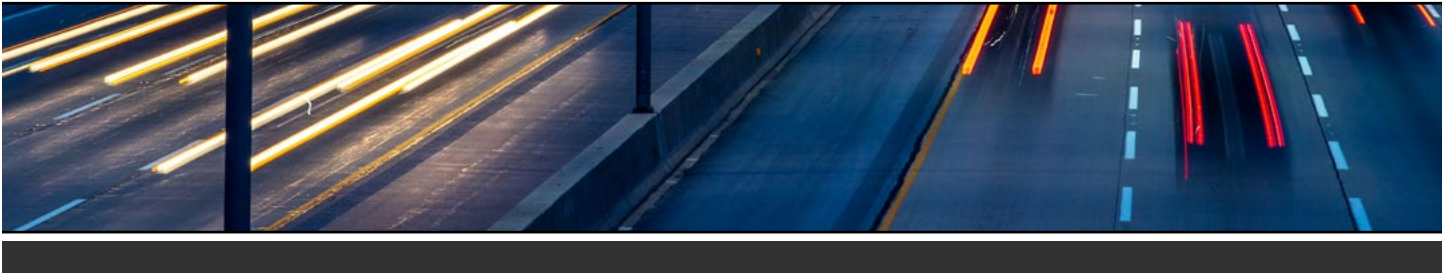




ILLINOIS TOLLWAY UPDATE



MORE THAN \$758 MILLION INVESTED IN 2021 TO SUPPORT THE 10TH YEAR OF THE MOVE ILLINOIS PROGRAM

The Illinois Tollway Board of Directors wrapped up 2021 by approving six construction and professional engineering services contracts totaling \$49.1 million at its December Board meeting, as part of the *Move Illinois* capital program.

In all, 62 construction and professional engineering services contracts totaling more than \$758 million have been approved by the Tollway Board in 2021.

“The December Board action brings an end to a very successful year for our *Move Illinois* Program,” said Illinois Tollway Executive Director José Alvarez. “Working together with our construction industry partners, we have successfully navigated ongoing challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic to continue delivering our capital program on schedule and within budget, and we have continued to engage a growing number of small and diverse businesses.”



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ILLINOIS TOLLWAY SURPASSES MILESTONE OF PLANTING 58,000 TREES

In October 2021, the Illinois Tollway surpassed its goal to plant 58,000 new trees along its system of roadways crossing 12 counties, and planting is ongoing.

The milestone occurred during planting of new trees and shrubs along the Veterans Memorial Tollway (I-355).

“It’s exciting to be part of this effort to expand the regional tree canopy, which will greatly benefit our customers and communities for generations,” said Illinois Tollway Executive Director José Alvarez.

Within The Morton Arboretum, the Center for Tree Science and the Chicago Region Trees Initiative have been focused on increasing the region’s tree canopy. The Tollway has partnered with these groups to develop and implement a comprehensive program that advances the region’s tree canopy across the Tollway’s landscape.



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In 2021, 81 percent of the contracts awarded for *Move Illinois* Program projects were unbundled or Small Business Initiative contracts that provided opportunities for small, diverse and veteran-owned firms to take on roles as prime contractors and consultants. This included 37 construction contracts and 13 professional engineering services contract awards.

The Illinois Tollway's Small Business Initiative puts small businesses earning gross revenues of \$14 million or less annually in a position to succeed and grow by identifying select contracts, generally with values of approximately \$5 million or less, specifically for small businesses to perform as primes. As of 2021, 165 unique firms are enrolled to participate in the Small Business Initiative.

The December contract awards marked the final Board action for the 10th year of the Tollway's 15-year, \$14 billion *Move Illinois* capital program.

Overall, more than \$9.4 billion has been invested by the Tollway since the Program began in 2012, with more than \$2.4 billion of that total committed to small, diverse and veteran-owned firms. In addition, the capital program has created or sustained an estimated 104,130 total jobs as of November 2021.

