



COMMONWEALTH OF KENTUCKY
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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Ahead of Schedule and Under Budget:
All Lanes of Travel on the Brent Spence Bridge Expected Open Later Today
Inspections confirm bridge safety; normal traffic patterns to resume gradually

FRANKFORT, Ky. (Dec. 22, 2020) – Gov. Andy Beshear and Kentucky Transportation Cabinet (KYTC) Secretary Jim Gray today announced the end of a six-week emergency repair project to restore and reopen the Brent Spence Bridge one day ahead of the scheduled completion date. Travel lanes and various access ramps leading to the bridge will gradually reopen to full capacity throughout the afternoon and evening, once lane striping on the upper and lower decks is complete.

The Brent Spence Bridge, which carries Interstates 71 and 75 over the Ohio River between Covington, KY, and Cincinnati, OH, closed on Nov. 11, 2020, due to a crash and fire involving two commercial vehicles. Multiple safety inspections took place throughout the course of the repair project; the final inspection was completed Monday evening, paving the way for the gradual reopening of the bridge and the travel lanes and ramps that support access to it.

“We are pleased to reopen the Brent Spence Bridge ahead of schedule and return one of the nation’s busiest and most important economic travel corridors to public use,” said Gov. Beshear. “I commend the dedicated employees of the Transportation Cabinet for working with deliberate speed and adhering to strict safety guidelines in a time of unprecedented uncertainty in our great state.”

Secretary Gray echoed the Governor’s comments and underscored the determination crews brought to the repair project. “We conquered a combination of factors that challenged our ability to complete this project on time, including a global health pandemic and winter weather, and still delivered on our promise to return a safe and sound bridge to the traveling public before the holidays,” said Secretary Gray. “Along with repairing the bridge, we also focused our attention on traffic management to maintain reliable connections for travelers. Ensuring safe roadways is a

partnership between KYTC and the public, and I appreciate everyone's commitment and contribution to keeping our roads safe."

KYTC assembled extraordinary talent to work with deliberate speed to reopen the bridge

An assessment of damage to the bridge began as soon as inspectors could safely access the site. A team of more than 20 national and local bridge inspectors surveyed the entire, two-deck span and conducted tests to ensure the structure's integrity was not compromised. Less than a week after the closure, KYTC awarded a \$3.1 million contract to prime contractor, Kokosing Construction Co., of Westerville, Ohio, with a target reopening date of Dec. 23.

Repairs to the bridge included:

- Replacing 16 steel beams that were damaged by the fire
- Pouring new upper deck driving surface and concrete barrier wall
- Pouring new layer of concrete on lower deck and new concrete barrier wall
- Removing and installing drainage system
- Installing new overhead lights
- Restriping new concrete on upper and lower decks

The Brent Spence Bridge is structurally sound and is part of the region's long-term infrastructure plan; a new companion bridge is needed to support additional capacity

The Brent Spence Bridge, which was designed to carry 80,000 to 100,000 vehicles per day, now carries approximately twice that across the Ohio River. Discussions continue between KYTC and its partner agency, the Ohio Department of Transportation, about plans to build a companion bridge to the west of the existing bridge to increase capacity.

Given the expectation that the existing bridge will remain in service for many years to come, ensuring the long-term safety of the bridge and the routes leading to and from it is of increased significance.

KYTC crews completed a number of maintenance projects on and around the bridge while traffic was restricted to minimize future traffic interruptions and maximize efficiency. These included significant drainage repairs on the northbound side of I-71/75, just south of the bridge; cleaning overhead signs on the lower deck, and repaving and restriping the northbound approach lanes.

Secretary Gray also announced plans for the Cabinet to install new hazardous material signage in Northern Kentucky to increase awareness of the long-standing hazardous material restriction north of I-275 between I-71/75 and the Ohio state line.

"We listened and then we held conversations at the local, state and federal levels regarding the hazmat restrictions in the area. We share the desire to install signage to reinforce the restrictions, which drivers who plan their routes should know," Secretary Gray said. "It's worthwhile to

remember that the amount of potassium hydroxide transported by one of the vehicles in the crash was well below the federal threshold of what is considered hazardous material, so it was allowed to cross the bridge. While it's every driver's responsibility to know and obey the rules of the road, we'll do everything we can to provide information."

The U.S. Department of Transportation authorized up to \$12 million in emergency relief reimbursement funding for the repair project, but Secretary Gray said the final expenses likely will be as little as half that amount.

Visit www.BrentSpenceRepair.com for project information. Follow our Covington highway district, KYTC District 6, on [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#). Follow [@TRIMARCTraffic](#) on Twitter for up-to-the-minute traffic incident reports in the Northern Kentucky region. Join the online conversation using #BSBUpdates.

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Editor's Note: Click [here](#) to view a diagram of completed repairs.