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Hearings Set On Acid Rock Remediation

The Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) will hold public hearings on March 7 and 9 regarding permit applications submitted by PennDOT and Robindale Energy Services to correct the Interstate 99 acid rock, or pyrite, drainage problem in the Skytop area of Centre County.

PennDOT has overseen interim remediation efforts in the area since 2003. The pyrite problems delayed the opening of a six-mile limited access highway between Port Matilda and State College, originally scheduled for 2004. Acid rock drainage can be caused when unearthed pyretic rock is exposed to air and precipitation.

One permit application is to complete work on two areas with the acid rock, where the northbound and southbound lanes are on different elevations—also known as buttress/bifurcation areas. The other application includes plans to remove and transport about 650,000 cubic yards of pyretic material to a facility that would be constructed at a Robindale-owned mine site in Indiana County.

PennDOT hopes to complete the Skytop remediation prior to the completion of the 10-mile highway between Bald Eagle and Port Matilda, scheduled to open in the fall of 2007. The paving contract for that section will be let in April. The goal is to have completion of the two stretches so the entire corridor from Bald Eagle to State College will be open to traffic in late 2007.

The applications can be reviewed at the DEP Northcentral Regional Office in Williamsport and at several locations in Bellefonte, State College, Port Matilda and other places.

Go to www.dot.pa.state.us and click on "More News and Media" and then click on "I-99/ARD Information, or visit the DEP website at www.depweb.state.pa.us. Click on "DEP Keywords" and "I-99 Information."

Federal Funds Go To CSVT Project

After 12 extensions and nearly two years after the old federal transportation funding bill expired, the new federal highway and transportation funding bill was signed into law in August 2005, providing \$286.5 billion for highway and transit projects.

The bill, named Safe, Accountable, Flexible and Efficient Transportation Equity Act of 2005: A Legacy of Users (SAFETEA-LU), earmarked \$10.5 million for the Central Susquehanna Valley Transportation Project (CSVT). However, much more funding is needed to complete the 13-mile limited access highway connecting the north end of the Selingsgrove Bypass to Route 147 south of I-80. The cost of the project is \$352 million.

SAFETEA-LU provides \$227.6 billion for federal-aid highway programs, \$52.6 billion for state and local transit programs, and \$6.3 billion for highway safety activities. Pennsylvania will receive an average of \$1.646 billion per year over a five-year period (FY) 2004-2009. This is about \$263 million more in annual funding for Pennsylvania than under the old TEA-21.

Federal highway investment will grow an average of 4.4 percent per year from the FY 2004 baseline of \$34.4 billion—a 1.8 percent average annual increase when the effects of projected inflation are taken into account.



Groundbreaking for northernmost part of Route 15 was really "snow breaking." From left, Rick Peltz, Sen. Roger Madigan, Oliver Bartlett, Rep. Matt Baker, Mark Murawski, Jim Kendter, and Russ Johnson.

Earthwork Nears Completion On Northern Route 15 Section

A year after the groundbreaking for the northernmost part of Route 15, earthwork is nearly complete on the six-mile stretch from the Route 287 interchange to the New York State line at Lawrenceville. The groundbreaking in February 2005 was the last in Tioga County for the future I-99.

The \$110 million project is expected to be completed in 2008. The first structure contract was let in October at \$26.9 million for two bridges over the Tioga River and three additional sets of twin bridges. A second bridge contract will be let at the end of March and the paving contract in October.

Construction on the twin-structure bridge that will carry Route 15 over State Route 49 at Lawrenceville began in 2003.

At the groundbreaking, Jim Kendter, PennDOT District 3 Engineer, said, "We have moved mountains to make this highway (the future I-99) safer. We eliminated the tomato curve, the pineapple curve, and the potato curve. In bad weather on Bloss Mountain, tractor trailers would turn over and spill every kind of produce."

