



## Kentucky Transportation Cabinet, District 3

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### **A new Interstate 65 interchange and connector road opens in Warren County**

*Phase I of the I-65 to U.S. 31-W Connector Project opened to the public today*

**BOWLING GREEN, Ky.** (July 6, 2017) – The Kentucky Transportation Cabinet (KYTC), in partnership with the Bowling Green Area Chamber of Commerce, held a ribbon cutting event today celebrating the opening of Phase I of the Interstate 65 to U.S. 31-W Connector Project in Warren County. Local, state and federal officials, along with local business leaders, gathered on the new connector road to cut the ribbon to officially open Phase I of the project.

"The Commonwealth's transportation systems, together with our geography, climate, workforce and other distinct advantages, make Kentucky a world-class place to do business. This new I-65 interchange will further position the Bowling Green region for sustained economic development and job growth," said Gov. Matt Bevin.

The \$66.8 million project provides residents and commuters another direct access point to I-65 and gives commercial vehicles a safer, more reliable route to serve the industries in the area.

"The opening of this I-65 interchange is a landmark achievement for Warren County," said U.S. Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell. The Kentucky Transpark is an economic driver for South Central Kentucky, and exit 30 will help the region continue to prosper. I was proud to partner with community and state leaders to make this interchange a reality, and I am grateful for their dedication to this project. Because of their work, this interchange will help support jobs, investment and economic development to our state."

Phase I of the project features a new interchange on I-65 with a new exit numbered 30. The connector road from I-65 to U.S. 68 is a four-lane section with a divided median with future expansion possible to six lanes. Phase II of the project, expected to open in 2018, will extend the connector road from U.S. 68 to U.S. 31-W and will be a two-lane section with the option to expand to four lanes.

“Transportation is a lifeline for economic development in Kentucky. Today marks the completion of an important project that will increase access for our neighbors in industrial parks, as well as relieve traffic congestion that has doubled in the last 20 years,” said KYTC Secretary Greg Thomas.

In 2004, \$5.25 million was allotted for the improvements to U.S. 31-W. In 2005, \$2 million was allotted for improvements to U.S. 68 and \$35 million was allotted for the construction of the interchange with connector Road. Qk4, Inc. of Louisville began the final design phase in 2011. The right-of-way and utility relocation phases began in 2012 and Scotty’s Contracting and Stone LLC began construction on the 2.5 mile project in 2014.

“The completion of this new interchange is a major milestone for economic development efforts in Warren County and surrounding communities,” said Rep. Jim DeCesare, R-Bowling Green, Chair of the House Economic Development & Workforce Development Committee. “Now, businesses have prime access to one of the area’s biggest industrial parks, which will help lure new investments while retaining already existing ones. The logistical advantage of this new transportation project will prove incredibly valuable to jobs growth, and I commend everybody involved in making it happen, and I look forward to future completion of the next phase.”

The project serves as the front door to the Kentucky Transpark, an industrial business area featuring regional, national and international outreach. As of April, the Transpark supports more than 2,600 jobs, which will have a \$5.9 billion economic impact on South Central Kentucky over the next 10 years. Since 2011, 300 acres and 1.1 million square feet of industrial space have been developed within the Kentucky Transpark. It is home to two state-of-the-art vocational-based education facilities and eight of the region’s targeted industries.

The surge in the once rural area has provided residents and commuters with many options for employment and commerce. However, with large growth comes the challenge of managing traffic changes and increased traffic volumes. Since 1988, traffic volume on I-65 in northern Warren County has more than doubled to more than 50,000 vehicles per day, with many of those being commercial vehicles. U.S. 31-W handles about 22,000 vehicles per day in the urban area. One of the main highways servicing the Transpark is U.S. 68, which carries about 4,900 vehicles per day, and KY 446, which is exit 28 on I-65, which carries approximately 17,500 vehicles per day. The opening of the new I-65 interchange with the connector road gives residents and commuters another access point to northern Warren County and gives commercial vehicles a safer, more reliable route to serve the industries in the area.

“Warren County and South Central Kentucky is growing rapidly and it is important that our infrastructure keeps pace with our economic growth,” said Rep. Michael Meredith, R-Oakland, Chairman of House Committee on Local Government. “The completion of this interchange will benefit economic development in our area and I commend all those involved. Quality infrastructure is necessary for creating jobs and I will continue to advocate for a modern transportation system that makes our region attractive.”

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