

INFORMATION RELEASE



Office of the Director

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WEIGHT RESTRICTION TO REMAIN ON BLACK RIVER BRIDGE

LITTLE ROCK (6-17) – An independent consultant analysis of the Highway 63 Black River Bridge near Black Rock has been concluded and verifies the findings of the Arkansas State Highway and Transportation Department (AHTD) concerning the present condition of the bridge, according to AHTD officials.

The maximum legal weight limit for five-axle trucks, normally 80,000 pounds, was reduced in February to 66,000 pounds on the bridge. The reduction was based on an engineering analysis and subsequent inspection by the Arkansas State Highway and Transportation Department (AHTD). Because of the unique design of the bridge, a consultant with experience in that type of structure was then retained to further evaluate the bridge. Based on the consultant's evaluation, the Department has determined that interim repairs aimed at raising the weight restriction are not feasible.

“The goal of the Department is to extend the life of the bridge and keep it in operation until we build a new one,” stated AHTD Director Dan Flowers. “The findings of the consultant analysis agree with our earlier assessment. Leaving the weight limit at 66,000 pounds and maintaining a lower speed limit are our best options to safely extend the life of the bridge until it is replaced. This is our safest option.”

Planning for a new bridge has already begun. Replacement of the 2,608-foot long bridge is tentatively scheduled to begin in early 2013.

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