



January 2006

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Feature Story

Open Road Tolling Makes Life Easier for South Suburban Mom



Dorothy Lawson is a working mother of two little girls. As a Tri-State Tollway (I-294) commuter, she drives through three toll plazas each way on the trip between her Blue Island home and job in Park Ridge. [Read More...](#)

Talk to the Tollway

Tell us what you think by taking our quick survey:

[Is Open Road Tolling making your life easier?](#)

Congestion-Relief Program

Open Road Tolling



Now Available: Aurora (I-88), Edens Spur (I-94), Boughton Rd. (I-355), Army Trail Rd. (I-355), Irving Park Rd. (I-294), 82nd St. and 83rd St. (I-294), Touhy Ave. (I-294), and Cermak Rd. (I-294).

Remainder to be converted in 2006

Dear Tollway Customer,

It's been a little more than a year since I announced the Tollway's Congestion-Relief Plan, and motorists are already enjoying the extra free time provided by non-stop Open Road Tolling and new lanes of highway.

Significant improvements were delivered in 2005, which is just the first year of a comprehensive \$5.3 billion capital program. The investment being made in the Illinois Tollway has already yielded Open Road Tolling lanes at nine toll plazas as well as rebuilt and widened segments of I-88 and I-294.

When I became Governor, I said there would be a new and improved way of doing business at the Illinois Tollway and that agenda includes the construction process. The first year of the Congestion-Relief Program was completed on time and under budget. I commend the Tollway staff and contractors for working hard to construct at a record pace while at the same time minimizing the impact on traffic.

Work to provide Open Road Tolling lanes at the remaining mainline toll plazas, rebuild & widen additional Tollway segments, and extend I-355 south into Will County continues in 2006.

These projects improve the quality of life in Illinois by reducing emissions, enhancing economic development, creating jobs and increasing safety. And even more

At-a-Glance

Governor Blagojevich's \$5.3 billion Program will reduce travel times by:

- Rebuilding/restoring 90 percent of the system
- Adding lanes to 117 miles of existing roads
- Converting 20 mainline toll plazas to Open Road Tolling
- Extending I-355 South by 2007



Question of the Month

Q: What's going near Meyers Road along I-88?

A: Work is underway to construct a new eastbound ORT plaza that will replace the current eastbound toll collection at the York Road Plaza. The York Road Toll Plaza is being split to accommodate ORT with the westbound plaza remaining in the current location.

Moving the eastbound plaza west of the current location near Meyers Road will improve safety and ease traffic flow during and after construction. When work is complete this year, the plaza will feature three eastbound Open Road Tolling lanes for non-stop I-PASS travel and a smaller plaza to the right will include four toll booths for customers paying cash. A fourth ORT lane will be constructed when I-88 is widened in 2007-2008.

important than these global benefits, they make a direct and positive impact on the daily lives of people like Dorothy Lawson, who you will read about in the Feature Story, by giving her more time to spend with her family. This is why Open Road Tolling is at the top of my agenda for the Illinois Tollway.

Best wishes for a safe 2006.

Sincerely,
Rod R. Blagojevich
Governor

Construction Update

[Tri-State \(I-294\)](#) | [North-South \(I-355\)](#) | [Reagan Memorial \(I-88\)](#) | [Open Road Tolling \(ORT\)](#)



Rebuild & Widen

Phase I: From 167th St. to IL Rte. 394

The South Tri-State from the Kingery Expressway (I-80/94) in South Holland to 95th St. in Oak Lawn will be rebuilt and widened to four lanes with work now underway in the five miles south of 167th St. (Phase I).

- Northbound work is complete from Markham Yard to 167th St.
- Work continues on bridges and northbound lanes south of the Lincoln Oasis.



Work continues on bridges south of the Lincoln Oasis.

[Read More About I-294](#) | [Back to Main Menu](#)



Extension

From I-55 to I-80

The North-South Tollway is being extended 12.5 miles south from the Stevenson Expressway to serve growing Will County, and is scheduled to be completed in 2007.

