



NEWS

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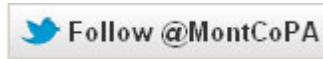
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Montco Launches \$7.7 Million Bridge Project

Collegeville, PA (October 20, 2014) – Pennsylvania Secretary of Transportation Barry Schoch joined the Montgomery County Commissioners, State Rep. Mike Vereb, and other dignitaries today to kickoff one of the most important bridge replacement projects in Montgomery County in decades.

The brief ceremony launched the \$7.7 million, 20-month demolition and replacement of the Arcola Road Bridge, which connects Lower and Upper Providence Townships over the Perkiomen Creek.

The 290-foot bridge, built in 1869 and rebuilt in 1931, was ordered closed by PennDOT on August 16, 2013 for safety reasons. By the time of its closure, the bridge had become a major commuter route for workers in the pharmaceutical companies and office parks clustered between Collegeville and Phoenixville. Unrivaled cooperation between PennDOT, area legislators, county and local officials managed to advance the construction schedule ahead significantly.

“This critical project has gotten to this point much sooner than many infrastructure projects because of the immense amount of cooperation between levels of government,” said Josh Shapiro, chair of the Montgomery County Commissioners. He specifically commended State Rep. Mike Vereb along with State Sen. John Rafferty, the county’s Department of Assets and Infrastructure, the Pennsylvania Department of Transportation, the federal Highway Administration and both Lower and Upper Providence Townships.

PennDOT closed the bridge because it was in an advanced state of deterioration, and was not capable of supporting the increased traffic from local development and did not meet current accepted design standards.

“Our infrastructure in Montgomery County had been ignored for decades, and when we took office the Arcola Road bridge was just one of the many in the county we were committed to replacing or upgrading,” said Commissioner Leslie S. Richards.

Richards said the administration that took office in 2012 restructured several departments, including the former Department of Roads and Bridges into a Department of Assets and Infrastructure, hired experienced engineers to prioritize its bridge replacement program, and has budgeted \$164 million on infrastructure improvement projects over the next five years.

The federal government will pay 80 percent of the costs of the Arcola Bridge project with the state paying 15 percent and the county contributing five percent.

Prior to its closure, the Arcola Road bridge had become a major commuter connection in the area, both for the rapidly increasing local population and the thousands of workers who are employed in the area’s pharmaceutical firms and surrounding office parks. When it closed about 12,000 vehicles a day had crossed the bridge. When complete, the bridge is expected to carry up to 20,000 vehicles a day, and will allow for heavy truck and emergency vehicle use. The new two-lane span will be 267 feet long, and will have shoulders and a sidewalk for pedestrians over the picturesque Perkiomen Creek.

“While the closure has caused some disruption and inconvenience for commuters,” said Commissioner Bruce L. Castor, Jr., “when completed it will be a major improvement for the businesses, residents, and commuters throughout the Collegeville and Upper and Lower Providence area.”