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## Good first Monday for Chisholm Trail Parkway

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A new chapter in Fort Worth's transportation history has begun.

Chisholm Trail Parkway welcomed motorists during Monday morning rush hour. The 28-mile toll road connecting Interstate 30 near downtown Fort Worth to U.S. 67 in Cleburne actually was fully opened by 11 p.m. Sunday. Although some motorists took a late-night cruise on the new toll road, others waited until daybreak to make the trek.

North Texas Tollway Authority crews spent all of Sunday putting the final touches on the roadway's entrance and exit ramps.

It was a time of anticipation for many motorists who just wanted to get on the road and see what they got for their \$1.6 billion project, some of which is paid for with state and federal highway funds but most of which is financed by the North Texas Tollway Authority.

Some drivers sought a new commuting pathway through southwest Tarrant County and northern Johnson County out of necessity - a roadway in that corridor has been planned for more than 50 years, after all - while others apparently sought to drive on the new road just out of curiosity.

On Monday morning, a smattering of motorists gave Chisholm Trail Parkway a try during rush hour. But many more are expected after construction is complete in late summer or early fall.

Wynona Beucler, a Cleburne resident who works as a registered nurse at Texas Health Harris Methodist Hospital in southwest Fort Worth, said she plans to use the road daily to get to and from work.

It won't be cheap. With a TollTag, she can expect to pay \$3.63 each way for a trip between U.S. 67 in Cleburne and Altamesa Boulevard in southwest Fort Worth - which most likely is the exit off Chisholm Trail Parkway she will be taking to get to the hospital.

But in exchange for that toll, she will be saving roughly 30 minutes each way of her trip - or potentially an hour a day. She said a normal trip from her home to work takes about 50 minutes, depending on congestion and time of day. By using Chisholm Trail Parkway she projects she can get to work in 20 minutes.

"I'm looking forward to it," she said. "I just wish it (the cost) wasn't quite as high."

On Sunday evening, Beucler drove out to the southern terminus of Chisholm Trail Parkway at U.S. 67 in Cleburne, and toyed with the idea of taking a joy ride just to get a look at the new road. However, at the time, only the northbound lanes were completely open heading toward Fort Worth, and the southbound lanes were still being worked on by tollway authority crews and contractors. So Beucler decided to wait until another day to give the road a try.

"I came out to give it a try, but I don't know if I can get back home," she quipped.



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For motorists wishing to use Chisholm Trail Parkway to get to downtown Fort Worth, the road currently is open no farther north than University Drive. The tollway authority has installed electronic message signs urging northbound motorists to exit at Montgomery Street - instead of going all the way to University - and take I-30 the rest of the way downtown.

Construction on the remainder of Chisholm Trail Parkway is expected to be completed by September or October, tollway authority officials said.

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