



Pulaski County Pedestrian and Bicycle Bridge



Pedestrian and Bicycle
Information Center

Problem

Pedestrian and bicycle paths in Pulaski County, Arkansas were divided by the Arkansas River, which left the fourteen miles of paths disconnected and incomplete. Pedestrians and bicyclists who wished to cross the river would have to travel by car or not at all, because the two bridges that did cross the Arkansas River had heavy automobile traffic and were not adequate for pedestrians or bicyclists.

Background

Citizens, local governmental officials, and several local organizations supported the idea of creating a pedestrian and bicycle bridge over Arkansas River. Beginning in 2000, Pulaski County began campaigning for funds for a bridge. By 2004 they had received enough grant money and donations to begin the project with a budget of \$11.34 million. Construction of the Pulaski County Pedestrian and Bicycle Bridge — Murray Lock and Dam, or as it is known, the Big Dam Bridge began in the fall of 2004 with an expected completion date of the fall of 2006.

Solution

Pulaski County teamed up with the Army Corps of Engineers to begin construction of a pedestrian and bicycle bridge to connect the north and south sides of the Arkansas River. The bridge was created on top the existing Murray Lock and Dam. Using this existing infrastructure as the foundation for the bridge saved approximately \$10 million in construction costs. After two years of construction the bridge opened. It is over $\frac{3}{4}$ mile long, 14 feet wide, equipped with pedestrian-level LED lights, and has eight observation areas with benches. With the completion of the Big Dam Bridge, over fourteen miles of trails along both sides of the Arkansas River are now connected.

Results

In conjunction with the Pulaski County Pedestrian and Bicycle Bridge opening, several bicycling and 5K run/walk events have been held. An informal count that was held on a weekend eight months after the bridge opened indicated that nearly 4,000 people used the bridge in one day. City park officials on both sides of the river have also reported increased usage of the parks since the Bridge opening.

Contact

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View of the bridge. Source: bigdambridge.com



The bridge at night with LED lights.