

CRPC NEWS



Capital Region Planning Commission's Newsletter

Spring/Summer 2015



CRPC Executive Director, Jamie Setze
Photo by: Brian Baiamonte

Director's Corner

Welcome to the inaugural edition of the CRPC newsletter!

Plenty of work is going on at the Capital Region Planning Commission, so we want our members to have up-to-date information. It is vital we all grow together in moving the region forward.

To that end, please read and feel free to comment on this issue! We are here to serve you, and look forward to hearing your thoughts on our progress.

Who We Are & What We Do

CRPC is the Metropolitan Planning Organization for the Capital Region. In this light, CRPC is responsible for transportation policies and consults with the area's elected officials and public for transportation changes.

In addition, CRPC is one of eight sub-state planning and development districts which is comprised of 11 parishes and 40 municipalities. CRPC provides technical assistance in the areas of transportation planning, economic development, land use planning, zoning, bike and pedestrian safety. CRPC evaluates data trends and plans for growth in the region.

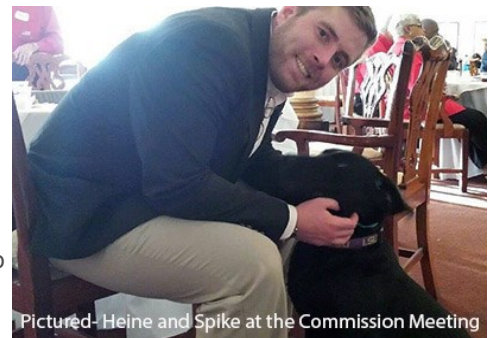
CRPC involves the public the planning process.

For additional information visit us at <http://www.crpc-la.org>.

St. Francisville hosts CRPC commission meeting

CRPC welcomed a special guest at its March Commission Meeting in St. Francisville. Hometown hero, Jared Heine, grandson of CRPC Commissioner, Pete Heine, and his dog Spike, attended the quarterly event at Hemingbough Plantation. Jared served 3 tours in Afghanistan with Spike by his side. The two trained together in South Carolina to detect bombs.

The duo encountered several explosive incidents while in Afghanistan, one in which both Heine and Spike were assumed dead. However, Spike managed to leave the scene and run 2 miles to Heine's search unit. Heine was rescued; but he was sent home with traumatic brain injuries. Once home, Heine began to suffer from PTSD, while also missing Spike.



Pictured- Heine and Spike at the Commission Meeting

Determined, Heine's mother located Spike with the Virginia Capitol Police at the state capitol building. She contacted officer Laura Holmes, who had grown deeply attached to Spike. Following a ceremony at the Virginia state capitol, Heine and Spike were reunited after three years apart.

In This Issue

° Director's Corner ° Q&A ° Recent Updates ° Calendar of Events ° Economic News ° Helpful Tips ° Contacts

Commissioner Spotlight

*Featuring West
Baton Rouge
Parish President,
Riley "Pee Wee"
Berthelot*



Editor's note: Each news-
letter, a CRPC Commis-
sioner will be featured to
talk about what is going on

If you could tell your citizens one thing about the CRPC, what would you tell them?

"I think that our citizens need to know that CRPC assists the entire Baton Rouge metropolitan region with transportation, environment, land use and economic planning. These issues don't end at parish boundary lines, and CRPC brings regional officials together to work through tough issues towards solutions for today and for the future."

What's your transportation vision for the region?

"Obviously, given the traffic situation on LA 1 and I-10, our most important goal is to increase the mobility for our citizens in the region so that the quality of life in the Capital Region improves and doesn't deteriorate. We are currently exploring any and all options that would provide some relief on those two very important regional corridors. We want to provide healthy job-housing linkages throughout the region as well as work on alternative modes of transportation for those who depend on—or enjoy—biking, pedestrian activity and mass transit."

How has CRPC helped your region in the past?

