



CONNECTIONS

LCTA Providing Service to Frances Slocum State Park

Free worms and ice cream were just two of the surprises that riders to Frances Slocum State Park received on June 8th as part of the inaugural trip to the state park.

The service to the park, which is located in Kingston Township, will be available Monday through Saturdays until August 24th from downtown Wilkes-Barre.

“This new route is great for helping people get outdoors at this wonderful park, especially for people without their own transportation,” said Carol Husa, Healthy Community Coordinator at the Wilkes-Barre YMCA.

Rex Bradish, Park Manager said, “Campers at the park are always asking if there is a bus to town, especially on rainy days. Now I can tell them “yes”.

“It’s a win for the park, for bus riders, and for out-of-town park visitors,” said Stan Strelish, LCTA Executive Director. “When the idea of a regular bus route to the park was presented to us by the YMCA and Live Well Luzerne, we immediately

saw an opportunity to provide a service that would benefit our current riders and attract new riders,” Strelish continued.

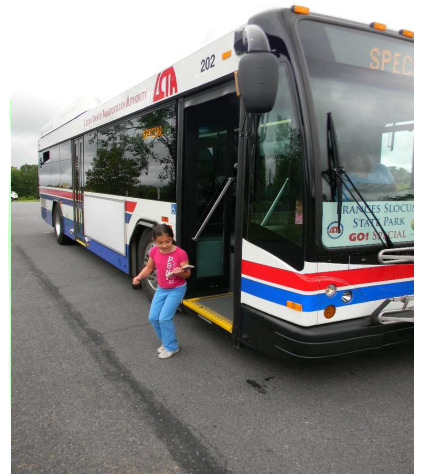
The round-trip fare is \$3.00, but senior citizens and children under 42 inches tall pay nothing. Students under 18 can purchase a summer pass for \$20 that’s good for unlimited trips from June through August. Picnic coolers are allowed on the bus as long as they fit under the seat, and the bus can accommodate two bikes on its rack.

The morning bus leaves the Intermodal Transportation Center (ITC) in Wilkes-Barre at 10 AM and picks up riders in Edwardsville, Kingston, Luzerne, Swoyersville, Forty-Fort, Wyoming, Exeter Borough and West Wyoming, arriving at the park at 11:10 AM. The afternoon bus from the park will get

riders back to the ITC in time to catch connecting buses home.

The new service was made possible via a partnership among the Wilkes-Barre YMCA, Live Well Luzerne, Department of Conservation of Natural Resources, and the LCTA.

To find out more about the new bus service, go to www.lctabus.com or call 570-287-8463.



Young girl exits bus on June 8th at Frances Slocum State Park.

Upcoming Road and Bridge Projects

The following roadway/bridge projects will be (or have been) started this summer with completion times varying according to the scope of the project:

Lackawanna County:

SR 0170, Fell Township; Bridge Replacement over Fell Creek; July, 2013 - September, 2014

SR 4026, Clarks Summit Borough; Bridge Preservation; July, 2013 - December, 2014

I-81, Moosic Borough; Northbound (NB) and Southbound (SB) paving from Luzerne County line to Scranton Central Expressway; July, 2013 - October, 2013

I-81, Dickson City Borough; NB and SB preservation activities work over Lackawanna, Main and Boulevard Avenues; January, 2012 - May, 2014

Luzerne County:

SR 0239 - Union Township;

Bridge over Shickshinny Creek; July, 2013 - September 2015

SR 2035 - Bear Creek Township; Bridge replacement over tributary of Meadow Run; August 2013 - July 2015

SR 0011 Larksville Borough; Bridge replacement over abandoned railroad; August 2013 - August 2015

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PennDOT Transportation Secretary and Turnpike CEO Visit Area to Highlight New Cost-Savings Agreement & Call For Funding Action

PennDOT Transportation Secretary Barry Schoch and PA Turnpike Commission (PTC) CEO Mark Compton, visited the Hazleton area on Friday, June 14 to emphasize the need for additional transportation funding, and to highlight an agreement between PennDOT and the PTC in which the two entities will reduce costs by sharing winter facilities and materials.



