



# NEWS

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
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## **ILLINOIS TOLLWAY CHIEF ENGINEERING OFFICER RECEIVES AMERICAN SOCIETY OF CIVIL ENGINEERS 2019 OUTSTANDING PROJECTS AND LEADERS AWARD**

**DOWNERS GROVE, IL** – The Illinois Tollway’s Chief Engineering Officer Paul Kovacs is a 2019 recipient of the national Outstanding Projects and Leaders Award in the government category by the American Society of Civil Engineers.

“ASCE is proud to recognize Paul Kovacs’ tremendous accomplishments with the 2019 Outstanding Projects and Leaders Award. As a leader in the transportation space, he continues to advocate for innovation within the civil engineering profession,” said American Society of Civil Engineers President Robin A. Kemper, P.E. “ASCE has seen firsthand that his work at the Illinois Tollway reflects and promotes our mission and vision to protect the public health, safety and welfare while also building a better quality of life for Illinois residents.”

The national Outstanding Projects and Leaders awards honor outstanding civil engineering leaders whose lifetime accomplishments contributed in one of five categories: design, construction, government, education and management. Those chosen for the honor in the government category are civil engineers who have demonstrated leadership on public service construction projects or those who direct and oversee large government projects.

Through the award, the national engineering group recognized several of Kovacs’ career accomplishments, as well as his ongoing advocacy for integrating innovation and anticipating the future needs of Tollway customers. ASCE also commended Kovacs for his collaborative approach to problem-solving, working hand-in-hand with leaders from other transportation and transit agencies, industry partners and educational institutions to deliver infrastructure improvements. His emphasis on teamwork provides opportunities for Tollway staff, consultants and contractors to perform at their highest level, innovate and excel.

Kovacs joined the Tollway in 1999 as a senior project engineer managing various Tollway bridge, roadway and interchange projects. He was promoted to open road tolling program manager and deputy chief of project implementation to manage the systemwide conversion of 20 mainline toll plazas to open road tolling – making Illinois the first state to complete, in less than two years, a total mainline conversion from a traditional barrier system to an end-to-end open road tolling system. Kovacs also was responsible for managing roadway and reconstruction and widening along the north and south segments of the Tri-State Tollway (I-94/I-294/I-80), the Jane Addams Memorial Tollway (I-90) and Reagan Memorial Tollway (I-88).

Today, Kovacs is the longest-serving chief engineering officer in the Tollway’s history, serving in this role since 2007. He is responsible for the policies, practices and procedures of the Engineering Department, which oversees all design and construction operations on the agency’s 294-mile system of roadways serving more than 1.6 million daily users in Northern Illinois. He leads a staff of more than 600 engineering, maintenance and traffic operations professionals.

Kovacs currently is responsible for delivering the Tollway’s 15-year, \$14 billion capital program, *Move Illinois: The Illinois Tollway Driving the Future*. *Move Illinois* is improving mobility, relieving congestion,

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reducing pollution, creating as many as 120,000 jobs and linking economies throughout the region. Launched in 2012, the first seven years of *Move Illinois* are on schedule and within budget, delivering the new Illinois Route 390 Tollway and a rebuilt and widened Jane Addams Memorial Tollway (I-90) with its new SmartRoad corridor, as well as opening a new interchange connecting the Tri-State Tollway (I-294) to I-57.

Kovacs also has been instrumental to creating greater opportunities for small, diverse and veteran-owned firms to participate on Tollway projects. Working with the Tollway's Department of Diversity and Strategic Development, Kovacs has led efforts to break down larger contracts into smaller jobs and create greater opportunities for firms of all sizes and types. These opportunities have resulted in more new firms and more diversity on Tollway projects than ever before. More than half of the nearly 1,290 unique firms that have participated on *Move Illinois* are new to the Tollway and more than one-third of those 1,290 unique firms are disadvantaged, minority-, women- or veteran-owned firms.

### **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.

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