

Colleyville Courier

Drivers handling one-way bridges connecting Grapevine and Southlake

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Drivers appeared to be handling the one-way traffic bridges connecting Grapevine and Southlake over State Highway 114 on Monday morning. While the backup along Northwest Highway going west and Southlake Boulevard (FM 1709) going east was long at times, there was little to no sign of frustration.

Police officers sat in their patrol cars on both bridges with lights flashing to ensure there were no problems on a rainy morning.

Monday was the first workday with both bridges marked for one-way traffic and nearby streets remarked to guide drivers around the potential bottle neck.

The changes were done by NorthGate Constructors to facilitate the construction of a new, single bridge connecting the two communities over SH 114. The one-way bridges and connecting traffic patterns are expected to continue until that bridge is completed sometime in 2013. The work is part of the \$1.02-billion DFW Connector project.

"Changing the traffic pattern at FM 1709 is allowing us to accomplish a lot of construction in a short amount of time," said Kristen Schropp, speaking for NorthGate.

"The new pattern also allows us to maintain the same number of lanes. In fact, in some areas we've actually increased capacity," Schropp said.

Monday morning the backup appeared to be longer on eastbound FM 1709, which has been reduced to three lanes with drivers being able to turn right from two of those lanes onto the SH 114 frontage road. By about 8 a.m. the backup seemed to be clearing up.

The one way direction begins at the 1709 intersection with Gateway Drive/Commerce Street. NorthGate crews already have scraped about a foot of asphalt off a portion of the old westbound lanes.

Coming the other direction, from Grapevine's Northwest Highway, drivers cross over the bridge on three lanes and are immediately confronted at the Southlake end with the two-way Gateway Drive, which winds its way through the Gateway Plaza shopping center to connect with FM 1709.

Despite the new traffic pattern, the wet streets and heavy commute, drivers were getting across the bridges and through the intersections. All traffic lights were working.

Schropp said workers will continue their efforts in the area, weather permitting, including removing parts of the old 1709, moving utilities and setting girders for the new bridge.

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