

Final bridge demolitions for North Tarrant Express set for this weekend

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By Terry Evans

tevans@star-telegram.com

A milestone will be reached as two old bridges on Northeast Loop 820 and Airport Freeway surrender to progress as part of the \$2.5 billion North Tarrant Express project.

The bad news, however, is that Holiday Lane under Loop 820 and Precinct Line Road under Texas 121/183 will be closed while the bridges are demolished. From 9 p.m. today to 5 a.m. Sunday, Holiday Lane's northbound traffic will be detoured to Grapevine Highway, and southbound traffic will be sent to Rufe Snow Drive.

Northbound Precinct Line traffic will use Hurstview Drive, and southbound traffic will go to Bedford-Euless Road.

Traffic on the freeways will also be affected for brief intervals, said Robert Hinkle, a North Tarrant Express spokesman.

"The demos [demolitions] are mostly nighttime operations," Hinkle said. "What we do is configure the closures so the crews work in 15-minute increments so there are rolling lane closures. It usually only takes a couple of those to get the demo far enough off the road that it can be done safely without stopping traffic."

But the good news about this part of the 13.5-mile project is that these are the last of 18 bridge demolitions since the project began in 2010, Hinkle said.

"Bridges are tough, especially if you have to keep traffic moving under as well as on them while you work on them," he said. "That's why a lot of it's done in the middle of the night, to impede as few drivers as possible."

The project is moving along at phenomenal speed, Hinkle said.

"We are making such progress that I wouldn't be surprised if we beat the June 2015 contract date," he said. "The next major milestones will be completely opening the gateways to cities like Precinct Line in Hurst, Central in Bedford, Denton Highway in Haltom City and Rufe Snow in North Richland Hills."

The next milestone after the last bridge demolitions is the opening of a new one, Hinkle said.

“One lane in each direction on Iron Horse Boulevard bridge should be open at the end of next week, to reconnect the residential and commercial districts on the north and south,” he said.

Work is more than 70 percent complete on the project to rebuild main lanes and frontage roads and add toll lanes to Loop 820 and Airport Freeway from Interstate 35W to Industrial Boulevard, Hinkle said.

Go to northtarrantexpress.com for more information and closure notifications.

Terry Evans, 817-390-7620 Twitter: [@fwstevans](https://twitter.com/fwstevans)