

Winter

2014



LACKAWANNA / LUZERNE METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION

CONNECTIONS

2013 RR Carloads Increase

The Pennsylvania Northeast Regional Railroad Authority (PNRRA) and its common carrier rail operator, the Delaware-Lackawanna Railroad (DL), recently reported a major uptick in carloads handled over their 100-mile regional rail system.

“Carloads for the calendar year 2013 amounted to 7,086 units which is up 6.5% over the previous year of 2012,” reported Larry Malski, PNRRA President. “This bodes well for the industrial and economic future of our region since rail carloads are a leading economic indicator used in determining future economic growth of a region. In fact, we have had a recent increase in the number of clients who are looking to locate their businesses and industries on our lines of railroad”.

The PNRRA rail system extends from Carbondale to Scranton and through the Poconos to East Stroudsburg and the Delaware Water Gap. Mr. Malski noted that several industries are currently looking to locate on the regional rail system with the potential for creating new jobs. The PNRRA and DL are also currently working with some of their existing industries to build new track and facilities for additional carloadings, due to expansions that these existing industries are undertaking.

The DL serves over 20 industries in Northeastern Pennsylvania which provide jobs for close to 1300 employees in our region.

The carload numbers are actually better

than the national trends which had shortline and regional railroads with about a 5% increase for 2013.

“The regional rail project has come a long way from its first year of operation in 1985 when it handled 393 carloads,” Malski said. “Most of the growth in carloadings has come from the new railroad-dependent industries that have located on our rail lines because rail is the most economical form of ground transportation.”



Delaware & Lehigh Railroad serves over 20 area industries

Steamtown to Commemorate Black History Month

Steamtown National Historic Site will commemorate Black History Month in February with an exhibit titled “All Aboard?”. It centers on the era of the Jim Crow laws which were enforced from the 1880s into the 1960s. These laws were written to provide “separate but equal” accommodations for black people in public facilities, including travel aboard passenger trains.

The coming of the railroad transformed various aspects of the American life, and for many it represented

freedom and power. However, passenger seating on trains revealed contradictions in the American ideals of freedom and equality in the accommodations afforded to the black population.

The exhibit includes images of the Jim Crow era from the Library of Congress and other museums across the country including the California State Railroad Museum and the North Carolina State Archives. Related newspaper articles from the period and a brief “restoration” video

of a wooden Jim Crow railroad car - the Rockdale, Sandow and Southern Railroad (Texas) - filmed at its home in the Pacific Southwest Railway Museum, Campo California complete the exhibit.

The “All Aboard?” exhibit will be on display at Steamtown through March 28 at the Changing Exhibits Gallery and the cost is included in the entrance fee.

Steamtown is open daily through March 28 from 10:00 AM - 4:00 PM.

Spring LTAP Courses Scheduled

Traffic Signs

Tuesday, March 25, 2014
8:00 a.m. – 3:00 p.m.
West Penn Township Building
27 Municipal Road
New Ringgold, PA 17960
Phone: (570) 386-4507
www.westpenn township.org

Principles of Paving

Wednesday, April 2, 2014
8:00 a.m. – 3:00 p.m.
Dallas Township Building
2919 SR 309 Highway
Dallas, PA 18612
(570) 674-2008
www.dallastownship.com

Roadside Safety Features

Tuesday, April 22, 2014
8:00 a.m. – 3:00 p.m.
Smithfield Township Building

1155 Red Fox Road
East Stroudsburg, PA 18301
Phone: (570) 223- 5082
Website: www.smithfieldtownship.com

Work Zone Traffic Control

Wednesday, April 23, 2014
8:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.
PennDOT District 4-0 Office
55 Keystone Industrial Park
Dunmore, PA 18512
Phone: (570) 963-4052
www.dot.state.pa.us

Equipment and Worker Safety

Thursday, May 8, 2014
8:00 a.m. – 11:30 a.m.
PPL Wallenpaupack Environmental
Learning Center
126 PPL Drive (off US Route 6)
Hawley, PA 18428
Phone: (570) 253-7076
Website: www.pplweb.com

Drainage: The Key to Roads That Last

Thursday, May 15, 2014
8:00 a.m. – 2:00 p.m.
Lackawaxen Township Building
169 Urban Road
Lackawaxen, PA 18435
Phone: (570) 685-7288
Website: www.lackawaxen.org

