

**11. CITY MANAGER**

a. Informational Items

vi. September 30, 2008 Causeway vehicle counts



October 30, 2008

## Bridges used less; Lee County pays toll

### Traffic thins, revenue off by almost \$4 million

By Jason Wermers  
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Fewer vehicles are crossing the Cape Coral bridges and the Sanibel Causeway these days and that's taking its toll on Lee County's bank account.

Data for fiscal year 2008, which ended Sept. 30, shows revenue is down for all three toll bridges in Lee, compared to the same period in 2007.

The Midpoint Memorial Bridge's revenue in Cape Coral dropped 18 percent; the Cape Coral Bridge revenue was off 12 percent; and the Sanibel Causeway's take was down 6.45 percent, according to the county's Department of Transportation. That translates to \$3,877,754 in lost revenue.

The main culprit appears to be the real estate market and the general state of the economy.

Tammy Bertsch, fiscal manager for the DOT, stressed the 2008 numbers are a rough estimate until all revenue sources are confirmed.

The drop in revenue is not expected to have an immediate impact on future road projects except the widening of Burnt Store Road, said Paul Wingard, deputy director for the DOT.

Burnt Store runs from Pine Island Road in Cape Coral north to U.S. 41 in Charlotte County. Wingard said some of the real estate acquisitions, which would have helped widen the road from two to four lanes, are on hold.

The toll plazas on the Cape and Midpoint bridges still will be redesigned on schedule to accommodate the switch to one-way tolling. The \$10 million project will knock out tolls on the eastbound lanes and convert two of the westbound lanes to "open-road" toll lanes, meaning motorists with transponders would not have to slow down.

Work could begin by mid-2009 and be finished about a year later, Wingard said.

He said most of the revenue shortfall was planned in the operating budget once the Cape Coral bridges began experimenting with one-way tolling Nov. 1, 2007. The county commissioners made the change permanent in June.

Wingard said the one-way tolls do not appear to be a major cause of the revenue drop. While motorists can use the free Caloosahatchee and Edison bridges to cross the river to North Fort Myers and work their way to Cape Coral, in many cases that adds too many miles to save money.

"People were doing that in the first month of one-way tolling, but that quickly reversed itself," Wingard said.

Fewer people have been driving in recent months because of the spike in gas prices. Those prices have dropped recently, but the economic downturn continues. Fewer people have jobs, and working families have less disposable income, so they cut their automobile trips.

Traffic counts for the three toll bridges are down from April to September 2008 compared to the same period in 2007. Cape Coral Bridge traffic is down 14.6 percent, Midpoint traffic is down 16 percent and Sanibel Causeway traffic decreased by .014 percent.

Andy Postell, 36, of Fort Myers, was laid off earlier this month from Ryland Homes. He used to cross the Midpoint bridge every day on his way to the Sandoval gated community west of Surfside Boulevard in Cape Coral.

"I'm actually turning this in today," Postell said Friday as he stood in line at the LeeWay Service Center, holding a transponder for electronic toll collection.

Even before he was laid off, Postell cut back on his trips across the Midpoint to save gas when the price of regular unleaded was flirting with \$4 a gallon in the region.

"I used to drive three or four times a week to Sandoval," Postell said. "Then I started letting a little more work build up before I'd go, so it would be twice a week."

Susan Hopwood, LeeWay manager, said 27,000 discount programs — available only for those with LeeWay transponders — have been renewed. That's about 10,000 fewer than had renewed last year at this time, and the deadline to renew those discount programs is Friday.

Evelyn Williams, 51, of Cape Coral, was one of those renewing her discount program recently at the service center just over the Midpoint bridge in Fort Myers. She said she crosses the bridge at least twice every day because her son attends Bishop Verot High School, and her husband works in south Fort Myers.

"We need the discount program," she said. "What I do try to do is to consolidate my trips and plan better. For example, I'm already over here, I have to pick up my husband, and I need to go to the mall. So guess where we're going right after this?"

