

New Fort Buhlow Bridge Begins Construction!



November 11, 2010 -- The long awaited replacement of the old OK Allen Bridge is about to begin. Work on the new 4-lane Fort Buhlow Bridge is set to begin the first week of January, 2011 by Jensen Construction of Tulsa, Oklahoma, who was the low bidder at \$82.8-million, and is projected to take 1,120 calendar days to construct.

The Fort Buhlow Bridge crosses the Red River in Pineville/Alexandria on US 71/165. This route serves as a major artery connecting Pineville on the east bank to Alexandria on the west bank. The new bridge is named for the historic Confederate fort on the east bank built in 1865 under the command of Captain C. M. Randolph and under the supervision of military engineer, Lieutenant A. Buhlow.

This new bridge will replace the O. K. Allen Bridge named in honor of Oscar Kelley Allen, governor of Louisiana from 1932 to 1936. Construction of the O. K. Allen Bridge was completed in 1936. It is one of only a few remaining examples of the classic K-truss steel bridge. The existing bridge has a 24-foot clear roadway width and a 500-foot clear center span with concrete and steel

deck truss approach spans. It presently carries one lane of traffic in each direction. Once the new bridge is completed this old bridge will be demolished.

The new bridges will each have a minimum 40-foot clear roadway width and carry two lanes of traffic. The main channel of the Red River will be bridged by a continuous steel girder unit consisting of spans of 300 feet, 400 feet and 300 feet for a total length of 1,000 feet. The new steel spans will be built of weathering steel which does not require painting. The approach spans will be constructed using 72" deep Bulb-T pre-stressed pre-cast concrete girders with the total length of bridge being 3,015 feet.

While the crossing of the Red River is the major feature of the project, it is by no means the whole project. The project also has nearly 8,000 feet of four-lane divided roadway with connections to several major local streets on the Pineville side, and an interchange on the west bank connecting US 71/165 to I- 49 and Third Street in Alexandria. Additionally, on the east end of the project, we have a 1,220-foot long bridge crossing the Kansas City Southern Railroad, in front of "Rebel Hill" by Pineville High School's football stadium. This will include new interchanges for better access to the Pineville Municipal Airport and Red River Waterway Recreation area.