"58,000 Trees" continued from page 1

As part of its Landscape Master Plan adopted in 2016, the Tollway mapped out a plan to enhance its right-of-way space with new trees, shrubs and native grasses and flowers. To meet the 58,000-goal included in the plan, the Tollway counted the planting of five shrubs as the equivalent of one tree.

In simple terms, adding 58,000 trees and shrubs would have required adding a new planting every 27 feet along the 294-mile Tollway system if all the new plantings were evenly spaced. But according to Bryan Wagner, the Tollway's environmental policy and program manager, the plan wasn't that simple.

The Tollway's Environmental staff, led by senior landscape architect Jeff Schneberg, first looked at the more rural and open areas along the Tollway system. As they got started, staff quickly realized that what at first glance appeared to be wide open land in reality included drainage systems, underground fiber optics, overhead power lines and sometimes bike trails running alongside the roadways.

"There's much more to our system than just pavement that we needed to take into consideration when determining where to plant tens of thousands of trees," said Wagner.

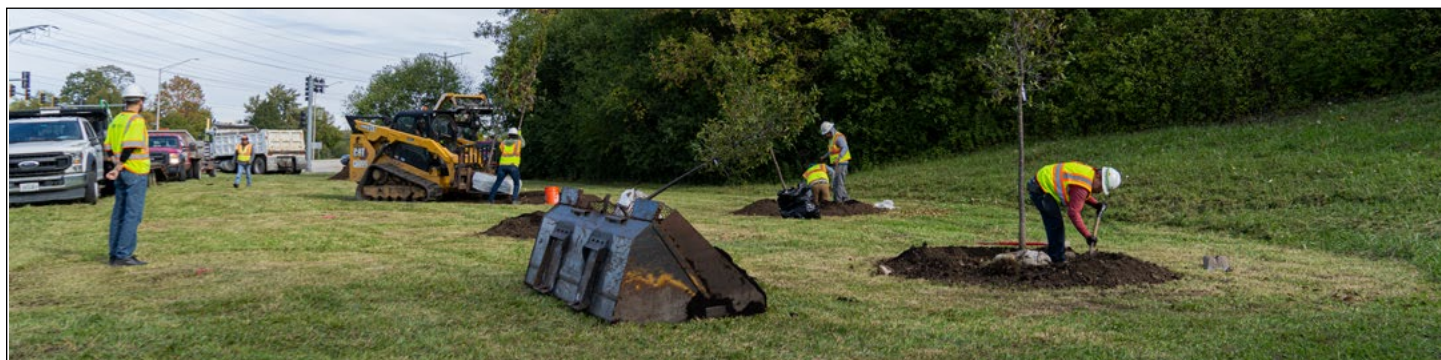
In the end, the Tollway identified locations around interchanges and along the mainline on every one of the five roadways that make up the Tollway system.

While planting tens of thousands of trees over a relatively short period can be considered a success on its own merits, the Tollway also has taken steps to ensure the program is a success over the long haul.

Species were selected for their resiliency to salt spray and harsh roadway conditions and being native to the region. The list includes a wide variety of shade trees such as ginkgo, honey locust, coffee trees, elm, maples, lilacs, as well as evergreens and nearly a dozen varieties of shrubs.

"Diversity in the species of trees and shrubs, as well as their size and ages, is vital to the successful implementation and sustainability of this effort," said senior environmental planner Kelsey Musich.

While the Tollway is celebrating this milestone achievement, there are plans for additional trees to be planted as part of the reconstruction of the Central Tri-State Tollway (I-294) and the new I-490 Tollway.



BUILDING BRIDGES BRINGS THE ILLINOIS TOLLWAY AND COMMUNITIES TOGETHER



While construction is not without inconvenience, the Illinois Tollway takes on every project committed to reducing that impact on its customers and communities, along with the goal of delivering new and improved roads and bridges on scheduled and within budget.

