning or upgrading.

Four main highways are included in Vision 21, including Hwy. 27. Those are earmarked for four-laning over the next 20 years, while six other highways will be upgraded with passing lanes built every few miles.

The bill has been signed by Gov. Kennebrew, adding to the four-laning programs the state began in 1987, the project that included the work on Hwy. 69 through Wallich County.

Vision 21 also sets criteria that might boost the immediacy of highway projects.

Sen. Joe Stanger says conditions such as an increase in

schedule of projects for 2004, 2007 and successive years," he said. Kops said the roads classified as immediate needs will probably be targeted first. He said up to \$300 million a year will be earmarked for the Vision 21 program.

For the present, the state is expected to continue the present program, Phase B of the 1987 Highway Program. The completion of most of Hwy. 64 will be under that project. A section of Hwy. 84 between Summit and Rude is targeted under the Vision 21 program. A section of Hwy. 84 from McComb to Washville is targeted under the state program.

Hwy. 27 is also targeted under the Vision 21 program, but Kops points out there is no set timetable.

Director Brown says he's met with Monticello Mayor Dave Nichols, one of those who had pushed earlier for the Hwy. 27 project.

"We told them at that time, the quickest way to move a project forward is to address right of

## Hwy 27 included

(Continued from front)

return trip to Washington to further enhance funding for Hwy. 25 four-laning. If we could get the feds to do the 25 portion, utility relocation, then Hwy. 27 would get high on the list due to the Vision 21 directives," Nichols says.

Nichols says he understands the emergency route might use Federal Emergency Management Agency funding for some parts of the project. Or he envisions getting the Louisiana and Mississippi delegations to get a special appropriations bill designating the route as an evacuation corridor.

"The fact that Hwy. 27 got into the Vision 21 program shows us that efforts should continue," Nichols said.

Nichols makes good arguments for his case. He says the additional route would be helpful in evacuating the city, which because of its low lying areas, he says, needs to take place three days in advance. The additional northbound route would be an aid to eliminating a bottleneck he says will occur on I-59 due to mixing of northbound coast

cial, and we want to set a

and New Orleans traffic in the event of hurricane evacuation.

The section of Hwy. 27 from Crystal Springs to Vicksburg is scheduled for four-laning prior to the section from Crystal Springs to the state line, according to the current layout of the program.

The bill also authorizes upgrades, but sets no dates, for construction of passing lanes on other area roads, including Hwy. 48 from Magnolia, through Tyertown, to Sandy Hook.

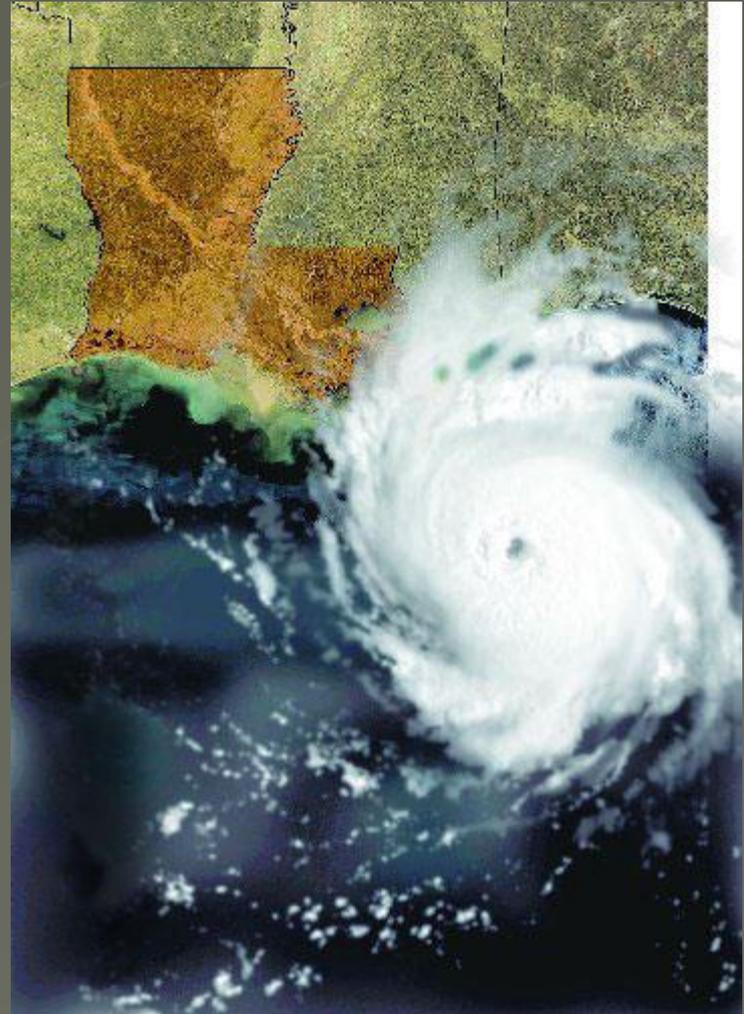
Jim Williams, chairman of the county's economic development authority, says plans are in the works for a meeting with officials from Covington, Folsom and Franklinton, along with government leaders along Mississippi 27.

"The present designation of Hwy. 27 puts it in line as medium range highway," Williams said. "We would gain more priority if Louisiana were to announce plans toward an upgrade, or a four-lane, of the 40 miles stretch between Covington and the state line."

Williams said officials will probably be setting up another meeting with Washington officials to expedite the project.

