Progress continues on I-74 River Bridge project

Huge strides have been made to build the new I-74 Mississippi River Bridge in the Quad Cities between Bettendorf, Iowa and Moline, Illinois. From ice to rising river levels, working in the river is challenging. Construction workers take crew boats each day to get to the work sites and contractors rely on barges to deliver project equipment and materials such as cranes and concrete. With extraordinary effort and patience, crews are working through all types of weather to make the new bridge a reality.

The Iowa Department of Transportation is ensuring the delivery of a safe, reliable new bridge that improves transportation for residents and visitors in the Quad Cities.

The I-74 River Bridge is complex and we have experienced challenges, but there is no question regarding whether the bridge can be properly built.

As highlighted in recent media reports, discussions between the Iowa Department of Transportation and contractor have been focused on the time and resources necessary to complete the project. These types of discussions are not uncommon in construction, and departments of transportation often provide clarifications on project requirements, adjust completion deadlines, and consider financial modifications if warranted. The Iowa Department of Transportation carefully reviews any requests for clarification or modifications submitted by the contractor, and both parties are working together to resolve issues within the scope of the contract. Construction of the I-74 River Bridge continues to progress while these contractual discussions take place.

The Iowa Department of Transportation is confident in the ability of the bridge to be built, the capability of the contractor to perform the work, and the safety and performance of the completed structure.
SAFETY IS TOP PRIORITY

SAFETY OF THE STRUCTURE IS THE NUMBER ONE PRIORITY OF THE I-74 RIVER BRIDGE PROJECT TEAM.

As part of the project’s commitment to safety, there is inspection staff on-site to monitor construction every day. Established procedures are also in place to ensure quality of the structure and that each element meets design requirements. Inspectors check everything, including testing concrete strength, fabrication and installation of the arch segments, tensioning of the bolts, quality of the welding, and review surveying results.

ENSURING CONSTRUCTION ACCOUNTABILITY

It is standard for major construction agreements to contain provisions holding contractors accountable for delays attributed to the contractor. There is a specific contract provision for the I-74 River Bridge project that allows the Iowa Department of Transportation to address delays through assessing liquidated damages, which is a monetary penalty for each day past the determined completion date. However, because there are items that are still being discussed that may affect the completion date, it’s premature to assess whether liquidated damages may be due.

PROGRESS BREAKDOWN

RIVER BRIDGE

- Progress on the arch for the Iowa-bound bridge is continuing. A total of thirty arch ribs and four struts will be installed to form the basket-handle arch.
- Work is continuing to form the deck (roadway) for the new Iowa-bound bridge.
- All Iowa-bound bridge piers are complete and workers are making steady progress on the Illinois-bound bridge piers.

BETTENDORF IOWA

- The new Iowa-bound I-74 viaduct as well as the ramps are nearly complete.
- The new Iowa-bound I-74 on-ramp at Grant Street/U.S. 67 was completed and opened to traffic.

MOLINE ILLINOIS

- Iowa-bound I-74 lanes, overpasses, and ramps are nearly complete.
- The new 6th Avenue ramp was completed and opened to traffic.
- The newly paved Iowa-bound I-74 lanes are scheduled to be completed and opened to traffic by the end of 2019.

GOAL IN SIGHT

From the interstate on the Iowa and Illinois sides to the River Bridge itself, the I-74 river bridge project is moving forward. There have been adjustments to the project timeline due to a variety of factors, but construction crews are continuing to work as swiftly as possible to build a safe, sound and reliable transportation system.

Ultimately, those efforts will result in improved mobility and safety for motorists and an iconic bridge structure that will stand tall in serving the Quad Cities for generations to come.