So, in 2021 when the Tollway reopened two local crossroad bridges – one in Gurnee crossing the Tri-State Tollway (I-94) and another in Oak Brook crossing ramps connecting the Reagan Memorial Tollway (I-88) and the Tri-State Tollway (I-294) – ahead of schedule, there was good reason for everyone to call them jobs well done.

“Stearns School Road is a vital part of the Lake County transportation system. This project is a great example of how agencies can work together to ensure everything runs smoothly from start to finish and deliver a project that fits the needs of the community,” said Kevin Carrier, Director of Planning and Programming at the Lake County Division of Transportation.

The new bridge was built to accommodate future local roadway improvements anticipated by the village and the county, so the \$12 million project includes \$5.4 million in local cost participation from Village of Gurnee and Lake County for the extra improvements.

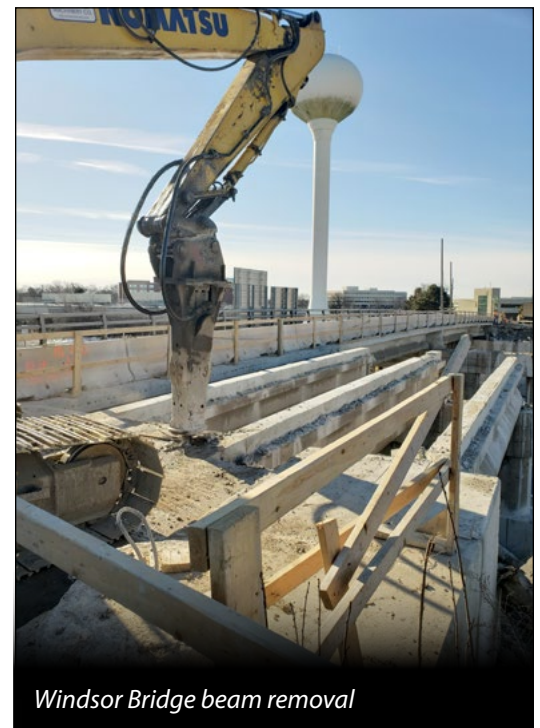
The project team in Lake County was able to start construction about two weeks earlier than originally intended due to close coordination with local partners and IDOT. In addition, there was a strong push to complete the project prior to any holiday shopping season, so the project’s local partners allowed the bridge closure and detour to start earlier than planned.

In Oak Brook, the Tollway contributed \$7.5 million to rebuild the [Windsor Drive Bridge](#) carrying local traffic over the Tollway’s ramps I-88 and I-294 needed to accommodate work by the Village of Oak Brook to widen Windsor Drive.

“The communication and cooperation of the Illinois Tollway throughout the bridge project was vital in allowing the Village’s Windsor Drive Widening and Streetscape project construction to progress concurrently,” said Rick Valent, Oak Brook’s Public Works Director.

The cooperation allowed the Village an opportunity to substantially complete its portion of the project ahead of the winter season and cut the time of disruption to the adjacent businesses by more than six months.

Valent said the Illinois Tollway exceeded Oak Brook’s expectations by accelerating the bridge replacement project, overcoming delays caused by utility conflicts in the project area and completing the bridge project ahead of schedule.



Windsor Bridge beam removal

THE ILLINOIS TOLLWAY SHOWS HOW THE MILE LONG BRIDGE IS “BUILT TO LAST”

“At the end of the day,” said Illinois Tollway Executive Director José Alvarez, “these are two structures that are going to be around for decades.”

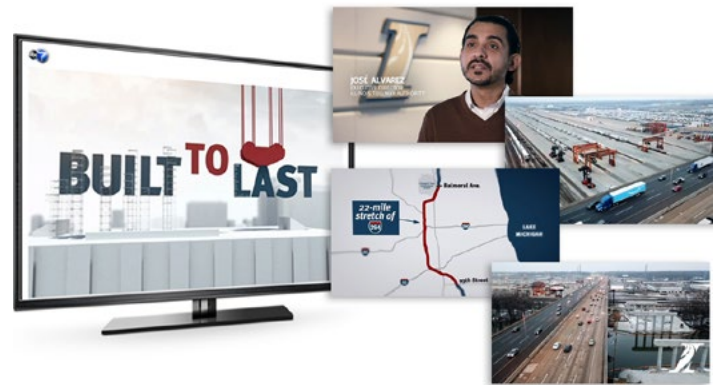
The two structures Alvarez is referring to make up the new Mile Long Bridge on the Tri-State Tollway (I-294).

