

Despite more traffic, PennDOT has no plans for Route 309

By RICH JOHNSON
Staff Writer

As growth in the Back Mountain continues so does the volume of traffic on Route 309. For now, however, the Pennsylvania Department of Transportation (PennDOT) has no intention of changing the traffic control system on the highway.

Concerns have been raised in recent years about the amount of traffic and the high speeds cars travel on the highway. Local municipalities may request changes on the highway, but it is PennDOT which has the final say on whether anything is done.

Officials agree that the highway is heavily traveled but also say that things aren't as bad as it may appear. "We have done traffic studies on the roadway but there are some places that aren't as heavily traveled as people think," said one PennDOT spokesman.

In an effort to better control traffic some local municipalities have asked that traffic lights be installed at intersections along Route 309. In Kingston Township, supervisors have asked that a light be installed at the Franklin Street intersection.

"We have asked that one be installed and they tell us we don't meet the requirements," said township manager Jeffrey Box.

In order to obtain a traffic light municipalities must prove that an intersection meets one of 13 requirements, according to Al Lolli, assistant traffic engineer at

A study in 1987 found that 36,857 vehicles used the road per day

PennDOT. "The municipality must show that a light is warranted for that area," said Lolli.

He said that the requirements, known as warrants, deal with a wide range of circumstances, including the number of accidents at an intersection.

Some local officials believe that one of the problems in dealing with traffic signals is that PennDOT has the final say over the installation, even though the municipality must pay all costs on the light.

Lolli says that PennDOT is very supportive of municipalities but says that the requirements are in writing and it is up to the municipalities to meet them.

"We work with the municipalities," said Lolli. "We come out and do traffic studies when asked and use those results, in part, to decide if a light is warranted."

"We don't fund the lights, they do. We just permit them," Lolli added. PennDOT also has the power to tell the municipality what kind of light is to be installed.

A traffic study done in 1989 showed that 36,857 cars passed the the Hillside Road intersection in Kingston Township per day. That is 283 percent of the maximum capacity of the roadway.



BUSY HIGHWAY - Route 309 is by far the busiest and deadliest roadway in the Back Mountain. Two lanes of high-speed traffic in each direction are separated only by a few feet of asphalt in many areas. (Post Photo/Ron Bartizek)

There is some concern that traffic volume could increase in the next few years. Construction on roadways around the Wilkes-Barre and Tunkhannock areas threaten to bring more motorists through the Back Mountain.

The Back Mountain Citizens'

Council is one group that has asked the state to look at the future of the traffic situation on Route 309. The council has contacted PennDOT about the possibility of increased traffic when work on Kidder Street in Wilkes-Barre and the possibility of a Tunkhannock by-pass are

completed.

"Everything is just speculation," said Ed Schechter, who has represented the citizens' council in talking with PennDOT.

"No one knows for sure which way a motorist will go, but we have to look at the future so we can

make decisions if necessary."

Schechter said that once the work is completed near the Wyoming Valley Mall it might be easier for some motorists to use Route 309 through the Back Mountain for some of the trips.

"Right now there is a bottle neck with the construction going on, but once that work is done people may choose to go out this way," he said.

The possibility of a highway built to bypass the Tunkhannock business area also brings the threat of increased truck traffic to this area.

Officials in Wyoming County say that it will be a couple of years before any work there is completed and added that no plans have been finalized for that project.

The PennDOT engineer who was asked by the council to look into the bypass was not available for comment on the project. However, the council wants the state to do some research on the proposal.

"We aren't saying a problem will occur, we just have to look at the future because if you don't look ahead you have no chance to make corrections," said Schechter.

PennDOT officials say that they are aware of concerns from citizens and municipalities about Route 309 and add that they are working towards keeping the traffic situation under control.

"We want all motorists to be safe. That's part of our business," said Lolli.

Crash

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was taken to Wilkes-Barre General Hospital. Two elementary school students were also taken to local hospitals for treatment. Both children received minor injuries in the mishap.

Gerald Wycallis, superintendent of Dallas Schools, said that quick work by emergency crews and help from school district personnel helped avoid greater injury.

Wycallis said that guidance counselors and nurses from the schools responded to the scene to help the children, who were taken to the Dallas Elementary where school nurses examined them further.

The parents of children on the bus were contacted by the school, according to Wycallis. The parents were told they could go to the school and see the children and take them home if necessary. He added that the school would be sending a memo to parents explaining the situation.

The superintendent also praised the action of the bus driver immediately after the accident. He said that Farr tried to keep control of the bus after contact and immediately took action when the vehicles stopped.

