

# Design work progressing on U.S. 30 upgrades

Project is in phase I, with studies done to determine location of future road

By Charlene Bielema  
Herald Editor

MORRISON, Ill. — More than 160 people turned out Thursday for an open house that gave them a glimpse of what could be in store for U.S. 30 from Clinton to Rock Falls, Ill.

Thursday's was the second such open house about the project, coming two years after the first. At that time project engineers were looking at four areas that could possibly be the site of the new highway, two to the north of U.S. 30 where it currently sits and two to the south.

Information at the most recent open house shows many studies have been done on the entire area, as the state works to pare down the options to find the best spot for the road.

"We have to show we've studied every alternative," said Rebecca Marruffo, a project engineer with the Illinois Department of Transportation.

The goal of the project is to improve the safety U.S. 30, currently a two-lane road, and to facilitate an efficient traffic flow. To make that happen, a U.S. 30 corridor study was completed in 2006, a study that evaluated the feasibility of an improved transportation

system from just east of Fulton, Ill., to west of Rock Falls, Ill.

The study concluded that transportation improvements are necessary to meet the growth and travel demands projected with the area, IDOT officials said.

Support from the public, special interest groups, federal, state and local leaders as well as the business community was able to get federal funds to begin the first step, the preparation of an Environmental Impact Statement and Phase I Design report.

IDOT officials say several major milestones for the U.S. 30 project have been met. These were accomplished through an effort with a Community Advisory Group and Project Study Group. Their work concluded that the problem with the area in question is the increasing traffic volume and congestion that overloads the area-wide traffic system, compromises safety and mobility and reduces the quality of life for adjacent communities.

There is a need for improved economical development and accessibility to the road while preserving the agriculture and environmentally significant areas, they say.

Currently, the work is in Phase I, a phase that is expected to last until 2012.

After the completion of Phase I, the next step will be land acquisition. Phase II will be the preparation of the final design and construction bid documents, and Phase III is the actual construction of the project. Funding for land acquisition, Phase II and Phase III is not currently available, IDOT officials say.