

State-Aid Bridge News

January 18, 2002

- **Processing plans through the Bridge Office**

State Aid:

Preliminary plans received and reviewed- the review process takes approximately 1- 2 weeks.

Design Consultants generally take 2-3 months to develop final plans.

Final plans received and reviewed- the review process takes approximately 2-2.5 weeks.

All of the above time estimates are dependent on the complexity of the plan.

Federal Aid:

Preliminary plans received with approved P.M.- the review process takes approximately 1- 2 weeks.

Preliminary plans received without approved P.M.- the plan review is not scheduled until the P.M. is approved. P.M. approval is important; plan review can be delayed several months without an approved P.M.

Design Consultants generally take 2-3 months to develop final plans.

Final plans received and reviewed- the review process takes approximately 2-2.5 weeks.

All of the above time estimates are dependent on the complexity of the plan.

Summary:

We generally receive few complaints on the time it takes to process a State Aid Bridge Project through the State Aid System. However, significant delays have occurred on our Federal Aid projects when the P.M. approval is delayed. Occasionally we have allowed the approval of the preliminary bridge plan contingent on the approval of the P.M. The County and the Consultant assume the risk in the development of the final plans without an approved P.M. Please feel free to contact the State-Aid Bridge Office at 651-747-2151 for a complete status update on your bridge projects.

- **FHWA bridge project oversight**

Bridge Projects that require partial oversight by FHWA:

All **new/reconstruction and substructure widening projects** bridge projects that carry traffic over the Interstate Highway regardless of estimated cost. Preliminary bridge plans will be submitted to Federal Highway Administration for approval.

Bridge Projects that require full oversight by FHWA:

On any other system (NHS, Non-NHS and **local roads**) in which the Bridge project's estimated cost is equal to or over \$10 million. Preliminary bridge plans and PS&E will be submitted to Federal Highway Administration for approval. **Final plans at 85 to 90% completion will also be submitted to FHWA for concurrent review.**

NOTE:

It is very important that these plans be submitted to the FHWA as soon as they are developed and prior to proceeding with final design. All bridge projects that carry traffic over the Interstate Highway will require partial oversight by the FHWA. The State Aid Bridge Office will be responsible for submitting the preliminary bridge plans to the FHWA for approval. The FHWA plan review will take approximately 2 weeks.

- **Pontis Update**

All of the counties should now have the new Pontis version 4.0 program. The program, formatted inspection data, and input instructions was shipped from the Bridge Management Section on January 15, 2002. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact Charlie Deutsch with our Bridge Management Section, at phone: 651-747-2121, or e-mail: charles.deutsch@dot.state.mn.us. Also, you can access the Bridge Management Website at www.dot.state.mn.us/bridge/mgmt/index.html to download the Certificate of Bridge Inspection form, visit our frequently asked question/answer page, and other bridge related links.

- **Hydraulic Data Base**

The Hydraulic Data Base (BrHydInfo) is currently under development. The database includes hydraulic data from Trunk Highway and State Aid structures and is accessed through a GIS format. Rowekamp and Assoc., the consultant who developed the program, have been hired to create an application that will allow Counties and Local Agencies to have read only access to the data over the Internet. We should have something by this summer.

- **State-Aid Bridge Web Site**

Development of the web site is nearly complete. Our site will include the secure link to the BrHydInfo System, a frequently asked questions (FAQ) screen, hotlinks to web sites that we feel can be of assistance and information about our staff including phone numbers and e-mail addresses. Comments and/or suggestions about what you would like to see on the web site are always welcome.

- **Bridge Maintenance Class**

The first ever Bridge Maintenance class was conducted December 5th in Mankato. Rob Kleinschmidt developed the class and it was well attended by several county, city, and Mn/DOT personnel. The class discussed the importance and elements of a bridge maintenance program. The class discussed common superstructure and substructure problems and repairs. We believe this class will evolve over time, and become extremely usefully for our counties and cities. We can't afford Not to perform preventive maintenance. When repairs or rehabilitation become a necessity, the cost is high; preventive maintenance is cheap and preserves the investment that has been made in the acquisition of the bridge.

- **State-Aid Bridge Costs:**

We have seen the cost of bridge construction on the rise this summer. The average cost per square foot for the cast-in-place slab span bridge and prestressed beam span bridge is nearing \$70.00/SF. This up from the \$60-\$65/SF we saw last year. It doesn't appear that the construction costs are coming down anytime soon. The SA Bridge office has put together a cost summary for local bridge construction in the calendar year 2001. This report will be available at the 2002 County Engineer's Conference. The square foot costs shown in the report can be used to roughly approximate current trends in bridge costs, but they are not necessarily representative, as all projects are unique.

- **Bridge Rehabilitation**

The Bridge Office is working with the FHWA to determine the level of bridge rehabilitation that would be eligible for Federal Aid. Currently we require that all rehabilitated bridges meet the geometric roadway widths for ADT, and a HS18 truck loading. This generally requires the existing bridge to be widened, and significant structural modifications addressed to secure funding. We often find that full bridge replacement is more cost effective than the required bridge rehabilitation. The FHWA is now considering the use of Federal Aid Monies to be allowed for structural bridge repairs, updating the bridge railing, signing, etc.... to the existing bridge structure.

- **State Aid Bridge/Culvert Plan Approval**

As of October 23, 2001, all District State Aid Engineers have been given the authority to approve bridge plans which do not include federal funding or turnback funding. Please adhere to the procedure for approving bridge plans as outlined in the SALT Notice dated 10/23/2001. The Districts will continue to coordinate preliminary and final plan approval through the State Aid Bridge Office for all bridge projects requiring the State Bridge Engineer's signature (all bridge designs which do not use standard plans/plates approved by the State Bridge Engineer). Concrete pipe arches, and box culverts generally fall into the category of standardized design. The project must be reviewed by State Aid Bridge if the size and design parameters of the pipe/culvert design are not listed on the standard plans/plates.

State Aid Bridge will be meeting with the Assistant District State Aid Engineers next month to discuss the approval process. We will also discuss/coordinate plan review responsibilities between the Districts and the State Aid Bridge Office.

- **State Aid Bridge Contacts:**

	Phone #
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