"In earlier times, when traffic wasn't as big of an issue, CRPC helped the Parish with subdivision and zoning regulations. Now that we have those regulations firmly established in West Baton Rouge, CRPC assists us in setting transportation, and along with our local Chamber of Commerce, economic development funding priorities, pursuing those funds, and getting local and regional transportation project ideas identified and completed. We have worked with CRPC very closely on three specific project categories—Surface Transportation (STP), Congestion Mitigation, and Air Quality (CMAQ), and the State Megaproject Priority list. We are thankful for CRPC's role in helping us secure millions of dollars in transportation funding over the years."

How is CRPC currently working for your region?

"I serve as the Chair of the CRPC Board of Directors where I help set the agenda for regional discussions on transportation, environmental issues, economic development and land use. Mayor Kip Holden and I work very closely, specifically on the MPO's Transportation Policy Committee. Kevin Durbin (WBR Public Works director) and I work with CRPC and DOTD to get small, medium, and large transportation projects reviewed, funded, and approved. Current funding wins for the Parish include our multi-year trail vision as well as some sidewalk, drainage, and intersection improvements. As stated earlier, we are also working on many different solutions to the La. 1 and I-10 traffic problems including several alternate bridge crossing options."

What would you like to accomplish in the future with CRPC's assistance?

"Our most important goal is to find solutions to the La. 1 and I-10 traffic problems. This issue is so critical to our local employers, employees, citizens and emergency responders. We have preliminary construction plans for an alternate crossing over the Intracoastal Canal that would help open up the north and central parts of West Baton Rouge for development, while providing major traffic relief on La. 1. We are also exploring multiple Mississippi River crossing locations."



DOTD traffic cameras show heavy delay along I-10 in West Baton Rouge Parish at the Mississippi River bridge. Alleviating this congestion is a top priority for state, local, and regional leaders.

I think that our citizens need to know that CRPC assists the entire Baton Rouge metropolitan region with transportation , environment, land use and economic planning. These issues don't end at parish boundary lines, and CRPC brings regional officials together to work through tough issues towards solutions for today and for the future"

CRPC's Projects

ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY'S SCHOOL FLAG PROGRAM

Kenilworth Science and Technology School for 6th, 7th, and 8th graders have joined in with the Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) school flag program. The program's purpose is to educate students about local air quality conditions and issues.

The schools are provided with various colored flags to be raised daily to signal the air quality condition. If the condition is good, it's safe to play outdoors. However, if the conditions are poor, the school will alter their daily schedule to move activities indoors. CRPC and Louisiana Clean Fuels have been targeting local schools to participate, and Kenilworth has signed on to be the first school in the area to participate!



Pictured are students participating in EPA's School Flag Program

CRPC RESPONDS TO EPA'S PROPOSED OZONE STANDARD

On March 16th, CRPC staff with assistance from Dr. Mike McDaniel, Ph.D., issued a response to the Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) proposed ozone standard. The response laid out the issues that will arise from the new standard, and advised the EPA to forgo or postpone the promulgated lowered standard.

CRPC ROLLS GEAUX RIDE

One of CRPC's ongoing projects is implementing a ride-sharing program called Geaux Ride. To start off this effort, staff has targeted state government agencies to pilot the program before it rolls out to the general public and private agencies. CRPC is implementing this trial period to improve the program. By the time the general public signs up for this program, it will be a tried-and-true option to help alleviate traffic congestion in the region.

SAFETY PROJECTS

CRPC is organizing safety projects centered on occupant protection and impaired driving emphasis. The project, in conjunction with SmartStart and Uber, aims to educate patrons about impaired driving at Live After Five, an evening event in Baton Rouge. Using SmartStart gift cards and discount codes for Uber rides, patrons will be encouraged to participate in our breathalyzer that will be displayed. This is to target the "buzzed" individuals at the event, and provide them with information on LA's DUI laws as well as how alcohol affects everyone differently. Hopefully this project will help keep impaired drivers off of the road!

