

## Historic Civil Engineering Landmark Nomination

This form may be printed. Please submit one copy for each committee member of all materials relating to the nomination. If more space is required to provide full response, please include additional documentation.

To: History & Heritage Committee  
ATTN: Carol Reese  
1801 Alexander Bell Drive  
Reston, VA 20191-4400

Date: 1/25/09 ASCE Section: Michigan

Circle one: This is to nominate the following for designation as a Historic Landmark: National or Local/State

Mackinac Bridge  
Previously nominated for National: Yes No; if Yes, when \_\_\_\_\_  
Located at: \_\_\_\_\_ County: \_\_\_\_\_ State: Michigan

The latitude and longitude to the nearest minute (or U.T.M. coordinates). Attach detailed local and vicinity maps that show access from a major city or the interstate. See map

The proposed landmark's owner: State of MI / Mackinac Bridge Authority

In support of this nomination the following information must be provided:

1. Date of construction (and other significant dates). SEE ATTACHED
2. Names of key civil engineer and other professionals associated with project. \_\_\_\_\_
3. Historic (national or local) significance of this landmark. \_\_\_\_\_
4. Comparable or similar projects, both in the United States and other countries. \_\_\_\_\_
5. Unique features or characteristics which set this proposed landmark apart from other civil engineering projects, including those in #4 above. \_\_\_\_\_
6. Contribution which this structure or project made toward the development of: (1) the civil engineering profession; (2) the nation or a large region thereof (part 2 is necessary for an NHCEL). \_\_\_\_\_
7. A list of published references concerning this nomination. \_\_\_\_\_
8. A list of additional documentation in support of this nomination. (Please list all enclosed documents, publications, photographs, and supporting historical evidence. Digital images and one 5" x 7" black & white glossy photo are required for publicity and presentation purposes.) DVD containing construction photos
9. The recommended citation for HHC consideration. \_\_\_\_\_
10. A statement of the owner's support of the nomination. SEE ATTACHED

If this nomination is approved for designation as a National Historic Civil Engineering Landmark by the Board of Direction of ASCE, we understand that the Section will have the major responsibility for the public presentation ceremony of the plaque and for plaque maintenance.

Chairman, Section History & Heritage Committee \_\_\_\_\_

Section Secretary [Signature]

Section President [Signature]

\*Note: For State Historic Civil Engineering Landmark designation, the other Section presidents from the state should sign the nomination form or concur with the nomination in writing. If all Sections affected by the nomination agree on dedicating this landmark, the nominating Section should inform the HHC of their decision and send one (1) copy of the nomination package to the staff contact for the HHC.

Note: Designation by ASCE as a National Historic Civil Engineering Landmark carries no legal commitment on the part of ASCE, the owner or the governmental jurisdiction in which it is located.

## Historic Civil Engineering Landmark Nomination

1. Construction of the Mackinac Bridge began on May 7, 1954. The bridge was completed on schedule and opened to traffic on November 1, 1957.
2. Designer and Chief engineer during construction of the Mackinac Bridge was Dr. David B. Steinman, Steinman Engineers, of New York City.
3. The Mackinac Bridge was the longest suspension bridge in the world at the time of its opening. It is now the longest suspension bridge in the Western Hemisphere and the third longest suspension bridge in the world (total suspension length).
4. The Mackinac Bridge, though longer over all and with a longer suspended span, is comparable to the Golden Gate Bridge in San Francisco, California. Another comparable suspension bridge is the much longer Akashi-Kaikyo Bridge of Japan. During construction of the Akashi-Kaikyo Bridge, Japanese engineers working on the project visited the Mackinac Bridge to learn both by inspection of the structure itself and talking with the engineers and maintenance crews who care for the bridge.
5. The Great State of Michigan is made up of two peninsulas connected only by the Mackinac Bridge. Completion of the Mackinac Bridge made travel between the two peninsulas convenient and expedient for citizens and tourists in the state as well as commercial interests needing to move their products from one peninsula to the other.

When it was constructed the Mackinac Bridge utilized an aerodynamic design new to the world of suspension bridges. It is designed to withstand winds of 662 mph.

6. The Mackinac Bridge made its mark on the civil engineering profession with a new aerodynamic design. A challenging and successful project, the Mackinac Bridge was the first major suspension bridge built after the collapse of the Tacoma Narrows Bridge in 1940.
7. Published references concerning the Mackinac Bridge include *Mighty Mac – The Official Picture History of the Mackinac Bridge*, Lawrence A. Rubin; *Miracle Bridge at Mackinac*, David B. Steinman; and *Bridging the Straits*, Lawrence A. Rubin.



## Statement of Support for Historical Civil Engineering Landmark

December 2008

Some referred to it as "the bridge that couldn't be built." However, Prentiss M. Brown and Dr. David B. Steinman saw things differently. These visionaries were the founding fathers of Michigan's Mackinac Bridge. Their leadership working with others led to the construction of it. Once it was completed and opened to traffic in 1957, the five-mile long structure historically and uniquely connected Michigan's two peninsulas. More than four decades later, the Michigan Section of the ASCE selected the bridge as Michigan's #1 Civil Engineering project of the 20th Century.

While the history of the Straits-area ferry service, process of obtaining funding, design, planning, and construction of the bridge are all amazing achievements in their own right, it is the bridge itself that never ceases to amaze engineers from across the country. The Bridge stands today with the same structural integrity it had more than 50 years ago. This aerodynamically-invisible and well-maintained structure is a Michigan landmark that is expected to last for generations to come.

The Mackinac Bridge Authority (MBA) board hereby supports the nomination recognizing the Mackinac Bridge as an Historical Civil Engineering Landmark. Additionally, the MBA appreciates the Michigan Section ASCE for their diligence in pursuing this important effort which will help preserve this national icon.

Respectfully signed,

*William H. Gnodtke*

William H. Gnodtke, Chairman  
Mackinac Bridge Authority Board