



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

ILLINOIS TOLLWAY GEARS UP FOR FIRST MAJOR SNOWFALL OF THE SEASON Snow Operations Center Now Open: Full Fleet of Snowplows Ready for Deployment

DOWNERS GROVE, IL – The Illinois Tollway is mobilizing its full fleet of 182 snowplows in preparation for the first major snow event of the season to help make travel safer and easier for customers on the 286-mile system of roads serving 12 counties in Northern Illinois.

The Illinois Tollway's Snow Operations Center is now open and staffed with traffic center operators and snow and ice control supervisors ready to manage this winter weather event. To help with snow removal efforts, the Tollway has cancelled all temporary lane closures between noon today and the morning of December 26.

The Tollway advises drivers to be aware of rain changing to snow accompanied by high winds that could significantly reduce visibility during the late afternoon and evening rush hour.

"This weather event is expected to impact most of the Tollway system – from Rockford to Chicago – resulting in rapidly deteriorating driving conditions across the entire region," said Illinois Tollway Executive Director Kristi Lafleur. "We urge everyone to stay off the roads this afternoon and evening, if possible, but if you must drive, slow down and allow plenty of extra time for the commute home."

The Tollway's snowplows are prepared for the winter snow season and the agency has stockpiled salt and de-icing materials to provide the highest possible level of service during winter operations. Snowplows travel at speeds of about 30 mph, so motorists should expect delays. During heavy snowfall, snowplows often work in tandem to remove as much ice, slush and snow as possible from all lanes at once. When it is safe to pass, the plows spread out and allow traffic to flow around them.

Illinois Tollway Keeps Drivers Informed

In addition to working to keep roads free of snow and ice, the Illinois Tollway provides drivers with information to help them reach their destinations safely during winter weather events.

The Illinois Tollway's Traffic and Incident Management System (TIMS) provides real-time travel times and roadway conditions via the Illinois Tollway's website, www.illinoistollway.com, and on over-the-road electronic message signs throughout the Tollway.

Drivers can call *999 from their cell phone to request assistance or report stranded vehicles. Drivers should note the roadway and direction of travel and nearest milepost or crossroad. The *999 service is funded by the Illinois Tollway and the Illinois Department of Transportation.

In addition, the Tollway operates a toll-free telephone line to keep customers up to date about weather conditions on its roadways. Customers can call 1-800-TOLL-FYI (1-800-865-5394) to get recorded information that is updated every two hours or as conditions require during winter storms.

Drivers also can sign up for Tollway Tweets at www.twitter.com or from the Tollway's website at www.illinoistollway.com to receive real-time information about roadway incidents, including the

type of incident, location and impact on traffic to assist drivers in planning their trips. Tweeters can follow all four Tollway Trips or just the roadways that interest them. The four are Tollway Trip 90, Tollway Trip 94/294, Tollway Trip 88 and Tollway Trip 355.

The Illinois Tollway also reminds customers that the seven Oases located along the Tollway system also serve as statewide warming centers. On the Tri-State Tollway (I-94/I-294/I-80), there are four Oases: Lake Forest, O'Hare, Hinsdale and Chicago Southland Lincoln in South Holland. There are two Oases on the Jane Addams Memorial Tollway (I-90) in Belvidere and Des Plaines, and one on the Reagan Memorial Tollway (I-88) in DeKalb.

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).