



# NEWS

## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

January 6, 2014

### **ILLINOIS TOLLWAY RECOMMENDS DRIVERS TRAVEL ONLY IF NECESSARY, SNOW AND ROADWAY OPERATIONS WILL CONTINUE OVERNIGHT**

*Roadway assistance provided to more than 370 motorists during extreme cold and snow*

**DOWNERS GROVE, IL** – The Illinois Tollway recommends drivers continue to defer all non-essential travel tonight due to hazardous driving conditions resulting from the extreme cold and wind. Drivers should be aware of winds causing blowing and drifting snow that can hinder visibility and cause icing conditions on bridges and elevated sections of the road.

“Facing such extreme conditions, we urge our customers to avoid driving, if possible, tonight,” said Illinois Tollway Executive Director Kristi Lafleur. “If you must travel, we ask that you take proper precautions for the dangerously cold temperatures and pay close attention when driving, using extreme caution when traveling on bridge decks, which freeze and refreeze rapidly.”

During the overnight hours, the Illinois Tollway will continue to use available manpower and equipment to keep the Tollway’s 286-mile system of roadways clear and to assist drivers. Drivers can call 1-800-TOLL-FYI for information about the latest winter travel conditions on the Tollway.

Since the start of snowfall and extreme cold on Saturday, the Tollway and District 15 State Police have helped more than 370 motorists in need of assistance, providing services such as changing tires, charging car batteries, dispensing fuel, calling for tows and transporting customers.

The Tollway has increased the number of 24-hour Zero Weather Road Patrols and Highway Emergency Lane Patrol (H.E.L.P.) trucks sponsored by State Farm to assist drivers stranded in disabled vehicles, as well as to respond to calls that come in to \*999 motorist assistance, Illinois Tollway dispatch or Illinois State Police District 15.

The Zero Weather Road Patrols consist of crew cab trucks equipped with arrow boards for directing traffic around accidents or stranded vehicles and enough room to accommodate up to five passengers if motorists need to be transported to a Tollway maintenance garage, toll plaza or Tollway oasis while service is obtained.

All seven Illinois Tollway oases also serve as warming centers. On the Tri-State Tollway (I-94/I-294/I-80), there are four oases: Lake Forest, O’Hare, Hinsdale and Chicago Southland Lincoln in South Holland. There are two oases on the Jane Addams Memorial Tollway (I-90) in Belvidere and Des Plaines and one on the Reagan Memorial Tollway (I-88) in DeKalb.

### **Winter Weather Travel Tips**

The Tollway offers the following travel tips to keep safe during dangerously cold weather:

- Reduce your speed and increase the gap between your car and the one in front of you.
- Be sure your cellphone is fully charged before heading out.
- Be sure tires are properly inflated during cold weather.
- Keep your gas tank at least half full to avoid gas line freeze-up and ensure that you have extra driving time if the weather is bad.

- Keep a cold weather safety kit in your car that includes gloves, boots, blankets, road flares, water and a flashlight with fresh batteries.
- Cell phone users should call \*999 motorist assistance for roadway assistance or to report other motorists pulled over on the side of the road.

In addition, the state of Illinois offers information about winter storm preparedness and conditions statewide at [www.Ready.Illinois.gov](http://www.Ready.Illinois.gov).

### **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).

# # #