# 2002 (June 23-27)

- ▶ **The Times Picayune publishes a 5-part series called "Washing Away" June 23-27 (Hyperlinks, if available online)**
- ▶
  - » Part 1 - In Harm's Way
  - » Part 2 - The Big One
  - » Part 3 - Exposure's Cost
  - » Part 4 - Tempting Fate
  - » Part 5 - Cost of Survival
- ▶ **"Ten years ago, after ravaging Florida, Hurricane Andrew bore down on Louisiana on the morning of Aug. 25, 1992. The Category 4 storm, seen here in a composite satellite image, bypassed New Orleans but struck rural areas of southwest Louisiana. With only a few changes in wind speed and atmospheric conditions, New Orleans might have experienced The Big One."**



# 2002 (July)

- ▶ LA and MS officials met and had a difficulties agreeing on an effective solution with the **existing roadways**. "...the evacuation route would give priority to Louisiana residents while crowding Mississippi with as many as 350,000 to 500,000 evacuees." "You're looking at a line of cars 75 or 80 miles long. The main objective is to be getting people out of the storm surge and keep them from drowning in their cars."  
(attached - Clarion-Ledger 7/17/02)

editor/website,  
1 or e-mail

MISSISSIPPI

# State

CLARIONLEDGER.COM

WEDNESDAY, JULY 17, 2002 ■ 3B

## La. storm escape route criticized

■ Miss. officials say evacuation plan would crowd areas

**HATTIESBURG** — Louisiana and Mississippi officials met this week to work out a plan both states could agree on. The New Orleans population would be split under the plan, with half the city's population evacuating on Interstate 55, and the rest using Interstate 59, officials said.

Officials said the problem is that the proposed evacuation route would give priority to Louisiana residents, while crowding Mississippi with as many as 350,000 to 500,000 evacuees.

Mississippi Department of Transportation spokesman Bobby Shapman said Louisiana officials had not responded to five requests:

- Contra-Flow be implemented only in the case of a category 3 or higher storm.
- MDOT and MEMA officials receive at least eight hours notice before the plan begins.
- Louisiana close I-10's eastbound traffic, so it can't enter Mississippi.
- No overweight or wide cargo be allowed.
- Route as much traffic as possible to the southbound lanes of I-59, so Mississippi Gulf Coast residents can use the northbound lanes to evacuate.

"You're looking at a line of cars 75 or 80 miles long," Shapman said. "The main objective is going to be getting people out of the storm surge and keep them from drowning in their cars."

The Associated Press

Mississippi officials say Louisiana's proposed hurricane escape route could be worse than the storm. The I-59 Contra-Flow evacuation plan calls for turning all four lanes of the

# 2002 (July 17)

- ▶ State Legislators of South Central Mississippi support the application to the Delta Regional Authority for funds to assist in development and right-of-way acquisition for MS HWY 27.

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

OFFICE HOLLOWAY  
CLARENCE  
Capitol, Children and Home Care  
1000 State Capitol  
Jackson, MS 39201-3833

STATE OF MISSISSIPPI

COMMITTEE ASSIGNMENTS  
Agriculture  
Education  
Healthcare  
Oil, Gas and Coal Matters

July 17, 2002

The Honorable Ronnie Musgrave  
Governor of Mississippi  
P.O. Box 139  
Jackson, MS 39205

Dear Governor Musgrave:

We, the following Legislators of South Central Mississippi, are pleased to support the Town of Monticello's application for Delta Regional Authority funds to assist in development and right-of-way acquisition for the Mississippi Highway 27 4-lane project in South Central Mississippi. This project is vital to provide safety and economic development to citizens in an area that is lacking in transportation infrastructure and has experienced a number of job losses.

We respectfully thank you and request that you give favorable consideration to this great application.

Sincerely,

Legislators of South Central Mississippi

Mary Holloway  
Lynda Perry  
Tom Weatherly

Joey Hudson  
Robert H. Smith

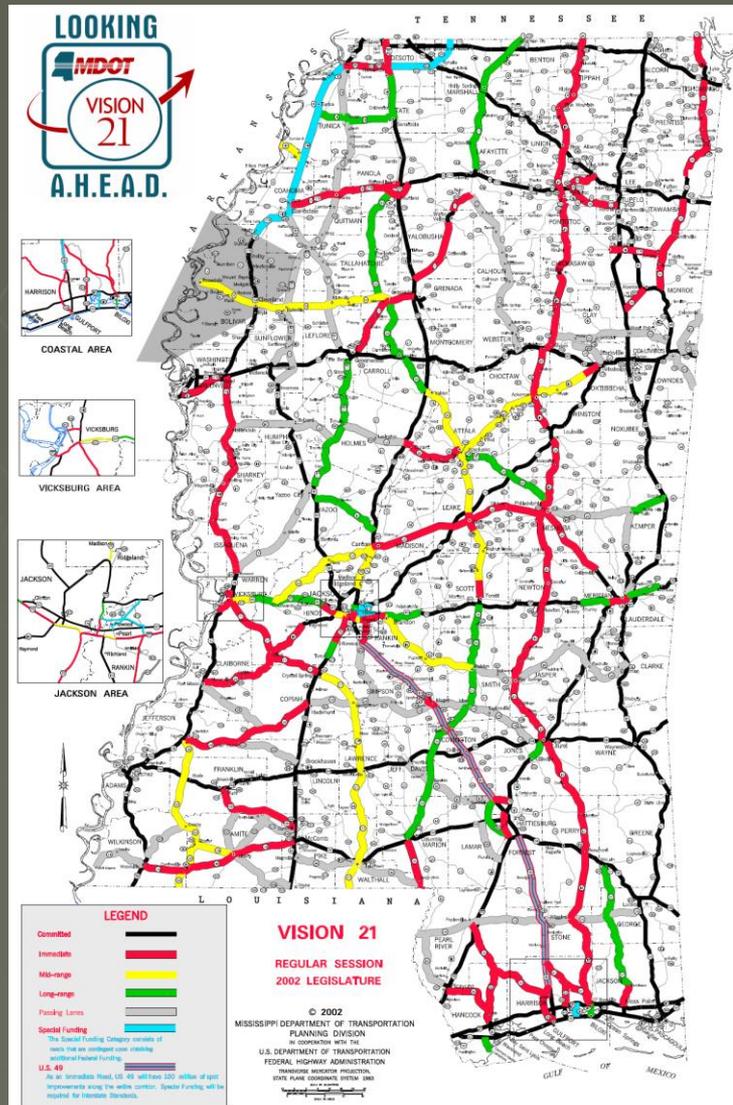
# 2002 (October 2)

