

I-270 North Project launches new Work Zone Safety Campaign

**JUST
SLOW
DOWN**

The I-270 North Project team is creating a series of generational videos with people who live in the community - adults and young people - sharing a Just Slow Down message related to safe driving, especially within construction zones.

We hope that folks will see and hear people that they know, and at least think about the messages. Visit www.i270north.org/gallery to see the current postings.

Please remember buckle up, phone down, and slow down, especially in construction zones. We want everyone, including workers to arrive home alive.

Want to get involved with this campaign? Contact the I-270 North Project Team at: I270North@modot.mo.gov.

West Florissant Bridge Closure Update



This month we will open the intersection and bridge at West Florissant. Upon completion, we will begin preparing for the construction of Pershall Road between Washington/Elizabeth and West Florissant.

During construction of Pershall Road between Washington/Elizabeth and West Florissant access will only be allowed in the eastbound direction(no westbound movements). Construction on this segment is estimated to be completed in 9 months and will eventually stretch out along Pershall Road towards Old Halls Ferry.

Drivers are encouraged to visit the I-270 North Project website to learn more about planned detours and details of the project, including a project overview and graphic displays of planned construction.

Travelers can also contact MoDOT's customer service center at 1-314-275-1500 or contact the I-270 North Project Team at: I270North@modot.mo.gov.



Chris Watts, P.E.

Project Manager
Parsons Corporation

MoDOT's \$278 million I-270 North Project has a lot of moving parts. Bridges and related infrastructure are being replaced and updated throughout the corridor. Accessibility for pedestrians and bicyclists is being improved with creation of a multi-use path from Lindbergh to Breezy Point Lane along Dunn Road, and from Hanley Road/Graham Road to Old Halls Ferry Road along Pershall. There are even two turnaround bridges planned - one at Washington Street/Elizabeth Avenue and one at West Florissant Avenue – and a new bridge that will connect Pershall Road to Dunn Road across I-270 near Old Halls Ferry Road.

That's a lot of detail and it doesn't even include all the other planned upgrades that are scheduled as part of the finished project. Though we may not often hear about the people behind the scenes, there are individuals whose sole job is to develop and oversee all the design aspects for Design-Build projects like I-270 North.

Chris Watts is the project's design manager for Parsons Corporation; a defense, intelligence, security and infrastructure engineering firm with offices in St. Louis. With a background in Civil Engineering and a desire to work in transportation design, his job is to oversee all design aspects of the project and work closely with the rest of the project team members to bring it to fruition.

"We work collaboratively and cohesively with all of the varied disciplines within a project – bridges, walls, drainage, signals, roads, etc. – to outline design elements which meet and even exceed the requirements in a particular request for proposal. On the I-270 North Design-Build Project, our focus was on innovative, cost-effective approaches that would yield the largest number of improvements for the available budget." Watts said the best approach, especially with a large project like I-270 North, was to design it in a sequence which matches how the contractor wants to construct the project.

"You can't eat the elephant in one bite. We started with a 15% design concept and then collaborated with MoDOT and Millstone Weber throughout interim design submittals until we had plans that were ready to be constructed. You have to work through it diligently as a team."

Watts added that the planning challenges around the I-270 North Project also were compounded by the necessary separation of team members due to COVID-19. "Communication was key, and we really worked well through those initial challenges with online meetings, and frequent communication."

"Things are moving ahead well, and we will be very excited when we can show the community the finished project. We are looking forward to everyone experiencing the safety upgrades that are a large part of the project, as well as the additional pedestrian facility upgrades that have been included."

[Lindbergh Time Lapse Camera](#)

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PROJECT PAVE: COHORT I

A Win for North St. Louis County Students

Trenton Clark went from only dreaming about a future in the civil engineering industry to landing his first paid summer internship with a transportation company before he even enters his senior year of high school, all thanks to Project PAVE.

The Millstone Weber I-270 North STEM initiative, part of their I-270 North Project Build, was designed to engage north St. Louis high school students just like Trenton through immersive learning and mentorship, creating a pathway into future careers in the heavy design, engineering or construction industries.

The program is divided into six bi-monthly sessions held on Saturdays, with each one featuring a different industry-based topic. Participating schools and school districts included North County Christian, North County Tech, Hazelwood and Ferguson Florissant.

