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DelDOT and Department of Education Partner For Unique Learning Opportunity

Indian River – The Department of Transportation (DelDOT) and the Department of Education, collectively recognizing the huge educational impact of the construction process of the Indian River Inlet Bridge, have partnered to bring a unique learning opportunity to the students in Delaware’s public schools. Students from across the state have made their way to the Indian River Inlet Bridge construction site for the two hour presentation/site tour, where they participate in an interactive presentation which teaches them about the math, science, technology and overall uniqueness of the bridge structure. Following the presentation students go on a tour of the construction site, where they have the once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to see history being made as crews work to build one of the biggest cable stay bridges on the East Coast.

Site tours are open to groups of students in grades 5-12, as well as college-level students and the general public. Scheduled site tours are conducted by both DelDOT and Skanska officials, with all safety measures being taken. Teachers or administrators interested in learning more about site tours or scheduling one, can go online to www.rib.deldot.gov, and click on Site Tours to submit a request.

Deborah Judy, a teacher in the Smyrna School District, which brought several students to the site for a tour states, “It is the goal of every educator to ‘bring to life’ the concepts we teach. The bridge visit, for us, did that and more. The experience is one my students will never forget, as so many people never get the opportunity to know the details of such a project with global involvement.”

“Secretary Lowery and I are extremely pleased that our vision for students statewide is being realized. What better way for students, parents and teachers to learn about the bridge’s history, its construction and its importance in our transportation system, than by coming to the site itself, visiting our Web site or having it brought to their school,” said Secretary of Transportation Carolann Wicks.

Secretary Lillian Lowery added, “The design and construction of the bridge are excellent opportunities to showcase the necessary science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) skills our students will need as they consider their career paths. Education in the STEM areas has seen increased emphasis in this state, as evidenced by its inclusion in the Department of Education’s Race to the Top grant application and the Governor’s establishment of a STEM Education Council.

Besides the presentation/site tour experience, the two state agencies have worked together to build the “Bridge Education” link on the DelDOT Web site which includes:

- General Information such as Frequently Asked Questions, a Glossary of Bridge Terms and related links such as an online Bridge Building game.
- An Ask the Engineer feature that allows parents, students or teachers to submit a question and receive an answer to any question they may have about bridge construction.
- A request form to have an Engineer In Your Classroom. This feature allows students in grades K-4 to learn about the bridge’s construction, without the safety concerns of bringing younger students to the

construction site. If you are interested in having DelDOT engineers or public outreach officials visit your school, please go online to www.irib.deldot.gov and click on Engineers In Your Class.

- A fun feature called What Part Of The Bridge Is This? This is a photo of some construction element of the bridge, along with a multiple choice answer. Students can test themselves by taking a guess as to what the photo depicts, and ultimately they can view the correct answer.
- Three webcams that show live footage of the construction site anytime day or night.
- A Toolkit that can be used by teachers as a supplemental resource in the classroom. It includes Bridge Components and Types, Bridge Wonders (interesting facts about the bridge) and a coloring page for the younger children. This link is continually being updated as educational resources become available.
- An extensive Photo Gallery of construction photos is also available online.

In addition, DelDOT has been working with the Delaware Business, Industry, Education (BIE) Alliance's "What In The World" Program to take bridge education to various schools in Delaware. This program takes bridge engineers into schools for presentations where students learn about the math, science and others skills needed to build the Indian River Inlet Bridge.

Since education naturally leads to careers, DelDOT has also highlighted a Careers in Engineering link on its Web site. This link allows students to explore the different types of engineers, salary ranges, necessary education as well as view information on an engineering career path at DelDOT. A link to the University of Delaware's College of Engineering is also available.

For additional information on the existing bridge or the construction of the new Indian River Inlet Bridge Project go to www.irib.deldot.gov.