CRPC hopes to partner with Alliance Safety Council to host occupant protection "fun fairs" at three of the council's locations. By partnering with the council, we will be able to target drivers who are least likely to wear seatbelts, male pick-up truck drivers 18-34 years old. The council locations in Ascension, East Baton Rouge, and West Baton Rouge also allow us to reach parishes that account for 25% of fatal and serious injury crashes in the state of Louisiana. Buckle up!

ADDITIONS TO THE WEB

CRPC staff is working to update its website! We're giving a new look to CRPC's web presence, and also updating the content. Current maps, regional transportation information, and other features are in the works.



Destination Zero Deaths booth in use at Live After Five event



Calendar of Events

May 2015

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
					1	2
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24	25	26	27	28	29	30
31						

May 5th: TAC Meeting 1:30pm—3:00pm @ BREC Commission Chamber, Rm 1800. 6201 Florida Blvd. Baton Rouge, LA 70806.

May 12th: TPC Meeting 1:30pm—3:00pm @ BREC Commission Chamber, Rm 1800. 6201 Florida Blvd. Baton Rouge, LA 70806.

May 14th: Bike & Pedestrian Safety Advisory Meeting 4:00pm—6:00pm @ Carver Library. 720 Terrace Ave. Baton Rouge, LA 70802.

June 2015

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
	1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30				

June 9th: TAC Meeting 1:30pm—3:00pm @ BREC Commission Chamber, Rm 1800. 6201 Florida Blvd. Baton Rouge, LA 70806.

June 11th: Bike & Pedestrian Safety Advisory Meeting 4:00pm—6:00pm @ Carver Library. 720 Terrace Ave. Baton Rouge, LA 70802.

June 13th: Planning Commissioner Training 8:00am—12:00pm @ Washington Parish Courthouse, Council Chambers. 908 Pearl Street. Franklinton, LA 70438.

June 16th: TPC Meeting 1:30pm—3:00pm @ BREC Commission Chamber, Rm 1800. 6201 Florida Blvd. Baton Rouge, LA 70806.

July 2015

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
			1	2	3	4
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	29	30	31	

July 9th: Bike & Pedestrian Safety Advisory Meeting 4:00pm—6:00 pm @ Carver Library. 720 Terrace Ave. Baton Rouge, LA 70802.

Baton Rouge Magnet High School Wins Bike Safety Video Contest

CRPC implemented the “Can You See Me Now” contest asking local students in grades 9-12 attending schools in East Baton Rouge, West Baton Rouge, Ascension, Livingston, and Iberville Parishes to create a short video demonstrating bicycle safety on the roads. Seventeen team entries were submitted, involving almost one hundred area high school students acting as actors, writers, directors, editors, musicians and other roles to portray safety on our roads for all types of drivers. The winning entry was created by Baton Rouge Magnet High School students: Maura Duprè, Tiffany Le, and Cindy Tran. The winners received a \$1,000 cash prize, an internship with the Louisiana Film Commission, a feature on the video screen in downtown Baton Rouge’s Town Square, and will be honored by Mayor Kip Holden at a Metro Council meeting.

The video portrays the consequences of being a “bad driver” and the benefits of being a “good driver” in a video game setting. The video ends with the message that “real life isn’t a game;” advocating for good bicycling and vehicle driving behavior.

You can view the video via YouTube: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2MSR6V4_Y5s&feature=youtu.be

The award for second place went to Thomas “TJ” Hanlon, Rondell Norman, and Demarcus Williams from Mentorship Academy. Their video titled, “Safety is a 2-Way Street,” featured a bicyclist on a collision course with a texting driver on the streets of downtown Baton Rouge.

Third place went to Robert Sciambra of Catholic High School. His video titled, “Can You See Me Now?/Destination Zero Deaths” featured bicyclists, drivers, and pedestrians created from legos showing how to share the road safely. Thank you to all of the students for their creative entries!

Economic News

As the planning district, CRPC helps with regional economic efforts. Our staff provides technical assistance involving funding opportunities from the Economic Development Administration (EDA) and Delta Regional Authority (DRA) investments.

