

PRESS RELEASE

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RIDOT REOPENING STILLWATER VIADUCT AHEAD OF SCHEDULE

During a tour of the Stillwater Viaduct in Smithfield, the Rhode Island Department of Transportation (RIDOT) today announced that it will be reopening the bridge to traffic next week on Wednesday, October 24, 2012. This new opening date is approximately five weeks ahead of schedule.

The 80-year-old bridge – at 450 feet long with 11 spans including huge concrete arches over the water – carries Route 116 (George Washington Highway) over the Stillwater Reservoir. It has been closed to all traffic since March while the Department completely replaced the superstructure, made sub-structure repairs and performed minor concrete repairs to the bridge's arches. The replacement structure is the same width as the existing bridge, with sidewalks on both sides.

Through a \$9.4 million contract with Northern Construction Services, RIDOT made use of pre-cast components wherever possible and placed a \$10,000-per-day incentive clause in the contract for every day ahead of schedule the bridge was open to traffic (maximum of 30 days). Additionally, the Department coordinated closely with the community on the decision to close the bridge so the work could be accelerated. Originally the Department considered phased construction that would have kept the bridge partially open to traffic, but would have taken three to four years to complete.



"This is the kind of transportation project we like to see: planned with community input, utilizing effective accelerated construction techniques, and, as a result, completed significantly ahead of schedule," Governor Lincoln D. Chafee said. "Going forward, when significant improvements or replacements are necessary, we will continue to explore innovative ways to execute them efficiently and come in ahead of schedule with minimum interruption of service."

"This day was many years in the making and I am pleased to have secured \$5 million in federal funding to help renovate this beautiful bridge to make it safer and more efficient. The Stillwater Viaduct is an important transportation link for in-town traffic and people traveling along the George Washington Highway. Today's reopening should help boost local businesses and is a smart, long-term investment in our economic future," said U.S. Senator Jack Reed, a member of the Appropriations Committee, who initially secured federal funding for the project back in 2005.

"Investing in our roads and bridges supports jobs while making the daily commute safer for Rhode Islanders, which is why I've helped lead the fight in the Senate to secure federal funding for transportation projects like this one," said U.S. Senator Sheldon Whitehouse. "I visited the Stillwater Viaduct construction site back in April and saw firsthand the hard work being done here, and I congratulate RIDOT and the individuals who worked on this project for completing it so far ahead of schedule. This is great news for the people of Smithfield."

"I'm pleased that the Stillwater Viaduct is ahead of schedule. The improvements made to carry Route 116 across the Stillwater Reservoir are valuable investments in Rhode Island infrastructure," Congressman David N. Cicilline said.

"We thank all those involved, from the community for their cooperation in allowing us to close the bridge to the prime contractor and RIDOT staff assigned to this project for their hard work in getting the bridge ready for traffic ahead of schedule," RIDOT Director Michael P. Lewis said. "The Department will continue to pursue the use of accelerated bridge construction techniques to complete our projects as quickly as possible."

RIDOT has witnessed great success with other bridge projects using accelerated construction methods. In late 2010, RIDOT replaced the Round Top Bridge in Burrillville in just 41 days. More recently, this August the Department reopened the Frenchtown Brook Bridge in East Greenwich in only 33 days.

All future bridge projects will be evaluated to determine the feasibility of using accelerated construction methods. Not all bridges can be rehabilitated in this way. The impact to traffic (the use of these techniques often call for a total road closure), the

complexity of utility relocations and the amount of work needed to be accomplished in the project must be taken into consideration.

Similar approaches are planned for the replacement of larger bridge structures in the next two years including the East Shore Expressway Bridge in East Providence, which carries traffic from I-195 East onto Exit 7 (Route 114) and over Warren Avenue, and the Barton Corner Bridge, which carries I-95 over Route 2 (Quaker Lane) on the Warwick/West Warwick line.

While RIDOT is opening the Stillwater Viaduct to traffic next week, minor construction activities will continue until late Spring 2013.

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