

Regional Planning Commission

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

Spring 2014

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Leake Avenue reimagined

The heavily-traveled section of Leake Avenue stretching between Oak and Broadway streets in New Orleans is envisioned as a walkable, bikeable, aesthetically-pleasing corridor under a study commissioned by the Regional Planning Commission.

As a follow up to a feasibility study completed in 2010, the RPC commissioned a more in-depth analysis of proposed Leake Avenue improvements. The study looked at opportunities for alternative transportation connections and ways to improve quality of life along the avenue, where existing conditions create unsafe and unappealing conditions for pedestrians, cyclists and motorists.

Specifically, it evaluated the potential for widened sidewalks, improved bicycle facilities and the creation of a landscaped buffer zone between the neighborhoods and the Public Belt Railroad, which runs parallel to Leake Avenue on the levee side of the street.

Leake Avenue provides unusual opportunity for enhancement thanks to the wide right-of-way resulting from an abandoned rail line on the levee side of the street.

Consideration was also given to enhancing pedestrian crossings across Leake to better connect the neighborhoods with the levee path and other recreational opportunities found along the Mississippi River, and to provide for improved stormwater management.



Leake Avenue at Dublin Street in New Orleans as proposed, with enhanced landscaping and pedestrian crossings. A study recently commissioned by RPC focuses on pedestrian and bicycle connectivity, improved parking, landscaping and other quality of life, safety and environmental considerations along the important connector between Orleans and Jefferson parishes.

The study additionally considered ways to accommodate parking for commercial activities in the area and how to ease traffic congestion surrounding the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers building, where vehicles attempting to enter the facility on Leake Avenue tend to block traffic flow along the roadway.

Design Engineering and Mathes-Brierre Architects conducted the study with input from the City of New Orleans, the Public Belt Railroad, Tulane University, the Corps of Engineers and neighborhood associations representing residents in the vicinity of the corridor. The result was a proposal to shift the roadway closer to the railroad tracks, widen the sidewalks to create a pedestrian promenade on the neighborhood side of the avenue, the addition of on-street and off-street parking around the intersection at Carrollton and Leake avenues, a planted buffer between the street and the sidewalk on the neighborhood side, right turn lanes into the Corps building and a high-visibility pedestrian crossing.

The feasibility study is now under review by the Louisiana Department of Transportation and Development.



A rendering of proposed improvements near the intersection of Leake and Carrollton avenues (left) and the intersection as it exists today (right).



Leake Avenue at Dublin Street in New Orleans as it exists today (above). See rendering on cover for an idea of how it could look under a plan commissioned by RPC.



RPC assists with conceptual designs for Kenner streetscape improvements

The RPC and the City of Kenner, working with consultants GEC Inc. and M. Johanna Liebe, recently concluded a conceptual design process aimed at bringing a series of capital improvement projects outlined in the city's Kenner 2030: Strategic Plan for a Prosperous Future one step closer to implementation. The designs focused on three streetscape improvements that will enhance access, safety and quality of life for city residents.



Power Blvd. as proposed



Power Blvd. today

On Power Blvd. (see photos above), plans call for creating a multi-use pathway for bicyclists and pedestrians in the median that includes landscaping and sculptures at certain intersections. This path serves as a connection to the lakefront trail.



Chateau Blvd. as proposed



Chateau Blvd. today

Conceptual designs (above) call for new public sidewalks along Chateau Blvd. and restriping to accommodate two lanes of motor vehicle traffic and a dedicated bike lane



Williams Blvd. at Airline Drive as proposed



Williams Blvd. at Airline Drive today

Conceptual designs (above) for the Williams Blvd. and Airline Drive intersection call for installing new high-visibility crosswalks, decorative lighting, and pedestrian islands and signals near the entrance to Rivertown.



New Orleans Tourism Marketing Corporation president and CEO Mark Romig

N.O. tourism chief discusses new strategy for attracting visitors

Mark Romig, president and CEO of the New Orleans Tourism Marketing Corporation, the city's leisure travel-promotion agency, spoke to the RPC Board in March about his organization's new approach to selling the city to visitors.

New Orleans has much more to offer than Bourbon Street, Romig said. "We need to be marketing what's found elsewhere in the city." To that end, the NOTMC has created a new website, followyournola.com, and online and TV ads that promote the architecture, food, music and people found outside of the French Quarter. The agency is marketing specifically to a group Romig dubbed "the experiential discoverers," those he described as drawn to the city in pursuit of authentic experiences unique to New Orleans.

