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Ribbon-cutting ceremony set for new Big Carlos Pass Bridge and Big Carlos Bridge Artificial Reef

Fort Myers, FL, June 9, 2026 – Lee County invites the community to celebrate the completion of the new Big Carlos Pass Bridge and the Big Carlos Bridge Artificial Reef with a ribbon cutting at 9:30 a.m. Tuesday, June 30.

The event will happen in the shade under the south side of the bridge by Lovers Key State Park, about 2 miles north of New Pass Bridge. The Big Carlos Pass Bridge is about 6 miles south of the Matanzas Pass Bridge and connects Estero Island to Lovers Key.

The bridge project includes:

- A new fixed-span bridge with a 60-foot navigation clearance over Big Carlos Pass, replacing the aged bascule bridge
- One travel lane in each direction
- Bicycle lanes
- A 6-foot-wide sidewalk along the north side of Estero Boulevard
- A 10-foot shared-use path along the south side of Estero Boulevard
- Relocation of existing infrastructure for Lee County Utilities and Bonita Springs Utilities

As a part of the project, sections of the old bridge were repurposed to create the Big Carlos Bridge Artificial Reef. The new reef is made up of more than 2,400 tons of bridge material and is about 4 nautical miles west of Big Carlos Pass (26° 22.850'N, -81° 57.733'W). This reef immediately creates new habitat for an array of marine organisms, many of which are recreationally and commercially important species. The reef also provides a new destination for anglers and divers to explore.

The Florida Department of Transportation completed a Project Development & Environment Study for the Big Carlos Pass Bridge Replacement in October 2021. Construction of the bridge began in summer 2023; the bridge is expected to have a lifespan of 75 years.

The official ribbon-cutting event will include brief remarks from Lee County Commissioners and other officials. Attendees are encouraged to wear appropriate footwear, as the parking lot is an uneven surface.

Those unable to attend the ribbon-cutting ceremony can watch it via livestream on Lee County's YouTube channel, www.youtube.com/@LeeCountyFLBOCC/videos or on Lee County's Facebook channel, www.facebook.com/leecountyflbocc.

Additional information is available:

- Bridge – <https://bigcarlosbridgeproject.com> and www.leegov.com/dot
- Artificial reef – www.leegov.com/naturalresources/marine/ArtificialReefs

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