



# FOR NEW ORLEANS BUSINESSES



*Design inspired by the artwork of Simon*

Dear Friends in the Business Community,

The City of New Orleans' Department of Public Works and Sewerage and Water Board of New Orleans are working together to implement the most robust infrastructure improvement program our region has seen in a generation. With more than 200 projects totaling \$2.4 billion, there will be a record amount of street work in the city, and once complete, every neighborhood will feel the positive impact.

On average, there will be one construction contract bid opening per week beginning in 2017 and lasting through 2020. Additionally, this program will create thousands of construction jobs and opportunities for our small and disadvantaged businesses.

Because we know this construction will have an impact on our local residents and businesses, we are working very hard to ensure that there are plenty of resources available for people to learn about the projects so that they can prepare before construction begins. This guide will serve as a valuable resource to help local businesses continue to thrive during the construction process.

Fixing our streets is a priority and absolutely essential so that New Orleans continues to grow economically and become more resilient.

Sincerely,



Mitchell J. Landrieu, Mayor  
City of New Orleans



Dear Business Community Partners,

We love the beauty and charm of our almost 300 year-old city, but we don't always love its aging infrastructure, crumbling streets, and local flooding. Given New Orleans' heavy rainfall, low elevation, and marshy conditions, road construction and drainage improvements are imperative. But it's not just a "New Orleans thing"; periodic road construction is necessary in every city —pavement, sewers and utilities don't last forever.

The good news is that New Orleans has secured billions of dollars to complete a once-in-a-generation amount of infrastructure improvements. Residents, businesses and tourists will experience some short-term impacts along the way, but this is a major down payment on our city's future. Unlike the isolated and patchwork projects of the past, current projects integrate sewer, water, drainage, and road paving. These massive and lengthy projects require more coordination among numerous utility companies and contractors. But they also lead to a better result and a construction-free corridor for years to come.

While road construction can be hard on small businesses, the maintenance and repairs can be good for your company in the end. With this positive outcome in mind, the Mayor's Office of Economic Development and StayLocal partnered up to create this guide to road construction. Whether you're a seasoned business owner or the new shop on the block, we hope this guide provides some new ideas and helpful resources. We look forward to working side-by-side with you to ensure your success.

Sincerely,



**Rebecca Conwell**

Senior Advisor to the Mayor for Economic Development, City of New Orleans

and



**Dana Eness**

Executive Director of the Urban Conservancy and the StayLocal initiative



**"The Oak Street merchants were proactive as a group and as individuals. We kept communication open with the city and the contractor. We paid for our own signage. We shared whatever ideas we had to help one another. Yes, it was worth the pain. It is hard to attribute all the growth on Oak to the improved streetscape but it definitely is a main factor. The improvement on Oak Street has flowed over into the surrounding neighborhoods benefiting more than just Oak Street. I think we are a star in the city's crown."**

*--Oak Street business owner who went through eight months of road construction*



## HELPFUL CONTACTS DURING CONSTRUCTION

### CONSTRUCTION RESOURCES

#### Roadwork.nola.gov

Map and project timeline of New Orleans' infrastructure projects. Features include: pavement condition, planned work and anticipated schedule, type and scope of repairs, what to expect during construction and more.

[roadwork.nola.gov](http://roadwork.nola.gov)

Construction Hotline: 504-658-ROAD (7623)

Twitter: @RoadWorkNOLA | Facebook.com/RoadWorkNOLA

#### Sewerage and Water Board

SELA website: [swbno.org/work\\_drainageSELA.asp](http://swbno.org/work_drainageSELA.asp)

S&WB SELA Hotline: 504-585-2450 | S&WB "Boots on the Ground:" 504-258-8158

#### US Army Corps of Engineers

[mvn.usace.army.mil](http://mvn.usace.army.mil)

Construction Hotline: 1-877-427-0345

Facebook page: [facebook.com/SELAfloodprotection](https://facebook.com/SELAfloodprotection)

Twitter account: @TeamNewOrleans

SELA Property Damage Claim: [swbnoselaclaims.com](http://swbnoselaclaims.com) or 504-585-2450

#### Department of Public Works

[nola.gov/dpw](http://nola.gov/dpw)

540-658-8200 | dpw@nola.gov

### BUSINESS RESOURCES

#### Office of Economic Development

The mission of the Office of Economic Development is to attract, retain, and grow New Orleans businesses.

