



October 2005

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Welcome to *Open Roads Ahead*, a monthly eNewsletter from the Illinois Tollway designed to keep you informed about construction underway and the congestion relief it will soon deliver.

Governor's Message



As you have undoubtedly noticed, work continues on our \$5.3 billion Congestion-Relief Plan aimed at reducing travel times by 10 to 15 minutes and bolstering economic development.

Work on the plan began earlier this year, and we are already about to achieve some early milestones. By the end of 2005, the following projects are scheduled to be completed:

- Rehab 32 miles of the Reagan Memorial Tollway (I-88) in Lee and Ogle counties

Feature Story

Rebuilding of Reagan Memorial Tollway (I-88)

End of Current Construction is Near

If you are a Reagan Memorial Tollway (I-88) driver, you will be among the first Tollway users to reap the benefits of the Illinois Tollway's Congestion-Relief Plan.



A grading machine compacts and smooths the rubblized concrete base of the road before the asphalt is poured.

Reconstruction projects at the far western end of the route and on the "washboard" in the Naperville/Warrenville area will both be completed by the end of this year.

In the west, a "rubblization" project along a 32-mile stretch of I-88 between Ill. Rte. 251 (near Rochelle) and U.S. 30 (near Rock Falls) is scheduled to wrap up in December. New construction technology allowed more of the work to be done on-site by the "rubblization" process, which involved breaking up the old concrete pavement and using the crushed pavement as a strong base for an overlay of asphalt.

Closer to Chicago, the reconstruction and widening of I-88 between Ill. Rte



Coming in 2005

OPEN ROAD TOLLING



At the following plazas:

Irving Park Rd. (I-294), Edens Spur (I-94), Boughton Rd. (I-355), Army Trail Rd. (I-355), 82nd St. (I-294), 83rd St. (I-294), Touhy Ave (I-294) and Cermak Rd. (I-294). The Aurora Toll Plaza (I-88) is complete.

Governor Blagojevich's \$5.3 Billion Congestion-Relief Plan

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

- Rebuild and widen I-88 “washboard” in DuPage County
- Construct eight new Open Road Tolling (ORT) plazas: Five along the Tri-State Tollway (I-294); two along the North-South Tollway (I-355); and one along the Edens Spur (I-94)
- Rebuild and widen the northbound direction of the South Tri-State Tollway (I-294) from IL Rte. 394 to 167th St. The southbound direction is scheduled to be complete in 2006. Also, finished rebuilding and widening of the Cal-Sag Bridge just north of Alsip.

These are quick and exciting transformations for a system approaching 50 years of age. We are working hard to deliver the benefits of the Congestion-Relief Plan to as many drivers as possible as quickly as possible. The reconstruction, widening and ORT projects work toward the ultimate goal of reducing the average one-way commute by 10-15 minutes. We are well on our way to *Open Roads for a Faster Future*.

Sincerely,

Rod Blagojevich
Governor

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59 and Naperville Rd. is also concluding by year’s end. The infamous “washboard” section of I-88 is gone. It has been replaced with new pavement, rebuilt bridges and a fourth lane in each direction. Pavement construction continues this fall and traffic is expected to be smoother and less congested in the area beginning this winter.

The reconstruction of I-88 is scheduled to continue in 2006 with a 2.5-year rebuild and widen project along I-88 in both directions between Naperville Rd. and Finley Rd. By 2012, another 14 miles of I-88 is scheduled to be reconstructed and widened to four lanes.

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

Improve Your News

Help the Tollway improve the monthly newsletter! Take our quick survey by clicking on the question below.

[How do you connect to the Internet?](#)

Construction Update

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

Tri-State



I-294 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).

[Learn More](#)



Project includes widening the Markham Yard Bridge.

- Work this year is on the northbound lanes, which will be complete in December. Southbound traffic is shifted to the outside, allowing one northbound lane to cross over. There is no exit from the northbound crossover express lane after IL Rte. 394 until 159th St.
- Farther to the north, work just concluded on the Cal Sag Bridge near Alsip. Traffic has returned to its normal configuration.
- The final stage of Phase I, which includes the reconstruction and widening of the southbound lanes, and the beginning of Phase II (rebuild and widen in both directions from 95th to 167th Streets)

Thanks For Your Patience

Thank you for your continued patience as we renew much of the Illinois Tollway system and convert plazas to Open Road Tolling (ORT).

During the upcoming construction seasons, reaching your destination may require a little more travel time, but I assure you that we are doing everything we can to minimize the impact to you and your fellow drivers. This e-mail newsletter, frequent updates to the [Illinois Tollway Web site](#), outreach to traffic reporters, and signage along the Tollway all work in concert to provide you with the up-to-the-minute information needed to make timely travel decisions.

No doubt, there is a lot of work taking place on the Illinois Tollway system. But, the short-term pain of construction will mean long-term gains for drivers in Northern Illinois.

Jack Hartman
Tollway Executive
Director

Illinois Tollway
Open Roads for a Faster Future

At-a-Glance

I-355 South Extension

- Earthwork underway along 12.5-mile route

are scheduled to begin in 2006.

Bridge Repairs

Between I-88 and West Lake Ave.

- Ten bridges are being repaired along the northbound Tri-State from I-88 north to West Lake Ave. (near Glenview)
- Work continues with overnight lane and shoulder closures to minimize impact of peak traffic.
- The project is scheduled to be completed by the end of November.

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

North-South



Extending I-355 South *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.

[Learn More](#)

- Earthwork is underway on the south end of the project and moving north towards the I-55 (Stevenson Expressway) interchange in Bolingbrook. Work this fall includes embankment excavation, drainage work, and creating runarounds for bridges that will be constructed in 2006.
- Construction equipment is being moved in and out of the corridor at work zone entrances on both sides of the crossroads. Movement of equipment over the new construction entrances at Cedar Rd., U.S. Rte. 6, Bruce Rd., 167th St., Gougar Rd., 163rd St., 159th St., 143rd St., Archer Ave., 135th St., and 127th St. is being coordinated to minimize impact on local traffic.



