

Big Changes at Big Rock

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ's)

Q: What's going to happen at the Big Rock Interchange starting July 19th?

A: Beginning at **9:00 a.m. Thursday, July 19**, crews will begin moving the existing **I-430 Southbound travel lanes to the adjacent collector/distributor (CD) road** on the West side of the highway. This will be the first of seven major traffic shifts to take place over a 20-day period. During the transition period, multiple lane closures will be needed on the I-430 Southbound lanes to re-stripe the road and move the traffic. At times during the day, I-430 Southbound traffic will be limited to one lane.

At the completion of the transition of the I-430 Southbound lanes, sometime late Thursday evening or in the early morning hours Friday, there will be two through travel lanes open for Southbound traffic on the CD road. This pattern will remain in place for the entire 20-day period. The I-430 Southbound on-ramp at Rodney Parham Road will also be affected during this period because of the reduced lanes on I-430.

Once the Southbound work is complete, crews will immediately begin to move the **I-430 Northbound lanes to the adjacent CD road** on the East side of the highway. This will be the second major traffic pattern change. During the transition period, multiple lane closures will be needed on the I-430 Northbound lanes to re-stripe the road and move the traffic. At times during the process, I-430 Northbound traffic will be limited to one lane.

At some point on Friday, or early Saturday morning, weather-permitting, the initial two traffic pattern changes on I-430 will be complete. Equipment and materials will start moving into place for the placement of the large steel beams.

Q: How much of the Big Rock Interchange will be affected by this new work?

A: The majority of the work will involve traffic on I-430, both Northbound and Southbound. However, approximately halfway through the 20 days, the loop ramp connecting I-630 Eastbound with I-430 Northbound, and the loop ramp connecting I-430 Northbound with I-630 Westbound/Financial Center Parkway will both close for several days. Motorists who normally use those ramps will be directed to the I-430/Shackleford Road interchange near the Shackleford Crossing shopping area. Advanced warning signs will be in place and the detours will be signed accordingly.

Q: How long will this phase of construction take?

A: The work will begin on Thursday, July 19th, and is expected to take 20 days, weather-permitting. The contractor will work 24-hours-a-day until this phase of work is complete.

Q: What exactly does ‘weather permitting’ mean?

A: The main factors that could impact the work will be lightning and wind. Some of the large beams cannot be hung in wind speeds above 15 miles-per-hour. Heavy rain could impact some phases of the work. If weather delays happen, the process could go beyond the 20 days planned.

Q: Why do the lanes need to be moved so many times?

A: Two reasons: The cranes being used to hang the steel beams require more room to move and operate than equipment used in other phases of the project. Also, for safety reasons, the beams cannot be hung over an active travel lane. So as this construction phase progresses, lane shifts will be needed to allow beams to be hung in different areas of the work zone.

Q: Why is this work being done now?

A: Because of the impact on traffic at peak travel periods, the ideal time to complete this work is before area schools open for the new school year.

Q: Why must this work be done in 20 continuous days?

A: Originally, this phase of construction was scheduled to be completed over a longer period of time, but ultimately it was determined that confining all of the lane shifts and lanes closures into a shorter, limited time period would be safer, and help decrease the overall impact on motorists.

Q: What speed can traffic flow through the construction zone?

A: Advisory speeds through the work zone will continue to be 40 and 45 mph.

Q: Where can I go to get timely information about lane closures and the progress of the work?

A: In the days leading up to July 19th—and throughout the entire phase of construction—you can find updated information on our homepage at www.ArkansasHighways.com. We will also be working closely with local media to make sure they have the latest project information. Smartphone users are encouraged to take advantage of mobile travel apps to monitor traffic flow through the work zone at any time of day or night.

Q: How many lanes will be open when the 20-day work period is finished?

A: After all the steel beams are hung, the Northbound and Southbound travel lanes will return to a similar configuration as existed before this 20-day phase of construction began.

Q: How much longer will the entire Big Rock Interchange be under construction?

A: Work on the Big Rock Interchange is expected to continue through 2014.

Q: What's the cost of the entire project?

A: Approximately \$125 Million.

Q: Based on my normal travel patterns, what can I expect to encounter on my way through the construction zone?

I travel I-430 Southbound from the Cantrell Rd. area (or points farther North):

A: Lane closures will begin at 9:00 a.m. Thursday morning near the Rodney Parham Road interchange. At times throughout the day and evening, traffic will be limited to only one lane. By late Thursday or early Friday, there will be two lanes of traffic for I-430 Southbound motorists on the adjacent collector/distributor (CD) road. A short part of that roadway will be striped for three narrow travel lanes. Access ramps will remain in their same location for Markham/Shackleford, and for I-630 Eastbound/Hermitage Rd. This pattern will remain in place for the entire 20-day period.

