2026 Team Achievement Award

Manitoba Transportation and Infrastructure (MTI)

Morris River Urgent Detour Bridge Project

In September 2025, the sudden settlement of the north pile bent of the 62-year-old Morris River Bridge on Provincial Trunk Highway (PTH) 3 necessitated the immediate closure of a critical transportation corridor serving approximately 4,000 vehicles per day in southern Manitoba. The closure disrupted commuter travel, emergency response services, school transportation, agricultural operations, and regional commerce. Faced with an urgent infrastructure failure, the Manitoba Transportation and Infrastructure project team demonstrated exceptional engineering leadership, ingenuity, and collaboration by delivering a temporary shoofly detour bridge and roadway within an extraordinary ten-week timeframe, restoring safe and reliable public access while advancing the permanent bridge replacement in parallel.

The project showcased remarkable technical innovation under urgent conditions. With limited historical geotechnical information available, the team rapidly completed an accelerated site investigation program, including borehole drilling and laboratory testing, and developed geotechnical and structural models to validate foundation performance under temporary loading conditions. Concurrent engineering and construction practices allowed roadway construction, pile driving, material procurement, and bridge fabrication activities to proceed simultaneously. An innovative bridge erection strategy saw approach roadways completed and paved to final grade before the bridge structure was assembled, launched, and lowered into place, mitigating seasonal paving risks and ensuring schedule certainty.

The success of the project was rooted in seamless collaboration among civil, structural, highway, geotechnical, hydrotechnical, regional, and water operations specialists. Daily coordination between survey crews, designers, contractors, suppliers, and environmental regulators enabled rapid decision-making and adaptation to evolving field conditions. Early engagement with provincial and federal regulatory agencies streamlined environmental approvals while maintaining rigorous environmental protection standards.

The social, economic, and environmental benefits of the project were immediate and significant. By restoring a direct route on PTH 3, the detour bridge reduced travel times, vehicle operating costs, and greenhouse gas emissions associated with lengthy regional detours. The project also alleviated pressure on municipal roads not designed for heavy traffic volumes, improved access to essential services, enhanced emergency response capabilities, and supported local businesses and freight movement across southern Manitoba. These benefits were achieved through cost-effective design solutions, disciplined risk management, and a rigorous quality assurance process that ensured safety and reliability despite the compressed schedule.

Through technical expertise, interdisciplinary collaboration, and a commitment to the public interest, the Manitoba Transportation and Infrastructure team successfully restored a vital transportation link and delivered a solution that provided lasting value to communities across the region.

In recognition of the engineering excellence, collaboration, and public service demonstrated through the Morris River Urgent Detour Bridge Project, Engineers Geoscientists Manitoba is pleased to present the 2026 Team Achievement Award to the Manitoba Transportation and Infrastructure project team.