

AG #34

Baytown - History

# OFFICIAL OPENING

Baytown—La Porte Tunnel

No. 8



September 22, 1953





Mayor Pruett

# Greetings



Mayor Burgin

## A Joint Proclamation

WHEREAS, the completion of Baytown-LaPorte Tunnel opens a new avenue of travel which joins these two cities with uninterrupted flow of traffic; and

WHEREAS, the formal opening of Baytown-LaPorte Tunnel completes a vital link in an important traffic artery in Texas highways, and

WHEREAS, the opening of Baytown-LaPorte Tunnel marks an historic milestone in the growth and development of both cities, and

WHEREAS, the opening of Baytown-LaPorte Tunnel opens up new and limitless possibilities for future growth of development of both cities,

NOW, THEREFORE, WE R. H. PRUETT, and M. D. BURGIN, Mayor of the City of Baytown, and the City of LaPorte, respectively, in the State of Texas, and County of Harris, do hereby jointly proclaim this day as

## OFFICIAL BAYTOWN-LAPORTE TUNNEL OPENING DAY

and we do hereby direct the attention of our citizens to the significance of this momentous occasion in the civic, economic, and social life of the people.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF WE have hereunto set our hands and caused the seal of the City of Baytown and the City of LaPorte to be affixed.



*R. H. Pruett*

Baytown, Texas

*M. D. Burgin*

LaPorte, Texas



L. T. Jones

# Welcome

## A Word of Thanks

We join in extending a hearty welcome to our visitors and guests on this special occasion. The strong bond of friendship and cooperation that has always existed between our two cities will become even stronger with this magnificent link of concrete and steel—the Baytown-LaPorte Tunnel.

It is, therefore, with deep gratitude that we express appreciation to the Texas Highway Department, the past and present Harris County Commissioners Courts, the Houston-Harris County Navigation District, the contractors, and consulting firms for their energies and efforts that have contributed to the successful completion of this project.

And we especially commend the hundreds of craftsmen and other employees who worked ceaselessly and undaunted in the face of difficulties in building the tunnel and the approach roads. They can take pardonable pride in the vital role they have played in this project.

*Edward J. Cade* President

LaPorte Chamber of Commerce

*Lloyd T. Jones* President

Baytown Chamber of Commerce



E. J. Cade





L. G. Sanders, Chairman  
Baytown Tunnel Committee

## Program



Frank R. Boyle, Chairman  
LaPorte Tunnel Committee



Fred Hartman, Editor

Publisher, Baytown Sun

Master of Ceremonies

Master of Ceremonies ..... Fred Hartman

Invocation ..... Dr. John Eichorn  
Pastor, La Porte Community Church

Star Spangled Banner ..... Mass Band  
J. C. Burkett, Director

Welcome ..... Hon. M. D. Burgin, Mayor of La Porte  
Hon. R. H. Pruett, Mayor of Baytown

Response ..... Hon. John S. Redditt  
Former Chairman State Highway Commission

Greetings ..... Hon. Price Daniel  
United States Senator from Texas

Introduction of Guests

Presentation of Speaker ..... Hon. E. H. Thornton, Jr.  
Chairman State Highway Commission

Speaker ..... Hon. Allan Shivers  
Governor of Texas

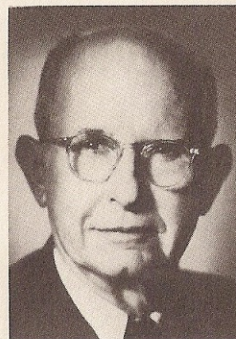
Ribbon Cutting

First Official Ride Through Tunnel.

