

BEN SAWYER BRIDGE REHABILITATION PROJECT

FACT SHEET

Bridge History

- The Ben Sawyer Bridge is a swing span bridge constructed between 1943 and 1945. It connects the towns of Sullivan's Island and Mount Pleasant over the Intracoastal Waterway.
- Benjamin Mack Sawyer (1890 -1940) was the Chief Highway Commissioner/ Executive Director of the South Carolina Highway Department between the years 1926 and 1940. Nicknamed "Builder Ben," Sawyer oversaw a period in South Carolina during which the Highway Department (now known as the South Carolina Department of Transportation –SCDOT) paved more than 6200 roads, doubled the roads in the system, and transformed into a fully functioning state agency with thousands of employees.

Comparing the New Bridge and the Existing Bridge

When completed, the rehabilitated bridge will have a new steel swing span, two new steel superstructure approach spans, as well as new electrical and mechanical systems.

- *Wider Lanes and Sidewalk* - In response to public input, the new swing span truss and approach ramps are similar to the existing bridge in design and height with slightly wider traffic lanes (14 feet wide) and a new 5.5 foot sidewalk on the harbor side.
- *Elevation and Clearance* - The new swing span's elevation will stay the same to maintain the bridge appearance and navigational channel clearances. The interior bracing is being reconfigured to provide additional vertical clearance for large vehicles crossing the bridge.
- *Control House* - The new control house is located above the roadway just like it is on the old bridge. While the octagonal design is the same, the new space is larger to maximize the controller's view corridors, enable the addition of a new bathroom, and allow for new electrical equipment space requirements.
- *Approach Roadway* - 400 linear feet of roadway on each side of the bridge is being improved to accommodate the new bridge's wider lanes and sidewalk. Transitions from the existing multi-use path are being constructed to allow bicyclists and pedestrians easy access to the new bridge sidewalk.

Funding

- This \$ 32.5 million project is entirely funded by federal dollars. These federal dollars were allocated prior to any stimulus funding.

Next Steps

- After the new bridge is in place and open to boats and vehicles, crews will take a short break and then begin demolition of the old approach spans. The entire project is on target to be completed by May 2, 2010- just over a year from the project start date in February 2009.