

Milestone for Pedestrian Bridge

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KINGSPORT – The pedestrian bridge spanning Wilcox Drive recently reached a milestone with the installation of the structural steel beams. Officials say the bridge is on track to be finished this fall, along with the remaining roadway and bridge improvements in and around Eastman Chemical Company's new corporate business center.

Earlier this month, Wilcox Drive was closed temporarily to allow crews to attach the pedestrian bridge to the two columns on both sides of the road, essentially connecting the new corporate business center to its two facilities on the other side of the road.

The road closure took place the weekend of July 11 and 12 with the structural steel truss being assembled and lifted into place by multiple large cranes. The climate-controlled pedestrian bridge will be accessible to the public and include elevators on both sides.

For more than a year crews have worked steady on the construction of Eastman's \$74.3 million corporate business center. Once complete, the 300,000 square foot building will be five stories high and house 800 to 900 employees.

To better accommodate the new facility, Kingsport and Eastman partnered with the Tennessee Department of Transportation for roadway improvements in and out of the campus, including a new bridge over Madd Branch Creek and a realignment at Lincoln and Sullivan to where the intersection would be a fully signalized four-way intersection.

A new traffic signal has also been installed on Wilcox Drive at the Toy F. Reid Employee Center to allow for a better flow of traffic into the corporate business center property.

"Project Inspire" is a seven-year expansion and modernization plan for the 94-year-old company and is set to conclude with the company's 100-year anniversary in 2020. The \$1.6 billion plan focuses on safety and environmental projects, warehouse capacity and building renovations as well as the corporate business center.

The corporate business center, pedestrian bridge and roadway improvements are scheduled to be complete later this fall.

