



Transportation

Yes, on the Mississippi Gulf Coast.

Mississippi Gulf Coast... A Driving Force

High-rise bridges, new roads and state-of-the-art traffic signals are among the many transportation projects on the Mississippi Gulf Coast that are reconnecting, relieving and reviving the area.

Both ends of the Coast boast new bridges that are gaining regional and national recognition. To the west, connecting Hancock County to Harrison County, the Bay St. Louis Bridge is a four-lane high rise with emergency lanes and a 12-foot pedestrian lane. Completed in May 2008, the bridge was recently named a finalist in the America's Transportation Award competition, and it will compete for the Grand National Prize and the People's Choice Award. Regionally, the bridge was a winner in the "On-Time" category for projects over \$200 million at the Southeastern Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials.

On the other side of the Coast, the Biloxi Bay Bridge spans 1.6 miles between Harrison and Jackson counties. The six-lane bridge is 95 feet at its highest point and has a 12-foot bike and pedestrian path. It was also honored regionally, tying for first place in the "Innovative Management" category for projects over \$200 million.

The two bridges have done much more than just provide a safe passage over water. The bridges have poured traffic and new vitality into the businesses, casinos and restaurants on either end. Their pedestrian lanes have increased outdoor activity, bringing out walkers, runners and bikers by the hundreds. They have also encouraged artistic expression, displaying public art projects representing the wildlife and heritage of the area. Overall, the bridges are symbolic of the spirit, determination and recovery of South Mississippi's residents.

The span of U.S. Highway 90 between the two bridges, which runs along the 26-mile white sand beach, is also receiving a great deal of attention. The scenic, heavily traveled stretch is being repaved, sidewalks are being re-poured, curbs and drainage are being repaired, and state-of-the-art traffic lights are being installed. Three contractors are working on the \$92 million project, which according to the area's transportation commissioner, Wayne Brown, is on schedule and should be complete before Christmas of this year.

North of Highway 90, numerous other projects are underway to upgrade and expand the area's transportation system, and funding continues to flow. Mississippi Highways 603, 605 and 609 are all undergoing improvements, including widening in some areas, adding new signals and reconstructing various features. The work on 605 will provide easier accessibility to the large, multi-use development of Tradition, and it will create an important hurricane evacuation route.

Plans are also in store for DeBuys Road, the gateway to Mississippi Gulf Coast Community College's Jefferson Davis campus. College officials are working with the county and cities to widen the road to make access to the campus easier for the growing number of students.

South Mississippi's transportation system is an ongoing project that will continue to advance to sustain the area's growth in casinos, tourism, industry, retail and residents.



www.mscoast.org • hcdc@mscoast.org
12292 intraplex Parkway • Gulfport, MS 39503
Phone: 228-896-5020 • Fax: 228-896-6020