[nola.gov/economic-development](http://nola.gov/economic-development)

504-658-4200

#### StayLocal

As Greater New Orleans Independent Business Alliance, StayLocal's mission is to create an environment where local businesses can thrive through research, education, and advocacy.

[staylocal.org](http://staylocal.org)

504-252-1259

### WHO DAT?:

Helpful Contacts During Construction ..... 5

### THE GRAND MARSHAL

Working With the City ..... 6

### GENERAL BEST PRACTICES

Tips for Getting By ..... 7

### HOW'S YA MOM'N'EM?:

Neighborhood Engagement..... 8

### WHERE Y'AT?:

Successful Signage ..... 9

### MEDIA GRAS:

Television, Print, and Radio Coverage..... 10-15

### NEUTRAL GROUND:

Social Media and Online Marketing..... 16-18

### LAISSEZ LES BONS TEMPS ROULER:

Promotions and Events..... 19

### GATHER YOUR KREWE:

Work with Other Small Businesses and Allies..... 20-22

### LAGNIAPPE:

Additional Small Business Resources ..... 23



## WORKING WITH THE CITY

The City and Sewerage and Water Board are working together to implement an unprecedented program to restore our damaged infrastructure. Using a combination of local and federal funds, the \$2.4 billion program will be the most comprehensive that our region has seen in a generation. Information about upcoming projects can be found on the city's road works website [roadwork.nola.gov](http://roadwork.nola.gov) or by calling **504-658-ROAD**.

As early as a year before the start of construction, the city will start reaching out to businesses within the affected corridor. This will likely include mailings to business owners inviting them to planning meeting(s) for the project. Your concerns, questions, and suggestions are very important at this early stage in the planning process as the city has the greatest flexibility to incorporate changes into the project at this time, before decisions have been made. Please watch for mailings and **attend these initial meetings** to learn more about the project and to provide any input you may have.

The city will host another round of pre-construction meetings with the contractor and business owners. The goal of these meetings will not be to gather input, but rather to ensure everyone is aware of the upcoming construction schedule and pertinent construction contacts.

**Take note of all communications from the city and attend all meetings.** Projects change, and this will ensure you have the most current information and can organize your business accordingly.

**Work with other businesses by joining or forming an organization.** Consider assigning liaisons to the city and the construction group. That person can attend planning meetings to funnel business concerns to the group.

**Work closely with city staff to ensure the contracts include business friendly requirements.** These might include:

- Regularly scheduled meetings before and during construction with business owners and construction staff;
- Ensuring sidewalk access to businesses is available at all times;
- Suspending construction and clearing sites during critical business days or holidays;
- Having contractors post “all businesses are open” signs.



## TIPS FOR GETTING BY

**Secure a good line of credit while times are good.** It's important to get a line of credit during a good time when sales are up. That way you'll have it when and if there's an emergency.

**Keep your staff lean.** It's an unfortunate reality, but if you expect a significant decrease in customers once construction begins, you may need to consider keeping a lean staff. If someone quits in the spring, you may decide to keep the position vacant if there's a construction project coming up that summer. Other options might include job sharing or reducing hours.

**Reduce inventory.** When possible, reducing inventory can be a useful strategy to respond to slower periods due to construction.

**You may need to rework your budget.** For instance, more money might be required for cleaning. While there's little you can do to reduce the dust and noise of a construction site, you can focus on keeping your own business as dust-free as possible. If you only clean your windows once a week right now, you might consider increasing that during the construction period. You may also decide to allocate more time or money for general cleaning and upkeep, in order to keep construction dust to a minimum.

