



Kentucky Transportation Cabinet - District 3

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Gov. Bevin, government officials, and business leaders commemorate 'Signs of Progress' to elevate Natcher Parkway to Interstate 165

Bowling Green event celebrates new I-165 designation

BOWLING GREEN, Ky. (March 26, 2019) – Gov. Matt Bevin today joined federal, state and local officials and business leaders to celebrate the newly designated Interstate 165 between Bowling Green and Owensboro. An event today in Warren County commemorated the ongoing project to sign 70 miles of the former William H. Natcher Parkway with distinctive red, white and blue shields, cementing the corridor's elevated interstate status.

"The official designation and signing of the I-165 corridor is an exciting milestone for Western Kentucky and the entire Commonwealth," said Gov. Bevin. "With direct interstate connectivity, communities all along this corridor are well positioned for economic development opportunities and sustained growth. In addition to being economically transformational for the region, the physical upgrades to the roadway will enhance the safety and overall commute for those traveling along I-165."

Hosted at Stryker Logistics headquarters near I-165 in Bowling Green, Kentucky Transportation Cabinet (KYTC) Secretary Greg Thomas and Federal Highway Administration official Thomas Nelson made remarks applauding the rapid progress made to sign the corridor following the joint agreement both agencies signed in September 2018 to designate the parkway as I-165. The designation upgrades the parkway into a federally-recognized route on the Interstate Highway System.

"Interstate shields send the message Kentucky is open for business," said Secretary Thomas. "This classification and future roadway improvements will support economic development by providing an efficient, safe route to transport goods and people. The new designation also ushers in the first interstate in Owensboro – a milestone for this valuable region of western Kentucky."

Also participating in today's event were business and industry representatives from Warren, Butler, Ohio and Daviess counties, as well as project contractors Scotty's Contracting & Stone LLC and George B Stone Company LLC.

The Bowling Green ceremony delivered on a commitment made by Gov. Bevin and U.S. Rep. Brett Guthrie during a 2016 announcement in Owensboro, the bookend of the corridor, to designate the Natcher Parkway as an interstate spur. A champion of the project and of promoting industry in western Kentucky, Congressman Guthrie was key in spearheading legislation, in collaboration with U.S. Senator Mitch McConnell and KYTC, to allow businesses dependent upon overweight commercial truck exceptions continued access on I-165 to ensure the uninterrupted transportation of goods and services.

"I am proud to see the William H. Natcher Parkway, now the Natcher Expressway, officially designated as Interstate I-165," said Congressman Guthrie. "This interstate is great news for the local economy and will encourage companies to do business in this part of the Commonwealth. I want to thank the Kentucky Transportation Cabinet, Senator McConnell, Governor Bevin, Congressman Comer, and members of the state legislature for helping to get this project across the finish line. I look forward to seeing what opportunities this new designation will bring to the Second District."

The upgrade of the Natcher Parkway to I-165 represents an investment of more than \$40 million in modernization projects along the corridor between Bowling Green and Owensboro. In addition to the improvements, multiple future upgrades are planned to bring the former parkway up to current interstate standards, providing a safer, more efficient commute for motorists.

KYTC District 3 has ongoing projects at the interchange with U.S. 31-W and interchange at U.S. 68 in Bowling Green to extend the ramp tapers – making it safer for motorists to exit on and off the interstate – and to upgrade the bridge walls and bridge roadway surfaces. KYTC District 2 has an ongoing rehab project between the Ohio County and Butler County line and the Natcher Parkway/U.S. 60 Interchange at Owensboro in Daviess County. The project includes guardrail, edge drainage, and bridge barrier wall upgrades along 35 miles of the parkway, with work expected to be complete in summer 2019.

Additional upgrades along the I-165 corridor include reconstruction of three cloverleaf interchanges originally designed to accommodate slowing and stopped traffic at toll plazas. The interchange with KY 69 at Hartford in Ohio County, the U.S. 231 interchange near Cromwell in Butler County, and the U.S. 231 interchange in Warren County, will be reconstructed to accommodate 70 mph interstate traffic.

The project to complete the temporary signing of I-165 is expected to be complete this spring. Permanent I-165 panel signs, ramp exits, mile markers and blue logo signs are expected to be in place by early June. Maintaining the legacy of the former parkway named after Congressman William H. Natcher, a 2018 General Assembly honorary and memorial road and bridge naming joint resolution allows for portions of I-165 to be signed as the "William H. Natcher Expressway" during the permanent signing phase. Honorary signs will be placed at each county line the corridor stretches through.

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