

The Thomas J. Hatem Memorial Bridge

A Toll Facility Of The Maryland Transportation Authority

The Thomas J. Hatem Memorial Bridge across the Susquehanna River on US 40 is the oldest of the seven toll facilities operated and maintained by the Maryland Transportation Authority. The first vehicles crossed the span between Havre de Grace and Perryville on Aug. 28, 1940.

The bridge, however, does not represent the first crossing of the Susquehanna River between the Harford County community of Havre de Grace and the Cecil County town of Perryville. A succession of ferries made the trip for more than 200 years, a railroad bridge was constructed during the last half of the 19th century, and a vehicle bridge opened in 1910.

The 1910 structure, acquired by a group of private citizens who operated it as a toll facility between 1910 and 1923,

was converted from a railroad bridge constructed in 1873. The State Roads Commission (SRC), predecessor of the Authority, bought the bridge in 1923 and continued to operate it as a toll facility.

The structure was extremely narrow -- with a roadway only 13 feet wide. Heavy trucks inched past each other, and there were many side-swiping accidents on the bridge. Traffic usually moved at a snail's pace.

To alleviate the problem, the SRC dualized the bridge in 1926 by building a deck over the old bridge, converting each level into a crossing for one-way traffic. This project was considered one of the most ingenious bridge-engineering feats of the time.

Then, new problems surfaced. The new deck had a vertical clearance of 12.5 feet -- barely sufficient to accommodate the growing number of commercial vehicles traveling the bridge in the 1930s. Frequently, trucks stacked too high with freight became wedged between the deck and the overhead structure and could proceed only after their tires were deflated to allow adequate clearance.

The need for a newer, more modern, structure became apparent in the mid-1930s.



At the same time, the Maryland General Assembly authorized the State Roads Commission to formulate a comprehensive plan for the construction of bridges and tunnels across major bodies of water in Maryland. These projects would be financed and operated through toll funding.

The plan developed by the SRC was ratified by the United States Congress in 1938 under its regulatory powers over navigable waterways. The plan became known as Maryland's Primary Bridge Program and provided, among other projects, for the construction of a bridge across the Susquehanna River parallel to the overtaxed double-decker structure.



Maryland
Transportation
Authority

Background (continued)



More than 11.2 million vehicles traveled the bridge (both directions) in FY 2007.

About the Authority

Fort McHenry Tunnel (I-95)

Harry W. Nice Memorial Bridge (US 301)

Francis Scott Key Bridge (I-695)

Baltimore Harbor Tunnel (I-895)

Thomas J. Hatem Memorial Bridge (US 40)

John F. Kennedy Memorial Highway (I-95)

William Preston Lane Jr. Memorial (Bay) Bridge (US 50/301)

Construction of this new span began in Feb. 1939 and was completed at a cost of \$4.5 million. The bridge opened to traffic on Aug. 28, 1940, and the obsolete double-decker bridge was later demolished. The new structure was known as the Susquehanna River Bridge.

All of the first toll collectors at the bridge were men; however, with the advent of World War II, men flocked to military service and women took over traditionally male-dominated jobs.

Exact-change lanes were a novelty in toll collection when they were installed at the bridge in 1958. Their contribution to efficient toll collection was overshadowed in 1976 with the introduction of AVI (Automatic Vehicle Identification) decals. AVI works on the same principle as automated checkouts at retail stores, and the decal itself looks like a large universal-product code symbol commonly found on many items.

In May 1986, the bridge was dedicated to the memory of Thomas J. Hatem, a distinguished citizen of Harford County, who devoted his life to public and civic service.

In 1991, a one-way toll collection system was introduced at the Thomas J. Hatem Memorial Bridge, and tolls now are collected in the eastbound direction only.

The Maryland Transportation Authority is an independent State Agency that finances, owns and operates the State's seven toll facilities. The Authority's eight Members, appointed by the Governor with consent of the State Senate, serve as the agency's policy-setting and governing body. Maryland's Secretary of Transportation serves as Authority Chairman.

