

= Interstate 80 in Iowa =

Interstate 80 (I @-@ 80) is a transcontinental Interstate Highway in the United States , stretching from San Francisco , California , to Teaneck , New Jersey . In Iowa , the highway travels west to east through the center of the state . It enters the state at the Missouri River in Council Bluffs and heads east through the southern Iowa drift plain . In the Des Moines area , I @-@ 80 meets up with I @-@ 35 and the two routes bypass Des Moines together . On the northern side of Des Moines , the interstates split and I @-@ 80 continues east . In eastern Iowa , it provides access to the University of Iowa in Iowa City . Northwest of the Quad Cities in Walcott is Iowa 80 , the World 's Largest Truckstop . I @-@ 80 passes along the northern edge of Davenport and Bettendorf and leaves Iowa via the Fred Schwengel Memorial Bridge over the Mississippi River into Illinois .

Before I @-@ 80 was planned , the route between Council Bluffs and Davenport , which passed through Des Moines , was vital to the state . Two competing auto trails , the Great White Way and the River @-@ to @-@ River Road , sought to be the best path to connect three of the state 's major population centers . The two trails combined in the 1920s and eventually became U.S. Highway 32 (US 32) in 1926 . US 6 , which had taken the place of US 32 , became the busiest highway in the state . In the early 1950s , plans were drawn up to build an Iowa Turnpike , to be the first modern four @-@ lane highway in the state , along the US 6 corridor . Plans for the turnpike were shelved when the Interstate Highway System was created in 1956 .

Construction of I @-@ 80 took place over 14 years . The first section opened on September 21 , 1958 , in the western suburbs of Des Moines . New sections of interstate opened up regularly over the next twelve years , though construction in eastern Iowa was completed in 1966 . The final piece of I @-@ 80 in Iowa , the Missouri River bridge to Omaha , Nebraska , opened on December 15 , 1972 . By the 1980s , I @-@ 80 had fallen into disrepair in Iowa and across the country . Federal funding was freed up in 1985 to allow reconstruction of the highway .

= = Route description = =

Interstate 80 is the longest Interstate Highway in Iowa . It extends from west to east across the central portion of the state through the population centers of Council Bluffs , Des Moines and the Quad Cities . The majority of the highway runs through farmland , yet roughly one @-@ third of Iowa 's population live along the I @-@ 80 corridor .

= = = Western Iowa = = =

I @-@ 80 enters Iowa on a bridge over the Missouri River , where it leaves Omaha , Nebraska , to enter Council Bluffs . Almost immediately after landing on the Iowa side of the bridge , it meets I @-@ 29 at a Y interchange . From eastbound I @-@ 80 , northbound I @-@ 29 is accessed via a left exit . The two interstates travel together through southern Council Bluffs for three miles (5 km) . The speed limit through this section is 55 miles per hour (90 km / h) . The South 24th Street interchange serves a commercial area anchored by the Mid @-@ America Center and Horseshoe Casino . The South Expressway exit , which marks the southern end of Iowa Highway 192 (Iowa 192) , is adjacent to a big box store commercial center . I @-@ 29 and I @-@ 80 diverge at another Y interchange ; I @-@ 29 heads south and I @-@ 80 heads to the northeast .

East of the I @-@ 29 split , I @-@ 80 travels northeast for the next 20 miles (32 km) . It passes through eastern Council Bluffs where it serves a shopping mall . Just after the Madison Avenue exit , the speed limit increases to 65 mph (105 km / h) . Exit 8 is the first of many encounters with U.S. Highway 6 (US 6) . The interstate leaves Council Bluffs and speed limits rise to the rural limit of 70 mph (110 km / h) . Here , I @-@ 80 roughly follows the course of Mosquito Creek past Underwood and Neola , both of which are served by interchanges . About two miles (3 km) of Neola , I @-@ 80 curves to the east as it meets the eastern end of I @-@ 680 at a directional T interchange .

