



NEW ORLEANS PUBLIC BELT RAILROAD

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-PRESS RELEASE-

Charles H. Ponstein to serve on the New Orleans Public Belt Railroad Corporation's Board of Directors
Board Elects Laney J. Chouest Chairman

NEW ORLEANS — Gov. John Bel Edwards appointed Charles H. Ponstein to the Board of Commissioners of the Port of New Orleans as the St. Bernard Parish representative on the seven-member regional board. With the Port's acquisition of the New Orleans Public Belt Railroad effective Feb. 1, 2018, Port Commissioners also serve as directors of the New Orleans Public Belt Railroad Board. Ponstein will become NOPB's newest director with this appointment, succeeding William T. Bergeron.

"Charles Ponstein is a welcome addition to our Board of Directors at NOPB," said Brandy D. Christian, New Orleans Public Belt Railroad CEO. "He brings a legacy of leadership and public service in St. Bernard Parish that will benefit both the Port and Public Belt. We look forward to his contributions as we work to increase our economic contributions throughout Port NOLA's three-parish jurisdiction."

Ponstein is a landlord and owner of several commercial and industrial buildings. A life-long resident of St. Bernard Parish, Ponstein served as Councilman-At-Large from 1992-1996 and Parish President from 1996-2004. He has served as a member of the St. Bernard Parish Chamber of Commerce, St. Bernard Economic Development Commission, Regional Planning Commission and United Way of New Orleans.

"Although I have had the honor to serve in a number of political positions, I have never considered myself a politician. I view my career as one of a public servant and businessman who has a deep desire to serve my community," said Ponstein. "This position provides me another opportunity to help St. Bernard and the entire region. I am honored to serve."

Ponstein received his Bachelor of Science in Business Administration from the University of New Orleans in 1971 after graduating from Holy Cross High School in 1967. He opened Ponstein's Food Store, the first self-service gas station in the New Orleans metropolitan area in May of 1972. He and his wife, Claudette, have three children, Jeffrey, Neil and Sadie, and three grandchildren, Payton, Noelle and Roman.

Along with welcoming a new commissioner, members of the Board selected a new Executive Committee with the election of Laney J. Chouest as Chairman, Arnold B. Baker as Vice Chairman and Tara C. Hernandez as Secretary-Treasurer.

Chouest joined the Board in June 2014 when he was appointed by former Gov. Bobby Jindal.



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He succeeds Robert R. Barkerding Jr. whose term as Chairman of the Board of Commissioners of the Port of New Orleans expired this month. Barkerding will continue to serve as a Director.

“It has been an honor to work under Mr. Robert Barkerding’s leadership and I thank him for laying a strong foundation,” said Chouest. “Since my appointment in 2014, I have had the privilege to be a part of the Port of New Orleans’ positive direction and growth. With the acquisition of the Public Belt Railroad, I look forward to working with the Board, staff and all stakeholders to make the New Orleans Gateway one of the best global transportation hubs.”

Chouest is the owner and developer of NOLA Motorsports Park in Avondale, Louisiana, one of the largest and most modern motorsports destinations in the United States. A retired family practitioner, Chouest joined his family business, Edison Chouest Offshore, in 1983 and served in many aspects of company operations including design, construction and operation of various offshore support vessels. During his tenure at the company, Edison Chouest Offshore grew into a major worldwide force within the deepwater oil and gas exploration and production industry. Chouest retired from the company in 2006 to focus on the motorsports business.

The Board of Directors of the New Orleans Public Belt Railroad corporation now consists of seven directors, who are unsalaried and serve five-year staggered terms. Current members include: Chairman Laney J. Chouest, Vice Chairman Arnold B. Baker, Secretary-Treasurer Tara C. Hernandez, Robert R. Barkerding Jr, Darryl D. Berger, William H. Lamgenstein III, and Charles H. Ponstein.

The New Orleans Public Belt Railroad (NOPB) is a Class III switching railroad with the primary mission of serving the Port of New Orleans and local industries. The NOPB is a neutral carrier, with direct connections to six (6) Class 1 Railroads, for which we play an important role in expediting local and intermediate freight through the strategic New Orleans rail gateway. The NOPB is a diversified company, with a full service car repair shop, locomotive shop, track maintenance and repair division, and railcar storage capabilities

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