I get on I-430 Southbound at the Rodney Parham Road Interchange:

A: Since there will only be two travel lanes on I-430 at this location, delays should be expected. Motorists who use this on-ramp are encouraged to consider alternate routes. This pattern will remain in place for the entire 20-day period.

I travel I-430 Northbound from the Col. Glenn Rd. area (or points farther South):

A: Beginning at the completion of the work on the I-430 Southbound lanes (at some point overnight Thursday or early Friday morning), lane closures will begin. At times throughout Friday and Friday night, traffic will be limited to only one lane. By late Friday or early Saturday, there will be two lanes of traffic for I-430 Northbound motorists on the adjacent collector/distributor (CD) road. A short part of that roadway will be striped for three narrow travel lanes. Access ramps will remain in their same location for I-630 East and for Shackleford/Financial Center Parkway. This pattern will remain in place for several days.

About halfway through the 20-day process, the I-430 Northbound lanes will be moved again. This time, they will be moved to the area that would normally house the I-430 Southbound lanes. At times during this transition, traffic will be limited to only one lane. Once the transition is complete, two lanes of traffic will be available for I-430 Northbound traffic.

It is at this point in the process that the loop ramps involving I-430 Northbound traffic will be closed. If you normally travel I-430 Northbound to Shackleford Rd./Financial Center Parkway loop ramp, that ramp will be closed. You will need to use the exit ramp at Shackleford Rd. near the Shackleford Crossing shopping area to access Shackleford and Financial Center Parkway. Detour and advance warning signs will be in place. This traffic pattern will be in place for approximately 10 days. (See the 'Financial Center Parkway to I-430 Northbound' description for info on the closure of the other loop ramp.)

I travel I-630 Westbound to I-430 Northbound:

A: This travel pattern should be relatively unaffected during this 20-day period. However, congestion and delays from the other traffic modifications could impact motorists on this route. Drivers should be aware of those potential impacts and plan accordingly.

I travel I-630 Westbound to I-430 Southbound:

A: Travel on the I-630 main lanes will not be directly affected, however, traffic using the loop ramp connecting to I-430 Southbound will be slower than usual and could back up onto I-630. Motorists moving from the loop ramp onto I-430 Southbound will encounter two narrow travel lanes. The merging traffic will have its own lane (a third Southbound lane), but that lane will also handle traffic trying to exit from I-430 Southbound onto I-630 Eastbound. Extreme caution should be used through this area due to the merging movements and the narrow travel lanes. Alternate routes should be considered as this pattern will be in place for the entire 20 days.

I travel I-630 Westbound through to Shackelford Road/Financial Center Parkway:

A: Travel on the I-630 main lanes will not be directly affected. However, congestion and delays from the other traffic modifications could impact motorists on this route. Drivers should be aware of those potential impacts and plan accordingly.

I travel Financial Center Parkway/I-630 Eastbound to I-430 Northbound:

A: **The loop ramp connecting I-630 Eastbound with I-430 Northbound will be closed beginning about halfway through the 20-day process.** Motorists traveling East on Financial Center Parkway toward I-630 will need to turn right (South) on Shackelford Rd. and access I-430 Northbound at the interchange near the Shackelford Crossing shopping area. Detour and advance warning signs will be in place. This traffic pattern will be in place for approximately 10 days.

I travel Financial Center Parkway to I-430 Southbound:

A: This movement will not change from its current configuration for this construction phase. However, due to increased congestion on Shackelford Rd. caused by the above described detour for motorists accessing I-430 Northbound, delays should be expected and alternate routes should be considered.

I travel Financial Center Parkway onto I-630 Eastbound:

A: This travel pattern should be relatively unaffected during this 20-day period. However, congestion and delays from the other traffic modifications could impact motorists on this route. Drivers should be aware of those potential impacts and plan accordingly.

Anything else I should know?

A: It's important for motorists to remember that with so many changes in traffic patterns over a short period of time—and with work underway 24-hours-a-day—the Big Rock Interchange will essentially be in a “state of transition” for the entire 20-day period. Unfamiliar traffic configurations will change with little or no warning other than the signs and message boards. Congestion levels could vary—not just at peak travel times—but at all hours of the day and night. Motorists are asked to identify and consider alternate routes around the Big Rock Interchange for the entire 20 days—no matter what time of day you travel.

If you should decide to travel through the work zone, pay attention!! Guard against distracted driving so you can follow the available signage announcing new lane shifts and applicable detours. And remember, the Big Rock Interchange will be unfamiliar terrain to not just you—but to your fellow motorists as well. Slow down through the work zone, and make it the safest possible environment for you, other motorists and the men and women working to complete this ambitious phase of construction.