Safety features are built in

This won't be your grandparents' Highway 41. When the project is complete in 2016, there will be more safety features built into this roadway than could have been imagined just a couple of generations ago.

The new message board pictured above for southbound traffic near Lineville Road in Brown County is an example. More than just a simple electronic sign, this message board is tied into Wisconsin's Intelligent Transportation System (ITS). This system includes controllable cameras and traffic sensors built into the new highway that can help WisDOT respond to changing conditions on the highway and give motorists time to slow down or change their route.

Scott Nelson, WisDOT's Traffic Safety Engineer on the I-41 Project, listed a number of other safety features being built in as part of the project (see blue box). Motorists are probably familiar with some of these, such as "rumble strips" that are being installed over the length of the project to the right and left of the roadway—"they help alert drowsy or inattentive drivers to stay in their lane," Nelson said. Wider sholders allow for more room for drivers in distress and are possible on this project because the existing roadway footprint is already wide enough.

Higher median barriers (56" rather than 42") help prevent crossover crashes as well as "rubbernecking crashes," secondary incidents in the opposite lanes caused from people stopping and gawking at the initial crash. Nelson said it is an improvement based on feedback gathered from regular monthly meetings that WisDOT conducts with first responders, including firefighters, law enforcement, EMS, towing professionals and county highway departments.

Nelson said the improved interchanges are easy to spot, where the big flyover ramps connect I-41 to US 45, WIS 29 and I-43. "From a safety perspective, the difference is night and day," Nelson said. "The ramps are built to better meet drivers' expectations because they flow freely and will be at speeds that drivers expect. Additionally, the on- and off-ramp acceleration and deceleration distance has

Continued on page 3

I-41 System safety features:

- Improved interchange ramps
- Higher median barriers
- Wider shoulders
- Smoother riding surfaces
- Rumble strips throughout
- Intersection improvements
- Roundabouts
- Crash investigation sites
- Collector-distributor roadways
- Pedestrian and bicycle enhancements
- Improved signs and markings

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Much progress was made in 2014

Accomplishments in 2014 included completion of the I-41/WIS 29 Systems interchange which culminated in a June ribbon-cutting ceremony on one of the new flyover ramps (above) and the start of construction on the I-43 interchange ramps (top left).

Freeway Service Team is ready to help

If your vehicle stalls in the I-41 Project construction zone during a busy weekday, the Freeway Service Team vehicle is there to help. Its purpose is to expedite relocation of disabled and crashed vehicles from the construction zone to prevent or alleviate congestion and backups.

The Freeway Service Team vehicle looks like a standard flatbed tow truck, painted bright yellow-green for increased visibility and easy recognition. It is equipped with small amounts of fuel and equipment to handle minor repairs such as changing flat tires and taping hoses. If the stranded vehicle can't be started in a short amount of time, it is moved to a pre-determined safe drop zone.

All assistance and relocation services are provided free of charge to the motorist.

Tom Buchholz takes over as Program Manager

Tom Buchholz, who has been with WisDOT's Northeast Region since 1992, was named Program Manager for the I-41, WIS 441 and WIS 15 Projects in December 2014. Most recently, Buchholz was Project Manager for the Leo Frigo Bridge Repair Project (2013-2014) and for the Winnebago County segment of the I-41 Project (2000-2014). He managed the Wisconsin Street Bridge Project in Oshkosh (2000-2008).

Originally from Omro, Buchholz earned his Civil/Environmental Engineering degree from the University of Wisconsin-Madison.

Tom Buchholz
US 41/WIS 441/WIS 15
Program Manager

The end is within sight

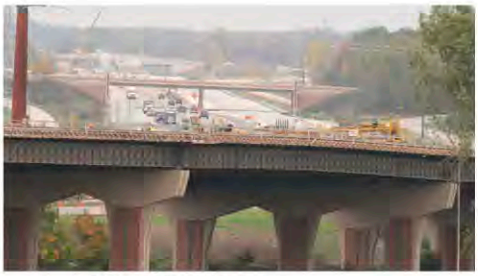
Motorists who travel through the I-41 Project in Brown County this year will find a busy construction zone, but they may be relieved to know that the end of construction is within sight. "We'll have plenty of workers and construction equipment out there in Brown County, but you are beginning to see and use parts of the finished highway," said Mike King, WisDOT's I-41 Construction Supervisor.

King said that the highlights of work being done this year include the mainline I-41 work from Glory Road to 9th Street and from Memorial Drive to Lakeview Drive. He also said traffic will be constricted with narrowed lane widths and reduced shoulders in these areas, and the lanes motorists use may switch from time to time as sections are completed in one direction and traffic is moved onto them while crews work on lanes in the other direction.

