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TWO-YEAR PROJECT WILL RECONSTRUCT CHICAGO'S BUSIEST EXPRESSWAY

Editor's Note: On June 29, 1956, President Eisenhower signed into law the Federal-Aid Highway Act of 1956, establishing a commitment from the federal government to create an interstate highway system. A significant part of our history, the passage of this important legislation is being commemorated in the months leading up to the 50th anniversary of the interstate. Look to HNTB News Online and HNTB News for continuing information about celebrating this vital national transportation network.

FROM NOW THROUGH THE END OF 2007, HNTB IS HELPING to make one of the world's widest highways – the Dan Ryan Expressway in Chicago – better, safer and state-of-the-art.

Running from downtown Chicago through the heart of the city's South Side, the 14-lane Dan Ryan is the busiest

expressway in the Chicago area. Each day hundreds of thousands of motorists travel this major transportation artery, which also has the highest accident rate in Illinois. More than 40 years since it opened, a 10-mile stretch of the route will be the focus of its first major reconstruction effort: the four-year, \$600 million Dan Ryan Expressway (I-94/90) reconstruction project.

Project improvements extend from 31st Street to I-57/Halsted Street, with the Illinois Department of Transportation also planning to add expressway lanes in each direction, enhance local access roads and reconfigure the Skyway interchange to make driving safer.

Going Southbound

Because of its magnitude, the mainline contract was split into four major sections. HNTB was selected in July 2005 to perform construction engineering

and inspection services on the southbound portion of the expressway.

"HNTB's experience and reputation in working on similar size projects with IDOT played an important role in this project win," said Tim Faerber, Chicago office leader and Great Lakes Division Construction Services market sector leader.

In particular, he credits Miguel Durante, HNTB's construction program manager, with providing top-notch services to IDOT on the advance contracts for this project. This allowed Durante and his team to gain crucial knowledge of the site and project area, and demonstrate their ability to build strong working relationships with IDOT's resident engineer and the district's bureau chief of construction.

HNTB's portion of the project consists of reconstructing all four existing southbound lanes and the addition of a fifth lane

from 71st Street through the I-57 interchange to IL 1 (Halsted Street) on the west leg and Martin Luther King, Jr. Drive on the east leg. This work totals approximately 3.5 miles on the expressway, including the east and west legs.

For Durante, the project is clearly one of the more important of the year for the Chicago office – and the biggest one, dollar-wise, he has ever worked on. "This win means a lot to the Chicago Construction Services team," he noted. "It simply means their hard work has paid off. We have a sense of pride built within the project team because of the delivery of past assignments."

Relationships Built on Success

Those CEI assignments were, in fact, some of IDOT's most complex, high-traffic expressway construction projects in all

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SUPPLIES AND SUPPORT POUR IN FOR COLLEAGUES AFFECTED BY HURRICANE KATRINA

Employees Aid Baton Rouge Colleagues

IN HURRICANE KATRINA'S WAKE, HEROISM AND SUPPORT emerged. Among the thousands of volunteers and contributors nationwide, HNTB employees stepped in to meet the needs of our Baton Rouge colleagues, donating more than \$1,500 and filling and delivering more than 125 boxes of supplies.

Beneficiaries included senior administrative assistant Monica Hooge, whose home was demolished by the storm. In the following letter of gratitude, Hooge recounts her experience.



[Above] Several Kansas City office employees load hurricane relief supplies onto pallets for shipping.

Dear HNTB Family,

On August 28, 2005, family and friends gathered at our home. Our brick home was more capable of withstanding hurricane force winds than others' homes. We took an inventory of our supplies and watched The Weather Channel as we waited. The kids played together in the cool breeze, which was not normal this time of year in Louisiana, and the adults grilled food for dinner that night. No rain yet, just a constant cool breeze.

By midnight, my house was silent except for the weather forecaster giving the location and projected path of Hurricane Katrina. The rain had begun, the wind was now gusting and the nightmare was quickly approaching us.

By 8 a.m., everyone was awake. We cooked breakfast and kept the phone busy trying to contact family members. Wind gusts were coming in at 50 mph and our parish had a tornado warning in effect.

