

UNR quake lab tests bridge design for Caltrans



Three 27-ton, 14 x 14-foot table platens are lifted into place by the lab's 30-ton cranes as the lab crew continues installing equipment in the earthquake engineering facility at UNR. Photo/Mike Wolterbeek/UNR

By Scott Sonner, AP

RENO – Scientists at a Nevada earthquake lab on Wednesday tested new bridge designs with connectors they say are innovative and created to better withstand violent temblors and speed reconstruction efforts after major quake damage.

UNR engineers performed the experiments on a giant “shake table” to simulate violent motions of an earthquake to rattle a 100-ton, 70 foot bridge model to determine how well it would hold up.

UNR's Earthquake Engineering Lab is the largest of its kind in the United States.

The latest project is funded by Caltrans, which currently is developing plans for 10 pilot projects based on the developing bridge connector technology.

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