Romig touted the economic value of tourism to the region. Visitors to New Orleans spent \$6 billion in 2012, he said, adding that the New Orleans tourism industry is responsible for 78,000 jobs.

Although areas outside New Orleans are not presently included in the NOTMC's campaign, Romig said subsequent iterations of the website and other initiatives could promote activities and attractions beyond the city limits. "We look at New Orleans as the base camp of a visitor to this part of the state," he said.

New Orleans hosts roughly 9 million visitors annually, Romig said. Tourism numbers for 2013 had not yet been released at the time of his presentation, but Romig said the city is on pace to record the highest visitation number since Hurricane Katrina.



NOTMC's website followyournola.com is one component of the organization's new tourist-attraction strategy.



Amber Perry, an environmental scientist with the EPA's Brownfield Redevelopment Program, says every \$1 invested in a Brownfield site yields an \$18 return.

EPA rep touts benefits of Brownfields program

Amber Perry, an environmental scientist who serves as a member of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's Region 6 Brownfields team, spoke to the RPC Board in March about the federal program. It focuses on assessment and remediation of abandoned, idled or underused industrial or commercial properties with real or perceived environmental contamination that stands in the way of redevelopment.

The program is administered locally by the RPC.

Perry said the Brownfield Redevelopment Program has proven successful in Southeast Louisiana. She pointed to a variety of local examples of properties that have been remediated and put back into commerce with the help of the program. Among them, she listed the

American Can Company in New Orleans, a former manufacturing facility that is now a mixed-use residential and commercial property near Bayou St. John.

Perry said on average, for every \$1 EPA invests in a Brownfield site, an \$18 return is realized. Approximately 50 jobs are created per brownfields project, she added. "It's a true win-win."

Through grants from the EPA, RPC provides funding assistance and technical guidance to assist those interested in cleaning up and redeveloping Brownfield sites. For more information, contact Rebecca Otte at rotte@norpc.org.

RPC hosts electric vehicle workshop



Mitch Comeaux, fleet manager with Ray Brandt Nissan, stands in front of one of the electric cars on display as part of a workshop sponsored by the RPC's Clean Fuel Partnership

RPC's Clean Fuel Partnership sponsored a workshop in March at Ray Brandt Nissan in Harvey through which the public was invited to learn about the newest models of electric and plug-in hybrid vehicles. Participants got an up-close look at the latest electric vehicles and were able to ask technical questions related to vehicle ownership and maintenance and charging options.

Regional Transportation Management Center serves as early voting site



Louisiana Secretary of State Tom Schedler, pictured at right, discusses the RTMC's use as a temporary early-voting site for New Orleans municipal elections

The use of the RTMC as an early voting site made it easier to vote in a section of the city otherwise lacking early-voting options.

-Louisiana Secretary of State Tom Schedler

The Regional Transportation Management Center, which houses the offices of the Regional Planning Commission, served as an early voting site on two days in January in advance of New Orleans municipal elections held in February and again in late February in advance of the city's runoff election.

Speaking during a press conference held at the RTMC January 9th, Louisiana Sec. of State Tom Schelder said the use of the facility for electoral purposes was temporary, and that his office was actively looking for a permanent place on the western side of New Orleans to host early voting activities.

The addition of the RTMC brings to four the number of early voting sites in the city. Voters were also able to cast ballots ahead of regularly-scheduled municipal elections in downtown New Orleans, in New Orleans East and in Algiers. Schedler said the move to expand early-voting facilities comes in response to growing demand for early voting across the state and city, where in the most recent gubernatorial election, 38 percent of parish voters cast ballots early.

Stacy Head, an RPC board member and a New Orleans City Councilwoman-at-large, was instrumental in establishing the RTMC as an early-voting site. The development, Head said, "makes it easier to cast your vote in a part of the city that hasn't had the early-voting opportunities that exist in other parts of the city."

State and local officials on hand for the announcement of the new voting facility said that they hope to further expand early-voting options in the city. "We're open to any early voting site that we can identify," Schedler said, noting that lining up local money to pay for early voting site operations is often the biggest obstacle to providing more early voting locations.