Road Surface Management

Wednesday, June 4, 2014
8:00 a.m. – 3:00 p.m.
Carbon County Emergency Management
Agency
1264 Emergency Lane
Nesquehoning, PA 18240
Phone: (570) 325-3097
www.carboncounty.com/emergency

For more information on the LTAP classes, contact Kate McMahon, NEPA-Alliance at 570-655-5581

Trail Symposium To Be Held in May

The Lackawanna Heritage Valley Authority (LHVA), the Pennsylvania Environmental Council/Pocono Forest and Waters Conservation Landscape, and the Anthracite Scenic Trails Association are sponsoring the 2014 Northeastern Pennsylvania Trail Symposium on May 5, 2014 at the offices of the Lackawanna Heritage Valley Authority in Scranton.

As in past years, the symposium will provide Northeastern Pennsylvania trail sponsors and supporters a networking venue where they can share opportunities, challenges, and solutions in an informal setting.

Department of Conservation of Natural Resources Secretary Ellen Ferretti and Transportation Secretary Barry Schoch are scheduled to present information regarding their respective agencies' perspectives on trails in Pennsylvania.

In addition to the Secretaries, several regional and local trail groups will present information on the progress of their trails.

Attendees of the symposium will be given ample opportunity to network with colleagues.

Anyone interested in attending the May 5th symposium should contact Stephanie

Milewski, LHVA, at 570-963-6730, extension 8203.



Cross-Country Skiers Enjoying an Area Trail

2013 Annual Obligation Report Available

The MPO recently completed the 2013 Annual Obligation Report which contains a list of projects for which funding was obligated and de-obligated during FFY 2013.

Obligated Funding

A total of \$60,352,335.1 million was obligated during this period for 96 phases of 77 projects. The following is a breakdown of the project type and costs:

Rail & Highway - 3 projects totaling \$240,000;

Safety - 4 projects totaling over \$1.8 million;

Federal Bridge - 23 projects totaling over \$19 million;

Federal Highway - 13 projects totaling over \$13 million;

Congestion Management/Air Quality - 5 projects totaling over \$11 million;

Enhancement - 7 projects totaling over \$3 million;

Urban - 7 projects totaling over \$5 million; and

Special Funding - 9 projects totaling \$5.1 million.

De-Obligated Funding

Funding is also de-obligated from projects over the course of a year. Some of the conditions which necessitate de-obligating funds include the following:

Project bids come in lower than anticipated; the difference between the projected total and the actual bid are returned once a bid has been accepted.

For projects using the Advanced Construction (AC) process, a contractor pays all costs and then is reimbursed for those costs. Funds

that were originally assigned to an AC project must be de-obligated because the contractor paid up front, and then obligated again when the contractor is reimbursed.

If a project phase costs less than anticipated, the remaining funds have to be de-obligated before those funds can be obligated for another phase.

Any remaining funds after a project has been completed and all bills paid must be returned to the federal government.

A total of \$6,040,096.88 was de-obligated during FFY 2013. The following is a breakdown of the project types and funding:

Rail & Highway - 1 project totaling \$18,445;

Safety - 5 projects totaling \$898,382;

Federal Bridge - 11 projects totaling \$1.5 million;

Federal Highway - 14 projects totaling \$1.4 million;

Congestion Management/Air Quality - 4 projects totaling \$1.2 million;

Enhancement - 6 projects totaling \$184,000;

Urban - 6 projects totaling \$250,000; and

Special Funds - 6 projects totaling \$500,000.

Funding Class Descriptions

Rail & Highway Funds - Most commonly used for at-grade crossing projects.

Safety Funds - Used for roadway design features or hardware, such as guiderails, rumble strips, etc. that help reduce the number of crashes or minimize their severity.

Federal Bridge Funds - Used to repair, rehabilitate, or replace eligible bridges.

CMAQ - Used for projects that help reduce traffic congestion and thereby improve air quality; includes intersection improvement projects, installation of new signals or re-timing of existing signals, creation of turning lanes, etc.

Federal Highway Funds - Used to repair, rehabilitate or re-surface eligible roadways.

Enhancement Funds - Used for projects that provide access for pedestrians, bicycles and other non-motorized forms of transportation.

