PennDOT Starts Work on Mount Joy Train Station Improvements

District 3 Responds to Autumn Flooding

Getting Through Snow Squalls

Vehicle Registration Stickers are a Thing of the Past
PennDOT Starts Work on Mount Joy Train Station Improvements
Part of Ongoing Upgrades to Keystone Rail Corridor

Secretary Richards hosted a groundbreaking event in October for improvements to the Mount Joy station on Amtrak’s Keystone Corridor, the latest in a series of investments to improve service on the 104-mile line.

The $25 million project will replace low-level platforms with covered, elevated ones that will make boarding trains easier, improve access with the addition of elevators and enclosed stair towers, and a pedestrian overpass between the east and westbound platforms. Work also includes adding 42 parking spaces and improving a total of 112 parking spaces and slope stabilization.

“These improvements will further enhance the center of Mount Joy and help boost the borough’s ongoing revitalization plans,” Richards said. “Transit plays a crucial role in building communities, and we have seen the results from more than a decade of upgrades to the Keystone Corridor.”

In addition, the new station will meet the requirements of the Americans With Disabilities Act.

The new phase of the Mount Joy station improvements, expected to take three years to complete, complements Phase 1, which added streetscaping, 69 parking spaces and a covered walkway between the parking lot and station. Phase 1 was completed in 2012.

“Our improvements will provide equal access for all people, allowing persons with disabilities, senior citizens, and other people with mobility challenges to live, work, and access transportation in this community.”

– PennDOT Secretary Leslie S. Richards
PennDOT Launches Video to Assist Pennsylvanians in Navigating Roundabouts

By Jan Huzvar, Deputy Communications Director, Central Office

We all know that change can be difficult, that’s why PennDOT set about the creation of a video to help our customers to navigate roundabouts. Proven to be safer than traditional intersections, roundabouts require that motorists slow down and yield to oncoming traffic without ever having to come to a complete stop.

PennDOT currently has 32 completed roundabouts, with 20 under construction and more in the planning stages. With the safety benefits of roundabouts well-documented, the likelihood of encountering a roundabout will only increase, and PennDOT wants users to be well informed.

The video instructs viewers on how to navigate single and multi-lane roundabouts whether in a vehicle, on a bicycle or on foot. The video also instructs viewers on what to do if they encounter an emergency vehicle in a roundabout.

The video can be accessed by visiting the roundabout page on www.penndot.gov or by visiting the department’s YouTube channel.

National studies have shown that modern roundabouts reduce fatal crashes by up to 90 percent and result in a 75 percent reduction in injury-causing crashes. Modern roundabouts also improve pedestrian safety by allowing people to cross shorter distances with slower moving one-way traffic.

“Data shows that modern-day roundabouts reduce crash severity and injuries while improving traffic flow. This video illustrates how to navigate these intersections regardless of how you travel.”

– PennDOT Secretary Leslie S. Richards

Vehicle Registration Stickers are a Thing of the Past

By Alexis Campbell, Community Relations Coordinator, Driver and Vehicle Services

As of December 31, 2016, PennDOT no longer issues or provides vehicle registration stickers, and you will no longer be required to display them on your license plate. This change is part of Act 89 of 2013, which provided for the elimination of the registration sticker, and is a crucial step in PennDOT modernizing its processes and improving customer convenience.

You will still have all currently available service channels to renew your registration; however, when you renew your registration online, you will now print your permanent registration document at the end of your transaction. No more temporary registration documents, no more waiting for the delivery of your registration card. Simply click, pay, print, and be done!

Additionally, customers with certain types of vehicles now have the option to renew their registration for a two-year period. The fee for a two-year registration will be two times the amount of the registration fee payable for the motor vehicle registration. If you only want to renew for one year, you still have that option as well.
Flash flooding that occurred late October in District 3 which includes Tioga, Bradford, Lycoming, Sullivan, Union, Montour, Columbia, Snyder and Northumberland Counties, proved preparation and teamwork can overcome Mother Nature’s most adverse conditions.

Rain was expected for western and central Pennsylvania during the early morning hours of Friday, October 21. While the forecast called for rainfall of up to 3.5 inches in some local areas, the reality was much worse in parts of the district.

