



PRESS RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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SIX-MONTH TREASURE ISLAND CAUSEWAY BRIDGE CLOSURE BEGINS THIS TUESDAY

TREASURE ISLAND (December 30, 2005) –A transportation era ends this Tuesday, January 3rd, 2006 at 6:30am when the remaining span of the 67-year old Treasure Island Causeway Drawbridge will be closed in preparation for demolition. The bridge will be closed to all vehicular traffic until July 2006. Traffic resumes this summer when a portion of the new Treasure Island Causeway Bridge opens with two lanes and a 10-foot wide bike and pedestrian path.

To mark the occasion of the bridge closure, the last vehicle to cross the drawbridge will be Treasure Island's antique fire truck, a 1927 American LaFrance pumper with Mayor Mary Maloof as its passenger. Mayor Maloof will pay the ceremonial "last toll" using a one-dollar gold coin. The mayor and fire truck will arrive at the toll plaza at 6:45am for the 7am ceremony. No traffic, except for city and construction vehicles, will be allowed on the bridge after 6:30am. Media outlets should assemble at the east end of the bridge at the toll plaza. The last crossing will proceed west from the toll plaza toward Treasure Island.

The Treasure Island Causeway has been the city's direct link to the mainland since it opened on November 15, 1939. Built in less than a year for \$1,046,000, the Treasure Island Causeway is comprised of three bridge spans of 1000, 400 and 217 feet in length. The two shorter fixed spans at the east and west ends of the causeway were replaced in October, 2004, with four lanes of traffic and wide pedestrian/bicyclist pathways.

In January 2005, demolition of the north span of the "big bridge" got underway. Traffic was shifted to two south span lanes. The north span, when complete in July 2006, will open with two lanes of traffic while the closed south span undergoes demolition and reconstruction. Full completion of the \$50-million bridge project is expected in late 2007.

At its center point, the new Treasure Island Causeway Bridge will be 21-

feet above the mean high waterline, substantially reducing the number of drawbridge openings and closings. The current causeway bridge, only five feet above mean high water, sometimes opens and closes up to 40 times a day.

Detour routes to and from Treasure Island during the six-month bridge closure are the Madeira Beach Causeway to the north and the Corey Causeway in St. Pete Beach to the south. The Treasure Island Causeway Drawbridge will be open to marine traffic; however, there may be times when only one leaf of the drawbridge is operational.