Beshear marks completion of I-69, I-169 in Western Kentucky

BY PAXTON MEDIA GROUP

Gov. Andy Beshear has announced that upgrades of the Purchase and Pennyrile parkways mean 55 miles of new Western Kentucky interstate now are open.

"Team Kentucky is connecting folks across the state like never before," Beshear said in a news release. "Upgrading a parkway to an interstate that now bears those recognizable shields sends the message to industries that Kentucky's open for business and ready to move their goods and people safely and efficiently. Travelers also get to enjoy a more modern corridor to get to what matters most."

PURCHASE PARKWAY CONVERTED TO I-69

In Graves, Hickman and Fulton counties, a two-year project to upgrade 21 miles of the Julian Carroll-Purchase Parkway to interstate standards now is complete, and the highway has been redesignated Interstate 69 from Mayfield to Fulton.

The interstate extension will improve traffic flow and safety for all travelers who use the route, the release said.

The $33.9 million interstate extension included widening culverts, modernizing guardrails and improving drainage as well as reconstructing bridges, overpasses and exits. One of the most significant modernizations was to Ky. 339's Exit 14 cloverleaf interchange. Originally designed to accommodate tollbooths, it was converted to a diamond interchange with extended ramps. The newly implemented design enhances safety for motorists traveling at interstate speeds.

> **"Team Kentucky is connecting folks across the state like never before"**
>
> — Gov. Andy Beshear

With construction complete, new I-69 signage went up in the final weeks of the project and the Federal Highway Administration has officially added the roadway to the National Highway System.

Once the new I-69 bridge over the Ohio River between Henderson and Evansville, Indiana, is complete, the interstate will run continuously from Fulton to the Kentucky-Indiana border at Henderson.

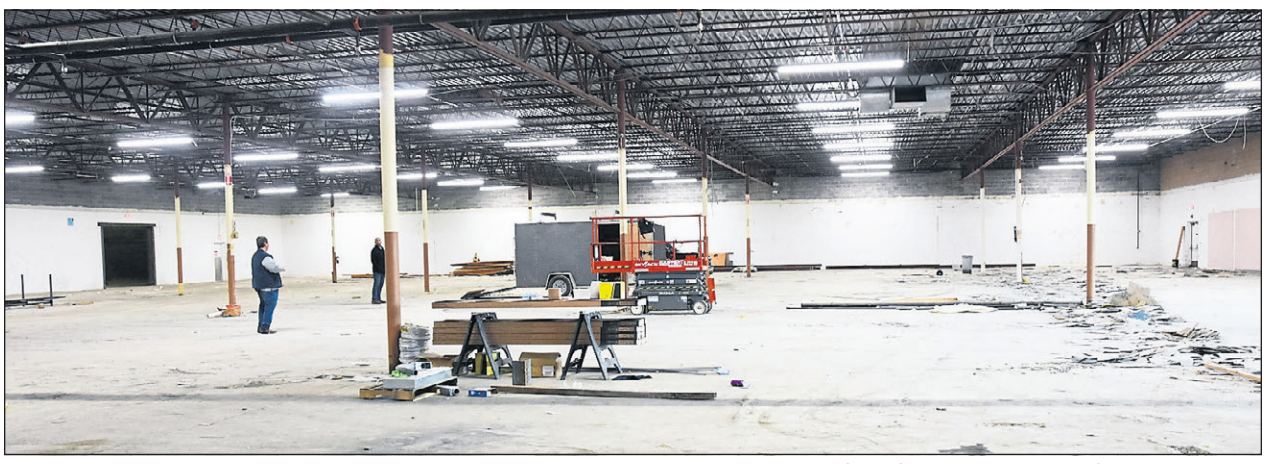
PENNYRILE PARKWAY CONVERTED TO I-169

A nearly $14 million project to upgrade 34 miles of the Edward T. Breathitt-Pennyrile Parkway between the I-69 interchange in Hopkins County and Interstate 24 south of Hopkinsville in Christian County, which began in 2023, now is complete.

It added improved bridges, increased bridge clearances, newly designed ramps, rehabilitated road surfaces and guardrails — meeting standards that allowed FHWA to redesignate the parkway as Interstate 169.

