



INFORMATION RELEASE

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Project Status of Sunken Lands Structure Rehabilitation on Interstate 555

POINSETT COUNTY (3-5) – Deck rehabilitation on 16 bridges located along 1.7 miles of Interstate 555 in an area known as the Sunken Lands in Poinsett County is expected to begin in mid-March, according to Arkansas Department of Transportation (ARDOT) officials.

In late August 2017, a \$12,272,673.80 contract was awarded to American Contracting Services Inc. for rehabilitation of the bridge decks. The work includes hydrodemolition, which is the removal of the top two inches of concrete by extremely high pressure water forced through small nozzles. The driving surface is to be replaced with a new concrete overlay.

This contract was awarded as a flexible start date contract, which gave the contractor an option to begin work between October 2017 and January 2018. ARDOT's Heavy Bridge Maintenance Section had scheduled maintenance and repair to the superstructures of each bridge prior to the contractor beginning work on the bridge decks. The superstructure is the structural system underneath the bridge that supports the driving surface.

Two unforeseen bridge strikes by large trucks in Northeast Arkansas required ARDOT crews to delay the maintenance work on the Interstate 555 bridges in the Sunken Lands area. The ARDOT Heavy Bridge Maintenance crews were required to redirect their efforts to make emergency repairs to correct the damage to the bridges resulting from these incidents. The first of these was a fatality accident that impacted the Harrisburg Rd. overpass on I-555 in Jonesboro late last June. The second was an accident that impacted the Mississippi County Rd. 378 overpass on I-55 north of Burdette last November. The necessary repairs to these two bridges have been completed by ARDOT, but their schedule to provide maintenance work to the I-555 bridges has been delayed.



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Before the bridge deck restoration can begin by American Contracting Services Inc., ARDOT crews need to complete the maintenance work to the substructures on the Interstate 555 bridges, which requires the use of the travel lanes on the structures. ARDOT's presence on the travel lanes conflicts with the area the contractor needs to perform the restoration work on the bridge decks. Therefore, in order to coordinate and efficiently perform all the necessary work on the bridges, the contractor has delayed work until mid-March at the request of ARDOT, when superstructure work by ARDOT crews is anticipated to be complete.

Although the 16 bridges on I-555 in the Sunken Lands have always been structurally safe, the driving surfaces have long been rough and unsightly. Pothole development accelerated during recent rain events as water penetrates the pavement cracks and causes the surface materials to loosen. A temporary asphalt pavement is being placed on some of the bridge decks to improve ride quality until more significant rehabilitation by the contractor can take place.

The work that will begin in mid-March by American Contracting Services Inc. is a long-term solution to repair and restore the driving surface on these bridges.