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CHAMPLAIN
Bridges
Canada

PRESS RELEASE
For immediate release

Permanent closure of the Champlain Bridge: A Historic Event

Longueuil, June 28, 2019 – A page of history is turning today for Montreal and The Jacques Cartier and Champlain Bridges Incorporated (JCCBI), which will completely and permanently close the Champlain Bridge as of 10:00 p.m. this evening. Inaugurated on June 28, 1962, the Champlain Bridge will be decommissioned 57 years later to the day.

To acknowledge this moment in history, JCCBI will welcome members of the media to the Champlain Bridge on Monday, July 1 to let them capture the last vehicles as they cross the bridge before it is permanently closed following the opening of the new Samuel De Champlain Bridge.

As the manager of this structure since 1978, JCCBI has applied a series of reinforcement measures on the Champlain Bridge's structural components to keep this critical infrastructure both safe and open to traffic. With approximately 50 million trips per year and over \$20 billion in goods passing over it annually, the Champlain Bridge is one of the busiest bridges in Canada.

“Today is an emotional one for the JCCBI team, but we also feel great pride at the work of our staff and suppliers, whose expertise and ingenuity have helped us deploy innovative solutions to keep this structure operational and safe for users until its very last day,” said Sandra Martel, Engineer, Chief Executive Officer of JCCBI. “Their civil engineering achievements have helped us tackle reinforcement challenges on this structure, whose lifespan was cut short due to corrosion. For us, today means mission accomplished!” she added.

The drainage and design problems of the original Champlain Bridge were factors that contributed to the deterioration of its structural components and shortened its service life. The bridge will therefore be deconstructed in 2020 according to a [sustainable development](#) approach.

The Champlain Bridge: An Open-air Laboratory

Due to the use of deicing salts and a lack of sufficient drainage systems, corrosion prematurely attacked the bridge's essential structural components, particularly its edge girders. In 2013, a crack appeared on one of these girders, and JCCBI deployed emergency measures to close lanes on the Champlain Bridge and install a 75-tonne “super beam” to stabilize the girder. A steel modular truss was then designed and installed a few months later to replace the super beam and take over the total load of the weakened edge girder.

As this reinforcement system proved to be very effective, JCCBI went on to install modular trusses on the bridge's 100 edge girders.

What's more, nearly 350 fibre-optic sensors were installed on different components of the structure so that the bridge's behaviour could be monitored in real time. The frequency of inspections was increased, and other reinforcements were implemented, such as external post-tension cables, shoring systems, and queen posts. More recently, super posts were also installed on all pier caps.

A Snapshot of the Bridge's History

As Montreal's suburbs grew, the Jacques Cartier Bridge and Victoria Bridge started getting busier and busier. On August 17, 1955, Ottawa announced the construction of a new toll bridge linking Montreal and Brossard. In 1957, a construction site took shape over the St. Lawrence Seaway. Innovative methods for the time were devised to build this immense structure that would consist of the largest application of prestressed concrete ever seen in the country. As a structural system, prestressed concrete was also less expensive than steel, as the Champlain Bridge cost \$35 million. Originally called the Nuns' Island Bridge, it was renamed the Champlain Bridge in 1958 to mark the 350th anniversary of Quebec City.

To fund the construction costs, motorists had to pay 25 cents to cross the Champlain Bridge once it opened in 1962. The toll on the Champlain Bridge was abolished in 1990.

About JCCBI

As a manager of important infrastructure, The Jacques Cartier and Champlain Bridges Incorporated is a Crown corporation established in 1978 that is responsible for the Jacques Cartier Bridge, the Champlain Bridge, the Champlain Bridge Ice Control Structure, the Île des Sœurs Bypass Bridge, the federal sections of Bonaventure Expressway and the Honoré Mercier Bridge, as well as the Melocheville Tunnel. The Corporation manages, maintains, and repairs these important Greater Montreal structures to ensure the safe passage of thousands of users every day. It also ensures that these critical structures remain safe, fully functional and aesthetically pleasing both today and in the future. JacquesCartierChamplain.ca

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