



## *Florida Department of Transportation*

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### **For Immediate Release**

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## **FDOT's October 29 Updates on the Pensacola Bay Bridge Recovery Efforts**

**TALLAHASSEE, Fla.** – Inspectors from the Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) have assessed the Pensacola Bay Bridge after Hurricane Zeta made landfall in Louisiana Wednesday afternoon and found no additional damage to the bridge.

Prior to the storm, FDOT personnel and bridge contractors were preparing for the anticipated storm surge, rainfall and wind impacts forecasted for northwest Florida. On the morning of Tuesday, October 27, the bridge repair team relocated and moored equipment in secure locations away from the Pensacola Bay Bridge. Crews are currently mobilizing equipment back to the bridge to continue demolition and repair efforts.

FDOT has mobilized three bridge contractors on site to expedite demolition and design including:

- Debris from two spans has been cleared along with the complete removal of one damaged span of the bridge as crews continue to carefully remove damaged portions from additional spans to minimize impacts to the existing structure. One barge remains under the bridge. To date, 21 of the 27 barges have been removed from the area.
- 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. Modified pier design has been reviewed and approved by FDOT, which uses six new piles instead of four piles in the existing footing.

The fabrication of multiple concrete piles, piers, and beams will be required to repair the Pensacola Bay Bridge. To date:

- Fifty-one concrete piles are on-hand at the precast yard. Additional piles are currently being cast and thirty-three concrete piles have been ordered from another facility in Tampa.
- Forty-two prestressed beams have been cast.
- Additional beams will be cast based on the final analysis of some of the damaged areas.
- Replacement piers will begin casting by mid-November 2020.

FDOT has been continuously working to improve the traffic flow along the Pensacola Bay Bridge detour routes and has reduced the average commute time by 25 percent. Additional improvements are underway as construction has begun to widen 2,000 feet of northbound and southbound S.R. 281 south of the I-10 interchange and widen the eastbound I-10 off ramp at eastbound S.R. 281 off ramp to two lanes.

To reinforce FDOT Secretary Kevin J. Thibault's, P.E. expectation of complete transparency and community assistance, FDOT's outreach team has met with stakeholder groups, state and local officials, civic organizations and local business owners to discuss the bridge reconstruction as well as other actions that are being considered to efficiently restore regional connectivity. FDOT will continue to meet with multiple stakeholder groups throughout the course of the project.

FDOT continues to develop and improve alternative transportation solutions to move people and goods safely and efficiently through the region while the Pensacola Bay Bridge is being repaired. Examples include:

- Funding the Escambia County Area Transit's (ECAT) temporary bus route to help transport passengers between the Pensacola Bay Center Park in Escambia County and the Tiger Point Community Center City in Gulf Breeze. ECAT has modified the original route to include stops at the ECAT Transfer Center in Pensacola, the Palm Beach Club and Pensacola Beach Boardwalk in Pensacola Beach, and Gulf Breeze Hospital.
- Gathering information such as potential ridership, times of operation, and duration of service as well as reviewing existing facilities that would be necessary for the safe operation of a ferry.

The Pensacola Bay Bridge has a targeted re-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.

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, November 13.

Details on the detour routes, including graphics, FAQs, and regular updates can be found online at [fdot.gov/PensacolaBay](https://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.

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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