

Project PAVE Students Recognized



Governor Parson recognized students from the I-270 North Project Pave program during this year's State of the State Address. The Science, Technology, Engineering and Math (STEM) Program mentors and teaches students attending partnering North St. Louis County high schools.

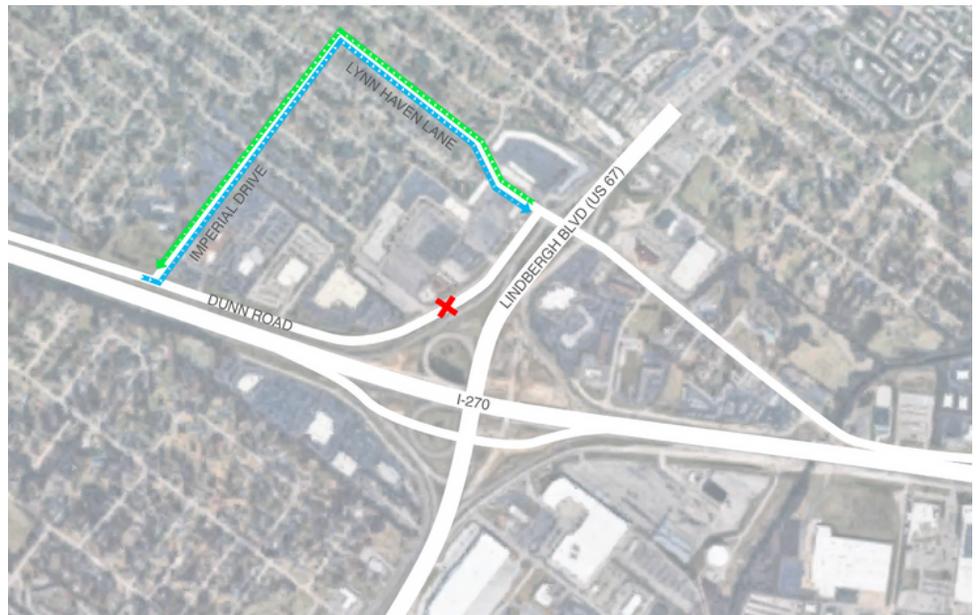
Project PAVE seeks to encourage an interest in and pursuit of heavy highway design, engineering, and construction careers. MoDOT and its contracting team leads, Millstone Weber and Parsons Transportation Group, are investing in the futures of area high school students near the project boundaries.

Project Pave representation at the 2023 State of State address included:

- Christian Malloyd – a former intern with Project Pave who has secured full-time employment with Millstone Weber as an IT Technician directly out of high school.
- Jaydin Thomas
- Savanna Jones
- Desiya Pace
- Sophia Luraschi
- Destinee Oglesby
- Kayla Stewart
- Vivian Martain – Millstone Weber Civil Rights Compliance & Project PAVE Administrator
- Sheron Thomas – MoDOT

I-270 NORTH NEWSLETTER

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Temporary closure at Dunn Road near Lindbergh Boulevard

Beginning March 15 and lasting for 28 days, Dunn Road near Lindbergh Boulevard will close. Eastbound Dunn Road traffic will detour to Taylor Road via Imperial Drive to Lynn Haven Lane. Westbound Dunn Road traffic will detour to Dunn Road via Lynn Haven Lane to Imperial Drive.

All I-270 North closures and construction work are part of the \$278 million I-270 North Project infrastructure upgrades. To stay current on the status of this closure and to view a project overview and graphic displays of planned construction, please visit the I-270 North Project website at: www.i270north.org.



CURRENT AND UPCOMING WORK AREAS:

- I-270 Westbound on ramp from New Halls Ferry Road to close on 3/15 for three months.
- New Halls Ferry Road Bridge construction continues through Spring 2023.
- New Florissant Road Bridge construction continues through Spring 2023.
- Route 367 Flyover bridge(s) are under construction through Summer 2023.
- Westbound I-270 widening work continues through 2023.

Learn more about the I-270 North Project at www.i270north.org



SHERON THOMAS

Senior Highway Designer|MoDOT



While most teenagers are just trying to find the next party or get close to their latest crush, when Sheron A. Thomas was a high school sophomore, he was only interested in one thing.

