

Gov. Beshear Breaks Ground for New Lake Barkley Bridge

Span critical to western Kentucky tourism has been priority of Governor

CADIZ, Ky. (July 22, 2015) – Governor Steve Beshear, flanked by state and local leaders, today ceremonially broke ground for a new bridge on Lake Barkley – the second of the much-anticipated twin Lake Bridges in the tourism-rich Jackson Purchase of western Kentucky.

“This is a great day that has been a long time in coming,” Gov. Beshear said. “Modern bridges for both Lake Barkley and Kentucky Lake have been badly needed for many years. For the residents of our Lakes region and the hundreds of thousands of visitors who are drawn every year to Land Between The Lakes, our two new bridges offer a vast improvement in traveling safety and convenience.”

Construction of the new Lake Barkley bridge, a \$128.3 million project, will result in a modern, four-lane bridge to carry U.S. 68/KY 80 and serve as the eastern entrance to Land Between The Lakes National Recreation Area. The contractor is PCL Civil Construction, of Denver.

The new bridge will replace the Henry Lawrence Memorial Bridge, a narrow, two-lane bridge built in 1932 that long ago ceased to meet design standards for modern volumes and types of traffic, including recreational vehicles and freight carriers. The new bridge, which will feature a basket-handle arch design, will have four travel lanes, each 11 feet wide, plus 4-foot shoulders and a 10-foot pedestrian-bicycle path.

The larger Lake Bridges Project also includes replacement of the Eggners Ferry Bridge on Kentucky Lake – a near twin of the Henry Lawrence Memorial. Construction of the new Kentucky Lake bridge is already underway. Gov. Beshear broke ground for it in September 2014.

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. In the Kentucky Lake region, approximately 2 miles of U.S. 68/KY 80 is being 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 that runs through Land Between The Lakes.

The Kentucky Lake project has two parts. Jim Smith Contracting, of Grand Rivers, was awarded a contract in 2014 to construct causeways and also 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. The lagoon bridge forms an approach to the main lake bridge.

“As a resident and former judge-executive of Trigg County, I can vouch that the people of our region have looked forward to this day for many years,” said Sen. Stan Humphries, of Cadiz. “Land Between The Lakes is an invaluable asset for the entire Commonwealth. The new twin bridges, both here and on Kentucky Lake, will provide a signature gateway befitting the importance of this area.”

“Construction of the Lake Barkley and Kentucky Lake bridges is a true milestone for western Kentucky,” said Sen. Danny Carroll, of Paducah. “The new bridges are arguably the most significant infrastructure developments in our region since construction of the dams that created the lakes. I appreciate the fact that this was a high priority for Gov. Beshear and the Kentucky Transportation Cabinet.”

“This groundbreaking today is a true high point for our region and will do so much for our local economy and traffic safety once it is complete,” said Rep. John Tilley, of Hopkinsville. “We’ve talked about the need for these bridges for decades, so to have construction under way is a major, and definitely welcome, accomplishment. I am proud I could play a role in helping to make today’s ceremony possible and look forward to the day when we can drive across both new bridges. I want to thank Gov. Beshear, the Transportation Cabinet and my friends in the House and Senate for their support.”

“It is difficult to overstate just how important these bridges are to Western Kentucky,” said Rep. Will Coursey, of Benton. “With today’s groundbreaking, we can now start counting down the days when Land Between The Lakes will get the type of entrances that the state’s biggest tourist draw has long needed. I’ve supported these projects from the moment I joined the General Assembly and have enjoyed working alongside my fellow legislators, Gov. Beshear and other local and state leaders to make all of this possible. This is a great moment for our region, and these bridges are on track to be the crown jewels of our local highway system.”

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

The new Lake Barkley bridge is expected to be open to traffic by October 2017. The new Kentucky Lake bridge, is expected to be ready for traffic in December 2015, with completion in 2016. Additional information on the Lake Bridges project can be found at www.lakebridges.com.