



NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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FIFTH STREET INTERCHANGE PROJECT DEADLINE MET

St. Charles exits open in time for Black Friday shopping!

ST. CHARLES COUNTY, MO – It doesn't have to take "forever" to build a road. That's the message County Executive Steve Ehlmann wants to convey. Ehlmann cites the Fifth Street Interchange Project in St. Charles, a partnership with the City of St. Charles, St. Charles County and the Missouri Department of Transportation (MoDOT), as proof.

"We set expectations from the beginning of this project that certain deadlines had to be met," says County Executive Steve Ehlmann. "We needed to have Fifth Street open and accessible to traffic for the holiday season. Construction didn't start until March 7, and our deadline was November 23, so it was a very aggressive schedule. But it was met. It *can* happen."

Ehlmann is referring to a diverging diamond interchange (DDI) at the intersection of Fifth Street and Interstate 70 which includes new exit ramps on and off I-70, both east and westbound. The project was initiated to help improve traffic flow, as well as access to and from Interstate 70, to a very busy Fifth Street interchange. Merchants along Main Street in St. Charles, as well as the Streets of St. Charles, Mark Twain Village, and Bass Pro were concerned about the effect construction might have on holiday shopping. City and County officials were concerned as well.

"Often, there are numerous delays which cause construction and inconveniences to residents and visitors," says Ehlmann, "but this project is proof that, by working together, roads can be built on schedule. The partnership between the City of St. Charles, the County and MoDOT worked well, and I am proud of that."

Ehlmann says similar projects have taken two years to complete, but the DDI was completed in nine months. He credits MoDOT, along with contractor Millstone Weber, with hard work and diligence that kept the project moving. Traffic already is adjusting to the lane changes and traffic flow and merchants are gearing up for a steady stream of shoppers who will find ease in traveling to St. Charles on Black Friday.

The Fifth Street Interchange Project includes components in addition to the DDI at Fifth Street and I-70. They are:

- construction of a new one-way outer road between Fifth Street and Fairgrounds Road;
- replacement of the Fairgrounds Road overpass;
- full interstate access to and from Fairgrounds Road;
- a roundabout at the intersection of Fairgrounds Road and Veterans Memorial Parkway
- new sidewalks along Fifth Street, Veterans Memorial Parkway and Fairgrounds Road,
- adding a new eastbound and westbound lane on I-70 under the First Capitol Drive Interchange and;
- new bike lanes at the Fairgrounds Road overpass.

The deadline for completion of the entire project is April 22, 2017.

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