



NEWS

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
February 14, 2011

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ILLINOIS TOLLWAY BRINGS NEW JOBS TO ILLINOIS

*Bridgeway Joins With Illinois Growth Enterprises to Employ
Disabled and Veteran Workers in Galesburg and Rockford*

DOWNERS GROVE, IL - The Illinois Tollway has relocated its license plate image review services to new facilities in Rockford and Galesburg bringing more than 100 new jobs to Illinois and providing employment opportunities for persons with disabilities and veterans. In addition, the move is expected to reduce costs to the Tollway by more than \$1 million annually.

Under the new \$9.7 million, three-year contract, Bridgeway has hired new employees for facilities in Galesburg and Rockford to review approximately 46 million license plate images annually as part of the Illinois Tollway's toll violation enforcement system. The Illinois Tollway's previous vendor performed these license plate image review services in Texas.

"The Illinois Tollway was committed to bringing jobs back to Illinois when it set out to find a new company to provide these services," said Illinois Tollway Executive Director Kristi Lafleur. "In addition, our Board of Directors felt it was important to reach out to not-for-profit organizations and provide quality employment opportunities for persons with disabilities and veterans."

This is the first contract that the Illinois Tollway has awarded through Illinois' State Use Program, which is designed to provide long-term employment opportunities for people working in not-for-profit community rehabilitation facilities. In addition, the Illinois Tollway's decision to seek image review services from a vendor of this type is unique to the tolling industry, as well as government entities that review violation images.

"We are pleased to be able to support Governor Pat Quinn's commitment to putting people back to work," said Tollway Board Chair Paula Wolff. "This contract award also reflects the Tollway's desire to expand on its traditional economic development role to create new opportunities for business."

The contract brings together two not-for-profit companies with established reputations for providing employment opportunities for workers with disabilities: Bridgeway through its Galesburg location and Loves Park-based Illinois Growth Enterprises (IGE).

Bridgeway is the lead organization bringing more than 20 years of expertise in data processing and experience working with government agencies, including the Illinois Department of Revenue and the Illinois Department of Healthcare and Family Services. The collaboration provides for a greater array of job opportunities for IGE, which brings access to EIGER/ab, the Rockford region's leading technology center and state-of-the-art business incubator.

"This three-year contract is great news for Galesburg during these very challenging economic times," said Bridgeway Training Services President Tom Colclasure. "Bridgeway's previous experience in computerized data entry for state government agencies will be a great asset to the Illinois Tollway and will help strengthen IGE's opportunities for the Rockford area, as well."

"With unemployment rates in the greater Rockford area among the highest in the state, this contract is a welcome opportunity for new jobs," said IGE CEO Don Thayer. "Our new affiliation with Bridgeway will create employment for people with disabilities and the community as a whole."

Working together, Bridgeway and IGE began conducting the Illinois Tollway's image review services in January at facilities in Rockford and Galesburg. The new employees are responsible for reviewing and accurately identifying license plate data daily for potential toll violations based on the digital images captured by cameras at toll plazas. Altogether, 107 full- and part-time positions have been filled for both facilities, including 34 veterans and persons with disabilities.

Bridgeway is a not-for-profit human services organization dedicated to improving the lives of individuals with disabilities in west central Illinois and southeast Iowa. IGE is a not-for-profit corporation that has been providing comprehensive vocational services to persons with disabilities since 1970.

About the Illinois Tollway

The Illinois Tollway is a user-fee system that receives no state or federal funds for maintenance and operations. The agency maintains and operates 286 miles of interstate tollways in 12 counties in Northern Illinois, including the Reagan Memorial Tollway (I-88), the Veterans Memorial Tollway (I-355), the Jane Addams Memorial Tollway (I-90) and the Tri-State Tollway (I-94/I-294/I-80).

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