Between four inches, and in some places more than eight inches, of rain – concentrated mostly along the tributaries to Lycoming and Loyalsock creeks – caused flooding that wreaked havoc on rural communities in northeastern Lycoming County and northwestern Sullivan County, as well as an isolated portion of Bradford County.

County department forces were among the first to respond to the emergency.

Sullivan County Assistant Maintenance Manager Matt Morgan received a call from the county 911 Center at 3:45 a.m. Friday morning. He immediately headed for the village of Hillsgrove where flooding threatened Route 87, including a bridge carrying the road over Mill Creek in the village.

“They were telling me there were some serious flooding issues in the Hillsgrove-Elk Creek area,” Morgan said. “When I got to Hillsgrove, I could see Loyalsock Creek was already over its banks. At the upper end of town where Mill Creek crosses the highway, it looked like the Susquehanna River – it was such a wide path of water.”

One particular area of concern was the Butternut Grove community in Gamble Township. A bridge spanning Wallis Run on Wallis Run Road just south of the community was washed out. This left residents with a section of Wallis Run Road threatened by a soil slide to the north as their only link to the outside world. The slide area was reduced to a single lane while an emergency contract was initiated so a series of pipes could be installed to provide a temporary crossing at the washed out bridge.

Once the temporary crossing was installed, PennDOT was able to close the road at the slide area because of the instability and risk of sudden failure.

A temporary bridge over Wallis Run is expected to be completed by March. A permanent bridge and a soil slide repair project should be completed by the end of the 2017 construction season.

In addition to removing the damaged bridge on Route 87 in Hillsgrove, PennDOT completed several emergency stream restoration projects on Mill Creek above and below the bridge over the creek. A project to install a two-lane temporary bridge and roadway downstream of the original bridge location is expected to be completed by March. The final project for this area will be the construction of a permanent bridge on Route 87 over Mill Creek. This project is planned to be bid by April and completed by October.

Repairs have been completed on 46 different state-owned roads in Lycoming, Sullivan and Bradford counties and the total estimated cost for the flood recovery work is $18.3 million.
“There were so many trees on the roadway and damming up the creek, you couldn’t even see across the bridge over Mill Creek. There was a chunk of roadway gone, power lines down and water rushing between houses.”
– Sullivan County Assistant Maintenance Manager Matt Morgan

“We are grateful for the dedicated PennDOT employees, emergency centers and contractors who responded around the clock to restore transportation to areas impacted by the flood.”
– District Executive Sandra Tosca, P.E.
When most people take a quick road trip, they pick a warmer climate or a place to relax. When Mercer County assistant manager Dan Whetzel decided in November to head out of town with his friend Sam Stebbins, they picked a real hot spot – Gatlinburg, Tennessee. The pair volunteered in the effort to extinguish the ongoing wildfires that had afflicted the area. Authorities believe the late November fire started when two teens dropped lit matches along the Chimney Tops Trail in the Great Smoky Mountain National Park. Due to dry conditions, the blaze quickly spread. More than 2,400 homes, businesses, and other structures were damaged or destroyed and more than 14,000 people were forced to evacuate the eastern Tennessee towns of Gatlinburg and Pigeon Forge.

While Dan watched the events play out on television, he knew he could help.

Dan has been a firefighter with the Clintonville Volunteer Fire Department in Venango County for 12 years, serving as the assistant chief for the past three years. During his tenure, he also received wildfire training.

It was a desire to serve the community that drew Dan to join the Clintonville fire company and to head south on Tuesday, November 29.

He and Sam set off to the disaster area at 5 p.m. that day and arrived at 2 a.m. the next morning.

“I had worked a shift on Tuesday so we took a quick three-hour nap prior to checking in with command so that we weren’t totally exhausted and useless,” Dan said.

After catching a little shut-eye, Dan and Sam checked in with the command post at 5 a.m. Wednesday, November 30. They were placed on a standby list for firefighters.

Eager to find a place where they could start helping right away, the men made their way to the Red Cross center and were immediately put to work.

