



## GEORGIA DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

# Press Release

For Immediate Release:  
Friday, January 20, 2012

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*Atlanta...*

## **17<sup>th</sup> Street Bridge Fence Canopy Failure Investigation Report Released**

**ATLANTA** – The failure last summer of a portion of a decorative fence canopy on the 17<sup>th</sup> Street Bridge above Interstate Highways 75 and 85 here was an inevitable result of circumstances unknown at the time it was built, according to a report commissioned by the Georgia Department of Transportation.

The study, by the highly regarded national forensic engineering firm, Wiss, Janney, Elstner Associates., Inc., (WJE) of Northbrook, IL, was done for Georgia DOT after part of the fence canopy on the south side of the bridge failed and fell onto the northbound lanes of I-75/85 (the Downtown Connector) on the night of August 13. Results were released today.

WJE determined that the epoxy used to secure the canopy's anchor bolts to the bridge wall lost adhesion under sustained tension – a phenomenon known as “creep” – that was first discovered in 2006. (The fence canopy was installed in 2004.) That creep allowed the anchor bolts to slowly, virtually imperceptibly, pull away from the wall until the structure fell. As it can be almost impossible to detect creep during an inspection process, WJE concluded it simply was a matter of time before the canopy failed. The firm also found that the failure was accelerated by “poor mixing...poor proportioning (and) ...incomplete filling” of the epoxy by Georgia DOT's contractor.

“We are so very fortunate that there were no injuries or worse and just minor property damage that night,” DOT Commissioner Keith Golden said, “so very, very fortunate. We learned from this and we already have begun to implement changes.”

Among those changes are an ongoing prioritized inspection of structures that utilize epoxy to secure appurtenances such as fence and utility conduit to bridge structures and an immediate prohibition on future epoxy use for such anchors.

“This was a disturbing incident, obviously,” DOT Chief Engineer Gerald Ross said. “But it was an anomaly in so many respects. Georgia's roads and bridges are safe and it is important that our citizens know that.”

The Georgia Department of Transportation is committed to providing a safe, seamless and sustainable transportation system that supports Georgia's economy and is sensitive to both its citizens and its environment. For general information on the Georgia DOT, please visit our Web site ([www.dot.ga.gov](http://www.dot.ga.gov)). Follow the Department on [Facebook](http://www.facebook.com/GeorgiaDOT) (<http://www.facebook.com/GeorgiaDOT>) and [Twitter](http://twitter.com/gadepoftrans) (<http://twitter.com/gadepoftrans>).

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