Work in progress this year includes:

- I- 41/I-43 systems interchange
- Velp Avenue interchange
- I-41 overpasses at Morris Avenue and Cormier Road
- Parkview Road bridges
- WIS 172 interchange ramps
- Waube Lane/Oneida Street interchange reconstruction

For more information about individual projects and traffic impacts, visit the Brown County Project Briefs page at US41wisconsin.gov.



Massive tub girders were put in place in 2014 for some of the new I-41 / I-43 interchange ramps.

Move over or get pulled over

It's always important to reduce your speed while driving through a construction zone for the safety of construction workers and other motorists. Wisconsin State Patrol Sgt. John Jones reminds motorists that when there's a traffic incident in the construction zone, "driving with caution is even more important."

Jones said that to help safeguard law enforcement officers, emergency responders, road maintenance workers and others who work on the side of highways, Wisconsin has a "Move Over Law." The law requires drivers to shift lanes or slow down in order to provide a "safety zone" for a squad car, ambulance, fire truck, tow truck, utility vehicle or highway maintenance vehicle that is stopped on the side of the road with its warning lights flashing.

Sgt. John Jones
WI State Patrol

"Drivers have two options for creating a safety zone," Jones said. "If the road has more than one directional lane, like the interstate, and you can switch lanes safely, you must move over to vacate the lane closest to the law enforcement or other vehicle with its lights flashing. If the road has a single directional lane or you can't safely move over, you must reduce your speed."

Jones said that failure of motorists to move over is one of the reasons that motor vehicle crashes kill more law enforcement officers on duty than any other cause.

Safety features

Continued from page 1

been increased to allow a greater distance for traffic to merge and diverge from mainline traffic."

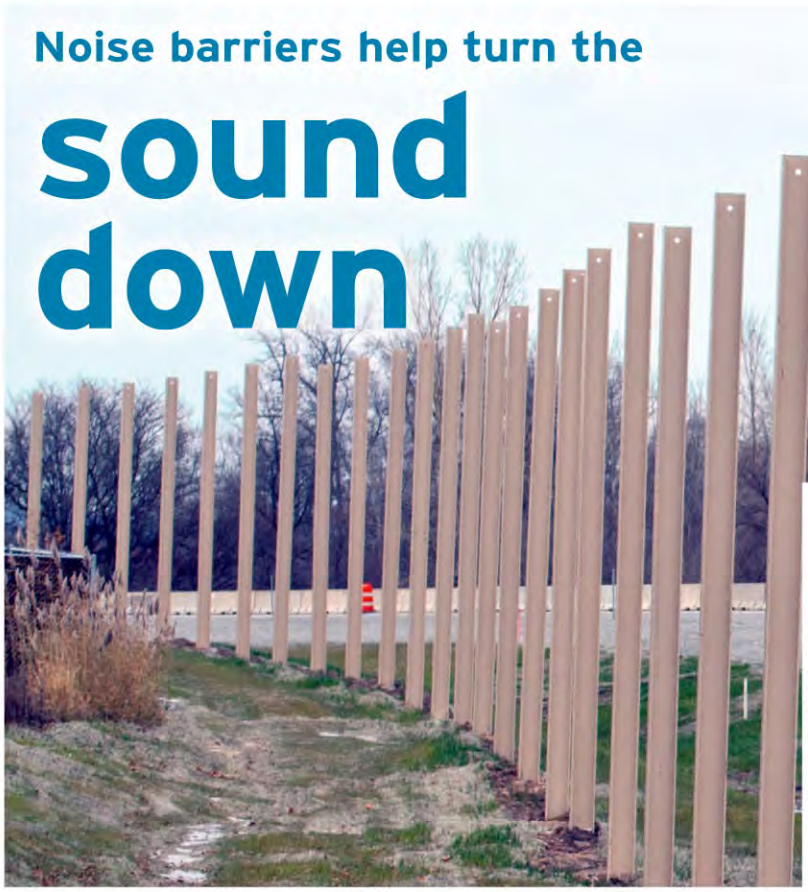
Nelson said the new I-41 will be "much friendlier for trucks." He added that the big flyover ramps with banked curves are coated with friction-enhancing epoxy overlays to help vehicles stay on the ramps during adverse pavement conditions.

