

“We would never have gone after this project without our high-caliber IUPAT workforce.”

*Lou Lyras, CEO
Corcon, Inc*

Location: Between Philadelphia, PA and Gloucester City, NJ

Bridge Completion: 1957

Designer: Othmar Ammann

Client: Delaware Port Authority

Chief Engineer: Mike Venuto

Industrial Painting Contractor: Corcon, Inc., Youngstown, Ohio

Paint Required: 50,000 Gallons

Scope of Work: Completely blast clean and paint the suspension spans, interior and exterior towers, and the girders and diaphragms supporting the anchorage decks; paint the main cables and suspender ropes; and perform structural steel repairs.

WALT WHITMAN BRIDGE

Blasting and painting one of the nation's largest bridges. While accommodating 120,000 vehicles a day. And 2 falcons.



Named after poet Walt Whitman, who spent his final years in nearby Camden, this magnificent seven-lane bridge spans over 2¼ miles (11,981 feet). It's a vital link across the Delaware River, between Philadelphia, PA and Gloucester City, NJ, for the 120,000 vehicles that rely on it each day. Containing 57,674 tons of steel, it was one of the first bridges of the interstate era and is the tenth largest suspension bridge in the U.S.

Corcon, Inc., an IUPAT industry partner, was selected to completely blast clean and paint the entire bridge, including all towers, cables and ropes, for the first time since construction was completed in 1957.

The Challenge

More than 2.3 million sq. ft. of original lead paint had to be safely removed, and sandblasting uncovered a great deal of deterioration that wasn't apparent at first. Then, the bridge needed to be completely painted while staying open to two-way traffic. Annual hurricane seasons were also a big concern over the three-year project. And a pair of nesting peregrine falcons, who had made the bridge their home, needed to be protected.

The Solution

A team of up to 100 specialized workers, including CAS-certified IUPAT painters, worked every day but Sunday. A 325,000 sq. ft. safety platform was built, along with chain-link scaffolding and a customized containment system with an elaborate air filtration system. Steel deck sheets allowed work to proceed during high winds, and ironworkers were subcontracted for the extensive steel repairs. As for the falcons, they simply changed nests each year to the side of the bridge away from the work.

The IUPAT Industry Partner Advantage

“Using an IUPAT workforce assured that this project's unique technological and safety challenges could be met,” says Lou Lyras, CEO of Corcon, Inc. “We needed a required number of Coating Application Specialists (CAS) to even bid on this job, and Corcon had them because, as IUPAT contractors, we attract the top industrial painters. I'm proud to be a card-carrying IUPAT member.”