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- Farmland rest area (I-74)
- Funks Grove rest area (I-55)
- Illini Prairie rest area (I-57)
- Salt Kettle rest area (I-74)

All photographs and articles by
Stephanie unless otherwise noted.



State of Illinois
Illinois Department of Transportation

0788-14, 05/14, 50

Driving Zero Fatalities to a Reality

At the Illinois Department of Transportation, safety is our number one priority and we stand committed to reducing the number of fatalities to zero on Illinois roadways.

Please help us by driving defensively, buckling up, putting down your cell phone, slowing down in work zones, wearing the proper gear while motorcycling, and designating a sober

driver if you have been drinking. Driving Zero Fatalities to a Reality is our message. Every life counts. With your help, we will ensure we are doing everything we can to save lives.

2014 Illinois Roadway Fatalities to Date

297

Lost & Found

Any lost and found items you may find should be brought to the attention of your supervisor immediately. Items should be sealed in an envelope. On the outside of the envelope, write a brief description of what is inside, when and where the item was found, the date, who found it and any other important information. Once the information is complete the envelope should be placed in the lost and found bin in the office to be picked up by Lee or Stephanie.

The Purple Coneflower

Purple coneflower, scientific name Echinacea purpurea is an attractive native prairie plant found in existing prairie remnants and restored prairies and many flower gardens throughout Illinois. As its name indicates the

flower has purple petals that curve slightly downward radiating from a spiny center that is gold or yellow in color. Each flower extends on a single stem and grows from two to five feet tall. Each plant produces several blooms each year. Purple coneflower is a perennial plant, meaning the tops die back in the fall but the plant comes back each year from the root. Coneflowers are members of the Aster family of plants and they typically bloom around mid-July in Illinois sporting beautiful blooms for several weeks.

Purple cone-flowers are also heavy seed producers and in the right conditions they reproduce well by spreading seeds to nearby areas. Echinacea purpurea is an herb and is commonly used in many herbal teas and supplements. The enzymes are thought to be a mild natural antibiotic and are thought to improve white blood cell counts when taken as a supplement to a normal diet.



Photo by Joseph A. Marcus

In addition to the herbal benefits to humans, purple coneflower also is a favorite of butterflies, hummingbirds and bees. The flower is recommended by and is recognized by pollination ecologists as having a special value to native pollinators.

We frequently plant and seed purple cone-flowers around our rest areas, in restored prairie plots and along our roadsides throughout the District. Pay careful attention this summer as you travel around and you can be guaranteed to spot this native flower growing along our roads and in our flower beds. You may be surprised to learn you already have this beauty growing in your own home or office flowerbed!

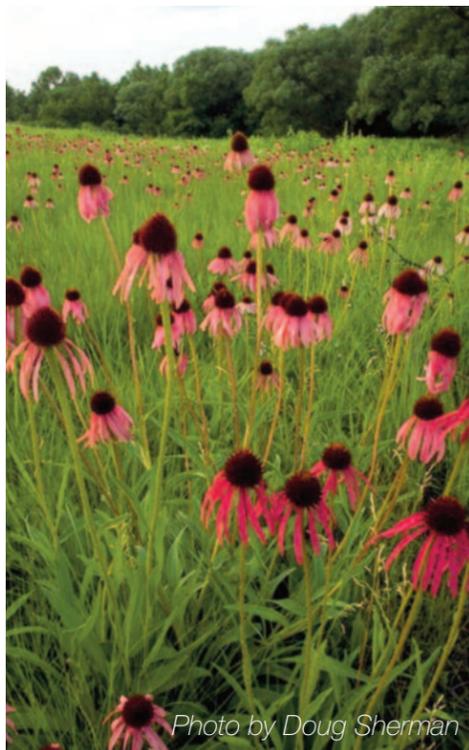


Photo by Doug Sherman

RAZR D5

D5 REST AREA ZONE REPORT • IDOT DISTRICT 5

June 2014 • Volume 1, Issue 6

Inside this issue

Salt Kettle and Illini Prairie Restroom Rehab Project.....	2
Trees!.....	2
Lightning Safety.....	3
Farmland Door Replacement Project.....	3
Funks Grove Construction.....	3
The Purple Coneflower.....	4
Driving Zero Fatalities to a Reality.....	4

