



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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**ILLINOIS TOLLWAY EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR CASSAUNDR A ROUSE
NAMED WTS INTERNATIONAL AND CHICAGO CHAPTER WOMAN OF THE YEAR**

Awards recognize women who are outstanding role models in transportation

DOWNERS GROVE, IL – Illinois Tollway Executive Director Cassaundra Rouse has been named Woman of the Year by WTS Greater Chicago Chapter and by WTS International for exemplifying its efforts to strengthen the transportation industry and support the global advancement of women in leadership.

"I am honored by this recognition which reflects more than just my journey," said Illinois Tollway Executive Director Cassaundra Rouse. "It symbolizes the Illinois Tollway's long-standing commitment to access, mobility and creating opportunities for women throughout the transportation industry."

WTS local and international leadership selected Rouse for this double distinction in recognition of her commitment to keeping diversity and inclusion at the heart of the Tollway's long-term capital investment strategies and agency operations, as well as for her leadership in opening doors for women and minorities across the transportation industry.

"Cassaundra Rouse exemplifies the qualities of a forward-thinking and results-oriented leadership that make her worthy of our Woman of the Year Award," said WTS International Board Chair and Lumenor Consulting Group CEO Bridgette Beato. "Her trailblazing efforts have not only advanced transportation infrastructure but have also inspired innovation, collaboration and progress across the transportation sector."

"Cassaundra's leadership is an inspiration to women across the transportation industry," said WTS Greater Chicago President Mary Lou Kutska. "Her commitment to excellence and inclusion has elevated the status and reputation of women leaders in our field and we are proud to honor her achievements."

Under Rouse's leadership, the Illinois Tollway is modernizing critical transportation infrastructure through its capital investments, which in turn fuel development, create jobs and drive regional growth.

As an advocate for equity Rouse guides the Illinois Tollway's commitment to supporting opportunities for small, diverse, women- and veteran-owned firms, as well as underrepresented individuals, to participate in Tollway projects and contracts – further strengthening the region's economy.

Rouse has also prioritized the Illinois Tollway's investment in the future workforce, expanding agency-supported workforce training and development programs for the heavy highway and related construction industries, along with internship and outreach programs that introduce high school and

college students to careers in transportation. These efforts help build a pipeline of diverse, talented professionals ready to lead the industry forward.

“I’m deeply honored to receive this recognition from WTS, which reflects both the incredible team I work with at the Illinois Tollway and the importance of creating opportunities for others,” said Rouse. “I believe that when we invest in people – whether through mentorship, education or greater access to opportunity – we build stronger communities and a better future for transportation.”

The WTS Greater Chicago Chapter honored Rouse during an awards ceremony in Chicago on May 1, and WTS International celebrated her achievement during its annual conference in Toronto on May 8.

About Cassandra Rouse



Cassandra Rouse is the Executive Director of the Illinois Tollway, appointed by Governor JB Pritzker in August 2022. Rouse’s responsibilities include oversight of the state’s 294-mile Tollway system, the Tollway’s historic \$15 billion *Move Illinois* capital program, now in its 14th year, as well as the new 7-year, \$2 billion Bridging the Future capital plan.

Rouse leads a workforce of 1,400 employees whose mission is to provide a safe, effective and efficient toll highway system, ensuring the highest level of service for more than 1.6 million daily drivers.

In 2024, Rouse was named vice-chair of the Metropolitan Planning Organization Policy Committee, which works with the Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning to plan, develop and maintain the regional transportation system. Rouse also was appointed by Governor Pritzker to serve as a commission on the Illinois High-Speed Railway Commission, which was established to create a statewide high-speed railway network plan for Illinois.

Rouse serves on the board of directors of the International Bridge Tunnel and Turnpike Association (IBTTA) which represents toll facilities and businesses in 23 countries and six continents working to solve infrastructure challenges of the 21st century. Rouse also serves on the IBTTA Women in Tolling Council. Additionally, she is a member of the WTS Greater Chicago Chapter advisory board. WTS promotes the development and advancement of women in one of the nation’s largest transportation hubs.

WTS International

WTS International is dedicated to creating a more diverse, inclusive, and equitable transportation industry through the global advancement of women. WTS is: Advancing women; advancing transportation with 8,500 members and 65 professional chapters throughout North America. WTS, in collaboration with its Foundation, attract, sustain, connect, and advance women to strengthen the transportation industry. www.WTSInternational.org.

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.