BREAUX BRIDGE - Indian folklore has come to life in Breaux Bridge. According to a local legend, the Bayou Teche (Teche is the Chitimacha word for snake) is the indentation left by a huge snake that was killed by the Chitimacha tribe.

The City of Breaux Bridge recently completed the installation of a commemorative marker which tells the tale of the Teche, "Acadiana's highway," in the words of Ray Pellerin.

Pellerin spearheaded the project which includes a 20-foot granite structure depicting the twisting, turning serpent stretching from Port Barre to Morgan City.

"I had seen a drawing of the snake in the architecture department at USL," Pellerin said. Department Head Ed Cazayoux told Pellerin the drawing was a student's project based on the Chitimacha legend.

Pellerin envisioned the snake as something needed to display the significance of the hayou.

"This is the one highway we all live on here in Acadiana," he said. "The Teche cuts through the heart of the area."

With the creative help of Breaux Bridge resident Joel Theriot, Pellerin first designed a mosaic inlay of the snake for the sidewalk at Parc du Pont Breaux.

"The mosaic fell through because of financing," he said, "it was just too expensive."

As the owner of Pellerin Granite in Breaux Bridge, he knew he could make the project work with granite.

The snake is constructed from a solid piece of "Violetta" granite from Saudi Arabia which was cut into five pieces and re-jointed. The snake is mounted onto a 25-foot piece of "Absolute Black" granite from Zimbabwe.

Another kiosk shaped piece of "Absolute Black" granite will have the legend of the snake in English and French cut into the stone. The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers will also provide the bayou's statistics on the other side.

"A lot of people have had a hand in this project," Pellerin said. "The legend was translated into French by David Benoit and then checked and re-translated by the Breaux Bridge Senior High School French Class."

The principal, Ronnie Dare, read over it to ensure accuracy.

The city paid for a portion of the snake with a $5,000 grant from the Acadiana Arts Council and the Louisiana Division of the Arts, authored by Director of Development Kris Dugas.

The Kiwanis Club of Breaux Bridge also provided essential landscaping.

But the project was Pellerin's baby. He covered the difference of the nearly $10,000 monument out of his own pocket.

"The biggest satisfaction for me is the reaction I have seen," Pellerin said smiling. "Two LSU architecture professors stopped by Thursday and thought it was awesome."

To add some mystery to the story of the snake, the student who originally designed the snake has not been identified. Pellerin wants to give credit to the creator of the Teche Commemorative Project. He can be contacted at Pellerin Granite in Breaux Bridge.