- ▶ **NEW ORLEANS, Louisiana,** October 2, 2002 (ENS) – **HURRICANE LILI**, a Category 4 storm that is termed "extremely dangerous" by the National Weather Service is heading for New Orleans, the northwestern Gulf Coast, and the mouth of the Mississippi River, forcing thousands of people in Louisiana and Texas to flee their homes.
- ▶ Reports from an Air Force Reserve hurricane hunter aircraft indicate that maximum sustained winds have increased to near 135 miles per hour with higher gusts. Forecasters say some areas could be flooded with 6 to 10 inches of rain and a life threatening storm surge of up to 20 feet.



A reporter with The Times-Picayune in **New Orleans**, about **Hurricane Lili**. ... "it came too close too quickly for us to have a significant **evacuation**. ..."

# 2002 MDOT's Vision 21 Map



- ▶ Map includes MS 27 as a mid-range 4-lane project.

# 2003

- ▶ Coptiah, Lawrence and Walthall County representatives meet in Washington D.C. with Senator Trent Lott, Senator Thad Cochran and Congressman Ronnie Shows about the possibility of FEMA funding the LA25/MS27 Emergency Evacuation Corridor.

## Coptahians lobby Washington for proposed Highway 27 expansion

By Robin White

A delegation from Coptiah, Lawrence, and Walthall Counties and the municipalities in those counties is in Washington D.C. to meet with Senator Trent Lott, Senator Thad Cochran, and Congressman Ronnie Shows to drum up support for a proposed expansion plan for Highway 27 in those three counties. They will also meet with Commissioner Wayne Burkes of the Surface Transportation Board of the U.S. Department of Transportation. Other appointments have not been finalized.

Highway 25 in Louisiana may be expanded to a four-lane as an evacuation route for Louisiana citizens. The delegation from Mississippi would like to see the expansion continue on Highway 27 to Crystal Springs.

Highway 27 is already being expanded to a four-lane highway between Crystal Springs and Vicksburg, so this proposed expansion would give a north-south four-lane corridor from New Orleans to Vicksburg, according to Mayor Dave Nichols of Monticello, a member of the delegation. Highway 84 is being expanded to a four lane, and this would give Lawrence County a four-lane east-west/north-south corridor.

Linda Caston, city clerk of Crystal Springs, is a member of the delegation. She said, "The I-55 junction of Highway 27 would be a major intersection that would generate a terrific boost of restaurants, hotels, and truck plazas."

The Coptiah County board of supervisors has written a letter of support that the group took to Washington with them. Caston said, "This is an opportunity for Coptiah, Lawrence, and Walthall Counties to open the corridor of Highway 27 to traffic that would be an economic boost to our area and an aid to assist people in time of an emergency."

Coptiah County Economic Development Director Bob Smith said, "Even though a project like this might take a number of years to complete, it could have a tremendous impact. I would welcome the opportunity to work on it."

Other Coptiah Countians in Washington are Jeff Knight, Mayor Carl Berry of Georgetown, and Greg Phillips.

Highway 27  
Crystal Springs  
response to a request  
Mayor Dave Nichols  
a lobbying representative  
to contact Congressman  
Management Administration  
and the Mississippi  
Delegation to seal  
the four-lane highway  
the Louisiana at  
Springs. Plans are  
for the four-lane  
Crystal Springs to Vicksburg.

The concept is that weather and other evacuations required from the New Orleans population center hit a bottleneck which routes such as Highway 27 narrow down to two-lane traf-

# 2004 (January)

2004 (January 8)

Sen. Trent Lott met with Col. Terry Ebbert (N.O. Director of Homeland Security), Chief Terry Tullier (N.O. Director of Emergency Preparedness), Wayne Brown (MS Hwy Commissioner), Tate Reeves (MS State Treasurer) and state legislators and local elected officials from LA and MS about the project.



# 2004 (January)

2004 (January 20)

Mayor Earle Brown of Franklinton, LA writes a letter of support accurately outlining the history of the project.