- Earthwork is underway including recent work near the I-55 (Stevenson



Artist rendering of

[Submit a Question to the Tollway*](#)

*All concerns will be addressed, but we may not be able to provide a personalized answer to each person who submits a question.



Update

If you miss a toll...

Drivers without an I-PASS transponder who mistakenly travel through I-PASS lanes or an unattended exit or entrance ramp have five days to pay the correct toll amount to the Illinois Tollway. Three or more missed tolls will result in a violation notice being mailed to the vehicle's registered owner. Of course, the easiest way to avoid violations is to purchase an I-PASS transponder. [Visit the Toll Violation section on the Tollway website](#) or call 1.800.241.0112 for more information.

Manage Your Account Online:

<http://www.getipass.com/>
Call: 1.800.UC.IPASS

Minimizing Impact



The Illinois Tollway works to

Expressway) interchange in Bolingbrook. Work this year includes embankment excavation, drainage work, and creating runarounds for bridges that will be constructed in 2006, like the one now open at Bruce Rd.

Des Plaines River Valley Bridge.

- The Tollway plans to begin work on the 1.5-mile Des Plaines River Valley Bridge this winter.

[Read More About I-355](#) | [Back to Main Menu](#)



Rebuild & Widen

IL Rte. 59 to Naperville Rd.

Rebuilding and widening of this five-mile section, known as the "washboard," is almost complete.

- Four lanes are open in each direction from Route 59 to Washington St. (Naperville).
- The only work remaining is the final striping and installation of reflective pavement markers, which has been delayed due to wet weather but is being done with off-peak lane closures as weather permits.



Four lanes now open from Rte. 59 to Washington St.

[Read More About I-88 Rebuild and Widen](#)

Roadway Rehabilitation

IL Rte. 251 to U.S. Rte. 30

The Tollway has completed rehabilitation of a 32-mile section at the western end of I-88 in North Central Illinois for a smoother and safer ride.

- Pavement was "Rubblized," making use of the existing pavement as the sub-base for the new surface, saving time and money.
- Newly available cable median barrier has been installed to reduce the risk of crossover collisions.
- A 2-mile patch of pavement just east of this project was also Rubblized to prepare for the construction of a new DeKalb Plaza at that location. To avoid tearing it up twice, this stretch of road will remain somewhat bumpy until plaza construction and Open Road Tolling



New cable median barrier installed on I-88.

provide drivers with ample warning and relevant information about an approaching work zone. There are static orange signs advising of a work zone. Also look for PCMS (Portable Changeable Message Signs) pointing out unique or temporary conditions that may not be posted on static signs.

Other State Programs

In addition to Open Road Tolling, following are other state programs that can improve your quality of life.

Health Insurance for Kids

If your children do not have health insurance, *All Kids* may be right for your family. *All Kids* is a new state program that gives every child in Illinois access to comprehensive, affordable health insurance. To start receiving health benefits [visit the All Kids website](#) and click on "Enrollment Information."

Affordable Prescriptions

I-SaveRx was created to provide a safe and affordable way for the people of Illinois to save money on the cost of prescription drugs. To start saving up to 80% on the cost of your prescription drugs, [visit the I-SaveRx website](#) or call toll-free 1-866-ISAVE33 (1-866-472-8333).

Staying Warm

The six completed Tollway Oases are among over 100 state-designated warming centers providing a safe, warm haven to residents on

lanes are complete in 2006 and it can be permanently paved.

[Read More About I-88 Rehab](#) | [Back to Main Menu](#)



Systemwide Toll Plaza Conversions

All 20 mainline toll plazas will be converted to Open Road Tolling (ORT) for non-stop I-PASS travel by the end of 2006. We apologize for delays created by this work.



Drivers can now enjoy the benefits of non-stop Open Road Tolling at 9 toll plazas.

- ORT lanes now available at Boughton Rd. & Army Trail Rd. Plazas (I-355); 82nd St., 83rd St., Cermak Rd., Touhy Ave., & Irving Park Rd. Plazas (I-294); Aurora (I-88); and Edens Spur (I-94).
- Remaining plazas to be converted in 2006 include South Beloit, Belvidere, Marengo, Elgin, Devon, and River Rd (I-90); Waukegan and 163rd St. (I-294); York/Meyers, DeKalb and Dixon (I-88).
- As a rule, each plaza will have as many ORT lanes after conversion as there are mainline lanes leading into or exiting the plaza, so I-PASS traffic does not have to change lanes or shift to pay tolls while traveling at highway speeds.
- To minimize impact, construction is being coordinated to keep as many I-PASS only lanes open as possible during the conversion.

