



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

June 9, 2010

Contact: Indira Parrales, Huey P. Long Bridge Public Outreach Office (504) 731-4200  
or Jodi Conachen, DOTD Communications Director, (225) 379-1275

**48-Hour Huey P. Long Bridge Closure**  
**Required For Span Lift**

Closure Dates June 19, 20

JEFFERSON, La. – A 48-hour closure of the Huey P. Long Bridge is needed as a steel structure larger than a football field is lifted into place with multiple barges and heavy-duty jacks. The massive bridge segment is the first of three to be lifted in place by this method, and will provide the narrow bridge the capacity to add lanes. The magnitude of this lift, which is actually two major lifts, is rare for its size and scope. The full bridge closure is scheduled to start at 5 a.m. Saturday, June 19 and will end at 5 a.m. on Monday, June 21. Motorists are advised to take alternate routes, including the Crescent City Connection and Interstate 310. If weather conflicts with the lift date, June 26 has been secured as an alternate date.

The first “Big Lift” – as is being referred to by the contractor – requires river, road and railroad traffic closures due to the sensitive nature of the operation. Emergency vehicles will be allowed to cross the bridge if necessary. The closure will last 48-hours because of the size of the structure and the methodical way in which machinery and equipment is moved into place. The contractor responsible for Big Lift is MTI – a joint venture of Massman Construction Co., Traylor Brothers, Inc. and IHI, Inc.



DOTD understands how this closure impacts the traveling public, and is working to get the message out through the media, its website and social media sites, its extensive contact list and even handing out flyers door to door.

“The Huey P. Long Bridge Project is another example of the state’s commitment to improve our infrastructure and create opportunities for economic development through the TIMED Program. This program has already widened roadways and expanded ports benefitting the residents of Louisiana by connecting communities, creating opportunities for business, improving vital evacuation routes and making critical freight corridors safer and more efficient,” said Sherri LeBas, P.E., Interim Secretary of the Department of Transportation and Development. “From a technical achievement perspective, the segment lift is an exciting milestone for this bridge project, because of its magnitude and because it represents another step toward completion of this much-needed project for the residents and businesses in Jefferson Parish and the New Orleans area.”

To carry out this first “Big Lift”, MTI composed a methodical plan. First, a four-barge assembly connected by three sectional barges was prepared. On the completed barges, two large stability frames were assembled to help support the bridge span section during the lift. At the same time, lifting towers, which will hold the strand jacks, were installed on each side of Pier II and Pier III. Currently, the construction of the pre-assembled span section on the barges is complete. On the day prior to the lift, the barges will be moved under the bridge following a well choreographed sequence. After the barges are positioned at their intended location, the span section along with the stability frames will be lifted approximately 135 feet using four 900-ton strand jacks. Once the span section is secured, the stability frames will be lowered to the barges and the span section will slide in 13 feet to its final



position. The hoisted span segment measures 528 feet long and weighs 2,650 tons. A lift of this scale is extremely uncommon in bridge work.

Steve Underwood, Project Manager with MTI, said “it has taken a lot of coordination between the Coast Guard, New Orleans Public Belt Railroad and DOTD to make this lift happen.” According to Underwood, the two factors which could postpone the lift from the June 19 target date will be high wind and a high river level. If the lift is unable to happen, MTI has secured June 26 as an alternate date.

When the widening of the truss is complete, an estimated 17,500 tons of structural steel and 750,000 new bolts will have been used during this phase of the project. The Huey P. Long Bridge Widening project will cost \$1.2 billion. The bridge carries an average of 50,000 vehicles a day. Construction of the original 75-year old structure began in 1932 and was completed in December of 1935 at a cost of \$13 million. Today, it is considered one of the longest railroad bridges in the U.S. providing two railroad tracks and two roadways crossing which provide one of three major Mississippi River crossings in the New Orleans metro area.

DOTD encourages the public to follow up-to-date information about the Big Lift on the Huey P. Long Twitter page at [www.twitter.com/hueypbridge](http://www.twitter.com/hueypbridge) and on Facebook at <http://bit.ly/HPLFB>. Those who wish to watch the Big Lift can do so by accessing two web cameras available on the project website at <http://bit.ly/HPLWebCams>.

For more information or high resolution images, contact Indira Parrales, Public Outreach Office at 504-731-4200 or Jodi Conachen, DOTD Communications Director, (225) 379-1275.



The Huey P. Long Bridge Widening Project is a TIMED (Transportation Infrastructure Model for Economic Development) Program project. The TIMED Program was created by Act 16 of the 1989 Louisiana Legislature, was voted for by the people and is the single largest transportation program in state history. The \$5.2 billion improvement program includes widening 536 miles of state highways, new construction or improvements to three major bridges projects and the improvements to both the Port of New Orleans and the Louis Armstrong International Airport. The Program is designed to enhance economic development in Louisiana through an investment in transportation projects.

As one of 16 TIMED projects, the completed Huey P. Long Bridge Widening Project will include three 11-foot lanes in each direction, along with new inside and outside shoulders across the bridge. The project also will include construction of new roadway approaches that will provide signalized intersections at Bridge City Avenue and Jefferson Highway. The entire project is scheduled to be complete by 2013.

###