NEWS

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
February 21, 2013

ILLINOIS TOLLWAY PREPARED FOR SNOWFALL OVERNIGHT AND CONTINUING INTO FRIDAY MORNING RUSH HOUR

Full Fleet of Snowplows Ready for Deployment; Snow Operations Center Will Be Activated

DOWNERS GROVE, IL – The Illinois Tollway is preparing to mobilize its full fleet of 182 snowplows in response to the snowfall expected to begin this evening and continue overnight into the Friday morning rush hour. The Tollway's Snow Operations Center will be open tonight to manage the agency's systemwide response.

"Our Snow Operations Center is monitoring this storm closely and has already begun planning to ensure that we have the resources needed to stay on top of the anticipated snowfall," said Illinois Tollway Executive Director Kristi Lafleur. "We expect that this storm could impact drivers tonight, as well as during tomorrow's morning rush hour, so we ask our customers to drive safely and give our snowplows the room they need to clear the roads."

To respond to this weather event, the Illinois Tollway will have a full complement of more than 200 staff and supervisors per shift to ensure that roadways are kept clear of snow and ice. To help with snow removal efforts, the Tollway has cancelled all temporary lane closures from 7 p.m. tonight, February 21, until 10 p.m. on Friday, February 22.

The Illinois Tollway advises drivers to be aware of heavy snow accompanied by winds that could reduce visibility later this evening and into the overnight hours.

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.

For drivers traveling tonight and tomorrow morning, the Tollway provides the following tips:

- Slow down and leave enough time to reach your destination
- Do not make sudden lane changes and always use your turn signal
- Don't follow too closely and increase your intervals between vehicles
- Reduce speed in cash lanes at toll plazas
- Remember to always wear your safety belt and ensure children under the age of 8 are securely restrained in child safety seats
- Yield to snowplows and emergency vehicles
- Don't text while driving. It's illegal.
- Dial *999 on your cell phone to report incidents

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.

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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.

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).

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