

Inland bridges too low to cope with climate change

By Scott McFetridge, AP

DES MOINES, Iowa — A century-old train trestle stands as one of the trophies of Des Moines' push to spruce up its downtown. Bicyclists and pedestrians pose for pictures beside the brightly painted beams of the Red Bridge and gather on viewing platforms overlooking the Des Moines River.

But little more than a decade after it was restored, crews went back to the site with a crane to hoist the span 4½ feet higher, at a cost of \$3 million, after experts concluded that the river's flooding risk was nearly double earlier estimates. Climate change was likely to blame.

Climate change is often seen as posing the greatest risk to coastal areas. But the nation's inland cities face perils of their own, including more intense storms and more frequent flooding. Even as President Trump has announced his intention for the U.S. to withdraw from a global climate agreement, many of the nation's river communities are responding to climate change by raising or replacing bridges that suddenly seem too low to stay safely above water.

In Reno, officials spent about \$18 million to replace a bridge over the Truckee River last year and plan to replace three more after flood-danger projections were increased by up to 15 percent.

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