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Liberty Memorial Bridge dedication honors veterans

Bismarck – Gov. John Hoeven, along with state, local and federal officials today honored veterans at a dedication ceremony for the new Liberty Memorial Bridge.

Hoeven said veterans across North Dakota can be proud of the new bridge. “The story of the Liberty Memorial Bridge is about remembering and honoring North Dakotans who have served our country and fought for our freedom in wars throughout the world.”

North Dakota Department of Transportation Director Francis Ziegler said: “The first Memorial Bridge was a historic part of Bismarck and Mandan for more than 80 years and stood as a testament to the support and commitment our state has for veterans. The new bridge continues the tradition with honor and stands as a daily reminder of the sacrifices our men and women in uniform have made for our state and country.”

The new bridge includes five overlooks, each dedicated to a military branch. The overlooks include flag stations that will be posted by the local veterans groups on holidays and flown for the first time this Veterans Day. At both ends of the bridge a plaza with 11 spires encircle the American, North Dakota and POW/MIA flags. The spires represent soldiers standing guard around the flags. There are 11 spires, representing Armistice Day which is now called Veterans day, the 11th day of the 11th month, November 11.

Tuesday’s dedication at the west end plaza of the bridge was followed by a military-themed parade across the bridge with more than two-dozen units including nine Honor Guards, antique military vehicles, National Guard Units and others. After the parade, a public reception was held at Bismarck State College featuring comments from Governor John Hoeven, the state’s Congressional Delegation, the Federal Highway Administration, Adjutant General Major General David Sprynczynatyk of the North Dakota National Guard and the mayors of Bismarck and Mandan.

While the entire project isn’t finished until the plazas and parks are completed in 2010, the construction cost at this time is \$49.7 million. The total estimated cost of the project is approximately \$62 million, which includes construction, engineering, right of way, bond repayment, and utilities.

Yet to be completed:

- Permanent striping throughout the project.
- Cleaning and touch-up painting of the steel girders.
- Completion of the surface finish and painting of the piers.
- Completion of the east plaza and towers.
- Bismarck’s River Road and Mandan’s Marina Road under the bridge.