

= Fort Henry Bridge =

The Fort Henry Bridge is a crossing of the Ohio River main channel in Wheeling , West Virginia . The tied @-@ arch bridge carries two lanes in each direction of Interstate 70 ( I @-@ 70 ) , U.S. Route 40 ( US 40 ) , and US 250 . The bridge opened after four years of construction work on September 8 , 1955 , costing \$ 6 @. @ 8 million , \$ 1 @. @ 8 million over budget . The bridge , along with the aging Wheeling Suspension Bridge , are the only two road links from Wheeling Island to downtown Wheeling . In 2009 , the structure carried an average of over 60 @, @ 000 vehicles per day .

= = Description = =

The 1 @, @ 660 @-@ foot ( 510 m ) long tied @-@ arch bridge carries four lanes of concurrent highways I @-@ 70 , US 40 and US 250 over the main channel of the Ohio River between Wheeling Island and downtown Wheeling , West Virginia . The bridge is the easternmost portion of a 1 @-@ mile ( 1 @. @ 6 km ) long chain of elevated structures spanning Wheeling Creek in Ohio , the Ohio River back channel , Wheeling Island , and the main channel . To the east of the bridge after an interchange in downtown Wheeling , I @-@ 70 and US 250 enter the Wheeling Tunnel . Besides the Wheeling Suspension Bridge , the Fort Henry Bridge is the only fixed connection from Wheeling Island to mainland West Virginia . The bridge is named after Fort Henry , which in turn was named after Patrick Henry , the governor of Virginia Territory at the outbreak of the American Revolutionary War .

Truck traffic is prohibited from using the Wheeling Suspension Bridge and must take the Fort Henry Bridge to cross between downtown Wheeling and Wheeling Island . The bridge is owned and maintained by the State of West Virginia . Every year , the West Virginia Department of Transportation ( WVDOT ) conducts a series of surveys on its highways in the state to measure traffic volume . This is expressed in terms of average annual daily traffic ( AADT ) , which is a measure of traffic volume for any average day of the year . In 2009 , WVDOT calculated that 60 @, @ 070 vehicles used the Fort Henry Bridge over the main channel of the Ohio River . This represents a 334 percent increase in traffic from 1956 , the first year traffic data was published , when 18 @, @ 000 vehicles used the bridge .

= = History = =

Contracts to build the Fort Henry Bridge were let to the American Bridge Company , a subsidiary of U.S. Steel , and Dravo Corporation of Pittsburgh , Pennsylvania . Costing \$ 6 @. @ 8 million , \$ 1 @. @ 8 million over budget , and taking four years to complete , the Fort Henry Bridge opened to traffic on September 8 , 1955 after a ribbon @-@ cutting ceremony with then @-@ governor William C. Marland in front of a crowd of 55 @, @ 000 to 60 @, @ 000 people . The bridge earned an Honorable Mention in 1955 from the National Steel Bridge Alliance , a part of the American Institute of Steel Construction , which recognizes the best steel bridges of the year . At the time of construction , the bridge was only the second tied @-@ arch bridge across the Ohio River .

The bridge was originally named the Ninth Street Bridge , and was designed to relieve traffic on the National Road 's Wheeling Suspension Bridge . The roadway as originally opened carried four lanes with a 4 ft ( 1 @. @ 2 m ) median between each direction . During the first years of the bridge it carried US 40 and US 250 from Wheeling Island over the Ohio River main channel . In 1957 plans to add an Interstate Highway designation to the bridge were formed , with the Interstate 70 designation added by 1966 . The bridge underwent a renovation in 1990 which included replacement of its bridge deck .

The bridge , along with the Vietnam Veterans Memorial Bridge and the Wheeling Suspension bridge were all closed in January 2005 , stopping any traffic from Ohio or Wheeling Island from entering mainland West Virginia for an hour due to barges breaking loose during heavy flooding along the Ohio River .