DOTD announces corporate sponsorship of motorist assistance program



TOP: DOTD Sec. Sherri LeBas announces State Farm's sponsorship of Louisiana's Motorist Assistance Patrol program in December. ABOVE: RPC Senior Transportation and Incident-Management Planner Chris Laborde tests out one of the newly-retrofitted motorist-assistance vehicles.

In December, the Louisiana Department of Transportation and Development announced a new public-private agreement with State Farm through which the insurance company will sponsor the Motorist Assistance Patrol (MAP) program. The MAP program offers roadway assistance for motorists in distress.

Through the partnership, State Farm will provide a supplemental source of funding for the program without requiring additional tax dollars. The company has committed to sponsoring the MAP program for at least three years to the tune of \$250,000 annually.

As part of the program, MAP vehicles have been outfitted with a State Farm logo and high-reflectivity safety markings to make the vehicles more visible at night. DOTD says the MAP program helps motorists in need while improving traffic flow and reducing traffic congestion caused by stalled vehicles. State Farm is the state's leading automobile insurer.

"DOTD is thrilled at the opportunity to work with State Farm," said Sec. Sherri LeBas. "State Farm's sponsorship of DOTD's Motorist Assistance Patrol program is a smart way to supplement operational costs of this important program."

DOTD's MAP program provides service seven days a week, from 5:30 a.m. to 7:30 p.m. on major interstates in the Baton Rouge, New Orleans and Shreveport areas. MAP trucks are often the first to arrive at a traffic incident and provide an array of services to stranded motorists that include changing flat tires, providing jump starts and adding coolant and fuel.

RPC encouraged DOTD to pursue sponsorship of the MAP program and other transportation assets. These types of opportunities can help with program retention and expansion and help to mitigate funding shortfalls.

Money available for cleaner fleets

The Regional Planning Commission has available funding to help offset the cost of alternative fuel vehicles and idle-reduction technology in municipal and law-enforcement fleets operating in Jefferson, Orleans, St. Bernard and St. Charles parishes.

The U.S. Highway Administration's Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality (CMAQ) program provides funding for transportation-related projects that reduce traffic congestion and/or improve air quality. The RPC's Clean Fuel Partnership applied and was selected by the Louisiana Department of Transportation and Development for funding for reducing the air-quality impacts of municipal and law-enforcement fleets.

For more information about this funding opportunity, please contact RPC Clean Fuel Partnership Coordinator Rebecca Otte at (504) 483-8513 or rotte@norpc.org.

Paths to Progress



Road work is underway along sections of Bienville Avenue, Banks Street, and Jefferson Davis Parkway in New Orleans as part of the Paths to Progress program.

Road work is currently underway in several parts of the metro region as part of the Paths to Progress program.

In New Orleans, construction crews are wrapping up work on a \$2.9 million project to restore sections of roadway along Jefferson Davis Parkway, between Gravier and Canal streets; on Banks Street between Carrollton Avenue and St. Patrick Street; and on Bienville Street between Jefferson Davis Parkway and Carrollton Avenue.

Also in New Orleans, work is underway along Congress Drive, between Chef Menteur Highway and Hayne Boulevard. Construction on the \$3.4 million project is slated to be completed by April.

Meantime, in Kenner crews are at work restoring the section of West Esplanade Avenue between Williams and Power boulevards in Kenner.

Paths to Progress is a transportation improvement program that is a collaborative effort by the Regional Planning Commission, the Louisiana Department of Transportation and Development, the Federal Highway Administration, the City of New Orleans, Jefferson Parish and the City of Kenner.

RPC hosts freight roundtable



Jim Amdal, of the University of New Orleans Transportation Institute, right, talks with Glen Guillot, of Southeastern Motor Freight, Inc., second from right, during a freight roundtable organized by RPC and held at the Regional Transportation Management Center in March.

In March, RPC hosted a gathering of stakeholders representing freight-related interests to discuss work RPC is doing related to freight and to hear from others working in the field about freight-related developments and challenges. Representatives of maritime, rail, motor carrier, aviation, pipeline, logistics and shipping interests, along with planners, engineers and others whose work relates to freight were present at the roundtable, held at RPC's offices in New Orleans. At the meeting, RPC also unveiled a draft version of a document that serves as an overview of the region's freight infrastructure and landscape, including a snapshot of what types of commodities are moved to, from and within the region, how they are moved and the region's major trading partners. RPC intends to host similar freight roundtables on a regular basis. For more information, contact Karen Parsons at kparsons@norpc.org.