“Our first jobs were to help unload donations and organize the emergency shelter,” Dan said.

The shelter was housed in a recreation center complete with 24 volleyball courts, six basketball courts, and a cafeteria. Dan estimates a few hundred people were staying at the shelter, which was also serving as the hub for all emergency operations.

Organizing the supplies for such a large shelter was no easy feat. “You name it and it was there,” Dan said of the variety of goods donated to the rescue effort. “We were like a mini Walmart, well, better make that a Sam’s Club with as many items as we had.

“The number of donated items just amazed me,” he said.

Dan and Sam worked at the shelter until 4 p.m. that day, took another three-hour nap and returned for a 12-hour shift. The pair continued to donate their time at the shelter until leaving for home on Saturday, December 3.
By Fritzi Schreffler, Safety Press Officer, District 8

PennDOT Takes a Stand at the Pennsylvania Farm Show

When you think of the Pennsylvania Farm Show, what comes to mind first? Milkshakes, potato donuts, deep-fried mozzarella cheese cubes, fried mushrooms, chocolate-covered bacon (um, yeah, it’s a thing)? Cows, horses, pigs, bunnies, chickens? Tractors, sheds, tools? Apples, potatoes, maple syrup, flower arranging? Buying a new hat or jacket or boots?

Yes, all those things and more are what the Farm Show is all about, and it is an annual tradition for many in Pennsylvania and surrounding states. And as you stroll in the Weis Expo Hall, sipping on your half-n-half milkshake (vanilla and chocolate heaven!), right smack in the middle of all the heavy equipment, you spot a familiar yellow truck… what is PennDOT doing here? We do roads, bridges and construction, right? And is that a motorcycle there, too? Huh?

In 2013, a three-way agility agreement went into effect which included Dauphin County maintenance, the Department of Agriculture/Farm Show, and PennDOT’s Motorcycle Safety Program. The agreement with our sister agency is considered a non-expiring one, meaning that although we update work plans every year, there is no end date to the agreement.

For PennDOT, we get to use the Farm Show facilities for trainings, meetings, and conferences. In return, we provide guiderail, drainage, and inlet repairs, as well as such asphalt maintenance as potholes and paving. We provide traffic control assistance when needed during major events held at the Farm Show Building.

As a result, for five of the past six years, we have had space for a booth to be able to engage the public in what we do and to answer questions they may have about doing business with PennDOT or how the agency handles various issues. This year, we included the motorcycle safety program and they brought a lot of materials and a bike, which has been very popular. We also had HR staff there to answer questions about employment with the department.

Every year, we have a big truck there, which is always popular with the little kids (they like to stand under the plow and have their pictures taken) and with the big kids (the guys) who want to ask all sorts of questions about the truck. This year, we showcased the new ejector body trucks that are being piloted across the state. I can confidently answer most of the questions, but we also have a few display boards up that talk about the truck as well. Every now and then, I do get stumped, such as the year when one older man asked me how many springs were under the truck. I wish I could have seen the look on my face because he laughed when I said, “There are springs under the truck?” Thank goodness there was someone working nearby who could answer that question!

Besides the big truck, I think the best part about having PennDOT at the Farm Show, with the crowds of people from all over the state coming to the event, is the opportunity to interact with the public. The benefits of this type of outreach cannot really be measured, but it does help to put PennDOT in a more positive light, and makes us more accessible to the public. I love the chance to engage people in conversation, to answer questions and try and help solve concerns, to put them in touch with my counterparts in other areas of the state, and generally give people a close-up encounter with our staff and our equipment.
PennDOT Looks to New Process to Fix Old Pipes, Stretch Resources

By Jim Carroll, Community Relations Coordinator, District 1

PennDOT District 1 Bridge Engineer Bill Koller examines one of the 188 large, corrugated metal pipes that carry streams under state roads in northwestern Pennsylvania. The pipes were built from the 1940s through the 1990s, and 95 of them have been identified as candidates for a new treatment that will add 50 years to the life of a deteriorating pipe at much less than the cost of replacing it.

Not many people ever notice the large corrugated metal arch pipes that carry streams under roads in northwest Pennsylvania - even though some of those pipes are large enough to drive a dump truck through.

