

MORRIS HERALD-NEWS

Morris company first in state to make new concrete

Product used on pedestrian bridge of I-290

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MORRIS – A Morris-based company is leading the charge in modern concrete manufacturing in Illinois.

Utility Concrete Products, 2495 W. Bungalow Road, recently produced precast deck panels that were installed in only four days on Chicago's Peoria Street Pedestrian Bridge rebuild project.

This project was the first in Illinois to use precast deck panels as part of a concept called accelerated bridge construction, or ABC, that is widespread across the country but just catching on in Illinois, said Tom Heraty, vice president of sales and engineering for UCP.



Precast deck panels, manufactured by Utility Concrete Products of Morris, were installed this summer on the new Peoria Street pedestrian bridge above Interstate 290 in Chicago

“ABC focuses less on cost and more on time and maintenance of traffic,” Heraty said.

The trend of entities such as the Illinois Department of Transportation desiring quicker turnaround times benefits UCP, he said, because it is the company's goal to use the most modern methods possible.

ABC allows some construction projects to be knocked out in a weekend or during nights, therefore lowering the cost for IDOT.

By attending conferences and forming working relationships with industry leaders, Heraty and UCP stay up to date and provide the best products for projects in the Midwest.

When it comes to Illinois, either Heraty or IDOT officials in Springfield will hear of a new method and they'll meet to discuss the possible implementation of it, he said.

The advantage to using precast concrete is that it allows the contractor to assemble the underlying bridge deck faster, as compared to a longer, traditional cast-in-place construction project, where forming and curing will increase the on-site duration.

The pedestrian bridge, which goes over Interstate 290 and is near the University of Illinois - Chicago, used more than 15,000 square feet of 8-inch precast deck panels set transverse to the main longitudinal I-beams, according to a news release from UCP.

The panels are manufactured at UCP's climate-controlled environment, delivered to the site and laid out kind of like Legos, Heraty said.

No form work is done, and the panels already have holes in them. Top-of-the-line, high-performance concrete is then poured into the holes, he said.

The project was recently featured in industry outlet Precast/Prestressed Concrete Institute.

PCI highlighted the project for its construction technique, which "capitalized on innovative precast concrete ABC techniques that allowed for high strength, thinner bridge sections and reduced delays and lane closures," according to the news release.

To view the project in more detail, visit www.pci.org.