



*The Marquette Interchange incorporates images from the area's African-American heritage on bridges and retaining walls, highlighting its role during the 19th century in helping fugitive slaves escape to free states and Canada via the Underground Railroad.*

## Keeping Milwaukee open for business

### Public involvement program a huge success

During the Marquette Interchange Reconstruction Project, keeping Milwaukee, Wisconsin, open for business was a key challenge and, as it turned out, one of the biggest successes for Milwaukee Transportation Partners, a CH2M HILL and HNTB joint venture.

Fueling this success was an intensive public involvement program for the \$1 billion project involving the reconstruction of a five-level interchange downtown at the junction of Interstate 94, I-43, and I-794. The interchange is the cornerstone of the state's southeastern freeway system, carrying 300,000 vehicles per day. Marquette was ranked by *Road and Bridges* magazine as the nation's No. 1 road project for 2004.

It included the completion of the \$107 million North Leg, under a much accelerated two-year schedule. Nearby neighbors were especially sensitive to impact. Because of this, minimizing disruption and making the freeway a "better neighbor" were key goals of the joint venture.

To do so, a commitment was made to stakeholders and residents to keep open two lanes in each direction during construction. This commitment was vital to maintain the reality and perception that downtown Milwaukee would be open for business. Ramp closures were coordinated to benefit motorists, and a detailed schedule was provided to the public showing ramp- and lane-closure times and locations. A "lane-rental" program gave contractors an allotment of hours to close freeway and ramp lanes, and they were charged for closures that exceeded those allotments.

An aggressive outreach campaign made the public aware of ramp closings and openings and alternate routes during construction. Integral to the public outreach was the development of an extensive web site, [www.mchange.org](http://www.mchange.org). By late April, the web site had received more than 88 million hits. *Cont'd on pg 2*



Success of the \$1 billion Marquette Interchange is due to a strong partnership between the team, WisDOT, stakeholders and the Milwaukee community.

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As part of the web site, Milwaukee Transportation Partners developed a “MapIt” routing application to help the public obtain custom driving directions through the interchange during construction. The site also allowed users to download the “Traffic Bug,” which electronically notifies them of traffic changes.

To address the project’s neighbors, a community-sensitive design process was adopted. It incorporated the area’s historic Bronzeville African-American heritage in the designs for bridges, retaining walls, and noise barriers.

The feedback received from both the traveling public and local businesses has been overwhelmingly positive regarding safety, maintenance of traffic, overall design and aesthetics, and economic development and impact. In 2006, during the project’s most disruptive traffic year, the Milwaukee Bucks, the Milwaukee Admirals, Milwaukee Wave, the city’s symphony, Pabst Theater, and the Nutcracker Ballet all had record attendance—a strong testament to keeping Milwaukee open for business.

**Public praise**

“Just wanted to let everyone involved with this project know that you guys are doing a great job. I have lived in several major cities including Boston and Washington, D.C., where projects of this magnitude more or less paralyzed portions of the city. The fact that you have been able to pull off this feat of engineering and logistics with a minimum of inconvenience to the public is nothing short of amazing. This project should serve as a model to other states. I believe a compliment is in order. Great job!” —Milwaukee resident, submitted to the project Web site.

**Moving forward in southeast Wisconsin**

CH2M HILL’s Transportation Business Group was notified of another win in southeast Wisconsin—this time, for the \$500 million Zoo Interchange, an additional reconstruction project in Milwaukee.

CH2M HILL, as part of the joint venture “Forward 45” ([www.forward45.com](http://www.forward45.com)) with Kapur & Associates, a local Milwaukee firm, and HNTB, was selected to deliver the Zoo Interchange corridor study and preliminary design for the Wisconsin Department of Transportation.

The scope will include the preparation of an environmental document and preliminary design for seven miles of freeway, the main system interchange between the routes, and five service interchanges on the various approach legs. The interchange is the busiest one in Wisconsin, handling more than 320,000 vehicles per day.

The team’s winning proposal focused on reinforcing the outstanding performance of the Forward 45 firms on the Marquette Interchange and the state’s I-94 North/South corridor.

“CH2M HILL and our partner firms have a long and successful record of service and performance on WisDOT projects—over a 20-year period,” said project manager Brad Heimlich. “All the firms on the Forward 45 team are Milwaukee-based, with a tremendous wealth of local technical talent located within miles of the project corridor.”



Ceramic tiles bearing African adinkra symbols are highlighted on the Walnut Street Bridge over I-43. These tiles were created by the 9th Street Elementary School adjacent to the project.