

NEWS RELEASE

Aug. 8, 2007

07-289

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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In-depth bridge inspections begin Monday

In-depth inspections of the state's six deck truss bridges, which have components similar to the Minneapolis bridge that collapsed Aug. 1, will begin Monday on the I-70 intercity viaduct in Kansas City, Kan.

The intercity viaduct, which crosses the Kansas River and railroad tracks, comprises three separate bridges – half of the deck truss structures on the state highway system. The in-depth inspections, which had been scheduled before the Minneapolis tragedy, are a hands-on, up-close examination that can also involve the use of special testing instruments, such as ultrasound. The engineering firm HNTB has been contracted to conduct the inspection. The inspection of the three structures is expected to take about six weeks.

The in-depth inspections of the state's other three deck-truss structures, the U.S. 69 18th Street Expressway, the U.S. 169 7th Street Trafficway, both in Kansas City, Kan., and the U.S. 59 Amelia Earhart Bridge in Atchison, will begin later this summer and are expected to be completed by late September. In the next few days, these three bridges also will receive a preliminary visual inspection before the more involved hands-on inspection later in the summer. The 18th Street Expressway will be visually inspected today; the 7th Street Trafficway will be inspected Thursday and the Amelia Earhart Bridge will be inspected Monday.

Engineers in the Kansas Department of Transportation's Bridge Management office reviewed the most recent inspection reports for all six deck truss bridges on Friday.

"Although the review of the inspection reports did not raise new concerns, I concluded that a higher level of scrutiny was a better, more responsible approach and I decided to rethink my initial decision not to order immediate, visual inspections," said Secretary of Transportation Deb Miller.

A review of the inspection reports of the state's other structurally deficient bridges (there are a total of 104 structurally deficient bridges in Kansas) is under way and will be completed next week.

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