



# Bridge Scheduled for Opening by July

Construction activity intensified over the winter in an effort to have Saunders Bridge – a stone-arch span over Route 53 that will provide a scenic and safe access to Monticello – open to traffic by July.

By March, 90 percent of the bridge structure had been completed. The final phase of activity will center on road-building: lowering the grade of Route 53, constructing the bridge entrance ramp, and paving the roadway over the bridge into Monticello.

Many key events in the construction process occurred during the winter. The arch of the bridge was framed, the barrel vault rock was laid, and the bridge span was poured with 190 cubic yards of concrete in late November. The removal of the earthen berm that supported the arch construction began in mid-February. The fieldstone facing for the eastern side of the bridge – 3,100 square feet of rock harvested in Highland County, Virginia – was essentially completed by the end of February. All of the bridge's concrete walls were finished by late March, a month that also saw progress continue on laying fieldstone to the facing of the western side, or spandrel, walls.
















Traffic on Route 53 was realigned in April, so the entrance ramp roadway could be built and the final rock work on the western side walls could be completed.

Saunders Bridge will be the capstone of the Thomas Jefferson Parkway, the linear park along Route 53 that includes Kemper Park and the Saunders-Monticello Trail, a 2.2-mile pathway that will run over the new bridge into the grounds of Monticello.

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# MONTICELLO



## Entrance Bridge

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T.J.F. / Jessica Tyree



**The eastern wall of Saunders Bridge, with fieldstone facing.**

At the lower end of the parkway, construction is scheduled to begin this spring on a pedestrian tunnel under Route 53 near Route 20 to link the trail to overflow parking and the site of the proposed Monticello Gateway and Jefferson History Center. Work has already begun within Kemper Park on construction of an outdoor amphitheater, further development of the native tree and shrub arboretum, and preparation of a plan for an extensive children's garden.

Though not yet completed, the Thomas Jefferson Parkway attracted more than 24,000 people in 2001.

**COMMENTS? [newsletter@monticello.org](mailto:newsletter@monticello.org)**