



OPEN ROADS AHEAD

Construction News You Can Use

January 2007

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Feature Story

The Toll Road Ahead in 2007



Taking a look at the road ahead in the third year of congestion-relief construction on the Tollway.

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Congestion-Relief Program At-a-Glance

Governor Blagojevich's comprehensive Congestion-Relief Program: *Open Roads for a Faster Future* will reduce travel times by:

- Rebuilding: Restoring nearly the entire system.
- Widening: Adding lanes to many miles of existing roads.
- Opening: Converting 20 mainline toll plazas to Open Road Tolling.
- Extending: Building the I-355 South Extension.

Open Road Tolling

Now Available Systemwide



Dear Tollway Customer,

As you have noticed, the Illinois Tollway made major strides in the Congestion-Relief Program during 2006. Illinois is now the first state to deliver congestion relief through a systemwide conversion to Open Road Tolling (ORT) in less than two years. Drivers continue to rave about the benefits of ORT which is saving them an average of 10 minutes each way.

I'd like to commend the team at the Tollway for delivering on that promise. I'd also like to thank you, the customers, for your patience as we continue to improve transportation in Northern Illinois. However, much work remains so we'll need you to be patient for a while longer.

In 2007, the Tollway's Congestion-Relief Program forges ahead toward many new challenges highlighted by the opening of the long-awaited I-355 South Extension into Will County at the end of the year.

Together we're creating a new Tollway system for the 21st century so that drivers can get where they're going easier, quicker and safer. I'm confident, as we've seen with Open Road Tolling, that the results will be well worth the wait.

Please drive safely, watch the speed limit and best wishes in 2007.

Rod R. Blagojevich
Governor

Construction Update

- [Tri-State \(I-294\)](#) | [North-South \(I-355\)](#) | [Reagan Memorial \(I-88\)](#) | [Northwest Tollway \(I-90\)](#) | [Open Road Tolling \(ORT\)](#)



Rebuild & Widen

Tri-State Tollway (I-94/294/80)

South Tri-State

Question of the Month

Q: Usually I see truckers in the right lanes, but at times, I notice them in any and all lanes. Where are they supposed to be?

A: You may have already noticed new signs appearing throughout the Tollway system saying, "Trucks, Use Two Right Lanes." This is not a new law, but a reminder of the rule that's been in existence for years.

In areas where there are four lanes, such as the Central Tri-State Tollway (I-294), trucks should use the two right lanes. On the parts of the system where there are only two lanes, truck traffic is confined to the right lane only.

[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.

I-PASS UPDATE



Updated your I-PASS account lately?

As we enter 2007, your friends at I-PASS are bringing new hardware and software systems online. As we implement the new systems, some I-PASS customers may see unpaid tolls from 2006 posted to their account over the next few months. Typically tolls unable to be deducted from the account at the time of the transaction can be caused by a dead battery, missing or improperly mounted transponder, or insufficient I-PASS balance.

Although, most I-PASS customers will not be affected, all customers are reminded to regularly update their I-PASS account information and follow the instructions for proper mounting.

Please make sure to:

- Register all vehicles that will use the I-PASS
- Regularly check your balance
- Update credit card information for auto-replenishment--especially expiration dates
- Periodically review account transactions to ensure that your transponder is functioning properly

Phase I: Travelers are experiencing the benefits of a rebuilt road with a new fourth lane in each direction from 167th to IL Route 394. The fourth lane and Open Road Tolling at the I-80 ramp plazas debuted in fall 2006 to help reduce congestion in the area. Off-peak closures remain to complete electrical and noise wall work.

Phase II: Off-system advance work is scheduled to begin early in 2007 from 159th Street to 95th Street, including bridge substructure widening, drainage work and retaining wall construction.