TOWN OF FRANKLINTON  
301 Eleventh Avenue  
Franklinton, Louisiana 70438

Earle R. Brown, Sr., Mayor

Phone 985-839-3569  
Fax 985-839-3552

Aldermen:  
T.J. Butler, Jr.  
John L. Daniel  
Wilbert R. Darden  
M. Wayne Fleming  
Florence Manning

January 20, 2004

On January 8, 2004, the second meeting of the Louisiana - Mississippi, municipal and (Parish-County) government officials met in Tylectown, MS. to discuss the development of the Hurricane Evacuation Route in Louisiana and Mississippi. This proposal would offer a 4-lane route from New Orleans, La along Highway 25 to the Mississippi, State Line, and continues along Mississippi Highway 27 to Crystal Spring, Mississippi to intersect with I- 55. With Highway 25 already designated as the Hurricane Evacuation Route, the proposed 4-Lanes would become a critical element to move thousands of people from New Orleans and the North Shore to safe areas to the North.

The political leaders of Walthall, Lawrence, and Copiah Counties along with the Municipal government of Tylectown, Monticello, George Town, and Crystal Springs, are in full support of this proposal. They have committed to do what is necessary to handle the traffic, safety and well being of the citizens from Louisiana, when they would be evacuating their homes and business. The results of our first meeting in 2003 were shared with our Louisiana congressional delegation, Senator John Breaux, Senator Mary Landrieu Representative David Vitter, and the Parish Government of Washington and St. Tammany Parishes. The importance and urgency of this project is emphasized each year as the hurricane season approaches. Should we begin a project of this magnitude today, we are years away from completion. It is imperative that we begin as soon as possible to secure funding for feasibility studies and cost of this project.

The Mississippi Committee has met with Senator Trent Lott, Senator Thad Cochran and Congressman Ronnie Showers. The Louisiana Committee is planning a meeting with our Congressional delegation, our State Senator and Representative from Washington, St. Tammany, Jefferson and Orleans Parish, the Parish Government official of their 4 Parishes, Mayor and Council member from Orleans, St. Tammany and Washington Parishes.

We hope that this meeting can be arranged in the near future, and all parties will be able to attend and support this effort.

Sincerely Yours

  
Earle R. Brown  
Mayor

# 2004 (June)

June 14

Jefferson Parish President, Aaron Broussard writes a letter to Sen. Mary Landrieu that reviews the scope of the project, mentions the efforts of Mayor Nichols and Washington Parish President Toye Taylor, and the fact that Senators Lott and Cochran and Representatives Pickering and Thompson are supporting the project. He states that \$ 500,000 was approved by the House of Representatives for the feasibility study for the Mississippi side and asks for her support of that legislation and adds that the inclusion of a similar amount for the Louisiana side would be appreciated.



JEFFERSON PARISH  
LOUISIANA

OFFICE OF PARISH PRESIDENT

Once again, I appreciate all you  
of the citizens of metropolitan  
essential tool.

AARON F. BROUSSARD  
PARISH PRESIDENT

June 14, 2004

Sincerely,

Aaron F. Broussard  
Parish President

AFB/wm

XC: President Toye Taylor  
Washington Parish

Mayor Dave Nichols  
Monticello, Mississippi

Honorable Mary Landrieu  
United States Senator, Louisiana  
724 Hart Senate Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20540

Dear Senator Landrieu:

As you know, Metropolitan New Orleans has only one possible response when facing a major hurricane which could cause catastrophic tidal surge flooding—evacuation. As you also know, that response is severely restricted because we have so few routes available to us for evacuation. I am writing now to ask your assistance in a project designed to provide more evacuation routes for metro New Orleans and the north shore.

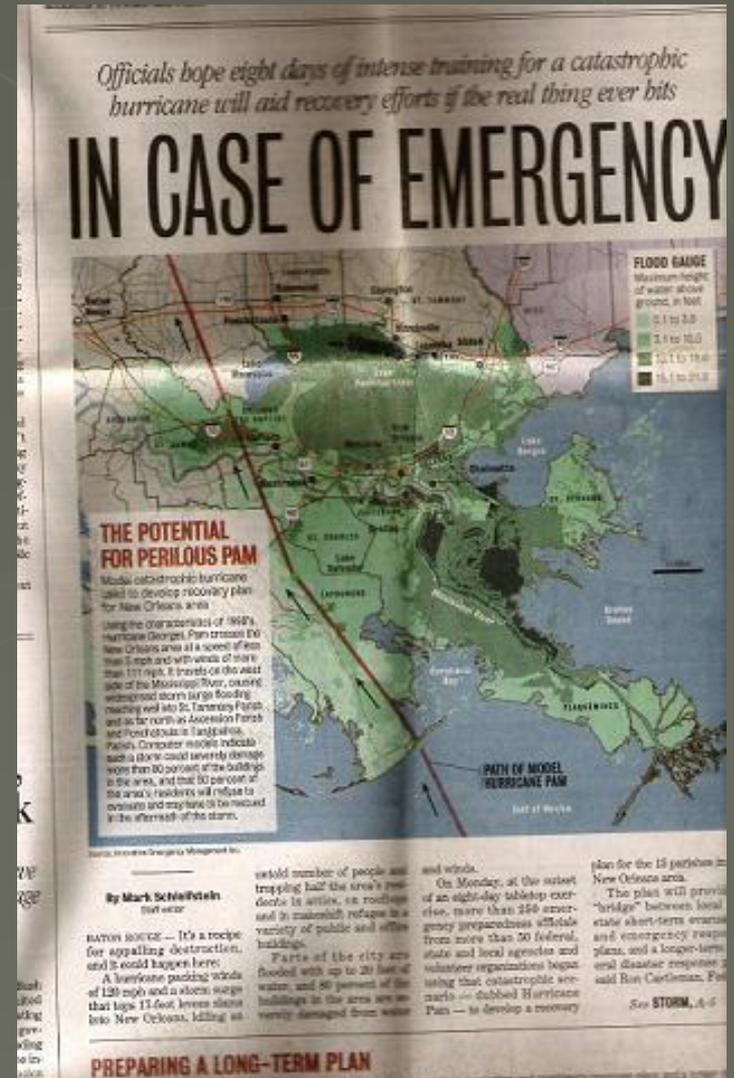
The proposed Louisiana Highway 25 and Mississippi Highway 27 emergency evacuation corridor would offer an interstate quality route from New Orleans and the north shore of Lake Pontchartrain that would intersect I-55 at Crystal Springs, Mississippi. Mississippi Highway 27 from Crystal Springs to I-20 at Vicksburg is scheduled for completion in 2008, and the four lane construction of U. S. Highway 61 from Vicksburg to Memphis, Tennessee is also near completion. When this construction is completed, we will have added another northern evacuation route which we so desperately need.