**Don't relocate.** Occasionally businesses facing lease renewals consider moving to avoid construction. Be careful—the city may end up reconstructing your new street just a few years later.

**Consider using a back entrance for better customer access.** Access to your business is often a problem during a construction project. Make sure there are signs directing your customers to the right entrance.

**Create a friendly rapport with construction workers.** While the on-site construction workers aren't the appropriate people to contact about concerns, it can only improve the situation if you create a friendly rapport with them. You might supply complimentary ice water to crews in the summer.

**Know who the supervisors are** and keep their contact information close at hand. The city will provide this information in the months leading up to the project.

**Contact suppliers to provide directions.** Find out when they'll be delivering, and talk with the project contractor to reschedule construction around your driveway at that time.



### NEIGHBORHOOD ENGAGEMENT

Local businesses are part of the neighborhood! You add character, provide amenities, and make neighborhoods vibrant and walkable. Let your community know you need their support during infrastructure disruptions.

Attending neighborhood association meetings, pre-construction public meetings, and other neighborhood events are excellent ways to engage with your neighbors.

- Be proactive! Reach out to neighborhood association leaders to be added to the agenda of the next meeting.
- Pass out flyers or yard signs to neighbors.
- Create an e-mail list of your neighbors to open the lines of communication.
- Invite neighbors to an upcoming store event or promotion.
- Ask neighbors to follow you on social media and share or like your posts.

For a complete list of neighborhood and community organizations, visit the [Mayor's Neighborhood Engagement Office's website](#). For more questions, information on upcoming meetings, or assistance in connecting with neighborhood associations contact the Neighborhood Engagement Office at 504-658-4980.



### SUCCESSFUL SIGNAGE

Traffic disruptions and obstructions near your store are an inevitable part of road construction projects. Creative use of signage can help cut through distractions and bring attention to your store.

**Make sure signage is clear.** See what sort of signs are going up to direct traffic and make sure they make sense for your customers. Construction crews aren't aware of your needs and often it's just a matter of asking. Also, make sure there's signage properly directing your customers to parking spaces.

**Window signs** are always allowed without a permit, and **A-frame signs** are allowed for use during business hours. Both of these forms of signage can be used to let motorists and pedestrians know you are open for business and direct them to your store's entrance or parking area.

**Banners** are a great way to advertise an event or season of shopping in your corridor. Banners require a temporary permit.

To learn more or to apply for a sign that requires a permit, visit the [City of New Orleans' One Stop Shop](#).



## TELEVISION, PRINT, AND RADIO COVERAGE

**Newsflash:** How you get word out about your business has changed in big ways with the advent of online news and the 24/7 news cycle. Most traditional media outlets have voracious appetites for pre-packaged content, so there are many effective low-cost ways to get word out about your deals, events and products.

### THE KEYS TO LOCAL PUBLICITY

There are two types of media targets.

- 1. Local “Mass” Media Coverage:** Publications that will have interest in your business because of your location. Your local broadcast stations, radio stations, and newspapers fit into this category.
- 2. Local “Interest-Based” Media Coverage:** This includes bloggers, travel sites, local celebrities that write about or feature your type of business. Do some Google searches to see who is writing about your industry.

### FIND THE MASS MEDIA IN YOUR AREA

- Newspapers:** A good starting point is the [USNPL](#) that lists newspapers by state and city.
- Local Radio Stations:** The signal of a powerful radio station will carry across parish or even state lines. [Radio Locator](#) will identify which signals reach your area by zip code, where the signal originates, the format of the radio station, and in many cases, contact information.
- Local Television Stations:** Start with the New Orleans area [Station Index](#).

**Local Online Publications and Websites:** Do a Google search for “New Orleans” and the words “news,” “blog,” or “event calendar”.

It may also help to think of the website associated with the local newspaper and TV stations as separate entities. They may produce separate content for the web.