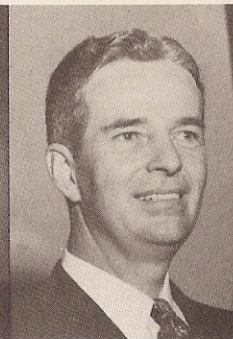


Governor Allan Shivers

## State Highway Commission



Robert J. Potts



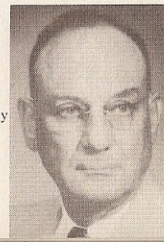
E. H. Thornton, Jr.  
Chairman



Marshall Formby



DeWitt C. Greer  
State Highway  
Engineer



Jim Douglas  
District Highway  
Engineer









## Another Milestone In Texas Transportation

By NELSON McELROY, *Manager*  
*Baytown Chamber of Commerce*

THE STORY OF BAYTOWN-LA PORTE TUNNEL is one of men spending long hours, energy, and money—experiencing setback, disappointment, elation, more disappointment and more elation. The long dreamed of project, predicted as early as 1919 by the *LaPorte Chronicle* that “someday a tunnel would be built under the channel,” has looked bad, good, better, worse, impossible, terrible, and exceedingly bright!

Tunnel advocates of this area, in their long and relentless battle, have shown the gentleness of kittens, the tenacity of tigers, the fury of Gulf hurricanes, the patience of Job, the tact of statesmen, and unparalleled service to their community.

In true American fashion, an idea grew in the minds of men. Every avenue of financing and construction was explored and many attempted, including privately financed-and-constructed railroad and vehicle toll tubes.

After numerous disappointing attempts by many groups and individuals, state, county, city, government agencies, and local civic groups joined forces. In September, 1945, successful proposals were submitted whereby the Washburn Tunnel between Pasadena and Galena Park and this tunnel were built. The Baytown-LaPorte Tunnel was financed by Harris County, Houston-Harris County Ship Channel Navigation District, state and federal finances.

This second tunnel beneath the ship channel today brings broader horizons and more expansive vistas to the sprawling Texas Gulf Coast. It is the culmination of a dream in many minds, the fulfillment of a pressing need, and an enduring monument to men of vision and dauntless courage.

## Tunnel Statistics

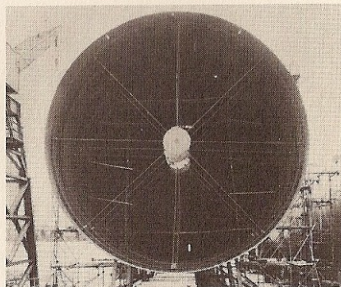


Total length	4,110 Ft.
Distance between portals	3,009 Ft.
Length of tube section	2,558 Ft.
Length of north and south concrete arch sections	225 Ft.
Length of north and south open ramps	551 Ft.
Roadway width	22 Ft.
Headroom in each lane	14 Ft.
Headroom in center of roadway	19 Ft. 8 Inches
Internal diameter of tube	28 Ft.
External diameter of tube	34 Ft. 10 Inches
Maximum grade	5.824 Pc.
Maximum depth (mean low water to top of tunnel)	55 Ft.
Maximum depth (mean low water to roadway)	76 Ft.
Maximum depth (mean low water to bottom of tunnel)	89 Ft.
Maximum length of single tube section	301 Ft.
Dredging - Hydraulic embankment	1,494,800 Cu. Yds.
Dredging - Backfill	497,500 Cu. Yds.
Tremie Concrete	1,512 Cu. Yds.
Concrete	52,270 Cu. Yds.
Structural steel in tubes	4,417 Tons
Reinforcing steel	2,384,345 Lbs.
Ceramic tunnel tile	1,332,000 Tiles
Number of fans	3
Maximum ventilation per minute	600,000 cfm
Time required for complete air change	2 minutes
Cost of north approach roads and interchange	\$606,291.77
Cost of south approach and interchange	\$734,032.27
Cost of State Highway 146 rerouting and bridge	\$218,461.66
Total tunnel construction cost	\$ 8,647,120.26
Total project cost	\$10,205,905.96

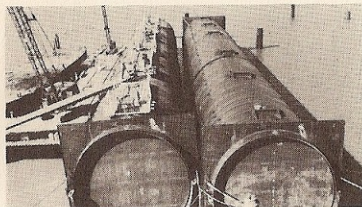




LOOKING NORTH toward Baytown and approach road across Black Duck Bay, with steel tubes in various stages of receiving concrete coating.



FIRST TUBE with rod spiders in place to control distortion on ways at Orange.