PTC CEO Mark Compton addresses the media on June 14 at the PennDOT salt dome in Hazleton.

Secretary Schoch announced that a project to extend PA Route 424 could move forward if a plan to provide additional transportation funding, like the proposal introduced by Governor Corbett in February, is passed by the General Assembly this year.

Schoch noted that extending Route 424 would stimulate additional economic development in the Humboldt Industrial Park, and would improve safety and traffic flow in the area. He went on to say, "Governor Corbett has shown leadership in introducing a transportation funding plan that would increase public safety and [improve] our quality of life. The General Assembly needs to carry this project forward if we're going to ensure businesses can keep expanding while ensuring the public's safety."

The extension of Route 424 would cost approximately \$20 million.

The sharing of winter facilities and materials between PennDOT and the PTC is part of an initiative called Mapping the Future, which the two entities entered into about two years ago.

"This endeavor increases cooperation and reduces redundancy between our agencies, and remains a priority for me and Secretary Schoch," CEO Compton said. "Together we have made remarkable progress in sharing resources and reducing costs, and today's milestone marks the first permanent and lasting change from this effort."

By sharing facilities and winter materials, the PTC will save \$1 million due to eliminating the need to build a salt dome or replace its Pocono brine-making facility. Conversely, PennDOT will not have to spend \$200,000 to construct a new brine-making facility in Dupont. The financial benefit of sharing facilities and materials will be about \$300,000.

"Our progress in Mapping the Future is just one of many ways that PennDOT is becoming a modernized, more

efficient agency," Schoch said. "Every day, we're making strides to become a better business partner and improve how we deliver transportation to Pennsylvanians. With additional investment, we'll have the resources we need to continue making our state a better place to live and work."

PennDOT District 4-0 Executive, George Roberts, attended the event, as well as representatives from area Chambers of Commerce, and the local planning partners in the region.

For more information on Governor Corbett's plan to improve safety, drive economic competitiveness, and create jobs through transportation investment, go to www.dot.state.pa.us.

Safety Upgrade Project at Railroad Crossing Completed

The Pennsylvania Northeast Regional Railroad Authority (PNRRA)/Delaware-Lackawanna Railroad recently held a ribbon-cutting at Seventh Avenue in Carbondale.

The project, funded through a grant from PennDOT, consisted of a rail crossing safety upgrade which included the installation of new lights, gates, flashers, and bells.

Those in attendance at the ribbon-cutting are pictured from left to right:

Dominic Keating, PNRRA Vice Chairman; James May, PennDOT District 4-0 Press Officer; Lorie Ransom, DLRR General Superintendent; Jim Wansacz, Lackawanna County Commissioner; Charlene Doyle, PNRRA Director of Administration; Larry Malski, Esq., PNRRA President; Christine Tockmulvey, Carbondale Director of Community & Economic Development; and Justin Taylor, Mayor of Carbondale



State Transportation Commission Develops Modernized Participation Method

The State Transportation Commission (STC) will no longer hold public hearings around the state when the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) update is being prepared.

At the May, 23, 2013 business meeting, the STC agreed to develop a Modernized Participation Method for gathering public input which will consist of the following measures:

STC Website Update - The STC will create a user-friendly website outside of the PennDOT framework that will include a message from the STC Chairman and an on-line survey.

Pre-Twelve-Year Program (TYP) Survey - The Pre-TYP Online Survey will focus on policy based on the STC's recently released *Transportation Performance Report* and will offer options to suggest project needs in various formats.



Transportation Secretary Barry Schoch and STC Member Frank Paczewski at event in Hazleton.

Statewide Webcast Public Meeting(s) - The public meetings will be recorded and posted to the website. It will offer a

range of options including online polling, text polling, etc.

Promotions - This will include a public launch with a PennDOT press release, and an e-mail blast campaign using the MPO/RPO networks, as well as social media sites, blogs, interest groups, etc.

Existing Public Meeting Opportunities - This will involve a coordinated effort among PennDOT, the STC and the Planning Partners (MPOs/RPOs). Each STC member will be assigned to one or more MPO/RPO planning regions, and will have the opportunity to attend their public meetings as an STC official.

