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International Bridge toll plaza project wins award

Fast facts:

- The Sault Ste. Marie International Bridge 2015 toll plaza reconstruction project was recently honored with a Merit Award from the American Council of Engineering Companies of Michigan (ACEC).
- The major upgrade to the U.S.-Canada border crossing involved constructing a new administration building and seven toll lanes to replace the original 53-year-old building and five toll lanes.
- The ACEC Merit Award recognizes projects based upon application of new or existing techniques; social, economic, and sustainable design considerations; complexity; and other factors.

March 14, 2017 -- The Sault Ste. Marie International Bridge toll plaza reconstruction project was recently honored with a Merit Award from the American Council of Engineering Companies (ACEC) of Michigan. The ACEC Merit Award recognizes worthy projects based upon application of new or existing techniques; future value to engineering and surveying professions; social, economic, and sustainable design considerations; exceeding client needs; and project complexity. The award was announced at the organization's annual gala March 11 in Detroit.

The 2015 International Bridge Administration (IBA) project involved constructing a new administration building and seven toll lanes to replace the original 53-year-old building and five toll lanes.

"This project represented a major milestone for the IBA," said IBA General Manager Peter Petainen. "The original administration building and toll plaza infrastructure were constructed in 1960 and in great need of replacement. The result was a bi-national project that has exceeded expectations of our bridge customers, the Sault Ste. Marie Bridge Authority, the IBA, and facility owners Federal Bridge Corp. Ltd. and MDOT."

Using an innovative, multi-disciplinary construction manager general contractor (CMGC) process, prime consultant CDM Smith led a bi-national design team in providing a major upgrade to the essential U.S.-Canada border crossing at the International Bridge toll plaza.

"CDM Smith joined the project in 2006 as an environmental planning firm and went on to lead the team of engineers and architects, including local firms EPOH and STEM Engineering, through the planning, design, and construction inspection process," said IBA Bridge Engineer and Project Manager Karl Hansen. "The lead construction team had bi-national representation, including CDM Smith, Northwest Design Group, EPOH, RA Engineers and Inspectors, and DeVere Construction."

The team and IBA staff ensured plaza operations continued with minimal disruption through creative construction staging and traffic maintenance. In addition to the toll booths and administration building, the project included the I-75 freeway terminus, ramps to Easterday Avenue, and a Michigan State Police static weigh scale. As a result of the CMGC process, the schedule was accelerated from 24 to 16 months, and construction costs were reduced from \$10.4 million to \$8.9 million.

"The collaboration between the design team, construction team, IBA employees, stakeholders, and the public was exemplary and helped play a role in the success of this project," Petainen said. "We are very proud to have been part of this team - there are so many others who played crucial roles. This award recognizes the delivery of all aspects of the complex design, construction, and operation of this public facility."

The operation and maintenance of the International Bridge is totally self-funded, primarily through bridge tolls. It is not subsidized by any state, provincial, or federal government entity. For a complete list of International Bridge tolls, visit the IBA website at www.michigan.gov/IBA.

For more information on the International Bridge, please visit www.saultbridge.com or follow us on Twitter at www.twitter.com/saultbridge.

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Sault Ste. Marie International Bridge:
Bridging Our Past, Connecting Our Future



The award-winning Sault Ste. Marie International Bridge toll plaza project shown as it was nearing completion. (MDOT Photo)



Accepting a Merit Award from the American Council of Engineering Companies of Michigan on March 11 are, from left, Matt D. Wendling, PE, of CDM Smith; Sault Ste. Marie International Bridge Administration (IBA) General Manager Peter Petainen; Natalie Kinloch, CPA, CA, representing the Canadian Federal Bridge Corp. Ltd; IBA Bridge Engineer Karl Hansen, PE; and Matt Hunter, PE, PTOE, of CDM Smith. (CDM Smith Photo)