

Governor Quinn Kicks Off Construction of Tri-State Tollway and I-57 Interchange Ramp

Written by Brooke Anderson
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Joined by Elected Officials and Labor Leaders to Sign First Girder of Project to Dramatically Improve Access to Chicago Southland, Create Thousands of Jobs

POSEN – Governor Pat Quinn today kicked off construction of a new ramp connecting northbound Interstate 57 to the northbound Tri-State Tollway (I-294). The Governor was joined by local elected officials and labor representatives to sign the first steel girder for the new I-294/I-57 ramp, which is part of the \$254 million first phase of an interchange project that is supporting thousands of jobs over two years. The project supports Governor Quinn’s agenda to create jobs and build a 21st century infrastructure that will drive Illinois’ economy forward.

“From day one, I have made economic development in the south suburbs a top priority,” Governor Quinn said. “This interchange project will create thousands of good-paying jobs and generate economic development throughout the region for future generations.”

The first phase of the I-294/I-57 Interchange Project will create access from northbound I-57 to northbound I-294 and southbound I-294 to southbound I-57, including a new interchange at 147th Street. The approximately \$185 million phase is scheduled to be completed in 2014, delivering 75 percent of the project’s benefits to the traveling public. It will accommodate 76,000 vehicles per day, provide direct freight access to Chicago’s south suburbs and save drivers \$4 million annually in fuel consumption. Tri-State Tollway drivers currently using I-80 to get to I-57 will save 25 travel hours per year using the new interchange. The 147th Street ramps will improve local access, connecting residents to employment opportunities not easily accessible by public transportation.

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“Once complete, this interchange will provide the Southland with many benefits for years to come,” U.S. Representative Robin Kelly said. “Motorists will be able to reach more places quicker and easier. Existing businesses will enjoy improved access to highways in all directions. And local municipalities – particularly Harvey, Markham, Dixmoor and Posen – will find themselves more attractive to new developers. That’s a winning combination.”

More than 100 firms, including contractors, subcontractors, consultants and sub-consultants are currently working on Tollway contracts for the project. More than \$107 million in construction and engineering contracts have been awarded for this project through July, with 22.2 percent going to disadvantaged business enterprises. The Tollway estimates as many as 110 workers are employed on the job site each day, and Phase One of the project will create or sustain an estimated 3,300 total jobs.

“Thanks to the leadership of Governor Pat Quinn, this project is moving forward, creating jobs and the promise of increased economic development and improved access to the Chicago Southland,” Illinois Tollway Executive Director Kristi Lafleur said. “New construction is creating economic benefits now and, when complete, this interchange will improve freight-to-rail connections, expand this region’s multimodal network and help continue to stimulate our state’s economy for years to come.”

“This project is providing many people with good-paying jobs and will encourage more private development in area communities, which will create even more jobs,” Chicago Laborer’s District Council Business Manager Jim Connolly said. “We applaud Governor Quinn for his leadership on the current capital construction program, and we need to continue to build on this success.”

To start the first phase of this project, the Illinois Tollway has completed the realignment of Dixie Creek and the installation of all 11 piers required for the new ramp connecting northbound I-57 to northbound I-294. The second phase of the project will begin in 2023 and be completed in 2024.

The project is a joint effort of the Illinois Tollway and the Illinois Department of Transportation. It is funded through Governor Quinn’s Illinois Jobs Now! capital program and the Tollway’s Move Illinois capital program.

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Over the past nine years, the Tollway has invested approximately \$1.6 billion in roadway infrastructure improvements in the Chicago Southland, including rebuilding and widening the south Tri-State Tollway between Illinois Route 394 and 95th Street and construction of the south extension of the Veterans Memorial Tollway (I-355).

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