
NEWS FROM FASCINATING PROJECTS

New Steel Arch Bridge to be constructed

140-year-old Iron Bridge to be laid to Rest in New York's Letchworth State Park

[Reported by Alexander Ehms in Buffalo](#)

16 December 2015 – Buffalo, NY, USA – Located just 35 miles south of Rochester, NY, Letchworth State Park is rich with history. The “Parade Grounds” located in the park, served as a civil war camp for the First New York Dragoons. The park is also home to the Glen Iris Inn, the former home of William Pryor Letchworth. Lovebirds flock for a chance to go hot air ballooning over the gorge. From this birds eye view we see the Portage Bridge, an iron railroad bridge and living monument. The Portage Bridge was constructed to replace the world's highest bridge which had once stood in its place. The wooden giant burned down back in 1875.

As much as many tourists may admire the incredible structure, the Portage Bridge is among the top 10 railway bottlenecks in New York State. The bridge is unable to carry the industry's current standard in terms of freight loads. Freight cars are expected to be 13,000 lbs. below the industry standard in order to make the trek across. Even once the train cars have been adequately prepped to cross, the trains are unable to maintain regular speeds while crossing and must travel below 10 mph.



The solution you ask?

A new steel arch bridge will be constructed in its place. 900-feet long this architectural wonder will be positioned just 75 feet south of the current Portage Bridge. Allowing the Iron truss bridge to remain active until the new steel bridge has been completed.

This will require an additional 1,200 feet of track to be constructed on either side of the bridge in order to align the new bridge with the existing tracks. Even with the added distance, the new bridge is expected to expedite freight train travel, meeting Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) Class 4 speeds, in addition to lowering the overall maintenance costs.

The New York State Department of Transportation is expected to contribute as much as 5.5 million, will several grants have been issued for a total of 12 million. The remainder of the 71 million dollar project will come from Norfolk Southern.



The Project Sponsor, Norfolk Southern, believes that this new bridge is necessary for the continued

safe, and reliable rail operations on the Southern Tier and plays a significant role in the overall economic viability of the Southern Tier area.

“This successful public-private partnership underscores the strong confidence we all have in the ongoing potential of the Southern Tier,” said James A. Squires, Norfolk Southern chairman, president and CEO. “Norfolk Southern has a robust bridge program, and the new Portageville Bridge will be a testament to today’s expert engineers and the craftsmanship of today’s railroaders. We expect this project will start a new rail legacy for Letchworth State Park and the Southern Tier.”

For more information, click on the following:

<https://www.dot.ny.gov/portagevillebridge/photos>

<https://www.dot.ny.gov/portagevillebridge>

<http://www.democratandchronicle.com/story/news/2015/12/16/update-letchworth-bridge-project/77378214/>

<http://www.nscorp.com/content/nscorp/en/news/-norfolk-southernandnewyorkstatebeginreplacementofkeyportagevill.html>