



# Eads Bridge

St. Louis, Missouri



On July 4, 2003, St. Louis' historic Eads Bridge reopened after being closed for 11 years. Referred to by Walt Whitman as a "structure of perfection and beauty unsurpassable," the bridge was originally built in 1874 under the direction of engineer James Buchanan Eads. Today, it remains one of the oldest standing Mississippi River spans.

The restoration team, aiming to maintain the bridge's original design down to the last detail, rejected the use of contemporary railing designs. Instead, designers opted for an ornamental rail that provided longevity delivered by a two-coat paint system layered over hot-dip galvanizing. The galvanizer consulted from the project's beginning, established a procedure for the entire coating process of the 275 tons of steel: the fabricator was to use specific welding rod and techniques to provide quality welds; each railing panel (measuring

7,200 lineal feet, or 58,000 square feet) was to be hand-sanded after galvanizing, marked with ceramic tags, and then shipped to the painting contractor.

The result of this four-year consultative process — in which the galvanizer guided the design, fabrication, galvanizing, and painting process — is a bridge of ornamental quality faithful to its original design and deserving of its majestic place over the mighty Mississippi.

**Specifier:**

City of St. Louis  
St. Louis, MO

**Engineer:**

St. Louis Bridge Company  
St. Louis, MO

