

# MACKINAC BRIDGE

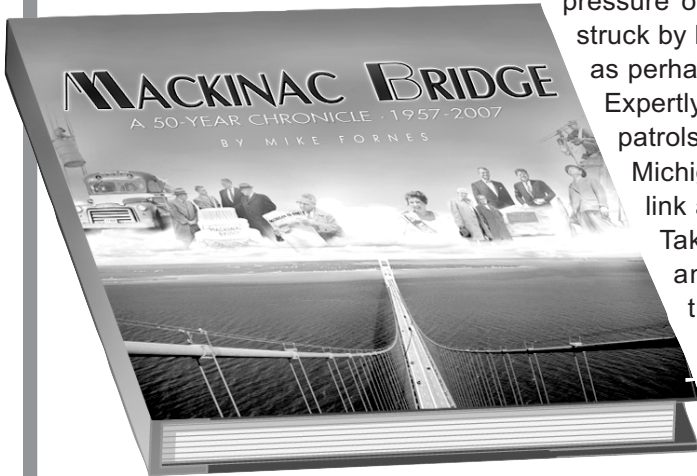
A 50-YEAR CHRONICLE · 1957-2007

BY MIKE FORNES

Since opening to traffic in 1957, the Mackinac Bridge has seen much more than the millions of vehicles that have crossed the five-mile span. America's longest suspension bridge has withstood gale-force winds, the pressure of crushing ice floes and blinding snowstorms. It has been struck by lightning and hit by an airplane and a ship — yet still stands as perhaps the safest five miles of I-75!

Expertly maintained by a close-knit crew that paints, plows and patrols its four lanes on a year-round basis, the "Big Mac" united Michigan's two peninsulas and still serves as the sole highway link across an open-water strait that is 300 feet deep.

Take a trip through the first 50 years of the bridge's history and you'll experience unusual crossings, triumph and tragedy. Parades of vehicles and pedestrians have crossed over the Mackinac Bridge and flotillas of ships have passed under it. Here are the stories, the photos and the people who have made this engineering wonder a symbol of the state of Michigan.



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