

February 16, 1962

Mr. R. A. Lonier  
Editor, Illinois Highway Engineer  
4051 North Harlem Avenue  
Chicago 34, Illinois

Dear Sir:

Enclosed herewith is a news item for the magazine. It may be used as a short feature article or included in our chapter news, whichever you prefer. Captions for pictures are attached to their corresponding photographs.

Our regular quarterly news item will be sent to you in a few days.

Sincerely,

Walter C Purcell, Jr.

WCP:MJM

## A NEW HIGHWAY

Several hundred people from the Mattoon-Charleston area shrugged off the discomforts of a cold, cloudy day to attend the dedication ceremony which officially opened the new F.A. Route 17, Sections 30, 30-1, 31, 31B, and 31-VB. This new highway is nearly nine miles long and provides a direct route between Charleston and Mattoon. It consists chiefly of a dual 24-foot concrete pavement, ten inches thick, with a 40-foot depressed earth median and two sets of twin bridges. Section 31B consists of twin bridges composed of a reinforced concrete deck on continuous steel girders, 1 span @100'6", 2 spans @78'6". Section 31-VB consists of twin bridges composed of a reinforced concrete deck on continuous steel I-beams, 1 span @61'0", 2 spans @52'2".

The dedication site was at the Loxa Road intersection, which is about midway between the two leading cities of Coles County. The principal speakers were Governor Otto Kerner, Mayor Carus Icenogle of Mattoon, Mayor William Woods of Charleston, and Dr. Quincy Doudna, president of Eastern Illinois University.

Perhaps the most attractive person present was Miss Nancy Blume (Miss Coles County 1961) holding the large bouquet of roses which Governor

Kerner had presented to her.

Governor Kerner complimented the leaders of the two cities on "their untiring efforts to get this major improvement accomplished". He also pointed out that because of this new highway, many benefits will be derived by "these two leading cities of our great State" and the people in this area.

Dr. Doudna congratulated highway engineers for designing the highway so that it passed "the university campus without marring the beauty of the institution".

Each mayor predicted that the highway will stimulate the further expansion of the two cities in the direction toward each other.

After the speakers concluded their talks, Governor Kerner, Mayor Icenogle, and Mayor Woods clipped the ribbons to officially open the new highway. The ceremony ended with a caravan of automobiles traveling along the new route to Charleston and then back to Mattoon.

Personnel from the Division of Highways who attended the dedication were Ralph Bartelsmeyer, Chief Highway Engineer; John Cychol, District Engineer of District Five; John Keller, Assistant District Engineer of District Five; Tom Kennedy, District Engineer of Design; Ralph Gher, District Engineer of Construction;

Robert Johnson, Assistant District Engineer  
of Construction; Gene Peper, Construction  
Field Engineer; Jerald Benson, Resident  
Engineer; and Gail Compton, Inspector.