Central Tri-State

Work began in fall 2006 to rebuild and add a lane on the northbound side of I-294 from Balmoral Avenue to Dempster Street. Traffic is shifted to the median shoulder and two left-most lanes, leaving a work zone on the right. In 2007, major reconstruction, including ramp closures and a crossover lane will be put in place. Work on the southbound lanes is expected to begin in fall 2008.

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



Four lanes of traffic are now open in both directions from 167th Street to IL Route 394



Extension

North-South Tollway (I-355)

Awarded #1 Road Project in North America for 2006 by Roads and Bridges magazine

Work continues on the construction of the 1.3-mile Des Plaines River Valley Bridge which will have six lanes and stand 90 feet above the valley. In addition, construction continues at the new interchanges at I-55 and I-80.

2007 will see the completion of bridge and interchange work and laying new pavement throughout the corridor.



Crews pour concrete for the Cedar Road Bridge over I-80.

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Rebuild & Widen

Reagan Memorial Tollway (I-88)

The advance work for a new section of the Rebuild & Widen project continues from Washington Street to Finley Road.

Winter Lane Configuration. Traffic is in the typical lane configuration with a full left shoulder. The right shoulder is closed or reduced along the entire length of the project as part of the work zone.

Naperville Ramp. The eastbound exit ramp from I-88 to Naperville Road and the westbound entrance to I-88 from Naperville Road are closed until Summer 2007. A posted detour directs traffic to and from the Winfield Road interchange via Ferry/Warrenville Road.

The eastbound mainline will be rebuilt and widened in 2007, with westbound work completed in 2008.



Panels are set for a retaining wall along I-88 as part of the advance work for a rebuild and widen project from Washington Street to Finley Road

Easily maintain your account online or by phone:
<http://www.getipass.com/>
1.800.UC.IPASS

Revive at the Oases



Free WiFi at All Seven Locations

All you need is a laptop with wireless capability to stay connected while traveling to your next destination on the Illinois Tollway. Stop at any of the seven Oases to access the internet for free while you enjoy a cup of coffee, relax in a massage chair, or grab a bite to eat at one of the many restaurant options.

[Visit the Oasis page on the Tollway website for location information.](#)

Other State Programs

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

Avoid the Dan Ryan

In March, the Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT) will begin its second season of major reconstruction along the Dan Ryan Expressway (I-90/94). Similar to last year's impacts, work will take place along both directions of the expressway from 13th Street to the Bishop Ford (I-94)/I-57 interchange.

Traffic will be reduced to three lanes in most areas. Drivers are urged to seek alternate routes and use public transportation. For more information please visit <http://www.avoidtheryan.com/>

Health Insurance for Kids

If your children do not have health insurance, *All Kids* may be right for your family. *All Kids* is a 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).

[Read About Ongoing I-88 Projects](#) | [Back to Main Menu](#)



Bridge & Interchange Improvements

Northwest Tollway (I-90)

The Illinois Tollway is working with the Illinois Department of Transportation on their project to rebuild and widen IL Route 173 under the Northwest Tollway (I-90) and to construct a full-access interchange at IL Route 173 and I-90. Construction to rebuild and widen the I-90 bridges over IL Route 173 was completed in December 2006. In 2007, construction begins on entrance and exit ramps and toll collection facilities on the ramps.



Workers removed the median curb as part of preliminary work to rebuild the flyover bridge over the Northwest Tollway to U.S. 20

The flyover ramp bridge over the Northwest Tollway at U.S. 20 was rebuilt in 2006.

Construction on the ramp structure that takes U.S. 20 traffic to eastbound I-90 was completed in early December. Erosion control and pier work will continue through early 2007.

[Read More About Ongoing I-90 Projects](#) | [Back to Main Menu](#)



Open Road Tolling Now Available Systemwide

Open Road Tolling lanes are now complete systemwide at all 20 mainline plazas.