How the new bridge is being built around the existing structures – and the highly skilled, diverse workforce behind its construction – was the focus of a 2021 episode of “Built To Last,” a series of half-hour specials that runs every Sunday morning on ABC 7 Chicago.

The specials, produced by the Chicago Regional Council of Union Carpenters & Contractors, highlight area projects being worked on by local trade union members and contractors.

The episode, titled “Getting from Here to There,” featured Tollway leadership, project managers and labor officials discussing the complexity, challenges and skills required to build the two side-by-side 4,800-foot-long structures on one of the most heavily traveled segments of the Tollway system in a highly developed urban area.

Up to 150,000 vehicles a day travel on the Mile Long Bridge, which serves as an important facility for the movement of people and freight throughout the region. The structures travel over three waterways, two railroad lines, a Water Reclamation District of Greater Chicago facility, as well



as major distribution facilities for UPS and the Burlington Northern Santa Fe Railway.

“Interstate 294 is by far the most important corridor for us from a traffic perspective – not just traffic, but commercial vehicle traffic,” said Chief Planning Officer Rocco Zucchero. “This is one of the last of the original segments of the Illinois Tollway that dated back to the 1950s.”

Illinois Tollway leaders emphasized the agency’s track record of successfully delivering projects on time and within budget, with the entire reconstruction and widening of the Central Tri-State Tollway completed by the end of 2026, including the Mile Long Bridge.

“Built To Last” can be seen [here](#).

CONSTRUCTION INDUSTRY BUILDING CONNECTIONS BY PARTNERING FOR GROWTH

Building on an already successful mentorship program for professional engineering firms, the Illinois Tollway and its Technical Assistance Program providers are working with industry leaders to increase participation among construction firms in its Partnering For Growth program.

In June 2021, 15 firms interested in becoming protégés to work on Illinois Tollway construction projects met virtually with potential mentor firms sharing capability statements and the spending some time in break out rooms to network and make connections.

The event brought together both past Partnering For Growth mentor firms and new firms interested in mentoring other firms on Tollway construction projects.

The interested mentor firms were recruited with help from the Illinois Road and Transportation Builders Association, which hosted a roundtable meeting in May with the goal of encouraging more experienced prime contractors to take part in the Tollway’s program.

The Partnering for Growth Program for Construction encourages contractors and subcontractors to assist

disadvantaged, minority and women-owned business enterprise (D/M/WBE) firms and veteran-owned small businesses (VOSBs) in remaining self-sufficient, competitive and profitable.

Since the launch in November 2017, the Tollway has added 20 Partnering for Growth Construction agreements and awarded more than \$1 million in bid credits.

Partnering for Growth for Construction offers participating contractors the opportunity to earn up to \$100,000 per year in bid credits that may be applied toward future Tollway construction bids to lower the bid amount and increase the chances of winning the contract as the low bidder. Contractors have the flexibility to determine areas of assistance including business planning, project management, financial counseling and bonding, equipment utilization and submitting quotes.

Illinois Tollway Technical Assistance Program providers are available to assist partnering firms at every step.

ILLINOIS TOLLWAY AWARDS CONTRACT TO CONTINUE TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE SERVICES TO DIVERSE CONSTRUCTION FIRMS

The Illinois Tollway Board of Directors in 2021 awarded a contract valued at up to \$15.9 million to two agencies to strengthen and expand the technical assistance training and services offered to small, diverse transportation-related construction firms seeking to compete for Tollway projects.