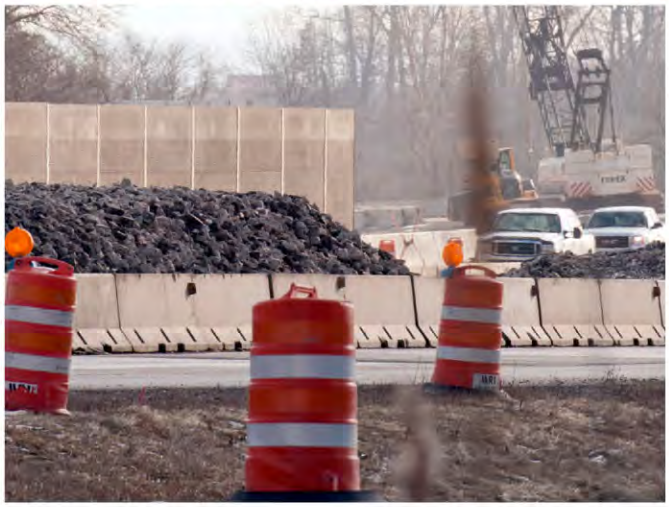
In some areas, motorists will notice the mainline roadway divided into "through lanes," and lanes that connect to exit ramps. These are known as "collector-distributor roadways" and help keep the flow of traffic moving smoothly, Nelson said. As far as highway signs and markings, he said, "Engineers are continually making them brighter and better."

Roundabouts have been shown to sharply decrease the number of serious crashes at intersections just off the highway. At signalized intersections, motorists will find that each lane has its own overhead signal, and there are now flashing yellow arrows for vehicles turning left. Lesser-known features include gentler cross slopes in ditches to help reduce the number of rollover crashes. Nelson said the new highway will have a smoother riding surface, which from a friction standpoint, means a smoother ride with fewer imperfections that can cause erratic movements. "This makes the overall ride safer," he said.

Noise barriers help turn the

sound down





Photos of the new noise wall being constructed near the westbound WIS 172 to northbound I-41 ramp.

WisDOT engineers planning major highway jobs like the I-41 Project have to accommodate more and more vehicles, and they also have to deal with the noise that this traffic will make. That's why at the start of each state highway project, WisDOT determines noise impacts and determines how to best keep down the noise, especially in residential or other noise-sensitive areas.

After careful evaluation, WisDOT installs noise barriers along portions of state highways to minimize noise impacts. They are typically made of precast, composite, sound-absorptive panels that can have different textures and colors. Some look like stone, or brick, or they may be smooth or have grooved patterns.

Noise level criteria are used for considering barriers for different land-use categories. These categories include residential areas, serene/quiet lands, parks, schools, hotels, offices, etc. The heights of noise barriers vary and are designed to provide predetermined noise reductions for the majority of residences located directly behind the barrier and at least one impacted location in the vicinity.

Federal and state highway money is used for the construction of noise barriers. Once installed, WisDOT is responsible for maintenance.

Several sections of the I-41 Project include the installation of noise barriers. For more information and to get answers to frequently asked questions, go to: **US41wisconsin.gov** and check out "Noise Barrier FAQs," which can be found in Quick Links on the lower right corner of the home-page.

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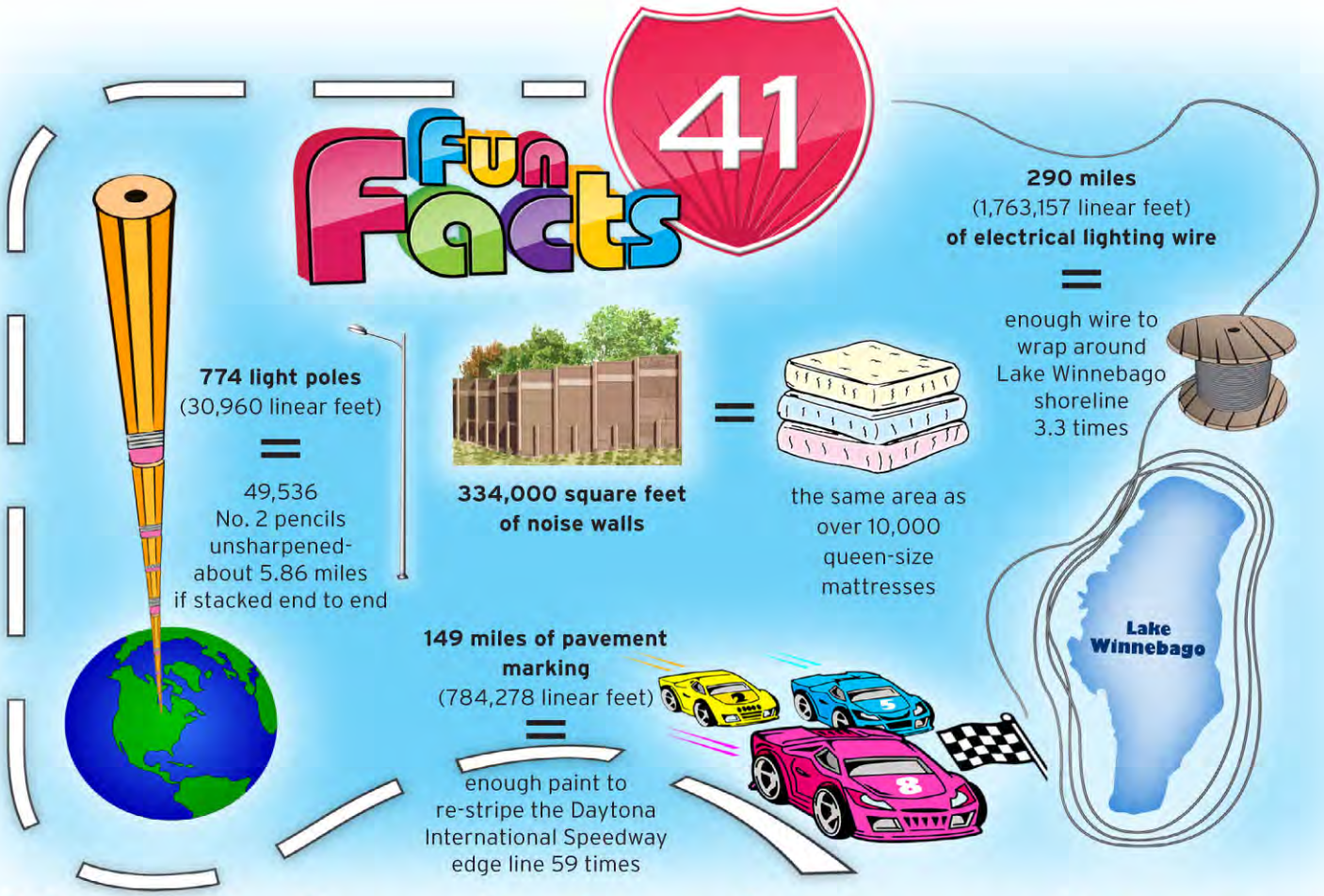

