

Strolling Through the Past Tri - County Expressway

As told by
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The 441 bridge or “Polish Connection” is probably the most visible landmark in Fox Crossing. This bridge, and accompanying freeway, can be traced back to a master plan of the Fox Valley prepared by Kenneth L. Shellie and Associates in 1962. This plan was to develop a southern bypass of the Fox Cities.

Once this plan was presented, Roland Kampo, town chairman at the time, strongly pushed for construction of the bridge, which would connect both sides of the growing town. According to a *Post-Crescent* article at the time, Roland Kampo states, “either we are going to have a bridge or we are going to stop talking about it.” During this time, the town chairman was an automatic member of the county board. Kampo politicked with the other county board members to persuade them to spend county money and use the county buying power to go with the idea of a bridge on the north end of the county.



Despite objections from both Neenah and Menasha, Kampo was able to get the county to commit \$100,000 for the engineering.

The original plan called for a two lane bridge ending at USH 41. Kampo called the idea ridiculous and soon after the state highway commission got involved. With the state becoming involved, and the possibility of one-third being paid for by the state, Kampo's battle became a little easier. There was still resistance to be overcome though. Kampo was able to get the bridge vote tied to several other projects vying for county funding including a new airport terminal in Oshkosh, which was a favorite of the large Oshkosh delegation on the board. As a result, the bridge resolution passed with only a single dissenter.



With the county bonding approved, Kampo now needed the City and Town of Menasha to approve posting referendums for the citizens to vote on.

Kampo was able to sell the idea of the bridge and the benefits thereof, to both boards and the referendums were held, which were ultimately passed in both municipalities.

Work started on the bridge on July 2, 1973 and was completed almost 2 ½ years later. Although it was to be a crucial part in the future state highway system, the bridge was designated County Highway Q and affectionately known as the 'Polish Connection', making reference to the large Menasha Polish community.

The Tri-County Expressway was now under way. The original plan was to go from USH 41 at Little Lake Butte des Morts through Calumet County, turning north and connecting with USH 41 again near French Rd. in Outagamie County.

Fortunately, when this was being planned in the 1960's, each county had the forethought to purchase right-of-way along the planned route to preserve it for future use.



Development of the expressway took the next 15 years and was constructed in phases. Phase I, or that stretch from

the bridge to S. Oneida St. opened in the fall of 1991. Phase II and III, opened in 1993, which completed the highway to USH 41 in Outagamie County.



The highway proved very successful and the usage exceeded preliminary figures. Development took place along the highway and soon there were plans to extend the highway westward through Fox Crossing. The state planned to re-route USH 10 through the new westward extension. This was also completed in phases with the first phase, from the bridge to the former USH 45, completed in 1996. This was also tied to the completion of the new west side arterial (CTH CB), which crossed the town in a north-south direction.



Development has been progressing in the last 10 years along both the new USH 10 and CTH CB in Fox Crossing. The village relocated its municipal offices along CTH CB shortly after the opening of the route. Since that time growth on the west side of has been on fast pace with large scale business and retail projects.

In 2012 Wisconsin DOT announced a large scale expansion and renovation of the existing freeway and bridge. This project will complete the much needed interchange at 441/41 and improve safety along that stretch of roadway. This project is set to conclude in 2021.