Midpoint revenue decreased by just 0.3 percent in 2007 compared to 2006. Cape Coral Bridge revenue increased in 2007 by 0.9 percent from 2006, and Sanibel Causeway revenue increased by 5.2 percent in 2007, according to the DOT.

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# MEMORANDUM

**Date:** October 24, 2008  
**To:** Sanibel City Council  
**From:** Judie Zimomra, City Manager  
**RE:** Causeway Vehicle Counts – September 2008

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Please find attached the September 2008 Causeway Vehicle Counts. September 2008 total vehicles decreased by 10,622 (-5.75%), as compared to September 2007. The September 2008 total traffic volume is less than all years from 1987 through 2003 and 2005 through 2007.

JAZ/cjm

xc: Executive Staff  
Ric Base, Executive Director, Sanibel & Captiva Islands Chamber of Commerce  
Suya Davenport, Executive Director, Lee County Visitor & Convention Bureau

**TOTAL VEHICLES THROUGH SANIBEL CAUSEWAY BY MONTH**

	<b>JAN</b>	<b>FEB</b>	<b>MAR</b>	<b>APR</b>	<b>MAY</b>	<b>JUN</b>	<b>JUL</b>	<b>AUG</b>	<b>SEP</b>	<b>OCT</b>	<b>NOV</b>	<b>DEC</b>	<b>TOTAL</b>
1975	71,497	77,820	92,725	70,355	60,632	59,139	62,322	62,201	45,480	53,450	59,084	78,668	795,348
1976	84,299	96,545	111,476	89,794	71,553	70,031	75,252	71,522	58,676	62,895	71,382	89,853	953,278
1977	94,447	108,599	129,246	103,187	82,152	77,932	83,723	79,071	65,662	75,735	85,564	97,797	1,083,115
1978	104,193	115,285	145,573	108,652	95,454	90,836	99,998	98,175	80,288	89,577	99,901	107,774	1,235,706
1979	120,611	133,867	161,056	132,023	106,364	97,850	99,924	101,007	78,769	98,014	108,945	118,275	1,356,735
1980	132,655	148,630	171,790	144,903	123,261	117,852	124,672	120,338	98,302	115,265	119,032	136,561	1,553,281
1981	141,531	158,419	187,929	159,416	139,422	126,940	134,746	127,094	111,486	123,591	131,986	142,354	1,684,914
1982	151,598	172,210	205,406	171,080	142,796	123,004	133,581	125,851	108,680	123,777	138,525	150,133	1,746,641
1983	165,687	175,371	206,486	175,982	155,029	137,686	140,377	138,763	123,577	145,603	155,938	167,072	1,887,571
1984	177,772	202,219	238,398	198,917	172,520	155,093	157,527	161,249	136,934	161,877	172,336	185,437	2,120,279
1985	195,656	214,378	260,947	218,871	189,217	166,656	170,963	171,472	144,877	171,828	184,240	201,856	2,290,961
1986	222,671	237,844	277,318	233,768	205,791	184,725	192,522	190,157	165,626	189,818	199,923	218,970	2,519,133
