State of Illinois
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Illinois Department of Transportation
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Express lanes anticipated to reopen on Kennedy the week of Jan. 13

Testing begins Jan. 2, second year of expressway rehabilitation nears end

CHICAGO – The Illinois Department of Transportation announced today that testing of the new reversible gate system on the Kennedy Expressway (Interstate 90/94) express lanes will begin, weather permitting, Thursday, Jan. 2. Due to the complexity of the overall Reversible Lane Access Control system, additional time is needed to ensure the safety components are fully integrated and their functions operating seamlessly before testing can begin and the reversible lanes reopen to the public.

"As we approach the finish line on the most complex piece of the Kennedy project, we appreciate your continued patience," said Illinois Transportation Secretary Omer Osman. "The improvements are highly technical and require time and effort behind the scenes, but they will result in a much safer and reliable system for the millions of people who rely on the Kennedy. We look forward to opening the express lanes as safely and expeditiously as possible."

Pending the safe and successful completion of the final round of testing, the express lanes are anticipated to reopen the week of Jan. 13.

The overall Kennedy rehabilitation project, from the Edens Expressway (Interstate 94) junction to Ohio Street, is taking place over three construction seasons. The inbound Kennedy was completed in 2023, with the outbound lanes starting next spring and taking one full construction season to complete.

The focus this year has been on the express lanes and the REVLAC system. In addition to rehabilitating the bridges and pavement in the two express lanes in the center of the Kennedy, the work has involved technical aspects not always visible to the public, namely the rehabilitation and replacement of the entire REVLAC system.

The REVLAC system controls the gates and whether traffic flow inbound or outbound. Work included installing 120 gates, integrating local and remote controls, replacing multiple cameras, modernizing electrical components as well as fiber-optic cables and terminal blocks along the 7.5

miles. New overhead sign structures and signs also were installed. Additionally, Hubbard's Cave (Grand Avenue to Wayman Street) was painted, and new LED lights installed.

The testing starting Jan. 2, will ensure the new system is operating safety and according to design before accommodating live traffic.

Made possible by Gov. JB Pritzker's Rebuild Illinois capital program, the $150 million project is rehabilitating 36 bridge structures and the reversible express lane system, replacing overhead sign structures, as well as installing new signage and modernized LED lights. The improvements also include pavement patching and structural painting.

The Kennedy Expressway officially opened in November 1960, with the last major rehabilitation completed in 1994. The reversible express lane system was upgraded in 1996, replacing the original 1960s system. The project will improve safety, traffic flow and reliability for the more than 275,000 motorists who use the expressway each day.

For more information, visit https://idot.illinois.gov/projects/Interstate-90-Kennedy-Bridge-Study. The website features project details, maps, photos and fact sheets. The public can email questions to DOT.KennedyRehab@illinois.gov. For systemwide traffic and road conditions, visit www.gettingaroundillinois.com. You also can follow IDOT on Facebook and X.

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