Skyway bridge lessons ignored

BY JUSTIN GARCIA AND JAY CRIDLIN

After the Sunshine Skyway Bridge collapse, strong barriers were installed, but not in Baltimore.

FOR THE TIMES

The Sunshine Skyway Bridge, a four-lane highway across Tampa Bay, was designed in the 1960s to span the bay without supports. But on March 10, 1980, a ship struck the bridge and caused it to collapse, killing 57 people. The collapse was the result of a combination of engineering errors and the lack of protective structures around the supports of the bridge. After the collapse, engineers recommended adding protective structures, but the recommendation was ignored.

The Skyway Bridge collapse was a wake-up call for the need for protective structures around bridges. In Baltimore, engineers put in place island-like mounds of rock that shape up the tallest support columns and huge, delicately structured dolphins that act as bumpers blocking wayward ships. Engineers around the country followed suit to help strengthen bridge protections.

BTW...Fears of a bridge collapse in Baltimore were allayed after a 2011 accident, which caused damage but no loss of life. After Sunshine Skyway collapse, strong barriers were installed, but not in Baltimore. After Sunshine Skyway collapse, strong barriers were installed, but not in Baltimore.

BY LANE DEGREGORY

Tampa — There’s a car down there, deep in the mud of the Hillsborough River. Maybe a motorbike. They’re wriggling into wetsuits below the shadow on the sonar with a golden blob in the center.

They found it the other day, out on their boat, while on their rounds of the state’s metro areas leading to Florida, where they are looking for bodies in the water. They have discovered remains of 11 missing people inside cars, giving answers to relatives who had spent years agonizing.

One family, who thought their mom had left them, learned that she had driven the road. Relatives of a missing teacher suspected his girlfriend — they found out he had been submerged in a canal. They have discovered remains of 11 missing people inside cars, giving answers to relatives who had spent years agonizing.

By Mike Sullivan

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This week, in Baltimore, a ship hit the bridge and caused damage but no loss of life. After Sunshine Skyway collapse, strong barriers were installed, but not in Baltimore. After Sunshine Skyway collapse, strong barriers were installed, but not in Baltimore.

BY EMILY L. MARKNEY

Ben Chapman shelled out extra cash to maneuver the water — commuting from his land O’ Lakes home to his security job in Tampa in a 2001 Ford Crown Victoria. He had begun to suspect an electric car would help him save.

So when he spotted a used Fiat 500e for just $9,000, he snapped it. That was four years ago. This year, he said the car will have paid for itself in all he’s saved on gas.

The environmental benefits were a “nice bonus,” Chapman said. But saving money was “the No. 1 thing for me.”

He’s one of thousands of Tampa Bay residents who have gone electric in the past five years, a period that saw EVs explode in popularity here. While Florida didn’t embrace EVs as quickly as some early adopters like California, its registrations of electric vehicles have ramped up, with some of the state’s metro areas leading the charge. And with President Joe Biden earlier this month announcing an ambitious new tailpipe pollution regulation to encourage electric vehicles, experts said the trend is expected to continue.

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