Talking traffic safety



RPC Pedestrian and Bicycle Program Manager Dan Jatres, second from left, is pictured here at the Transportation Safety Summit, held in March in Baton Rouge, with Joseph Cains of Stantec, Inc., left, Melanie Bordelon of Lafayette's MPO and DOTD Bicycle and Pedestrian Program Coordinator Brian Parsons

Dan Jatres, RPC's pedestrian and bicycle program manager, was among the speakers at the Louisiana Department of Transportation and Development's Transportation Safety Summit, held in March in Baton Rouge. Jatres spoke about how complete streets policies, which emphasize consideration of all types of users, including motorists, pedestrians, bicyclists, transit riders and the physically disabled, can improve communities' safety, economy, health, accessibility and liveability.

DOTD, RPC and the City of New Orleans have all adopted complete streets policies. The RPC is the only MPO in the state with such a policy in place.

The Transportation Safety Summit is held annually and is part of ongoing efforts to reduce the number of traffic-related fatalities in the state.

This year's summit also addressed safety issues related to drunk, drugged and distracted driving, rail operations, and how behavioral research offers important insights into changing the safety-related culture of a community.



A decorated traffic cone on display at DOTD's Transportation Safety Summit

Chemical industry spokesman anticipates plant-building boom

Urges planners, policy makers to prepare



Dan Borné, president of the Louisiana Chemical Association, spoke at RPC’s February meeting about the expected boom in plant construction and expansion projects spurred by natural gas fracking.

“We use natural gas like a bakery shop uses flour.”

-Dan Borné, president of the Louisiana Chemical Association

Dan Borné, president of the Louisiana Chemical Association, spoke at the Regional Planning Commission’s February meeting about the expected boom in plant construction and expansion projects across the state spurred by the low price and ready availability of natural gas as a result of hydraulic fracturing, or fracking, the controversial process by which natural gas is extracted from shale rock layers.

Borné explained that the success or failure of chemical plant operations is contingent on natural gas availability.

“We use natural gas like a bakery shop uses flour,” he said, noting that the fuel is used in heating processes, power generation and as the feed stock in a wide variety of products manufactured by the state’s chemical industry.

The growth in supply and reduced price of natural gas results from what Borné described as “the miracle of fracking.” He said his group expects cheap, readily-available natural gas to spur around \$60 billion in new investment in chemical plants in Louisiana in the coming years.

This development is expected to generate tens of thousands of new jobs, Borné said. But it will also create significant stress on the transportation network and on other infrastructure elements that planners and policy makers should be accounting for.

styrene, poly vinyl chloride, crude oil, sulfuric acid, methanol, hydrogen fluoride, chlorine, waxes, solvents, pigments, herbicides, ethylene, surfactants, acetone, sulfur, propylene, magnesium sulfate, polyurethane, benzene, ammonia, propellant hydrazine, fluid cracking catalyst, renewable diesel

Some of the chemicals made or used by chemical companies operating in Louisiana

Source: Louisiana Chemical Association

New Orleans airport reaching new heights

Director says new terminal will bring economic boost



Louis Armstrong International Airport Director of Aviation Iftikhar Ahmad speaks at RPC’s January meeting about progress made toward streamlining and modernizing operations at the state’s largest airport.

Louis Armstrong International Airport Aviation Director and Regional Planning Commission Board Member Iftikhar Ahmad spoke at RPC’s January meeting about the progress made toward improving performance, transparency and facility modernization at the airport. To date, he said, the airport – which is by far the busiest in the state - has successfully decreased the cost of doing business at the airport for airlines, improved concessions and the bidding process, and abandoned once-discussed ideas about privatization and relocation. It has also embarked on a multi-million dollar capital improvement program.

The airport is moving ahead on an \$826 million new terminal, expected to be completed by 2018 in time for the city’s 300th anniversary. Ahmad said the new terminal is estimated to generate \$1.8 billion of economic impact.

Weigh in on the MTP

The Regional Planning Commission is in the process of updating the Metropolitan Transportation Plan. This plan, updated every five years, describes the region’s transportation needs and the ways we can meet those needs for the next 30 years. It is the chief legal document of the New Orleans Metropolitan Planning Organization, and it includes the goals, objectives, information, and resources that guide this very important planning process. Public input is critical to the development of the plan, so stay tuned to the RPC website for ways you can get involved in shaping this vital document. For more information, contact Jason Sappington at jsappington@norpc.org.



