

Written by Administrator
Wednesday, 06 October 2010 10:09 -

Drivers will have to put up with 10 more months of construction before River Road is fully rebuilt, Illinois Department of Transportation Secretary Gary Hannig said at a news conference Tuesday in Des Plaines.

Hannig joined Des Plaines city officials to give an update on the status of the state's \$14 million River Road reconstruction project that began in

June.

The entire project is expected to be completed in July 2011, in time for Des Plaines' casino opening.

"We understand what the casino means to the community, Hannig said. "We want to try to do what we can to coordinate our efforts. We don't want them (casino visitors) to come out here and feel like it isn't worth the trip.

Construction of the casino, on about 20 acres fronting the Tri-State Tollway, also is ongoing.

The first phase involves a 45,000-square-foot, single-level building with 1,200 gambling positions, and an attached five-story parking garage for 1,560 cars. About 30,000 square feet of restaurants and bars and an additional 773 surface parking spaces also are planned in the first phase of development.

Des Plaines Mayor Marty Moylan said it is reassuring to hear that IDOT is committed to finishing the project before the casino comes online.

Reconstruction of the 1.5-mile stretch of River Road from north of Touhy Avenue to south of Devon Avenue involves widening, raising and reconstructing the road bed to protect it against flooding from the Des Plaines River.

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Once complete, River Road won't need to be worked on for another 25 years, said Jon Duddles, Des Plaines assistant director of public works and engineering.

The first stage of the two-year project where temporary lanes will be built to handle traffic for the remainder of the construction is expecting to be done in November.

In December, traffic will be shifted to allow for the construction of permanent lanes.

The roadway also will be getting a new, enclosed storm sewer system, which currently doesn't exist, Duddles said.

The new system of curbs and gutters will be built along the entire length of the roadway with large filtration manholes to separate sediment and debris from the rainwater that ultimately flows into the Des Plaines River.

"We're also dealing with the problem of drainage and flooding, said Congresswoman Jan Schakowsky of the 9th Congressional District, which includes a large portion of Des Plaines. "Everything has got a green element to it.

Retaining walls and new traffic signals will be installed at Touhy and Devon avenues.

Schakowsky added 180 jobs have been created or retained because of the project.

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