The Amazing Monarch Migration *By Lee Cochran*

Across the USA and southern Canada, monarch butterflies soar and glide in the warm sunshine from March through October. But each fall, as the temperatures drop in the north, they migrate south to warmer climates. The Rocky Mountains seem to be the dividing line that determines where they go...monarchs from east of the mountains travel to Mexico, and those from west of the Rockies journey to coastal southern California. What's particularly astonishing about the monarch migration is that no individual makes the entire round trip! Female monarchs lay eggs for the next generations during the spring migration back north. It takes 4 generations to complete a round trip. The first 3 generations live only about 2 months. It is the 4th generation that travels all the way south to hibernate for 6-8 months until it is time to begin the return trip home. Then, during the months of February and March, they come out of their hibernating state to find a mate. After this, they search for the ideal place for laying their eggs, by traveling to the east and to the north, making it as far as Oklahoma and Texas. During March-April you can see them laying their eggs on the milkweed plants. These eggs grow to become the 1st new generation of monarchs. This 1st generation dies after having laid eggs for the 2nd generation. During May-June, you can see these 2nd generation butterflies appearing. They are finding mates and will lay eggs to make the

3rd generation, which will go on to make the 4th generation, born in Sept-October. Soon after, depending on weather conditions, the migration southward begins again. So, it is the Great, Great, "Grandchildren" of each 4th generation that makes the trip south year after year, traveling up to 12 miles per hour, about 50 miles per day, over a distance as long as 3000 miles to arrive in Mexico or California. It is remarkable how monarch butterflies of 4 generations work out a way that their population survives through the years. This migratory test of endurance proves unsuccessful for many of the monarchs as they succumb to fatigue and the dangers of storms and passing cars. Despite this, it is believed that as many as 300 million of the orange and black butterflies successfully migrate to their over-wintering lands in the south.

There is much more to share about the amazing monarch butterfly...to be continued in the next RAZR.



Special Points of Interest

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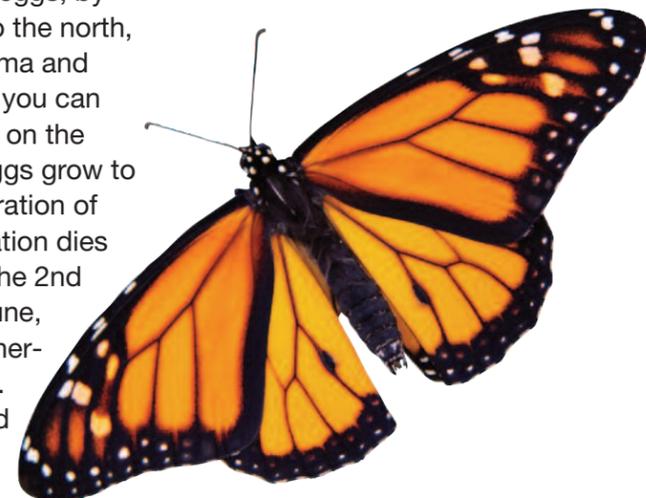
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Illinois Department of Transportation



Salt Kettle and Illini Prairie Restroom Rehab Project

A contractor has been selected for the construction projects at Illini Prairie and Salt Kettle rest areas. The order to proceed has been issued and the contractor is currently making arrangements for the work including ordering of new fixtures and partitions for the rest rooms. At this time the contractor is planning to begin the work in late June or early July. We do not have an exact start date.

All three of the rest area facilities will be closed once the construction begins. One of the main items of construction will be refinishing the terrazzo floors in all six of the rest rooms. Due to the special nature of

this work and the proximity of the rest areas to each other, closing all three locations at once will allow the project to move forward quicker versus completing the floor rehab one facility at a time.

The project includes rehabilitating the existing floors, new fixtures including urinals, toilets and sinks with automatic faucets, new partitions, removal of the existing tile flooring and replacement with a terrazzo product similar to the existing floors. The partition spacing will be updated to meet current ADA standards and requirements and push button openers will be added to the main bathroom doors to improve access.

At this time the contractor plans to have the facilities closed for up to four months. During the closure the Department will be making other repairs to the rest area buildings and grounds including planting trees, updating landscaping, concrete sidewalk repairs, curb replacement and repairs and some pavement patching. We are also investigating replacing the existing hand dryers and updating the thermostats to make the facilities more energy efficient.

Future issues of the RAZR will feature updates on the construction work as it progresses.

Trees!