But the Bridge Unit in PennDOT District 1 certainly knows about them, and knows that many of those pipes are rusting and deteriorating with age.

District 1 is now ready to try a new way to stretch the service life of those metal arch pipes, and potentially save millions of dollars in the long run.

The idea is to line rusting large metal pipes with concrete using a shotcrete process – essentially spraying concrete at high velocity using compressed air, a hose, and nozzle. That concrete lining is expected to give the pipes an estimated 50 extra years of service at a fraction of the cost of replacing them.

In fact, first-year savings over replacement costs is estimated in the $1 million to $2 million range.

PennDOT District 1 Bridge Engineer William Koller estimates it would cost roughly $250,000 to $400,000 each to replace the deteriorating corrugated metal pipes. District 1 decided to start the rehab effort with a group of six pipes, and the low bid for the work was a total of $219,523 for the whole six-pipe package – or about $37,000 per pipe.

“We believe this will prove to be a very cost effective treatment,” Koller said.

The first six pipes to be treated with the shotcrete process are located in Crawford and Mercer counties:

Crawford County:
• Route 198 in Spring Township;
• Route 1007 (Little Cooley Road) in Steuben Township; and
• Route 2007 (Thurston Road) in Meadville

Mercer County:
• Route 158 in Wilmington Township;
• Route 1001 (Fredonia-Hadley Road) in Perry Township; and
• Route 1014 (Georgetown Road) in New Vernon Township.

The locations of the 95 eight-foot-or-greater corrugated metal pipes in the northwest region that are presently considered candidates for the shotcrete process are: Crawford County, 33; Erie County, 20; Forest County, 3; Mercer County 19; Venango County 6; and Warren County 14.

“We believe this will prove to be a very cost effective treatment.”

– District 1 Executive William G. Petit

“The pipes were built from the 1940s to the 1990s. We stopped building them when we switched to concrete box culverts, which are superior in strength and durability.”

– PennDOT District 1 Bridge Engineer William Koller
PennDOT’s employee engagement system, IdeaLink 20/20, not only encourages employees to think of better ways of doing business, it also helps staff champion ideas to improve safety in the workplace as well as on Pennsylvania’s vast transportation system. Employee ideas are paying safety dividends in a number of areas.

**Safe Work Environment**

Charles Brewer, an aviation specialist in the Bureau of Aviation, submitted an idea to provide periodic safety reminders to all PennDOT employees. As a result, safety reminders are now appearing in periodic employee safety newsletters that engage employees by having them work through an interactive question and answer section. PennDOT Deputy Secretary for Administration Suzanne Itzko wrote, “By creating interactive safety reminders, employees are more fully engaged in safety as part of their day-to-day business.”

A diesel mechanic in Venango County, Christopher McKiernan, submitted an idea to eliminate extra fuses, breakers and relays from battery boxes. By simply eliminating the number of electrical connections mechanics have to check when a truck is not running properly, safety has been enhanced.

Donald Moyer, a radio telecommunications specialist in the Bureau of Maintenance and Operations, suggested PennDOT use existing Automated Vehicle Locator (AVL) equipment to send alerts to managers when truck operators do not secure their seatbelt when their vehicles are in motion. PennDOT will be working with equipment manufacturers and service vendors to determine the full capabilities of the AVL technology for their possible implementation, and adding this seat belt input capability could possibly save a life.

**Safe Transportation System**

Several employees submitted an idea to install an air compressor so visitors to the Welcome Centers could ensure that their tires are properly inflated. Anne Horosky, a Tourist Information Supervisor at the I-95 Welcome Center in Delaware County, said, “Drivers will be safer riding on the correct tire pressure, especially in bad weather.” PennDOT has received favorable responses from the public and inflation stations are planned to be installed at other Rest Areas and Welcome Centers.

Several employees submitted ideas to install security cameras at PennDOT Welcome Centers to better enhance both employees’ and travelers’ safety. As a result of these suggestions, PennDOT is working on plans to install cameras at Welcome Centers and Rest Areas building entrances and lobby areas across the state.

