

Twenty-Two New Bridges For Texarkana

Austin Bridge & Road is expanding I-59 on Texas side of Texarkana.

By R. G. Pickard -- Texas Contractor, 1/5/2009

Austin Bridge & Road, LP, of Irving, TX, is currently about halfway through a \$153-million expansion and renovation project on Interstates 59 and 30 in Texarkana.

Construction began in October 2006. The project involves one interchange connecting I-30 and I-59 on the west side of Texarkana as well as 22 new bridges, new entrance ramps, new exit ramps, and frontage road rehabilitation on I-30 from Exit 218 to Jefferson, AR, and a 5-mile section of Interstate 59 from the Interstate 30 / Interstate 59 interchange south to State Highway 182.

The project's 22 new bridges include new U-turn bridges as well as new mainline bridges at every cross street along the project length in Texarkana. Austin Bridge & Road brought most of their own equipment, including all of the cranes, from their yard in Ft. Worth, but it has been necessary to lease some bulldozers and excavators from local rental companies.

According to Randall Rosenbaum, project manager for Austin Bridge & Road, "the only difficulties we've had on this project have been caused by the weather. It seems as though every time we have even the slightest chance of rain in the forecast in this part of Texas, it rains at least half an inch and causes delays."

Austin Bridge & Road is performing all of the structural work in house on the bridges and columns. The bridge columns range from 36 inches to 60 inches in diameter. WW Drilling Company, Inc. of Houston drilled the shafts. Depths of the columns are not affected by the soil type, but are variable up to a maximum depth of 90 feet.

Austin Bridge & Road crews are tying the rebar in structures and on the roadway using 23,187,545 pounds of rebar supplied by Hirschfeld Steel Co. Inc. of San Angelo, TX. Hirschfeld is also supplying 2,268,827 pounds of structural steel for the project.

Smith's Ready Mix of Texarkana has already supplied 2,237 cubic yards of concrete for the roadways and 28,217 cubic yards of concrete for the bridges and columns. When complete, the project will have a total of 57,646 cubic yards of concrete in the roadway, and the bridges and columns are going to need a total of 60,352 cubic yards of concrete.

The roadways are being paved with 11-inch and 13-inch thicknesses of concrete. Each cross street is constructed of 11-inch-thick jointed concrete. No special concrete mixes are required to cope with the soil conditions in this area, in spite of the fact that the construction zone has widely varying soil types ranging from sand to clay. Each of the entrance and exit ramps is being constructed with 13-inch-thick concrete paving.

Each bridge is being built using precast beams, and all of the bridges together will eventually have 67,079 linear feet, or 12.7 miles, of precast beams supplied by Texas Prestressed Concrete, Inc. of Elm Mott, TX. All of the bridge deck panels are being supplied by Bexar Concrete Works Ltd. of San Antonio.

R. K. Hall Construction, Ltd., of Paris, TX, has been subcontracted to place the curbs and gutters as well as performing the asphalt paving. For drainage, the necessary box culverts and storm sewers are being constructed by Renaissance Contractors Inc. of Ft. Worth. A portion of the concrete storm sewer structures are shipped in as precast, while others are being cast in place. All headwalls are cast in place as well.

If the weather cooperates, the Interstate 59 and I-30 expansion and renovation is expected to be completed in December 2010.