



ARKANSAS DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

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INTEROFFICE MEMORANDUM

May 17, 2021

TO: Steve Frisbee, Assistant Chief Engineer – Operations

FROM: Michael Hill, State HBM Engineer – Maintenance

SUBJECT: Dereliction of Duty – Monty Frazier

Bridge inspections occurred on the Hernando de Soto bridge over the Mississippi River on 9/3/2019 and 9/1/2020. There is documented evidence that a severe crack existed in the upstream tie of the east-tied arch over a navigational channel at the time of these inspections. This crack was visible and would have been discovered if proper fracture critical inspection procedures were followed.

This crack continued to propagate until discovered by a scheduled inspection on 5/11/2021. At this time, the crack had turned into a partial fracture of the tie girder and was severe enough to put the structure in jeopardy of failing. This partial fracture necessitated the closure of all bridge traffic and barge traffic underneath the structure.

Monty Frazier was the team leader on both inspections and the under-bridge inspection unit operator. Mr. Frazier, neglecting his responsibilities to follow proper fracture critical inspection techniques by getting within arm's length of the outside of the tie girder, was why the crack was not discovered.

When Mr. Frazier was asked why he didn't move along the outside of the tie girder he said that it was unsafe to run the under-bridge unit in that manner. This is not true. Standard practice is to boom out along the tie girder, looking for cracks. Mr. Frazier had done this himself when another operated the under-bridge inspection unit. The unit also has safety features that keep one from moving into an unstable position.

I recommend that Mr. Frazier be terminated from the position of statewide bridge inspector for dereliction of duty.