

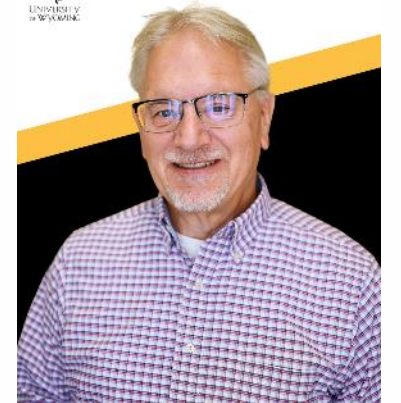


# RESILIENT BRIDGE SOLUTIONS

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**New Jersey Short Span Steel Bridge Workshop  
February 12, 2026**

**Dr. Michael G. Barker, PE  
University of Wyoming &  
SSSBA, Director of Education**



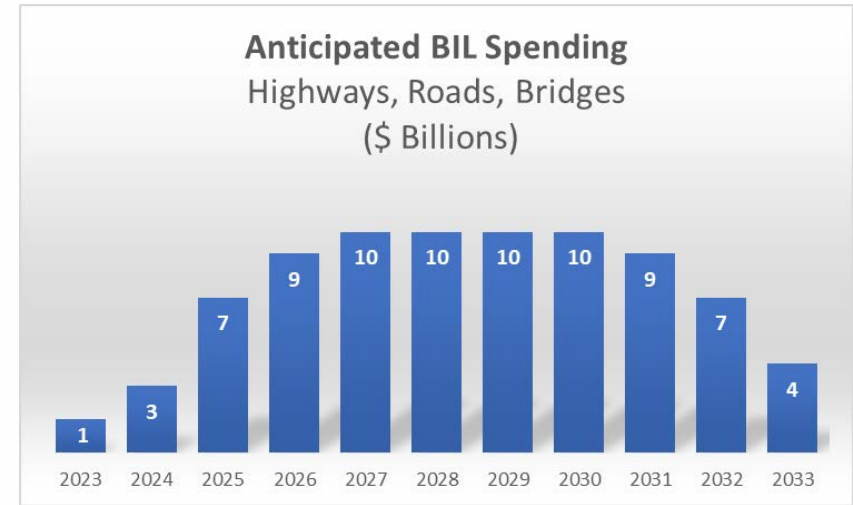
# Resiliency – Infrastructure

- **Bipartisan Infrastructure Law**

- \$39.5 billion over 5 years to repair or replace as many as 15,000 bridges
- Minimum 15% must be used to build off-system bridges

- **PROTECT (\$7.2 billion)**

- BIL establishes the **Promoting Resilient Operations** for Transformative, Efficient, and Cost-Saving Transportation (PROTECT) Formula Program
  - Make surface transportation **more resilient** to natural hazards (support of planning activities, resilience improvements, community resilience and evacuation routes, and at-risk coastal infrastructure).



\* Source: McKinsey Insights

# Resiliency



## Challenge

Because of deterioration, individual bridge components and systems such as bearings, decks, joints, columns, and girders require frequent and costly inspections, maintenance, and repairs that are often difficult to conduct. These activities cause lane closures that create congestion and impact safety for road workers and motorists. Bridge engineers need improved design options so they can deliver bridges that are operational for 100 years or more.

Learn more - <https://www.shortspansteelbridges.org/steel-bridges-beyond-100-years>

## What is a Resilient Bridge?

- Service Life & Life Cycle Performance – New Target is 100 Years Life
- Robustness for Unexpected Demands: Seismic, Natural, Man-Made
- Inspectable & Repairable
- Rehabilitation & Strengthening
- Sustainable

# Resilience - Service Life & Life Cycle Performance

## 1000's of Steel Bridges Over 100 Years Old

### Steel Bridge Longevity

- Practical and Effective Design
- Durable Materials
- Inspection, Maintenance & Repair
- Corrosion Protective Systems – Steel Chemistry and Protective Coatings





# Service Life & Life Cycle Performance

As an Example: 95 ft Simple Span, 5 Plate Girders

Weathering Steel with Painted Ends

Integral Abutments – No Joints

Bolted Diaphragms/Cross-Frames - Fatigue



How Long Will This Bridge Last?

