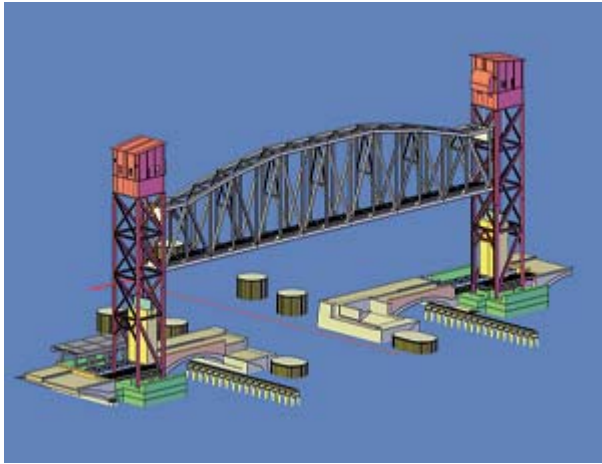


## Despite Bumpy Bid Process, Texas Span Work Is Under Way

06/09/2010

A 98-year-old, accident-prone southeast Texas bridge is being upgraded following a long and bumpy bidding process. The U.S. Coast Guard declared the rolling-lift single-leaf bascule causeway bridge connecting Galveston Island with Texas a navigational hazard in 2001.



Old bascule bridge was subjected to repeated barge collisions.

The 108-ft-wide bridge often is struck by barges, costing more than \$2 million in repairs each year, says Raymond Butler, Gulf Coast Intracoastal Canal Association's former executive director. A new structure designed by Galveston County with Mechanicsburg, Pa.-based Modjeski and Masters triples the clearance width. Bids came in higher than expected in October, resulting in value-engineering changes, says Mike Fitzgerald, Galveston County engineer. The relocation of two water pipelines, truss modification and elimination of a full-time tugboat requirement cut costs.

The job was rebid on Jan. 29, and the \$80-million contract was awarded on May 5 to a joint venture of Cianbro Corp., Pittsfield, Maine, and Birmingham, Ala.-based Brasfield & Gorrie LLC. Runner-up American Bridge Co., despite

its bid being \$4 million higher, threatened legal action. The Corapolis, Pa.-based firm claimed the winning team didn't file a required conflict-of-interest questionnaire. The paperwork was submitted but not recorded in time, Galveston County officials acknowledge. Further delays jeopardized the project's federal funds. Work finally is proceeding.

The foundation will be anchored by 240 steel H-type piles driven 200 ft below sea level. Bridge components will be built offsite and barged in. Segments will be jacked onto a parallel temporary trestle and slid into place via rails. The project is scheduled to finish in May 2012.

Copyright © 2006-2008 The McGraw-Hill Companies - All Rights Reserved.