1987	237,853	253,132	292,300	256,283	228,039	202,271	212,669	198,889	179,830	203,003	218,186	227,822	2,710,277
1988	240,333	263,684	298,358	261,259	227,835	211,278	219,390	202,843	185,991	211,476	225,141	232,510	2,780,098
1989	262,812	275,217	319,506	265,334	240,919	217,282	223,224	217,561	194,282	224,655	234,250	226,305	2,901,347
1990	263,259	283,752	330,219	286,758	247,651	226,605	227,423	228,836	196,113	229,494	248,957	251,114	3,020,181
1991	284,739	287,309	327,890	285,819	249,680	220,757	225,596	223,316	191,537	225,082	238,544	253,706	3,013,975
1992	280,819	297,992	325,286	282,992	254,534	220,681	240,321	221,543	208,241	241,442	250,092	264,262	3,088,205
1993	290,670	296,725	337,653	302,459	261,192	233,296	246,572	233,370	212,183	239,421	259,123	270,798	3,183,462
1994	293,531	300,002	357,362	308,596	264,426	228,980	240,589	234,362	212,574	246,573	265,715	272,408	3,225,118
1995	299,559	308,171	348,594	307,534	268,757	230,841	243,361	199,379	209,803	241,521	270,379	271,923	3,199,822
1996	304,407	326,104	347,728	311,173	271,955	238,613	250,166	241,345	212,542	246,955	264,623	268,229	3,283,840
1997	306,316	310,880	359,236	305,966	277,043	243,687	253,515	244,433	208,686	253,406	264,595	269,812	3,297,575
1998	307,702	312,839	354,579	323,198	278,057	244,061	257,095	244,650	194,238	261,953	276,278	281,724	3,336,374
1999	309,901	321,124	364,627	321,078	277,797	245,719	266,201	245,368	220,735	248,747	282,998	280,212	3,384,507
2000	314,885	334,888	362,049	318,087	284,199	256,539	263,139	244,603	224,860	261,497	284,445	284,578	3,433,769
2001	322,154	333,949	373,881	330,856	289,756	262,558	265,127	257,564	209,826	253,214	280,433	281,029	3,460,347
2002	318,784	324,030	372,848	322,133	283,490	249,509	266,951	254,452	218,476	262,318	279,067	278,258	3,430,316
2003	292,127	299,200	334,043	298,465	269,750	240,791	261,964	243,152	208,777	261,425	274,091	273,962	3,257,747
2004	304,643	318,535	356,220	316,083	275,031	253,718	270,112	243,152	169,391	235,888	231,622	236,781	3,112,301
2005	267,889	273,111	319,514	273,327	243,571	220,531	232,041	212,698	183,277	183,538	239,412	241,946	2,890,855
2006	268,038	266,706	322,245	276,324	240,382	219,615	218,316	196,253	180,467	213,190	236,941	237,016	2,875,493
2007	271,923	267,015	317,457	272,220	240,125	224,222	227,500	215,347	184,663	217,740	238,781	241,586	2,918,579
2008	273,912	291,589	325,814	280,186	245,084	216,491	226,915	201,964	174,041				

