



Move Illinois:  
*The Illinois Tollway Driving the Future*

# NEWS

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**December 15, 2011**

**ILLINOIS TOLLWAY AND THE UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS  
TO STUDY FUTURE BRIDGE DESIGN AND CONSTRUCTION**

*Research Aimed at Reducing Costs on Bridge Projects for Move Illinois Program*

**DOWNERS GROVE, IL** – The Illinois Tollway Board of Directors today approved a three-year intergovernmental agreement with the Illinois Center for Transportation (ICT) at the University of Illinois at Champaign/Urbana to study ways to reduce construction and maintenance costs and extend the life span of future Tollway bridges.

The new agreement with the University of Illinois further demonstrates the Illinois Tollway's commitment to collaborate with local universities, research institutions and laboratories on new initiatives to reduce costs of capital improvements, foster environmental sustainability and improve the efficiency and safety of maintenance and operations.

"The University of Illinois is uniquely qualified to partner with us on this research based on their strong record of leadership and innovation," said Illinois Tollway Executive Director Kristi Lafleur. "This research will help us design new bridges on our system that are less expensive to build, will last longer and will result in fewer disruptions for Tollway customers due to maintenance and repairs."

Research conducted by the ICT will include an analysis of new bridge design and construction under the Tollway's new \$12 billion, 15-year capital program, Move Illinois: *The Illinois Tollway Driving the Future*. The Tollway plans to include designs for jointless bridges in the new Jane Addams Memorial Tollway (I-90) corridor from the Tri-State Tollway (I-294) to the I-39 interchange in Rockford, reconstruction of the central Tri-State Tollway (I-294) from 95<sup>th</sup> Street to Balmoral Avenue and the Edens Spur (I-94), as well as in the construction of the new, Elgin O'Hare West Bypass.

"The ICT and the University of Illinois are very pleased to partner with the Illinois Tollway and the Illinois Department of Transportation to conduct important research that will result in safer bridges and reduced construction and operation costs, while minimizing traffic disruption," said Imad Al-Qadi, Director of the Illinois Center for Transportation and Founder Professor of Engineering in the Department of Civil and Environmental Engineering at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign.

Under the agreement, the Tollway will collaborate with ICT and the Illinois Department of Transportation in exploring issues related to the analysis, design, construction and maintenance of jointless bridges. The research will also seek ways to reduce or eliminate the use of bridge expansion joints whenever possible on these new structures, providing opportunity to reduce construction and maintenance costs.

Jointless bridges have been proven to be more cost-effective than conventional bridges, as jointless bridges require less maintenance and have a longer service life. Conventional bridges are costlier to maintain because joints commonly leak when exposed to rain and snow and must be replaced every seven to 10 years. These leaks cause corrosion and degrade concrete structures, which shortens the overall life of a typical bridge.

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In addition, ICT will generate design guidelines and construction specifications for jointless bridges that meet Tollway standards and continue to monitor the performance of jointless bridges during and after construction under the terms of the \$67,000-a-year agreement.

**About Move Illinois**

The Illinois Tollway's \$12 billion capital program, Move Illinois: *The Illinois Tollway Driving the Future*, will improve mobility, relieve congestion, reduce pollution, create 120,000 jobs and link economies across the Midwest region. Move Illinois will address the remaining needs of the existing Tollway system; rebuild and widen the Jane Addams Memorial Tollway (I-90) as a state-of-the-art 21<sup>st</sup> century corridor; construct a new interchange to connect the Tri-State Tollway (I-294) to I-57; build a new, all-electronic Elgin O'Hare West Bypass and fund planning studies for the Illinois Route 53 Extension and the Illiana Expressway.

**About the Illinois Tollway**

The Illinois Tollway is a user-fee system that receives no state or federal funds for maintenance and operations. The agency maintains and operates 286 miles of interstate tollways in 12 counties in Northern Illinois, including the Reagan Memorial Tollway (I-88), the Veterans Memorial Tollway (I-355), the Jane Addams Memorial Tollway (I-90) and the Tri-State Tollway (I-94/I-294/I-80).

**About the Illinois Center for Transportation**

The Illinois Center for Transportation (ICT) is a premier transportation research center that builds on the experience of renowned experts in transportation and related fields at the University of Illinois, the Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT), and other universities in Illinois and across the country by providing the appropriate tools and support required for objective research. The ICT is headquartered at the state-of-the-art Advanced Transportation and Engineering Laboratory in Rantoul, Ill.

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