## Steel Bridge Longevity

- Practical and Effective Design
- Durable Materials
- Inspection, Maintenance & Repair
- Corrosion Protective Systems – Steel Chemistry and Protective Coatings



# Resilience - Robustness for Unexpected Demands

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Steel bridge robustness is a bridge's ability to withstand damage and maintain its structural integrity, especially in the face of unexpected events or local failures: **Seismic, Natural, Man-Made**

- **Ductility**

Steel can deform significantly without breaking

- **Redundancy**

Alternate load paths and ability for load redistribution

- **Lightweight Yet Strong**

Steel structures are lighter, reducing seismic forces

- **Bolted and Welded Connections**

Steel bridges use high-strength bolted or welded joints

- **Ease of Retrofitting**

Steel bridges can be easily repaired, rehabilitated & retrofitted



# Robustness for Unexpected Demands

## Seismic: Survivability & Service

### High Ductility

Energy Absorption & Dissipation  
Prevents Brittle Fracture and Collapse

### Lighter Self-Weight

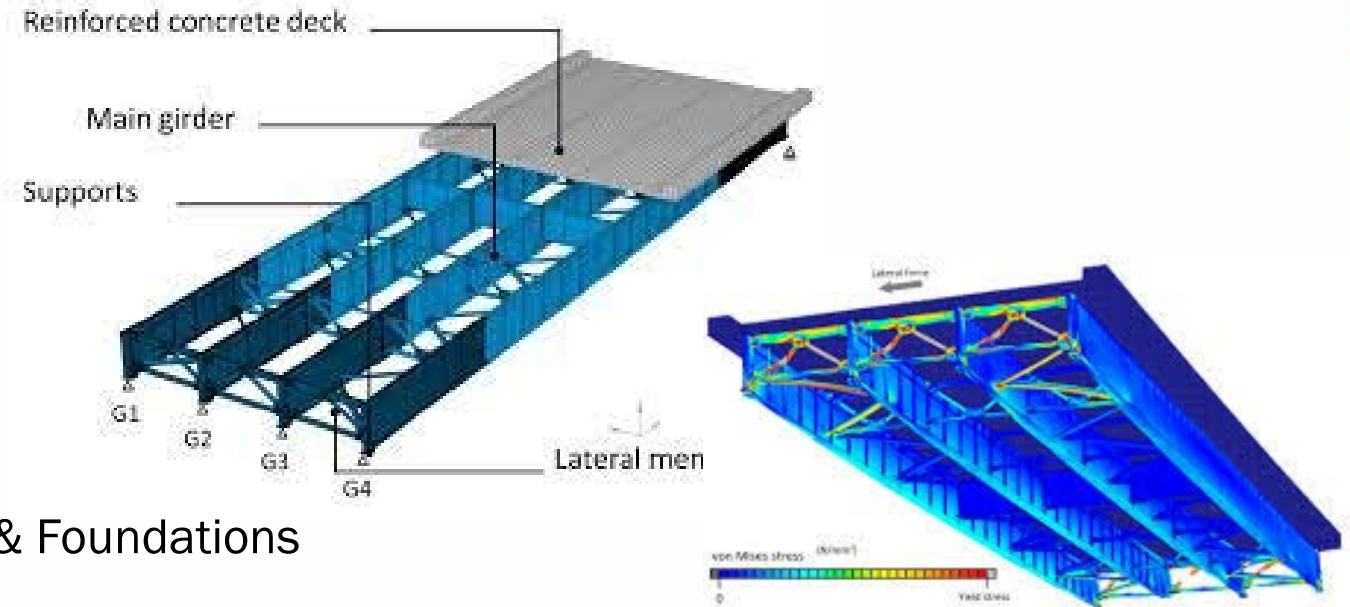
Smaller Inertial Forces  
Reduces Demand on Abutments, Piers & Foundations

