

November 5, 2019

## Fast, faster, fastest

As bridges go, the one on Kruse Road was pretty ordinary. A concrete deck spanning from abutments at either end and supported by timber piles in between. But time had taken its toll and the bridge was in serious need of repair. Load restrictions were in place and, after considering their options, the County decided to go ahead with a full replacement of the bridge.

Now it normally takes between two and three years to complete a bridge replacement project. Determine the need, examine the options, develop the engineering design, obtain the permits, apply for funding, send the plans out for bidding, hire the contractor, do the construction, inspect the work. Each step has countless intermediate steps that are all too often delayed and hung up by snags that arise in any other step.



But things took a different turn when, in January 2018, the County Engineer heard about an opportunity to apply for Federal funds to pay for the bridge replacement. The catch? The work had to be completed by the end of the year or the funds would disappear. WHKS engineers had already done some preliminary survey work and the County asked them to jump on board for this ultra-fast project. The team agreed to go for it and put the project on the leap into hyperspace.

By the end of April the final plans and specifications were ready. Even more impressively, the environmental and Illinois DOT reviews had also been completed. But everyone understood the project timeline and pitched in with their part of the teamwork. The attitude on every team member's part was, "How high do you need us to jump?"



Because everyone worked together the engineering and permitting work was completed in just three months. Bidding followed in the spring and the contract was let to the builder in June. The construction crew was every bit as much of a team player as the rest and the bridge was completed by November - just five months after signing the deal.

The highly responsive teamwork between the County, the engineering team, the Federal funding agency and the State DOT and EPA allowed this relatively ordinary bridge project to go from preliminary design to completion in just 11 months. Blindingly fast where bridges are concerned.

