



March 10, 2011

Anti-icing technology tested on Henday Drive to improve safety

Edmonton... As part of the Alberta government's continued efforts to improve traffic safety, a two-year pilot program will test a new, automated anti-icing technology on the eastbound lanes of the Anthony Henday Drive Bridge over the North Saskatchewan River. The technology has been proven to reduce ice build-up, improve driving conditions, and increase safety for motorists. Pending the results of the testing, the technology may be considered for use on the westbound lanes. The testing results will also be evaluated to see if the technology may be suitable elsewhere in the province.

The Anthony Henday Drive Bridge was selected for the pilot program because the plumbing infrastructure was previously installed during the original construction, allowing for easier installation of the new technology for testing. The cost to install the operating system is \$2.3 million.

This is the first time the automated anti-icing technology will be used in Alberta. Ontario was the first province in Canada to install the technology in 2000 and currently uses it in 10 locations. Quebec is also in the process of installing the technology and it has been successfully used in Europe and in several northern U.S. states.

While the new system is designed to prevent ice from forming on the bridge surface before it occurs, regular road maintenance and patrols are still required for all other road weather conditions such as heavy snowfall and drifting snow.

Preliminary testing of the new system and calibration of the spray nozzles will be conducted Saturday, March 12, between 9 a.m. and 3 p.m., weather permitting. During the preliminary testing, traffic will be reduced to one lane. Motorists should use caution in the area and obey all signs and flag people. Full operation of the new system is anticipated in the following weeks.

Details about the project are available online at www.transportation.alberta.ca/1701.htm.

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Background: Fixed Automated Spray Technology

Media inquiries may be directed to:

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Fixed Automated Spray Technology

The system is known in the industry as Fixed Automated Spray Technology, or FAST, and is an automated system designed to spray an anti-icing agent onto the road, based on actual real-time weather pavement conditions, as measured by special sensors installed on the bridge deck. The fully automated system operates 24/7 and responds to the changing conditions on the bridge without manual intervention.

The FAST system features 34 nozzles embedded into the pavement at the shoulder lane edge of the eastbound North Saskatchewan River Bridge on Anthony Henday Drive, spaced every 12 metres, covering both eastbound lanes. The pattern is a fine mist of liquid that is aimed in the same direction of travel and does not affect the driving ability of motorists.

Environmental Benefits

The anti-icing spray used by the FAST system (potassium acetate) does not corrode steel and concrete, so there is no concern for car and truck bodies and other road infrastructure. The anti-icing spray is a biodegradable by-product made from potash production. It is widely used by most major North American and European airports to treat their runways. It is also used by many North American highway agencies, including Ontario, for FAST applications. The product has been reviewed by Environment Canada and there are no environmental health concerns with its use on roads and bridges.

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