### Strong & Reliable Connections

Bolted/Welded  
Designed for Seismic Distortions

### Redundancy

Alternate Load Paths  
Redistribution of Force Effects



**Kobe, Japan (1995):** Many modern steel bridges survived with repairable damage.

**Northridge, USA (1994):** Minor local damage, many bridges remained operational.

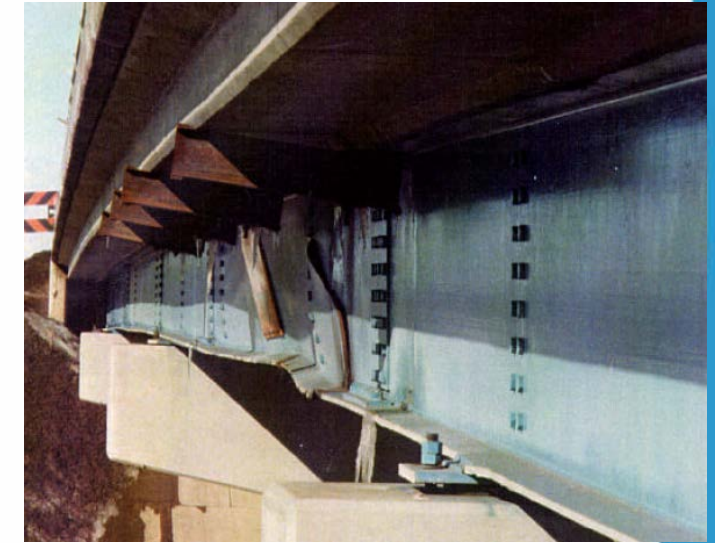
**Chile (2010):** Steel bridges demonstrated strong resilience and quick post-quake recovery.



# Resilience - Inspectable & Repairable

## Structural Steel Bridge Damage or Deterioration

- Overload
- High or wide vehicle collision
- Fire
- Structural vandalism
- Fatigue
- Corrosion



**Accessibility** - Exposed structural components

**Ease of Nondestructive Testing (NDT)**

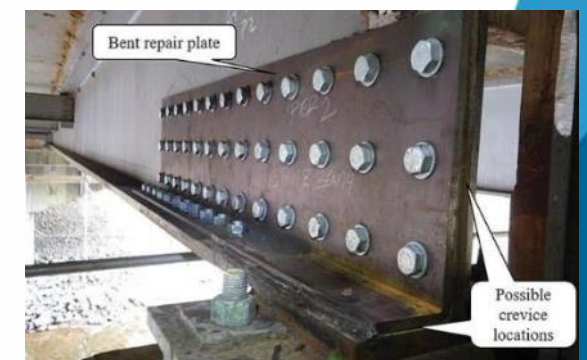
Steel is compatible with NDT techniques

**Repairable Characteristics of Steel Bridges**

**Modular Repairs** of Damaged sections

**Fatigue Management** Fatigue cracks can be fixed

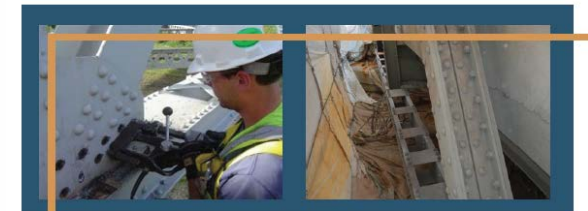
**Corrosion Repair** repainted or metalized





# Inspectable & Repairable

## Inspectable



Guidelines for Field Repairs and  
Retrofits of Steel Bridges  
G14.2—2023



# Inspectable & Repairable

Overheight Bridge Strikes:

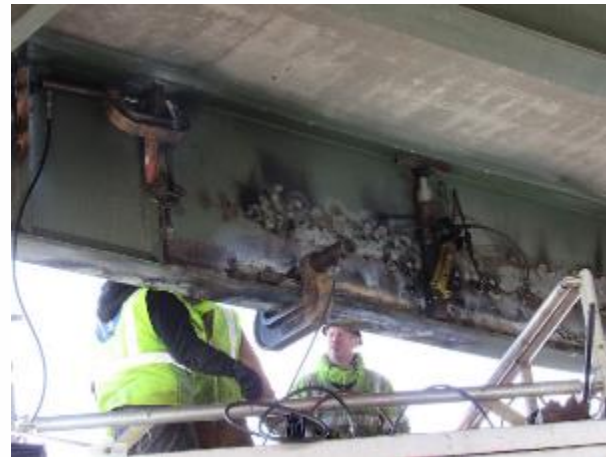
The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration reports an average of 15,000 such incidents a year