As I-355 is extended, earthwork continues to move north from I-80 to I-55 in Will County.

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

Reagan Memorial



I-88 Rebuild & Widen *IL Rte. 59 to Naperville Rd.*

This five-mile section, known as the "washboard," will be rebuilt and widened by year's end.

[Learn More](#)

- Construction is nearly complete, but eastbound



- Three lanes in each direction from the Stevenson Expressway (I-55) through Will County to I-80
- Work on 1.5-mile Des Plaines River Valley Bridge starts early in 2006
- Little impact yet to local traffic since it's a new road
- Scheduled to be completed in 2007

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Question of the Month

Q: Why are most of the toll plazas on the Tri-State (I-294) under construction at the same time?

A: There are many plazas under construction at once because we want to deliver the benefits of Open Road Tolling—reduced congestion and improved travel times—to all Tollway customers by the end of 2006. The Tollway apologizes for the delays being caused by work at the plazas, but the good news is that the work at 8 plazas will be complete by the end of 2005.

[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.

traffic remains shifted into a crossover configuration for construction until later this year.

Work on Eastbound lanes of I-88 "washboard" is almost complete.

- One eastbound lane is shifted into an express lane that is separated by a barrier wall; no exit is permitted from this lane between IL Rte. 59 and I-355.
- To minimize impact, three lanes are typically available in both directions during peak travel times through the use of shoulders and a crossover lane. Temporary off-peak lane closures are sometimes needed and posted on the Tollway's Web site.

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

Roadway Rehabilitation

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

A 32-mile section of road is being "rubblized" on the western end of I-88 in north central Illinois for a smoother ride.

- In both directions, there are approximately 23 miles of lane closures, between U.S. 30 and IL Rte. 251. By late October, only the 7-mile section in the center of this 32-mile project will remain under construction, with the inside shoulder and lane closed for rehabilitation.
- Work is expected to be completed by December.



New Technology crumbles old pavement in the "rubblization" of I-88.

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

Open Road Tolling



[Learn More](#)

Systemwide Toll Plaza Conversions

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

- Work recently began or will soon begin at South Beloit (I-90), Belvidere (I-90), Marengo (I-90), Elgin (I-90), Devon (I-90), River Rd. (I-90) and Touhy (I-294). Touhy is scheduled to be completed this year; the rest next year.
- Also scheduled to deliver Open Road Tolling by the end of 2005 are Irving Park Rd. (I-294), Edens Spur (I-94), Boughton Rd. (I-355), Army Trail Rd. (I-355),



Crews construct ORT monotubes along I-294 at Irving Park Road.



Most Illinois Tollway I-PASS customers now have an added benefit: They can automatically pay tolls electronically on the E-ZPass electronic toll collection system used by toll roads, bridge and tunnels in 11 Eastern states.



If you're a commercial I-PASS customer (trucker, bus driver or recreational vehicle user), you may need to swap your transponder for one that's compatible with the E-ZPass system. There is no fee for the exchange. Call (630) 241-6800, ext. 4310 for more information.

Manage Your Account Online:
<http://www.getipass.com/>

Call:
1.800.UC.IPASS

82nd St. (I-294), 83rd St. (I-294), Touhy Ave. (I-294) and Cermak Rd. (I-294). The Aurora Toll Plaza (I-88) is complete.

- When complete, the plazas will separate ORT lanes on the mainline from a smaller cash plaza for customers paying cash. To minimize impact, the ORT schedule is being coordinated to keep as many I-PASS lanes open as possible during the conversion.

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

Safety Zone

Photo Radar Coming to a Tollway Near You

In spite of huge fines, speeding continues in Illinois Tollway work zones. Hundreds of tickets were issued this past summer during *Operation Hardhat* details, where Illinois State Troopers posed as construction workers, but police cannot be in all work zones at all times.



Coming soon is a new enforcement tool—photo radar vans. These vehicles will be equipped with cameras that record a clear image of the car/truck and its driver. The vehicle's speed and license plate also will be recorded by the on-board camera and radar. Tickets will be issued by mail to vehicle owners.

So, be sure to slow down to 45 mph in work zones as required by law or it could result in a minimum \$375 fine. A second offense is \$1,000 and a mandatory three-month driver's license suspension.

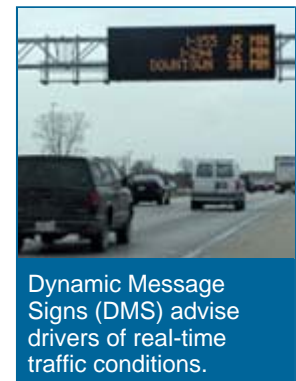
[Learn More About Work Zone Safety](#) | [Back to Main Menu](#)

Moving Traffic Along

Check Traffic Out Before Departing

There are many opportunities to get up-to-the-minute traffic information about any Chicago-area Interstate before you head out. Visit the [Illinois Tollway home page](#) and select a helpful link along the right side of the page:

- Select "Traffic Alert E-Mails" to sign up to receive personalized travel to your computer, phone or PDA from NBC5
- Choose the "Tollway Travel Times" link to obtain real-time traffic information for all Chicago-area expressways and tollways



Dynamic Message Signs (DMS) advise drivers of real-time traffic conditions.

In addition, you can:

- Look for up-to-the-minute travel times on the 33 dynamic message signs (DMS) over the road
- Tune to your favorite radio station or morning TV news program for a comprehensive Chicago-area traffic report, based on information provided to the media by the Illinois Tollway

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