

Pritzker Administration Announces on Schedule Reopening of Murray Baker Bridge Following Extensive Renovations

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PEORIA – Gov. JB Pritzker was joined by the Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT) and local officials today to announce the Murray Baker Bridge rehabilitation will be completed on schedule and reopen to the public on October 31st. The project, one of the first under Gov. Pritzker’s historic, bipartisan Rebuild Illinois capital

program, improved a critical travel corridor and regional landmark safer, quicker, and for less money by closing the work zone to all traffic for seven months instead of multiple construction seasons.

“When I ran for governor, I promised that I would pass a robust capital bill to fix roads and bridges across the state so we can again create jobs and grow our economy. State representatives and senators from both sides of the aisle worked with me last year to create the bipartisan Rebuild Illinois capital plan – the largest infrastructure investment in our state’s history,” said Governor JB Pritzker. “Since we passed that plan, I’ve presided over groundbreaking ceremonies for new projects all across the state. But today is different. It’s a very special day. Because today we get to celebrate the completion of one of those projects, as I-74’s Murray Baker Bridge opens back up to the public later this week. And I’m proud to say that not only was this project completed on time, but also on budget.”

The \$42.2 million rehabilitation [project](#) removed and replaced the existing bridge deck, repaired structural steel, repainted lower portions of the bridge and installed new lighting, resulting in a smoother, safer ride for commuter and freight traffic. As part of a joint effort with the City of Peoria, energy-efficient decorative lighting was added to enhance a community focal point.

Carrying Interstate 74 over the Illinois River between Peoria and East Peoria, the Murray Baker Bridge was built in 1958 and carries almost 68,000 vehicles a day. The most recent upgrade was in 2005, with the last replacement of the bridge deck in 1984.

“The Murray Baker Bridge is a linchpin in the regional economy and the state’s overall transportation network,” said Acting Illinois Transportation Secretary Omer Osman. “Under Gov. Pritzker, we are delivering projects through Rebuild Illinois that improve quality of life and strengthen our competitive advantage as the country’s transportation hub.”

To complete the project, the bridge was closed March 29. By removing traffic from the work zone, the repairs were completed in just one construction season, reducing the overall project cost and eliminating a safety risk to workers and motorists.

A project webpage with maps, photos and videos of the bridge under construction can be viewed by clicking [here](#) or visiting www.gettingaroundpeoria.com.

“I was proud to be one of the House lead negotiators for the Capital Bill under Governor Pritzker’s administration. This bridge will be an attraction for generations to come because now it is one of the most beautiful bridges in our country. This bridge is also symbolic as to where we are going as a region in Central Illinois as it relates to new

investments,” said Representative Jehan Gordon-Booth (D-Peoria). “I want to thank Governor Pritzker and my colleagues for this great bipartisanship achieve for Central Illinois. What we need right now, more than ever, is real leaders that know how to get things done.”

“The revitalization of the Murray Baker Bridge is a long time coming,” said Senator Dave Koehler (D-Peoria). “The peace of mind that comes with regular maintenance of our roads and bridges cannot be understated and the newly installed lights add to the already magnificent Peoria skyline.”

“The refurbishment of the iconic Murray Baker bridge is important for the future of the Greater Peoria region. Improving system reliability for commercial travel as well as commuters is tantamount,” said Representative Ryan Spain (R-Peoria). “This is a testament to the power of bipartisan cooperation, as well as the benefits that come from investing in the transportation infrastructure of our state.”

Passed in 2019, Rebuild Illinois is investing \$33.2 billion into the state’s aging transportation system, creating jobs and promoting economic growth. Rebuild Illinois is not only the largest capital program in state history but also the first one that touches all modes of Illinois transportation: roads and bridges, transit, waterways, freight and passenger rail, aviation, and bicycle and pedestrian accommodations.

In Peoria alone, multiple IDOT [projects](#) are underway or starting in 2021, highlighting a commitment to improve safety, reduce congestion and encourage economic growth throughout the region. The [projects](#) represent a total investment of more than \$281 million.