

June 23, 2008

Construction begins on new five-lane bridge in Fort McMurray

Fort McMurray... Construction has begun on the \$127-million five-lane bridge across the Athabasca River in Fort McMurray. The new bridge will have the province's largest bridge deck when it opens to traffic in 2011, weather permitting.

"There are more than \$600 million worth of transportation projects underway or starting this year on Highway 63," said Luke Ouellette, Minister of Transportation. "The province is committed to building the transportation infrastructure needed to support growth in Alberta's oil sands and this new five-lane bridge will significantly improve traffic flow across the Athabasca River."

This project includes construction of the new northbound Highway 63 bridge over the Athabasca River and the first stage construction of the new overpass structure over Franklin Avenue. Traffic disruptions during construction of the bridge will be limited.

The new bridge will be 33 metres wide and 472 metres long, with a deck area of 15,576 square metres, making it the largest provincial bridge deck. The bridge will provide three lanes for northbound Highway 63 traffic and two lanes for the northbound traffic from Franklin Avenue. The bridge will include a 4.2-metre wide sidewalk and major utility lines. The bridge has been designed to carry up to a 6.4-metre wide, 1.1 million-kilogram (2.3 million-pound) overload vehicle, which is 12.5 times our usual designs.

In addition to the \$127-million new five-lane bridge, other projects underway or starting this year include:

- completion of 16 kilometres of Highway 63 twinning south of Fort McMurray at a cost of \$53 million;
- completion of 17 kilometres of Highway 63 twinning north of Fort McMurray at a cost of \$80 million;
- repaving 70 kilometres of Highway 63 north of Highway 55 and the addition of two new southbound passing lanes at a cost of \$30 million;
- repaving five kilometres of Highway 63 within Fort McMurray at a cost of \$17 million; and
- start of construction on the new Thickwood Blvd and Confederation Way interchanges at an estimated cost of \$300 million.

Approximately 50,000 vehicles per day use Highway 63 at the site of the new bridge.

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Media inquiries may be directed to:

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To call toll free within Alberta dial 310-0000.

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Construction schedule for Athabasca River bridge

The project is scheduled to begin June 2008 and completed by June 2011.

2008

- Construct berm on Ft. MacKay (North) side of river
- Construct the north abutment
- Construct Piers 4, 5 and 6
- Commence fabrication of steel girders

2009

- Remove north side construction berm
- Construct south side construction berm
- Construct the south abutment
- Construct Piers 1, 2 and 3
- Start assembly and launching of steel girders from the north
- Construct Franklin Avenue overpass structure retaining walls and abutments

2010

- Complete launching and final erection of steel girders
- Remove south side construction berm
- Form and pour bridge deck
- Start casting bridge barriers
- Complete Franklin Avenue overpass girders, deck and barriers

2011

- Construct roadway approaches
- Complete bridge and sidewalk barriers
- Place waterproofing and ACP wearing surface
- Final cleanup and opening of both bridges and approach roadways to traffic

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