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Illinois Department of Transportation

Stoptlights on U.S. 45 near Thomasboro? Not so fast

By **DAVE HINTON**

THOMASBORO — Motorists using U.S. 45 from Thomasboro to Urbana soon will see bright lighting conditions at two intersections and a change in how traffic accesses the road.

Gary Sims, operations engineer for the Illinois Department of Transportation, said highway lighting will be added to the Flatville Road interchange in Thomasboro and the Leverett Road interchange 4 miles south of the village.

Sims said there had been some speculation that equipment installed at the intersections is to accommodate stoplights. That's not the case, he said.



Ten poles with lighting will be added “to bring attention to those busy intersections,” Sims said.

It is one of several area intersections where highway lighting will be added. The others:

- Illinois 130 and Sidney Road.
- U.S. 36 and Illinois 130 South.
- Illinois 49 and Illinois 133.
- U.S. 136 and Illinois 47.
- Illinois 130 and Illinois 133.
- U.S. 36 and Illinois 1.
- U.S. 150 and Staley Road.
- U.S. 36 and Arthur-Atwood Road.
- U.S. 136 and Illinois 49 North.
- U.S. 36 and Illinois 130 North.
- U.S. 36 and Illinois 49.
- U.S. 136 and Illinois 49 South.

Sims said Gerstner Electric was awarded the highway-lighting contract.

Motorists could also see another major change at the Flatville Road and Leverett Road intersections with U.S. 45.

“Our safety committee has looked at it and is proposing a J-turn intersection be applied to both those intersections,” Sims said.

U.S. 45 between Rantoul and Urbana features four lanes of traffic, with two each traveling north and south, and is potentially dangerous for eastbound traffic wishing to turn onto north bound lanes and westbound traffic wishing to turn onto southbound lanes.

With the change, westbound or eastbound traffic would turn right, travel a short distance and then make a J turn in the direction they wish to travel.

“It’s similar to a roundabout,” Sims said. “It doesn’t look like a roundabout, but the theory is it’s similar to why a roundabout works.”

He said the most severe traffic crashes occur when vehicles hit head-on or when one T-bones another.

“With a J-turn, you kind of take away that T-bone conflict,” Sims said.

He said there have been some requests for stoplights at those intersections, but those can prove more dangerous than four-way-stop intersections.

“It’s one of those things that the public is quick to request,” Sims said. “They think it will be safer. It’s really not.

“People run red lights all the time, whereas the people with the green light have no reason to stop or slow down. Statistically, there are a lot of crashes at stoplights, whereas otherwise, there’s not.”

Bid letting for the J-turn contract is scheduled for January 2026.

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