



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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**ILLINOIS TOLLWAY, BLICK ART MATERIALS AND MB REAL ESTATE INVITE
HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS TO CREATE ART TO SHOWCASE SMARTROADS**
Winning contest entry will appear on the cover of the 2017 Illinois Tollway map

DOWNERS GROVE, IL – The Illinois Tollway, Blick Art Materials and MB Real Estate (MBRE) this week invited high school art students to participate in the 2017 Tollway Map Cover Art Contest.

Recognizing that high school students throughout the region are the next generation of drivers, the Illinois Tollway is inviting students to submit original works of art that illustrate what a SmartRoad can offer drivers.

Artwork should focus on how emerging technology and innovations on the Illinois Tollway will benefit drivers by:

- Providing new and improved services
- Creating a more efficient, reliable way to communicate with drivers
- Ensuring greater safety

“This year’s art contest challenges students to think about the future and how the Illinois Tollway can use technology and innovation to improve transportation,” said Illinois Tollway Executive Director Greg Bedalov. “Today’s high school students will be our customers tomorrow, so we are interested in their vision of how our roadways will address their needs.”

The Illinois Tollway is building state-of-the-art roadways to improve travel, reduce congestion and better serve its 1.6 million daily drivers. In 2017, the Tollway will roll out the first SmartRoad on the Jane Addams Memorial Tollway (I-90) incorporating active traffic management, integrating transit and delivering a 21st century corridor. SmartRoad will provide real-time travel information via dynamic electronic signage, integrate Flex Lanes for Pace buses to provide reliable service and include flexible technologies so new smart features can be added as they come online in the years ahead.

More than 300 high schools in the 12 counties served by the Illinois Tollway have been sent information about this year’s contest. Art contest entries will be accepted beginning September 12, 2016, and must be postmarked no later than October 13, 2016.

Artwork created by the grand prize winner will be featured on the cover of the Tollway’s 2017 map, which is distributed at no cost to more than 75,000 customers. The grand prize winner and three runners-up will be featured in the Tollway’s annual report. Awards include:

- Grand prize winner: \$400 gift certificate from Blick Art Materials and \$200 in gift certificates from MBRE to use at oases retail shops and restaurants
- Runners-up: \$200 gift certificate from Blick Art Materials and \$100 in gift certificates from MBRE
- A certificate of appreciation for all students who participate in the contest
- Acknowledgment of winners at the Illinois Tollway Board of Directors meeting on November 17, 2016

“Blick Art Materials is pleased to support the efforts of student artists to promote technology and innovation on the Illinois Tollway system,” said Blick Art Materials Chief Executive Bob Buchsbaum. “We are always impressed with the creativity of the participants in the art contest and are particularly excited about this year’s contest theme.”

An Illinois Tollway committee will initially judge all contest entries to determine the top 10. Those top 10 entries will be featured on the Illinois Tollway’s website and displayed in galleries at each of the six Tollway oases pavilions during the last week of October. The public is invited to view the artwork and cast their votes online at www.illinoistollway.com to choose the top four entries. The grand prize winner and three runners-up will be selected by a panel of judges, including members of the Tollway Board of Directors and representatives from MBRE.

“MB Real Estate is pleased to be partnering with the Illinois Tollway and Blick Art Materials for this year’s map cover art contest to promote technology and innovation and to showcase the creativity of young artists in the community,” said MBRE General Manager Alma Becerra. “We look forward to seeing the artwork on display throughout the oases.”

The 2017 Tollway Map Cover Art Contest rules and all required entry forms are posted on the Tollway’s website at www.illinoistollway.com.

The Illinois Tollway launched the Map Cover Art Contest in 2011 to highlight the work of talented art students from the communities served by the Illinois Tollway. Last year, more than 75 entries from student artists attending 33 high schools throughout the region were submitted and more than 27,000 votes were cast by the general public to determine the four contest finalists. The 2016 Tollway map features cover artwork from last year’s contest winner, Theresa Kerouac, a sophomore at Lake Forest High School in Lake Forest.

About Blick Art Materials

Founded in Galesburg, Illinois, in 1911, Blick Art Materials is one of the largest and oldest providers of art supplies in the United States, with 66 retail stores nationwide. Its products cater to the full spectrum of artists – from the youngest child ready to scribble with his or her first crayon to well-known, gallery-represented professionals. The company’s extensive selection, competitive prices and superior customer service make Blick the best choice for art educators, students, artists, architects, designers, hobbyists or anyone requiring quality art materials for work or pleasure. A long-time advocate of art education in the U.S., Blick also provides support of scholastic, collegiate and professional art shows, both financially and through a variety of materials that emphasize the benefits of art education. Blick also supports the communities in which it does business by sponsoring in-store events, local schools, art leagues and community groups across the country. Visit www.dickblick.com for more information.

About MB Real Estate Services Inc.

Founded in 1982, MB Real Estate is a full-service real estate organization that provides multifaceted expertise in Asset/Facilities Management; Leasing Services; Project/Construction Management; Tenant Representation and Investment Services. Additionally, MBRE Healthcare provides comprehensive real estate solutions for hospitals, health systems and physicians throughout the United States. Headquartered in Chicago, with regional offices in New York, Atlanta, Orlando, Dallas and Denver, MB Real Estate provides these services to corporations,

institutions, professional organizations, private investors and non-profit agencies. For more information, please visit www.mbres.com.

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

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