

Unified Testing Services Completes Mississippi River Bridge Inspection Work For Mississippi DOT

Mississippi Bridge Fourth Longest Cable-Stayed Bridge in North America

Authored by Don Uptain (Woodstock, AL), President of UTS

Unified Testing Services (UTS), a member of TÜVRheinland®, recently completed shop fabrication inspection services for the Mississippi River Bridge, located along U.S. Highway 82 crossing the Mississippi River between Lake Village, Arkansas and Greenville, Mississippi. Contracted by the Mississippi Department of Transportation, the testing and inspection services company inspected the bridge's steel approaches, with the first work beginning on the bridge's center span in September 2002.

The center span was fabricated by PDM Bridge at locations in Palatka, FL and Eau Claire, WI (167 welded floor beams and 102 welded edge girders). Additional bridge items were fabricated by D.S. Brown Company of Chaska, MN (expansion joints), Taylor Devices, Inc. of North Tonawanda, NY (lock-up devices), Specialized Engineered Products of Lynden, WA (inspection traveler) and Missouri Fabricators of Fulton, MO (tie downs).

The Mississippi bridge approach consisted of 176 welded plate girders and was fabricated by AFCO Steel of Van Buren, AR. The other fabrication locations were Missouri Fabricators of Fulton, MO (expansion joints) and D.S. Brown Company of North Baltimore, OH (disc bearings).

The Arkansas bridge approach consisted of 88 welded plate girders and was fabricated by Trinity Industries, Inc. of Houston, TX. Missouri Fabricators of Fulton, MO produced the expansion joints and R.J. Watson of Amherst, NY provided the disc bearings.

At 1,378 feet, the Mississippi River Bridge boasts the longest main span of any cable-stayed bridge on the Mississippi River and is the fourth longest in North America. The bridge is expected to open in the fall of 2010 to traffic between Arkansas and Mississippi.



“The quality of the workmanship and precision in the fabrication of all the structural steel components were paramount in our minds from the very beginning of this project,” said Mitchell K. Carr, P.E., State Bridge Engineer for the Mississippi Department of Transportation (MDOT). “UTS has provided MDOT with exemplary quality assurance and testing for many years. Their steadfast attention to detail and dedication to quality was absolutely essential to the success of this project.”



Precisely Right.

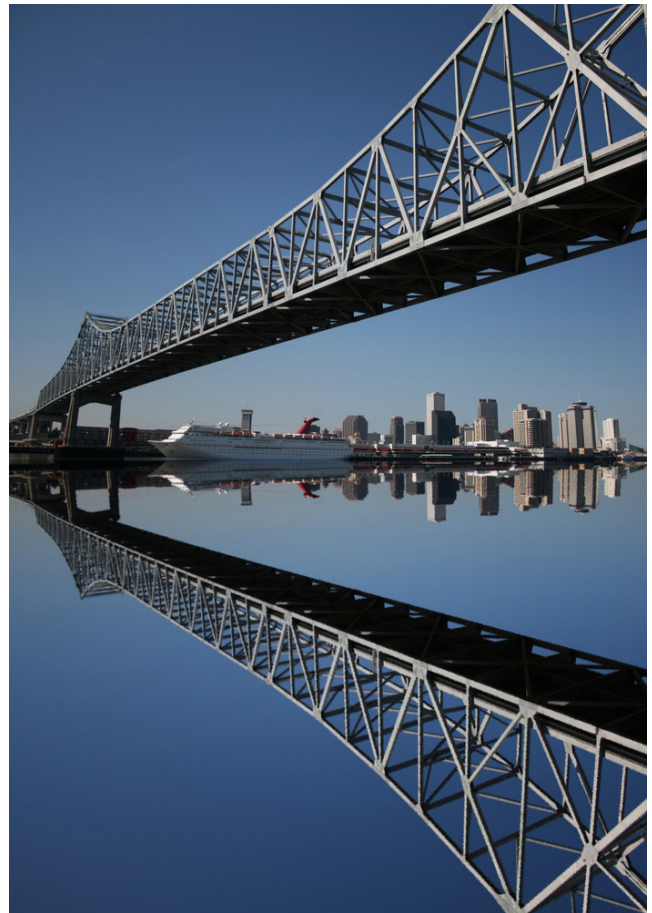
Unified Testing Services Completes Mississippi River Bridge Inspection Work For Mississippi DOT (continued)

Much of this 'Fracture Critical' bridge was fabricated from a 'High Performance Steel' ASTM A709 HPS 70W. Successfully welding this material requires following very precise controlled parameters and detailed welding procedures. UTS inspectors monitored all the processes involved in fabricating these critical components.


Based in Woodstock, Alabama, UTS offers a wide variety of testing and inspection services focused on materials, construction, transportation, facilities and environmental engineering. One of the company specialties includes shop fabrication inspection of structural steel bridges. UTS inspectors acted as representatives of Mississippi Department of Transportation and worked closely with the design engineering firm HNTB. The experience and expertise of UTS was instrumental and relied upon by MDOT and HNTB in solving the fabrication and erection problems that arose.

Work involved verifying shop fabrication practices such as welder qualifications, welding procedures and material certifications. Additionally, the company monitored the cutting, fitting and welding of steel materials; witnessed and reviewed nondestructive testing; and monitored shop blasting and coating operations.

"We are very excited about this landmark bridge and what it means to the states of Mississippi and Arkansas as well as the local communities," said Mitchell, "The bridge is a beautiful symbol of engineering and construction excellence, which should inspire generations to come."



Additionally, UTS offers environmental consulting and testing, and destructive and nondestructive materials testing.

For more information, please call toll-free at **1-TUV-RHEINLAND (1-888-743-4652)** or visit www.us.tuv.com. 



Precisely Right.