[Read More About Open Road Tolling](#) | [Back to Main Menu](#)

Feature Story

South Suburban Mom Lauds Benefits of Open Road Tolling

Dorothy Lawson is a working mother of two little girls. As a Tri-State Tollway (I-294) commuter, she drives through three toll plazas each way on the trip between her Blue Island home and job in Park Ridge.



Commuter Dorothy Lawson said ORT was "the best

"These new Open Road Tolling lanes are going to cut my travel time by about 30 minutes," said

cold winter days. [Visit the Keep Warm Illinois website](#) or call 1.877.411.WARM to locate a warming center and learn more about how to conserve energy, save money and keep warm this winter.

Lawson, at the December opening of the Cermak Rd. Toll Plaza. "That means I'll have more time to make my kids' dinner, finish homework, take baths and read bed time stories."

Christmas gift ever."

ORT allows motorists with I-PASS to avoid stopping at tollbooths and instead pay their tolls electronically while traveling at the posted speed limit.

"Dorothy's story exemplifies how Open Road Tolling can really make a positive difference in someone's life," said Gov. Rod Blagojevich. "Instead of sitting in traffic, she can now get between work and home quicker and with less stress. This is why I have been such an advocate for Open Road Tolling."

Ms. Lawson's commute takes her through the 82nd St., 83rd St., Cermak, Irving Park and Touhy toll plazas. These mainline plazas were among the nine that debuted ORT lanes in 2005.



Indy Champion Bobby Rahal christened the new ORT lanes in this Indy 500 Pace Car.

In December, Gov. Blagojevich also teamed up with Chicago-area resident and Indianapolis 500 Champion Bobby Rahal to open the ORT lanes at the Touhy Toll Plaza. Rahal zoomed under the monotubes in the 2005 Corvette Indy 500 Pace Car.

"I invited Bobby to christen the new Open Road Tolling lanes after he told me how much he

likes I-PASS--he was happy to help us out," said Tollway Executive Director Jack Hartman.

[Read More About Open Road Tolling](#) | [Back to Main Menu](#)

Moving Traffic Along

Need a Tow?

Stranded on the Tollway in need of a tow? You can rely on the Tollway to help you out when you're on the road and need service. Follow these steps to ensure safety:

1. Pull over and park on the shoulder of the road.
2. Activate your hazard lights



Tollway dispatch called for 18,747 tows in 2005.

- if possible.
3. Dial *999 for help OR call your own towing service/roadside assistance provider.
 4. Remain in your vehicle until help arrives at your car door.

When you call *999, the Tollway dispatches a HELP truck or Illinois State Police Trooper to assist you. If you need a tow and don't have your own roadway assistance provider/plan, the Tollway can then call a pre-authorized tow service to assist you. These trucks can be identified by a sticker with the Tollway logo.

As a service to our customers, the Tollway monitors the costs of these pre-approved companies to ensure that you receive a fair and competitive rate on our system. If you leave your car on the shoulder for more than two hours, however, it will be automatically towed.

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Safety Zone

Check Car, Change Oil for Winter

It's never too late to make sure your car is ready for the worst that winter has to offer. While help is a cell phone call away, it's no fun being stranded with a dead engine. Here are some basic tips:



- Have your battery and cooling system checked.
- Change the oil in your car every three months or 3,000 miles.
- During winter, maintain at least a half tank of gas and make sure you've got enough windshield washer solvent.
- Make sure your tires are in good condition.

If you break down, call *999 with your location and a Tollway HELP truck or Illinois State Police Trooper patrolling the system will be sent to your aid.

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Illinois Tollway
2700 Ogden Ave. - Downers Grove, IL 60515
630-241-6800 - <http://www.illinoistollway.com/>

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