STC member, Mr. Frank Paczewski, has been assigned to the Lackawanna/Luzerne MPO region, the NEPA MPO region and the Northern Tier RPO region. He is associated with Ertley Vehicle Sales in Moosic, and lives in the Back Mountain area of Luzerne County.

Upcoming Road & Bridge Projects (continued from page 1)

I-81 Plains Township; replacement of 4 bridges - 2 over Jumper Road and 2 over Sunset Road; May, 2013 - July, 2016

I-81 Dupont Borough; Reconstruction of Exit 178 and construction of airport access road; June 2013 - November 2015

The purpose of this project is to combine the two exits on the NB and SB lanes into one exit, using three roundabouts to direct traffic to the airport and SR 0315.

The project will include the following elements:

Rehabilitation of 4 bridges on I-81 - 2 over SR 0315 and 2 over Plane Street;

Replacement of a pedestrian bridge over the interstate;

Repaving of a 1.5 mile stretch of I-81;

Construction of an access road that will connect the Wilkes-Barre/Scranton International Airport to the Grimes Industrial Park in Pittston Township;

Replacement of antiquated off-ramps.

According to project manager, Chris Tomaszewski, the planned reconstruction of the ramps is a critical element that will improve safety by lengthening the ramps, and giving motorists more time to enter and exit the interstate.

Once construction begins, the bridges will be widened to provide two lanes of traffic in order to minimize congestion during the heavily-traveled hours of the day. However, it is possible that one lane could be closed at night on occasion.

At a recent groundbreaking ceremony, state Senator John P. Blake said about the pro-

ject, "Today we mark a new beginning and we commit new federal, state, and local investments that will ensure safer commutes for our residents and for visitors to our region while improving prospects for business growth and jobs."

The \$41.9 million contract was awarded to Pennsy Supply on May 21, 2013. The project is one of the largest undertaken within District 4-0, and is unique in that it addresses safety, congestion mitigation, and economic development issues.

Construction is expected to be completed by November of 2015.



District Executive, George Roberts, addresses the public during the recent groundbreaking ceremony, while state and local officials look on.

**LACKAWANNA/LUZERNE METROPOLITAN
PLANNING ORGANIZATION**

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MPO Web Page Link:

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

**PennDOT District 4-0 web site:
neparoads.com**

Additional Miles of Lackawanna River Heritage Trail to Open

The Lackawanna Heritage Valley National and State Heritage Area (LHV) announces the near completion of two more miles of the Lackawanna River Heritage Trail connecting Elm Street in Scranton to Keyser Creek in Taylor Borough. The official opening of the new section will take place on Friday, July 26, 2013 at 11:00 AM.

The trail dedication will be conducted at an amphitheatre that has been constructed with large rocks excavated from the trail site. The site is located about 1.5 miles from the trail entrance at Elm Street. The County of Lackawanna Transit System (COLTS) will shuttle guests to the dedication site beginning at 10:30AM. (Further details regarding the shuttle service will be released to the media closer to the dedication date).

Known as the CNJ extension, the trail runs along the Lackawanna River and features many unique pieces of art that represent the Native American population that stopped here many years ago. Located along a short spur off the main trail is a statue of a Native American chief that was carved from a red oak tree by local artist and PennDOT consultant Tom Austin. Also nearby are several interesting

rock carvings, as well as flower planters filled with lilies and other species.

Dr. Gere Reisinger, Luzerne County resident and representative of the Seneca Nation, has planted a garden of spices that would have been used by the Native Americans who fished in the river. This section of the river is a popular site for fisherman who compete with bald eagles and ospreys for the trout that thrive there.

The CNJ extension begins at Elm Street, not far from the South Side Shopping Center, and offers trail users the opportunity to travel to Taylor along the former rail line,



Rock carvings found along the trail



Tom Austin works on Indian carving

creating a contiguous trail from the Downtown Scranton Riverwalk at Olive Street past the 7th Avenue and Broadway Trailheads.

For more information on the dedication, contact Natalie Gelb, LHV Executive Director at 963-6730.

Masthead Photo: Section of Lackawanna River Heritage Trail