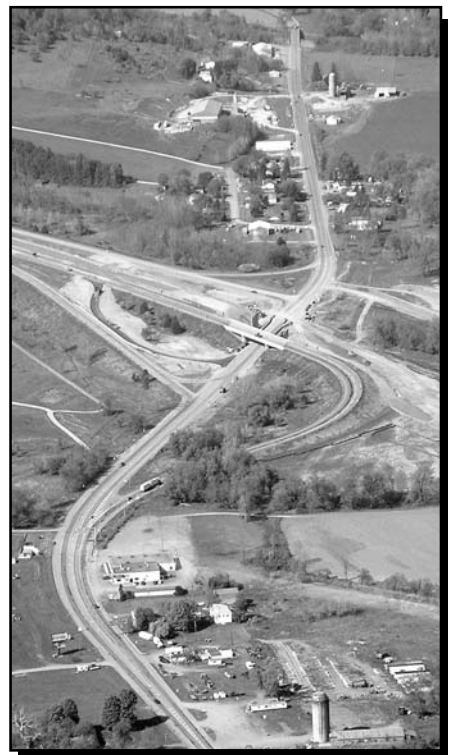
Rick Peltz, alternate federal co-chair of the Appalachian Regional Commission

(ARC), said, "These modern highways help break down the isolation of people living in Appalachia as they improve economic development."

Mark Murawski, president of the Route 15 Coalition said, "We are writing chapters for a book. With the building of the road between Tioga and the New York border, we're at the end of the book. It is written in the library of our minds, and it will be a best seller for as long as we live."

Oliver Bartlett, president of ATA said, "A lot of people sacrificed their lands or homes to make this road happen. Sen. (Roger) Madigan, you said you would not be happy until you saw the New York border."

With that, officials grabbed shovels and dug snow outside the Tioga Welcome Center, marking a symbolic groundbreaking.



Earthwork is nearing completion on the Route 287 and Route 15 interchange in Tioga County.

CSVT Alignment Could Change

PennDOT is considering changing the alignment of the Central Susquehanna Valley Transportation Project (CSVT), going directly through the App Farmstead. The farm is no longer considered historic, based on new evaluation criteria for historic properties.

If approved, the realignment would reduce the cost of the CSVT project by \$5 million and not take four other businesses properties.

The App Farmstead, directly on the northern end of the existing Selinsgrove Bypass, would provide a more direct connection with the planned CSVT. An existing interchange at the end of the Selinsgrove Bypass could be integrated into the CSVT project.

The Agricultural Lands Condemnation Approval Board will schedule a meeting to consider the condemnation of the farmstead.

Two More Miles . . .

Two additional lanes in the 2-mile stretch of road from North Tioga to Tioga Junction will be open to traffic this summer. The estimated cost of the project is \$18.8 million.

The Route 15 Coalition

The Coalition is a broad-based group of individuals, businesses, organizations and units of local government interested in seeing the highway improved for safety and economic development.

Formal announcement of the Coalition's incorporation and inaugural public meeting was held on April 15, 1988. The Coalition's primary area of interest is the 152-mile section between Harrisburg and New York State.

Current leadership includes: Mark Murawski, Lycoming County Planning Commission (LCPC), president; Warren Van Buskirk, Perry County Commission, vice president; Jerry Walls LCPC, treasurer; and Steve Herman, SEDA-COG, treasurer.

For more information, visit our website at www.Route15Coalition.org.

The Appalachian Thruway Association

The Appalachian Thruway Association consists of volunteer, public-spirited citizens living along the route of the Thruway who are interested in seeing a safe, modern highway completed through the region.

The association was formed in 1963 through the efforts of the Altoona Chamber of Commerce. Today, there are eight county chapters in three states.

Current leadership includes Oliver Bartlett, president; Thomas Tamaro, vice president-NY; Ken Larson, vice president-PA; Chuck Mong, secretary; Chester Bailey, treasurer; and Marty Muggleton, director at large.