For the next 50 miles (80 km) , I @-@ 80 runs in more or less a straight line . Interchanges occur at regular intervals ; 3 to 6 miles (5 to 10 km) of Pottawattamie and Cass county farmland separate

each exit from the next . Near Avoca , it crosses the West Nishnabotna River and meets US 59 . East of the interchange , the interstate crosses the eastern branch of the West Nishnabotna . As I @-@ 80 approaches the area north of Atlantic , there are three interchanges , Iowa 173 , County Road N16 (CR N16) , and US 71 , which serve the western , central , and eastern parts of the city , respectively . Iowa 173 , which serves Atlantic by way of Iowa 83 , also connects to Elk Horn and Kimballton . US 71 , which continues north towards Carroll , carries US 6 traffic to the interstate . At this point , US 6 begins the first of three instances when its traffic is routed along I @-@ 80 . In the eastern part of Cass County , the two routes meet the northern end of Iowa 148 .

As I @-@ 80 and US 6 approach Adair , the highways curve slightly to the south to bypass the community . There are two interchanges in Adair ; both of the intersecting roads , at one time or another , carried US 6 . CR G30 , the White Pole Road , was the original alignment of US 6 , while CR N54 has not carried US 6 since 1980 . Further east is an interchange with Iowa 25 . About one mile (1 @. @ 6 km) south of the interchange is Freedom Rock . Each year for Memorial Day , the rock is repainted with a patriotic scene by local artist Ray " Bubba " Sorenson II . Near Dexter , I @-@ 80 and US 6 graze the northwestern corner of Madison County . After two miles (3 @. @ 2 km) , the routes enter Dallas County and meet CR F60 , another former alignment of US 6 .

= = = Central Iowa = = =

Continuing east , the two routes follow a due @-@ east section of highway , where they pass Earlham . Near the CR F90 / CR P58 interchange , they start heading northeast towards Des Moines . At De Soto , US 6 splits away from I @-@ 80 at the interchange with US 169 . Tourists who want to see the covered bridges of Madison County (made famous by the book The Bridges of Madison County) and the birthplace of John Wayne , are directed to follow US 169 south to Winterset . Between De Soto and Van Meter , the interstate crosses the middle and north branches of the Raccoon River , which converge just south of the crossing of the North Raccoon .

As the highway gets closer to Des Moines , it moves more sharply to the northeast . In southern Waukee , near the entrance ramp to the eastbound rest area , there is an overpass which carries Alice 's Road . A new interchange is planned for this location , which is scheduled to be open in late 2013 or early 2014 . As I @-@ 80 enters West Des Moines , the speed limit lowers to 65 mph (105 km / h) and the path of the interstate straightens out to the east at the Jordan Creek Parkway exit . The highway adds a third lane eastbound and drops the third lane westbound . Almost two miles (3 km) to the east is the interchange with I @-@ 35 , which also marks the beginning of I @-@ 235 . Eastbound I @-@ 80 exits the freeway via a flyover ramp to northbound I @-@ 35 ; eastbound I @-@ 235 begins as the continuation of the I @-@ 80 freeway . Locally , this exit is called the West Mixmaster .

I @-@ 80 shares the next 14 miles (23 km) with I @-@ 35 on a six @-@ lane freeway where each direction 's three lanes are separated by a Jersey barrier . They begin their journey together by heading north ; they briefly run through West Des Moines and then cross into Clive at University Avenue . At the Clive ? Urbandale city limits is the interchange with Hickman Road , which carries US 6 . Hickman Road serves a truck stop to the west and the Living History Farms visitor center to the east . The two interstates continue north through Urbandale where they pass Douglas Avenue . The Iowa 141 exit is at Rider Corner , the point where the I @-@ 35 / I @-@ 80 freeway curves 90 degrees to the east .

