



*Move Illinois:
The Illinois Tollway Driving the Future*

NEWS

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**ILLINOIS TOLLWAY ANNOUNCES PLANS TO PARTNER
WITH THE MORTON ARBORETUM TO CREATE “URBAN FOREST”**

*April 29 Arbor Day celebration planned to give away
15,000 tree seedlings to Tollway customers*

DOWNERS GROVE, IL – The Illinois Tollway today announced plans to partner with The Morton Arboretum to enhance aesthetics and expand tree canopy coverage along the Tollway system as part of its efforts to increase environmental benefits and sustainability. In recognition of the new effort, the Tollway will celebrate Arbor Day on Friday, April 29, by giving away 15,000 tree seedlings to customers at the Tollway’s Downers Grove headquarters and oases.

In partnership with The Morton Arboretum, the Illinois Tollway will move forward with developing a systemwide landscape master plan for trees, shrubs and other native plantings on Tollway property. The Illinois Tollway is committed to minimizing the environmental impacts of its roadways by adopting wetland improvement and landscaping projects with local and regional benefits.

“We know that the roads the Illinois Tollway builds and operates are critical to transporting the goods, services and workforce that support and grow our region’s economy,” said Illinois Tollway Board of Directors Chairman Bob Schillerstrom. “Today, we’re announcing our support for the growth of natural resources throughout the 12 counties we serve, by setting a goal to plant 58,000 trees.”

The Tollway will begin the new initiative by working with the Arboretum to analyze the 286-mile Tollway system to determine potential planting areas, with emphasis on areas in which trees can be established and tree canopy coverage expanded. Tollway interchanges will be a primary focus area being analyzed for suitability of plantings as they serve as gateways into the communities surrounding the Tollway.

In addition, on Arbor Day, Friday, April 29, the public is invited to stop by Tollway headquarters in Downers Grove or one of the seven Tollway oases between 7 a.m. and 6 p.m. to pick up a complimentary tree seedling. The Tollway will offer a variety of species that grow well in Northern Illinois along with information for planting and care provided by The Morton Arboretum.

“The Morton Arboretum welcomes the opportunity to be part of this innovative effort and provide expertise in tree science and conservation to establish and maintain a healthy urban forest along the Illinois Tollway system,” said Gerry Donnelly, President and CEO of the Arboretum. “Planting more trees throughout the Tollway system offsets impacts of road development and use, creates a community asset, and adds greatly to the quality of the environment.”

This initiative builds upon the ongoing relationship between the Tollway and the Arboretum, which previously included collaborating on the development of a landscaped gateway to The Morton Arboretum and the Village of Lisle on the Reagan Memorial Tollway (I-88).

The Tollway’s landscape master plan will identify suitable areas for tree canopy establishment, including evaluating ways to tie into and connect other green space in forest preserves, parks and

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communities adjacent to the Tollway system. In addition, the Arboretum will identify experimental planting techniques for desired canopy locations based on identified soil conditions within specific areas, as well as research on the success of current Tollway planting specifications.

The Illinois Tollway anticipates planting approximately 3,000 trees and 6,000 shrubs this year to begin the initiative. Coordinating with design engineers and construction managers on current construction projects will allow the agency to maximize the benefit of the overall canopy effort this year, while working with the Arboretum to develop a formal program based off the master plan.

As part of the *Move Illinois* capital program, the Tollway is working to minimize the environmental impact of new roadway construction by reducing, recycling and reusing materials. In addition, the agency is committed to using renewable energy and green technology, as well as investing in wetland mitigation projects, adopting innovative stormwater management techniques and using native and adaptive vegetation. The Illinois Tollway's 15-year, \$12 billion capital program, *Move Illinois: The Illinois Tollway Driving the Future*, will improve mobility, relieve congestion, reduce pollution, create as many as 120,000 jobs and link economies across the Midwest region. *Move Illinois* will address the remaining needs of the existing Tollway system; rebuild and widen the Jane Addams Memorial Tollway (I-90) as a state-of-the-art 21st century corridor; construct a new interchange to connect the Tri-State Tollway (I-294) to I-57; build a new, all-electronic Elgin O'Hare Western Access Project and fund planning studies for emerging projects.

About The Morton Arboretum

The Morton Arboretum is an internationally recognized outdoor tree museum and tree research center located in Lisle, Illinois. As the champion of trees, the Arboretum is committed to scientifically-informed action, both locally and globally, and encouraging the planting and conservation of trees for a greener, healthier, more beautiful world. On 1,700 acres are 222,000 plant specimens representing 4,500 different kinds of plants, along with specialty gardens, educational exhibits, the award-winning Children's Garden, 16 miles of hiking trails and the Visitor Center, featuring The Arboretum Store and the Gingko Restaurant and Café. The Morton Arboretum is a not-for-profit 501(c)3 charitable organization, welcoming more than 1 million visitors and serving 43,700 member households in 2015. Learn more at mortonarb.org.

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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