“I was like, ‘Alright, I need to figure out what I want to do after I graduate high school... It was really bothering me,” the St. Louis native said. “I spent a lot of that time trying to figure it out.”

Because he always excelled in math, many of Thomas’ teachers encouraged him to look into engineering, but that was only the first step. Then, an older friend helped him take his path to the next level. “He was already attending the same college I would later attend (Missouri University of Science & Technology) and he was telling me about all of the different engineering disciplines out there. I took a tour of the school and just saw everything they had to offer,” Thomas said. “And that’s when I found a special area I wanted to go into – all while I was in high school.”

Today, the 29-year-old is living his dream. For six years he’s worked at the Missouri Department of Transportation where he now serves as a Senior Highway Designer. As part of MoDOT’s I-270 North Project, Thomas performs various construction and utility inspections day in and day out. During the design phase of the project, he was in charge of reviewing a lot of the designs for the project, as well.

However, he’s most proud of his role with Project PAVE as a project administrator and mentor to high school student participants. “When we started the I-270 Project, we wanted to come up with a STEM initiative to go along with it in an effort to develop our workforce and young leaders throughout the city,” Thomas said. “We made it a requirement for contractors in this project to develop a program for high school students and that’s how Project PAVE was created.”

Ever since, Thomas partners with Millstone Weber Project PAVE Administrator Vivian Martain to offer monthly sessions to participating high school students. Participants are exposed to various STEM-related areas of the I-270 project and other construction trades via lectures, field trips, college tours and more.

“I love the end result of just seeing the students really enjoying what they see and figuring out what they want to do in life,” Thomas said.

“When I was in high school trying to figure things out, I had to do a lot of that on my own. I didn’t know about a lot of other programs out there that I could have benefitted from. Being able to offer that assistance to students through Project PAVE is definitely a full circle moment for me.”

[PROJECT TIMELAPSE CAMERA](#)

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ERIC KOPINSKI

Project Director | I-270 North Project

“I sought this opportunity because I knew it was going to be one of our most challenging projects,” said current I-270 North Project Director Eric Kopinski. “This corridor is an integral part of our overall system and to have the chance to serve on the team that is reshaping and upgrading it, and essentially transforming the way that it operates, is phenomenal.”

The Missouri Department of Transportation’s (MoDOT) I-270 North Project covers 8.6-mile of highway along I-270 North between Lindbergh Boulevard and Bellefontaine Road. Reconstructing this stretch proved challenging from both a construction and traffic maintenance standpoint. “It was very important to involve, inform and engage those who live, work, and play within the corridor, not only during the development phase, but throughout the entire process. We wanted meaningful stakeholder involvement and even now, we work hard to keep people informed about construction impacts and project progress,” said Kopinski.

I-270 North Project team members spent many years building up to the groundbreaking. Among other things, they conducted a corridor study, held meetings with those who would be most impacted by the work, and met with North County residents, leaders, and businesses to ensure that they were aware that the project was coming. The team also had to contend with the COVID-19 outbreak, that caused in-person meetings to be canceled just as the project was preparing to break ground.

While MoDOT has always been committed to meaningful stakeholder involvement, an inability to host in person meetings forced the team to immediately develop creative ways to introduce the project. “I-270 North has been challenging from a construction phasing and maintenance of traffic standpoint so keeping people updated and engaged, especially those along I-270 North, is a must, and we could not allow COVID-19 to impede our efforts toward that,” said Kopinski. Ongoing efforts to supply critical project status and information include online project status reports, monthly e-newsletters, detour and completed sections maps that offer virtual tours and detour routes, photo and video galleries, workforce development and STEM initiatives information and a project schedule.

“At the end of the day, this isn’t our corridor it’s the public’s and we want to deliver an exceptional product to those impacted the most. When this work is completed, we hope that people are proud of the result and can see the attention to detail that was paid – the larger-sized and lighted bridges that now include larger spaces for pedestrians and cyclists; safer public transit tie-ins; additional traffic lanes both eastbound and westbound; signal upgrades; multi-use paths along both sides of the highway; and a multitude of safety upgrades,” said Kopinski.”

“And even though we may not have been able to resolve every challenge or implement every suggestion from people, at project completion we hope folks see a cohesive work, where all of these seemingly individual parts come together to improve safety and reliability within the I-270 corridor, link communities, and enhance traffic operations.