## TARGET THE RIGHT PEOPLE AT THE RIGHT MEDIA PLACES

Newspaper staffs are stretched thin and may welcome your help in delivering a compelling story. You can target reporters from different sections, as well as their editors. Start with contacting individual reporters and move on to contacting their editors if there is no response or a negative response. The reporter might have to get approval from the editor to pursue a story.

In the example of a restaurant, you might want to target any of the following, depending on your coverage goals:

### 1. Food Critic and/or Editor of the Food/Dining Section

Your top goal would be to get a review of your restaurant. You can also contribute to the recipe section or pitch a story about foods that are in season.

### 2. Entertainment/Cultural Events Reporter or Section Editor

Are you participating in a fair, charity event, or hosting an event open to the public? If the paper has a calendar, you want to get the event listed. But more importantly, you want to be part of the paper’s coverage of the event.

### 3. Business Reporter

Has your business done something newsworthy or interesting? Have sales increased because you changed the menu, like offering family size portions to help large families save money when going out?





### Food for Thought: Radio Tip For Restaurants

The hosts of radio talk shows tend to be on-air for long periods of time, and like most people, they tend to get hungry.

Sometimes, a gift of free food sent to the station can generate free editorial coverage. The overnight personalities always seem to give fantastic reviews when they receive free pizza or food attached with the following note: “We’re big fans. Please enjoy the following complimentary pizza from (Your Local Pizza Place).”

## RADIO AND TV STATIONS CAN WORK DIFFERENTLY THAN A NEWSPAPER

When going after TV coverage and radio coverage, it’s important to target specific shows or segments. To get “on-air” reach out to producers and bookers, in addition to reporters that you already have a relationship with.

## FREE RADIO AND TELEVISION PRESS FROM ADVERTISING

Most media outlets will tell you dollars cannot buy free editorial coverage. However, there are a couple ways in which you can structure your advertising in order to get editorial coverage. If you are a good advertiser, they will broadcast remotely from your place of business. During the show, the guests will often comment about how they are broadcasting from your place.

## BEYOND PRESS RELEASES

### How to Pitch to Get Media Coverage

While press releases have their place, they are not the key to getting local press coverage. In fact, drafting a general press release can distract a business owner from developing individualized pitches for their media targets.

What are the chances of your press release being picked up by a regional news website? News sites can receive hundreds of press releases per day and can only publish a fraction of them. A journalist or producer is more likely to read a personalized e-mail over one of the hundreds of press releases they receive.

### What Should Your Email Contain?

First, it’s important to establish that this is not a generic email. The email should be specifically written for the recipient. Use the name of their show in the subject line of the email, use their name in the greeting, and reference a recent story they have covered.

Second, tell them what you want and give them a reason that their audience would be interested in the review or story.

## AN EMAIL IS NOT ENOUGH

Getting a reporter to cover you is like selling to a major client. It will usually require follow-up, persistence, and a positive attitude.

If they respond to your first email consider yourself lucky. If they do not respond, wait a week and then follow-up with a phone call and another email.

Once you make initial contact with the reporter or producer, connecting with them over social networks like Facebook, LinkedIn, and Twitter can be beneficial.

## WHAT TO DO ONCE YOU GET PRESS OPPORTUNITIES

### Ask What They Want

This helps both the interviewer and the subject of interview, as the answers are likely to be higher quality and more detailed.

Asking what the press wants goes beyond finding out questions in advance. The press might want to be able to interview a couple clients for the story or visit parts of your facility (like the kitchen). You want to be prepared for these types of requests.

### Make it Visually or Musically Appealing

You want to make sure that there are great visuals for stories that appear online, in a newspaper, or on TV. With online stories, you want to provide a number of high quality photos of your storefront and customers using your products for the story.



## FINAL POINTS ON GETTING THE RIGHT TYPE OF PRESS

### Point 1:

For small businesses, bad publicity is generally far worse than no publicity.

