The Lake Butte des Morts Causeway

A new crossing in Oshkosh

The new causeway over Lake Butte des Morts on US 41 opens fully to traffic in July, which will undoubtedly be a relief and a pleasure for motorists who drive it. With two additional lanes in each direction capable of handling a much larger volume of traffic, the improvements over the lake are impressive. But below the live traffic on US 41 may be an even bigger story.

> **"They said traffic would back up for miles if a boat went through after a Packer Game."**
> -Tom Buchholz, Project Manager WisDOT

One of the highly-anticipated benefits of the new causeway is the recreational trail that was built as part of the project. Runners, walkers, bikers and in-line skaters will now be able to cross the lake on the trail, which will connect to the Wiouwash Trail on the north end. It will provide access to fishing, as well as interpretive displays. Work will continue on the trail after the roadway is completed, and it is scheduled to open for recreational use in the fall.

The interpretive displays will open a window to a water system with a history that is remarkable. It is the ancestral home to American Indians who have been here "since time immemorial," and an important place for all 11 Indian tribes of Wisconsin. The city of Oshkosh is named after one of the Menominee Nations' most noted chiefs. It is the home of re-located eastern Indian bands, of wars, steamboats and a lumber industry boom.

The first causeway over Lake Butte des Morts was constructed in 1955. In this photo, workers pose before the concrete structures that they were building in 1968 and 1969. *Photo courtesy Faye Beach*

The earliest written accounts of Lake Butte des Morts describe a vibrant river channel winding through a "vast expanse of wild rice," teeming with fish, furbearing animals and waterfowl. In the mid-1850s, with an influx of new settlers and industry—including two dams on the twin lower Fox outlets of Lake Winnebago—the waterway changed dramatically.

Tom Buchholtz

Prior to the mid-1950s when the original causeway was built, motorists had to cross the Fox River in downtown Oshkosh. The construction of a causeway with a series of three bridges was a great improvement, said Tom Buchholz, WisDOT Project Manager, though one of the bridges was a draw bridge. "They said traffic would back up for miles if a boat went through after a Packer game," he said.

The Causeway reconstruction project was undertaken to address capacity and safety needs on US 41, Buchholz said, adding that WisDOT looked at several options, including the construction of a single bridge to the west of the existing causeway. With a price tag of around $100 million for a bridge compared to approximately $34 million for an improved causeway, WisDOT opted for the latter. "We came up with the idea of putting a trail along side of US 41, and that idea was very well received," Buchholz said. "It's a win-win situation for everyone."

The result is a new, eight-lane Lake Butte des Morts crossing, created by widening the existing causeway to the west. Buchholz said three through lanes and an auxiliary lane in each direction will improve the traffic flow between the WIS 21 and US 45 interchanges. Freeway lighting will span the entire causeway.

Buchholz said the new causeway is built for traffic volumes projected 20 years into the future. "The general feedback we've received so far has been very positive," Buchholz said. "I think once it's fully open, people are going to love it."

An artist's rendering of the new Lake Butte des Morts Causeway northbound lanes, showing the recreational trail.

Wisconsin Department of Transportation

Northeast Region
944 Vanderperren Way
Green Bay, WI 54304

CONNECTING WISCONSIN

US 41 Project Update

▸ Spring 2013

Good news and better news!

Greetings from Wisconsin Department of Transportation's (WisDOT) Northeast Region, where it's a tale of two counties for the US 41 Project this year.

The good news in Brown County is that much needed improvements to US 41 are fully underway. If you are traveling this way, remember to plan a little extra time. For Winnebago County, the news is even better and a happy ending is within sight as major construction activities will wrap up after this season. Overall, the US 41 Project remains on schedule and within budget.

Project details inside

Will Dorsey
NE Region Director
WisDOT

We could not accomplish a project like this without the cooperation of the local communities and motorists who travel on US 41. Thank you for your continued patience and attentive driving in the construction zones.

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US 41 Project Update

▸ Spring 2013

Aerial view of US 41 in Oshkosh, south of Lake Butte des Morts, from early September, 2012. The 9th Avenue interchange is in the foreground.

Project nears completion in Winnebago County

Years before construction equipment arrived and orange barrels were placed, Wisconsin Department of Transportation (WisDOT) engineers, staff and consultants were quietly planning the second largest highway project in Wisconsin's history. Early on, plans for the new US 41 were all "blue sky," with talk of roundabouts and flyover ramps. For motorists traveling on US 41—especially in Winnebago County—blue sky is becoming reality.

"When the Lake Butte des Morts Causeway opens in July, US 41 Project construction in Winnebago County will be nearly complete," said Brian Roper, WisDOT Projects Group Chief. "In Brown County, we're really just getting into the heaviest construction phase. But overall, and especially in Winnebago County, people are beginning to enjoy the payoff for the inconvenience," Roper said.

