



# **IN HANDS OF MOTHER NATURE: IDOT works to open Illinois 143 near Wood River, southbound US 67 near Clark Bridge**

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**COLLINSVILLE** - Questions have been flying over past couple days about when the **Illinois Department of Transportation will open Illinois 143** west of Illinois 255 in the Wood River area and **US 67** southbound into Missouri at the Clark Bridge.

The two routes have been closed now for multiple days and it is affecting many commuters. The answer from IDOT is it is mostly dependent on Mother Nature and what happens over the weekend and upcoming days.

**IDOT District 8 spokesperson Joe Monroe** said IDOT obviously wants to all the routes in the area open, but at the same time wants to keep things safe for motorists.

Much of West Alton remains under water and it is affecting US 67 southbound into Missouri.

“The whole roadway on that side is closed,” Monroe said of right past the Clark Bridge in Alton into Missouri. “In West Alton, water is trapped between the levee system. The two rivers there have almost merged together. They can’t pump over there yet.”

Monroe, an Alton resident, knows the tremendous hardship that occurs for motorists with that area closed just outside Alton.

“It also eliminates the ability to go for (emergency) cardiac care as quickly to Christian Northeast from Alton,” he said. “Alton works conversely with Christian Northeast as a team and this hinders that.”

The forecast this weekend is for snow and freezing temperatures, dropping down to 9 degrees.

“We will need to get to Monday and see exactly how this storm unfolds,” Monroe said. “We are working with the Corps of Engineers to facilitate an opening, but there is no timetable yet on that for the US 67 southbound route after the Clark Bridge.”

Monroe said as far as Illinois 143 west of Illinois 255, IDOT is working to try to get the road reopened.

“We have trucks down there plowing debris,” he said. “We have to take into consideration this storm headed our way and evaluate what is best for motorists. Right now there is a detour on Illinois 111 that allows you to circumvent the closed area.”

Monroe said IDOT has considered taking just the right lanes and opening it to traffic, but with the weather forecast with a low of 9 degrees it may make it difficult to open

this weekend. Both sides of Illinois 143 in that area have over five feet of water, Monroe said, with one side having about six feet presently.

“Right now there is enough moisture that with an inch of snow it is all liquid. With this storm, the ground near the Illinois 143 there is exceptionally saturated. If the temps die down over the weekend, we will consider what is our best course of action for that area.”