The board awarded the three-year contract to Inner-City Underwriting Agency and The Mexican American Chamber of Commerce of Illinois. The contract may be renewed for an additional two years.

“We’re ensuring that our critical technical assistance support stays on track as we continue with our *Move Illinois* capital program,” said Illinois Tollway Executive Director José Alvarez.

“These services are vital to leveling the playing field for D/M/WBE and veteran-owned firms to ensure small, diverse businesses have every opportunity to benefit from the investments the Tollway is making in our regional infrastructure and economy.”

The Illinois Tollway’s Technical Assistance Program is intended to increase the pool of small and diverse businesses that are qualified to compete for contracts as prime contractors and subcontractors in the Tollway’s 15-year, \$14 billion *Move Illinois* capital program.

The agencies will collaborate to provide comprehensive business development and coaching assistance to disadvantaged, minority- and women-owned construction businesses, as well as offer those resources to veteran-owned, small construction businesses and firms providing engineering services.

The technical assistance services will be provided at no charge to businesses participating in the program, which is open to businesses located in the 12 Northern Illinois counties served by the Tollway.

Businesses participating in the Technical Assistance program receive comprehensive, customized business development assistance to build financial understanding and business plan development for increased business stability and growth in the transportation-related construction industry.

Services are customized to the assessed strengths, challenges and needs of participating firms. This includes education, guidance and feedback on general business and construction-specific operations, including strategic planning and assistance with the Illinois Department of Transportation pre-qualification applications.

Programs are either self-paced, allowing participants to determine how quickly the program is completed, or cohort-based, in which participants work in a group setting that invites a collaborative learning environment.

Since it was launched, the Tollway’s Technical Assistance Program has provided support and training to more than 750 firms working to succeed and grow through July 2021. Locations providing technical assistance for businesses are in Chicago, Cook County, the south suburbs and Rockford.



ILLINOIS TOLLWAY EXPANDS TO ENSURE EVERYONE IS ABLE TO ATTAIN AND RETAIN THE BENEFITS OF I-PASS

The Illinois Tollway opened enrollment to a significantly enhanced I-PASS Assist program in June 2021 to help customers realize the benefits of I-PASS. The program's aim is to ensure all Illinois residents are able to both attain, and more importantly retain, the financial benefits of using an I-PASS transponder when traveling on the Illinois Tollway system.



"Communities across Illinois rely on our roads and highways to get from point A to B safely every day, whether they are commuting to work, taking kids to school, or delivering goods and services," said Governor JB Pritzker. "Thanks to the new I-PASS Assist program, working families will receive critical financial relief that will remove barriers to access to the I-PASS system and offer all residents equal access to the Illinois Tollway System."

I-PASS customers save 50 percent on tolls and have the advantage of easily managing vehicles and travel costs online. As a condition of these benefits, customers are required to fund their accounts prior to incurring tolls, periodically replenish their accounts and maintain a transponder in their vehicle.

"To complement the improvements made to our system, expanding the current I-PASS Assist program is critical to making sure customers have access to the benefits of I-PASS," said Illinois Tollway Chairman and Chief Executive Officer Will Evans. "Through a partnership with the Illinois Department of Revenue, the Illinois Tollway is making it easy for customers to determine if they are eligible to join I-PASS Assist."

Often times, economically disadvantaged customers are reluctant to sign up for I-PASS due to the deposit required on transponders as well as the initial minimum prepayment and minimum, ongoing auto-replenishment amounts when account balances become low.

To be eligible for enrollment in I-PASS Assist, household income cannot exceed 250 percent of Federal Poverty Guidelines as verified by the Illinois Department of Revenue. For reference, an individual making \$31,900/year and a family of four making \$65,500/year would be eligible to enroll in I-PASS Assist.

