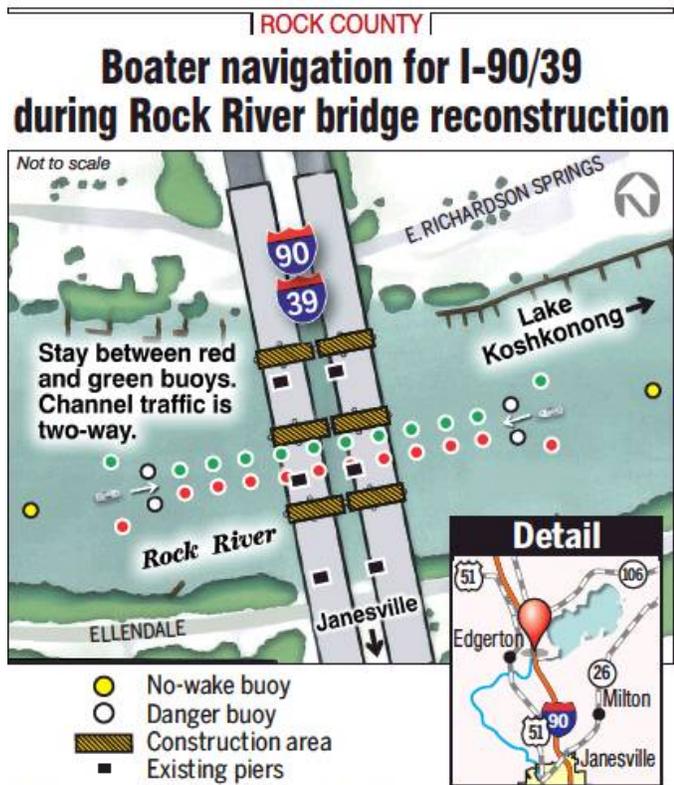


# Road work slows Rock River traffic

## Boat travel limited during I-90/39 work

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SOURCE: Wisconsin Department of Transportation

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Construction crews will be working on the Interstate 90/39 bridge above the Rock River in Newville for the next couple of summers. Boaters must navigate a narrow, marked channel in the area.



Below: A pair of workers move buoys below the Interstate bridge over the Rock River near Newville.



Photos by Anthony Wahl/[awahl@gazettextra.com](mailto:awahl@gazettextra.com)

Above: Construction crews will be working on the Interstate 90/39 bridge over the Rock River in Newville for the next couple summers. Boaters must navigate a narrow, marked channel in the area.

## NEWVILLE

Not even boaters are safe from the headaches of road construction season.

For the next few summers, crews will be working along the Rock River at Newville to construct a new, wider Interstate bridge.

And with construction come detours, speed enforcement and plenty of orange, even on the

water.

During a recent Rock County Sheriff's Office boat patrol, workers were topping off the concrete pillars that will hold the wider Interstate 90/39. In May, they built the piers that hold the pillars.

Workers in orange vests patrolled in a small boat under the bridge. Others puttered around in a small barge. Still others were lined on either side of the river along with trucks, tools, equipment and a crane.

During construction, boaters must slow to a "no wake" speed before passing under the Interstate. Green and red buoys set between two of the bridge's pillars give 30 feet of clearance for boats to pass safely as crews work on

either side.

As crews work in the area through fall 2018, the buoys marking the channel will occasionally be repositioned, said Christopher Krahn, sheriff's office recreational patrol deputy.

"As this ... period goes on, the channel will get bigger and bigger as they get more and more done," he said.

At no point will the river be closed to boaters, said Steve Theisen, state Department of Transportation communications manager.

Crews will work only during the day, Krahn said.

The areas leading up to both sides of the channel are slow, no-wake zones already. Officials aren't worried about boaters speeding through the area, Krahn said.

"Even before the construction it was a slow, no-wake area, so that helped because people already know that it's slow, nowake, so you don't have to worry about them going into it not knowing," he said.

The Interstate bridge is west of most businesses on the water, such as the Anchor Inn, the Rock River Marina and Rosati's Pizza Sports Pub.

The lake lies farther east, meaning lake boaters who want to head downstream to grab a bite to eat or fuel up won't have to deal with construction.

Buckhorn Supper Club owner Chico Pope doesn't think the construction will hinder area businesses much.

"I think people will find a way to get up here," he said. "The DOT has done a good job alerting people what's going on. People just need to slow down."

Most of the boaters who will pass under the bridge will be lake house residents and free public boat landing users from farther downstream trying to access businesses and the lake, Krahn said.

Despite the limited amount of people who will have to use the channel, the area can get packed. That section of Rock River can see hundreds of boaters on a busy weekend, such as around the Fourth of July, Krahn said.

"That's just a very congestive point because you have Anchor Inn, you have Lakeview (Campground and Bar), you have all the restaurants, and everybody's trying to get to the lake (from downstream)," he said. "It's a pretty busy area."

The Wisconsin Department of Transportation installed orange signs at public boat launches warning boaters of the Interstate construction. Free fliers at the launches and some bait shops in the area give details about the construction.

## VIDEO

To see video of the construction from a boater's point of view, visit gazette [xtra.com/videos](http://www.janesvillegazette.com/xtra.com/videos).