20 plazas were converted to Open Road Tolling in just 22 months

Work will continue until summer 2007 on the cash lanes at River Road and Devon (I-90), Waukegan (I-94), and 163rd Street (I-294). Cash lane modifications will also be in place through the summer at the Edens Spur (I-94), Boughton and Army Trail (I-355) and at Irving Park Road, Cermak, 82nd Street and 83rd Street (I-294).

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

Feature Story

The Toll Road Ahead in 2007

The second year of the Tollway's Congestion-Relief Program came to a close with the end of 2006. Many major milestones were accomplished throughout the year, most notably the completion of Open Road Tolling lanes systemwide. This major accomplishment will pave the way for the improvement projects slated in 2007. In addition, the congestion relief provided by Open Road Tolling will work to minimize the impact that these much-needed projects would otherwise have on traffic.

The highlight of 2007 will be the debut of the long-awaited South Extension of the North-South Tollway (I-355). The Tollway team is making remarkable progress on the new 12.5-mile road through Will County. The dirt path that marked the extension's route has transformed into a recognizable road project. In 2006, construction began on the Des Plaines River Valley Bridge and crossroad bridges in addition to the interchanges at I-80 and I-55. The South Extension will open to traffic in November 2007.



Nearly 3,900 professional and construction staff are working to ensure the South Extension (I-355) is completed on time

A little less perceptible to the average driver was the advance work done in 2006 to prepare the way for major rebuild and widening work. Such work will begin this spring on the Reagan Memorial Tollway (I-88) from Washington Street to Finley Road and on the northbound Central Tri-

State Tollway (I-294) from Balmoral Avenue to Dempster Street. Similar projects have been completed on both roads and are demonstrating the benefits of rebuild and widening. In 2005, the section from IL Route 59 to Washington Street on I-88, formerly known as the "washboard," now provides smooth sailing with increased capacity for drivers. On the South Tri-State (I-80/I-294), travelers are also enjoying a new lane and rebuilt roads in each direction.

Also scheduled in 2007 are rebuild and widening projects on the North Tri-State Tollway (I-94) and the central section of the Reagan Memorial Tollway (I-88). On the North Tri-State Tollway, construction will begin on the southbound lanes from Russell Road to Grand Avenue. The rubblization project on I-88 will rebuild the road in both directions from Orchard Road to IL-251.

This year will mark the beginning of more construction on the Tollway that will deliver greater congestion relief to drivers. With construction will come delays, so please obey construction work zone speed limits and be patient, knowing that the Tollway will continue to plan from the driver's seat in order to reduce the impact construction has on traffic. As always, the most current project information is posted on the Tollway's website to prepare drivers for the road ahead.

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Moving Traffic Along

Pay Missed Tolls Online

Wrong lane? No change? Paying a missed toll is now just a mouse click away for Illinois Tollway drivers. The Illinois Tollway recently launched a new online customer service enabling drivers to pay missed tolls online 24/7 by credit or debit card to avoid receiving toll violation notices and fines.



- Missed tolls must be paid within 7 days of the occurrence
- A maximum of 4 missed toll payments will be accepted per year. Consequent missed tolls will be fined as violations.
- If a transponder malfunctions, I-PASS users do not need to pay missed tolls if the vehicle is registered to an account in good standing. These tolls will be automatically deducted from the I-PASS account. Please ensure that your account is valid and your transponder is working as excessive missed tolls are subject to penalty.

[Click Here for more information about Missed Tolls](#) | [Back to Main Menu](#)

Safety Zone

Watch for Plows

The snow and ice have finally returned since the early winter weather blast that hit in December. As a reminder, please keep a safe distance when Tollway work crews are plowing the roads and spreading salt for your safety.

During heavy snows, the plows often line up in formation across all lanes of traffic to quickly move the snow off the road. For your safety, do not attempt to pass the trucks if you see the tandem configuration.



178 plow trucks and 26 front loaders are prepared to combat winter snow and ice storms on the Tollway

To read more about safe winter travel and the preparations made by the Tollway to combat winter storms, please visit the [Travel Tips page on the Tollway website](#).

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