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Lighted crosswalks debut on Roosevelt Road

Crossing Roosevelt Road at Lombard Avenue, Gunderson Avenue and Home Avenue should get a little safer now that lighted crosswalks have been installed.

In-roadway warning lights, as they are officially known were installed as part of the Roosevelt Road streetscape improvement project, a cooperative effort between the Berwyn, Cicero, Oak Park and the state to revitalize Roosevelt Road from Harlem Avenue to Austin Boulevard.

State law requires motorists to stop for pedestrians in marked crosswalks. However, at crosswalks without traffic signs or signals, pedestrians can have difficulty getting the right of way, a situation officials say the warning lights can help to remedy.

"As with any new device we expect there will be a learning curve," said Village Engineer Jim Budrick whose staff oversees the Village's traffic management programs and equipment. "Observations indicate an initial compliance rate of about 40 percent of drivers. But as drivers become more familiar with the system, compliance should grow significantly."

The system is dormant until a pedestrian presses a button near the crosswalk, activating a signpost beacon and flashing, in-pavement lights. Pedestrians have about 30 seconds to cross before the system automatically turns off. The energy-efficient LED lights are solar powered.

Officials caution pedestrians to be sure vehicles are stopped before proceeding into the crosswalk.

The crosswalks selected for the lighted crossings had the most pedestrians and pedestrian incidents, officials say.

For more information regarding these and other enhancements as part of the Roosevelt Road streetscape project, visit www.rooseveltrroad.com.

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