Daily operations of the seven facilities are carried out by the Authority's 1,700 employees. Overall management of Authority operations is handled by the agency's Executive Secretary.

The Transportation Authority oversees the State's seven toll facilities and the Maryland Transportation Authority Police. The agency has statutory authority to act on behalf of the Maryland Department of Transportation to supervise, finance, construct, operate and maintain transportation facilities.

Maryland's toll facilities were financed and constructed through revenue bonds. The outstanding principal and interest due each year is paid from toll revenues. Toll revenues are the primary source of funds. The Authority's toll receipts are pooled, and revenues from all seven facilities are combined to pay for operating, maintaining and making capital improvements to these facilities.

A Commitment to Safety

The Maryland Transportation Authority Police is a nationally accredited force with more than 500 sworn and civilian employees. Specialized K-9, motorcycle, all-terrain-vehicle, marine and anti-aggressive-driving units help provide maximum safety and security at Authority facilities, the Baltimore/Washington International Thurgood Marshall Airport and the Port of Baltimore. To maintain the highest level of professionalism and ethics, Transportation Authority Police officers remain true to their mission of safeguarding life and property, preserving peace, preventing and detecting crime, enforcing the law and protecting the rights of citizens.

The force has received local and national recognition for its roadway-safety efforts, which include child-passenger-safety awareness programs, anti-aggressive-driving initiatives and sobriety checkpoints. These efforts have been successful due to the continued teamwork among Authority Police and Operations personnel.

This same teamwork drives the Authority's Traffic Safety Committee, headed by the Chief of Police, Chief of Engineering and Director of Operations. The committee provides leadership of Authority efforts to help ensure safe roadways for Maryland's citizens and visitors.

E-ZPass® Maryland

The Maryland Transportation Authority is a member of the *E-ZPass*® InterAgency Group (IAG), which continues to develop a seamless electronic-toll-collection system throughout the northeastern United States. *E-ZPass* Maryland has grown to include more than 650,000 active transponders and has reduced significantly typical, peak-hour congestion at Maryland toll plazas. More than 16-million *E-ZPass* customers from IAG agencies throughout the Northeast can pay tolls electronically in Maryland. As more motorists use *E-ZPass*, convenience will increase; traffic congestion in and around toll-plaza areas will decrease; and engine-idling time will be reduced, resulting in reduced vehicle emissions. For additional information about the *E-ZPass* Maryland program and its standard, commuter and business plans, visit www.ezpassmd.com.

Intelligent Transportation Systems (ITS)

The Authority continues to use ITS technology to improve safety and reduce congestion through enhanced incident detection and response, while informing motorists of real-time roadway and travel conditions and alternative routes. The Authority is an active partner in the Coordinated Highways Action Response Team (CHART). Through a series of variable-message signs and highway-advisory-radio messages, the CHART system advises motorists of traffic conditions along major routes and suggests alternatives to avoid delays and congestion. This information, as well as real-time traffic images are available on CHART's website at www.traffic.md.gov.

Your Toll Dollars At Work

Fast Facts

Construction Dates

February 1939 - August 1940

Cost

\$5 million

Location

US 40 over the Susquehanna River between Harford and Cecil Counties; 1.3-mile, four-lane bridge; vertical clearance is 89 feet; 0.5 miles of approach roadway.

Toll Rates

Toll is collected in the eastbound direction only

Commuter discount with valid Maryland-issued *E-ZPass*: up to 84-percent savings per trip

2 axles: \$5

3 axles: \$10

4 axles: \$15

5 axles: \$20

6 axles: \$25

Annual Traffic

11.2 million vehicles
(both directions)

Contact Us

For more information about the Maryland Transportation Authority, please call the Division of Communications at 410-537-1017, or, toll-free, at 1-866-713-1596.

E-mail: mdta@mdtransportationauthority.com, or visit us at www.mdtransportationauthority.com



The Authority reminds its customers to stay alert and exercise caution when traveling through workzones, toll plazas and around police vehicles.



Maryland
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Authority

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