
End of the road for I-93 weekend work

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By Matt Byrne, Globe correspondent

On the last weekend of major construction work that has frequently snarled traffic north of Boston, top state transportation officials Saturday lauded the massive project to rapidly replace 14 deteriorating bridges along Interstate 93.

The work, performed exclusively during the last nine weekends, came to a head Sunday, as workers prepare to lower into place the final major sections of concrete and rebar roadway at seven points along the highway, which engineers expect to last for 75 years.

To see a photo gallery of I-93 construction work, [click here](#).

At a brief news conference yesterday at the site of the Route 16 overpass, the last superstructure to be demolished and replaced, state Secretary of Transportation Jeffrey B. Mullan thanked Governor Deval Patrick, local officials, and law enforcement agencies for their cooperation during recent weeks on the \$98 million effort.

"A little more than a year ago, we stood here looking at the sink hole we had to deal with," said Mullan, referring to a gaping hole in the Valley Street overpass that formed in August 2010. That hole, caused by leaking joints in the concrete, prompting state officials to reexamine the bridges.

"We did an evaluation of all of the decks and they were about all in the same condition," said Frank DePaola, highway administrator with the Massachusetts Department of Transportation.

Each weekend -- except the July 4th -- more than 250 workers labored around the clock to tear down and reinstall the sections of the road, in what amounted to an oversized game of cut and paste. After the old steel girders were separated and torn away from their supports, hulking cranes lowered sections of prefabricated road.

Traffic, meanwhile, was diverted each week after Friday rush hour, reducing each direction of the highway to two lanes.

DePaola said the cash-strapped agency saved years in construction time because of innovative method, and will consider using it again in the future.

Richard Davey, the MBTA general manager who is slated to replace Mullan this fall, thanked and congratulated the planners.

"It was pulled off well," Davey said.

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