A conceptual rendering of the new 650,000-square-foot terminal complex planned for Louis Armstrong International Airport.

EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS PUBLIC-PRIVATE PARTNERSHIP:

A coalition of stakeholders that supports emergency management in Southeast Louisiana and South Mississippi

1. **John Clements, Ph.D.**, of Tulane University, left, and **Matt Moreland**, of the National Weather Service, right, were two of the speakers at the Emergency Preparedness Partnership meeting in November. Clements spoke at the meeting about bioterrorism and Moreland discussed new technology being employed by the NWS to better prepare the public about extreme weather conditions;

2. **Members of RPC's Homebuilder's Disasters Partnership**, a subgroup of the Emergency Preparedness Partnership, listen as **Steve Zimmer** of United Way presents an overview of marketing options that could assist in efforts to address the problem of unqualified contractors preying on homeowners following disasters; 3. **From left, Stephen Murphy**, of Loyola University, **Cynthia Davidson**, of the Louisiana Department of Health and Hospitals, **Henry Newton**, former president of InfraGard, and **Jim Hufft**, representing Jefferson Parish Public Schools, listen as **Richard Metcalf** of the Louisiana Mid-Continent Oil & Gas Association discusses safety issues related to the energy industry at November's Emergency Preparedness Partnership meeting; 4. **From left, Marguerite Redwine** and **LaVondra Dobbs**, both of VIA LINK, and **Michael Williamson** of United Way, listen as **Charmaine Caccioppi** of United Way discusses a strategy to support initiatives of the Homebuilders-Disasters Partnership at December's Homebuilders-Disasters Partnership meeting; 5. **Billy Ward**, 2013 president of the Louisiana Homebuilders Association, and RPC's **Chris Laborde** listen in on a conference call with **Ines Pearce**, senior advisor to the U.S. Chamber of Commerce's National Disaster Help Desk during the Homebuilders-Disasters Partnership in February.

RPC'S NEWSLETTER

RPC's newsletter is produced quarterly. Hard copies are available at the Regional Transportation Management Center at 10 Veterans Blvd. in New Orleans. The document is also available electronically through the "public involvement" tab on our website, www.norpc.org. For information, contact Emilie Bahr at ebahr@norpc.org.



6. **From left, Marianne Sullivan** and **Carl Bouque**, of the Louisiana State Licensing Board for Contractors, and **Joshua Hollins**, of the Louisiana Attorney General's Office, listen to Pearce discuss disaster-related challenges from around the country; 7. **Kevin Smith**, second from left, of the Louisiana Insurance Commission, offers suggestions related to theft and fraud as **Jon Luther**, far right, of the Greater New Orleans Homebuilders Association, **Jim Seago** of the Attorney General's Office, second from right, and **Jimmy Henry** of the Louisiana Insurance Commission, far left, listen in at the December meeting of the Homebuilders-Disasters Partnership; 8. **Todd Rivere**, center, of the Jefferson Parish Sheriff's Office, offers examples of criminal investigations of contractors alleged to have preyed on homeowners following disasters, as **Mike Morales**, left, and **Megan Gorman**, right, both of them representing the Jefferson Parish District Attorney's Office, listen in during the February Homebuilders-Disasters Partnership meeting.



Planning smarter



From left: Steve Strength with the Louisiana Local Technical Assistance Program; Dwight Norton with GCR Inc.; Stefan Marks with Veolia Transportation; and RPC's Jeff Roesel pose after speaking on a panel focused on the use of technology in transportation planning and management.

LA APA Conference

The RPC was well-represented at the American Planning Association's state conference, held in New Orleans in January. RPC Deputy Director Jeff Roesel spoke about ITS architecture and regional applications. RPC Principal Planner and GIS Coordinator Lynn Dupont participated in a panel that focused on planning initiatives across the state. Additionally, RPC Principal Planner Karen Parsons, Bicycle and Pedestrian Program Manager Dan Jatres and transportation planner Emilie Bahr spoke during a mobile workshop focused on bike-related planning and infrastructure. Finally, RPC Sustainability Planner Meredith Soniat served on the conference host committee. The technology-themed conference was held at the Hotel Monteleone in the French Quarter.