I recently met with Washington Parish President Toye Taylor and with Mayor Dave Nichols of Monticello, Mississippi, who are both committed to an expedited completion of this necessary project. Mayor Nichols informed me that Senators Trent Lott and Thad Cochran, along with Representatives Bennie Thompson and Chip Pickering have all met with him and have committed to support this project. In fact, the U. S. House of Representatives recently approved \$500,000 for a feasibility study for the Mississippi portion of the project in the TEA-21 bill. Your support of this legislation and the inclusion of a similar amount for the Louisiana side of the project would be greatly appreciated. If you agree that this project is essential for the safety of the metro area, I would be happy to provide the particulars of the proposed route.

-continued

# 2004 (July)

In July 2004 Emergency officials from 50 parish, state, federal and volunteer organizations faced this scenario during a five-day exercise held at the State Emergency Operations Center in Baton Rouge.



# 2004 (September 14)



**The state police never expected the 60 miles between New Orleans and Baton Rouge would turn into a seven-hour-long crawl (Hurricane Georges).** Those too poor to leave the city had to find their own shelter - a policy that was eventually reversed but only a few hours before the deadly storm struck land.

# 2004 Regular Session (LA)

- ▶ Louisiana  
Sen. Ben Nevers introduces the following legislation – filed with the Secretary of State  
10/18/2004

## **SCR 20**

### **Nevers**

**Memorializes the United States Congress to appropriate and expedite funding for the development of a hurricane evacuation route in Louisiana and Mississippi due to increasing vulnerability in coastal storm surge and flooding. Proposes an evacuation route from New Orleans along Highway 25 to the Mississippi state line continuing along Mississippi Highway 27 to Crystal Springs, Mississippi and intersecting with Interstate 55. Proposes a second route from Louisiana Highway 47 connecting in New Orleans with the first proposed evacuation route into Mississippi.**

# 2004

- ▶ The feasibility study for the Mississippi part of the project was included but not funded with the 2004 Transportation Bill, as originally hoped.

## Study of Hwy. 27 evacuation route included in highway bill

A proposed upgrading of Mississippi Hwy. 27 and Louisiana Hwy. 25 as a hurricane evacuation route gained momentum recently when the 2004 Transportation Bill, H.R. 2646, passed the U.S. House of Representatives on July 29, 2003.

Copiah County, Mississippi, is the only county in the 2004 Transportation Bill that is included with \$14 million. Included in the measure is a feasibility study for widening Hwy. 27 South from Monticello to the Louisiana line, a designated hurricane emergency route from New Orleans.

The project had been dormant until January when Walnut economic developer, Pam Kastan, coordinated a meeting with Louisiana and Mississippi officials. U.S. Sen. Trent Lott and representatives of Cong. Chip Pickering's office, in order to gain support for the project.

Monticello Mayor Dave Nichols, who has spearheaded efforts for the project, says having the measure included in the Federal

Transportation Bill is a "huge first step toward the project becoming reality."

"With it included in the federal bill, it makes it easier to go back later for a federal appropriation since we can refer to a study that is already funded," Nichols said.

He says he has contacted Cong. Charlie Thompson's office about seeing if funds designated for projects in Copiah County can be diverted to a study on the section of Hwy. 27 which runs through Copiah County in the second congressional district.

The proposal calls for upgrading of the route, which officials hope would lead to a four-lane highway from the Lake Portchartrain causeway to Vicksburg.

While the hurricane evacuation route lies in federal dollars to the project, there are obvious economic benefits to communities along the proposed route, Nichols said. He says he's received support of towns along the route. Several meetings have been

held in support of the project, beginning in early 2003 at Vicksburg city hall which included representatives from counties and towns in Louisiana and Mississippi.

In early 2004, representatives of several of those cities met with Sen. Trent Lott, who pledged support of the project. Several meetings have been held in Louisiana, as well.

Nichols hopes the federal involvement in the highway study will speed up efforts to actually see plans for the route take shape. He believes with the federal government behind such a project, construction stages could take place in the space of years as opposed to a decade or more, otherwise.

Nichols says the Causeway northward as a major evacuation route may be more feasible than other routes studied. He says the Causeway is the last route out of the city to be closed in case of a major storm. East-west routes, he says, are subject to flooding and closure before the Causeway.