The EDA is part of the U.S. Chamber of Commerce to promote economic ecosystems in which jobs are created, advance global competitiveness, foster the creation of high-paying jobs, and leverage public and private resources strategically. The City of Walker is collaborating with CRPC for infrastructure funds from EDA for its Industrial Park. Through EDA's competitive process, Walker has been selected for further consideration in the approximate amount of \$1.5 million.

EDA funding categories include: public works and economic development, economic adjustment assistance, planning assistance, technical assistance, research and evaluation, and trade adjustment assistance.

Approximately 381 economic development districts nation-wide partner with EDA each year to develop and implement bottom-up economic development strategies for their respective regions.

Delta Regional Authority is an independent federal agency that was created by congress in 2000. The organization serves 252 counties and parishes in 8 states. This federal-state partnership works with its local development districts to grow economic outcomes and enhance quality of life. Congress makes an annual appropriation to DRA to fund economic development investments and internal operations. DRA's investment program is known as the State's Economic Development Assistance Program (SEDAP).

DRA recently announced its new funding cycle. Further information can be found at www.dra.gov, or contact Courtney Maciasz at (225) 383-5203.

DRA's priority funding areas are basic public infrastructure, transportation infrastructure, business development and entrepreneurship, and workforce development.



Small Business Development Program

CRPC is also working with Louisiana Economic Development to promote LED's Small Business Development Program. Through the Small and Emerging Business Development program, new companies receive help in areas including marketing and accounting, entrepreneurial training, business planning, legal and industry-specific assistance, along with the professional encouragement they seek every step of the way. Further information can be found www.opportunitylouisiana.com.

This is open to all Louisiana small businesses that meet the eligibility requirements for both the business and the owner. For a list of eligibility requirements, visit: OpportunityLouisiana.com/SEBD. For further information, please contact Courtney Maciasz at [\(225\) 383-5203](tel:(225)383-5203).

East Feliciana Airpark and Aviation Business Development Complex

CRPC's role in this project was to assist with grant funding. Staff helped the organization by applying to DRA, and was successful; gaining \$200,000 in funds to help build the \$375,674 project.

The construction is a common-use aviation business development facility. This facility will provide small businesses and entrepreneurs a foundation to build their careers.

In addition to this, Baton Rouge Community College will also benefit from the airpark complex as well with the development's plan to have an on-site aviation mechanic program.



Be Heard— Attend Planning Meetings

CRPC extends an open invitation to our regional planning meetings and events. Public and advisory committee meetings are held regularly to gain input from community members who want to see transportation-related improvements in their area.

We pay special attention to underserved areas, this includes minority or low-income areas of our region.

By attending our meetings, you also have a chance to view the various transportation planning documents that CRPC creates before they are issued in effect for the following year.

In the time period outlined in the Public Participation Plan, the public can review the plans presented and make comments. This is how the public can make an influence on future plans and developments.



Helpful Tips

How to Get Involved with your Regional Planning Commission Through the Public Participation Plan

There is a designated time period that the public can get involved with the various plans issued by CRPC. Before the review and comment time periods, CRPC will provide ample notice that the plan is ready to start this stage, and will notify the public with meeting details.

Here are the specific time periods that are outlined in the Public Participation Plan:

Public Participation Plan: 45-day review/comment time period.

Metropolitan Transportation Plan: 30-day review/comment time period, and also 14 days for public reviews/amendments.

Transportation Improvement Plan: 30-day review/comment time period

Unified Planning Work Program: 14-day review/comment time period.

If there are any major changes in any plan, a second public review/comment 7-day time period will be added.



Ethics Training

Public employees and Officials are welcome to participate in ethics training led by Ashley Hebert at CRPC. If interested, please contact Ashley at ahebert@brgov.com or (225) 383-5203.

Technical Assistance

CRPC is here to help! If you are interested in receiving assistance from our qualified staff, don't hesitate to call or email us.

Still not sure who to contact, or just have a general inquiry?

Contact CRPC's administrative coordinator or office manager. They can help point you in the right direction.

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