

INFORMATION RELEASE



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NR 17-047
February 22, 2017

U.S. HIGHWAY 70 (BROADWAY) BRIDGE OPENING IMMINENT AHTD TO CELEBRATE FIRST DRIVE ACROSS NEW STRUCTURE

PULASKI COUNTY (2-22) – The new U.S. Highway 70 (Broadway) Bridge crossing the Arkansas River is anticipated to open sometime next week and plans are in the works for a ceremonial first crossing of the new structure, according to Arkansas State Highway and Transportation Department (AHTD) officials.

The project contractor Massman Construction Co. has alerted AHTD that it anticipates opening the bridge to traffic at a time yet to be determined next week. Work on the structure has progressed so well throughout the unseasonably warm winter months that the opening will occur almost a full month ahead of the 180-day schedule Massman included in its \$98.4 million bid to replace the river crossing.

Although an exact time of the opening is unknown at this time, the AHTD has scheduled a ceremonial first crossing media event that will take place on **Monday, February 27 at 3:30 p.m.** Among the dignitaries included in the procession of vehicles are members of the Arkansas Highway Commission, AHTD Director of Highways and Transportation Scott Bennett, Pulaski County Judge Barry Hyde, North Little Rock Mayor Joe Smith, and Little Rock Mayor Mark Stodola.

Since the site is still very much an active construction work zone, the event will be closed to the general public. Only credentialed media will be allowed on the bridge to witness the occasion. **Participating media will enter from the Little Rock side beginning at 3:15 p.m.** and will be routed to a staging area where hard hats and safety vests will be distributed. Once properly outfitted, media will be escorted to an area on the bridge where AHTD Director Scott Bennett will say a few words before the first crossing. **Please note the event begins at 3:30. After this time, late-arriving media will not be accommodated.**

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When the bridge opens to traffic next week, only north-south vehicular connectivity across the Arkansas River will be available. Massman Construction Co. will spend the following weeks completing the tie-in of the southbound off-ramp that will carry traffic to westbound State Highway 10. Additionally, the 16-foot shared-use path will not open for several weeks as Massman works to tie-in ramps on both sides of the river to the Arkansas River Trail. Announcements will be made as these features become available.

Motorists can expect occasional lane closures on the bridge once it opens to traffic as the contractor works to complete miscellaneous items. The lane closures will occur during off-peak times (outside of commute hours and on weekends).

A ribbon-cutting and commissioning of the new bridge will be held in the west parking lot across from Dickey-Stephens Park on **Thursday, April 6 at 4:00 p.m.** The public is invited to participate in this celebration. More information will be forthcoming as plans are finalized.

The U.S. Highway 70 (Broadway) Bridge was closed on Wednesday, September 28, 2016 (see our video recap of the event here: <https://vimeo.com/ahtd/BroadwayDecommission>) as Kansas City-based Massman Construction Co. prepared for a 180-day period in which the existing structure would be completely dismantled and a new structure would be constructed and opened to traffic.

The 180-day closure period was included in Massman's \$98.4 million bid to replace the Broadway Bridge. The construction contract includes an incentive / disincentive clause of \$80,000 per day. If Massman opens the new bridge to traffic before the 180 days expires, the company will earn an incentive of \$80,000 per day up to a maximum of 50 days. If the 180 days is exceeded, Massman will be charged \$80,000 per day with no limit on the number of days that amount can be assessed.

