
News Release

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**NEW BRIDGES TO HELP EXTEND WINTER ROAD SEASON
IN ADVANCE OF EAST SIDE ALL-SEASON ROAD CONSTRUCTION: ROBINSON**

Three temporary bridges are scheduled to be installed next year at key winter road water crossings as work proceeds to convert winter roads into an all-season road network, Aboriginal and Northern Affairs Minister Eric Robinson, minister responsible for the East Side Road Authority (ESRA), announced today.

“With nearly 90 per cent of the all-season route aligned with existing winter roads, this work will advance the all-season road project while improving winter road reliability in the short term,” said Robinson. “These strategically located bridges will help provide residents of the Island Lake communities extended winter road access beginning next year as work proceeds on the all-season road network.”

The first two bridges will be shipped this winter for placement across the Big Stone and Red Sucker rivers next winter. A third will be shipped next winter for installation at that time at Pelican Rapids, the minister said.

“Our community is pleased to see the province and East Side Road Authority fast-track these bridges,” said Wasagamack Chief Jerry Knott. “It will mean longer access over the winter roads and jobs for our people.”

“This is a welcome initiative that will extend the length of time we can transport essential supplies to our communities as we look forward to an all-season road,” said St. Theresa Point Chief David McDougall. “We are still concerned about the viability of the winter road system this year and the needs of our people and community.”

“These bridges are an example of how we are working with east side communities to ensure local residents will not have to wait until the all-season road is complete to benefit from the project,” said Ernie Gilroy, CEO of ESRA. “We look forward to beginning the design and environmental licensing process that will allow installation of these bridges next winter.”

The Government of Manitoba established the East Side Transportation Initiative to improve transportation for the 36,000 residents who live in the remote and isolated communities on the east side of Lake Winnipeg currently accessible only by air and winter roads. Plans for an all-season road network are intended to improve the quality of life and standard of living while providing employment and economic development opportunities for people living on the east side, the minister noted.

To date, the province has invested \$93 million in the initiative and discussions with the Government of Canada continue regarding the prospect of federal funding for the project.

A map with the locations of the proposed bridges can be found at:

http://news.gov.mb.ca/asset_library/en/newslinks/2010/1/BridgeLocations.pdf.