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Gov. Beshear Announces Contract Award to Construct Kentucky Lake Bridge

Project entails modern, 4-lane bridge to carry U.S.68/KY80 over lake

FRANKFORT, Ky. (Feb. 11, 2014) – Governor Steve Beshear today announced the award of a contract to build the first of the much-anticipated twin Lake Bridges in the tourism-rich Jackson Purchase of western Kentucky.

The $131.5 million project, awarded by the Kentucky Transportation Cabinet (KYTC) to Johnson Brothers Corp., of Fort Worth, Texas, will result in a modern, four-lane bridge to carry U.S. 68/KY 80 over Kentucky Lake and serve as the western entrance to Land Between The Lakes National Recreation Area.

"Replacement of the bridges over Kentucky Lake and Lake Barkley has been a priority of my administration because of their importance to the tourism industry of western Kentucky," Gov. Beshear said. "Land Between The Lakes, and indeed our entire 'Western Waterland' region, is not only a cultural and recreational treasure. It also is an economic engine."

The new bridge will replace the venerable but narrow and functionally obsolete Eggners Ferry Bridge, which was built in 1932 and long ago ceased to meet modern design standards for the amount of traffic it must accommodate. The Eggners Ferry, joining Marshall and Trigg counties, has two lanes, each 10 feet wide, with no shoulders. The new bridge will have four travel lanes, each 11 feet wide, plus 4-foot shoulders and a 10-foot-wide pedestrian/bicycle path.

The larger Lake Bridges Project also includes replacement of the Henry Lawrence Memorial Bridge on Lake Barkley – a near twin of the Eggners Ferry. The KYTC is aiming to award a contract for the second bridge by December 2014.

In the Kentucky Lake region, approximately two miles of U.S. 68/KY 80 will be widened from two lanes to four lanes from Aurora, in Marshall County on the western shore, to just east of Kentucky Lake, where the project will connect to the four-lane roadway in the Land Between The Lakes. In the Lake Barkley area, the project will widen approximately 1.5 miles of U.S. 68/KY 80 from two lanes to four lanes from just west of Lake Barkley to just east of the lake.

Like the Eggners Ferry, the Lawrence Memorial Bridge, also built in 1932, no longer meets traffic demands in the region. Plans for the new bridge over Lake Barkley call for a design similar to that of the new Kentucky Lake bridge – four traffic lanes instead of two, with shoulders and a bicycle/pedestrian lane.

The recent award is the second for the Kentucky Lake project, which consisted of two construction contracts. The first, awarded earlier this year to Jim Smith Contracting, of Grand Rivers, was to construct the fill for the western and eastern causeways in the location of the new bridge alignment. Part of the $25 million project also included a new bridge over a lagoon on the west side of Kentucky Lake, just north of U.S. 68/KY 80 and adjacent to the Kenlake State Resort Park campground. Work still continues on this portion of the project.

Once completed, the Lakes Bridges Project will provide a continuous, four-lane route from Aurora to Cadiz, crossing both lakes and Land Between The Lakes. It also will be part of a four-lane corridor from Mayfield to Bowling Green.

Additional information on the project is available at www.lakebridges.com.

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Governor Beshear's press releases are available on his official website at www.governor.ky.gov

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" Words carry the freight that can change our own lives and change the way we look at the lives of others."
---Bill Tammeus, former Kansas City Star columnist &
former pres. of the National Society of Newspaper Columnists