

## Student Bridge

Thursday and Friday, August 17 and 18, 2000, Channel 5 St. Louis KSDK

By Sharon Stevens

Its' designers call it the bridge of the future but it's not made from concrete or steel. It's made from composite parts including fiberglass and old cars! Students at the University of Missouri-Rolla teamed up with some local businesses, including Composite Products Incorporated, to build a pedestrian bridge on campus. Students say Missouri's first all-composite bridge (meaning it's made from various items) was a hands-on project. The students helped design it and Composite Products did the actual construction.

Using state-of-the art fiber optic sensors, the students in the electrical engineering school will monitor the bridge for performance and to help identify potential structural problems. The "Smart Bridge" as it's called, replaces a wooden bridge, which has been moved to the west side of campus near the football field. The National Science Foundation funds the project. Although it is a pedestrian bridge, UMR officials say it is strong enough for vehicles as well. For more information, contact the University of Missouri @ Rolla, 573-341-4328.