8/18/08-8/19/08 Toll Facility closed due to Tropical Storm Fay  
 10/23/05-10/25/05 Toll Facility closed due to Hurricane Wilma  
 09/01-09/05/04 - Causeway closed to non-residents & non-business owners  
 08/19-08/31/04 - Causeway closed to non-residents & non-business owners  
 08/12/04-08/13/04 - Toll Facility closed due to Hurricane Charley  
 01/20/03 - Causeway shut down for emergency repairs to Span "B"  
 09/24/98-09/27/98 - Toll Facility closed due to Hurricane Georges  
 11/96-12/96 - Estimated: new toll equipment installed  
 08/95 - Computer "crashed" - estimated total

Lee County Toll System  
**PERIODIC DAILY LANE TRAFFIC REPORT**  
 Sanibel Island

Start Date: 09/01/2008

End Date: 09/30/2008

Date	Lane 1	Lane 2	Lane 3	Total
09/01/2008	1,430 1	1,029	2,622	5,082
09/02/2008	1,369 2	1,025	3,731	6,127
09/03/2008	1,305	1,061	3,814	6,180
09/04/2008	1,338	1,100	3,812	6,250
09/05/2008	1,460	1,170	4,017	6,647
09/06/2008	1,476 1	1,009 2	2,887	5,375
09/07/2008	1,120 1	790	2,181	4,090
09/08/2008	1,132	947	3,568	5,647
09/09/2008	1,119	923	3,619	5,661
09/10/2008	1,068	825	3,562	5,455
09/11/2008	1,314	1,026	3,962	6,302
09/12/2008	1,545	1,138	4,056	6,739
09/13/2008	1,590 2	1,121	2,930	5,643
09/14/2008	1,225 1	841	2,243	4,308
09/15/2008	1,281 1	1,003	3,627	5,912
09/16/2008	1,371	1,008	3,860	6,239
09/17/2008	1,379	1,059	3,854	6,292
09/18/2008	1,361	1,048	3,906	6,315
09/19/2008	1,575	1,225	4,116	6,916
09/20/2008	1,606	1,179	3,037	5,822
09/21/2008	1,145 4	786	2,224	4,159
09/22/2008	1,213	991	3,643	5,847
09/23/2008	1,275 1	1,071 2	3,748	6,091
09/24/2008	1,441	1,084	3,875	6,400

Lee County Toll System  
**PERIODIC DAILY LANE TRAFFIC REPORT**  
 Sanibel Island

Start Date: 09/01/2008

End Date: 09/30/2008

Date	Lane 1	Lane 2	Lane 3	Total
09/25/2008	1,478	1,188	3,880	6,546
09/26/2008	1,727 1	1,247	4,084	7,059
09/27/2008	1,639 4	1,087	2,889	5,619
09/28/2008	874	614	1,987	3,475
09/29/2008	1,268	974	3,748	5,990
09/30/2008	1,302	907	3,644	5,853
<b>Total:</b>	<b>40,439</b>	<b>30,476</b>	<b>103,126</b>	<b>174,041</b>

PERIODIC DAILY AVI TRAFFIC REPORT

Sanibel Island

Start Date: 09/01/2008 End Date: 09/30/2008

Revenue Date	AVI	Prepaid Variable	AVI Full	AVI	Prepaid	AVI Exempt	AVI Full	Total
09/01/2008	0	0	0	632	980	15	1283	2910
09/02/2008	0	0	0	451	1528	28	2259	4266
09/03/2008	0	0	0	535	1521	27	2293	4376
09/04/2008	0	0	0	544	1530	21	2273	4368
09/05/2008	0	0	0	620	1617	20	2329	4566
09/06/2008	0	0	0	597	1193	6	1442	3238
09/07/2008	0	0	0	385	975	13	1048	2421
09/08/2008	0	0	0	412	1426	23	2184	4045
09/09/2008	0	0	0	440	1480	29	2184	4133
09/10/2008	0	0	0	499	1350	34	2134	4017
09/11/2008	0	0	0	548	1618	21	2321	4508
09/12/2008	0	0	0	706	1643	24	2245	4618
09/13/2008	0	0	0	668	1182	15	1444	3309
09/14/2008	0	0	0	454	973	16	1046	2489
09/15/2008	0	0	0	503	1468	16	2169	4156
09/16/2008	0	0	0	526	1590	16	2296	4443
09/17/2008	0	0	0	503	1633	31	2224	4387
09/18/2008	0	0	0	569	1629	24	2238	4460
09/19/2008	0	0	0	783	1588	16	2262	4649
09/20/2008	0	0	0	740	1183	9	1493	3425
09/21/2008	0	0	0	443	952	9	1070	2474
09/22/2008	0	0	0	453	1495	25	2149	4122
09/23/2008	0	0	0	507	1541	24	2233	4305
09/24/2008	0	0	0	553	1605	22	2217	4397
09/25/2008	0	0	0	593	1606	19	2241	4459
09/26/2008	0	0	0	819	1641	18	2206	4684
09/27/2008	0	0	0	622	1163	14	1442	3241
09/28/2008	0	0	0	277	910	7	1017	2211
09/29/2008	0	0	0	474	1528	19	2197	4218
09/30/2008	0	0	0	457	1539	19	2125	4140
<b>Total:</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>16313</b>	<b>42087</b>	<b>591</b>	<b>58064</b>	<b>117055</b>