

## Governor Quinn Opens Stan Musial Veterans Memorial Bridge Over Mississippi River

Written by Grant Klinzman

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### Monumental Bridge Will Improve Safety and Reduce Traffic Congestion

EAST ST. LOUIS – Governor Pat Quinn today was joined by U.S. Transportation Secretary Anthony Foxx, U.S. Senator Dick Durbin, Missouri Governor Jay Nixon and a number of local officials to open the Stan Musial Veterans Memorial Bridge. The monumental \$695 million bridge provides a better and safer way for millions of motorists to cross the Mississippi River between Illinois and Missouri. Today's event is part of Governor Quinn's agenda to create jobs and build a 21st century infrastructure that will drive Illinois' economy forward.

"The team spirit and diverse participation that went into the planning and construction of this magnificent structure is a fitting tribute to Stan Musial and the veterans after whom it is named," Governor Quinn said. "This is the first new bridge connecting downtown St. Louis and southwestern Illinois that has been built in more than four decades, and it will be a catalyst for business development and job creation for the future."

"This is more than a bridge – it is a road to opportunity for the thousands of people in Illinois and Missouri who have long deserved a faster and safer way to get to work and home again," Transportation Secretary Foxx said. "Last week, President Obama said that 'first-class jobs gravitate to first-class infrastructure,' and there is no bigger example than this first-class bridge of how transportation investments can help businesses and residents alike."

"The new bridge will mean more jobs and more economic opportunity on both sides of the

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Mississippi,” Senator Durbin said. “I was proud to support federal funding for the bridge in Washington and proud to join Senator McCaskill in introducing legislation to name the bridge after both our brave veterans and one of my earliest childhood heroes, Stan ‘The Man’ Musial. I look forward to the economic boost this bridge will bring to both Illinois and Missouri.”

“One-hundred and forty years after the Eads Bridge first linked Missouri and Illinois, the I-70 Stan Musial Veterans Memorial Bridge is the latest span to bring commerce and travelers across the Mississippi River at this nexus of our country,” Governor Nixon said. “This is a milestone for trade and transportation that will help this region, and our two states, continue to grow.”

The Stan Musial Veterans Memorial Bridge is one mile north of the Martin Luther King Bridge. It has two traffic lanes in each direction with room to expand to three lanes, and carries Interstate 70 traffic between Illinois and Missouri, connecting I-70 at the I-55/I-64/I-70 interchange on the Illinois side to I-70 near Cass Avenue in Missouri. Construction began in the summer of 2009. The project, a joint effort by the Illinois and Missouri departments of transportation, has created or supported more than 9,000 jobs.

Illinois contributed \$347 million toward the bridge construction, with Missouri contributing \$41 million and the federal government contributing \$307 million. Part of Illinois' commitment came from Governor Quinn's Illinois Jobs Now! capital construction program.

“We are excited to open the new Stan Musial Veterans Memorial Bridge to traffic,” Illinois Transportation Secretary Ann L. Schneider said. “Thanks to the hard work of our diverse group of trade workers, contractors and consulting engineers who made this project happen, motorists on both sides of the river will have a safer, less congested and faster commute. We are proud of the partnership with the Missouri Department of Transportation and we sincerely appreciate Governor Pat Quinn’s unwavering support for this important project as part of our vision to transform Transportation for Tomorrow.”

A diverse group of trade workers, contractors, and engineers have worked on the project since it began in 2009. The 24 percent minority workforce participation on the Illinois-funded part of the project is nearly 10 percent higher than the goal set by the Federal Highway Administration and sets a record for construction projects in the Metro East area.

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The new bridge and its carefully planned alignment will provide economic benefits to the Metro East area of Illinois. For example, a new interchange was constructed at the relocated Illinois Route 3 that will open the National Stockyards area for redevelopment.

The work in Illinois required the largest archaeological dig in the country from 2009-12. More than 6,000 archaeological features were investigated, and in 2011 the Federal Highway Administration Environmental Excellence Award was presented to the Illinois Department of Transportation for their efforts relating to archaeology in the area. The discoveries made during the project greatly enhanced the knowledge of the civilization that flourished at nearby Cahokia Mounds State Historic Site, Illinois' only World Heritage Site. The new bridge will make it easier for motorists on the Missouri side of the river to visit Cahokia Mounds.

The existing Poplar Street Bridge carried combined traffic for Interstates 55, 64 and 70 and averages 120,000 vehicles daily. By 2030, the Poplar Street Bridge would have carried more than 150,000 vehicles daily if the Stan Musial Veterans Memorial Bridge had not been built. The new I-70 bridge and the Poplar Street Bridge, which will continue to carry I-55/64 traffic, will mean much less congestion and fewer accidents and will greatly enhance traffic flow between Illinois and Missouri.

The Stan Musial Veterans Memorial Bridge project is part of Governor Quinn's \$31 billion Illinois Jobs Now! program, which will support more than 439,000 jobs over six years. Illinois Jobs Now! is the largest capital construction program in Illinois history, and is one of the largest capital construction programs in the nation.

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