



DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

NEWS

URBAN MASS TRANSPORTATION ADMINISTRATION

WASHINGTON, D. C. 20590

FOR RELEASE THURSDAY
February 28, 1974

UMTA 32-74
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Secretary of Transportation Claude S. Brinegar today announced an Urban Mass Transportation (UMTA) grant of \$10,707,920 to the Mississippi River Bridge Authority of New Orleans, Louisiana to assist in the purchase of three diesel powered ferry boats, reconstruction of passenger terminal facilities, fringe parking areas, and related facilities. Ferry service is an integral part of the transit program in the New Orleans area.

"Communities throughout the nation must avail themselves of every opportunity to reduce energy needs and traffic congestion," Secretary Brinegar said. "The additional ferries in New Orleans will significantly improve coordination of the bus and ferry systems into an integrated operation," the Secretary added.

The Mississippi River Bridge Authority operates four ferries at three separate crossings across the Mississippi River in the New Orleans area. The Regional Planning Commission's transit development program recommended the additional ferries to reduce traffic congestion at two existing bridges and to increase the pedestrian use of the ferry system.

UMTA Administrator Frank C. Herringer noted that the new ferries will provide capacity for 1,500 pedestrians. Although the ferries also have a carrying capacity for 50 vehicles on the main deck, the prime objective of implementing the improved ferry program is to move people not vehicles--across the river. The "park and paddle" operation is expected to substantially reduce vehicle

traffic over existing bridges with a possibility of eliminating a substantial number of vehicles from the heavily populated Canal Street crossing area.

The one-fifth local share of the project cost will be provided by the Mississippi River Bridge Authority.

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For further information contact the UMTA Office of Public Affairs at (202) 426-4043 or Mr. Jack A. Stepham, Federal Program Officer, Mississippi River Bridge Authority, 2001 Behrman Avenue, New Orleans, Louisiana 70174. (UMTA Project No. LA-03-0012)

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