East of the 86th Street exit , the freeway begins a slow descent towards the Des Moines River . Merle Hay Road , named for the first Iowan to die in World War I , carries Iowa 28 from the south to its northern end at the interstates . They cross the Des Moines River just south of the mouth of Beaver Creek . Four miles (6 km) to the east is Iowa 415 and one mile (2 km) further east is US 69 . Between the interchanges there is a fourth lane in each direction . At the end of their 14 miles (23 km) together , I @-@ 35 exits to the north and I @-@ 235 's eastern end is to the south at the East Mixmaster .

East of I @-@ 35 , I @-@ 80 meets up with US 65 on the outskirts of Altoona . The two routes only share the highway for one mile (2 km) as US 65 splits away at the next exit . Here , US 6 rejoins I

@-@ 80 for the second time and the interstate returns to its four @-@ lane configuration . After a third exit for Altoona , the interstate resumes its 70 mph (110 km / h) rural limit . Near Colfax , the highways cross the South Skunk River . After an interchange with Iowa 117 , the highway is forced to the north to avoid crossing the river multiple times . As it returns south to its original line , it meets CR F48 , which was another former alignment of US 6 . At the Iowa 14 exit in Newton , US 6 exits off the interstate . East of Newton is an interchange that serves the Iowa Speedway .

Five miles (8 km) east of the speedway is an exit for Iowa 224 which connects to Kellogg . After this interchange , the highway curves to the northeast and descends a hill to cross the North Skunk River . Shortly after the river , it curves back to the east and climbs up the hill . As the road straightens out , it begins a 35 @-@ mile @-@ long (56 km) stretch of straight highway . Between the river and the Iowa 146 exit south of Grinnell , the farmland that surrounds the interstate undulates . Just south of Malcom , it meets US 63 . Further east , at exit 201 for Iowa 21 , there are competing truck stops on either side of the freeway . A hotel is located on the northern side .

= = = Eastern Iowa = = =

Now in Iowa County , I @-@ 80 continues towards the eastern end of the 50 @-@ mile (80 km) stretch of straight highway . It turns slightly to the southeast near the Ladora exit and straightens again at the Marengo interchange , where Kinze Manufacturing , a farm implement manufacturer , advertises its business to passing travelers by arranging farm implements into sculptures . A few miles east , in Williamsburg , is the northern end of Iowa 149 . The Williamsburg exit is the location of a Tanger Outlet Mall . The next interchange marks the southern end of US 151 . Both the Iowa 149 and US 151 interchanges serve the Amana Colonies which are located 10 miles (16 km) to the north .

As I @-@ 80 enters the Iowa City area , the speed limit drops to 65 mph (105 km / h) . On the edge of Coralville is an interchange with US 218 and Iowa 27 . This interchange is also the beginning of I @-@ 380 , which heads north along US 218 and Iowa 27 towards Cedar Rapids and Waterloo . The I @-@ 80 / I @-@ 380 interchange was identified as the most likely location in Iowa for a semi @-@ trailer truck to overturn . According to the American Transportation Research Institute , 30 trucks rolled over at the interchange during the 8 @-@ year study period . The Iowa DOT has plans to replace the cloverleaf interchange with a turbine interchange , but the project would not take place until around 2025 .

At the I @-@ 380 interchange , I @-@ 80 becomes a six @-@ lane freeway . The Coral Ridge Avenue exit provides access to US 6 , which passes beneath the interstate just before the interchange , and the eponymous shopping center located to the southeast . The First Avenue exit in Coralville and Dubuque Street exit in Iowa City direct University of Iowa traffic to different parts of the university campus . The Iowa River flows between the two interchanges and also marks the boundary between Coralville and Iowa City . On Iowa City 's east side are the Iowa 1 and Herbert Hoover Highway exits . Between them , the highway drops back to four lanes and the speed limit increases to 70 mph (110 km / h) .

