



Springfield Rail Improvement Project's Ash Street Underpass Named 'Project Of The Year'

May 10 2021 4:45 PM

SPRINGFIELD – The Illinois Department of Transportation announced today that the Illinois chapter of the American Public Works Association has recognized the Ash Street underpass in Springfield as its “Project of the Year.”

“We’re proud to bring home this award for the Ash Street underpass, which increases safety for motorists and pedestrians while laying the groundwork for improved passenger rail service and future freight traffic needs,” said Acting Illinois Transportation Secretary Omer Osman. “We credit the success of the project to our collaboration with the City of Springfield, the Illinois Commerce Commission and other stakeholders. Working together, we are improving quality of life for Springfield. ”

The Ash Street underpass, which improves rail travel through Springfield along the Chicago-to-St. Louis corridor, took APWA’s top prize in the \$5 million to \$25 million category. The improvements upgraded the Norfolk Southern Railroad and added tracks for the Union Pacific Railroad. The project created additional track capacity to accommodate future freight traffic and passenger trains once the full project is complete.

The underpass includes a four-lane street with pedestrian accommodations. Removing the crossing improves safety, reduces congestion and enhances access for vehicles and public transit.

“The Ash Street underpass is an illustration of progress for Springfield that improves pedestrian and vehicular access and safety through this east-west transportation corridor,” Springfield Mayor Jim Langfelder said. “This recognition shows that when all levels of government work in partnership with the private sector – for the betterment of community and its residents – the end result is success.”

In addition to Project of the Year, IDOT took home two other prizes.

- A project to reconstruct Miller City Road was awarded "Best Disaster or Emergency Construction/Repair" of less than \$5 million. Following record flooding last spring, the road – a major artery for farming and commuting in southern Illinois' Alexander County – was largely destroyed. Conventional repairs would have taken at least a year to complete. An emergency declaration by Gov. JB Pritzker made repairs eligible for Federal Highway Administration funding. Within days, FHWA, Alexander County and IDOT's District 9 in Carbondale pressed forward to minimize the impact to the area. The reconstructed Miller City Road opened in just three months.
- Old Route 66 concrete patching was named the "Best Historical Restoration /Preservation" project of less than \$5 million. A historic landmark, Old Route 66 remains a major tourist attraction and a serviceable road in parts of Illinois. Between Chenoa and Pontiac, the road required repairs but needed to maintain its historic appearance according to strict preservation guidelines. Through coordination with the State Historic Preservation Office, IDOT's District 3 in Ottawa replaced a minimal amount of original concrete with patches that seamlessly blend with existing pavement.