

MANY EXPRESS ROADS WILL BE FINISHED IN 1956

Continuous Toll Highway to N. Y. Included

Highway construction in the Chicago metropolitan area will make these headlines in 1956:

The Congress st. expressway will extend west from the Loop to Laramie av., a mile from the west city limits. The 150 million dollar project will be opened to the Cook-DuPage county line in 1958.

The extension south of double decked Wacker dr. will be completed to Congress st., with a modern interchange, free of cross traffic, with the west side expressway.

The Indiana turnpike is to be completed from the Chicago city limits, at Indianapolis blvd. and 106th st., to the Ohio state line, where it will connect with the Ohio turnpike, which was opened Oct. 1. There will be a continuous expressway, free of cross traffic and pedestrians, from Chicago to New York via toll roads in Indiana, Ohio, Pennsylvania and New Jersey.

Chicago Belt System

Construction is expected to start on a 415 million dollar system of toll roads in northern Illinois. The system, to be completed in three years, will consist of a belt route around Chicago plus two tangents, one to Aurora and one to Rockford. The belt will extend west from the Indiana-Illinois line in southern Cook county, thence north near the DuPage-Cook county line to the Illinois-Wisconsin line near U. W. 41.

Construction will get underway under a Cook county 245 million dollar bond issue for building toll free expressways radiating from the central business district. Congress st. will be completed as the western route. Northwest will be a route to O'Hare International airport, with a connection with Edens expressway. Southwest will be a route, employing the obsolete Illinois-Michigan canal bed as right of way for much of the distance, to serve Midway airport traffic and to connect with U. S. 66, the main Chicago-Springfield-St. Louis highway.

A south route on the county bond issue program will extend from the central business district to about 63d st. and State sts., where it will connect with a Calumet Skyway. It will continue farther south to connect via Doty av. with the Calumet expressway and the Kingery [Tri-State] expressway.

Build Calumet Skyway

Construction will start on the Calumet Skyway, for which the city sold 88 million dollars worth of bonds last year. Lawyers have been negotiating purchases and condemning property for the right of way.

This skyway will connect with the Indiana turnpike at the city limits. It will consist of an expressway, abutting existing railroad embankments for most of its distance. It will include a high fixed bridge over the busy Calumet river, where shipping frequently halts vehicular traffic. A toll will be charged.

Additional major construction in the metropolitan area would develop if Congress adopts the proposed 27 billion dollar 10 year federal program for modernizing routes and their urban extensions.

Get More Tax Money

Chicago is a hub of inter-regional routes, which under this federal program would be reconstructed as expressways, with continuous grade separation and with access control.

In addition to these headlines in road news, there will be a banner year in ordinary Illinois state highway construction. Contracts totaling 80 million dollars were awarded last year. Increased traffic is boosting gas tax collections, at a rate raised from 3 to 5 cents a gallon by the 1951 legislature. The other state levy for roads, the auto and truck license fees, is also producing more money because there are more vehicles and because with the increase in horsepower many makes of cars have to pay a higher rate for plates.