

Crafted by a legend. Designed to connect Scottsdale.

# BRIDGE TAKES SHAPE

Architect Soleri on hand for project milestone

By Beth Duckett

THE ARIZONA REPUBLIC

**P**aolo Soleri, the famed architect who designed Arcosanti 40 years ago, watched his latest effort come closer to fruition Monday: a pedestrian bridge linking areas of downtown Scottsdale.

Soleri, 91, looked on as the bridge he designed descended over the Arizona Canal, southwest of Camelback and Scottsdale roads.

“They started talking about a bridge over the canal 15 years ago,” said Mary Hoadley, Soleri’s assistant. “Paolo has very few things built in the world. This is amazing.”

Crowds gathered Monday to observe the milestone in the bridge’s construction.

After the project is finished in October, the bridge’s two 64-foot pylons will mark seasonal solar events, said project manager Donna Isaac. On the equinox, solstice and cross-quarter days, the pylons will generate a light beam across the bridge’s surface.

“Soleri means ‘you were the sun,’” Hoadley said. “(Paolo Soleri) has taken the sun into consideration for all his architectural planning.”

The \$2.9 million bridge and plaza will provide a scenic viewpoint in Scottsdale’s downtown district. Commissioned by Scottsdale Public Art, the bridge links Scottsdale Fashion Square and the city’s Waterfront shops to gallery

districts south of the canal, providing better access for pedestrians.

For Soleri, the bridge is a testament to his many years as an architect, author and trailblazer in innovative design.

Born in Turin, Italy, in 1919, Soleri came to the United States in 1947 and spent time studying at Taliesin West.

In 1956, he settled in Arizona. His famous project, Arcosanti, is an ever-evolving urban experiment that combines architecture and ecology — or “arcology” — in a complex of buildings near Cordes Junction, about 70 miles north of Phoenix.

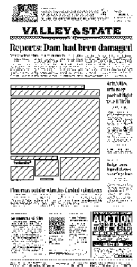
Paradise Valley-based Cosanti, Soleri’s home and studio, allows visitors to explore design elements and “earth-casting.”

Concrete for the bridge was poured on “earthen molds,” and the earth was taken out after the concrete hardened. A similar technique is used to craft Soleri’s well-known ceramic and bronze windbells.

“It’s something we’re really famous for in architecture around the world,” said Erin Jeffries, a spokeswoman for the non-profit Cosanti Foundation.

Isaac said the Scottsdale Museum of Contemporary Art will unveil an exhibit dedicated to Soleri’s works that will run from Oct. 9 through Jan. 23.

“We hope it gives people a little bit of background about Paolo, his art and public art,” Isaac said.





PHOTOS BY TOM TINGLE/THE ARIZONA REPUBLIC

A crane places a pedestrian bridge over the Arizona Canal on Monday in Scottsdale. The bridge, years in the proposal and planning stages, will link parts of the city's downtown. It was designed by Paolo Soleri, known for his Arcosanti project near Cordes Junction.



Doris Ong of Scottsdale takes a photo of the bridge Monday. The project, which includes a plaza, is scheduled to be completed in the fall.