As it enters Cedar County , it passes West Branch , the birthplace of and site of the library and museum of President Herbert Hoover . It approaches the Cedar River near the village of Rochester . Just east of the river crossing , Iowa 38 joins I @-@ 80 from the north . The county road that continues to the south from Iowa 38 leads to Moscow . The two highways travel together for four miles (6 @-@ 4 km) until they reach the Wilton area . Here , Iowa 38 exits to the south , while US 6 joins I @-@ 80 for the last time .

Before reaching the Quad Cities , I @-@ 80 passes Walcott and Iowa 80 , which is self @-@ billed as the " World 's Largest Truckstop " . The 65 @-@ acre (26 ha) truck stop has three restaurants , a gift shop , movie theater , museum , barber shop , and dentist on site . On average , the truck stop has served more than 1 @-@ 4 million customers per year since it opened in 1965 .

As I @-@ 80 and US 6 approach the Quad Cities metropolitan area , the speed limit drops to 65 mph (105 km / h) for the final time . Just within the city limits of Davenport is the I @-@ 280 interchange . US 6 exits to the south to join I @-@ 280 while I @-@ 80 is joined by US 61 . I @-@

80 and US 61 only share 5 miles (8 @. @ 0 km) of freeway before US 61 exits to its own freeway heading north . In between the two exits is an interchange with Northwest Boulevard , which marks the eastern end of Iowa 130 . A couple miles east of the eastern US 61 interchange is the western end of I @-@ 74 . Because of a " turn off to stay on " interchange with I @-@ 74 and I @-@ 280 near Colona , Illinois , called " the Big X " , I @-@ 74 through traffic is urged to use I @-@ 80 around the Quad Cities to the Big X. At the Big X , traffic from both I @-@ 74 and I @-@ 80 must exit their respective freeways to continue on the same route . Near the Mississippi River , the interstate takes a sharp curve to the southeast to line up perpendicularly to the river . Just before the base of the bridge is an interchange with US 67 , the last exit in Iowa . I @-@ 80 ends its 306 @-@ mile @-@ long (492 km) journey through Iowa over the Mississippi River on the Fred Schwengel Memorial Bridge . It enters rural Rock Island County , Illinois , and continues towards Chicago .

= = = Services = = =

The Iowa DOT operates 37 rest areas and one scenic overlook in 20 locations along its 780 miles (1 @, @ 260 km) of interstate highway . Along I @-@ 80 , there are nine locations that have facilities for each direction of traffic . Parking areas are divided so passenger automobiles are separated from large trucks . Common among all of the rest stops are separate men 's and women 's restrooms , payphones with TDD capabilities , weather reporting kiosks , vending machines , and free wireless Internet . Many stations have family restrooms and dump stations for recreational vehicles .

The first rest areas along Iowa 's interstates were built in the 1960s . They were modest facilities ; separate buildings housed the restrooms and vending machines . A few rest stops had another building with local tourist information . On August 4 , 1999 , the first modern rest area opened along eastbound I @-@ 80 near Wilton . The new facilities feature one large building housing as many as 28 more toilets than the older buildings , in addition to all the other common rest area amenities . They also feature artwork by local Iowa artists . Each new rest area is designed around a theme . For instance , the facility near Adair is a tribute to the life of Henry A. Wallace , the 33rd Vice President of the United States , who was born in nearby Orient .

= = History = =

Since before the primary highway system was created in 1920 , the Council Bluffs @-@ to @-@ Davenport , by way of Des Moines , corridor has always been important . Two roughly parallel auto trails , the Great White Way and the River @-@ to @-@ River Road , served cross @-@ state traffic . The two routes were merged into one route , the Whiteway Highway , in 1922 . Four years later , the Whiteway Highway would become US 32 . The US 32 designation was absorbed into an extended US 6 in 1931 . Previously , US 6 had existed only in the Northeastern United States . Within ten years , US 6 was the most @-@ traveled road in Iowa , with an average of " 1 @, @ 920 cars a day at any given rural point . "

= = = Iowa Turnpike = = =

In 1954 , Coverdale & Colpitts , a New York City @-@ based engineering firm working on behalf of the Iowa State Highway Commission , reported on the feasibility of building an east ? west toll road , to be called the Iowa Turnpike , across the state . The firm found that the turnpike should closely parallel US 6 between Council Bluffs and Davenport . They concluded that the turnpike could be economically possible if \$ 180 million (\$ 1 @. @ 59 billion in 2016) in revenue bonds were issued at interest rates no higher than 3 @. @ 5 % .