Clarkson honored by LA APA

New Orleans City Council President and Regional Planning Commission Board Member Jackie Clarkson received the Louisiana American Planning Association Chapter's 2014 State Planning Achievement Award for Enriching a Community's Quality of Life, given in honor of the late Francis P. Keevers. Keevers was a well-known planner known for his love and support of planning in New Orleans. Clarkson received the award for her advocacy on behalf of the city's first master plan.



Photo courtesy LA APA

New Orleans City Council President and RPC Board Member Jackie Clarkson, center, poses with Lydia Jemison, right, president of the American Planning Association's Louisiana Chapter, and Jeffery Leuenberger, vice president of public information for the organization, after Clarkson receives the 2014 State Planning Achievement Award in January.



Keeping tabs on Congress

Jeff Brooks, the Washington, D.C.-based managing director of Adams and Reese, speaks at RPC's January meeting about pending legislation in Congress with significant implications for the region. He talked about positive developments related to modifying the Biggert-Waters Act, since adopted by Congress and signed into law by the president, that will stave off massive flood insurance rate increases for many coastal residents, and about progress toward securing transportation, navigation, and coastal restoration and hurricane-protection funding.

Louisiana Smart Growth Summit



RPC names 2014 officers



Landrieu



Nungesser



Brister



Young



Burgess



Peralta

RPC's officers for 2014 are:

Mitch Landrieu, chairman

Billy Nungesser, 1st vice chairman

Patricia Brister, 2nd vice chairman

John F. Young, 3rd vice chairman

Gordon Burgess, secretary

David Peralta, treasurer



Regional Planning Commission representatives, parishes and projects featured prominently at the Center for Planning Excellence's 2013 Louisiana Smart Growth Summit, held in November in Baton Rouge. Above, Cedric Grant, center, representing the City of New Orleans, discusses the city's interest in innovative ways of managing water, including new standards for permeable pavement and other types of green infrastructure; Left, Dan Jatres, fourth from left, manager of RPC's pedestrian and bicycle program, speaks about progress made toward developing the region's first bicycle master plan in Jefferson Parish during a session focused on bicycle planning.



RPC staff joined with DOTD employees housed at the Regional Transportation Management Center in December to celebrate the holidays with a potluck lunch. Pictured clockwise from top left are: 1. RPC staffers Maggie Woodruff, Dan Jatres, Lynn Dupont and Susan Simon; 2. RPC staffers Tricia Keffer, John King, Karen Parsons, Chris Laborde, Walter Brooks and Megan Leonard; 3. RPC staffers Alison Maulhardt, John King, Nik Richard and Walter Brooks; 4. RPC staffers Amber Seely, Emilie Bahr, Tricia Keffer and Karen Parsons; 5. RPC staffers show off their festive footwear; 6. DOTD District 02 Administrator Mike Stack, RPC Executive Director Walter Brooks; RPC Deputy Director Jeff Roesel; and DOTD's Scott Boyle; 7. RPC staffers Rebecca Otte and Chris Laborde; 8. RPC Economic Development Director Amber Seely; 9. The tree set up at the RTMC.

Getting in the spirit

Farewell Mike Stack



Outgoing Louisiana Department of Transportation and Development District 02 Engineer Administrator Michael Stack, left, pictured here with RPC Director Walter Brooks, holds a plaque presented by the RPC in commemoration of Stack's decades of service. Stack retired Feb. 16th after 36 years with DOTD.

Mike Stack, who served as the Louisiana Department of Transportation and Development's district 02 engineer administrator since 2006 and who spent 36 years in various positions at DOTD, retired from the agency effective February 16th.

Friends, family and colleagues gathered February 13th for a celebration of Stack's tenure, which began when he was just 17 years old and still in school.

They saluted his professional accomplishments, including his role in the procurement of billions of dollars worth of construction projects for the district, which covers a wide swath of Southeastern Louisiana including New Orleans. But they equally stressed his humanity, humility and the bond they shared with a man who, despite his high-ranking position, made few feel subordinate.



"As long as I was working for him, I always felt like somebody had my back," said one former employee to a crowd of nodding heads.

"To find people dedicated like Mike is hard," said Gordon Nelson, a former DOTD deputy secretary. "He bleeds DOTD."

