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Concrete being poured on last section of new Folsom bridge

clocke@sacbee.com

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As most of the region slept Thursday night, five trucks loaded with concrete delivered a milestone of sorts.

At 1 a.m. today, crews were scheduled to pour the final section of Folsom Lake Crossing, the bridge project to span the American River below Folsom Dam.

Floyd Bolton, resident engineer with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, said temperature determined timing of the final pour to fill an approximately 6-foot gap at the center of the 970-foot-long bridge. Corps representatives and Folsom city officials planned a brief midmorning ceremony at the bridge site to celebrate the achievement.

Diana Modini, project manager for the Corps of Engineers, said considerable work remains to be done before the span opens to motorists. The deck must be ground down to create a smooth surface for travel, and guardrails, lighting and signs must be installed.

Bolton said the bridge is on target to open in the spring.

"This was a very aggressive schedule," he said. "The original contract time was only 22 months."

Most bridge contractors would have expected a project of this type to take about a year longer, Bolton said.

Contractor Kiewit Pacific Co. of Concord began work in April 2007. Meeting the accelerated construction schedule, Bolton said, required good organization and doing several things at once.

The biggest challenge in constructing the \$134 million project, which rises 200 feet above the river, was the site itself. "We had to over-excavate for the footings to find solid rock that we could tie the pier footings into," Bolton said.

The bridge was built in cantilever fashion. From piers atop concrete columns, sections were built out first from one side and then the other. The sections are smaller toward the middle of the span, and much of the structure beneath the deck is hollow, providing interior walkways for maintenance.

The project also included construction of 2.1 miles of four-lane roadway and a bike trail.

For many residents of Folsom, as well as Placer and El Dorado counties, who used to travel Folsom Dam Road, the new bridge can't open too soon.

The road across Folsom Dam was closed to traffic in 2003 because of safety concerns after the terrorist attacks of Sept. 11, 2001.

Folsom Lake Crossing is expected to handle about 26,000 vehicles daily.

The new Folsom Bridge Road and separate paved bike trail have been completed on either side of the span.

Bolton said the city plans to use dirt excavated for the project in constructing ramps for a bicycle and pedestrian bridge.

Call The Bee's Cathy Locke, (916) 608-7451.



Randy Pench

The Folsom Bridge, under construction since April 2007 spans 200 feet over the American River just downstream from Folsom Dam. Workers prepare to pour concrete in the last six-foot center section of the \$134 million Folsom Bridge on Thursday, Nov. 13, 2009. The bridge is scheduled to be open for traffic in the spring of 2009.

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