# 2005 (March)

- ▶ On Thursday, March 10, 2005, Parish President Toye Taylor (Washington Parish) Mayor Ray Nagin (New Orleans) Parish President Aaron Broussard (Jefferson Parish) Mayor Dave Nichols, Janet Sullivan (MDOT) Bill McGlathery (MDA) met with Sen. Landrieu, Sen Vitter and Rep. Jindal about the LA side of the project. ***All in attendance enthusiastically supported the project.***
- ▶ Also on Thursday, Supervisor Ken Craft (Tylertown), Mayor Dave Nichols (Monticello), Supervisor Steve Garrett (Monticello) Janet Sullivan (MDOT), Bill McGlathery (Congressional Liaison for the MDA) Mayor Walter Riley (Crystal Springs), John Perry (engineer), and Pam Keaton (Tylertown) met with Rep. Chip Pickering in Washington D.C. about the LA HWY 25/MS HWY 27 Emergency Evacuation Corridor. Later that day, the same group also met with Sen. Cochran's staff members.
- ▶ Mayor Nichols met with Rep Thompson on Monday, March 7, 2005.
- ▶ Mayor Nichols met with Sen. Lott's staff on Wednesday, March 9, 2005 and spoke to Sen. Lott in person on Thursday.

# 2005 (July)

- ▶ On July 29, 2005 the Transportation Bill allocated \$400,000 for the study of LA 25.



## THE 131<sup>ST</sup> ST. TAMMANY FARMER

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### Funds are allocated for LA 25 study

Long-awaited plans for improvements to Louisiana 25, which runs north from Covington to Polson and through Washington Parish to the Mississippi line, could be in effect with the passage of the 2005 federal transportation bill.

The bill, which was approved on July 29, includes a \$400,000 allocation to be used for studying proposals to use LA 25 as an official hurricane evacuation route.

"I have been and continue

committed to efforts to improve Highway 25 and get it named a hurricane evacuation route," said U.S. Rep. Bobby Jindal. "I am pleased with the funding we have secured in the national highway bill, which will start the process of making Highway 25 a critical evacuation and economic route for years to come."

Jindal, along with Louisiana Sen. David Vitter and Mississippi Sen. Trent Lott, worked to secure funding for the study.

Although the highway is listed in the state's new contra-flow plan for systematic evacuation during hurricanes, officials said it is not designated as an official hurricane evacuation route. That official designation would open the door to increased federal funding.

State Sen. Ben Nevers, who represents portions of St. Tammany and Tangipahoa parishes and all of Washington Parish, said that while

he has not seen any documents relating to the proposed study, there is no doubt in his mind that the hurricane route designation and road improvements are needed.

"The entire north shore, in both St. Tammany and Tangipahoa parishes, are just becoming tremendously populated," Nevers said. "As the population increases, we have to have ways to move people north."

Nevers pointed out that the number of north-south roadways on the north shore, between Interstate 54, near Sidell, and Interstate 55, in Hammond, are limited.

"There just aren't that many north-south routes," he said. "We need a good north-south route. Not only do we have people on the north shore who travel north during evacuations, but we also have people coming from the north shore, through Mindeville on the Causeway.

(Continued on page 10)

### Funds

I think Highway 25 is really one of the most viable north-south routes we have, and it should be widened."

According to Nevers, though, improvements to LA 25 are only part of a larger picture.

Two other projects that impact north shore evacuation routes are included in the bill. \$3.2 million for the widening of the Louisiana 21 bridge over the Tubulacata River at Covington and \$3.6 million for improvements to the Zachary Taylor Parkway, which runs east-west from Alexandria through several parishes, including Tangipahoa and Washington parishes, to Poplarville, Miss.

Although Washington Parish officials said they have not received a project breakdown or timetable yet for the Zachary Taylor Parkway project, Nevers said both it and the Covington bridge widening project will also have significant roles during hurricane evacuations.

"Yes we also need to improve our north-south evacuation routes, but we also need to improve this east-west route as well," Nevers said. "Improvements on Zachary Taylor Parkway would really help some of the congestion that impacts 12 parishes during evacuations."

Nevers said the LA 21 bridge widening project is also critical.

"All the improvements for the world on Highway 25 aren't going to do a lot of good unless we can move traffic up Highway 21," he said.

St. Tammany Parish President Kevin Davis said work on that project, which is estimated at a cost of \$5 million, could begin within a year if all goes according to plan.

Meanwhile, officials with the state Department of Transportation and Development said two re-routing projects for LA 25 in Washington Parish were recently bid out.

The first project, which costs \$1.3 million, will reroute LA 25 from the St. Tammany Parish line up to the road's southern junction with Louisiana 16. The second project, which costs \$1.2 million, will reroute the portion of LA 25 between its intersection with Louisiana 41 and the highway to the north end.

Officials with the state Department of Transportation and Development said the two projects on the highway are expected to begin this month.

High	Low	Precip.
9	98	72
10	94	73
11	92	72
12	91	73
13	94	71
14	96	72
15	96	73
16	97	70

Weather provided by the weather station at St. Joseph Abbey

# 2005 (August)

## 2005 season breaks records

The 2005 season featured 14 hurricanes (a record), including Katrina, which devastated Louisiana and Mississippi in August and became the most costly disaster in U.S. history. The season's hurricanes were responsible for over \$100 billion in damage and over 1,700 deaths

Additionally, 2005 saw the highest number of Category 5 storms, at three, equaling half the total number of Category 5 hurricanes on record.



# 2005 (August)

▶ Major highways in New Orleans cleared out late Sunday after more than 24 hours of jammed traffic as people headed inland. At the peak of the evacuation 18,000 people an hour were streaming out of southeastern Louisiana according to the state police.



