

CHESAPEAKE BAY BRIDGE-TUNNEL HISTORY

1954 – Virginia General Assembly created the Chesapeake Bay Ferry District and the Chesapeake Bay Ferry Commission as the governing body of the District; subsequently the Chesapeake Bay Bridge and Tunnel District and Commission. It authorized the Commission to acquire, through bond financing, the private ferry corporation to improve ferry service between Virginia's Eastern Shore and the Norfolk/Virginia Beach area and to implement ferry service between the Eastern Shore and the Hampton/Newport News area.

1956 – Began actual operation of the ferries. The General Assembly authorized the Commission to explore the construction of a bridge-tunnel. The Commission employed Consulting Engineers, Traffic Engineers, and Financial Advisors to assist them.

1960 – Once the project was found to be feasible, both from a financial and engineering standpoint, \$200 million in revenue bonds were sold and a construction contract was awarded to the Joint Venture of Tidewater Construction, Peter Kiewit, and Raymond International. Construction began in September. No local, state, or federal tax money was used in the construction of the project.

1964 – On April 15, the Chesapeake Bay Bridge-Tunnel opened to traffic after just 42 months of construction and ferry service was discontinued.

1965 – In worldwide competition with more than a hundred other major projects, the Bridge-Tunnel was selected as one of the Seven Engineering Wonders of the Modern World, and the American Society of Civil Engineers recognized it with the award of Outstanding Civil Engineering Achievement.

From shore to shore, the facility measures 17.6 miles, and is considered the largest bridge-tunnel complex in the world. Construction required undertaking a project of more than 12 miles of low-level trestle, two one-mile tunnels, two bridges, almost 2 miles of causeway, four manmade islands and 5 ½ miles of approach roads, totaling 23 miles.

CHESAPEAKE BAY BRIDGE-TUNNEL PARALLEL CROSSING PROJECT

1987 – Looking toward the future, the Bridge-Tunnel Commission began investigating the possibility of building a parallel crossing facility.

1989 – In-house studies and projections were made, and a Comprehensive Study was conducted in cooperation with the Virginia Department of Transportation. The VDOT Study concluded that parallel bridges, trestles, and roadways would be needed by the year 2000.

1990 – The Virginia General Assembly empowered the Bridge-Tunnel Commission with the authority to proceed with the Parallel Crossing Project.

1991 – Revenue Bonds were sold to finance engineering, environmental and traffic studies.

Sverdrup Civil, Inc., Consulting Engineers to the District, was selected to design, prepare specifications and contract documents, and be Construction Manager for the project.

1995 – Additional Revenue Bonds were sold to finance the construction of the Parallel Crossing Project. No local, state, or federal monies were utilized for the construction costs.

On April 18, the District received four bids in response to a public solicitation for services as primary construction contractor in connection with the Parallel Crossing Project.

On May 4, the Chesapeake Bay Bridge and Tunnel Commission awarded the construction contract in the amount of \$197,185,777 to a joint venture of PCL Civil Constructors, Inc., The Hardaway Company, and Interbeton, Inc., to build a second span parallel and adjacent to the existing Bridge-Tunnel. The contract included the expansion of toll plazas, trestles, bridges, and roadways, but, because of financial constraints, did not include the expansion of the four manmade islands or additional tunnels under this project.

1999 – On April 19, the Project opened to traffic, transforming the two-lane facility to four lanes. The expansion will meet future traffic demands and provide a safer crossing for our customers.

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