Karyl Claroni, a management analyst in PennDOT’s District 3 office located in Montoursville, submitted an idea for PennDOT to spearhead a media campaign to educate the public on the importance of ensuring that vehicle loads, such as those on a vehicle’s roof rack, are properly secured. PennDOT will highlight Karyl’s idea by putting into motion an upcoming social media infographic.

These are just a few of the many innovative ideas PennDOT employees submitted through IdeaLink 20/20 to improve safety in the workplace as well as across the state’s transportation system. As a part of PennDOT’s employee engagement and continuous quality improvement efforts, the Bureau of Innovations administers the IdeaLink 20/20 system to help empower all PennDOT employees to share innovative ideas.
Progress on Automated, Connected Vehicles Continues in Pennsylvania

In January, PennDOT and the Pennsylvania Turnpike Commission (PTC) formed the Smart Belt Coalition – a first-of-its-kind collaboration – with transportation agencies in Ohio and Michigan that will focus on automated and connected vehicle initiatives.

The coalition, which includes transportation and academic partners, brings together leaders on these technologies to support research, testing, policy, funding pursuits and deployment, as well as share data and provide unique opportunities for private-sector testers.

While coalition membership may expand in the future, agencies and universities anticipated to participate include:

- Pennsylvania: PennDOT, PTC and Carnegie Mellon University;
- Michigan: Michigan Department of Transportation and University of Michigan; and
- Ohio: Ohio Department of Transportation, Ohio Turnpike and Infrastructure Commission, The Ohio State University and Transportation Research Center.

With similar climates, commercial truck traffic and active work on these technologies in the participating states, the coalition will be a resource for transportation stakeholders and the private sector alike. The coalition is developing its strategic plan which initially focuses on:

- Connected and automated applications in work zones, including uniform work-zone scenarios offering consistency for testers as well as technologies offering better information to motorists.
- Commercial freight opportunities in testing, including platooning (connecting more than one vehicle) and potential coordination on interstates.
- Incident management applications providing better information to and infrastructure for emergency responders and other agencies.

Also in January, the U.S. Department of Transportation designated the City of Pittsburgh and the Thomas D. Larson Transportation Institute at Penn State University as two of the 10 highly automated vehicle proving grounds will help keep Pennsylvania in the forefront of this emerging technology. The proving grounds will share data, best practices and more as these technologies continue to develop.

More information on the task force and the state’s efforts related to these technologies can be found at www.penndot.gov in the “Projects & Programs” section under “Research and Testing.”

Safety Law Awareness Week: A PennDOT, Pennsylvania State Police Collaboration

By Ashley Schoch, Deputy Communications Director, Central Office

Each year in February, PennDOT and the Pennsylvania State Police team up to help Pennsylvania’s motorists stay up-to-speed on new and some lesser-known existing laws. Here are the laws we are highlighting for Safety Law Awareness Week, 2017:

Steer Clear Law
This law requires motorists to move at least one lane away from an incident involving emergency responders including law enforcement, tow truck operators and emergency services personnel. If you can’t move over, you must slow down.

Child Passenger Safety
Under Pennsylvania’s updated seat belt law, children under the age of 2 must be secured in a rear-facing car seat until maximum weight and height limits for the seat as defined by the manufacturer are reached.

Daniel’s Law
In 2016, Daniel’s Law made penalties greater for drivers found guilty of texting while driving and causing a crash that results in severe injury or death.

Pedestrian at Non-Signalized Intersection
Motorists must yield for pedestrians at an intersection with no signals. When traffic control signals are not in place or there is a marked crosswalk, it is the driver’s responsibility to yield to all people crossing.

Ignition Interlock System
Pennsylvania’s Ignition Interlock Law targets second-time or subsequent DUI offenders. It requires drivers to have an ignition interlock system installed on EVERY vehicle they own, operate or lease for one year. The approximate cost of each system is $1,000. That’s in addition to fines, fees, attorney costs, and insurance rate hikes.
Getting Through Snow Squalls

As winter trudges on, the potential for snow storms and heavy snow squalls will persist.

