



ILLINOIS TOLLWAY NEWS

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ILLINOIS TOLLWAY CONTINUING TO CREATE OPPORTUNITIES FOR SMALL CONSTRUCTION BUSINESSES

September Board approval includes fifth contract in 2026 as part of its Small Business Initiative

DOWNERS GROVE, IL – The Illinois Tollway Board of Directors today approved one new construction contract at the September Board meeting supporting its ongoing commitment to offering contracts that create opportunities for small businesses and attract new firms to bid on Tollway contracts.

The contract was bid as part of the Illinois Tollway Small Business Initiative, a race- and gender-neutral program for small construction companies with gross revenues of \$14 million or less annually. This is the fifth Small Business Initiative contract awarded in 2026.

“The Illinois Tollway is committed to helping small firms succeed in the construction industry and have a chance to take on the role as prime contractors,” said Illinois Tollway Executive Director Cassaundra Rouse. “Membership in the Tollway’s Small Business Initiative remains strong, with more than 180 registered firms, of which more than 84 percent are diverse or veteran-owned firms.”

The Small Business Initiative puts small businesses in a position to succeed and grow by identifying select construction contracts, generally with values of approximately \$5 million or less, specifically for small businesses to perform as prime contractors and subcontractors; establishing diversity goals for select construction contracts on a project-by-project basis; and by providing liability coverage for on-site activities for contractors and subcontractors through the Rolling Owner-Controlled Insurance Program.

The September Board action included a \$1.1 million construction contract awarded to Staalsen Construction Company Inc., Chicago, IL, for facility improvements. The contract includes two certified disadvantaged, minority- and women-owned business enterprise (D/M/WBE) firms, as well as one certified veteran-owned firm. The commitment for D/M/WBE participation is 36.16 percent and commitment for veteran participation is 3.46 percent.

Nearly \$527.9 million in contracts has been approved by the Tollway Board in 2026, including \$226.6 million as part of the 15th year of the Tollway’s 16-year, \$15 billion *Move Illinois* capital program and \$301.3 million as part of the seven-year, \$2 billion *Bridging the Future* plan. The Illinois Tollway’s 2026 capital program calls for investing \$1.26 billion.

Overall, more than \$12.5 billion has been invested by the Illinois Tollway since 2012, with more than \$3.36 billion of that total committed to small, diverse and veteran-owned firms. In addition, the capital program has created or sustained an estimated 156,240 total jobs as of August 2026.

Construction contracts for Illinois Tollway projects are competitively bid under the rules of the Illinois Procurement Code.

The Illinois Tollway broadcasts all public meetings on the Tollway's website at www.illinoistollway.com. This includes all board meetings and public bid openings. Also provided is detailed information about current Tollway construction and professional engineering services contracts in the Construction Contract Tracker.

About *Move Illinois*

The Illinois Tollway's 16-year, \$15 billion capital program, *Move Illinois: The Illinois Tollway Driving the Future*, is improving mobility, relieving congestion, reducing pollution, creating as many as 165,220 jobs and linking economies throughout the region. During the first 14 years of *Move Illinois*, the Tollway has delivered the new Illinois Route 390 Tollway and a rebuilt and widened Jane Addams Memorial Tollway (I-90) with its new SmartRoad corridor, as well as opened a new interchange connecting the Tri-State Tollway (I-294) to I-57. Progress continues on projects addressing the remaining needs of the existing Tollway system, delivering the new I-490 Tollway Project and reconstructing of the Central Tri-State Tollway (I-294).

About *Bridging the Future*

Approved in 2024, *Bridging the Future* is a seven-year, \$2 billion plan designed to continue infrastructure improvements, bridging the gap between the agency's current and next long-term capital program. Based on stakeholder feedback and engagement, *Bridging the Future* is addressing ongoing modernization initiatives and continuing to support investments in the people and firms working to improve regional mobility.

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.

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