When it came time for him to speak, Stack recalled having lost his mother shortly before starting with DOTD and his father shortly thereafter. The agency became a surrogate family of sorts, he explained, "the one constant" in his adult life, apart from his wife and son. At times, the work was difficult, he remembered, recalling his early days traipsing around in muck up to his waist out in the field as a member of a survey crew and, much later, trying to piece back together a severely compromised transportation system with greatly diminished staff after Hurricane Katrina.

Since he was named district administrator in 2006, Stack said there have been roughly 600 projects worth more than \$3 billion completed in the district. "Y'all need to be very proud of that," he told DOTD staff on hand. From building bridges to successfully accommodating major events such as the Super Bowl, "there was never a challenge that I put forth that we wouldn't accomplish," he said.

RPC Executive Director Walter Brooks praised Stack's role in securing investment in the district and what he described as the unprecedented communication Stack helped to forge between the two agencies. He also credited Stack for helping to ensure that the Regional Transportation Management Center, in which the RPC's offices are housed, was built in New Orleans following Katrina, when there was talk of moving it elsewhere. Brooks said that decision sent an important message about the viability of the community.

"It's been an honor and a privilege to be your DA," Stack told those who had gathered to see him off. "I'm not a very religious person, but I believe I was put here for a reason. I'm very proud of all of you, and I hope you're proud of me."

"I'm really proud of him," said Geneva Grille, who worked with Stack in his earliest days at DOTD, when they were both members of the survey crew. ("I used to call Michael my child," she remembered.) Summarizing the thoughts of many, Grille added, "I'm glad to see him retire, but then I hate to see him go too."

"To find people dedicated like Mike is hard ... He bleeds DOTD."

-Former DOTD Deputy Secretary
Gordon Nelson



Colleagues past and present gathered at the Regional Transportation Management Center February 13th to celebrate outgoing DOTD District Administrator Mike Stack's decades-long tenure at DOTD. 1. Stack receives a certificate honoring his service from Chris Morvant, then-DOTD West Bank Area Engineer and since named as Stack's replacement; 2. Former coworker Geneva Grille shares her memories of working with Stack in his earliest days at DOTD; 3. Former coworker Connie Standige shares a laugh with Stack.

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:

Mitchell J. Landrieu Chairman	Billy Nungesser 1st Vice Chairman	Patricia Brister 2nd Vice Chairman	John Young Jr. 3rd Vice Chairman	Gordon Burgess Secretary	David Peralta Treasurer
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Jefferson Parish

John Young Jr.
Parish President

Elton Lagasse
Councilmember-at-Large

Belinda Constant
Mayor of Gretna

Lee Giorgio
Citizen Member

John F. Stumpf, Jr.
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

Plaquemines Parish

Billy Nungesser
Parish President

Kirk Lepine
Councilmember

Byron Marinovich
Councilmember

Darren Barrois
Citizen Member

Mike Ford
Citizen Member

St. Bernard Parish

David Peralta
Parish President

Casey W. Hunnicutt
Councilmember

Ray Lauga
Councilmember

Charles Ponstein
Citizen Member

David Munn
Citizen Member

St. Tammany Parish

Patricia Brister
Parish President

Steve Stefancik
Councilmember

R. Reid Falconer
Councilmember

Richard Kelley
Citizen Member

Maureen Clary
Citizen Member

Tangipahoa Parish

Gordon Burgess
Parish President

Robert Zabbia
Mayor of Pontchatoula

David Vial
Council Chairman

Dr. Bonnie Lewis
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 <i>N.O. Public Belt Railroad</i>	Salvador Longoria <i>Regional Transit Authority</i>	Cathy Gautreaux <i>La. Motor Transport Assoc.</i>	Freddy Drennan <i>Mayor, City of Slidell</i>
Larry Rase <i>Greater N.O. Expwy. Comm.</i>	Iftikhar Ahmad <i>N.O. International Airport</i>	V.J. St. Pierre, Jr. <i>St. Charles Parish President</i>	Donald Villere <i>Mayor, City of Mandeville</i>
Ryan Brown <i>Jeff., Dept. of Transit Adm.</i>	Pat Gallwey <i>Port of New Orleans</i>	Natalie Robottom <i>St. John Parish President</i>	Mike Cooper <i>Mayor, City of Covington</i>
			Mayson Foster <i>Mayor, City of Hammond</i>

Executive Director: Walter R. Brooks



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