On inland highways in Louisiana and Mississippi, heavy traffic remained the rule into the night as the last evacuees tried to reach safety. In Orange, Texas, Janie Johnson of the American Red Cross described it as a "river of headlights."

# 2005 (August)

- ▶ "Trips that spanned the 80 miles from **New Orleans to Baton Rouge in some cases exceeded eight hours** during some periods during the evacuation."
- ▶ Those shocking times underscored something that would be changed by the time Katrina made landfall: It is better to push more contraflow north on I-55 and I-59, rather than channel so much of it east or west on I-10. Major reductions in the east-west traffic on I-12 meant fewer bottlenecks at interchanges throughout St. Tammany and Tangipahoa parishes, but most significantly where I-12 merges with I-10 in Baton Rouge. Famously clogged on good days and hopelessly snarled during Ivan, the junction flowed more smoothly during the Katrina evacuation.
- ▶ Times Picayune on Sunday, May 28, 2006 "**Contraflow evacuation a hurricane triumph" 1 million moved in 38-hour period**

# Recap of evacuations

## **NEW ORLEANS TO BATON ROUGE (60 miles)**

**September 28, 1998**

**Hurricane Georges          6 hours**

**September 14, 2004**

**Hurricane Ivan                7 hours**

**August 28, 2005**

**Hurricane Katrina          8 hours**



# 2007

- ▶ On July 10, 2007, St. Tammany Parish President, Kevin Davis, Washington Parish President, Toye Taylor, MDOT representative, Janet Sullivan, Mayor of Monticello, Dave Nichols met with staffers of Rep. Bobby Jindal, Sen. David Vitter, Sen. Mary Landrieu of LA and Rep. Chip Pickering, Sen. Thad Cochran and Sen. Trent Lott of MS in Washington D.C. to continue to relay the importance of this project and express gratitude for the support of the project to date.
- ▶ In December of 2007 the omnibus bill (HR 2764) included \$ 98,000 to start the Mississippi study.

# 2010

- ▶ June 11, 2010  
LA 25 Study



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**REGIONAL  
PLANNING  
COMMISSION**



**LA Highway 25  
Improvements – Stage 0  
Feasibility Study**



LA State Highway 25  
Covington – Mississippi State Line

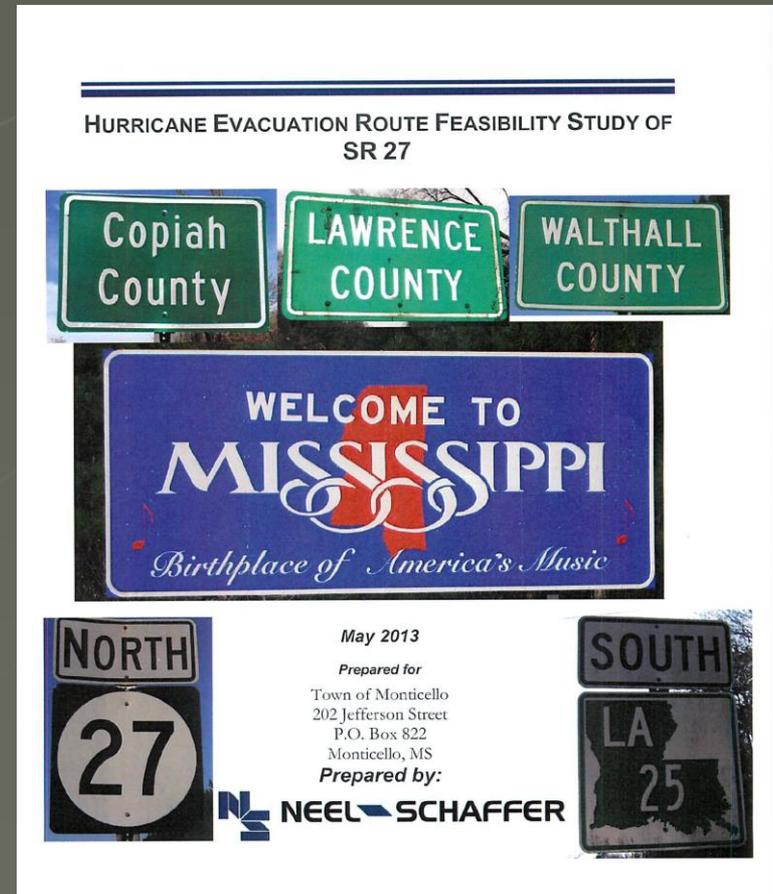
**Final Report  
June 11, 2010**



**DEDICATION      QUALITY SERVICE      CUSTOMER FOCUSED**

# 2013

- ▶ May 2013  
MS HWY 27 Feasibility Study



# 2014



## U.S. 190 (Collins Blvd.) Corridor Study

S.P. No. 4400002630  
T.O. No. H.004987.5  
St. Tammany Parish



Prepared for:

Louisiana Department of Transportation  
and Development

**FINAL** May 2014

This document and the information contained herein is prepared solely for the purpose of identifying, evaluating and planning safety improvements on public roads which may be implemented utilizing federal aid highway funds; and is therefore exempt from discovery or admission into evidence pursuant to 23 U.S.C. 409.

- ▶ 2014 – May  
LDOT - U.S. 190 Corridor Study
- ▶ In the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina, other infrastructure projects throughout the region were fast-tracked putting the LA25/MS27 project on hold.
- ▶ Many improvements were made on US HWY 190 and LA HWY 25 and more are scheduled for the future, including \$5,000,000 for the U.S.190 bridge in Covington, LA in the FY 2022 Transportation, Housing and Urban Development, and Related Bill.