> "We're looking forward to delivering a fantastic new highway."
> -Brian Roper, Projects Group Chief

Roper noted that US 41 is a route that has national, state and regional importance. "The upgrades to US 41 are of critical importance to the region," he said. "We know that this improvement to the infrastructure of northeastern Wisconsin will result in direct benefits to the regional economy." He said that US 41 links the population centers and recreational areas of Green Bay and the Fox River Valley with the Chicago-Milwaukee metropolitan area, making it a key backbone route.

Roper said that the US 41 Project is on track to reach its objectives. The goals for the project are: to enhance safety, minimize environmental impacts, provide a safe and efficient regional and state transportation corridor, to accommodate regional transportation needs, to reduce congestion and travel times and to encourage community involvement.

"The local communities and the traveling public have handled this about as well as possible," Roper said. "We're looking forward to delivering a fantastic new highway."

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2012 in review

Major milestones are adding up

Construction on the US 41 Project, which began in 2009, reached some significant milestones during the 2012 season. Work began first on the 17 miles of US 41 in Winnebago County, so the end is within sight for that segment of the project. In Brown County, where 14 miles of US 41 are part of the work zone, construction is now reaching its peak.

Here's a US 41 Project year-in-review for 2012.

Winnebago County highlights

US 45 interchange: June 26 marked the completion of the $31 million project to rebuild the busy interchange, which handles up to 18,000 vehicles per day. The interchange closed to traffic in April 2011 to allow construction of free-flow ramps between US 41 and US 45, while reconstructing US 45 to pass over US 41 traffic lanes.

An aerial view of the US 45 interchange taken in September, 2012.

The WIS 21 interchange at US 41 opened on Oct. 29, 2012, three weeks ahead of schedule. The $54 million project included rebuilding the WIS 21 interchange so that WIS 21 passes over US 41, construction of four roundabouts, and the expansion of US 41 between Witzel Avenue and US 45.

The WIS 21 interchange opening was celebrated with a ribbon-cutting ceremony on Nov. 5, 2012. A number of local, state and WisDOT dignitaries attended, including Congressman Tom Petri (holding scissors) and WisDOT Secretary Mark Gottlieb (left of Petri).

Brown County highlights

Mason Street interchange: After six months of demolishing and rebuilding, the Mason Street interchange re-opened on July 28. The $29 million reconstruction project replaced the 46-year-old bridge over US 41 and included the construction of three multi-lane roundabouts, replacement of the 9th street bridges and expanded one mile of US 41.

Lombardi Avenue: The $4.2 million project involved the reconstruction of Lombardi Avenue between Wood Lane and Argonne Street. Through traffic lanes on Lombardi were expanded and reconstructed along with the construction of additional turn lanes on the entrance and exit ramps connecting to US 41.

Main Avenue interchange: The interchange and Main Avenue under US 41 was closed for two months and re-opened on November 16. The closure was part of the $57 million project to reconstruct the interchange and expand US 41 to six lanes of traffic from Orange Lane to Glory Road.

Lakeview Bridge: On November 17, the reconstructed Lakeview Bridge over US 41 in the village of Howard opened to traffic. The $3.3 million project involved replacing the bridge over US 41, building two retaining wall structures, and improvements to Lakeview Drive.

The new Mason Street interchange, shortly after opening in the summer of 2012.

Stay informed about US 41

Looking for more details about US 41 construction in 2013? There are many avenues for you to stay current.

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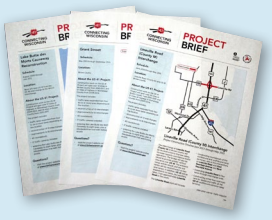
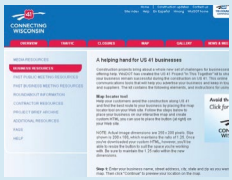
Pick up the 2013 *US 41 Project Traveler's Guide*, with maps, timelines and details about individual segments of the Project. They are available at WisDOT Division of Motor Vehicle (DMV) offices in Green Bay and Oshkosh, as well as many visitor centers and service stations near the construction zone.

You'll find an electronic version of the *Traveler's Guide* and much more on the US 41 Project website. If you are interested in a particular project, look for Project Briefs available by clicking on the "Overview" tab. These give more details on particular projects within the main US 41 Project.



Businesses impacted by the project will also find a variety of resources available. Click on the "Resources" tab to find a map locator tool, print ad templates and examples, a temporary business sign application form and more.



US41 Project Website:
us41wisconsin.gov

Construction outlook for 2013

Concrete pavement construction on US 41 between Scheuring Road and Grant Street in early August 2012. The workers are placing dowel bar baskets to reinforce the pavement.

The US 41 Project work in 2013 will focus on expansions and improvements in Brown County, while wrapping up construction activities in Winnebago County.

Winnebago County 2013 preview

Work will continue in three areas: the WIS 44 interchange, Lake Butte des Morts Causeway, and the north segment mainline expansion from US 45 to Breezewood Lane. There will be no Winnebago County interchange closures in 2013 and traffic impacts to US 41 end in July with the completion of the causeway.

The new Lake Butte des Morts Causeway will provide increased safety and mobility. Improvements will include: three through-lanes and an auxiliary lane in each direction; lighting spanning the entire causeway; bicycle/pedestrian recreational trail across the causeway east of the northbound lane; and fishing access on Lake Butte des Morts.

