

Kiai Road a Success Story

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Contractor, Afghan Builders Consortium and members from the Army Corps of Engineers at ribbon cutting ceremony to officially open Kiai road for local and Coalition traffic.

Kabul, Afghanistan - Kiai road was once a substandard road system located at Kabul's airport that rivaled any road system in any third world nation. Thankfully, in the last few years, building a transportation infrastructure has been an AED priority and with coalition dollars being spent to develop roads, Kiai road was one of Afghanistan's high priority improvements.

This reasonably short 2 Kilometer plus stretch of road is also a small representation of what Afghanistan has to offer with its local Bazaar. One side freshly butchered meat hangs from the ceiling in one shop while women have their hair done in another and right next to a tire repair station. During the rainy months all these businesses had to do their commerce on and around the mud that accumulates in front of their

shops, a typical winter occurrence on this road. The potholes and the poor condition



The poor condition Kiai road was in before construction.

of the existing asphalt made this road a hazard for any small car or animal that accidentally fell into it.

Kiai road is a small but important transportation artery located directly adjacent to the Kabul International Airport. One major condition the contractor had to face while building Kiai was that normal traffic flow was crucial during all phases of work. And due to ISAF Base and surrounding security compounds that are located near it, it's was essential. In addition to the use by coalition forces, it's also a major airline hub. Buses use it to shuttle passengers to and from the airport before every flight, and is frequented by cars, buses and mule carts, to goats and pedestrians and anything in-between.

Subsequently back in October 2008, the US Army Corps of Engineers decided to take on the challenge, and carefully build a typical roadway you would see in any American City. With its curbs, gutters, sidewalks and a proper drainage system, an important construction job was to be undertaken.

The Solicitation of a bid intended for the contractor was in reconstructing approximately 2.2 kilometer of roadway at 13 meter wide with two 3.5 meter wide traffic lanes. Also installed would be two 3.0 wide meter bicycle lanes, and 3.0 meter wide sidewalks on either side. Let's not forget a properly built storm sewer to carry away any accumulating rain water. And all this had to be built while traffic was unaffected. The contract was planned for 220 days total build time. Notice to Proceed was sent in November of 2008, and the successful bidder was the Local National firm, Afghan Builders Consortium, (ABC). They put together an aggressive plan to complete construction by mid December and present-



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ed their intensions in the Pre-construction meeting. Their plan included the removal of what little asphalt existed along the roadway and to also excavate to sub grade. This impressed AED project manager's with their assertive plans, and swift completion date projection, and would take make them months ahead of schedule. The only concern was winter was fast approaching. Typically construction takes longer than planned especially here in Afghanistan and definitely in winter. Things rarely go according to plan here but it was understood that this road was a high priority to ensure safe and swift transit to and from ISAF and any other coalition location.

Authorization to proceed at this time (late November) might embrace some weather related problems. Nevertheless, with this in mind AED decided to give the go-ahead to start excavation. ABC began by excavating one half side of the road leaving traffic to flow on the other side, giving the free flow of two way traffic. They properly prepared plans and submittals, and in general made an impressive beginning. One reasons for this strong showing was the December arrival of SSG Dave Phariss. Phariss's background, when not clearing roads in



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Iraq, is building roads in California. Back in the States he's the superintendent for Granit Construction, one of the oldest construction companies in California. His job here was to mentor the contractor through the placement and compaction of the sub-grade, and also train them in the placement and compaction of the sub-base/base material.

They were off to a good start and by mid December ABC patched all the potholes so traffic could continue to use the right-of-way. Down the length of the other side they excavated and base material and placed finishing touches just before paving. As the weather turned cold though, ABC made the recommendation to shut down for winter. The USACE representatives encouraged them to push on, so they agreed to pave the part of the road that was already prepared. Essentially they had to pave to protect the base material from the coming rains; luckily the rains held off. The weather remained dry December and January, but due to the cold temperature and the inherent dynamics of asphalt it was too cold to lay it. The contractor responded to this in a letter of concern and agreed to go back to work in mid march when temperatures were typically warmer. Unfortunately March and

April proved to be extremely rainy months but they knew the project had to be completed in a timely manner. Ultimately the contractor went back to work hiring a crew full time just to pump out the rain water and keep the road somewhat dry.

When the rain finally broke, the sub-grade had to be scarified and dried out properly. In June, warm and dry, ABC went to work in earnest. During this push to complete, Phariss taught them the art of multitasking, paving on one side of the road while compacting the other side. They built sidewalks the same time they laid asphalt. They also successfully built a new drainage system, connecting one side of the road to the other, "no mean feat". ABC planned and executed this project a skillful American Contractor would be proud of, and on July 28th, paving completed, and the road was finally opened to traffic. A letter of Substantial Completion was sent to ABC and only punch list items remained, those were quickly addressed.

Kiai Road today has two lanes for autos and buses with a bicycle lane on both sides going down the entire length. A 3meter wide sidewalk allows pedestrians and children to travel back and forth from work or school safely. Local businesses continue with their trade in an improved environment and a piece of Kabul's infrastructure was successfully completed. As the saying goes, a country without infrastructure is a country without the engine to drive the economy. Every road paved, every waste water treatment plant built, every bridge placed, helps improves the living condition for its people. Its one more piece of the economic puzzle improving Afghanistan's future and the US Army Corps of Engineers is proud to help contribute to this future here in Afghanistan. 🇦🇫