



STATE OF MICHIGAN
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MACKINAC BRIDGE AUTHORITY

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

TUESDAY, JULY 11, 2017

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Live streaming available of Mackinac Bridge Authority's discussion of the 2017 Annual Bridge Walk

July 11, 2017 -- Thursday's meeting of the Mackinac Bridge Authority (MBA), which includes discussion of the bridge closure during the annual bridge walk, will be available to view on LiveStream.

The meeting, scheduled for 9 a.m. at the Mackinac Island City Hall on Thursday, July 13, will be broadcast on the Michigan Department of Transportation's (MDOT) LiveStream channel here: <https://livestream.com/MDOT/MBAmeeing071317>.

"We know that many people are interested in the bridge walk and concerns regarding the closure, so we worked with MDOT to make access to that discussion available," said MBA Executive Secretary Bob Sweeney. "The walk is now about two months away, and we want to ensure everyone is aware of the change with plenty of time to plan."

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.

The Authority made the decision during a special board meeting May 16, citing safety and security recommendations by the Michigan State Police (MSP) and U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS). The MBA and MDOT are working together to notify as many travelers as possible of the scheduled closure to allow them to modify travel plans and avoid unexpected delays.

"The Authority felt it was left with the choice of closing the bridge to vehicle traffic during the event, or canceling this 60-year tradition," said Sweeney. "Many in Michigan feel a real connection to the bridge, and the chance to walk across it is a special opportunity only available once each year."

Every 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 shuttling participants across the bridge either before or after 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 authorized 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.

Official 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 is working 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 MDOT's 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.

Recorded video of the meeting will be available on MDOT's FTP site afterward at ftp://ftpmidot.state.mi.us/MDOT_Mapping_Media_Services/Videos/MBA_Meeting_071317/.

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