

600 million crossings and 85 years for the Mid-Hudson Bridge

John W. Barry, Poughkeepsie Journal 8:32 p.m. EDT August 23, 2015



(Photo: New York State Bridge Authority/Courtesy photo)

You could say it divides us. Others insist it binds us together.

A massive span, a critical link in the regional economy and simple means of reaching point B from point A, the [Franklin D. Roosevelt](#) ([/story/news/local/2014/09/11/franklin-d-roosevelt-photos-videos/15453431/](#)) Mid-Hudson Bridge is used by tens of thousands of people daily, with hundreds of millions of crossings over decades.

The 3,000-foot-long bridge links Dutchess and Ulster counties, the City of Poughkeepsie and the Town of Lloyd and, in a much bigger sense, east and west. You may drive over it twice a day for work. You may use it for an occasional excursion or night out. And, you could very likely take it for granted.

Whether you marvel at its stunning views of the Hudson Valley or remain indifferent, we will all be reminded on Tuesday of the Mid-Hudson Bridge's endurance and the key role it plays in so many lives. That's when the Mid-Hudson Bridge turns 85 years old.

"For me, that bridge is very important," said Tony Rojas, 37, of the City of Poughkeepsie. Rojas uses the bridge twice daily, during his commute to work in [Orange County](#).

"When I cross that bridge and I pay \$1.50 I feel so happy," he said. "With that money, they keep the bridge in good shape."

Named in 1994 for the 32nd president of the United States, who was born, lived and is buried in Hyde Park, the Mid-Hudson Bridge opened on Aug. 25, 1930. Since then, according to the state Bridge Authority, there have been more than 600 million crossings on the parallel wire cable suspension bridge with suspended side panels.



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[FDR photos, videos and more](#)

(<http://www.poughkeepsiejournal.com/story/news/local/2014/09/11/franklin-d-roosevelt-photos-videos/15453431/>)

Gov. Alfred E. Smith signed legislation for the bridge in 1923, according to the Bridge Authority, which operates the Mid-Hudson, [Newburgh-Beacon](#) ([/story/news/local/southern-dutchess/2015/08/03/newburgh-beacon-bridge-finish-november/30831163/](#)), Kingston-Rhinecliff, [Bear Mountain](#) ([/story/news/local/2014/11/19/bear-mountain-bridge/19298149/](#)) and Rip Van Winkle bridges.



The Mid-Hudson Bridge under construction. (Photo: New York State Bridge Authority/Courtesy photo)

On Aug. 25, 1930, Smith and his wife joined the man who was governor at the time — FDR — along with [Eleanor Roosevelt](#) and Poughkeepsie Mayor Frank Lovelace, to dedicate the bridge. Nearly a century later, the span provides the [Hudson River](#) with much more than a mere link between Route 9W in [Ulster County](#) and the arterial in the City of Poughkeepsie.

"The bridge integrates the region," said Gerald Benjamin, director of the Center for Research, Regional Education and Outreach at the [State University of New York at New Paltz](#).

And though rush hour bridge traffic can slow your commute down, things could be worse.

"Imagine life without the bridge," Benjamin said.

Jeff Anzevino, director of land use advocacy at Poughkeepsie-based [Scenic Hudson](#), offered a perspective on the bridge that extended far beyond its role as a conduit for transportation.

He called the Mid-Hudson Bridge, "a great source of community pride."



The Mid-Hudson Bridge, looking east from the Town of Lloyd. (Photo: John W. Barry/Poughkeepsie Journal)

"It's a very graceful structure," he said. "In many instances, it really frames the view and provides a very interesting and compelling scale of the river and both sides."

And, Anzevino added, "you get views you can get very few other places."

Adam Skura, 30, lives in Newburgh, works in Poughkeepsie and crosses the Mid-Hudson Bridge twice daily during his commute. He appreciates the architecture of the span and enjoys the views.

"You see the [Walkway \(/story/news/local/2014/10/02/converting-bridge-to-walkway/16589789/\)](#) and that's nice, that's pretty amazing," he said. "And when it's hazy in the morning, it's pretty scenic."

But beyond the vistas, Skura said, the Mid-Hudson Bridge is, "part of our identity."

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Franklin D. Roosevelt Mid-Hudson Bridge

3,000-foot long

Opened: Aug. 25, 1930

2014 Average daily traffic 40,771

Tolls collected:

2014: \$10,383,951

2013: \$10,301,243

2012: \$10,061,462

2011: \$6,881,731

Hamilton Fish Newburgh-Beacon Bridge

Opened: North Span - Nov. 2, 1963. South Span - Nov. 1, 1980



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Newburgh-Beacon Bridge repairs to finish by November

<http://www.poughkeepsiejournal.com/story/news/local/southern-dutchess/2015/08/03/newburgh-beacon-bridge-finish-november/30831163/?from=global&sessionKey=&autologin=>

George Clinton Kingston-Rhinecliff Bridge

Opened: Feb. 2, 1957

Bear Mountain Bridge

Opened: November 27, 1924



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[Bear Mountain Bridge looks great at 90](#)

[http://www.poughkeepsiejournal.com/story/news/local/2014/11/19/bear-mountain-bridge/19298149/?from=global&sessionKey=&autologin=\)](http://www.poughkeepsiejournal.com/story/news/local/2014/11/19/bear-mountain-bridge/19298149/?from=global&sessionKey=&autologin=)

Rip Van Winkle Bridge

Opened: July 2, 1935

Did you know:

The opening day celebration of the Mid-Hudson Bridge, on Aug. 25, 1930, was officiated by Gov. Franklin D. Roosevelt, a Hyde Park native, and his wife, Eleanor; former Gov. Alfred E. Smith, his wife; and Poughkeepsie Mayor Frank Lovelace.

At 5:30 p.m. on that day, ribbons were cut on the east and west sides of the bridge, by the current and former first ladies of New York state. A procession of automobiles began from both sides and met in the middle. On that day, 12,000 automobiles and 30,000 pedestrians crossed the Mid-Hudson Bridge for free.

Also:

To help commemorate the 85th anniversary of the Mid-Hudson Bridge, members of the Mid-Hudson Valley Model A Restorers Club Tuesday at 10 a.m. will cross the span in vintage [Model A Fords](#), beginning in Highland.

The state Bridge Authority, which operates the Mid-Hudson Bridge, will escort the vehicles. Officials do not anticipate any significant traffic disruptions.

source: [New York State Bridge Authority](#)

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