

April 15, 2010

Dear Nebraska Bridge Owner:

RE: Bridge Inspection Program

This memorandum to all Bridge Owners is the first of future communication on Bridge Inspection Program (BIP) in Nebraska. These memos will be maintained on the NDOR Bridge Division Website. This first memorandum is somewhat long, but this is necessary given the changes that have taken place in the processes to meet the National Bridge Inspection Standards (NBIS).

- BIP Memorandums: The Bridge Division will be issuing a Program Memo at least annually at the beginning of a given inspection year communicating revisions to the BIP Manual and other policy matters. As you know, NDOR submits a data set to FHWA no later than April 1. The data generally represents data collected from inspections and load ratings from the prior calendar year. BIP Memos will be issued throughout the year as needed.
- Bridge Policy on Design, Load Rating and Inspection: Attached is the revised policy regarding design (hydraulic, geometric and structural) and inventory inspections. This does not represent any changes to past practice or requirements of prior policies, but rather clarifies and reemphasizes requirements for design and submittal of documentation to NDOR.
- NDOR Bridge Conference: NDOR will be holding a Bridge Conference this summer to provide a more detailed overview of new processes of the Bridge Inspection Program and of the Bridge Inspection Manual. LTAP will be handling the arrangements for this conference. You will receive a notification in the near future regarding the date and agenda.
- Bridge Inspection Program Manual: If you have not done so already we recommend that you read the Bridge Inspection program Manual that was effective on January 25, 2010. The Manual, program forms, reference documents and interim guidance including this and future BIP Memos, will be posted on the NDOR Bridge Division Website. Attached you will find a list of the "Top Ten" items you need to know regarding the Manual and areas of emphasis from the compliance process with FHWA.
- NDOR/Bridge Owner Agreements: The Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) has a national initiative to ensure compliance with the NBIS, which was particularly heightened after the collapse of the I35W Bridge in Minneapolis. Much progress has been made in this area in Nebraska and, as a result Nebraska is now conditionally compliant; there are some important tasks at hand to be done to attain full compliance.

An FHWA compliance requirement is that NDOR enter into agreements with each and every Bridge Owner in the state to delegate responsibility for the NBIS requirements to each Owner. These agreements will set Owner responsibility for NBIS requirements which include bridge inspections, load rating, record keeping and scour monitoring/management. These responsibilities described

more fully in the BIP Manual for each major operation of the Program. NDOR will retain responsibility for underwater inspections and fracture critical inspections.

The agreement is currently being studied and reviewed by NDOR Legal Counsel and a working Committee made of the following: Nebraska Board of Classifications, Bridge Owners and consultants who complete operations for Owners. We encourage you to contact the Bridge Inspection Program Manager, Babrak Niazi if you would like input. Working drafts will be posted to the Bridge Division website. You will receive a copy of the proposed agreement after this review. The goal is to have these agreements in place by September 1, 2010.

Another FHWA compliance requirement is that future bridge inspections be funded with Federal aid. This underscores the key NBIS objectives of importance of maintaining bridges to protect the public's safety and cost-effect management of these capital assets. Owners who do not comply with the NBIS and the Nebraska Bridge Inspection Program, may see Federal aid for these inspection and potentially bridge replacements sanctioned.

- Quality Assurance Results: NDOR also completed a Quality Assurance review of program operations of inspection and load rating, and records. Quality Assurance provides not only a check on quality Control being done by those generating data and reports for the Program, it also provides a mechanism to identify best practices or recurring problematic issues to be shared with all participants to improve the Program. A summary of the findings for this inaugural cycle is attached. Your organization's individual reports will be sent separately.
- Pontis Owner Packages Available: We also want to inform you that the Nebraska database refreshed data is ready to go and available on the ftp site for your use.

If you have any questions, please call Steve Andersen at 402-479-4705.

Mark Traynowicz
State Bridge Engineer

Enclosure

Copy: County Attorney
County Clerk
FHWA/NE Division Office
Jeff Schroeder, Asst. Attorney General
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