

Clark Bridge Undergoes "Routine" Inspection, Lane Closures Expected

by Sydney Sinks, News Reporter
September 14 2023 4:43 PM



ALTON - Clark Bridge will have daily lane closures for the next month as the Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT) completes inspections of the cable system.

From Sept. 11 to Oct. 13, motorists can expect delays when traveling U.S. Route 67 over the Mississippi River on Clark Bridge, which connects Illinois and Missouri. The

Clark Bridge has a unique design, so while this isn't necessarily a regular inspection, it is a normal maintenance task for this kind of bridge.

"This is a scheduled inspection," Joseph Monroe, an IDOT engineer, said. "This isn't an inspection that was put into place out of duress. This is a routine approach to this class of structure."

The Clark Bridge, also known as the Super Bridge, attracted attention when it first opened in 1994 because of its design. It's a steel-framed cable-stayed bridge, which means most of the weight is supported by the cables. Pylon provides additional support. This design was the first of its kind in the U.S. when it was built.

"It's hard to call it routine, because it's a very unique signature bridge," Monroe said. "But for that class of structure, it's a routine inspection."

IDOT will be inspecting the cables, damper system and other parts of the bridge to make sure it is still structurally sound. A damper system, which is common in cable-stayed bridges, suppresses vibrations from traffic and wind to prevent the bridge itself from vibrating.

For several months now, there has also been construction on U.S. Route 67 near West Alton, Missouri, near Clark Bridge. This construction is through the Missouri Department of Transportation. Because there are currently two major operations on and near Clark Bridge, Monroe urges drivers to be extra cautious.

IDOT currently expects inspections to be complete by Oct. 13. While lane closures on and near the bridge can be inconvenient, Monroe noted the importance of making sure Clark Bridge is operating as it should be.

"We don't want to be reactionary," Monroe added. "We want to be proactive in our approach to that structure."