New interstate signs going up

US 41 is now Interstate 41. Replacement or modification of 3,500 signs in Wisconsin is underway. Earlier this year, Governor Scott Walker and WisDOT Secretary Mark Gottlieb thanked the Wisconsin congressional delegation for their efforts to pass federal legislation to enable the state to continue with plans to convert 175 miles of US 41 to an interstate from the Illinois border north to Green Bay.

"US 41 connects crucial regions of Wisconsin with economic impacts that benefit local, state and regional economies. Converting the corridor to an interstate highway will improve safety, mobility and economic development," noted Governor Walker. "I appreciate the efforts of Wisconsin's congressional delegation, especially those of Congressman Petri, who worked over many years to bring this project to fruition."

Benefits of converting to an interstate highway include:

- Interstate highways provide a corridor identity and encourage growth. Nineteen of the 26 major distribution centers in Wisconsin are located within five miles of an interstate.
- Interstate status will elevate US 41 from a regionally known freeway to a nationally recognized corridor. This will allow communities along the route to be competitive when large corporations are looking for market expansion locations.
- Companies looking to relocate or expand consistently put highway accessibility at the top of their list. Many have stated they will only relocate or expand near an interstate.
- The corridor's approximate center point, Fond du Lac, is within a day's drive of all other major Midwestern U.S. metropolitan areas containing 15 percent of the country's population.
- The extension along I-94 links the Fox Valley and Green Bay metropolitan areas and markets to the greater Chicago metropolitan area. Chicago is the economic epicenter of the entire Midwest and a key hub near the end of the corridor.

In 2005, US 41 from Milwaukee to Green Bay was identified by the federal government for inclusion in the U.S. Interstate Highway System and planning for the interstate conversion began in 2007. In May 2011, Governor Walker committed state resources to complete a study and move ahead with the project. The federal legislation was needed to allow certain commercial trucks to continue operating on the corridor after interstate conversion.

Wisconsin Department of Transportation

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INSIDE

News you can use about the I-41 Project!

- Building a safer I-41
- Noise barrier info
- Interstate conversion update

CONNECTING WISCONSIN

I-41 Project

▸ Annual Update 2015

Safe and sound

Safety is our first goal when constructing any highway, interchange, ramp, bridge or local road.

The new I-41 has enhanced technological features that will make for a better–and safer–highway for all who travel on it (see page 1). We are also bringing some of the latest highway construction technology to bear on the new I-41, creating a sound roadway that is built to last–up to 75 years.

We cannot do this without the patience and cooperation of motorists who must travel around and through this project while it is underway. Thank you from all of us at the Wisconsin Department of Transportation. Continue to plan a little extra travel time if you are driving on I-41 in Brown County.

By the end of 2016, we will all be enjoying the new interstate (see page 3 inside).

Will Dorsey
NE Region Director

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