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Construction Update on New US-59 Amelia Earhart Bridge Project

Construction work on the US-59 Amelia Earhart (AE) Bridge Project in Atchison has been delayed over the summer months due to high water from Missouri River flooding along with fabrication issues related to the structural steel that will be used in the arch span portion of the new bridge.

Over the summer months, crews continued work on the bridge deck as well as on either end of the new bridge with tie-in work to existing roadways on both the Kansas and Missouri side. Now that flood waters from the Missouri River have receded, crews can resume work from the river itself. The structural steel components for the arch span section of the new bridge are scheduled to arrive on or before November 15, 2011. As soon as the structural steel components begin to arrive, crews will begin installation work and continue to do so as weather permits throughout the winter season.

The new AE bridge was originally scheduled to be completed in the fall of 2011, but due to the delays is now scheduled for completion in fall 2012, weather permitting. The removal of the existing bridge is scheduled for early 2013.

The new Amelia Earhart Memorial Bridge, a four-lane, tied arch structure will stretch nearly 2,500 feet, distinguished by its double steel arches on the main river span and special aesthetic lighting. It will replace the existing two-lane structure, which was completed in 1938 and is too narrow to handle some of today's larger truck loads and farm implements. The extra lanes also will accommodate the greater numbers of vehicles that now pass over the bridge daily.

The AE bridge replacement is a cooperative project funded by the Kansas Department of Transportation and the Missouri Department of Transportation. Of the \$59.4 million construction cost, Kansas will contribute \$30.6 million and MoDOT will contribute \$28.8 million.

The Kansas Department of Transportation urges all motorists to be alert, obey the warning signs, and “Give ‘Em a Brake!” when approaching and driving through the project work zone. For more information on this bridge replacement project, please contact Kimberly Qualls, Northeast Kansas Public Affairs Manager, at (785) 640-9340, or Michelle Anschutz, Horton Construction Engineer, at (785) 486-2142.

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