**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**I-40 Hernando DeSoto Bridge Repair**

Daily Update

TDOT is holding daily meetings with the Arkansas Department of Transportation, design consultants, Tennessee Highway Patrol, Memphis Police Department, and the Federal Highway Administration to develop and expedite a repair project while managing traffic along the alternate routes.

Our consistent message, above all, is the safety of the public is paramount, and the priorities are to 1) open the river traffic 2) open bridge traffic 3) look at the bridge for long-term issues related to the original failure.

We now have a webpage dedicated to the bridge repair: <https://www.tn.gov/tdot/projects/region-4/i-40-hernando-desoto-bridge.html>. You can also follow us on social media for the latest. Here is today’s update.

**Bridge Repair Design Update:**

* The repair will be performed in two phases. **Both phases will need to be completed before traffic can re-open on the bridge.** At this point, we are unable to project a re-opening date.
* Phase 1 will require the installation of steel plates on each side of the fractured member. This repair will strengthen the damaged steel plates providing stability needed for crews to install equipment for the permanent replacement of the damaged components and continue bridge inspections. The design of the plates has been completed, and plans were provided to Stupp Bridge Company in Bowling Green, Kentucky, for fabrication. Fabrication of the roughly 11,000 lbs. of steel is expected to be complete by Wednesday, May 19th. TDOT forces will be picking up the fabricated plates from Stupp Bridge Company and transport them to Memphis, where they will be ready for our contractor.
* Phase 2 design is underway and will be finalized with the input of the contractor once selected. This will enable us to remove and replace the damaged piece and open the bridge to traffic.

**Contractor Selection**

* TDOT will select a contractor based on their qualifications, experience, and availability of personnel and equipment.
* An Invitation to provide qualifications, experience, and availability was sent to 8 Contractors on Friday, May 14th.
* TDOT staff has responded to questions posed by Contractors over the weekend with assistance from our design consultant Michael Baker International.
* Invited Contractors interested in completing the repairs must submit their information to TDOT by 10:00 AM Monday, May 17th, to be considered for selection.
* TDOT intends to select a contractor Monday afternoon and execute a contract to begin the phase 1 repair. In addition, the contractor can provide input with the Design team for phase 2 and project completion.

**Traffic Diversion**

* TDOT is working with other state DOT’s and the trucking industry to get information out to long haul Commercial Vehicles allowing them to divert to other Mississippi River crossings to avoid the I-55 bridge.
* Additional message boards have been placed along I-40, alerting drivers of the closure.
* TDOT’s Traffic Management Center and HELP trucks continue to monitor the closed I-40 bridge, the I-55 bridge, and congestion in Memphis. We have HELP trucks stationed on both sides of the I-55 bridge to respond to any incidents and open lanes quickly. Additionally, we are utilizing message boards across Shelby County to assist with messaging.

**I-55 Bridge**

* Out of an abundance of caution, TDOT will perform a review of the I-55 Bridge over the Mississippi River to look at key components of the bridge.
* TDOT is working closely with ArDOT and the Federal Highway Administration to review previous bridge inspection reports to assess bridge components quickly.

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