

I-65 lanes to close most of next week for bridge removal



FRANKLIN – There will be lane closures along Interstate 65 most of next week for crews to remove the new Highway 248/Goose Creek Interchange Bridge at Exit 61, which was destroyed by a gasoline tanker explosion Aug. 15.

A single lane will be closed in both directions from 8 p.m.-5 a.m. Tuesday through Thursday and then all lanes will be shut down at 8 p.m. Sept. 19 before reopening at 5 a.m. Monday, Sept. 22. Workers will dismantle and remove the bridge, one of two destroyed at the interchange when the tanker crashed and burned underneath them. No traffic has been allowed to cross I-65 at the interchange since the crash.

State and local officials say motorists should find alternate routes because the shutdown is expected to create a massive traffic jam, even though vehicles will be able to exit I-65 at Peytonsville Road and re-enter on the other side.

Williamson County Mayor Rogers Anderson informed county commissioners last week about the planned shutdown, adding that a replacement bridge is scheduled to be finished by Thanksgiving. The bridge that's being demolished next week hadn't even been opened to traffic yet when the accident occurred. Before the accident, traffic was still using the old two-lane bridge, which also was destroyed by the tanker fire.

Crews closed I-65 the weekend of Aug. 16-17 to remove the old bridge but were able to reopen the interstate early when the work was completed sooner than expected.

Because Peytonsville Road is the only road crossing over I-65 between Exit 65 (Highway 96/Murfreesboro Road) in Franklin and Exit 59/Interstate 840, the accident left emergency crews and residents without a simple way across Interstate 65 in southern Williamson County.

To handle emergency calls on the east side of I-65 until the new bridge is opened, the Franklin fire and police departments and Williamson County EMS have set up a temporary station at the county Ag Expo Park along Long Lane, keeping crews and equipment there around the clock.

During the closure of I-65, alternate routes include 840 and Interstate 24, the Tennessee Department of Transportation said.