By 11 a.m., we had no electricity and were listening to the weather forecasters via a radio. No telecommunications were available and our neighbors across the street had begun losing shingles from their roof. The children were hungry so we made sandwiches for them, and I sat down to feed my 3-month-old son, Masun.

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Life in the Fast Lane

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of Chicago: the I-55 (Stevenson Expressway) reconstruction between the Dan Ryan and Lakeshore Drive, and the Ogden-Cicero interchange reconstruction. HNTB's strong relationship with IDOT dates back even further to the Dan Ryan Viaduct reconstruction project from 1987 through 1989. In a section of expressway north of the current project's location, this major project involved total removal and replacement of a section of elevated expressway near downtown.

It's been especially interesting to Faerber how HNTB and IDOT have been able to maintain individual relationships across the years, too, with many of those same people now in leadership posi-



“Staging of the project is critical so you're able to maintain a high level of traffic, even as we're rebuilding it”

tions. “I used to be the structural inspector running a work crew in the field on the early Dan Ryan jobs,” he said. “I've enjoyed working with these people for many years.”

Durante and his team actually have been on the job since late 2003, overseeing the advance work on sewer and water main relocation as well as some retaining walls and wraps. “There is no secret to our success,” he said. “We have learned how to work with the client to make their job easier. We have delivered 4for4 continually on all jobs, and we have not only delivered projects on budget, but under budget. We carry that reputation with the client, and they know that HNTB provides what is necessary to deliver the project, and we do it well. We have earned their trust, and for this type of project the team sells the project.”

“On the Move to Improve”

In addition to reconstructing the expressway, HNTB is participating in IDOT's “On the Move to Improve” workforce training program designed to benefit distressed communities surrounding the Dan Ryan. Based on a new initiative from Illinois Governor Rod Blagojevich, the agency requested that each of the seven main-line contractors employ local residents who want to work on the Dan Ryan and Kingery Expressway reconstruction, another major Chicago highway project.

As part of this pre-apprentice program for women and minorities, Durante has hired 10 trainees who will learn how to become construction inspectors over the next six months. If the program proves successful, IDOT will extend it for the entire project, which means every six months HNTB will re-hire another 10 trainees until the reconstruction is complete.

Currently, Durante spends much of his time instructing trainees in HNTB's field office classroom, with the remainder outside doing field inspection. “I'm training them the way I would train an HNTB person, because they are an HNTB employee of ours,” he said. “I like teaching...and what you can share. When you can see they are learning something that they never knew before, it's so satisfying.”

Keep it Moving

Once the project officially starts this fall, HNTB will provide complete CEI services for all highway and bridge rehabilitations, construction of retaining walls, reconfiguration of entrance and exit ramps, new overhead signs, updated highway lighting and ITS, drainage and sewer enhancements, landscaping and traffic control.

Faerber, Durante and their team have been here before. So what's the most critical element of the Dan Ryan reconstruction? To keep traffic moving so the public can continue to commute – especially because this is the most heavily-traveled section of expressway in Chicagoland.



The Dan Ryan Expressway Reconstruction Project

Project:

Total reconstruction of four existing south-bound lanes and the addition of a fifth lane for a 3.5-mile section of the Dan Ryan Expressway, including removal and replacement of an existing three-span bridge.

HNTB team leaders:

Tim Faerber, Chicago office leader; Miguel Durante, construction program manager

Client:

Illinois Department of Transportation

Project schedule:

Late 2003 through 2007

Project construction value:

\$100 million

Estimated fee:

\$10 million-plus

“Every time you reduce the number of lanes, you are forcing people to squeeze into a much smaller roadway section, so in turn, that obviously creates backups,” Durante said. “But our objective is to keep that inconvenience to the public to a minimum. It takes a lot of coordination to get it flowing the way it should.”

Faerber agreed. “Staging of the project is critical so you're able to maintain a high level of traffic, even as we're rebuilding it. In other words, we're not shutting down the Dan Ryan.”

HNTB News is a publication of the HNTB Companies.

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