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# *News Release*

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February 24, 2011

**FIRST CONSTRUCTION PROJECT  
OF EAST SIDE ROAD NETWORK COMPLETE**

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**Temporary Bridge Over Wanipigow River  
Open to Traffic: Robinson**

HOLLOW WATER FIRST NATION—A new temporary bridge over the Wanipigow River marking kilometre one of the east side road network was officially opened to traffic today by Aboriginal and Northern Affairs Minister Eric Robinson, minister responsible for the East Side Road Authority (ESRA). As the first construction project completed under the all-season road project from PR 304 to Berens River First Nation, the temporary bridge will enable crews to begin work on a new, permanent bridge.

“Construction of this bridge has already provided employment and training for many members of Hollow Water First Nation and nearby communities,” said Robinson. “Its completion is good news for east side residents and all others who use the seasonal Rice River Road, which will soon provide year-round ground access to Berens River, as we move forward on permanent road work throughout the region.”

“This project is a good example of how local residents can benefit from training and jobs related to the all-season road project,” said Chief Larry Barker of Hollow Water First Nation. “As the project proceeds, we look forward to more opportunities for Hollow Water members including pre-construction activities such as road improvement work. We look forward to working with the Government of Manitoba and the ESRA as the project moves forward.”

The project employed a total of 31 people, approximately 45 per cent of whom were from Hollow Water and other east side communities. In preparation for the work, 12 local residents graduated from an introduction to construction training course last November. ESRA is now in discussion with Hollow Water to hold a skilled labourer or heavy equipment operator training course later this spring in preparation for the next phase of project, said Ernie Gilroy, CEO of the ESRA.

“The construction of this temporary bridge began in December and was recently completed on schedule,” said Gilroy. “The new structure provides greater safety and security for those using the road and will allow us to begin replacement of the old damaged bridge.”

Work to demolish the original Wanipigow River seasonal road bridge is scheduled to begin in the coming weeks, with permanent bridge construction set to follow once federal environmental approvals are received. The temporary bridge opened today will then be available for disassembly and reconstruction at other locations along the east side road network as needed, said Gilroy.

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