



ILLINOIS TOLLWAY NEWS

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INNOVATIVE GANTRY SYSTEM IN PLACE FOR CONSTRUCTION ON MILE LONG BRIDGE ON THE CENTRAL TRI-STATE TOLLWAY (I-294)

Gantries equipped with hoists and cranes to move and install beams for new southbound bridge

DOWNERS GROVE, IL – As part of the construction of a new southbound Mile Long Bridge on the Central Tri-State Tollway (I-294), the Illinois Tollway will begin using an innovative gantry system this month to move and install bridge beams behind barrier wall in the work zone, without disrupting traffic.

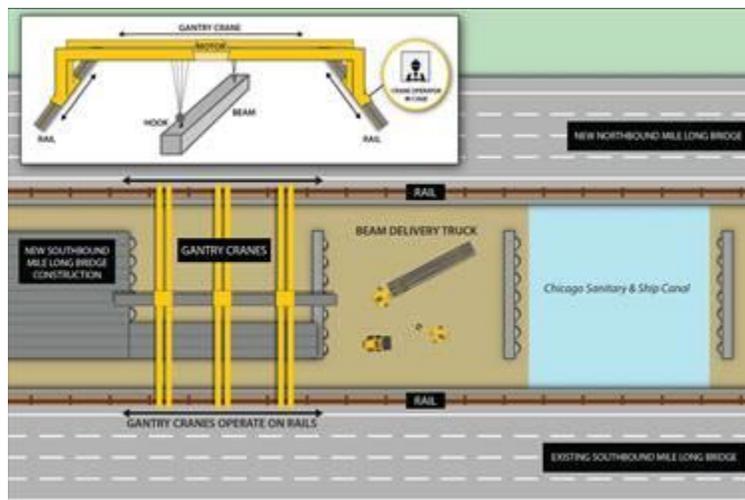
Construction of the new bridge as part of the Tollway's \$500-million Mile Long Bridge Project is anticipated to continue through 2022. The massive gantry system will be used in place of traditional construction cranes to install beams in the area over the Chicago Sanitary & Ship Canal.

The innovative gantry system includes three main gantry frames each approximately 28 feet tall and 145 feet long. The gantries extend from the existing southbound bridge structure across to the newly constructed northbound bridge structure. In addition, a rail system was installed on the both existing bridge structures to allow the gantries to move from north to south during beam placement.

Each of the gantries is equipped with overhead rails movable hoists and cranes. Each hoist moves east and west across the gantry and can lift up to 30 tons using a crane that drops down to pick up beams from the delivery truck below and then lift the beams into position on the bridge piers.

During beam placement, each gantry is controlled by a crane operator. Gantries are positioned on each end of the beam as they are hoisted into place, and the third gantry can be used to hold the beams in place while the other two gantries move to deliver the next beam segment into place.

The gantry system allows four lanes of traffic to remain open in both directions on the bridges currently carrying northbound and southbound traffic as 30 steel beams are installed in the area over the Chicago Sanitary & Ship Canal.



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Beam installation for the new southbound Mile Long Bridge began in August. Beam deliveries will continue into early 2022, and altogether 250 concrete beams and 165 steel beam segments will be delivered to the site for the new southbound Mile Long Bridge Project. Steel beams, measuring up to 10 feet tall and range in length from 57 feet to 134 feet long, are transported from a manufacturing plant in Indiana and concrete beams, measuring nearly 8 feet tall and are up to 187 feet long, are transported from a plant in Wisconsin.

As part of the \$4 billion Central Tri-State Tollway Project, the Illinois Tollway is reconstructing the Mile Long Bridge that carries up to 150,000 vehicles daily over two major railroads, the Des Plaines River, the Chicago Sanitary & Ship Canal and the Illinois & Michigan Canal and local roads, and over several major distribution centers. Construction of the new northbound structure was completed in 2020 and construction of the new southbound structure is scheduled to be complete in 2022.

A \$184.6 million contract to build the new northbound bridge structure began in summer 2019 and was completed in November 2020. Work began on a second \$182.6 million contract in 2020 to remove the old northbound structure and deliver the new southbound Mile Long Bridge to drivers by the end of 2022. The entire Mile Long Bridge Project is scheduled to be complete by the end of 2023.

The Mile Long Bridge Project includes building two, new side-by-side 4,800-foot-long bridge structures designed to last 100 years and increasing capacity to five lanes in each direction. The original bridge structures were built in 1958.

Both of the new bridges feature 27 spans supported by 26 piers, compared to the previous structures with 53 piers, reducing the impact on waterways, roadway and rail operations below. In addition, the bridges' inside shoulders in both directions will be built to serve as Flex Lanes for transit, for emergency vehicles and as an alternate lane when warranted.

The Illinois Tollway is coordinating work on the Mile Long Bridge Project with the Village of Hodgkins, Village of Countryside, Village of Willow Springs, Village of Justice, Cook County, Forest Preserve District of Cook County, Metropolitan Water Reclamation District, Burlington Northern Santa Fe Railway, Illinois Department of Transportation, Illinois Environmental Protection Agency, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, U.S. Department of Fish and Wildlife, U.S. Coast Guard, Illinois Department of Natural Resources (IDNR), IDNR Office of Water Resources and the Illinois Nature Preserve Commission, as well as numerous businesses located near the Mile Long Bridge.

Construction information about the Mile Long Bridge Project is available in the Projects Section on the Tollway's website at illinoistollway.com.

Work Zone Safety

Construction zone speed limits are in effect in all construction zones 24/7 and drivers should continue to watch for changing traffic patterns and use caution, especially when workers are present. On I-294, a 45 mph work zone speed limit is in effect throughout the construction season.

The Illinois Tollway reminds motorists that the "Move Over Law" requires motorists to change lanes or to slow down and proceed with caution when passing any vehicle on the side of the road with hazard lights activated. If you see flashing lights ahead, please move over or slow down.

Illinois State Police have zero tolerance for drivers speeding in work zones or failure to comply with the Move Over Law. The minimum penalty for speeding in a work zone is \$250 with up to a \$25,000 fine and a 14-year jail sentence for hitting a roadway worker. Penalties for failure to slow down or move over for a vehicle on the shoulder with flashing lights includes up to a \$10,000 fine, 2-year suspension of driving privileges and jail time, in extreme cases.

About Move Illinois

The Illinois Tollway’s 15-year, \$14 billion capital program, *Move Illinois: The Illinois Tollway Driving the Future*, is improving mobility, relieving congestion, reducing pollution, creating as many as 120,000 jobs and linking economies throughout the region. The first 10 years of *Move Illinois* is on schedule and within budget, delivering the rebuilt and widened Jane Addams Memorial Tollway (I-90) as a state-of-the-art 21st century corridor and opening a new interchange connecting the Tri-State Tollway (I-294) to I-57. Progress continues on projects addressing the remaining needs of the existing Tollway system, delivering the Elgin O’Hare Western Access Project and reconstruction of the Central Tri-State Tollway (I-294).

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 294 miles of roadways 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), the Tri-State Tollway (I-94/I-294/I-80) and the Illinois Route 390 Tollway.



PHASE 1:
Build new northbound bridge

PHASE 2:
Remove old northbound bridge and build new southbound bridge

PHASE 3:
Remove old southbound bridge



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