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Harrods Creek bridge reopens

By Glypie Grider

After two years of construction, injunctions and delays, Harrods Creek bridge reopened Monday afternoon, allowing north Oldham residents a more direct route to downtown Louisville via River Road. The former one-lane bridge closed, some say rather unexpectedly, on Nov. 26, 2008, after Louisville engineers determined guardrails were not sturdy enough.

"I was out of town for Thanksgiving that year, and I remember coming home to see 'bridge closed signs.' It came out of nowhere," said Todd Eberle, mayor of Prospect.

The now-widened, two-lane bridge is a welcome change for the Prospect community.

"[The closure] was a major inconvenience to people that live in, drive from or drive through Prospect to Louisville," Eberle said.

He added that the bridge closure put a barrier between Prospect and River Road businesses, causing them to suffer economically.

"We're just glad it's open now," he said.

Eberle said drivers used a detour through Wolf Pen Branch Road to U.S. 42, but the narrow, windy road caused delayed and congested traffic. Others used I-71, which is often subject to large traffic delays and accidents, he said.

The bridge is located outside of Prospect city limits and was funded by federal, state and Louisville Metro dollars, Eberle said.

A spokesperson for Louisville mayor Jerry Abramson estimated the cost to be around \$3 million.

The project was delayed multiple times when River Fields, a Louisville conservation group, filed injunctions, arguing that construction to widen and enhance structural stability would harm the historic nature of the bridge.

The annual Ironman triathlon will be returning to the Harrods Creek bridge Aug. 29, Eberle said.

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