

Longer wait for new I-90 ramps
Completion date for full Huntley interchange pushed into fall
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HUNTLEY – Route 47 commuters wanting to use new eastbound and westbound ramps on Interstate 90 in Huntley will have to wait a little longer because of some minor delays to the multimillion-dollar interchange project.

The Illinois Toll Highway Authority originally estimated this summer as the time when travelers could start using the revamped interchange at Route 47 and I-90 that would for the first time allow commuters to go east and west along the interstate from Route 47.

But since breaking ground on the project in June, engineers have had to redesign support piers for the bridges that carry Route 47 traffic over the interstate, and Tollway officials took longer than anticipated to acquire nearby properties to make room for the six new ramps.

The delays have pushed the completion date to early November, village officials have learned.

But the setbacks are relatively minor, since the full interchange still will be ready for use by the end of the year, said Lisa Armour, the village manager's senior assistant.

"Everybody obviously wants it done as soon as possible, but it has always been on line to be completed by 2013," Armour said. "We don't have any indications that will be any different."

Village officials are eager to see the eastbound and westbound ramps open to traffic, after working for more than a decade with multiple governments and agencies to secure funding for the \$61 million project.

Officials have hoped that unbridled access into Huntley from both the Chicago and Rockford areas would accelerate economic development in a village that already has seen exponential population growth.

Since interchange construction started, Huntley has started working with Centegra Health System on constructing a full-service hospital and has recruited LionHeart Engineering to move its headquarters from Woodstock to a business park near the interstate.

The interchange project also has drawn the interest of prospective hotel developers, restaurant owners and data centers, said Victor Narusis, business recruitment coordinator for Huntley's economic development department.

The department will look to capitalize on that heightened interest, as Narusis and other staffers plan to actively recruit more businesses through increased networking in 2013.

The department already has been to five business conventions this year, with seven more scheduled. Officials also are reaching out to bankers, engineers and existing Huntley businesses.

“We are doing economic development on a proactive basis and not sitting around and waiting for it to happen,” Narusis said.

In the coming months, Tollway crews will complete construction on the six new ramps and rebuild the existing Route 47 bridge to carry northbound traffic over I-90.

Construction crews also will install new traffic signals along the interchange. This comes after the Tollway built a new southbound bridge over I-90 last year and started work on the new ramps.

“We are happy to see the progress continuing,” Armour said.