

Workers dive into lake as bridge slips at casino

Hammond, Indiana (AP) – An enclosed walkway being attached to a floating casino on Lake Michigan slipped Tuesday as it was being attached, sending seven construction workers into the water, authorities said.

After the workers fell, nine other workers jumped into the water to help them, including two men who were briefly trapped inside the fallen walkway, said Kevin Margraf, chief fire inspector for the Hammond Fire Department.

One of the workers was taken to a hospital complaining of shoulder pain and was later released, and several of the 15 others were treated at the scene for minor injuries, he said.

Just before 8 a.m., Margraf said five workers were on the barge using sledgehammers to adjust a shoring attached to the metal passageway for the new Horseshoe Casino.

Two other workers were inside the walkway working on hydraulic lifts.

Margraf said the barge shifted beneath the structure, causing the walkway to fall. The collapse hurled the two workers inside the walkway 12 to 15 feet into the lake while the five workers below jumped or fell into the water.

Margraf said the two workers who were inside the passageway as it fell ended up briefly trapped inside the fallen walkway, one end of which was submerged a few feet into the water.

„It was like a chute. They slid down into the water, inside, and it landed on the marina,“ he said.

The two workers were never in serious danger, Margraf said.

Horseshoe is nearly finished building the new USD 485 million

casino boat just across the state line from Chicago. The walkway that fell is one of three that will connect the casino to the site's pavilion.

Margraf said the U.S. Coast Guard and the Indiana Occupational Safety and Health Administration are investigating the accident.

The workers, members of the Iron Workers Local 395, were wearing lifejackets, said Mike Summers, the local's business manager.

A statement released by Horseshoe Casino said the casino had been closed since early Monday as the new casino barge was being moved into the place of the previous boat. The company said it doesn't expect the accident will delay the new casino's opening.

„A full engineering review is under way, and Horseshoe Casino has taken measures to ensure the safety of the on site construction staff,“ the company said.