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Long-Awaited Interchange Project Designed to Bring More Safety, Less Congestion in Pulaski County is Ceremonially Opened

Transportation Secretary Jim Gray says good roads 'aren't red or blue'

FRANKFORT, Ky. (July 24, 2023) – A long-awaited interchange and road widening project that will bring greater safety and less traffic congestion in tourism-rich Pulaski County was ceremonially opened today by Kentucky Transportation Secretary Jim Gray, U.S. Rep. Harold “Hal” Rogers and area officials.

“Our roads aren’t red or blue. They’re for the people of Kentucky and the millions of visitors that come to our great state,” said Secretary Gray, representing Gov. Andy Beshear. “The Beshear administration knows that well-built and well-maintained transportation infrastructure is a key that unlocks economic development opportunities and adds to the quality of life in Kentucky.”

The event marked the completion of two new interchanges at the juncture of KY 80 and KY 461, two routes that see steady streams of traffic, including vacationers going to and from Lake Cumberland. Also in the project is the widening to four lanes of more than 3 miles of KY 461.

“This monumental transportation project is a stamp of economic success and growth for southern and eastern Kentucky, and we’re far from finished,” said Congressman Rogers, who is Dean of the House. “Southern Kentucky needs a four-lane highway that runs east to west, attracting new business and tourism dollars through the most beautiful parts of our state. We are making significant progress towards that goal as we continue strategic planning across the federal, state and local levels.”

The KY80/461 project, a \$51 million investment, was funded in part with a \$25 million federal grant from the program known as BUILD -- Better Utilizing Investments to Leverage Development. The remaining \$26 million came from state-federal apportionment and a local match. While most of the funds went to the two interchanges and lane widening, funds also will be used to purchase new intelligent transportation systems including improved lighting, electronic messaging boards, camera monitoring systems, and upgraded signage.

The project in general, and the widening of KY 461 in particular, will benefit a long list of businesses located in the nearby Valley Oak Complex:

- TTAI (Toyotetsu)
- Hendrickson
- Gatormade
- AppHarvest
- Bondtech
- Team Modern
- Conner Logistics
- HT Warehousing
- EOS
- Performance Foods
- SCC Lineman Training Center
- SCC Valley Oak Campus

Valley Oak Complex is an industrial park on KY 461 that has over 3,000 employees. More than a thousand tractor-trailers travel to and from the site weekly. That number will soon grow with the planned construction of a multi-million dollar apartment complex and a childcare center.

"This road project is one of the most impactful endeavors to have taken place in the Somerset and Pulaski County community in decades," Chris Girdler, President and CEO of Somerset-Pulaski Economic Development Authority, said. "It has drastically improved safety for the thousands employed within the Valley Oak Commerce Complex and millions who travel to Lake Cumberland annually. This area of Pulaski County is primed for record-breaking growth over the coming years."

Construction began in late 2020 after [the announcement of the competitive BUILD grant and other federal funding](#) for the project was released in early 2019.

"This project will save lives and be crucial to local tourism and commerce here in Pulaski County," said Pulaski County Judge-Executive Marshall Todd. "This was a very dangerous intersection. When we looked at the traffic congestion and the collisions that came with that original intersection, we saw that something was needed to help with that and open up this area even more for future development."

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