The 106th U.S. Congress appropriated $5 million in the extensive construction and renovation activities will necessitate closure of the lift bridge to vehicular and pedestrian traffic (still allowing boat traffic to pass) for 10 weeks starting in August of 2005 (scheduled to begin after Lumberjack Days). Advance notice of the closure will be made through newspaper, radio and news releases well in advance of the closure. Additional information regarding this project, including the schedule, is available at Mn/DOT’s $5 Million Lift Bridge Repair Project website: www.dot.state.mn.us/metro/projects/liftbridge

Public Meetings to be Held June 15 and 21, 2004

The St. Croix River Crossing Project Stakeholder Group in cooperation with Mn/DOT and WisDOT will hold two public informational meetings in June to update the public on the project to-date, present the project alternatives being considered in the Supplemental Draft Environmental Impact Statement (SDEIS) (currently being prepared) and respond to questions received in response to a previous brochure (distributed through local papers in May) that solicited questions from the public. The “frequently asked questions” identified as a result of the May brochure will be summarized in a handout available at the meeting and on the project’s website.

Specific information that will be presented at each meeting includes:

- Update of studies required as part of the Supplemental Draft Environmental Impact Statement;
- Schedule for the SDEIS development and project;
- Information on the stakeholder Problem-Solving Process;
- Description of the alternatives, including proposed improvements to Trunk Highway (TH) 36 and TH 95 (in Minnesota), and WIS (Wisconsin) 64 and WIS 35 (in Wisconsin), potential river crossing locations and proposed bridge types; and
- Response to questions received on the project via the May brochure.

Each meeting will follow the same format and will present information in several ways:

- Display boards with text and graphics in an open house style before and after the formal presentation;
- Formal presentation to a large group in the school auditorium describing the alternatives being considered and discussing the questions received via the brochure; and
- Facilitated question and answer session with a panel of agency and stakeholder representatives.

The purpose of the meetings is not to solicit comments regarding the alternative to be chosen, but rather, to promote public understanding of all alternatives and to share the environmental impact studies completed to date. The transportation agencies recognize the need for exchange of ideas with the public, and will continue to listen and provide information through the Stakeholder Resolution Process and these meetings, newsletters, press releases and the website.

SECTION 106 People with an interest in or knowledge of historic structures or archeological sites are especially encouraged to attend the June meetings and share their comments and questions.
**EIS Alternatives to be Examined**

The Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and the Minnesota and Wisconsin Departments of Transportation (Mn/DOT and WisDOT) are working together with the cooperation of a 28-member stakeholder group to resolve traffic congestion problems in Stillwater, Oak Park Heights and Houlton. In March of 2004, the three transportation agencies completed the scoping phase of the St. Croix River Crossing Project by releasing the final amended Scoping Decision Document. Four “build” alternatives (B-1, C, D and E), in addition to the “no build” alternative, will be studied in the Supplemental Draft Environmental Impact Statement (SDEIS). The three transportation agencies anticipate an August 2004 release of the SDEIS for a 45-day public comment period. Formal public hearings to review and comment on the alternatives and potential environmental impacts as presented in the SDEIS will be held in September 2004. Copies of all project documents can be viewed on the project website and at local libraries.

Figure 1 shows the build alternatives being considered in the SDEIS. In Minnesota, all build alternatives include buttonhook interchanges at Norell Ave./Washington Ave. and at Osgood Ave., an overpass at Oakgreen Ave./Greely Street and Beach Road, and an interchange at Highways 36 and 95. In Wisconsin, each build alternative separately dictates the specific interchanges and overpass configurations east of the new river crossing.

**VISIT MN/DOT'S WEBSITE:**
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**FIGURE 1**
Shows the Build Alternatives being considered in the SDEIS.

**ALTERNATIVE B-1** New four-lane bridge with diamond interchange at relocated County Highway E

**ALTERNATIVE C** New four-lane bridge and approach roadways in Minnesota and Wisconsin

**ALTERNATIVE D** New four-lane bridge replacing lift bridge; lift bridge used for bicycles/pedestrians only

**ALTERNATIVE E** New one-way two-lane bridge for eastbound traffic; use of the lift bridge for two lanes of westbound traffic