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NKU tells how to navigate roundabout

University mails guide on new entrance

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A roundabout at Northern Kentucky University's campus' gateway intersection at Nunn Drive and University Drive is intended to make for a safer intersection.

But NKU officials want drivers to know what to expect so they've mailed instructions for the novel traffic design.

A roundabout is a circular intersection with an island in the middle, popular in Europe and used in many major cities.

Cars enter and exit the roundabout without stopping at a traffic light.

The change from a traditional four-way stop is expected to have many benefits, NKU officials say.

"The Transportation Cabinet and their design team from Entran (a Lexington-based civil engineering firm) suggested the idea and we decided it was an idea that could work well for us," said Rob Robert L. Knarr, a senior project manager for the University Architecture & Construction Management Department.

"They liked the idea of introducing the concept on a college campus, where many drivers would be open to new concepts," Knarr said.

A Kentucky Transportation Cabinet brochure cited a 2000 Insurance Institute for Highway Safety study detailing the benefits of roundabouts.

After 24 traditional intersections were converted to roundabouts, total crashes declined by 39 percent, injury crashes declined by 76 percent, and serious injury and fatal crashes declined by 89 percent.

Pedestrian safety also increased.

"An additional roundabout is planned for the new University Drive and Johns Hill Road intersection when the Johns Hill Road reconstruction project gets underway in late 2008," said Knarr.

"Also, the future I-275 to AA Highway connector road, a project currently in the planning phase, could also include roundabouts at critical intersections."

The cost of converting the Nunn Drive and University Drive intersection to a roundabout was \$2.2 million.

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