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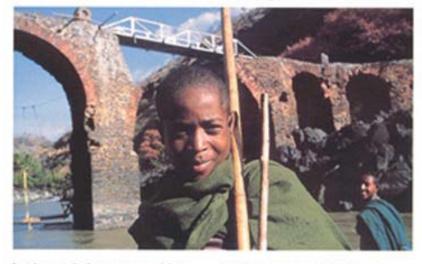
## Reader Fixes an African Bridge

Photo inspires Ethiopian rebuilding project

en Frantz decided to fix an Ethiopian bridge because, he says, "I'm a boy, and boys love bridges." Happily, this "boy" owns a construction company.

Ken, 52, was waiting for mechanics to service a truck in his hometown of Gloucester, Virginia, when he picked up the December 2000 GEOGRAPHIC. He saw a photo of Ethiopians being hauled on a rope across the Blue Nile—a 360-year-old bridge there had been destroyed during the Italian occupation of 1935-1941. "I looked at the photo once, twice, three times," Ken recalls, "and it came to me: What I want to do is repair that bridge."

Ken helped launch Bridges to Prosperity, dedicated to building



bridges to help create wealth in developing nations. The group surveyed the site (top), won backing from tribal elders, and chose a lightweight steel design. Donkeys toted in 25,000 pounds of supplies, and Ken, his crew, and Ethiopian volunteers rebuilt the bridge (above) in ten days at a cost of \$108,000, largely donated by the organization's founders.

"Half a million people live near
the bridge," he says. "Now they
can trade, get to hospitals and
schools on the other side, and
see family members they haven't
seen for years." Ken's group has
also built cableways in Nepal, a
suspension bridge in Indonesia,
and a second Ethiopian bridge.