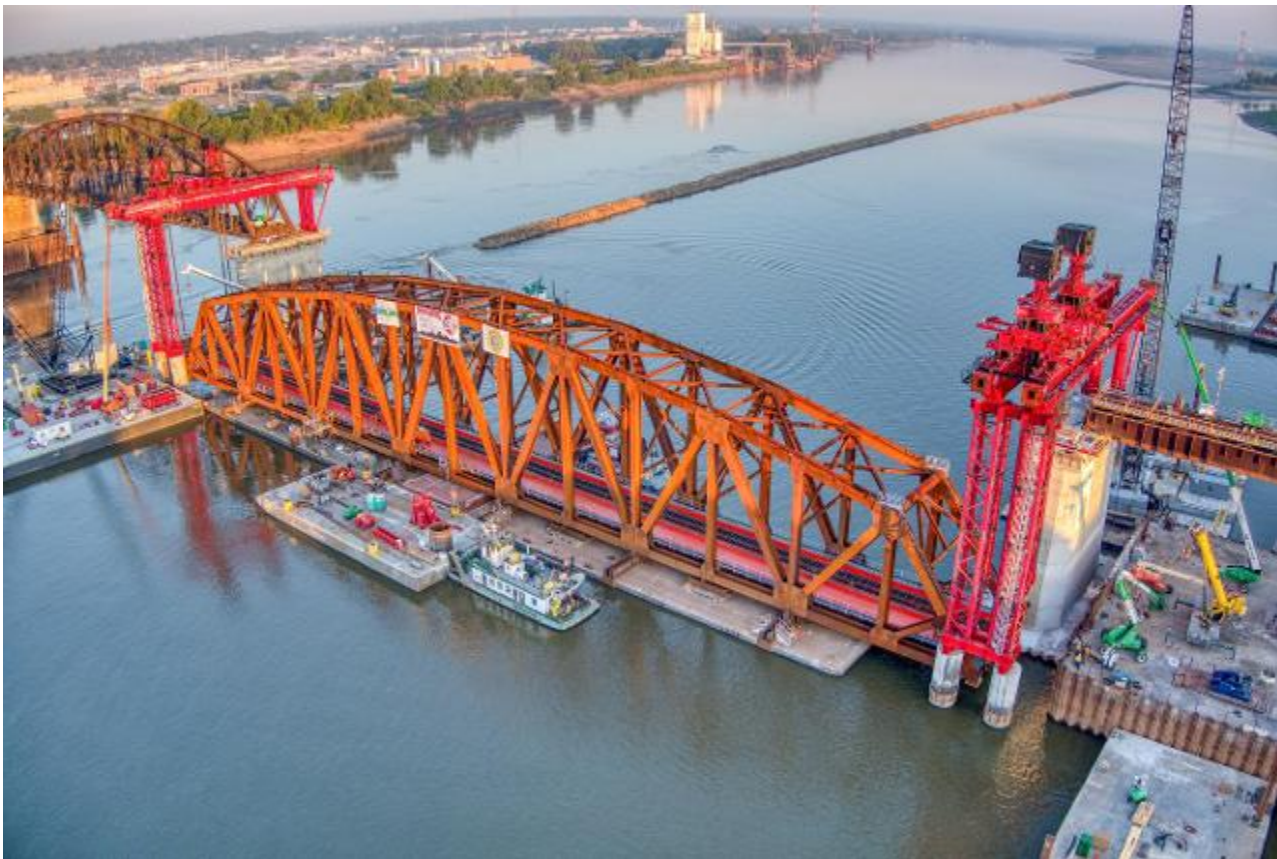




# Merchants Bridge Reconstruction Project Reaches Major Milestone

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*Photos of the bridge truss being raised are courtesy of Walsh Construction and Trey Cambern Photography. Riverboat Cruise Provides Opportunity to View Installation of the First of Three New Trusses.*

**ST. LOUIS** - The \$222 million project to replace the Merchants Bridge that links Missouri and Illinois at Downtown St. Louis reached a major milestone Friday, Sept. 17, with the first one of three new trusses being installed. Dating back to 1890, the Merchants Bridge serves six Class I railroads and Amtrak to cross the Mississippi River at St. Louis and is one of the nation's primary east-west rail corridors serving the nation's second-largest rail hub by car interchange volume and third-largest by gross tonnage. The replacement of this vital rail artery is the bi-state St. Louis region's top freight infrastructure priority.

Owned by Terminal Railroad Association of St. Louis (TRRA), the Merchants Bridge required reconstruction due to the speed, clearance, and load restrictions. The project includes the removal and replacement of the three river-span trusses, seismically retrofitting the existing river piers, and improving the east approach. Work began in 2018 and, when completed in early 2023, the new double-track bridge will provide reliable, resilient, and expanded freight and passenger rail capacity, helping move freight faster, cost-effectively, and more reliably, providing an alternative to more



congested rail regions like Chicago. With a doubling of the capacity of the bridge, the project will allow for expanded service to assist in meeting projected future freight and passenger rail demand, reduce grade delays for motorists and emergency vehicles and ensure reliable rail connections across the Mississippi River into the next century.

“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 innovative project delivery methods that will improve safety and speed completion while limiting bridge and river traffic outages. 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 will be floated into place immediately after the old spans are floated out.

Removal and installation of the three new trusses will require three separate 10-day rail outages and three separate river channel outages. The first of these outages began on Sept. 13 in preparation for the first truss to be moved into position and floated into place on Sept. 17, a milestone that was witnessed by approximately 200 invited guests and members of the media aboard a Riverboat Cruise hosted by the St. Louis Regional Freightway. The other two trusses will be installed in the winter and summer of 2022.

The replacement of this vital rail artery has been identified each year since 2016 as the region's top freight infrastructure priority by the St. Louis Regional Freightway, which is nationally recognized for its innovative and collaborative approach to creating a Priority Projects List that identifies key infrastructure projects and advocates for funding for them.

In Winter 2020, the Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) awarded TRRA a \$22.45 million Consolidated Rail Infrastructure and Safety Improvements (CRISI) grant toward

the replacement of the Merchants Bridge. TRRA is providing 90% of the construction costs, making this project a model for public-private partnerships.

“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 they are priorities and can advocate for funding for them,” said Mary Lamie, Executive Vice President – Multi-Modal Enterprises, Bi-State Development. “It is extremely rewarding to see the progress on the region’s top priority project and several of the others on our list. It affirms that we are on the right path with our approach and that our region’s freight network will be stronger as a result.”

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

### ***About Terminal Railroad Association of St. Louis (TRRA)***

*The TRRA is a Class III railroad serving 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. These services provide cost-efficient transportation options to area businesses and are a critical hub for connecting the St. Louis region to the national and global marketplace.*

### ***About St. Louis Regional Freightway***

*The St. Louis Regional Freightway is a Bi-State Development enterprise formed to create a regional freight district and comprehensive authority for freight operations and opportunities within eight counties in Illinois and Missouri which comprise the St. Louis metropolitan area. Public sector and private industry businesses are partnering with the St. Louis Regional Freightway to establish the bi-state region as one of the premier multimodal freight hubs and distribution centers in the United States through marketing, public advocacy, and freight and infrastructure development. To learn more, visit [thefreightway.com](http://thefreightway.com).*



