The Kishwaukee River Bridge in Rockford, IL, is a post-tensioned (PT) precast segmental concrete box-girder bridge that opened to traffic in 1980. The bridge has five spans with lengths of 170 ft (51.8 m), three at 250 ft (76.2 m), and one at 170 ft (51.8 m). The Kishwaukee River Bridge engineers chose the design of a single shear-key joint usually located close to the centroid of the cross section. The overall length of the deck is 1096 ft (334 m) and was built using the balanced cantilever method. Each cantilever consists of 17 segments 7.05 ft (2.15 mm) long and one pier segment 3.5 ft long (1.07 m). Cast-in-place closures are 3.23 ft (0.98 m) long.

In the early 2000s, the owner—the Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT)—decided on a strengthening program to extend the design life of the bridges. The strengthening design required an additional twenty-four twelve strand external post-tensioning tendons of various lengths in each bridge.

In 2007, IDOT awarded the contract through competitive bidding to the same team as 28 years previously. The owner’s schedule required all work to be completed within a very short time, as they wanted to keep bridge closure to a minimum due to I-39 being a high traffic route, especially for Chicago-area residents traveling to Wisconsin during the weekends.

**CHALLENGES**

Design practice of the 1970s did not require the inclusion of provisions for future additional PT tendons; therefore, new deviators had to be constructed throughout the bridge as well as new PT anchorage zones at the diaphragms and abutments. The new anchor zones and deviators were cast in place within the segmental box and then post-tensioned. Instead of using steel pipes at the deviators, continuously curved voids (diablos) were cast in the deviation diaphragm to allow large deviations from the theoretical tendon profile.

To meet the higher standards of today’s post-tensioning technology, the post-tensioning was designed with a continuous air-tight, high-density polyethylene (HDPE) pipe from anchor to anchor, then grouted with high-performance grout and equipment. Due to the diablos and continuous HDPE pipe requirements, specially-designed
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