The new I-169 now serves as a direct interstate link from I-24 to I-69, through Western Kentucky. It connects communities and also shortens the distance between the Indiana and Tennessee state lines by 44 interstate miles.

"With these parkway to interstate conversions, the Mountain Parkway Expansion in the east, and all the industrial access roads and projects in between, Kentucky is on a roll," Transportation Cabinet Secretary Jim Gray said in the release.



Photos by GREG THOMPSON/The News-Enterprise

Renovations are ongoing since Powers Paper Co. purchased the former Pulau Electronics building at 630 Knox Blvd. in Radcliff. Martin Powers, owner, president and CEO of the company, says the goal is to have the facility turned into a distribution center with the possibility of light manufacturing sometime in 2025.



This facility at 630 Knox Blvd. in Radcliff was once home to Kmart and most recently Pulau Electronics. By the end of January it will be occupied as a distribution center for Powers Paper Co. from Brandenburg.



Submitted

During renovations and clearing out debris, Martin Powers, owner, president and CEO of Powers Paper Co., came across one of the former blue lights K-Mart employees would use to attract the attention of customers to their Blue Light Specials. The company purchased the property at 630 Knox Boulevard in Radcliff.

POWERS

FROM **PAGE A1**

Amazon, void-fill, heavy weight butcher and freezer paper to the retail, manufacturing, industrial and food service industries.

"We'll bring full truckloads of products into here when we produce it," Powers said. "It's going to be more of a distribution center."

Thanks to the company's portfolio being so diversified, it plays in a lot of arenas where paper products are needed or required, whereas in the early stages they focused only on automotive aftermarket for its bread and butter.

Other than clinking metal pipes, sniffing of an electrician's dog wandering through the building, Xavier Miles, 12 rang his grandpa's cell phone wanting to know what the two of them were doing for the day.

Powers said Miles, his grandson, is a big help on the family's 2,000 acre farm.

"He drives tractors for me and everything else," Powers said.

With 10 grandchildren and one on the way, Powers told his four children if he could have, he would would have bypassed every one of them going straight to the grands.

"But that's no possible," he said.

PPC has been in in Brandenburg since 1989. The headquarters has expanded all it possibly can at that location as Powers says they are landlocked.

If the company continues on the trajectory of growth it has seen the past few years and is projected to see in the next three to five years, more of what is being done in Brandenburg could very well be moved to Radcliff.

"It's all dependent, relevant to what happens," Powers said. "We're looking at another 30% growth this year."

It's not out of the question some light manufacturing could take place in Radcliff by the end of 2025, Powers said.

The company ships its products across the nation, into Canada, Mexico and New Zealand.

"Thirty-five years of doing this we've gotten into a lot of different things," Powers said.

Copy paper, something people still use daily whether at work or at home, already has been discussed as a future business possibility for the company. In two to three years, the new facility could be filled with manufacturing copy paper alone. That industry, according to Powers has actually grown, not shrunk as predicted.

Conversations already have begun with the city of Radcliff looking at property next door at the former Redmar Plaza that continues to remain vacant.

Powers would like to move a location in another state to property the city owns next door in a few years depending on what can be negotiated.

"People have said we're going to turn into a paperless society," Powers said. "That's not true."

Greg Thompson can be reached at 270-505-1414 or gthompson@thenewsenterprise.com.

ACE CONTRACTING
SEAMLESS GUTTERS
270-405-0423
FREE ESTIMATES

LUTTRELL STAFFING GROUP
Need A Job? Need Employees? We're Here For You!
2014 - 2024 BEST of Staffing TALENT 10
2012 - 2024 BEST of Staffing CLIENT 12
2021 - 2024 BEST of Staffing EMPLOYEE SATISFACTION 4 YEARS
Contact Us Today!
(270) 900-4370
400 Ring Rd, Suite 105
Elizabethtown, KY 42701
LuttrellStaffing.com

MERRY Christmas
AND HAPPY NEW YEAR
Akebono would like to thank our Associates for their donations this Holiday season. They have made a significant impact on our community by purchasing toys for local families in need. Thank you once again for your generosity and support. Wishing you and your families a wonderful holiday season and a prosperous New Year!
akebono BRAKE EXPERTS
300 Ring Road, Elizabethtown, KY 42701
AKEBONOBRAKES.COM
Equal Opportunity Employer