Before you go after publicity, try to anticipate if it will be good or bad. This is easier than it sounds. Look at the stories that reporters tend to write. If they tend to do “feel good” human interest stories, chances are the publicity will be good. Your tone is important, too! Showcasing your creative solutions to meeting your customers’ needs and good humor in the midst of intense road construction will more likely motivate people to seek out your business and support you.

### Point 2:

Not all publicity leads to sales.

When thinking about where to target, it’s important to consider who will be reading the article (or watching the video). Participating in an event that is likely to get local media coverage may be a better use of time than writing a press release. If you had a choice, which would you prefer to have: a picture of the reporter eating your specialty dish, with a caption that mentions your restaurant? Or a quote in the paper about the event? Yep, the picture.

## REMEMBER: YOU ARE NOT ALONE!

You may be thinking this is great, but who has time for this? Band together with other businesses in your area and business assistance providers (see list under “Lagniappe” on page 21) to work collaboratively on getting positive media attention for your entire shopping district. Your neighborhood associations, your merchants’ association and citywide business assistance organizations are there to help you create some marketing buzz around your block or commercial corridor.



The advertisement features a central image of a street scene with a sign that reads "OAK ST. PROPOSED IMPROVEMENTS". Below the image is a yellow tag with the text "Get Your Oak Street Fix!" and "new sidewalks • better streets • beautiful landscape". The background of the advertisement is a list of local businesses, including Family Barber Shop, Queen of the Ball, Oak Street Shoe Repair, Gelato Pazzo Caffè, Royal Passage Ltd., Blue Cypress Books, Haase's Shoes & Young, Beatrice Shop, Carrollton, Lil Dave's Alterations, Paul's Framing, Maple Leaf Bar, Jacques-Imo's, White Oak, Premier Medical Rehab, Café Au Clay, Driscoll Antiques & Repairs, Michael Joyner Catering, Maximillian's, Body Bistro, Gulf South, Home Care Service, Sun Finance, Brewstock, Graffiti Graphics, Station 8801, Family Barber Shop, Queen of the Ball, Oak Street Shoe Repair, Gelato Pazzo Caffè, Royal Passage Ltd., Blue Cypress Books, Haase's Shoes & Young, and Beatrice Shop.

**We're making improvements to Oak Street, so you can have more memories like:**  
Alligator Cheesecake at Jacquimo's, Coffee at Cafe' Au Clay, Homemade gelato from Gelato Pazzo Cafe, Poboyos from the Poboy Festival, Sno Balls year round at Queen of the Ball, Rebirth at the Maple Leaf, Eggs & Bacon from Oak St. Cafe

**staylocal.org**  
CULTURE COMMERCE ENVIRONMENT  
GO TO WWW.STAYLOCAL.ORG FOR EVENTS AND LISTINGS

**oakstreet**  
MAIN STREET™  
ONLYONOAK.COM

## CASE STUDY: GET YOUR OAK STREET FIX

When Oak Street was undergoing major road construction nearly a decade ago, merchants worked with StayLocal and the Oak Street Main Street Association to create a full-page advertisement in Gambit reminding shoppers to “Get Your Oak Street Fix.” They focused on the beautiful improvements in sidewalks, streets, and landscaping they would soon enjoy. There was concern among business owners along the corridor about the temporary negative impact the construction would have on businesses, but the outward-facing messaging was upbeat and forward-looking, and focused on the customer experience.



## SOCIAL MEDIA AND ONLINE MARKETING

Social media and online marketing are excellent channels for providing updates, connecting with customers, and letting people know you are open for business.