PRESSING ON DURING A PANDEMIC

After encouragement from his high school engineering teacher, Trenton became one of 31 students to sign up for Project PAVE. Originally, the sessions would include both hands-on and face-to-face experiences but like the rest of the world, everything changed once COVID-19 struck.

"We had to regroup and re-design the program so that it fit into the parameters of the pandemic," Project PAVE Director Vivian Martain said.

Martain, who serves as Millstone Weber's civil rights compliance manager, immediately reached out to educators from the participating school districts to discuss how they would shift the program into a remote learning experience.

In spite of the challenges, by the time Project PAVE wrapped for the school year, 11 students had remained in the program with perfect attendance, 10 students received committed mentorships and four students, including 11th grader Trenton, received paid summer internships with construction-related companies.

"I'm so proud of the students that stayed the course," Martain said. "It's not normal for an internship, a paid internship, to include a high schooler. Paid internships are generally for high school graduates or college students, but an 11th grader? That's unheard of."



THE IMPACT

Educators throughout the north St. Louis County area's participating school districts are equally proud of their students and excited about Project PAVE's impact.

"It's not every day a kid can get access to a transportation engineer. It's not every day a kid can get access to a live feed of an overpass being demolished and see the preparations being made to replace it. It's not every day that kids who have an interest in civil engineering and transportation engineering have the opportunity to network with these types of people. So, to sum that all up, the exposure is just priceless," Matt McClellan, CTE curriculum coordinator for the Hazelwood School District said.

Dr. Bonita Jamison, Ferguson Florissant's then-executive director of integrated supports and accelerated learning, lauds Project PAVE's flexibility during such trying circumstances.

"The ability for Millstone Weber to actually pivot and develop something that students would still have access to and give them the opportunity to interact with industry professionals was

ingenious," she said. "(Project PAVE's) approach helped students to better understand their own personal interests while engaging in the experience. I think it's been worthwhile and definitely life-changing for some of our students."

North County Christian School Principal Yolander Pittman praised Project PAVE for its ability to connect with students who may not necessarily be interested in taking the college route to their dream career. "A program like this gets that technical kid the support they need to know that they can be successful without going to college" she said. "Whether you want to be an excavator or a welder, for example. In the past, those types of careers were kind of looked down on because they weren't based on a college degree. But (Project PAVE) shows them the things that they can do, the money that they can make, the promotions they can achieve. It shows every student a level of success and how they can attain it."

Patrick Hannekan, an instructor at North Technical High School agrees and is already seeing a difference among his students. "Morale is above and beyond. I have 9 seniors and when they see this kind of success happening through

these partnerships with Millstone Weber and other companies, it helps tremendously," Hannekan said. "Classes run smoother, more work is getting done, these kids are seeing the big picture at the end of the tunnel and saying 'Hey, that could be me.'"

WHAT'S NEXT

Trenton is especially excited about all of the doors that have opened for him through Project PAVE. In addition to the internship, he said he learned about an array of scholarships that he can apply for in the coming school year, has made connections with various industry professionals and more. "Ms. Vivian (Martain) has helped me so much," he said. "They're very open to questions, to suggestions, and they actually listen and talk to people and do what they say they'll do."

In fact, when he and his mom visit one of his top college picks this summer, University of Southern California in Los Angeles, he said, "They recommended some people I can talk to when I get there, like actual heads of the transportation companies, and I'll get to talk to them in person! So yeah, that will be fun."

For Martain, that's what Project PAVE is all about. Now that they've gotten past the worst of the pandemic, she looks forward to being able to offer students even more immersive experiences including more live sessions in person and even creating a drone-based project.

"It gives them the opportunity to spread their wings and add some experience to their resumes before they even need a resume," she said. "Most people don't realize the kinds of careers you can have coming into construction. So, through Project PAVE, they're exposed to those careers in a different way. Or, if they think this is the career path that they want to take, now they have a better understanding of just what that means."

Click [HERE](#) to learn more about Project PAVE and Millstone Weber's I-270 North Project or visit them online at www.millstoneweber.com.

I-270 NORTH

Build. Progress. Together.

GOALS:

- 1 **Deliver the project by December 1, 2023 within the program budget of \$278 million.**
- 2 **Maximize reliability and safety while linking communities for all users.**
- 3 **Provide a durable and maintainable transportation network making Interstate 270 the conduit for a prosperous region.**
- 4 **Grow and utilize a diverse workforce.**
- 5 **Minimize and mitigate impacts to customers through innovation.**

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