

BRIDGE

continued from page 1

Because freight will move faster and more cost-effectively, the project is considered a more reliable alternative to more congested rail regions like Chicago.

With a doubling of the bridge capacity, the project will allow for an expanded service to assist in meeting projected future freight and passenger rail demand. Right now, Terminal Railroad serves at least 80 industrial customers in the St. Louis region and provides interchange services to Class I railroads serving the East and West Coasts and the Great Lakes to the Gulf of Mexico.

“The Class I railroads relying on the Merchants Bridge serve the St. Louis region’s manufacturing and logistics companies that are part of an interdependent supply chain requiring access to markets on both sides of the Mississippi River, across the United States, and internationally,” said Ron Tindall, president of TRRA. “Implementation of this project will allow those companies – and others moving freight from coast to coast through our region – to move that freight faster, more cost-effectively and more reliably. Just as important, TRRA estimates our impact in the region will almost double, as we generate more than \$456 million in local economic activity over a 20-year period.”

A design-bid-build project, reconstruction of the bridge uses what are said to be innovative project delivery methods that will improve safety and speed completion while limiting bridge and river traffic outages.

The new spans are being constructed in Wisconsin and shipped to St. Louis for final assembly on the Missouri bank of the Mississippi River and each is being floated into place immediately after the old spans are floated out.

Removal and installation of the three new trusses requires three separate 10-day rail outages, and three separate river channel outages.

The first of those outages began on Sept. 13 in preparation for moving the first truss, viewed by those aboard the special river cruise.

In Winter 2020, the Federal Railroad Administration awarded TRRA a \$22.45 million Consolidated Rail Infrastructure and Safety Improvements grant toward replacement of the Merchants Bridge. TRRA is providing 90 percent of the construction costs.

“Our Freight Development Committee continues to work with our many public and private partners to understand the needs of our manufacturing and logistics industries so we can speak with one voice to ensure all necessary parties are familiar with the region’s infrastructure priorities, understand why



The movement of the first replacement truss can be seen from above, as seen in these aerial photos.

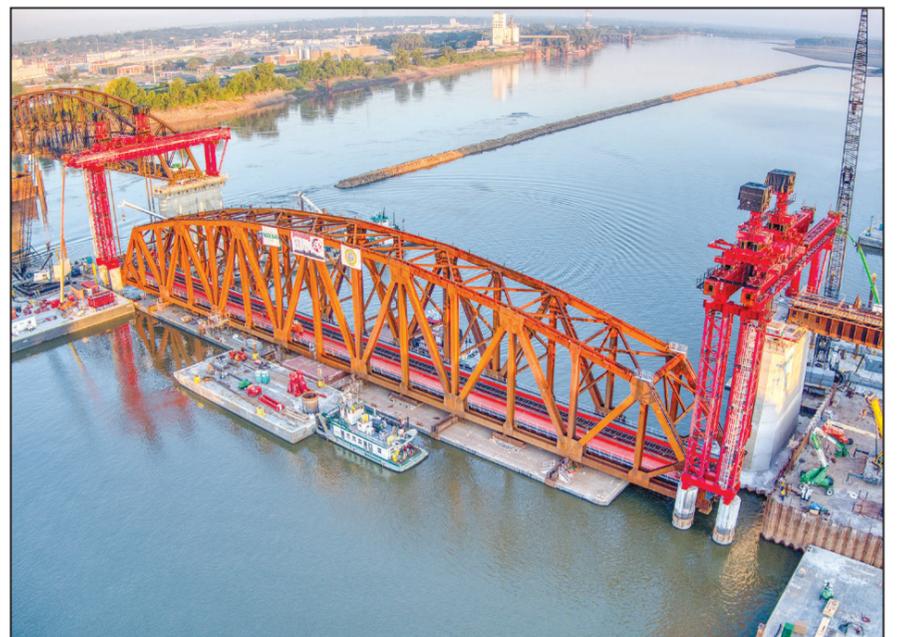
they are priorities and can advocate for funding for them,” said Lamie.

Walsh Construction is the general contractor for the project, with TranSystems and Burns & McDonnell serving as the project engineers. The steel fabrication is being done by Veritas Steel in Eau Claire, Wis.

Here are the facts

The construction of the new Merchants Bridge at Venice carries with it some astonishing numbers.

- Built in 1890, it is owned and operated by Terminal Railroad Association of St. Louis. It carries 32 freight trains per day and carries 150 million gross tons per year
- There are:
 - 26,000,000 pounds of structural steel installed in new truss spans.
 - 12,000,000 pounds of existing spans to be removed.
 - 3,500,000 pounds of rebar to be installed.
 - 1,750,000 pounds of steel for retrofitted approach spans.
 - 50,000 square feet of MSE (mechanically stabilized earth) retaining walls.



- 36,000 cubic yards of embankment.
- 11,000 linear feet of auger cast piles.
- 8,750 cubic yards of pier encasement structural concrete.
- 6,000 linear feet of track replacement.
- 4,000 cubic yards of structural approach concrete

Project benefits

- Built to meet projected future freight and passenger rail demand, critical for economic growth.

- Increased national rail and multimodal capacity, resiliency and redundancy.
- Over \$370 million in operational savings from reductions in delay, rerouting and operations and maintenance.
- Supports 1,100 construction-related jobs during construction.
- Contributes to growing regional multimodal logistics hub.
- Reduced travel times for intercity passenger rail service for Chicago-St. Louis Amtrak along with the ability to provide expanded service.



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