Urban Funds: These funds are available to MPOs that are classified as Transportation Management Areas due to having an urbanized area population of 200,000 or more (urbanized area population figures are derived from census data); they are a versatile category of funds that can be used for resurfacing, highway construction, safety, and enhancement projects and can also be flexed to fund transit projects.

Special Funds: Funds earmarked for specific projects by members of Congress allocated under prior transportation bills. (Map -21 does not include any earmarked funds).

The obligation report contains a listing of all the projects/phases for which funding was obligated and de-obligated in FFY 2013.

The listing can be found in the full FFY 2013 Annual Obligation Report located on the MPO web page at the following link:

http://www.luzernecounty.org/county/departments_agencies/planning_commission/lackawannaluzerne-metropolitan-planning-organization

2015-2017 TIP Being Developed

The 2015 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) is in the process of being developed by the Lackawanna-Luzerne MPO.

The TIP represents the first four years of the Twelve Year Program (TYP) and the Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP). It is a list of projects for which funding has been designated.

The majority of projects on the new TIP will be carry-overs from the current 2013 TIP. A few new projects will be added provided there is adequate funding for that particular type of project.

The TIP contains projects relating to all modes of transportation. It must be fiscally-constrained meaning that only projects for which funding has been identified can be placed on the TIP.

The public will have a chance to review and provide input on the TIP during the summer when it will go out for public display. Following the public comment period, revisions, if needed, will be made, comments will be addressed, and the MPO committees will review and approve the new TIP at the July meetings.

**LACKAWANNA/LUZERNE METROPOLITAN
PLANNING ORGANIZATION**

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**MPO Web Page: [http://
www.luzernecounty.org/county/
departments_agencies/
planning_commission/lackawannaluzerne
-metropolitan-planning-organization](http://www.luzernecounty.org/county/departments_agencies/planning_commission/lackawannaluzerne-metropolitan-planning-organization)**

**PennDOT District 4-0
www.neparoads.com**



PennDOT Winter Services Guide

In the midst of one of the snowiest Februaries on record, some facts and figures on how PennDOT deals with winter road conditions seemed in order.

PennDOT District 4-0 is responsible for dealing with winter weather conditions on 8,480 snow lane miles in the following six counties: Susquehanna, Wayne, Wyoming, Lackawanna, Luzerne, and Pike. The District uses a variety of tools to deal with winter weather conditions ranging from freezing rain to ice. Although salt remains the major weapon to deal with winter conditions (PennDOT used an average of 800,000 tons of salt over the past five years statewide), there are several other tools the Department uses including anti-icing, anti-skid, de-icing, ground-speed activated salt spreader, infrared temperature sensors, and pre-wetted salt.

The District uses one or more of these methods based on the type of precipitation and ambient temperature.

Luzerne County Facts & Figures

The 2013-2014 winter budget for Luzerne County is \$6 million. \$5.3 million was

spent last year. Luzerne County, which has 2,289 snow lane miles, and 172 Municipal Agreement Miles, averages about 31 inches of snow per year. Last year, PennDOT used 28,992 tons of salt and 275,000 gallons of brine to treat roadways in the County.

Lackawanna County Facts & Figures

The 2013-2014 winter budget for Lackawanna County is \$4.2 million. The amount spent last winter was \$4.1 million. The County, which has 1,564 snow

lane miles, and 98 Municipal Agreement Miles, averages about 38 inches of snow per winter.

Last winter, PennDOT used 28,552 tons of salt and 258,000 gallons of brine to treat roadways in the County.

It takes plenty of manpower and vehicles to distribute the salt, brine and other materials onto the roadways.

In both counties, 143 vehicle operators drive snow plows, anti-icing trucks, graders, stockpiles and loaders to deal with winter weather conditions, and each county hires temporary operators to help in the effort.

The data in this article comes from the 2013-2014 PennDOT Winter Weather Guide which can be found on the PennDOT web site. It contains a lot of useful information including winter weather driving tips and a quiz to test your knowledge about driving in winter weather. The link for the site is :

[http://ftp.dot.state.pa.us/public/Bureaus/
Press/Winter/PUB628.pdf](http://ftp.dot.state.pa.us/public/Bureaus/Press/Winter/PUB628.pdf)



PennDOT plow trucks at work during one of the many storms this winter