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Peoria Journal Star, The (IL) June 16, 2004 2004- CITY All B1 MATT BUEDEL Cameras will keep eye on Interstate 74 - Motorists can check Internet to monitor traffic conditions PEORIA - Determining whether to take Interstate 74 to where you're going will be just a click away later this summer, when information gleaned from a network of cameras and highway sensors goes online.

The Intelligent Transportation System, a \$7.5 million facet of the \$461 million Upgrade 74, will relay, in real time, traffic backups, accidents and construction conditions throughout the **I-74** corridor in Peoria and East Peoria. Police and other emergency personnel in both communities already use the system, which will remain a permanent part of the interstate once the overhaul is complete. While the cameras possess the capability to identify speeding motorists, the videos will not be used in law enforcement.

"The main function is just to monitor traffic," said Randy Laninga, traffic engineer and ITS coordinator with District 4 of the Illinois Department of Transportation. "It won't be used to give any tickets."

Officials on Tuesday unveiled the ITS communication center at IDOT headquarters in Downtown Peoria. Video screens line one wall on the seventh floor at the Becker Building, surrounded by computer work stations that connect the system's operations: Portable and permanent message boards warning motorists of traffic congestion ahead. Messages can also alert drivers of Amber Alerts, giving descriptions of suspected abductors' vehicles or license plates.

- Fifteen cameras sprinkled along the interstate and at other intersections where traffic is likely to increase because of commuters avoiding construction zones. A handful of cameras have yet to be put in place.

- Sensors embedded in interstate pavement that gauge the number of vehicles on the road and where drivers will likely encounter backups.

- Yellow flashing railroad warnings that will alert motorists to trains crossing Main and Washington streets in East Peoria.

- Accident investigation sites where people involved in minor traffic accidents can pull to the side of the interstate. Temporary sites will be placed at various locations along the interstate when construction pushes vehicles onto one lane in either direction. Permanent sites will be built on either side of the Murray Baker Bridge.

The camera views, information broadcast on message boards and congestion reports will be available on the **I-74** overhaul Web site, [www.upgrade74.com](#), by September, according to Upgrade 74 spokeswoman

Beth Mosher.

A map of the Peoria area will indicate interstate congestion with yellow and red highlights. Green zones will show where traffic is flowing freely.

Camera icons on the maps will allow commuters to view still images - updated every five minutes - of the site where the camera is located.

Laniga said IDOT will eventually acquire software that fuses all aspects of ITS, from cameras to message boards to traffic control signals. A uniform software network will allow the Peoria-area ITS to link to other traffic monitoring systems throughout the state.

He used the Georgia Department of Transportation's ITS as an example of unified systems. That state has linked metropolitan areas and state highways under one Web site, which can be viewed at [www.georgia-navigator.com](http://www.georgia-navigator.com). Illinois Department of Transportation traffic engineer Randy Laniga explains advantages of the new intelligent Transportation System, installed as part of the Interstate 74 upgrade. The system comprises 15 cameras located throughout the Peoria area to monitor traffic, message boards to alert motorists of problems, and other technology to monitor traffic flow. Laniga is coordinator of the ITS system. The screens in the background on the wall of the IDOT offices in Downtown Peoria display video of intersections in the Peoria area.

</p><p>CAPTION: Fifteen cameras along **I-74** and at other intersections where traffic is likely to increase because of construction are part of the Intelligent Transportation System unveiled Tuesday. The \$7.5 million facet of the \$461 million Upgrade 74 will relay in real-time traffic backups, accidents and construction conditions throughout the **I-74** corridor in Peoria and East Peoria. (See graphics folder for map)</p><p>CAPTION: On the Net: Get the latest construction news about the **I-74** overhaul at [pjstar.com](http://pjstar.com). Click on "The Big Fix" at right.

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