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Thousand Islands Bridge Authority

The Bridge and Boldt Facilities Progress Review

Bridge Facilities

The Thousand Islands Bridge Authority (TIBA) and its operating partner, the Federal Bridge Corporation Limited (FBCL) of Canada, own, manage, maintain and operate the Thousand Islands International Bridge system in the safest and secure manner possible while providing the public with reliable service and value. Together, the TIBA and FBCL perform many shared maintenance programs including continuous painting programs and annual bridge inspections. The annual painting programs use in excess of 700 gallons of primer and 800 gallons of paint (sea foam green), and allows for hands-on inspection by TIBA staff, enabling and assisting our bridge engineers, the Parsons Transportation Group, formally Steinman Engineering, the engineering company that originally designed the Thousand Islands International Bridges. In depth inspections are performed biennially on both the US and Canadian spans alternating each year with an in-depth inspection scheduled this year on the U. S. span and a scheduled follow-up inspection on the Canadian span.

As part of its seasonal maintenance the TIBA will clean both the U.S. and Canadian spans in order to prepare for its seasonal painting programs. In an effort to minimize the impact on traffic flow Bridge crews perform clean up work on both bridges Monday – Friday (May-June) in the evening and early morning hours with alternating one way traffic. Annual cleaning of the bridges is part of a scheduled maintenance program ensuring the bridges integrity and longevity.

This year the Thousand Islands Bridge system will implement upgrades to its Tolling Facilities adding new wiring and communication cables which will enable near future electronic toll collection capability. Additionally paving improvements near the U.S. Bridge's Toll Plaza and approaches will be undertaken this season. And, a regular scheduled detailed inspection of the International Rift Bridge and Boldt Yacht House bridges will also be performed this season.

During its 77 years of operation this international crossing has been an integral part of regional and international commerce. Presently this 8.5 mile international crossing supports travel and trade between the world's two greatest trading partners, the United States and Canada along the Capital Corridor. The Thousand Islands International Bridge system provides access to large international markets linking the four lane 401 Expressway in Canada with US Interstate 81 and is ranked 7th overall in trade value on the northern border equaling 1.5 billion dollars in trade monthly using this international bridge crossing.

The Thousand Islands Bridge crossing has experienced crossings exceeding two million vehicles annually since 1990 with over 99,500,000 vehicles having used this crossing since 1938.

Boldt Facilities

The Thousand Islands Bridge Authority, owners of historic Boldt Castle and Yacht House, present these two premier 1000 Islands attractions with their fascinating stories, historic structures, scenic views, beautiful gardens and grounds. Last season saw the official opening of the Alster Tower to the public after several years of stabilization, complete with protective sea walls, new windows, total masonry re-pointing, roofing and landscaping.

2015 Boldt Facilities Rehabilitation Projects:

2015 will see the grand opening of the Boldt Castle Kitchen, as well as the Servant's and Maid's Dining Rooms, located adjacent to the Butler's Pantry. The kitchen is complete with a reproduction antique woodstove, soapstone countertops, porcelain sinks and various pieces of antique kitchenware including: a butter churn, ice cream maker, wine press, coffee press, copperware, pudding molds, and a copper hot water tank. Our talented carpenters have also hand crafted an authentic reproduction soft maple work table, a white oak Ice Box door, and time-period reproduction seasoning and hanging herb racks.

The Butler's Pantry will showcase a newly refurbished antique Laura Lard Ice Box found in storage at the Boldt Yacht House. The Pantry will also have additional mounted mahogany china cabinets installed to match the current cabinetry, which will signify the final completion of the original plans for the Butler's Pantry.

The first phase of interior restoration of the Alster Tower will also begin this season, and will last approximately four to five years. First on the list will be the Tower's Billiard Room; a hardwood white oak floor will be installed, along with a new fireplace mantel, firebrick and ceramic tile. Once finished, the room will reflect a turn-of-the-century gentleman's refuge, fully equipped with popular games of the era, such as chess, cards, billiards or bagatelle.

Visitors to Boldt Castle this season will also witness continued construction on the Castle's Cistern Tower, which will be marked by scaffolding. Continued rehabilitation work is applied to the tower's roofing, windows and terra cotta appointments, which stand nearly seven stories above ground.

Boldt Yacht House:

Located directly across the water from Boldt Castle on Wellesley Island is the magnificent Boldt Yacht House. First opened to the public in 1996 by the Authority, the Boldt Yacht House is the last and largest remaining Yacht House on the St. Lawrence River. The Boldt Yacht House contains a number of antique boats, some of which were originally owned by George C. Boldt. 2009 witnessed the arrival of the steam yacht Kestrel, built in 1892 and donated to the Boldt Yacht House by Mr. John Luhrs of Luhrs Marine. The Kestrel is 63' long with a 12 ½' beam and typifies the steam yachts of George Boldt's era. The first floor living quarters of the Boldt Yacht House are also open for viewing providing visitors with an exceptional experience as they tour this very special river landmark. The Boldt Yacht House contains antique boats, many displays, signs and pictures of boating and yachting on the St. Lawrence River. The Boldt Facilities work closely with the Antique Boat Museum, Clayton, NY to exhibit and showcase a collection of antique boats representing a grand era of boating on the St. Lawrence River.

With the near completion of the Boldt Castle Kitchen and the previously completed Butler's Pantry, Boldt Castle Theater, Library, Ballroom, Billiards Room, Reception Room, Dining Room, Grand Staircase, Stain Glass Dome, Elevator, Boldt Family Bedroom Suites, marble flooring, ornate plaster treatments and period furnishings the Authority has accomplished never before finishes to historic Boldt Castle and the Boldt Yacht House.

During the Authority's 38 years of ownership of the former Boldt properties on Heart Island and the Boldt Yacht House on Wellesley Island, millions of dollars have been invested in rehabilitation and improvement efforts. At the same time the Boldt Facilities have hosted over 1,000 weddings and have counted over 6.3 million visitors to these historic properties providing incalculable value to the 1000 Islands International Tourism Industry and demonstrating the Authority's long term commitment to improve and preserve these landmark properties for present and future generations to enjoy.

Events:

During the 2015 season Boldt Castle will host two major events: the first is Talons! "A Birds of Prey Experience" featuring two Master Falconers who will educate, engage and entertain visitors with head spinning excitement as they present these amazing and beautiful creatures on Saturday May 30th. Second, the annual "Family Fun Day" event will take place on Saturday June 20th. Visiting Heart Island this year will be several well-known costumed PBS Kids cartoon characters such as Cat in the Hat, Curious George, Clifford the Big Red Dog and more. In addition to the presence of these favorite characters children will have the opportunity to take part in various activities such as face painting, planting a flower garden or making a birdhouse.

Boldt Castle and the Boldt Yacht House will open for the 2015 season on Saturday May 9th and remain open daily until Sunday October 18th.

Please call 315-482-2501 or log onto www.boldtcastle.com for more information about Boldt Castle, admission rates, weddings, events and links to scenic cruise operators offering stops at the Castle. For general 1000 Islands tourism information, including lodging, call 800-847-5263 or log onto www.visit1000islands.com.

For information regarding the Thousand Islands Bridge Authority please call 315-482-2501 or visit our website at www.tibridge.com.