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Federal Highway Administrator Mendez Reviews Progress on Milwaukee's Juneau Avenue Bridge



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Federal Highway Administrator Mendez Reviews Progress on Milwaukee's Juneau Avenue Bridge

Nearing Completion, Bridge Project Extends Life of Historic City Street

MILWAUKEE - Federal Highway Administrator Victor Mendez today visited Milwaukee to review progress on the second of two federally funded bridge replacement projects spanning the city's downtown Riverwalk.

"By putting people to work improving the nation's roads and bridges, we strengthen our nation's economy," said U.S. Transportation Secretary Ray LaHood. "The American people expect and deserve an America built to last, and the work taking place on Milwaukee's bridges will ensure they are around for generations to come."

Engineers briefed Mendez, Milwaukee Mayor Tom Barrett and other local officials about the Juneau Avenue Bridge replacement, which is slated to be completed in November - only 15 months after construction work began. Repairs to the Wisconsin Avenue Bridge were completed last month.

Together, the bridges received a \$21.5 million grant from the U.S. Department of Transportation's TIGER (Transportation Investment Generating Economic Recovery) program. The Juneau Avenue Bridge project received \$14.5 million from the grant and \$7 million went to the Wisconsin Avenue bridge project.

The existing Juneau Avenue bridge, which first opened to traffic in 1953, was a "bascule"-type bridge, allowing it to swing to the side to accommodate river traffic. It will be replaced with a "vertical lift"-style bridge, allowing the bridge to lift up when needed. It will also feature a new bridge control house and incorporate numerous architectural and historical elements.

Replacing this deteriorating bridge is a safety improvement for the city and extends the historic street's useful life by an estimated 75 years. Named for Solomon Juneau, Milwaukee's first mayor, Juneau Avenue is one of the city's first streets. The first bridge to span the Milwaukee River on Juneau Avenue played a prominent role in the Bridge War of 1845, which led to the founding of the city.

"Bridge investments not only create jobs for workers now, but they also bring communities together and strengthen the economy for decades," said Administrator Mendez. "The innovative engineering being used to deliver these state-of-the-art bridges in such a short time will help downtown Milwaukee prepare for the opportunities of the 21st century."

Though the FHWA cleared the Juneau Avenue Bridge project to start in June 2011, local officials held off until August to minimize road closures and construction-related traffic delays until after the busy summer season.

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