



EXPERTS | 2019

HNTB expert:

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“U.S. infrastructure now faces threats from increasingly powerful natural disasters. As we work to restore our cities and communities after these events, it is crucial to design infrastructure that is prepared for whatever the future may bring.”

John Basilica, Jr., leads HNTB’s resilient infrastructure services practice, and has significant experience in large-scale disaster assessment, recovery and preparedness. He also serves as Gulf Coast District Leader and Vice President, overseeing offices in Louisiana and Mississippi.

Basilica has 23 years of experience in executive positions in state government agencies, his project experience includes serving as program manager for the Louisiana Department of Transportation and Development’s (LaDOTD) \$180 million program for repairs to federal-aid-eligible roadways after Hurricane Katrina, and as project manager for Superstorm Sandy Disaster Assistance/Road Repair for the New York City Department of Transportation. Additionally, he served as principal-in-charge on an extension-of-staff services contract for the Coastal Protection and Restoration Agency to overhaul New Orleans’ flood protection system.

Prior to joining HNTB, he served as the chief of staff and later as undersecretary of LaDOTD. He also performed similar duties for the Louisiana State Military Department for three years.

In the summer of 2016, Basilica was appointed by Louisiana Gov. John Bel Edwards to the Governor’s Task Force on Transportation Infrastructure Investment,

which studied overall state transportation funding and made recommendations to the state government in December 2016.

Basilica can speak about a wide variety of topics, including:

- **Resilient construction**

A dramatic increase in the frequency and severity of catastrophes – from windstorms to hurricanes to wildfires – is having a profound impact on communities’ stability and sustainability. These events can cause agencies to have to rewrite the book on design and construction, and to rebuild with adaptation and resiliency in mind. As they prepare for future events, agencies can consider building roads that better facilitate evacuations, creating drainage systems to help alleviate flooding, constructing storm shelters and wastewater treatment plants above the base flood elevation, and other tactics. It’s critical to rebuild for the next disaster – not from the last one.

- **Disaster recovery and federal funding**

After a disaster strikes, private-sector engineers can quickly be engaged to assess areas of risk; develop customized scopes for recovery and rebuilding; bridge knowledge and relationship gaps that may exist between a transportation agency and its local, state and federal partners; and more. After immediate response and recovery

efforts are undertaken, preliminary damage assessments and detailed cost estimates and scope development must begin. Federal funding largely hinges on local agencies' early understanding of damages, so there is pressure to have full knowledge of their needs.

If damages are not properly captured, scoped and estimated early on, there is risk for underfunding, appeals and delays. Third-party engineering assessments can ensure all scope items are documented early and agencies get the dollars they deserve.

- **Damage assessment**

After a disaster, damage assessments should be performed as quickly as possible so transportation agencies understand which assets need repair and how to prioritize. However, fixing only "apparent" damage may not be enough. Latent damage – the damage we can't see and don't always detect – is a huge issue we are only beginning to comprehend. After a major coastal storm for example, floodwaters that submerge transportation infrastructure and halt service can create mold and corrosion and weaken essential structures over time - long after initial cleanup is complete.

Transportation agencies should prepare broad grant requests for additional federal assistance for destruction that isn't obvious, ensuring they cover all potential costs associated with recovery.

Education

Master of Science in construction engineering and management, University of Maryland College Park

Bachelor of Science in civil engineering, United States Military Academy at West Point

Professional affiliations

Louisiana Good Roads and Transportation Association - Board of Directors

Select media and appearances

Equipment World's Better Roads, April 28, 2017 - "Louisiana infrastructure task force releases investment plan circular"

To schedule an interview with John Basilica and for more information, contact:

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