



Transportation Secretary Promotes Funding Initiatives

Transportation Secretary, Barry Schoch, visited Luzerne County recently to bring attention to and promote Governor Corbett's Plan for Transportation Funding.

As part of the proposed 2013-2014 state budget, the Governor is calling for lifting the cap on the Oil Franchise Tax which is now set at \$1.25 per gallon. By allowing the tax to rise and fall with the wholesale price of gas, the state can significantly increase the amount of funds needed to repair roads and bridges - about \$2 billion after 5 years.

Lifting the tax cap is just one element of a larger effort the Governor's Transportation Funding Advisory Commission put forth several months ago to fund Pennsylvania's multi-modal transportation system.

In addition to tax-related funding efforts, PennDOT will revise current practices to save money and operate more efficiently. Vehicle registration and license renewal periods will be lengthened, and registration stickers will be eliminated. (The stickers used to help police identify vehicles and operators, but computers are used for this now).

The Department will create one, multi-modal Deputate,

consisting of rail, air, ports, and transit. One Deputy Secretary position will be eliminated, the office of PENNPORTS will move from the Department of Conservation and Economic Development to PennDOT, and the Department will create an annual, dedicated multi-modal funding source for non-highway modes of travel, including bike and pedestrian projects.

Local governments will have the opportunity to work with the Department in bundling and managing road and bridge projects which will reduce their local share by 100%. They will also be offered the opportunity to partner with PennDOT in the management of traffic signals.

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Transportation Secretary Barry Schoch answers questions at recent press conference

PNRRA Receives Rail Safety Grant

The Pennsylvania Northeast Regional Railroad Authority (PNRRA) has been awarded a Section 103 federal highway-rail safety grant for the purchase and installment of new crossing lights, flashers, gates and bells at the Seventh Avenue grade crossing in Carbondale.

PNRRA awarded a contract to Diamondback Signal, the lowest responsible bidder, for \$114,995.00 to install the new equipment on or before May of 2013.

According to PNRAA President Larry Malski, "This is a continuing example of the type of safety upgrades that the Authority and its contract rail operator, the Delaware-Lackawanna Railroad, has pursued to provide added safety and efficiency as the growth of our regional rail system continues."

He added, "With the continued growth and operation of more trains to Carbondale servicing the Linde

Transload Terminal in Carbondale Yards for the Marcellus Shale industry, the investments that have been made on the Carbondale Mainline have provided an enhanced level of safety for the public and operational efficiency as more freight and passenger trains traverse our regional rail system between Scranton and Carbondale."

Submitted by Larry Malski, PNRAA President

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According to Secretary Schoch, "PennDOT has been working to ensure we're operating and delivering projects as efficiently as we can, so we're ready to put these additional dollars to work. Through our Next Generation initiative, we've already identified more than \$50 million in savings stemming from modernizing operations, becoming a better business partner, and working more closely with other agencies."

Two regional projects could benefit from the additional funds. Pavement on 31 miles of the Casey Highway needs to be rehabilitated at a cost of \$32 million, and a 1-mile extension of PA Route 424 be-



Casey Highway in Mayfield Township, Lackawanna County

tween Exit 143 of I-81 and the Humboldt Industrial Park needs about \$20 million to be constructed. This project would include access and safety improvements and enhance economic development in the Greater Hazleton Area.

Donna Palermo, President of the Greater

Hazleton Chamber of Commerce, said, "The Governor's announcement is the beginning of a process that will have a great impact on Pennsylvania's economic future. It is critical to keep our transportation infrastructure maintained and continually improving so we can keep goods and people moving."

In summing up the proposed initiatives, Secretary Schoch stated, "The governor's plan is a sorely-needed, common-sense plan that will help us improve Pennsylvania's infrastructure for years to come. This is a fair plan that will boost our economy and help deliver services more efficiently, which is what Pennsylvanians expect and deserve."

Winter/Spring LTAP Courses

Work Zone Traffic Control

Tuesday, January 29, 2013

8:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m.

Schuylkill Community Education Council

1-7 West Center Street

Mahanoy City, PA 17948

Phone: (570) 773-1270

<http://www.schuylkilleducation.org/>

Safe Driver

Thursday, February 21, 2013

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

Traffic Signs

Wednesday, March 13, 2013

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

Traffic Calming

Thursday, March 14, 2013

8:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m.

Forty Fort Borough Building

1271 Wyoming Ave.

Forty Fort, PA 18704

Phone: (570) 287-8586

<http://fortyfort.org>

Equipment and Worker Safety

Wednesday, April 10, 2013

8:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m.

Pike County Conservation District

556 Route 402, Suite 1

Hawley, PA 18428

Phone: (570) 226-8220

<http://www.pikeconservation.org/>

Principles of Paving

Monday, April 15, 2013

8:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m.

Monroe County Public Safety Center

100 Gypsum Road

Stroudsburg, PA 18360

Phone: (570) 992-4113

www.co.monroe.pa.us

Equipment and Worker Safety

Tuesday, May 14, 2013

8:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m.

Lehighton Borough Building

1 Constitution Avenue

Lehighton, PA 18235

Phone: (610) 377-4002

www.lehightonborough.com

Risk Management Strategies

Tuesday, June 4, 2013

8:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m.

PPL Wallenpaupack Environmental Learning Center

126 PPL Drive (off US Route 6)

Hawley, PA 18428

Phone: (570) 253-7076

www.pplweb.com

Annual Bike Tour To Be Held in June

The Lackawanna Heritage Valley, National and State Heritage Areas (LVH) will hold its fourth annual Bike Tour on Saturday, June 15, 2013 from 8:00 AM to 3:00 PM, rain or shine.