### WHY IT WORKS:

- **It connects you directly to your consumers.** Social media is about connecting. Easily share updates, sales, contests, new arrivals, and more!
- **It's responsive.** On social media customers are able to communicate directly with businesses. Treat your customers the same online as you would in-person and be responsive. Monitor reviews and comments on websites such as Yelp, Trip Advisor, and Facebook. Respond to questions, compliments, and complaints quickly and professionally.
- **It updates frequently.** Unlike web pages that feature static content, social media is updated frequently. Use platforms such as Facebook and Twitter to post updates about the construction project, road closures, parking availability, sales, promotions, and other marketing efforts. To help to stay on track, consider creating social media guidelines for your business (i.e. post frequency, tone, content, hashtags).
- **It's interactive.** Stay top-of-mind by keeping your customers involved online. Host online contests, offer special discount codes exclusively for social media followers, have customers submit photos, use your hashtags, and tag your store on their social media platforms.
- **It's fun.** Creative and distinctive content receives the most attention online. Use platforms such as Instagram and Facebook to post photos of your store, products, staff, or a NOLA activity that fits with your brand. Also, get creative when it comes to posting about the construction.

### EXAMPLES:

- A high-end clothing store posted a picture about a construction sale with their fashionable staff in the store's clothing wearing hard hats.
- Life Yoga on West Mag posted a creative photo letting people know both lanes at Magazine and Jefferson were open.
- Café Luna on West Mag poked fun at the detours with a clever sign when they re-painted their porch and shared it on Facebook.



### PITFALLS:

**You're on every platform.** Only join the social media platforms you need and have time to manage. It's better to do great marketing on 1 or 2 channels than do it poorly across 5 channels. When choosing a platform consider what platform your customers are on and what you want to accomplish (i.e. educate, connect, sell, update). Here are two cheat sheets:

- *Accion:* [Choosing the Right Social Media Platform For Your Business](#)
- *Digital Information World:* [Understanding How Brands And Users Connect On Social Media](#)

**You don't play by the social media rules.** Each platform has an algorithm that determines who sees your post. Be wary of post frequency, number of likes, and text length to optimize your social media impact. The websites below provide you with a few "rules" to follow:

- *Buffer Social:* [The 29 Most Common Social Media Rules](#)
- *Hootsuite:* [Common Social Media Etiquette for Businesses](#)

**You're not genuine.** Stay true to your brand and your work.

## SOCIAL MEDIA AND ONLINE MARKETING RESOURCES:

See if your chamber, local first movement, and other business support organizations are hosting workshops on social media and online marketing.

- *HeidiCohen.com*: [80 Social Media Marketing Tools](#)
- *Business2community.com*: [The 7 Best Resources for Social Media Marketing](#)
- *StayLocal*: [Social Media Tools](#)

## WEBSITE

Your website is an extension of your business. Make sure to include practical information such as hours and locations as well as the story of your business. Design your website to let customers get to know you, not just what you sell.

Have a **“Frequently Asked Questions”** section for road construction concerns (i.e. parking, road access, business entrance, changes in business hours, etc.).

**Explore e-commerce.** If your business is dependent on foot traffic, look into expanding your e-commerce site. This allows loyal and local customers to bypass the construction for their favorite products and it also opens you up to a larger customer market.

## EMAIL (LISTS OF CUSTOMERS)

**Gather customer contact information before construction begins** so you can keep them informed of road conditions, best routes and promotional specials during the construction period. Consider sending weekly e-mails to customers—if you keep them informed and in the loop, they may not be as likely to change their buying habits during construction.

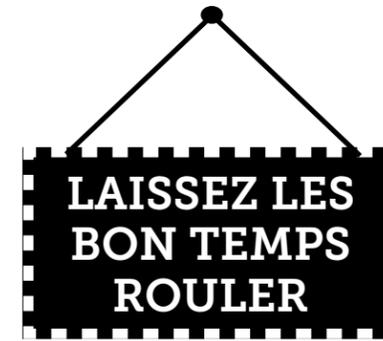
## BRANDING AND OTHER MARKETING TIPS

**Identify marketing, advertising and design firms in the neighborhood** that might provide pro bono assistance.

**Work with your employees to develop a game plan.** Share construction updates and information on marketing efforts, and allow employees to share their ideas.

**Keep on message.** Consider keeping a script next to your phone, so that you and your employees have quick and easy directions to provide to customers.

