



February 6, 2010

To our valued customers and the residents of South Baldwin County

Hi,

My name is Neal Belitsky, and I'm the president of the Beach Express (BEX). I want to personally thank you for being a valued customer. We truly appreciate your business and feedback about our services.

Recently, it has come to my attention that there are many questions about the Beach Express toll-rate increases. I want to apologize for any confusion and inconvenience due to lack of communication on our end.

As a part of your local community, we want you to have all the facts and know why we had to increase certain toll rates.

Although we haven't needed to change toll rates for the last three years, we found it impossible to keep the rates the same in 2010. Due to increased operational expenses, maintenance fees, and other significant expenses beyond our control, it was necessary to raise the fares as follows:

2010 Beach Express Toll Bridge Fares

- The rate for cash customers increased by \$.50.
- **The price for account holders with a Freedom Pass[®] card with funds on the account remained at \$3.00.**
- **There was no increase for Orange Beach registered voters who paid from a prepaid funds account.** Orange Beach voters paying by cash experienced a \$.25 increase.
- There was **no increase** in the Annual Membership Club fee with fares increasing by \$.50 cents per trip. This increase was only \$.25 cents if paid from a prepaid account.
- The annual fee for unlimited usage customers went from \$675.00 to \$745.00.
- The six-month program for unlimited usage increased from \$350.00 to \$395.00.

We realize these increases have an impact on the budgets of all local residents and understand their significance.

Please know that we take great pride in running the Beach Express Bridge and feel it is the front door to the Orange Beach community, a responsibility we do not take lightly.

With this in mind, the fare increases were necessary in order to maintain the safety and integrity of the bridge and continue independent, structural and underwater inspections.

In addition to these crucial safety-requirements, your fares will go towards major roadway reconditioning on the plaza, bridge painting and technology upgrades for online-account management. These upgrades will not only promote safety, but they will help you save time by preventing undue traffic delays.

Helping Your Local Community

Plus, your fares help the local community. Not only do we provide the first impression for many new visitors, but the Beach Express supports numerous civic and charitable organizations too. For example, we contributed \$548,000 to the extension of the Beach Express to I-10. And, we set aside \$2.2 million to

construct the Southern Hurricane Evacuation Route from Canal Road to the beach. We also maintain a \$16 million fund to construct a second bridge span when traffic warrants the need.

BEX and American Roads support the community in smaller ways too. We hold company events in the city, provide no-cost event promotion on our digital billboard on AL 59 for charitable and civic organizations and help out groups such as:

- AC Celebrity Golf Tournament
- Alabama Advantage Exposition
- American Cancer Society
- C Bennett Celebrity Golf Tournament
- City of OB Parks and Recreation
- City of Orange Beach Hurricane Evacuation Committee
- Convention and Visitors Bureau
- CVB Sports Commission
- Donation of Used Computer Equipment
- Gulf Coast chamber of Commerce
- GUMBO
- Lighthouse for Abused
- Motorcycle Poker Run
- Multiple Sclerosis MS 150
- Municipal vehicles/Funerals – No toll charge
- Mystic Order of Miriam's
- OB Adult Activity Center
- OB Police Department
- Red Snapper Tournament
- Snow Bird Clubs of Baldwin County
- South Baldwin County United Way
- St. Jude Children's Hospital
- Student Life
- Teddy Bear Cruise
- The Wharf
- Thunder on the Gulf
- YMCA
- And more!

Additionally, American Roads' Information Technology group has offices in Foley to help serve your needs better.

We hope you will understand our rate increases. After all, BEX usage by Orange Beach residents has increased every year since 2007. Bridge traffic going to support our local shops, restaurants, sporting events, etc., is dependent on visitors to the beach. And this traffic has followed the same trend as occupancy reports from the Alabama Gulf Coast Convention & Visitors Bureau.

More Benefits for You

To offset the toll increases, we've created a host of programs. (Please visit <http://www.beachexpress.com/Content.aspx?p=toll/toll-rates> and <http://www.beachexpress.com/Content.aspx?p=freedom-pass> for more information.)

We feel strongly that the bridge continues to provide value. Your toll fee helps you save time on the road, stop wasting money on fuel while being stuck in traffic, contribute to your community, and bring in travelers to bolster the local economy. More importantly, it helps the U.S. be less dependent on foreign oil at a time when that's important to our environment and critical to our future.

Hopefully, this letter will help explain the BEX toll increases that began on January 1, 2010. But if you have feedback and suggestions, *please let me know*. We are here to answer your questions. And I'm interested in hearing from you so that we can serve your needs and the needs of the community the best way possible.

Feel free to contact me any time at nealb@beachexpress.com or contact Chris Musgrove, BEX Bridge Manager at cmusgrove@beachexpress.com, and we will respond as soon as possible.

Thank you so much for your time, and we look forward to seeing you at BEX,

Neal Belitsky
President, BEX