## Repairable - Heat Straightening, Kansas 2018

Damaged steel bridge girders can be repaired

<https://kansastransportation.blogspot.com/2019/02/hot-news-damaged-steel-bridge-girders.html>

Distortions were deemed repairable  
Heat straightening process to repair  
Clamps and hydraulic jacks used to help influence the  
return of the steel to its former shape  
Seven days of the heat straightening



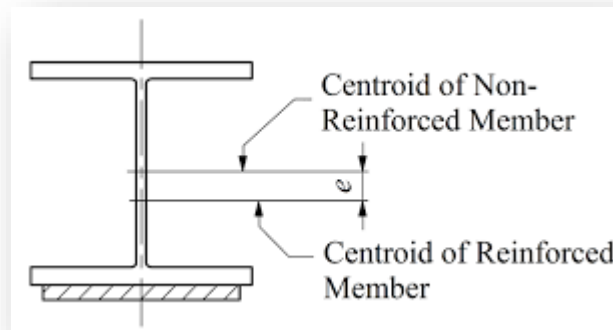
Cool Oklahoma State Video at <https://www.aisc.org/nsba/design-and-estimation-resources/preservation-and-repairability>



# Resilience - Rehabilitation & Strengthening

## Rehabilitation & Strengthening

- Extend service life
- Restore or increase load capacity
- Prevent or mitigate corrosion and fatigue
- Upgrade for seismic or traffic demands
- Improve safety and user experience





# Rehabilitation & Strengthening

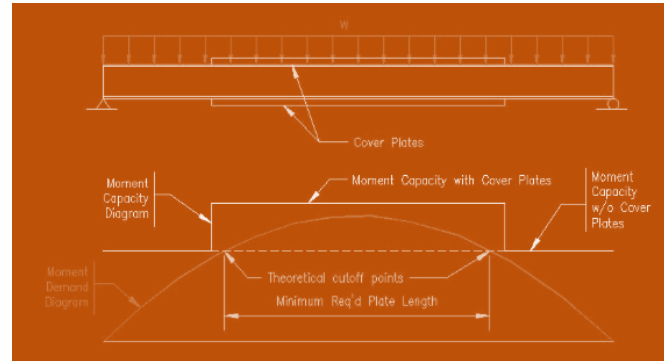
## Strengthening

Why?

