



STATE OF MICHIGAN  
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# MACKINAC BRIDGE AUTHORITY

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**WEDNESDAY, APRIL 18, 2018**

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## **Brief, early-morning Mackinac Bridge closure scheduled to begin next phase of tower painting project**

**April 18, 2018** – To continue repainting the Mackinac Bridge's north tower, contractors need to hang a pair of custom moveable scaffold platforms above the roadway, requiring a brief closure Saturday morning.

Seaway Painting, the contractor for the \$6.3 million two-season project, expects to need a 30-minute to one-hour closure to install the new scaffold platforms. The closure is scheduled for 6 a.m. Saturday to minimize the effect on traffic and is weather-dependent.

"The Mackinac Bridge is a unique structure, so it requires custom equipment for a project of this scale," said Mackinac Bridge Authority (MBA) Executive Secretary Bob Sweeney. "These platforms will help the contractor safely complete their remaining work on the north tower."

The platforms will be lifted into place and hooked up to hoists connected to the top of the tower, allowing workers to move their work area up the tower as they progress. The system includes safety blocks on the hoists, static safety cables, and a net beneath both platforms.

"While the sight of this work is certainly interesting, we urge customers to keep their attention on driving and not on the platforms hanging above the roadway," Sweeney said. "That's critically important, both for drivers' safety and the safety of our workers."

This project marks the first time in the bridge's 60-year history when one of the iconic ivory towers is being stripped down to bare metal and repainted. In 2017, Seaway worked on

stripping and painting within the bridge's interior "cells," as well as the tower legs beneath the roadway. The project is required to be completed by Dec. 31, 2018.

The original paint is lead-based, and Seaway is required to contain 100 percent of the paint as it is removed, test it, and ship it to an appropriate landfill facility. The new paint, which is zinc-based, is expected to last at least 35 years with periodic maintenance.

As painting resumes, the outside two lanes of the bridge near the north tower will be closed to stage equipment. Sweeney said closures on the northbound lanes will be lifted on Fridays and on southbound lanes on Sundays during the peak traffic weekends. Lane closures also will be removed as needed for other high traffic volume times, such as holidays.

Seasonal work by MBA staff also will resume soon, requiring crews to stop traffic briefly (usually five minutes or less) for projects, such as grating replacement and inspection work.

"Anyone who crosses the bridge in the warmer months is familiar with the sight of our continued work," Sweeney said. "Please be patient and careful as we work to keep the bridge maintained for years to come."

Construction on the Mackinac Bridge began in May 1953, and the completed structure was opened to traffic on Nov. 1, 1957. The MBA's sole source of funding is from tolls and fees collected, with all revenue used to maintain, operate, and protect the bridge.

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