Mackinac Bridge painting project wins third award

March 17, 2020 -- The Mackinac Bridge tower painting project, now entering its fourth and final year, has won a third national award.

Ruby+Associates of Bingham Farms received one of five Engineering Honorable Conceptor Awards from the American Council of Engineering Companies of Michigan (ACEC/M) at the association's annual Engineering and Surveying Excellence Awards Gala on March 7. Ruby+Associates designed the movable painting scaffolding painting platforms being used in the Mackinac Bridge's back-to-back two-year tower painting projects.

"It's gratifying that the companies involved in repainting the Mackinac Bridge towers have now been recognized a third time for their excellence in design of equipment and execution of their work," said Mackinac Bridge Authority (MBA) Executive Secretary Kim Nowack. "As an engineer, it's exciting to witness the problem-solving creativity being applied to this project."

Earlier this year, representatives of Seaway Painting of Livonia, the contractor performing the work on the bridge, accepted the E. Crone Knoy Award from the Society for Protective Coatings, an industry group focused on protecting and preserving concrete, steel, and other industrial and marine structures. The E. Crone Knoy Award "recognizes an outstanding achievement in industrial or commercial coatings work that demonstrates innovation, excellence in craftsmanship, or the use of state-of-the-art techniques or products to creatively solve problems or provide long-term service."

Last summer at the Structural Engineers Association of Illinois 2019 Excellence in Structural Engineering Annual Awards, Ruby+Associates took home the Best Neighboring State Project Award for the bridge painting platforms used in the painting project. The movable scaffold
system was designed by Ruby+Associates, fabricated by Moran Iron Works of Onaway, and used by Seaway Painting.

The south tower contract is for just less than $6.5 million, with Seaway required to complete the project by Dec. 31. The contract to repaint the north tower was just less than $6.3 million. Installation and removal of the platforms has required brief closures during the overnight and early morning hours on several occasions.

The original paint is lead-based and Seaway is required to contain 100 percent of the paint as it is removed 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.

*Mackinac Bridge tower leg platform.*
Mackinac Bridge tower strut platform.

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