



ASPIRE NSF ERC – Illinois Tollway Joint Press Release

Illinois Tollway Joins ASPIRE’s Industry and Innovation Board

Monday, April 10, 2025 – ASPIRE National Science Foundation (NSF) Engineering Research Center is proud to announce Illinois Tollway as the newest member of its Industry and Innovation Board (IIB). This strategic partnership is poised to place Illinois on the electrified transportation infrastructure map as one of the most technologically advanced states in the U.S.

“The Illinois Tollway is committed to leading the way in innovation by integrating new technologies and expanding EV infrastructure across our 294-mile roadway system,” said Illinois Tollway Executive Director Cassandra Rouse. “Long-term strategic investments and our new partnership with ASPIRE underscore our goal to be one of the first agencies in the U.S. to pilot and deliver in-road electric vehicle charging to our customers.”

The collaboration between Illinois Tollway and ASPIRE focuses on advancing in-road wireless charging to expand EV infrastructure. By combining research with real-world application, this partnership supports sustainable transportation and promotes economic growth through technological innovation.

“The Illinois Tollway is pivotal in advancing innovation, sustainability, and mobility in one of the nation’s most critical transportation corridors. ASPIRE is proud to support its strategic goals by collaborating on cutting-edge technologies like in-road EV charging,” noted Don Linford, ASPIRE’s Director of Innovation and Ecosystem Development. “This partnership brings tremendous value to the ASPIRE Research Center and our Industry and Innovation Board members by supporting the acceleration of real-world deployment of innovative infrastructure solutions.”

About ASPIRE

Advancing Sustainability through Powered Infrastructure for Roadway Electrification (ASPIRE) is a 4th generation National Science Foundation (NSF) Engineering Research Center (ERC) which conducts vital R&D to catalyze practical transitions to widespread electrification in transportation. ASPIRE initiatives enhance quality-of-life for all through improved air quality, economic opportunity, and access to clean, affordable transportation.

Over 400 global ASPIRE staff, faculty, and students work in sync towards the seamless integration of electrified transportation with interconnected intelligent systems infrastructure to provide an inexpensive, seamless charging experience.

Multiple disciplines, including engineering, social science, policy, and business, contribute to the effort spanning 10 top-tier universities and 60+ industry, government, and non-profit organizations. They are joined by many community partners and advisors to provide a most comprehensive view of the electric transportation ecosystem and society. Visit aspire.usu.edu for more insights on the future of transportation.

About 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.