Sudden and heavy snow squalls are one of the biggest challenges that motorists, including PennDOT plow truck drivers, face during the winter. Heavy squalls can cause whiteout conditions that suddenly shroud a highway and can greatly restrict or virtually eliminate a driver’s visibility. Motorists need to be alert for these sudden squalls that can quickly cause roads to become snow covered.

PennDOT will always recommend that motorists avoid traveling during winter storms, if possible, but motorists who must be on the road are urged to use caution while driving.

Please remember that roadways cannot be free of snow while winter precipitation is falling. With freezing temperatures, roads that look wet may actually be icy. Extra caution is needed when approaching bridges and highway ramps where ice can form without warning.

Also, leave plenty of space - six car lengths - when following a truck that is plowing or spreading winter materials.

For more information on winter driving and PennDOT operations, visit www.penndot.gov/winter.

Here’s our Snow Squall Driving Advice:

- Slow down gradually and drive at a speed that suits the conditions.
- Turn on your headlights.
- Stay in your lane.
- Increase your following distance.
- Use defroster and wipers.
- Keep windows and mirrors free of snow and ice.
- Do not pass a vehicle moving slowly or speed up to get away from a vehicle that is following too closely.
- Stay alert, keep looking as far ahead as possible and be patient.
- Reduce in-car distractions since your full attention is required.
- During severe whiteouts when you are no longer comfortable behind the wheel, look for a safe area to get off the road. When found, pull as safely far off of the road that you can before coming to a complete stop. Keep your lights on.
- Do not stop in the flow of traffic since this could create a chain-reaction collision.
- Always buckle up and never drink and drive.

While PennDOT recommends not traveling during winter storms, motorists can check conditions on more than 40,000 roadway miles, including color-coded winter conditions on 2,900 miles, by visiting www.511PA.com. 511PA, which is free and available 24 hours a day, provides traffic delay warnings, weather forecasts, traffic speed information and access to more than 770 traffic cameras.
2016 saw the inaugural year of the PennDOT Mentoring Program. The program was developed to address the ongoing needs of internally developing a dynamic workforce and the facilitation of generational knowledge transfer to employees through a mentor-mentee relationship.

The five-session program provided a structured learning environment to explore skill-building and topics related towards individual growth and development for 32 mentors and their 32 mentees.

Chris Norris, PennDOT’s director of human resources, commented on the program by saying, “It’s important to us to find ways to constantly engage our staff in order to ensure that the citizens of Pennsylvania consistently receive the highest level of customer service possible.”

PennDOT Mentoring Program Class of 2016

**Mentee**

Nicholas Baldwin  
Tiffany Barksdale  
Daniel Brady  
Tracey Clevenger  
Atisha Duffin  
Elizabeth Forcey  
Karen Heath  
Patrick Heller  
Rodney Hill  
Jonathan Hoffman  
Abraham Holman  
George Kapral  
Stephen King  
Paula Klinger  
Jonathan Korus  
Elizabeth Kotz  
Lisa Little  
Dominick Lovallo  
Paul Manvisha  
Matthew McDeavitt  
Brandy Miller  
Kelly Morales  
Ty Reed  
Matthew Reis  
Ashley Seburn  
Daniel Shifka  
Nicholas Shrawder  
Gena Strawmire  
Joshua Timko  
Nelson Trout  
Shawn Wheeler  
A. Darren Zapsky

**Mentor**

Stephen Panko  
Edna Weaver  
Thomas Younkin  
Courtney Snyder  
Tracy Robinson  
Catherine Frankovich  
Kristin Sims  
David Shearer  
Edward Steinbugl  
Leonard Walutes  
Richard Lawson  
Sarah Fenton  
Daniel Strazisar  
Adam Elms  
Timothy Culbertson  
Denise Remillard  
Cheryl Pastor  
Julianne Lawson  
Frank Cippel  
Mark Malhenzie  
James McKnight  
David Lapadat  
Colin McClennenah  
David Rock  
Lynette Praster  
Glenn Rowe  
Randy Lazouras  
Gloria Collier  
Chad Kezmarsky  
Ronald Fye  
Pete Kemp  
Andrew Firment