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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 9, 2017

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International Bridge board hears inspection updates

Fast facts:

- **The International Bridge recently underwent a fracture critical inspection and an annual inspection.**
- **Ongoing maintenance is keeping the bridge in good condition.**
- **The Sault Ste. Marie Bridge Authority (SSMBA) board of directors heard updates on major contracted projects completed at the bridge this year.**

November 9, 2017 -- The Sault Ste. Marie Bridge Authority (SSMBA) board of directors, the bi-national body that supervises operations of the International Bridge, heard reports on bridge inspections at the board's regular meeting today.

The SSMBA board reviewed and officially accepted the results of the annual bridge inspection and fracture critical inspection. A team of bridge engineering experts from the lead firm of Hardesty and Hanover (H&H) of Okemos, Mich., along with their Canadian partner firm WSP Canada Group Limited of Mississauga, Ontario, conducted the two-week-long annual inspections of the bridge this fall and presented their findings at today's meeting.

"With outstanding ongoing maintenance, the bridge is being kept in good condition," said H&H structural engineer Richard Wianecki. "The overall condition of the bridge is good and our inspection found no serious issues."

H&H noted some minor items that the International Bridge Administration (IBA) staff has included in scheduled maintenance for 2018.

The fracture critical inspection was conducted on the U.S. half of the bridge. Fracture critical inspections are conducted on one-half of the bridge each year and provide a closer look at bridge components that are critical to the structural integrity of the bridge.

"We repair any structural deficiencies, no matter how minor, found during the inspection," said Karl Hansen, the IBA bridge engineer. "The IBA has a long legacy of excellent bridge maintenance and a dedicated staff who protect the public investment in the bridge."

In other business, the board heard updates on two major contracted projects completed this construction season. The Canadian arch painting finished in mid-October, three weeks ahead of schedule and on its \$3.4 million CDN contracted budget. The arch was painted using an alternate one-coat technique covered by five-year paint and two-year workmanship warranties.

"The project was completed in a single season as opposed to the originally planned two construction seasons," said IBA General Manager Peter Petainen. "This work was funded entirely through current bridge revenue and we have not had to tap into investments as was originally planned."

Petainen noted the project had positive economic impacts beyond the bridge span. In addition to their own staff, the Canadian contractors locally hired up to 24 full- and part-time employees. The contractors also hired or rented local services for roofing, environmental, waste management, construction, equipment and office spaces. Additionally, the IBA added 10 seasonal local staff and provided flagging operations.

A project by contractor C.A. Hull to replace two rocker link arms on the U.S. arch began following the Fourth of July holiday and was completed two weeks ahead of schedule. The link arms move to allow for expansion and contraction of the arch as temperature conditions change. The planned \$506,000 project came in under budget at approximately \$472,000.

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. The ongoing construction of the Canadian Plaza Redevelopment Project is a Canadian capital project that is financed separately by the Federal Bridge Corporation Limited (FBCL), through the Canadian Gateways and Border Crossings Fund. 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