Area projects approved

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State Editor

BATON ROUGE — The Lafayette area is in line for $9.2 million in improvements through the state construction program approved Friday.

Lafayette Rep. Ron Gomez, author of the capital outlay bill, got the House to agree with Senate amendments tacked on to the bill, although not all of them were to the liking of House members. Gomez said the problems could be taken care of with Gov. Buddy Roemer's line item veto powers.

The bill included funding for $1 billion in projects statewide as originally approved by the House, but was boosted by $40 million in the Senate.

Only $4 million of the total comes from the state general fund.

In the cash portion of the bill is $1.75 million for a natural gas distribution system for USL. The system will transport gas directly to the university, saving transportation costs through common carriers.

The cash portion also includes $500,000 for USL to purchase property. The funds are self-generated by the university.

In Priority 1, which is available for immediate use, is $245,000 for

bulkheading and utility relocation for the Abbeville Harbor and Terminal District. Another $500,000 is allocated for land acquisition at the Port of Iberia, which will enable the port to secure a federal grant.

In Priority 4, which would be ready for funding during the fourth quarter of the fiscal year, are two local projects totalling $2.5 million. Renovation of Buildings C and D at USL's Iberia Research Center is set for $2 million provided that a Division of Administration analysis of the cost-benefit ratio shows it is more economical than building a new facility.

Improvements for the Twin Parish Port totalling $500,000 also are included in Priority 4. The improvements are expected to attract new industry to the port.

In Priority 5, which sets up future construction funding, is another $3.4 million renovating Buildings C and D at the USL Iberia Research Center.

Several local projects are included in a category labeled “Not Requiring a Priority.” The projects will be funded immediately with money left over from previous bond sales.

The local projects include:

- $1.5 million for construction, rights of way and utilities for improving Kaliste Saloom Road in Lafayette.
- $1.58 million for energy conservation controls and water loops will be installed at USL.
- $776,250 at Lafayette Regional Vo-tech to replace air conditioning and heating units.

The Lafayette area also is eligible to receive funding under statewide

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programs, including portions of: $20 million in flood control, $15 million in a ports priority program, $23.7 million for airports; and $12 million in boating and fishing development.