

GASPARILLA ISLAND BRIDGE AUTHORITY

ORGANIZATION & MISSION - FACT SHEET 9/7/11

MISSION: The mission of the Gasparilla Island Bridge Authority (GIBA) is to provide the best possible bridge opening operations and toll collection services to the community.

HISTORY: The Boca Grande Swing Bridge and causeway is located in southwest Charlotte County near Placida. It is the only land link from Charlotte County to the three barrier islands known as: North, Cole and Gasparilla Island. All three bridges and the causeway are owned by The GIBA. The Boca Grande Swing Bridge spans two 80 foot wide channels on the Gulf Intracoastal Waterway at Placida. The bridge was built with private funds (1952-1958) to replace a ferry service. The steel swing span is 213 feet in length. Posted vessel clearances are: low point = 9 feet and high point = 13 feet. It is one of the largest operational "swing bridges" in the State of Florida and the U.S. It was the only privately owned Toll Bridge in the state, until it was purchased on January 5, 1998 by the Gasparilla Island Bridge Authority (GIBA). It is presently the only Toll-Swing Bridge in Florida. The owners are the public residing within the GIBA Special Tax District.

THE BRIDGE AUTHORITY: The State of Florida Independent Special Tax District, known as the Gasparilla Island Bridge Authority (GIBA) was created by Special Act 96-507 of the Florida Legislature. The GIBA is run by a Board of 5 elected Supervisors and 4 appointed Supervisors who meet quarterly. The Chairman is George Robinson, a Boca Grande resident. Daily bridge/causeway operations are managed by Executive Director, James Cooper. The GIBA Special Tax District includes all voters within the geographic area from the CR 775/Causeway intersection (Charlotte County), south along the Boca Grande Causeway past North & Cole Islands to Gasparilla Island's village of Boca Grande (Lee County).

BRIDGE OPENINGS: GIBA's mission, 24 hours/day, is to provide: (1) the best possible customer services for all customers (vessels and vehicles) and (2) safe, efficient traffic flow for vehicles paying bridge tolls and all boats requesting bridge openings. The Boca Grande "swing bridge" spans the Gulf Intracoastal Waterway. Openings are set by U.S. Coast Guard waterway rules. Coast Guard regulations require the Boca Grande swing bridge to open for vessel traffic: (A) Days: via "Timed Openings," each 30 minutes 7:00 AM - 6:00 PM & on weekdays & holidays: each 15 minutes; and (B) Nights: "On Request" 6:00 PM - 7:00 AM.

BRIDGE TENDER: On duty 24 hours everyday. They also provide Wind Speed & Direction or relay vessel emergencies to the Coast Guard. Communications: **Phone:** 941-697-2271 or **VHF Channel:** 9/16.

VEHICLE TOLLS: All GIBA operating revenues are generated via user tolls. No tax dollars are used. Simply stated, if you do not use the GIBA causeway, you do not pay for it. Passenger vehicles and small trucks pay \$5.00 for a round trip to the island. Discount Passes (30 trips or more) are available to the public. Commercial trucks, buses, and heavy equipment pay \$4.50/axle. All large commercial vehicles must weigh.

BOCA GRANDE TOLL BRIDGE WEIGHT LIMIT: 20 Tons (40,000 pounds) maximum gross weight, for 3 axles or more, and 17 Tons (34,000 pounds) max gross weight for 2 axles. which is strictly enforced. The Weigh Scale is open weekdays only, Monday to Friday, from 6 AM to 6:00 PM.

ROAD SYSTEM MAINTENANCE: The Gasparilla Island Bridge Authority maintains three (3) bridges: the Boca Grande swing bridge and two concrete bridges, plus 2.5 miles of single lane causeway, designated as Charlotte County/State Road 771. As one travels south on GIBA's Causeway toward Boca Grande, Charlotte County maintains the next .8 miles of CR 771. The final leg of LR 771 is another 3 miles located on Gasparilla Island, which is maintained by Lee County. All of this roadway lies within the GIBA Special District taxing and voting area. No taxpayer Federal, State or County taxes are used to pay for the GIBA roads and bridges. *Tolls collected are the only source of revenue to maintain GIBA roads and bridges.*

STATE AGENCY – TAX EXEMPT STATUS: Florida Tax Exempt Certificate # 18-00-022368-51C

For Further Information Please Contact:

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