Traffic Loads/Postings  
Corrosion Reduced Capacity

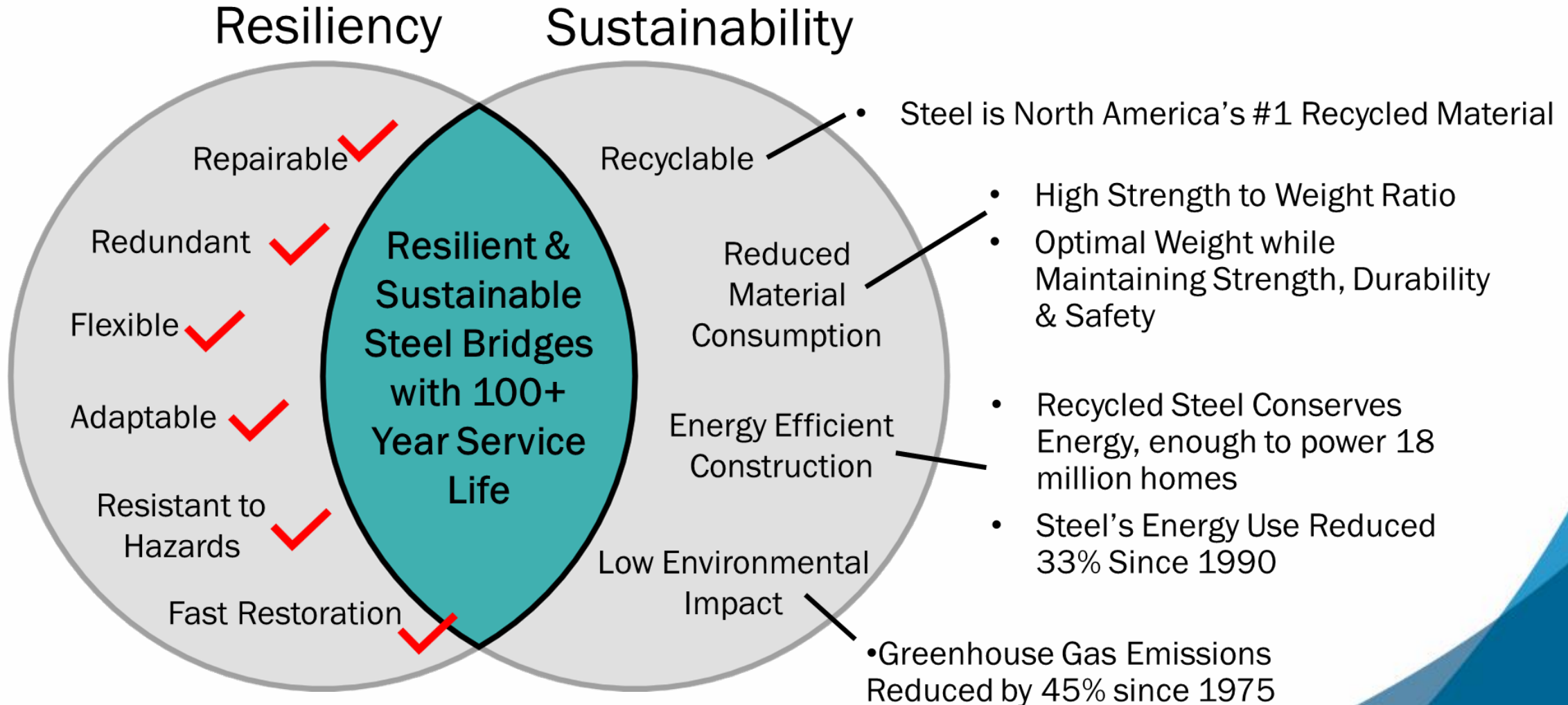
How?

Adding Steel (Flanges/Webs)  
Replace Deteriorated Members  
Add Composite Action  
Reduce Dead Loads  
Post-Tensioning



# Resilience - Sustainable

## Crossover Between Resiliency & Sustainability



# Steel Advantages for Resiliency

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- **Long Service Life**
  - Thousands of 100-year-old steel bridges still in service.
  - Innovative new systems have life expectancy of 100+ years.
- **Robustness, Strength and Durability**
  - High strength-to-weight ratios, which allows steel bridges to resist structural damage.
  - Ductile, Redundant and Robust Structure
- **Ease of Inspection/Repair**
  - Signs of problems are clearly apparent at an early stage, making steel bridges easier to inspect and repair.
- **Rehabilitation & Strengthening for Increased Loads**
  - Quickly rehabilitate & strengthen a steel bridge, while keeping the bridge in service with minimal traffic disruption.
- **Sustainability:** >90% Steel is from Recycled Material



# Quiz

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An Owner Should Be able to Expect a 100 Year Life Span for a Typical Steel Girder Bridge

- a. True
- b. False

True –

**Practical & Effective Design (Details and Joints)**


**Durable Materials (Chemistry) & Corrosion Protection Systems**

**Inspectability, Maintenance & Repair**

# Quiz

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Approximately What percentage of Steel is Made From Recycled Products?

- a. 0% - it is Raw Iron Ore & Element Additives
- b. 70%
- c. 90% 
- d. 132%

# Quiz

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There was a Lot of Information Presented in Today's Workshop. For More Information on Any Steel Bridge Topic, a Person Could Contact (Select All That Apply):

- a. The Short Span Steel Bridge Alliance  
([www.ShortSpanSteelBridges.org](http://www.ShortSpanSteelBridges.org))
- b. The National Steel Bridge Alliance  
([www.AISC.org/NSBA](http://www.AISC.org/NSBA))