"Our team has worked tirelessly on a plan to ensure our system is equitable and fair, and we're now building on the success of our extensive violation relief efforts to eliminate the challenges many customers face in becoming regular Tollway customers," said Illinois Tollway Executive Director José Alvarez. "By lowering the initial costs of enrollment and ensuring fees don't have a disparate impact on working families, we're building a network of support to ensure all families are able to access the same I-PASS rate that the vast majority of our customers already enjoy."

Under the enhanced I-PASS Assist Program, the financial requirements associated with an I-PASS have been reduced across the board—for qualifying customers.

- ◆ No transponder deposit required (currently \$10 deposit)
- ◆ Open and fund an account with as little as \$4 in initial prepaid tolls (currently \$20)
- ◆ Automatic account replenishment on low balances, as little as \$4 (currently \$10 minimum)

In addition, to help income-eligible customers retain the benefits of I-PASS, invoice fees, if any, will be eligible for dismissal through customer service for accounts in good standing. Fee avoidance has been found to be critical to assisting customers keep accounts in good standing.

"An expanded I-PASS Assist program is an important step toward making our transportation system more equitable," said Erin Aleman, executive director of the Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning. "When transportation connects people to economic opportunities, jobs and amenities, our entire region prospers."

NEW WAY TO PAY CHANGING THE TOLL PAYMENT GAME

In 2021, 1.5 million new accounts were opened to use the Illinois Tollway's Pay By Plate service, raising usage to more than two million customers leveraging the service to pay their tolls seamlessly online. And, nearly 60 percent of the users signing up for the new convenient way to pay are from out of state.

In the wake of a worldwide COVID-19 pandemic, the Illinois Tollway responded with extensive mitigation efforts including the halt to cash toll payments. With an urgent need to find new ways for customers to pay, the Tollway's operations and business team accelerated the development of a new technology designed to let infrequent and out of state customers set up a service to pay tolls for either short term, one-time payments for rental cars, or ongoing and infrequent use.

And while I-PASS is still the best, most cost-effective way to pay tolls on the Illinois Tollway, Pay By Plate now offers former cash customers a way to safely and securely pay unpaid tolls without an I-PASS transponder or I-PASS account.

The service has been so successful in serving customers, over one million unique travelers on the Illinois Tollway system have now enrolled in the service.

PAY-BY-PLATE

So, whether you just traveled or are about to travel, simply provide your license plate details, dates of travel, and a payment method and you're all set.

What can you do with Pay By Plate?

- ◆ Already miss a toll? No problem. For up to 14 days after you've traveled, you can now enter your vehicle and payment information into the Pay By Plate system.
- ◆ Our system will bill you the cash rate for your unpaid tolls.
- ◆ Renting or Borrowing a car? Pay Tolls Here! Now you can use the Pay By Plate system to pay and you'll be able to set a start and an end date to ensure you're not charged in the future for that same vehicle. This service allows you to backdate the start date by 14 days.
- ◆ Managing Multiple Vehicles? You can do that on Pay By Plate too! If you'd like, within the Pay By Plate system you can add vehicles and manage your payment methods.

2021 ILLINOIS TOLLWAY AWARDS

American Council of Engineering Companies, Illinois

2021 Engineering Excellence Awards

- ◆ Illinois Route 23 Interchange on the Jane Addams Memorial Tollway (I-90)—Honor Award
- ◆ Illinois Route 47 Interchange on the Reagan Memorial Tollway (I-88)—Honor Award
- ◆ Teen Driver Safety Education—Special Projects Award

2022 Engineering Excellence Awards

- ◆ Edens Spur (I-94) Reconstruction Project—Honor Award
- ◆ Illinois Prairie Path Underpass on the Reagan Memorial Tollway (I-88)—Merit Award

American Council of Engineering Companies, New York

2021 Engineering Excellence Awards

- ◆ Prairie Path Underpass under the Reagan Memorial Tollway (I-88)—Platinum Award

American Council of Engineering Companies, National

2021 Engineering Excellence Awards

- ◆ Illinois Route 23 Interchange on the Jane Addams Memorial Tollway (I-90)—Honor Award

