

Athabasca River Bridge

A HOCHTIEF Company

Owner

Alberta Infrastructure and Transportation

Location

Ft. McMurray, Alberta

Value

C\$139.5 million

Market

Bridges

Start - Completion Dates

4/2008 - 6/2011

- 1,548-foot-long steel girder bridge
- Increase capacity from five to nine lanes
- Largest bridge deck in Alberta
- Additional construction of secant pile-founded bridge

Project Description

Flatiron constructed the Athabasca River Bridge in Ft. McMurray, Alberta, approximately 270 miles north of Edmonton. The 108-foot-wide, 1,548-foot-long bridge deck is the largest in Alberta. The stout structure was built to accommodate more than three times the average weight of most bridges, with a capacity of 1,100-metric-ton loads.

This project is needed to facilitate the accelerated development of an area of the Alberta Oil Sands, a natural resource that can be processed into lightweight crude oil and associated fuels. The city of Ft. McMurray, which exists to support the Oil Sands, has nearly doubled in population in the past five years. Highway 63 runs north-south through the center of Ft. McMurray and is heavily congested, particularly during shift changes at the local mines. Here Flatiron constructed a new steel girder bridge parallel to existing bridges. The new bridge adds five lanes to the previous four-lane configuration, and will eventually be expanded to a total of 10 lanes.

Flatiron engineers used a unique method to incrementally launch and position the steel girders, which are some of the heaviest ever used. The structural steel is corrosion resistant and built to withstand extreme temperatures, and the bridge is designed to carry heavy loads, such as reactors carried by 130-axle trucks traveling in and out of the oil sands. Flatiron is also constructing a smaller, secant pile-founded bridge to carry Highway 63 traffic over Franklin Avenue.

The project opened in 2011.

Company Role

Flatiron is the prime contractor for this project.

Awards

- Alberta Roadbuilders and Heavy Construction Association - Environmental Award, 2011
- *Alberta Construction Magazine*, Top Projects Runner Up, Civil Construction Category, 2011