CONCRETE FORMS and reinforcing being placed on first tubes after arrival from Orange.



REMOVING last beam from bulkhead at south end of tunnel, showing thick concrete case.

NEARING COMPLETION, view from LaPorte side prior to installing tile lining.



## Tunnel Construction Progress in Pictures

### A New Link In International Travel

The Baytown-LaPorte tunnel is a vital link in coastal traffic lanes.

It brings the eastern and northern sections of our country closer to our south-of-the-border neighbors.

With completion of already designated coastal highways eastward, this tunnel will become an increasingly important link in travel along the sprawling Texas Gulf Coast.

### Texianic Tunnel Topics

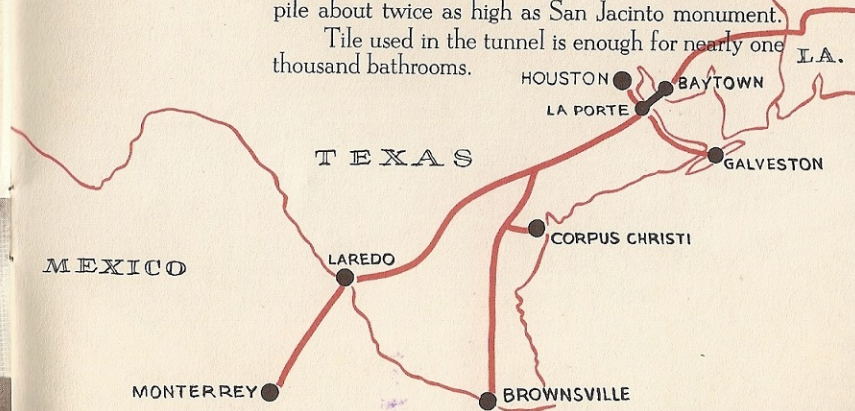
Enough steel was used in building Baytown-LaPorte tunnel to build a four-strand barbed wire fence around the State of Texas.

Concrete used in the tunnel would build a two lane highway twenty miles long.

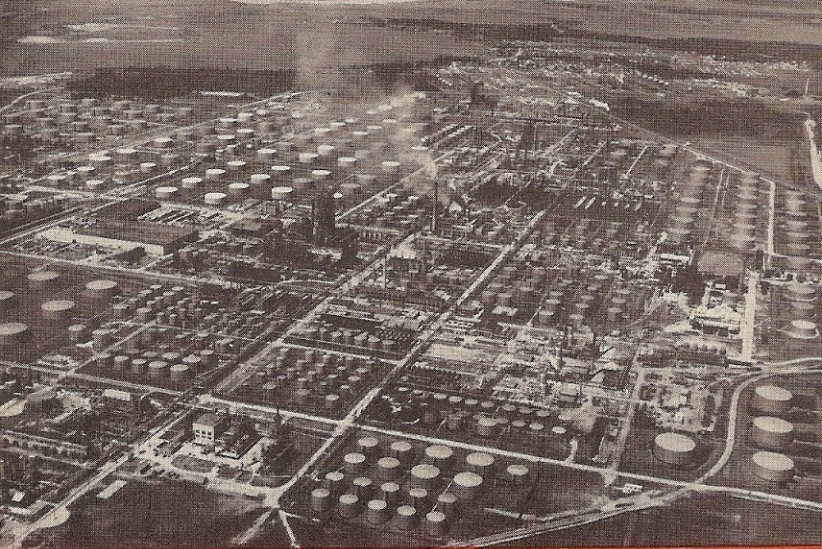
Baytown-LaPorte tunnel is the largest in Texas. There is enough standing room for all the population of Baytown and LaPorte, with more than enough headroom for the tallest Texan.

Dirt and sand dredged out to make room for the tunnel, if placed on a football field, would make a pile about twice as high as San Jacinto monument.

Tile used in the tunnel is enough for nearly one thousand bathrooms.







HUMBLE BAYTOWN REFINERY  
TWO MAJOR INDUSTRIES ADJACENT TO TUNNEL  
DU PONT CHEMICAL PLANT — LA PORTE

