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FDOT's October 6 Updates on the Pensacola Bay Bridge Recovery Efforts

TALLAHASSEE, Fla. – The Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) is actively monitoring Hurricane Delta and is preparing for its possible impact including heavy rain, flooding and storm surge in Northwest Florida. FDOT has made clear it expects the contractors on the Pensacola Bay Bridge to properly secure all equipment ahead of the storm. Bridge inspection teams are at the ready to monitor the possibility of bridge closures in the region and crews stand prepared to respond to damage resulting from the storm.

FDOT and its partners have made the reopening of the Pensacola Bay Bridge a top priority with numerous efforts underway. The survey of the piers and topside inspections have been completed along with most of the underwater footings. Additional dive teams have been deployed, bringing the total to eight, to assist with the final inspection. Demolition is focused on three of the spans with the purpose of removing the damaged portions while preventing any further damage to the structure. In the interest of safety, crews are also utilizing remote controlled jack hammers on portions of the structure. The contractor has ordered three additional cranes to replace existing cranes that were damaged or lost to assist in the process. Two additional subcontractors are also on site, to increase on-site resources with additional equipment and 40 additional personnel to expedite demolition.

The recommended repairs to the damaged areas of the Pensacola Bay Bridge will take approximately six months to complete with a targeted opening date of early March 2021. Once repairs are complete, all four lanes will be open with no load restrictions and at the same condition as expected for new construction. As each repair method is developed, FDOT will be conducting reviews to ensure the contractor is hitting all milestones in the established schedule.

FDOT recognizes that businesses impacted by the closure of the Pensacola Bay Bridge are concerned about the extended time this critical connection will be out of use. It is critical that their customers have access to their business and that they continue to patronize these businesses, in spite of the disruption of traffic. The department is examining potential ways to help alleviate the concerns of local business owners. To that end, FDOT will be meeting with local leaders, chambers of commerce and others to communicate information and coordinate outreach efforts to the community and visitors starting tomorrow.

FDOT is exploring alternative transportation solutions to assist moving people and goods through the region and is also assisting local governments as they look to apply for emergency relief funds through the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) regarding alternate transportation services.

Three of the contractor's barges remain on or under the structure and the removal of those barges will have to be done with great caution. The contractor has prioritized the removal of the barges and will work closely with FDOT to ensure the least amount of additional damage possible to the bridge in this effort. To date, 12 barges have been removed from the area with two most recently recovered from near Scenic Highway and the Garcon Point Bridge.

The design is underway for the permanent repairs and reestablishment of four lanes of traffic on the bridge with a focus on substructure repairs which includes the piers. Durability, and ensuring there is absolutely no reduction in the bridge's strength as a result of the repairs, remains paramount in the design plans.

FDOT is assessing the final total number of the spans/piers that will ultimately need to be replaced. The contractor has already fabricated 25 beams and the piers needed to begin repairs. The contractor has also begun constructing more replacement beams and piers at its offsite yard and has reached out to other facilities to assist in production. This aggressive effort will allow the installation of these items to commence as soon as demolition of the damaged items are complete.

Further preliminary inspection findings include:

- To date, FDOT divers have inspected 202 underwater footings while top side inspection teams have assessed 105 spans, 202 piers and 525 beams.
- The number of spans requiring full replacement remains at five and FDOT has identified an additional two that will require partial replacement.
- A minimum of twelve pedestrian spans have been identified for replacement.
- FDOT will have to replace a number of beams and is still determining the specific number needing replacement.

The U.S. Coast Guard has established a 500-yard buffer zone for all Pensacola Bay Bridge construction activities. Vessels may use only low or idle speeds within the buffer zone. Due to the potential for underwater hazards, boaters are advised to use caution near the bridge. The navigational channel has been inspected and is free of hazards. For this reason, crossing beneath the bridge should be done only at the navigational channel.

Motorists should continue to use all available detour routes, which include the Garcon Point Bridge and State Road 87. At this time, tolls on the Garcon Point Bridge have been suspended through 6 a.m., Friday, October 23.

Details on the detour routes, including graphics, FAQs, and regular updates can be found online at fdot.gov/PensacolaBay. Members of the public wishing to receive these updates can choose to subscribe by providing their email address on this website as well. FDOT has also posted a [video](#) overview of the bridge that highlights the individual components inspectors are investigating.

FDOT understands the contractor has dispatched a community outreach team and insurance claim specialists to assist impacted property owners. The contractor has asked property owners impacted by Skanska's barges or other equipment during Hurricane Sally to contact them at pensacola@skanska.com.

For additional real-time updates on the Pensacola Bay Bridge, follow FDOT District Three on social media:

- Twitter: [@MyFDOT_NWFL](https://twitter.com/MyFDOT_NWFL)
- Facebook: [@MyFDOTNWFL](https://www.facebook.com/MyFDOTNWFL)

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