

Group hears concerns about CCC audit report - ' - Times-Picayune, The (New Orleans, LA) - January 13, 2011 - page F 08

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State Rep. **Patrick Connick**, R-Harvey, recently made a stop at the Terrytown Civic Association's monthly meeting. He, along with other government officials and representatives, including Royce Blanchard, chief administrative assistant to Parish President John Young; Councilman Chris Roberts; state Rep. Ricky Templet, R-Gretna; state Sen. David Heitmeier, D-Algiers; and Gretna Chief of Police Arthur Lawson, discussed the recent bridge toll audit findings.

Connick opened up the meeting by expressing his concerns with the way the **Crescent City Connection** Division has been handling money.

"They are not doing what they promised us," he said.

He then presented residents with an extensive slide show of some of the audit findings. Connick said that included in the bridge toll extension agreement to 2012 was the promise to complete 11 projects.

"The extension was established by House Bill 250, and out of the 11 projects, only one has been completed," Connick said.

Along with the unfinished projects, he also talked to residents about the excessive number of employees connected to the bridge.

"The **Crescent City Connection** has 230 employees and there are over 40 more jobs available," he said. "That's more than the state Department of Insurance; there's no other bridge with that many employees."

Findings were also presented that showed how \$15 million was spent on an unnecessary flood-insurance policy for the bridge. Connick also brought up the fact that although the bridge tolls are set to expire in 2012, there have been recent renovations to the CCCD facility.

"There have been \$600-per-square-foot expansions on the offices, and I've talked to contractors who've said that pricing is outrageous," he said.

Connick said that according to CCCD data, Gretna and Terrytown residents account for 27 percent of toll tag households. He said that it's time for residents to start fighting back.

"The politics has to end, and we need to get people who will do what it takes to get the job done," he said. "We need to get the public involved and eliminate the CCCD because it's a worthless government agency."

Connick added that citizen involvement is the key.

"Concerned residents should contact the local delegation with their concerns, because when the people rise up, things happen," he said "Pound on your representatives and say, 'Enough is enough and we're not going to take any more lies.' "

Robert's office is located at General Government Building, 200 Derbigny Street, sixth floor, Gretna. E-mail ChrisRoberts@jeffparish.net, call 504.364.2607 or fax 504.364.2615.

Young's West Bank office is also located at General Government Building. E-mail JohnYoung@jeffparish.net, call 504.364.2703 or fax 504.364.2828.

Heitmeier's local office is located at 3501 Holiday Drive, Suite 225, Algiers. E-mail heitmeid@legis.state.la.us, call 504.361.6356 or fax 504.361.6358.

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Councilman Chris Roberts said the floors have finally been put into the Terrytown Gymnasium and the facility is close to completion. He said the project should be complete by the end of this month.

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