

DID YOU KNOW???

ROUNABOUTS IMPROVE SAFETY, EFFICIENCY IN CHAMPLAIN

Two new roundabouts are now in service on Route 11 at the junction with Interstate 87 in Champlain. These roundabouts, one on the west side and one on the east side of I-87, will go a long way to improve safety and reduce waiting time for traffic at this intersection. The new roundabouts replace two three-color traffic signals at each entrance/exit with I-87 and US Route 11. Along with the roundabout in Plattsburgh at the intersection of US Route 9 (US Avenue) and New York Road at the former entrance to the “old base” and the “new base”, the number of roundabouts in the North Country increases to three.

Since roundabouts are relatively new to our area, let’s review just how they work. Roundabouts force traffic to circulate in a counterclockwise direction around the center island. All traffic entering a roundabout must yield the right of way to traffic already in the roundabout. You don’t really need to remember this as all roads leading into roundabouts have yield signs at the entrances.

Once in the roundabout, you should use your right turn signal prior to the street or road that you will take to leave the roundabout. For example, if you are traveling from Malone to Rouses Point, after entering the westerly roundabout in Champlain, the first exit leads onto I-87 southbound. After passing this road, you should activate your right turn signal prior to the exit that continues easterly toward Rouses Point.

Roundabouts are much safer than a four-legged intersection controlled by a three-color traffic signal. In a roundabout, there are only eight potential conflict points where two vehicles are likely to collide, whereas in a typical intersection controlled by a signal light, there are 32 possible conflict points. Furthermore, collisions in a roundabout generally result in a fender-bender, where crashes in a four-legged intersection often result in a serious injury from a T-bone type of crash. Statistics show roundabouts reduce crashes by 37 percent and injury crashes by 75 percent, pretty significant figures.

Another positive feature with roundabouts is that traffic is normally always moving, as opposed to signalized intersections where half of the traffic is just sitting at a red light, wasting gasoline.

Roundabouts have been utilized in Europe for decades. And, in Carmel, Indiana, that city has pretty much done away with the traditional traffic signal in favor of roundabouts. Most drivers, with about six months experience with roundabouts, get to like them. Don’t fear or avoid them – you will, in due time, get to love them.

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