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## FAST TRACK BRIDGE PROJECT AIDED ALTON IN TROPICAL STORM IRENE DAMAGES

ALTON, NH — When Tropical Storm Irene struck back in late August of 2011, Vermont wasn't the only state to suffer major damage to its roads and bridges. Among a number of communities



in New Hampshire, the Town of Alton sustained damage that required assistance and quickly. The Reed Road Bridge over West Alton Brook, already on the NH Department of Transportation (NHDOT) Municipal Red List and in the initial planning stages for replacement, suffered rapid deterioration during the high flows. The bridge provides the only access to 25 homes and two commercial businesses. Immediately following the storm, the condition of the twin steel culverts left no choice but to brace the culverts and post the road for passenger vehicles only and one lane of traffic, until a fix could be completed. The project was elevated by the Town and NHDOT to an emergency project in order to restore permanent and suitable access to the neighborhood before winter.

The Town worked closely with NHDOT to streamline the project, selecting CLD Consulting Engineers (CLD) of Manchester, NH to lead the design efforts for the project. The first priority included selection of E.D. Swett of Concord, NH to install a temporary single-lane bridge, opened to traffic on October 10, 2011. The bridge was designed to allow for passage for oil trucks, school buses, emergency vehicles and larger trucks.

CLD teamed with Stoney Ridge Environmental, of Alton, to shepherd the project through approvals of the NH Department of Environmental Services (NHDES). The design team worked tirelessly in a collaborative effort with the Town, NHDOT and NHDES to complete design and obtain approvals within one month for the replacement bridge due to the emergency nature of the project and need to allow residents and businesses full and safe access. CLD recommended replacement with a larger precast concrete rigid frame to pass storm flows. Michie Corporation of Henniker, NH had a precast concrete structure already fabricated that was the right fit for the site and available for installation immediately. Weaver Brothers Construction of Concord, NH was hired to install the bridge and complete roadway reconstruction, utilizing multiple crews to complete both phases of construction in a short period of time.

Cooperation was the name of the game for this project, including Mother Nature. The mild start to the winter allowed for paving the base of the roadway with favorable temperatures in mid-December. The project is funded in part through the NHDOT State Aid Bridge Program, which provides 80% funding to local municipalities to replace their bridges. There are 130 bridges scheduled in the program over the next ten years, with another 160 bridges in process for possible future inclusion.

Given the current funding levels, these bridges may not see construction funding until 2021 or beyond. Increased funding to the State Aid Bridge Program is essential to expedite improvements to the 365 Municipal Red List bridges that are susceptible to these large storm events that seem to occur more frequently.

***About CLD Consulting Engineers, Inc.***

*CLD Consulting Engineers, Inc. (CLD) has provided professional engineering services to communities, regional planning agencies, State and Federal agencies, as well as industrial and private clients throughout northern New England since 1976.*

*CLD provides an extensive range of comprehensive professional services including survey, site planning, civil engineering, traffic/transportation planning, bridge/highway design, water resources engineering, environmental engineering, solid waste management, structural engineering, permitting, construction management services including oversight and inspections, value engineering and peer review services.*

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