INTRODUCTION OF US25-US42 BRIDGE PANEL DISCUSSION:

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On Thursday, March 16, 1972, the contract was let for the Ohio approaches to the new US25-US42 replacement bridge between Covington, Kentucky and Cincinnati, Ohio. With this letting, the entire replacement bridge project is now under construction with an anticipated open-to-traffic date of late 1973. This will mean that an existing major structure has been dismantled and removed and a new major Ohio River bridge project planned, designed and constructed in four years. A project of this nature, not including any existing bridge removal, would normally require about eight years.

How was this done? Well, it became evident to both the States of Kentucky and Ohio and the Federal Highway Administration at the very outset of the project that an emergency existed and other than normal procedures would have to prevail. A Management Team composed of some twenty-five individuals representing all affected agencies and offices was selected; each member of the team having the full authority to make decisions for the office or agency he represented. I will be frank and state that I never thought that it would be possible to get this many people to agree and coordinate. It has really been amazing and has been an experience that I am sure all team members will remember for the rest of their lives.

Most of the gentlemen on today's panel are key members of the Management Team. I use the present tense because the team retains its full duties and responsibilities until the project is complete. I would like to introduce each of the panel members to you now with some brief introductory remarks and I will have more to say about each one as his part on the program comes about.

In the order that they appear on the program:

- Myself, Charles G. Cook, Director, Division of Bridges, Kentucky Department of Highways.
- Mr. Calvin G. Grayson, Assistant State Highway Engineer for Planning and Programming, Kentucky Department of Highways.
- Mr. W. G. Peeples, Executive Director, Office of Public Affairs, Kentucky Department of Highways.
- Mr. Robert H. Wood, Partner, Hazelot & Erdal.
- Mr. James H. Havens, Director, Division of Research, Kentucky Department of Highways.
- Mr. Logan L. Ratliff, Chief, Federal Highway Projects Division, Federal Highway Administration, Washington, D. C.

I would also add, at this time, that today's first speaker, Mr. Thoroughman, was the Management Team representative for the U. S. Coast Guard. I presently have the honor of holding the position as Head of this vital Management Team which is handling a project designated by the Kentucky Department of Highways as its No. 1 Priority Project.

I will take a few minutes and cover the investigation of the old existing bridge which led to its closing. At the outset, let me say that some of us from habit may refer to this structure this afternoon as the C & O bridge which it was known as for so many years. However, at the request of the Management Team members from the C & O Railway Company, we have all been trying to refrain from calling it by that misnomer.

The original structure was completed as a railroad bridge on December 25, 1888. It was originally owned and operated by the Cincinnati and Covington Elevated Railway Transfer and Bridge Company. By 1917, when certain members of the truss spans were strengthened to carry heavier railroad loadings, the Chesapeake and Ohio Railway Company had assumed ownership of the bridge. After the C & O Railway Company constructed a new railroad bridge, the old railroad structure was converted to a highway bridge and sold to the Kentucky Department of Highways in 1937 for approximately $2,350,000.00 (which by the way was a pretty high price for 1937).

Bridge inspections in the early 1960's began to show the need for extensive repairs. As a result of one of these annual inspections, an engineer budget request in June, 1967, asked for in excess of $900,000.00 for repairs and painting. On October 31, 1967, the Assistant State Highway Engineer for Operations, in a memorandum to the State Highway Engineer, pointed out the need for an in-depth inspection of the bridge. The State Highway Engineer by memo dated November 8, 1967 concurred in the study need. Commissioner Mitchell W. Tinder on November 10, 1967 advised that this action should be taken. The bridge was re-inspected by the Kentucky Department of Highways in early December, 1967 and the re-inspection clearly reaffirmed the need for an extensive in-depth study. The Point Pleasant bridge collapsed on December 15, 1967. I have bored you with these dates merely to show that the Kentucky Department of Highways had taken action to begin an intensive study of this bridge several months prior to the Point Pleasant disaster. I know we have had some critics who claim that we only became concerned about the US25 bridge after the Point Pleasant bridge fell.

After the bridge was again inspected by the Kentucky Department of Highways, the Engineering Staff met with State Highway Engineer A. O. Neiser in February, 1968 to discuss results of load analysis and maintenance inspections of all Ohio River bridges which had been ordered by Governor Nunn in January, 1968. It was decided to conduct an inspection in-depth and thorough analysis of the bridge which required skills not available other than by consultants.

The firm of Hazelot & Erdal was engaged in March, 1968 for this investigative study. Among other activities, the consultant agreement provided for the consultant to promptly alert the Kentucky Department of Highways should...
signals of distress be disclosed. From April, 1968 to August, 1968, various inspections were conducted by Hazelet & Erdal including a July, 1968 underwater inspection by divers.

On September 30, 1968, the consultants reported that a combination of several deficiencies could lead to sudden and disastrous failure of the bridge. On November 6, 1968, after the Kentucky Department of Highways staff had thoroughly challenged and evaluated the consultant's report, the staff recommendation was made to Commissioner Hazelrigg that the Kentucky Department of Highways could no longer accept the risk of keeping the bridge open to traffic.

The bridge was closed to all vehicular and pedestrian traffic on November 10, 1968 ending 37 years of service as a highway bridge and 80 years of total combined highway and railway bridge service.

With the bridge closed to traffic, an emergency was declared and the Management Team selected. Appointed by Commissioner Hazelrigg to head the team was Mr. Calvin G. Grayson, who was then Assistant State Highway Engineer for Special Services.