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Canadian toll adjustments at International Bridge based on currency exchange rates

Fast facts:

- The International Bridge Authority (IBA) in Sault Ste. Marie, is adjusting Canadian fares at the bridge.
- Starting April 1, the passenger vehicle rate for Canadian currency will change from \$4.40 to \$4.70.
- Customers making just one round trip across the bridge each week can qualify for a 20 percent commuter discount.

March 16, 2016 -- While the U.S. fare will remain unchanged, International Bridge customers paying Canadian currency will see the toll rate adjusted due to the current value of the Canadian dollar. The changes, effective Friday, April 1, are the result of the currency exchange review conducted by bridge officials twice each year.

Starting April 1, the passenger vehicle rate for Canadian currency will change from \$4.40 to \$4.70. The U.S. rate remains unchanged at \$3.50. This is not a rate increase but a currency exchange adjustment. Exchange rate reviews in April and October are mandated as U.S. and Canadian dollars fluctuate in value. Prior to the adjustment, all customers had been saving 7 percent overall since October 2015, due to exchange rate fluctuation.

"I want to emphasize that the base U.S. fare is unchanged and there are no plans to change it," said Peter Petainen, International Bridge Administration (IBA) general manager. "The IBA is a U.S.-based agency, and these adjustments are mandated to keep the toll rates consistent with the exchange rate for customers paying with either U.S. or Canadian funds."

Under the bridge's intergovernmental operating agreement, Canadian currency toll rates must be adjusted every April and October if the change in the average currency exchange rate during the first six months of the preceding seven months is large enough. Using U.S. currency as

the benchmark, the IBA is required to keep toll equity to within 5 cents in relation to currency exchange rates.

Petainen pointed out that the International Bridge is still a border crossing bargain. U.S. rates are competitively priced at 50 cents below the average rate for passenger vehicles at other international crossings between Ontario and Michigan, and Ontario and New York.

The new three-tiered commuter rates for Canadian currency will be \$3.29, \$3.76 and \$4.23. U.S. commuter account rates remain unchanged at \$2.45, \$2.80 and \$3.15. Discounts through the IBA's Prox card commuter program are based on the number of one-way crossings on each account over the previous 30 days. Customers with up to two crossings receive a 10 percent discount, three to eight crossings receive a 20 percent discount, and nine or more crossings receive 30 percent off the regular cash rate. Accounts no longer expire in the new commuter program.

"If customers make just one round trip across the bridge each week, they'll qualify for the 20 percent discount," Petainen said. "Plus, all Prox card customers receive a 10 percent discount regardless of how often they cross."

That 10 percent discount alone will more than negate the effect of the currency adjustment, Petainen added. "Which makes this an excellent time to take a look at getting a Prox card."

Commuter traffic on the International Bridge down 20 percent from last year – a statistic bridge officials attribute largely to the weaker Canadian dollar. Forty-seven percent of International Bridge customers are getting the full 30 percent discount now and 10 percent of commuters actually cross the bridge more than 15 times in a 30-day period.

The commuter program also boasts several convenience features:

- Customers with Prox accounts can activate their online accounts now at www.saultbridge.com (click Debit Accounts) or <https://tolls.saultbridge.com/>.
- For assistance, follow the FAQ on the website.
- Customers can setup automatic rebilling to refresh their account when it falls below a set amount.
- Prox accounts accept Visa, MasterCard or Discover payments.

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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