**Be positive.** Encourage and generate a positive, healthy environment to support your staff and to ensure retention of valued employees.



## PROMOTIONS AND EVENTS

**Deliver products to your customers.** To reach customers unable or unwilling to navigate the construction, one restaurant initiated a catering business. They credit this as one method that helped their business endure construction.

**Extend business hours.** Consider staying open later in the evening after construction crews are finished for the day. Be flexible to accommodate customer demands and other perceived needs.

Example:

On West Mag business owners stayed open late during the holiday shopping season. In the evening there is less traffic, crowds, and no metered parking making it easier for shoppers.

**Creative Promotions.** Come up with creative ways to drive traffic during construction.

Examples:

- Have a construction worker sit outside your shop during the lunch break and talk to kids and families about the ongoing project. The trucks are a big draw for kids.
- Have a prize drawings or a big event that is above and beyond what you would usually do in your business to attract customers.
- Host a trunk show with a designer meet and greet.
- Host a sip and shop event.

**Rally around national and local events.** Use local and national momentum around holidays and events to bring in customers.

Examples:

- Local festivals
- Small Business Saturday - November
- GiveNOLA Day - May
- [Independents Week](#) - July
- Independent Bookstore Day - April
- Independent Retailer Month - July
  - Other days for independent businesses in your industry





### WORK WITH OTHER SMALL BUSINESSES AND ALLIES

**Reach out to businesses in other neighborhoods** that have dealt with construction projects. Discuss how they prepared for the project and what actions they took during and after construction. Ask what worked well and what didn't.

**Join local business organizations or consider forming one.** There's strength in numbers. Make sure to communicate with other local leaders so you can band together and make concerns heard. Consider assigning association staff as liaisons to the city and the construction group. That person can attend planning meetings to funnel business concerns to the groups.

**Consider pooling advertising resources** with other businesses in the construction zone to let the public know you're still open for business. If you're part of a business association, consider agreeing to increase dues temporarily so the organization can do district-wide marketing. (See "Oak Street Fix" example.)

**Create a listserv and/or a members-only Facebook group** to communicate with other business owners about construction and successful tactics businesses. Also consider hosting regular meetings with other local businesses to plan promotions.

**Create a corridor-wide event to widen your reach.** Successful events like Magazine Street's Champagne Stroll or the Whitney White Linen Night create a festive atmosphere with live music, sip and shop opportunities, and special promotions.

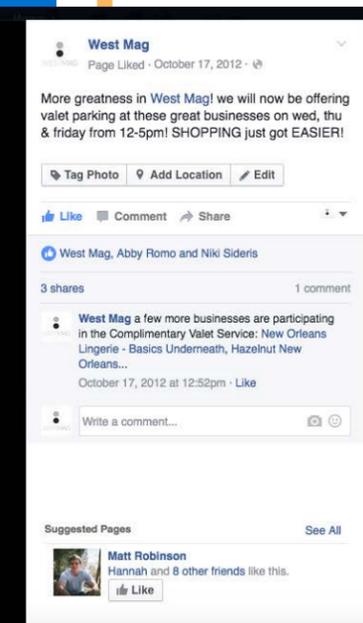
**Keep Your Business Lean and Flexible.** If you expect a significant decrease in customers once construction begins, consider keeping a lean staff. Strategies include job sharing, reducing hours, and not filling vacant positions. Additionally, reducing inventory can be a useful way to respond to slower periods due to construction.

### CASE STUDY: WEST MAG

StayLocal, Greater New Orleans' independent business alliance, worked with the City of New Orleans and business owners along the West Magazine corridor to support and promote the businesses affected by SELA road construction.

