

August 25, 2011

Gasparilla Gazette: Letter to the Editor
**GIBA Director Clarifies
Bridge-Building Process**

To the editor:

Orlando-based Dyer, Riddle, Mills and Precourt Inc. performed, delivered and is responsible for the design for the two fixed bridges and the design for the roads in between the Swing Bridge and over the South bridge to the end of the Gasparilla Island Bridge Authority's portion of Causeway Road just beyond Uncle Henry's Marina area.

These new GIBA fixed bridge designs are very important for GIBA as they mark a giant step forward in ensuring our three-bridge replacement process, which starts with \$1.2 million landmark Center and South fixed bridge designs. The project remains on time and on budget.

What makes the fixed bridge designs special is they are the very first coastal (salt water) bridge system in the state designed to take the new and expensive state-mandated 17-foot storm surge with heavy lateral and uplift wave forces.

The good news for GIBA's customer is that the new replacement GIBA bridges will have the ability to withstand a 17-foot storm surge. This means the new GIBA bridges will be built much stronger than the current bridges. They are being built to withstand powerful side forces and the uplift forces per American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials safety rules.

These new and more expensive AASHTO design safety rules were developed after Hurricane Ivan in 2004 destroyed a quarter-mile section of an Interstate 10 bridge near Pensacola when 130-mph winds and giant waves actually lifted several heavy concrete interstate highway deck slabs off their piers and tossed them into the coastal waters. These new coastal bridge design standards became effective in August 2010.

GIBA is pleased to have DRMP on call and available throughout the planned 21-month bridge construction process, to be certain the bridge contractor and his onsite team properly interpret all of the new design's special and unique details.

In addition, DRMP provided a helpful planning construction cost estimate of about \$10 million for GIBA to build the two fixed bridges and roadway. Please remember, the actual construction phase of the replacement fixed bridges will be done by another firm — still to be selected by the GIBA Board. GIBA's replacement fixed bridge request for proposal for bidders for the important final construction phase was approved Aug. 10 by the GIBA Board and posted Aug. 18 with a sample copy posted on the GIBA website. The RFP is was provided by KCA Engineers in Tampa.

Our GIBA Board approved long-range plans calling for the final award of the fixed bridges project to be made at the Nov. 17 GIBA Quarterly Board Meeting.

Meanwhile, Hardesty and Hanover LLP from near Fort Lauderdale, and project manager Mike Sileno will begin the final design plans for GIBA's new replacement Swing Bridge by Oct. 1. The original \$2 million estimated Swing Bridge design costs were negotiated by GIBA to a fair and reasonable \$1.75 million, which was approved by the GIBA board last May. The future contractor to win the bid on the Swing Bridge build contract will likely be determined in about 2 ½ more years.

Jim Cooper
Executive Director
Gasparilla Island Bridge Authority