Brown County 2013 preview

Brown County will have numerous construction projects in 2013. Grant Street in De Pere will be reconstructed under US 41 through June of 2013. Preparation will begin in 2013 for major construction in following years at Parkview Road, Waube Lane/Oneida Street, Cormier Road and Morris Avenue.

The Hansen Road overpass will be under construction from August 2013 to September 2014. At WIS 172, reconstruction of ramps and the mainline at US 41 will begin in the fall of 2013. From June through August 2013, the 9th Street roadway and sidewalks will be reconstructed under US 41. Work will continue on the WIS 29 interchange. Early structures and filling work will start on the I-43 interchange. While the Lineville Road interchange will be under construction, it will remain open with intermittent lane and ramp closures. Mainline construction will be in full swing with nearly all of US 41 in Brown County either completed or under construction by late 2013.

Separate but connected is the Leo Frigo Memorial Bridge and I-43 project, which began last April concentrating on the northbound lanes. Workers will continue on this project in April 2013, when the southbound lanes will be resurfaced. Traffic will be restricted to one lane in each direction until the project is completed in late July 2013.

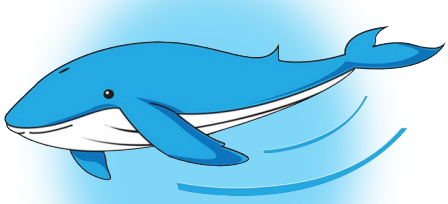
Remember:

- **Speed zones are reduced in some construction zones... schedule extra time.**
- **Fines are double in construction zones.**

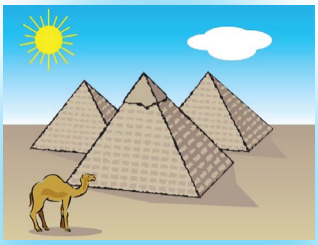
Amazing facts about the US 41 Project

The US 41 Project is the largest highway construction project in Northeast Wisconsin, and one of the largest-ever highway improvements in the entire state. The project adds new lanes to 31 miles of freeway (14 in Brown County and 17 in Winnebago County). It includes the reconstruction of 16 interchanges, with 13 being completely rebuilt. It also includes the construction of 44 roundabouts; installation of 17 traffic cameras; and widening the Lake Butte des Morts Causeway to eight lanes with a recreational trail across the lake with access for fishing.

The quantities of materials needed are truly amazing. To put it in perspective, consider these comparisons:



793 tons of asphalt =
weighs about as much as 4,182 Blue Whales

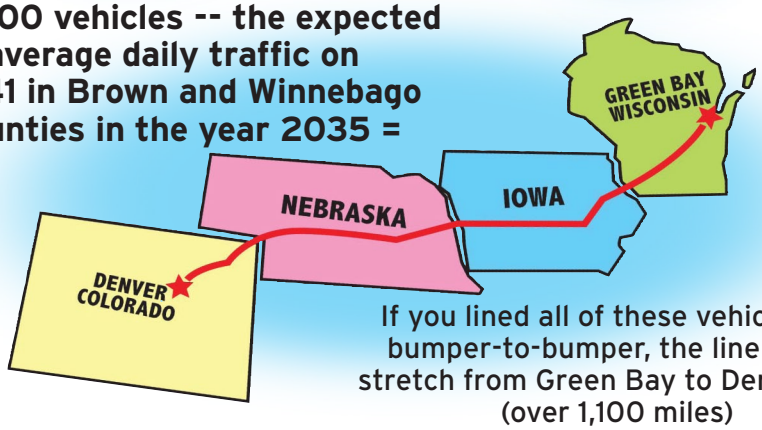


9,200,000 cu. yds. of excavation =
enough to build 2.8 Great Pyramids of Egypt

1,973,000 sq. ft. of bridge structures =
enough to cover Lambeau Field—34 times

3,243,300 sq. yds. of concrete pavement =
enough to pave over 123 Manhattan city blocks

221,000 vehicles -- the expected average daily traffic on US 41 in Brown and Winnebago Counties in the year 2035 =



If you lined all of these vehicles up, bumper-to-bumper, the line would stretch from Green Bay to Denver, CO. (over 1,100 miles)

Wisconsin Rideshare offers reduced congestion in construction zones

As construction on US 41 picks up speed, so will the congestion. This is a good time to consider carpooling. The math is simple. If all the single drivers used the Wisconsin Rideshare program to find one other person to carpool with, there would be half as many cars on the road! Half as many cars creeping around barrels through construction! ....A commuter's dream!

You can find your match through the internet at www.rideshare.wi.gov. Register your origin, destination, work times, and contact information.

Find your matches and contact them to arrange a carpool. Reduce congestion, save fuel costs, extend the life of your car, and improve air quality.

The Wisconsin Rideshare website has a new look with videos of the program features. You'll find tips for a successful carpool and even a link to eco-driving tips to get the most miles per gallon. Check it out! You have nothing to lose.

RIDESHARE
FEELIN' BETTER ALREADY!