American Public Works Association

2021 Excellence in Snow and Ice Control

- ◆ Illinois Tollway Roadway Maintenance

American Society of Civil Engineers, Illinois Section

Sustainability in Civil Engineering Achievement Award

- ◆ Aurora (M-8) Maintenance Facility

Construction Industry Service Corporation

Pride in Construction Awards for Projects of the Year—Infrastructure

- ◆ Mile Long Bridge Project on the Tri-State Tollway (I-294)

Engineering News-Record

ENR Regional Best Projects—Excellence in Safety Award of Merit

- ◆ Mile Long Bridge Project on the Tri-State Tollway (I-294)

Federal Highway Administration Center for Local Aid Support

Build a Better Mousetrap Competition, Bold Steps Award

- ◆ Roadway Electric Training System

Illinois Association of Chiefs of Police

Illinois Traffic Safety Challenge

- ◆ First place—Illinois State Police District 15

National Safety Council

Green Cross for Safety Awards

- ◆ Constant-Slope Barrier System—Semi-finalist, Safety Innovation

WORK ZONE SAFETY WEEK 2021: "DRIVE SAFE. WORK SAFE. SAVE LIVES."

In partnership with the Illinois Department of Transportation, Illinois State Police and Secretary of State Jesse White, the Illinois Tollway marked National Work Zone Awareness Week in April 2021, asking the public to "Drive safe. Work safe. Save lives."

"When you see orange, slow down, pay attention and avoid all distractions," said Illinois Transportation Secretary Omer Osman. "Always remember, the people you pass working on equipment or behind the cones and barricades are someone's father, mother, son, daughter, friend or neighbor. At the end of the day, they want to get home safely, just like you."

The theme for 2021 National Work Zone Awareness Week was "Drive safe. Work safe. Save lives," reinforcing the message that reaching a goal of zero work zone fatalities is truly a team effort by the public and the people who build our infrastructure.

To call attention to the life-and-death issues facing workers and the public in work zones, Gov. JB Pritzker proclaimed April 26-30 as "Work Zone Safety Awareness Week" in Illinois.

Throughout the construction season, the public should be on alert for lane closures, changes in traffic patterns, reduced speed limits and the presence of workers and equipment.

"The Illinois State Police support efforts to bring awareness to the public regarding issues that affect the lives and safety of all workers in Illinois," said ISP Director Brendan Kelly. "The goal of this week is to encourage people to make responsible choices and focus on the road when they get behind the wheel, so that together we can prevent another tragic loss to another family."

Each year, more than 6,400 motor vehicle crashes on average occur in Illinois work zones, resulting in more than 1,700 injuries. In 2020, 37 people died in work zones in Illinois, including two workers.

"This year, drivers will encounter work zones all across our system as we invest nearly \$1.5 billion to rebuild, widen and improve our roads," said Illinois Tollway Executive



Director José Alvarez. "This investment will mean better, safer roads for everyone, but it also means drivers must slow down and take precautions in work zones to protect the men and women who are making these vital improvements. Working together, we can make the roads safer for everyone."

The following guidelines for traveling through work zones should be followed at all times:

- ◆ Drop it and drive. Phones and electronic devices down at all times – it's the law.
- ◆ Obey the signs. They will help you safely navigate work zones – and sometimes avoid delays.
- ◆ Slow down. The posted speed limits are there for the safety of workers and you.
- ◆ Be on the lookout for slowed or stopped traffic.
- ◆ Consider the limitations of heavy equipment, trucks and commercial vehicles. Provide them extra distance to come to a complete stop if they are behind you.

"We have a responsibility to protect the people who work on and maintain our roads by driving safely and responsibly," said Secretary of State Jesse White. "When you approach a construction zone, reduce your speed and pay attention – that means putting your phone away and keeping your eyes on the road. I am pleased to join with Gov. Pritzker and our state's traffic safety partners in making sure that the roads of Illinois are the safest ever."