In early March 1955 , the Iowa General Assembly debated the pros and cons on building a toll road . Proponents of the turnpike said it would be a self @-@ financing project . The feasibility report suggested tolls of 1 @. @ 5 cents per mile (0 @. @ 93 ¢ / km) , which in 2016 is 13 cents per mile (8 @. @ 1 ¢ / km) . It was estimated that in 1953 , the turnpike could have generated \$ 5 @. @ 9 million (\$ 52 @. @ 2 million in 2016) . If traffic levels were not high enough to raise enough revenue

, as the opponents of the project worried , the state would end up paying for the project , thus defeating the purpose of a toll road .

The proposed highway was to run from Illinois Route 80 near Port Byron , Illinois , which ran along the eastern bank of the Mississippi River , over a new bridge into Iowa , to the South Omaha Bridge where US 275 crossed the Missouri River . The entire route was to be in close proximity to US 6 across the state . It was to be the first modern four @-@ lane highway in the state , with 12 @-@ foot @-@ wide (3 @. @ 7 m) lanes and an at least 15 @-@ foot @-@ wide (4 @. @ 6 m) grassy median . Sixteen interchanges were planned along the route . Most interchanges were to be located near population centers ; an option to build a seventeenth near Grinnell , if necessary , was included . Eight service areas , similar in quality to those found on the Pennsylvania and New Jersey turnpikes , were planned as well .

On April 29 , 1955 , an enabling act , which created the Iowa Toll Road Authority , came into effect giving the Authority the power to further study the feasibility of building a turnpike across the state . Before any construction was to begin , the authority was tasked with developing working relationships with neighboring states ' toll road authorities . A provision in the enabling act prevented Iowa from issuing toll road bonds before neighboring states had issued similar bonds . Plans were stalled while Illinois 's toll road commission worked out litigation regarding the financing of its bonds . Illinois was the only neighboring state to have a toll @-@ road @-@ planning body .

Construction on the Iowa Turnpike would never begin . In January 1956 , the Federal @-@ Aid Highway Act of 1956 (H.R. 8836) was introduced in Congress . H.R. 8836 created the Interstate Highway System , a national system of controlled @-@ access highways . President Dwight D. Eisenhower signed the bill into law on June 29 , 1956 . The new law was problematic for the Iowa Turnpike for a couple of reasons . Firstly , the law designated 700 miles (1 @, @ 100 km) of controlled @-@ access highway in Iowa , including a cross @-@ state route in the vicinity of the turnpike 's planned route . Secondly , the federal government was going to pay for ninety percent of the construction costs ; states were only required to match ten percent of costs (however , tolls were generally prohibited) . The Interstate Highway System 's completeness and financing rendered the Iowa Turnpike obsolete before it was ever constructed .

= = = Construction = = =

The first section of I @-@ 80 to open for traffic , 2 1 ? 2 miles (4 @. @ 0 km) from the West Mixmaster to the Douglas Avenue interchange in Urbandale , opened on September 21 , 1958 . By the end of November 1959 , the new interstate extended around the north side of Des Moines to US 69 . Within a year , the East Mixmaster , where I @-@ 35 splits away to the north , was opened . By the end of 1960 , 40 miles (64 km) from US 71 north of Atlantic to US 6 near Dexter , 20 miles (32 km) from I @-@ 35 to US 6 west of Newton , and 28 miles (45 km) from Iowa 38 near the Cedar River to US 61 in Davenport had opened to traffic .