# LA25/MS27 Hwy Meetings

- ▶ July 15, 2019 - Ryan Bruhl and Mark Holmes of Walthall County meet with U.S. Congressman Michael Guest and Senator Cindy Hyde-Smith in Washington DC about the LA25/MS27 Four-Lane Project.
- ▶ January 22, 2020 – meeting held in Walthall County and attended by State and Federal Legislators and/or their representatives.
- ▶ August 25, 2021 – meeting scheduled in Washington Parish converted to zoom meeting due to COVID. State, Federal, and Transportation Department representatives participated.
- ▶ Many other meetings were held in various locations with leadership from both states working together.



# 2019

LA Governor John Bel Edwards and Louisiana Department of Transportation and Development Secretary Shawn D. Wilson, Ph.D., announced that work to widen and overlay I-12 between U.S. 190 and LA 59 will begin. The project, which is estimated to cost \$55 million. The construction will also include widening six existing bridges along I-12.

The stretch of I-12 between U.S. 190 and LA 59 sees over 76,000 vehicles per day. The project will add a third lane in each direction and include widening the existing bridges over U.S. 190, Ponchitolawa Creek, and Tammany Trace. Construction will begin in early 2020 and is expected to last approximately 2.5 years, weather permitting. St. Tammany Parish is contributing \$8 million to the project.

# 2021

July 20, 2021

WASHINGTON, D.C.— House Republican Whip Steve Scalise (R-La.) announced that he has secured \$5 million in the Transportation, and Housing and Urban Development, and Related Agencies (THUD) subcommittee bill to construct a new U.S. 190 bridge in Covington. The new bridge, which has the support of local and state leaders, will feature additional lanes to the east and west approaches over the Bogue Falaya River, freeing up traffic on the highway and improving a critical hurricane evacuation route for southeast Louisiana residents.

“I am happy to get my request for the U.S. 190 bridge in Covington included in the House bill. The U.S. 190 bridge over the Bogue Falaya River has faced continued congestion as we have seen tremendous growth in the surrounding community in recent years. On any given day, you will often see long traffic backups on either side of the bridge. Replacement and widening of the bridge will help address many of the congestion and safety issues families in St. Tammany face with the current bridge. Additionally, because U.S. 190 serves as an important hurricane evacuation route in the area, a new bridge will improve the **safe flow of traffic during times of emergency and evacuation. This project is a big priority for the entire community**, and I will continue to fight for it as this bill moves through negotiations with the Senate,” said Whip Scalise.

<https://scalise.house.gov/media/press-releases/scalise-st-tammany-leaders-announce-5-million-house-bill-new-us-190-bridge>

# 2021



On November 15, 2021, with the presidential signing of the \$1.2 trillion Infrastructure bill, Congressional designation of the Interstate 14 Corridor across Texas, Louisiana, Mississippi, Alabama and Georgia became a reality. Most sections of the newly designated I-14 Corridor will be built by incrementally upgrading existing highways in each of the five states.

<http://gulfcoaststrategichighway.org/>

# 2022

March 10, 2022

ST. TAMMANY, La. – President Mike Cooper announces \$5 million has been secured to expand Collins Boulevard (U.S. 190) in Covington.

“Today is a remarkable day for the future of St. Tammany Parish,” said Cooper. “The replacement and widening of the Collins Boulevard Overpass, will ease congestion along U.S. 190, provide a reliable evacuation route, and ensure that our citizens continue to have safe, efficient infrastructure. We are incredibly thankful for Congressman Scalise, our state legislators and all those whose partnership will put the needs of our citizens on the forefront.”

The expansion includes a four-lane bridge from West Front Street to LA 437, over the Bogue Falaya and East Boston Street.

# 2022

March 10, 2022 (continued) “The Bogue Falaya overpass has caused traffic congestion for decades, which is why I’m proud to have played a role in funding the construction of a new 4 lane bridge,” said state Sen. Patrick McMath. “In addition to the \$27 million in state funding our delegation secured last session, the \$5 million in federal funds will help continue the expansion of US 190. I’d like to personally thank Whip Scalise in helping ease our severe traffic congestion we in St Tammany face on a daily basis. It’s vital that our local, state, and federal partners continue to fund the projects we need to improve our quality of life in St Tammany Parish.”

“The Bogue Falaya bridge expansion is the most anticipated and needed project in Covington,” said state Rep. Mark Wright. “I’m grateful that Congressman Scalise was able to help move it further by obtaining federal funds.”

The project was federally funded through the FY 2022 Transportation, Housing and Urban Development, and Related Agencies appropriations bill, which is expected to be approved this week.

“This is very exciting news. Many of our citizens have been waiting for this since we were children,” said Covington Mayor Mark Johnson. “This new bridge will have a wonderful positive impact on all our residents from Barker’s Corner to Folsom, from Goodbee to Franklinton. I’m very grateful to Congressman Scalise for steering this through the labyrinth of Congress and to the State for its financial contribution to this much needed improvement.”

The federal allocation will provide funding for construction of the project, which includes the widening of U.S. 190 from West Front Street to LA 25.

<http://www.stpgov.org/residents/news/item/5379-president-mike-cooper-announces-5-million-has-been-secured-to-expand-collins-boulevard-in-covington>

# LA/MS Emergency Evacuation Corridor



Thank you for supporting this worthwhile project.