For more information about the Association or Coalition, please contact Ida Crist, executive director, 4775 Linglestown Road, Harrisburg, PA 17112; (717) 671-4500; icrist@MomentumCom.com

Public Comment Is Sought On CSVT Bridge Design

The Route 15 Coalition and SEDA-Council of Governments, an 11-county economic development group based in Lewisburg, will cosponsor a public meeting from 6:30-8:30 p.m. Thursday, March 16, at Tedd's On the Hill in Hummels Wharf, across the river from Sunbury, to present recommendations on design principles and gather public feedback of a new bridge to be built at Winfield as part of the Central Susquehanna Valley Transportation (CSVT) project.

The final recommendations of the CSVT Gateway Task Force will guide the design of the new \$175 million structure between Lewisburg and Sunbury on the West Branch of the Susquehanna River. The design principles have been developed in cooperation with PennDOT and with assistance from the Community Resource Center staff at SEDA-COG and the Transportation Planning Program.

The task force's objective is to recommend a bridge of distinction that exhibits

architectural merit. The span across the river is 2,000 feet, but the bridge will be more than 4,000 feet long, the longest span across the Susquehanna north of the Harrisburg area. The bridge will vary in elevation from 120 feet above the river on the east shore to 180 feet on the west shore.

Mark Murawski, president of the Route 15 Coalition, served on the task force.

Murawski Testifies Before Commission

Mark Murawski, president of the Route 15 Coalition, testified on behalf of the Coalition and the Appalachian Thruway Association before the Pennsylvania Transportation Commission on Sept. 1. Murawski recapped progress along the Route 15 and Route 220 corridors and spoke in support of funding highways to stimulate economic development and promote safety.

New York Bond Act Passes

New York voters approved the \$2.9 billion New York State Transportation Bond Act in the Nov. 8, 2005, election. It includes \$30 million for construction of the new U.S. Route 15 alignment from Watson Creek south to Presho in Steuben County. This four-lane highway will connect with the expressway currently under construction from north of Tioga to Lawrenceville in Pennsylvania.

The five-mile New York project is estimated to cost \$76.9 million. The funding will come from the bond act and federal and state funding. With passage of the bond act, the future I-99 highway in New York will be completed faster. New York State needs to hire a consultant before it develops a schedule for the project. The Pennsylvania portion of the future I-99 highway is expected to be complete in 2008.

The Route 15 Coalition and Appalachian Thruway Association, along with the

Corning Area-Wide Transportation Committee and the New York I-86 Coalition, sponsored a meeting to support the bond act on October 28, 2005, as part of the two Pennsylvania groups' annual meeting.

Murawski Elected To PHIA Board

Mark Murawski, president of the Route 15 Coalition, has been elected to the Board of Directors of the Pennsylvania Highway Information Association (PHIA).

"We'll be working with PHIA to send a strong message to the governor and to the General Assembly that financial support of highway projects is vital to the economic development and safety issues of Pennsylvania," Murawski said.

To receive PHIA's electronic *E-Motion* newsletter, send your e-mail address to regeist@paconstructors.org.

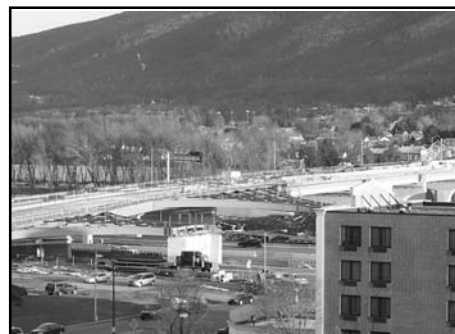
Market St. Bridge Progresses

The first of two structures of the Market Street Bridge project, which carries Route 15 over the Susquehanna River between the city of Williamsport and the Borough of South Williamsport, is expected to open to traffic this summer, according to PennDOT. At that time, the old Susquehanna River Bridge will be demolished and a new two-lane bridge built in the same location as the old bridge.

After a winter hiatus, work should resume in March. Focus will be on finishing the new southbound bridge and direct-connect ramp to Interstate 180. Simultaneously, the Basin Street Bridges on I-180 will be widened.

A single point urban interchange (SPUI) will serve as a direct tie-in between Route

15 and Interstate 180. The \$60 million Market St. Bridge complements a \$72 million revitalization project of downtown Williamsport and streetscape projects.



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