Through combining their resources, here is what they accomplished over a four-month span:

- 156 daily underwriting spots during peak drive time on 89.9 FM WWNO.
- 50 yard signs distributed and two banners installed.
- Met with 20 attendees at the Audubon Riverbend Neighborhood Association's monthly meeting.
- Hosted an [Uber campaign](#) on Small Business Saturday coupled with an e-blast from Uber to its subscribers. Uber reported an 18% open rate and 2.5% click rate. That's twice their normal open rate and click rates!
- Compiled a ["Shop Local for the Holidays" Pinterest Board](#) highlighting Magazine Street retail businesses.
- Featured WWL-TV story aired November 17, 2015.
- [Uptown Messenger editorial](#) published November 11, 2015
- Created a [West Mag Facebook page](#) to share information with customers.
- Launched ["Shopkeeper Stories"](#) on Uptown Messenger! This story series shares the vision and personality of New Orleans business owners. The goal is to inspire New Orleanians to shop small and shop local—even if it takes a little extra time!



### More Collaborative Marketing Ideas:

- Place yard signs throughout the neighborhood as permitted.
- Post captivating images online and on social media.
- Advertise in neighborhood newsletters and business publications.
- Create a marketing/communications campaign to incite media to cover the reconstruction as news and spawn publicity for businesses.
- Host a series of business-generating promotional events in the neighborhood, such as a local band, farmers' and craft markets, 3K run/walk, sidewalk sales, or vendor.
- Create a public Facebook page or webpage focused on neighborhood events and promotions to draw customers to local businesses.
- Send a newsletter to customers encouraging them to frequent area businesses.
- Develop coupon books usable at area businesses. Distribute them city-wide and make them available on businesses' and the chamber's websites.
- Create a "Get-Around Guide" that helps people navigate construction: lists open streets, alternative routes, and available parking. Put the guide on your website, in e-blasts, and keep copies by your registers to guide callers.
- Distribute "Local Money" certificates that cost \$4 for people to redeem for \$5 at participating area businesses.
- Shared ad buys to tout the entire commercial corridor as a destination, not just your business.



#### Ask Loan Providers for Forbearance During Construction

One Oak Street merchant shared the following tip for managing costs during construction: "Our councilperson, Shelly Midura, met with us to hear our concerns. We came up with the idea of requesting "forbearance" from lenders holding mortgages or business loans. Ms. Midura personally wrote to all the major banks asking for their help. Gulf Coast Bank not only granted us forbearance but structured it so the delayed payments went on the back end of the note. Otherwise forbearance is structured for a 3-month reprieve but the 4th through 6th month notes are 1.5 times the regular note. That would be a hardship."



### ADDITIONAL SMALL BUSINESS RESOURCES

#### TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE PROVIDERS:

[America's Small Business Development Center Louisiana \(LSBDC\)](#) provides no cost business consulting and technical assistance such as one-on-one consulting, training, and information to help business owners.

[Dillard University Economic Development Corporation \(CDC\)](#) provides business services, including an information resource center, computer literacy training, grant writing workshops, and tax services.

[Operation HOPE](#) is a national nonprofit that provides financial dignity education and economic empowerment programs for low- or moderate-income youth, individuals and families in underserved communities.

[U.S. Small Business Administration \(SBA\) - Louisiana District Office](#) is an independent agency of the federal government created to aid, counsel, assist and protect the interests of small business concerns, to preserve free competitive enterprise, and to maintain and strengthen the overall economy of our nation. SBA offers local workshops and technical assistance.

[Southern University at New Orleans Small Business Development & Management Institute \(SBDMI at SUNO\)](#) offers workshops and free consulting services to fuel the establishment and growth of small businesses, primarily in New Orleans East.

[Urban League of New Orleans Women's Business Resource Center \(WBRC\)](#) provides training, assistance, and resources to aspiring and existing entrepreneurs, including one-on-one counseling, training programs, financial analysis, and technology assistance.

#### OTHER BUSINESS RESOURCES:

City Planning Commission: [New Orleans Business Continuity Guide](#)

Urban League of Greater New Orleans: [Small Business Guide to Disaster Planning & Recovery](#)

Louisiana Small Business Administration: [Resource Guide for Small Business](#)