



STATE OF MICHIGAN
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MACKINAC BRIDGE AUTHORITY

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Traffic changes announced for 2017 Annual Mackinac Bridge Walk

May 16, 2017 -- Citing safety and security recommendations by the Michigan State Police (MSP) and U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS), the Mackinac Bridge Authority (MBA) will close the bridge to most vehicle traffic during the 2017 Annual Bridge Walk on Labor Day.

Unlike in prior years, only buses used to transport walkers to the starting point for the walk and emergency services vehicles will be allowed on the bridge during the event. All other vehicle traffic will be stopped from 6:30 a.m. to noon while event participants are on the bridge.

"This was not a decision the Mackinac Bridge Authority makes lightly. We understand this change will be an inconvenience to our customers traveling Labor Day morning," said MBA Chairman William Gnodtke. "Our board felt this choice strikes the best balance of keeping this 60-year tradition going for the tens of thousands of visitors who walk the bridge each year and keeping them safe."

"While there are no known threats to this annual tradition, recent terrorist-related attacks carried out around the globe serve as a reminder to remain alert and vigilant," stated Col. Kriste Kibbey Etue, director of MSP and state director of Emergency Management and Homeland Security. "Since 9/11, Michigan has made great strides enhancing the state's homeland security framework to protect critical infrastructure, key resources and our residents."

Each year, between 30,000 and 60,000 people from several states and countries come to the Mackinac Bridge for the Annual Bridge Walk, which has taken place since 1958, the year after the

bridge opened to traffic. Roughly 9,000 vehicles cross the bridge during the event hours, with many of them carrying participants in the walk.

As before, the two eastern lanes of the bridge will be closed to vehicle traffic before the walk starts. The western two lanes will be open to the buses transporting walkers between Mackinaw City and St. Ignace, as well as emergency vehicles.

The event will begin at 6:40 a.m. with the start of the Governor's Council on Physical Fitness Jog, followed by a greeting from Gov. Rick Snyder at 6:55 a.m. Walkers will begin across the bridge at 7 a.m.

No walkers will be permitted to begin the walk after 10 a.m., as it takes roughly one-and-a-half hours to complete the crossing. Buses will begin picking up any remaining walkers on the bridge at 11:30 a.m. to ensure the bridge is clear and can reopen to traffic promptly at noon.

Buses will again shuttle participants between Mackinaw City and St. Ignace for the start of the walk, and then back to St. Ignace if needed, starting at 4:30 a.m. The MBA plans to secure additional buses to make sure all participants can get to the starting area prior to 10 a.m.

Northbound I-75 traffic will be stopped at Exit 337 on the south end of the bridge; southbound US-2 and I-75 traffic will be stopped at Exit 344 on the north side.

The MBA intends to alert motorists of this change through media releases, postings on the MBA website (www.mackinacbridge.org), messages on the Michigan Department of Transportation's (MDOT) dynamic message sign system, the Mi Drive travel information website (www.michigan.gov/drive), and notifications to customers at the bridge. The MBA will work with MSP to help inform the public and direct traffic the day of the event.

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