This non-competitive, family-friendly event offers four out-and-back routes that extend from Mellow Park north on the Lackawanna River Heritage Trail and on quiet, residential streets in 17 municipalities. Each route has station stops along the course with complimentary water, snacks, and fun activities. Experienced bike marshals will patrol the course to guide riders and assist with any needed repairs. All street sections and crossings will be marked and staffed. Any rider under the age of 14 must be accompanied by an adult.

In addition to the bike tour events, there will be a festival held at Mellow Park on

the same day which will run from 10:00 AM to 3:00 PM.

Open to the general public, the festival will feature live music and entertainment, a variety of demonstrations, vendors and exhibits and a tent packed with raffle baskets. Two, free events will cater to children 10 and under - the Blakely Lokie



2012 Bike Tour Participants Ride Through Mellow Park

Bike Rally and the Heritage Explorer Festival Youth Run. The bike rally will circle the park and have interactive station stops for the kids. The Youth Run will begin at noon. Runners between the ages of 5-10 will run a determined course within Mellow Park. Prizes will be awarded for both events.

Registration can be made electronically at www.HeritageExplorer.org, or a paper form can be downloaded from the site and sent via hard copy to LVH. Interested riders can also register on the day of the event.

Packages, which include price and a selected route, are available for Seniors (55+), Adults over 18, Families (2 adults and 4 children under the age of 18), and Teams (up to 6 adults, 18 and up).

For more information on the event, contact Owen Worozbyt, LVH Volunteer Coordinator, at 963-6730, Extension 8212.

FHWA & FTA Re-Certify MPO Transportation Planning Process

The Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) conducted a federal certification review of the Lackawanna-Luzerne Transportation Study (LLTS) MPO last spring.

The review consists of two parts - a desk analysis of transportation planning documents and a field review. The field review was held on April 30 and May 1, 2012 at the PennDOT District 4-0 Office.

MPO staff presented an overview of the transportation planning duties the MPO

performs and responded to questions and/or comments from the certification review team.

In a recently-released draft report, the review team has found that the "MPO complies with the spirit and intent of metropolitan transportation planning laws and regulations."

The draft report contains one corrective action. Within 30 days of receiving the final report, the MPO must prepare a schedule as to when it will prepare the required annual listing of obligated projects for the federal fiscal year.

The draft report also provides several recommendations on how to increase or expand current planning practices, especially in regard to public involvement measures. In addition, the MPO received commendations regarding the preparation of the Environmental Justice and Title VI Benefits & Burdens Analysis done in conjunction with the preparation of the Lackawanna-Luzerne Regional Plan.

The next certification review will take place in 2015.

Bridge Safety and Inspections

In 2003, then District 4-0 ADE for Design, Bob Doble, made a presentation at an MPO meeting detailing the looming bridge crisis the area was facing. All of the interstate bridges were close to being 50 years old and non-interstate state and local bridges were approaching the end of their life cycle as well.

Since then, PennDOT, which is responsible for inspecting 25,000 state bridges and 7,000 local bridges statewide, has made a concerted effort to address the issue.

The first step in addressing the bridge situation is to evaluate the condition of a bridge via an inspection.

During an inspection, certified bridge inspectors do an evaluation of the entire bridge structure to determine the current status of the bridge versus its condition when it was first built, and since the last inspection was conducted.

Inspectors look at the superstructure (deck area), how it aligns with the underlying structure and with the roadway, the proper place-

ment of road signs, and the condition of the water or roadway over which the bridge passes. Every bridge element is inspected for deterioration due to weather, chemicals (road salt), and traffic impacts. Rust/corrosion or cracks in steel or concrete components, and missing or broken-off sections of concrete are some of the things inspectors look for during an inspection. Every part of a bridge is looked at closely, but inspectors emphasize the primary structural elements that support the weight of the bridge and the traffic load.

**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



Bridge Safety and Inspections (Continued from Page 3)

All of the data gathered during the inspection is calculated to produce a Sufficiency Rating (SFR). The SFR indicates the ability of a structure to meet the traffic demands and safety needs of the traffic traveling on it. SFRs range from a perfect score of 100 to 0 at which point a structure is considered entirely insufficient or deficient.

SFRs determine the amount of federal funds that can be used to rehab or replace bridges. No federal funding is available if the SFR is between 80 and 100. Federal funds can be used to refurbish or rehab a bridge if the SFR is between 50 and 79. Federal funds can be used for bridge replacements if the SFR is between 0 and 49.

In addition to SFRs, inspections also produce Condition Ratings (CR) which range from 9 to 0, with 9 denoting an excellent condition and 0 denoting a failed bridge which is out of service and beyond corrective action.

A rating of 5-9 means that the bridge is performing as designed with minor signs of deterioration; it is structurally sound and routine maintenance work can stop further deterioration.

A rating of 0-4 means that deterioration on at least one structural component is advanced, resulting in the bridge being classified as Structurally Deficient (SD).



Certified Engineer Performs Inspection of Bridge Substructure

When this occurs, an analysis is done to determine the load capacity. The results are compared to previous studies to see if the load capacity has changed, and the engineers then decide the type of action that needs to be taken. SD bridges are not unsafe to travel on; they just need to be inspected more often.

PennDOT and the MPO have been concentrating funding toward existing roads and bridges, SD bridges in particular, over the last several years.

As of 2011, there were 175 state and 86 local bridges classified as SD. During that same period 10 bridges had been removed from the SD list, but 11 others had been added.

The MPO and PennDOT will continue their efforts to address the SD bridge situation to ensure area bridges remain open and viable.