

July 25 update

Committee Shares More Details About Champ Clark Bridge Ceremony Descendent of the Honorable Champ Clark Guest Speaker

In just a little over a week, several hundred people are expected to walk on the NEW Champ Clark Bridge for the first time. All are invited to attend the bridge dedication ceremony on Saturday, August 3, beginning at 6:30 p.m. Mr. Ben Clark, great-grandson of The Honorable Champ Clark, for whom the bridge is named, will be the featured speaker. Missouri Department of Transportation Director Patrick McKenna, Illinois Secretary of Transportation Omer Osman, and Henry J. Massman, President, Massman Construction Company, the design-builder, also will speak, along with U.S. Congressman Sam Graves from Missouri.

The new bridge will open soon after the ceremony concludes. All details of the ceremony can be found online at www.champclarkbridge.com.

Those attending the ceremony can park at the Louisiana High School, where school buses will shuttle them to the end of the new bridge. Shuttles will begin at 5:15 p.m. At that point, attendees can walk to the middle of the bridge where the ceremony is to take place, or if they need assistance, golf carts will be available to give them rides. Should the high school parking lot fill up, overflow parking will be at the school ball fields off of Kelly Lane behind the high school, and parking signs will be alongside the streets to help direct traffic. Law enforcement and city personnel will assist in guiding traffic. Attendees using wheelchairs can be dropped off in front of Ayerco at the U.S. Route 54 and MO 79 intersection at the end of the bridge. The public will be allowed on the bridge beginning at 5 p.m.

Anyone interested in getting photos of the new and old bridge, before the old bridge comes down, is encouraged to walk up to Riverview Park that evening and take “selfies.” Beginning at 5 p.m., several food vendors, from both sides of the river, will be offering items for sale. “There is a nice place to sit and if the weather cooperates, it will make for an enjoyable setting,” said Kristal Pitzer, Louisiana Chamber of Commerce director who is also helping coordinate the event. The list of vendors and other activities are on the website. Riverview Park will close to vehicle traffic Saturday morning, August 3 around 8 a.m.

Wayne and Georgia Gamm, and their son, Larry, are providing two vintage vehicles that will be parked on either side of the stage. These include a 1930 Model A Ford and a 1923 Case Car. “This will be another great photo opportunity,” said Carolyn Wisecarver with Pike County Economic Development who coordinated getting the vehicles.

Pike County, Missouri resident Pam Ince will sing the national anthem for the ceremony. American Legion Post 370 in Louisiana will post the colors during the ceremony. A “Blessing” of the new bridge will be led by Pastor John Kroeze and then a moment of silence for those who lost their lives on the old bridge.

Residents who are more than 90 years in age and live in Pike County are encouraged to attend and sit in a special section. To prepare, please call 573-248-5584 with the number of people who

will be in your party. A video featuring three Pike County residents, the history of the old bridge and construction of the new bridge will be available on the bridge website prior to the ceremony.

Seating at the ceremony will be first come first serve. “We are not sure how many to expect, yet we are prepared for several hundred, and we appreciate everything done by the contractor, the state agencies and these communities to make this a memorable dual-state event,” said MoDOT Project Director of the Champ Clark Bridge Keith Killen.

The new bridge is expected to open to traffic soon after the ceremony. At that time, the old bridge will close to through traffic, only being made available from the Missouri side to those who need to access the marina on the Illinois side. Once Massman Construction Co. completes the work in front of the marina to connect it to the new section of highway leading up to the bridge, the old bridge will be permanently closed. The old bridge will be demolished in the next few months.

The ceremony is being planned by a region-wide committee with representatives from many organizations on both sides of the river