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## **New Lewis and Clark Bridge south of Williston opens today**

Today, the North Dakota Department of Transportation (NDDOT) along with federal, state and local officials opened the new Lewis and Clark Bridge located on US Highway 85 south of Williston.

"Today's opening of the Lewis and Clark Bridge marks a major milestone in the history of North Dakota's transportation system," Lt. Gov. Brent Sanford said. "This bridge is a big part of the state's investment in western North Dakota to provide essential transportation for the safety of the traveling public and for the state's economy."

The opening of the Lewis and Clark Bridge is part of the US Highway 85 four-lane expansion, which included over \$340 million of state money invested into the bridge, two bypasses and 60 miles of highway between Watford City and Williston.

"US Highway 85 is an essential highway in western North Dakota for the energy industry," says Tom Sorel, NDDOT Director. "This bridge is a major thoroughfare for traffic with approximately 10,000 vehicles a day utilizing the Lewis and Clark Bridge."

The \$80 million bridge project includes construction, engineering and design of a new four-lane bridge, replacing the former two-lane bridge which was originally built in 1973. Other parts of the project included bridge lighting, rebuilding the roadway leading up to the bridge, and the construction of a wildlife crossing specifically designed for moose located south of the bridge. This specific kind of wildlife crossing is a first for North Dakota.

The new Lewis and Clark Bridge is a steel girder bridge design. The bridge will have four, 12-foot driving lanes with a median in the center. The new bridge will accommodate larger, wider truck loads than was previously capable on the old bridge. Johnson Bros. Construction located in Texas was the prime contractor for the project.

The \$80 million project is the single largest infrastructure project bid in NDDOT's history. The opening of the Lewis and Clark Bridge represents a collaborative effort between local, state and federal agencies who helped make this project possible.

Currently, the bridge is open to two-lanes of traffic. Contractors will work for the next year to dismantle and remove the old bridge. Motorists will see final construction elements of the project taking places as contractors continue to work on final phases of the project. The Lewis and Clark Bridge will be fully open to four lanes of traffic once all work complete.