

New Bridge Shines a Light on Fort Wayne

With its LED lights capable of generating 16 million color combinations, the newly opened Parker-Cole Crossing pedestrian bridge in Fort Wayne theoretically could be lit nightly for the next 43,835 years and never repeat the same color if the color scheme were limited to one per night.



The Parker-Cole Crossing can be illuminated in millions of colors, including its standard gold (top photo) along with green and blue (bottom photos). Photos by Fort Wayne District Public Relations Director Hunter Petroviak.

This is just one of several fascinating aspects of the pedestrian bridge, which opened to pedestrians in late April and connects the campuses of Purdue University Fort Wayne (PFW) and Ivy Tech Community College Northeast over State Road 930/Coliseum Boulevard.

“There is a full spectrum of ornamental LED lights with all the colors of the rainbow,” said Fort Wayne District Communications Director Toni Mayo. “A PFW technician will control the light effects. There is no set color, and PFW can change the colors to whatever it wants, whenever it wants.”



Because the color scheme at night so far has changed often, the 43,835 figure is an exaggeration. Still, even if the colors changed every 3½ seconds, as they did in this mid-May [video](#), it would take 1,728 nights (or more than 4½ years) for all the available color combinations to cycle through, assuming that the lights are on for an average of nine hours nightly.



The bridge was a collaborative local public agency project between PFW and Ivy Tech, using federal funds allocated by INDOT. The remaining 20% of funding was funded via bridge namesakes Mac and Pat Parker, and the Olive B. Cole Foundation.

The structure, designed by local firm Engineering Resources, is distinctive and serves as a gateway to the universities and the city of Fort Wayne. The asymmetrical design features a large, curved single pylon and dual curved-sided triangles on the PFW side. The tall, curved pylon is easy to spot from a distance and is likely to become a landmark of the area.

At the April 28 opening ceremony, Mac Parker said, “No one who drives State Road 930 here is going to miss where these universities are located.”

PFW will finish the landscaping around the new Parker-Cole Crossing this summer. The cable-stayed concrete bridge features thick, braided steel cables hanging from sturdy, steel pylons. The Parker-Cole bridge, located on the south side of PFW's campus, also includes a high railing on both sides to prevent people from dropping or throwing objects on the roadway below.

Connectivity immediately improved upon the opening of the bridge. The bridge enables people to walk or bike back and forth between PFW and Ivy Tech, as well as to and from the hundreds of businesses on State Road 930. Additionally, it has been estimated that 1,000 Ivy Tech students also attend classes at PFW; the new bridge eliminates the need for these students to drive across the street and park.

“The bridge is symbolic of the long-standing partnership between our institutions,” said Ivy Tech Northeast Chancellor Jerrilee Mosier. “It is our hope to continue building on this partnership to increase higher education attainment in northeast Indiana for years to come.”

The bridge also connects to the Fort Wayne Parks & Recreation's Rivergreenway Trail on both sides of State Road 930 and is officially considered part of Fort Wayne Trails Inc. The Rivergreenway Trail is a 25-mile-long linear park in Fort Wayne and nearby New Haven.

“Project Manager John Langmaid, Construction Director Jason Spreen, and Area Engineer Brian Bauermeister all played important roles in the Parker-Cole Crossing project,” said Mayo.

Two other bridges on the PFW campus were designed by Engineering Resources.

The Crescent Avenue Bridge, opened in 2004, is located on the east side of campus and crosses over Crescent Avenue to connect the main campus with student housing on the Waterfield portion of campus on the east side of Crescent Avenue.

The Ron Venderly Family Bridge, opened in 2009, is located on the west side of campus and crosses the St. Joseph River to connect the main campus with the school's alumni center and soccer fields.

PFW owns and maintains these two bridges and now the Parker-Cole Crossing. INDOT will be inspecting these three bridges every 24 months. To view photos that illustrate a progression of the Parker-Cole Crossing, click [here](#).



The original rendering of the bridge (top photo), how it looks in late April before landscaping is finished (middle photo), and while crossing the bridge (bottom photo).

