

Maintaining Local Bridges

Last May, statewide workshops were offered for municipal personnel on "Maintaining Local Bridges". The underlying theme was preventative maintenance. In the workshop, simple maintenance items were pointed out that could dramatically increase the longevity of a bridge.

Tips included:

- washing the bridge to get rid of winter salt and sand;
- treating concrete with a 50/50 blend of double boiled linseed oil and kerosene;
- checking under and around bridge abutments for eroded areas that need repair

These are only a few maintenance items which will add considerable years to the useful and safe life cycle of a local bridge. In one example, a bridge that was built in 1934 between two different towns was maintained by the respective towns. One town took care of their end with preventative and regular maintenance, and the other town did nothing. The difference between the two ends was so dramatic it appeared that the photos were of two different bridges. The end that was routinely maintained looked almost new. The other end was in very bad disrepair, needing immediate attention to save the bridge.

A workshop notebook is available with lots of great information about local bridges.

As a footnote to this article, the Local Bridge Program recently went through some internal change at MDOT. The Local Bridge Program used to be administered within the Bridge Design Division, but it is now resides in the Bridge Maintenance Division. This change also included personnel changes. If you have any questions concerning the Local Bridge Program or bridge maintenance issues, contact Gary Hoar at 624-3417.