In eastern Iowa , new sections of road were opened in series . 1962 saw the eastern section extended 20 miles west to Iowa City and the central section was extended 25 miles east to Grinnell . Iowa City 's section of interstate was completed on November 15 , 1963 . A 60 @-@ mile @-@ long (97 km) section , the longest section to be opened at one time , connected the two sections in October 1964 . The easternmost section of I @-@ 80 , from US 61 to US 67 at the Mississippi River , opened a month later . This gave travelers nearly 185 miles (298 km) of uninterrupted freeway driving .

Construction then moved to the western half of the state . A new 20 @-@ mile @-@ long (32 km) section from US 71 west to US 59 north of Avoca opened in December 1965 . A year later , the interstate was 90 % completed when two stretches , a 50 @-@ mile @-@ long (80 km) stretch from US 59 to I @-@ 29 , which included 16 miles (26 km) of I @-@ 80N and the missing 25 @-@ mile @-@ long (40 km) section between the western section and Des Moines , each opened to traffic . Sections of I @-@ 80 in the Council Bluffs area did not open for another couple years . A short section between Madison Avenue and US 6 opened in 1968 . The interstate was completed from the eastern junction with I @-@ 29 to I @-@ 80N in late December 1969 .

On both sides of the state , the respective river crossings opened to traffic nearly two years later than the connecting highways . Near LeClaire , the Fred Schwengel Memorial Bridge over the Mississippi River opened in 1966 after the highway had been completed to US 67 , which runs at the foot of the bridge , in 1964 . The center span of the Mississippi River bridge was installed on June 29 , 1966 . The 237 @-@ foot @-@ long (72 m) , 520 @-@ short @-@ ton (470 t) piece was floated into place by barge . In Council Bluffs , the Missouri River crossing opened on December 15 , 1972 , while the approach to the bridge opened in November 1970 . The Missouri River bridge 's completion marked the end of the 14 years it took to construct Interstate 80 .

= = = Reconstruction = = =

As early as the 1980s , traffic levels on I @-@ 80 reached the road 's design capacity . As a result , the highway required significant repairs for which Iowa 's interstate maintenance program lacked funding . A 16 @-@ 2 @-@ mile @-@ long (26 @-@ 1 km) section from CR F90 between Earlham and the western junction with I @-@ 35 needed \$ 500 @-@ 000 (\$ 1 @-@ 04 million in 2016) in annual repairs . Funds for needed interstate repair became available in 1985 when President Ronald Reagan signed a bill that freed up \$ 7 billion (\$ 15 @-@ 4 billion in 2016) from the Highway Trust Fund , the national mechanism for funding repairs to the Interstate Highway System . Under the law , Iowa was slated to receive \$ 200 million per year (\$ 440 million in 2016) for its interstates .

Reconstruction across the state took place in phases . Road crews worked in roughly 15 @-@ mile @-@ long (24 km) zones divided into smaller sections . In each section , one direction of highway was closed while the other direction became a two @-@ lane , two @-@ direction road . When one section was completed , the crew would move on to the next section , preventing the entire zone from being closed at once . Iowa was not alone in the required repairs to I @-@ 80 . The Automobile Association of America reported that nearly every state along I @-@ 80 had reports of road work . In Iowa , though , there were two sections in 1988 which were particularly troublesome for travelers . The I @-@ 680 interchange near Neola was closed , so I @-@ 680 @-@ bound traffic was forced to travel through Neola on Iowa 191 to reach that highway . Another bottleneck occurred near Williamsburg , where it was a two @-@ lane road for six miles (10 km) .

Another problem for travelers hoping to avoid the construction on I @-@ 80 was the lack of east ? west , four @-@ lane highways in Iowa . At the time , the nearest interstates , I @-@ 70 and I @-@ 90 were far across state lines in Missouri and Minnesota , respectively . One traveler , interviewed by The Des Moines Register , who was traveling back to Iowa from New York , sought to avoid I @-@ 80 's construction woes entirely by driving through Canada .

= = Exit list = =