We have received and have started planting new trees at all of our District 5 rest area locations. Some locations will only receive a few new trees and some will have several new trees planted. The trees were provided to the Department as part of a vegetation control permit and are being utilized in the rest areas as a part of the Emerald Ash Borer tree replacement project.

The varieties of new trees vary from small ornamental landscape trees to large shade trees and evergreens. The species we will be planting include: Eastern Redbud, American Hornbeam, American Yellowwood, Tulip tree, Shingle Oak, Limber Pine, Littleleaf Linden, Miyable Maple, Red Maple, Ornamental Cherry, White Fringetree, Swamp White Oak, Canaan Fir, Bald Cypress, Autumn Gold Ginkgo, London Planetree and European Beech.

If that sounds like a very long list of different species of trees, it is. One of

the best ways to combat the effects of devastating attacks by invasive insects like the Emerald Ash Borer or diseases such as Dutch Elm disease or Sudden Oak death is to plant a wide variety of species. Both locations at Illini Prairie and our Salt Kettle



rest areas have lost over 70 trees each due to the recent infestation of the Emerald Ash Borer. By diversifying the species of trees we have selected for replacements our hope is to prevent similar devastating attacks in the future as well as provide interesting and inviting grounds at our rest areas. In the future we hope to install identification tags containing both the trees common name, scientific name and any interesting facts about the trees to further interest and educate the public on our wide varieties of trees at the rest areas.

We hope to plant the trees without creating too much disturbance to the rest area grounds and without making too much of a mess on sidewalks and paved areas around the buildings. Once planted the trees will be fitted with watering bags and be mulched to prevent weeds and aid in watering. Please bear with us as we work to get the trees planted over the next several weeks.

Lightning Safety



view lightning safety and your company's policies with all staff. Lightning safety tips from the National Weather Service include:

- NO PLACE outside is safe when thunderstorms are in the area
- If you hear thunder, lightning is close enough to strike you
- When you hear thunder, immediately move to a substantial building or an enclosed metal topped vehicle with the windows up
- Stay in a safe shelter at least 30 minutes after you hear the last thunder
- Stay away from windows and doors and stay off porches

All of our rest area building have weather radios equipped with battery backups. These radios will warn you of weather threats, watches and warnings. The Department also recommends that supervisors make themselves aware of the days forecast and inform all employees of the potential threat, especially those involved in lawn care operations if you

“When Thunder Roars Go Indoors” that is the lightning safety slogan of the National Weather Service. We all know hot, humid summer days often lead to afternoon thunderstorms in our area. Now is a good time to re-

suspect bad weather or if bad weather has been forecasted for that day. In addition to the weather radios, all rest areas also have weather radar computers in the lobby areas.

The above tips were taken from the National Weather Service web site at www.lightningsafety.noaa.gov. The web page is a great resource if you have lightning questions or would like more information.

Funks Grove Construction

Construction began on the rebuild of the Funks Grove septic system in mid May. The project consists of cleaning and repairs to the existing septic holding tanks, cleaning and repairs to the existing lagoons, installation of a cover over lagoon two and rehabilitation of the sand filter system. A temporary access drive will be built near the back of the building to allow trucks in and out during the cleaning of the septic holding tanks and installation of new access manholes. This area will be seeded and returned to lawn at the end of the project.

During the closure the Department has worked on the trees and vegetation around the rest area grounds and we will be planting some trees and doing some other landscaping work prior to reopening. We also plan to make some minor repairs and updates to the water plant while the other construction is ongoing.

The rest area will remain closed for the duration of the construction project. At this time we are hopeful that the work will be completed by the end of summer. Once the construction is complete and testing can be done on all of the existing and repaired utilities the rest area will reopen.

Farmland Door Replacement Project

A contractor has been selected and a contract has been awarded for the replacement of all entry doors at the Farmland rest areas. The materials have been ordered and construction will begin once the materials have been received.

The existing teal colored steel and glass doors will be replaced with bronze colored steel doors of similar style. The ADA push buttons will also be updated. The work will progress one entrance at a time until the project is complete. The rest areas will remain open and the public will be routed to one of the other building entrances during the construction.

A recent project was completed that updated the exterior of the building entrances from wood to natural stone. Replacement of the doors will complete the entrance rehabilitation projects. In addition to looking much nicer than the aging steel doors the new doors will be more energy efficient and will be installed with a heavier hinge mechanism to help combat the ever present winds at the locations.

Once construction begins and the first entrance is completed we will include before and after photographs in a future progress update article.