

# Construction begins on Crown Point Bridge

Governors break ground June 11

By Fred Herbst

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**CROWN POINT** — The construction of a new Lake Champlain Bridge is much more than an engineering project.

"This is a critical link between two states," Vermont Gov. Jim Douglas said at a ground breaking ceremony marking the start of construction June 11. "Those who live and work in the area surrounding the Lake Champlain Bridge share family, friends and business relationships on both sides of the lake. The ease and timeliness of transportation across Lake Champlain is critical to their way of life and economy."

Douglas was joined by New York Gov. David Paterson and a host of federal, state and local officials at the ceremony at the base of the former bridge in Crown Point.

"Breaking ground on the new Lake Champlain Bridge is an important step in reconnecting our two states and restoring this critical link for commerce, tourism, employment, education and medical services," Paterson said.

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"I am proud to have worked closely with Gov. Douglas to expedite this project, and commend the elected officials, community members and respective transportation officials for their efforts to work together toward a solution."

All the dignitaries expressed relief a new bridge is being built and heaped praise on Paterson and Douglas for their leadership.

"I have attended many groundbreakings and can't think of one of greater importance to constituents I represent," state Sen. Betty Little said. "Since the bridge's closure, our local communities, families and businesses have been managing through a sort of triage to deal with the loss of this vital link. Today marks the first step on the path to full recovery."

Assemblywoman Teresa Sayward of New York and Vermont Rep. Diane Lanpher echoed those comments.

"As a representative I've had the privilege to serve my community during a time of crisis," Lanpher said. "We have sat with both Vermonters and New Yorkers alike. We have visited homes and businesses. I want you to know your voices have been heard."

Bethany Kosmider, Crown Point supervisor, said the new bridge is a new beginning for the area.

"Although the last few months have been difficult for the people of this region, today signifies a new start, and I thank Gov. Paterson and Gov. Douglas for their efforts to expedite this project," Kosmider said. "I will continue to work with local, state and federal officials to bring prosperity to the North



Country and to Crown Point.

"We will be leaving a great legacy and I want that legacy to include a renewed hope for the citizens of Crown Point," she said.

The Lake Champlain Bridge was closed last October because of safety concerns. A ferry service now links Crown Point and Addison, Vt.

The new \$69.6 million bridge will be built at the same location as the previous structure and is expected to be completed in September 2011.

**Flatiron** Constructors, Inc. of Boulder, Colorado was awarded the contract to build the new bridge. While Flatiron will bring a core team of approximately a dozen managers, there will be jobs for local workers.

"This will help create jobs in communities that desperately need them," U.S. Rep. Bill Owens said. "I hope to see many people from my side of the lake, from my district, hired to work here."

Rep. Scott Murphy also attended.

Tom Scozzafava, Moriah supervisor, said the bridge project is an example of how government can and should work.

"During my 22 years as a town supervisor, I am pleased to say that I have never witnessed a faster approach to a catastrophic problem in finding both a temporary and permanent solution," he said. "When the Lake Champlain Bridge was closed in October, Gov. Paterson and Gov. Douglas witnessed the many hardships that this created for thousands of their constituents. Without hesitation, they immediately began to work with local officials.

"Gov. Paterson has proven his commitment to the North Country by his decisive actions in implementing the temporary ferry service and now a new bridge," Scozzafava said. "This project is a true demonstration that two states, and the federal government worked in unison to make this a reality."



Dignitaries from New York and Vermont gathered June 11 to commemorate construction of a new Crown Point bridge across Lake Champlain. The new \$69.6 million bridge will be built at the same location as the previous structure and is expected to be completed in September 2011.

*Photo by Nancy Frasier*