"He took the pulse of the girl in the car and then calmed down the children on the bus," said Wycallis. It was only after the children were calmed down and the emergency crews responded to the scene that Farr began to consider his own injuries.



Total wreck

A Pontiac Fiero driven by Yolonda Sarnosky of Meshoppen collided with a Dallas school bus Tuesday morning on Country Club Road in Dallas Township. Sarnosky had to be removed from the vehicle by crews using "jaws of life" equipment and was then taken to Community Medical Center in Scranton by Life Flight helicopter. The bus driver and two children received minor injuries. (Post Photo/Ron Bartizek)

Harveys Lake trash fees stay at \$85

By RICH JOHNSON
Staff Writer

Garbage fees for residents at Harveys Lake will stay the same this year as the borough council voted unanimously last week to keep the cost at \$85 annually per home.

Harveys Lake began garbage collection with a new hauler at the beginning of the year. Solomon Container Service of Wilkes-Barre is the new municipal hauler and will help the borough save an estimated \$8,000 in fees in 1991.

The borough, which is the only Back Mountain community to offer municipal garbage disposal, will pay Solomon \$102,500 in 1991.

This is \$8,000 less than the borough allocated in its municipal budget.

Even though the borough's cost is less than anticipated, the council said that fees will not be lowered as costs next year may be higher.

In the bid submitted to the borough, Solomon said it would cost the municipality more than \$107,000 for service next year. In accepting this year's bid the council took an option to exercise next year's bid by June 1.

Also at the meeting, the council approved two ordinances. The first required that all solid waste haulers, transfer stations and collectors dispose of waste at designated

facilities.

The second ordinance provided a definition of dangerous buildings and specified the standards for inspection, repair, vacating and demolition of the buildings.

In other business, the council hired two new employees and made one appointment. Doug Higgins was hired as a part-time police patrolman while Cheryl Harris was hired as the secretary for the borough's planning commission, zoning hearing board, and environmental action committee.

Jack McManus, chairman of the sewer authority, was reappointed to that board.

Second fund drive starts for burned-out family

By RICH JOHNSON
Staff Writer

A second group has started a fund drive to help two families who lost all their belongings in a fire that destroyed a Harveys Lake apartment building Jan. 11.

The Idetown Fire Company announced last week that it is opening an account at Merchants Bank North for the two families. According to a fire company spokesperson, donations will be accepted and saved in the account until the families find new places to live.

The families were left homeless after an early morning fire at their apartment building located at Pole 267 in the borough. Six residents were in the two apartments when the fire broke out.

Robert Baldoni, Sr. and his son Robert Jr., escaped injury from one apartment, while a family of

four; Emmy Hanna, Dorothy Wolfe, David Wolfe and Donald Culvert, escaped from the second apartment without injury.

The fire company is also donating the use of its hall for a benefit dinner that is being planned for February to raise money for the families.

This action complements an effort already underway by a Harveys Lake businessman. Nicholas Diveronica, owner of Diveronica's Sunset Store, has started a collection at his store for the families.

Anyone interested in making a donation can drop it off at Diveronica's or mail it to the Idetown Fire Company, RR4 Box 383D, Dallas, PA 18612. The fire company asks that any donations be marked for the families.

Both families have found temporary shelter as they attempt to get back on their feet. The cause of the fire is still under investigation.

New Harveys Lake fire chief has 8 years with company

By RICH JOHNSON
Staff Writer

Christian DeLeur, an eight-year veteran of the Harveys Lake Fire Department, was named the company's new fire chief January 1.

DeLeur has been chief engineer for the company the past couple of years and says that he does not think many changes are going to occur now that he is chief.

"I just want to keep the company going," he said. "Nowadays it seems like the main thing companies have to do is survive."

DeLeur said that Harveys Lake has a good fire company because of its active members. "We have between 40 and 50 members and they are all quite active and good members," he said.

As chief DeLeur said that he is going to try to keep the high standards that the company has worked towards and believes that a lot of safety training will be done by the members under his leadership.

DeLeur lives in the Warden Place section of Harveys Lake with his wife Maureen and stepson.

Send The Post to a friend, it makes a great gift. Call 675-5211 to find out how



Adopt-a-pet

This male black and brown Husky Shepherd Mix with white markings has a name but unfortunately members of the SPCA staff do not know what it might be since it was picked up as a stray. Approximately one or two years of age, he is beautiful, well-behaved dog looking for someone to take him home and give him some affection.

Gentle as he might be, he would make a good watch dog as well as an affectionate pet. Stop in at the SPCA at 824-E. Main St., Fox Hill, Wilkes-Barre to see him during visiting and adoption hours, 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. and 5 to 7 p.m. weekdays or 11 a.m. to 3 p.m., weekends, or call the SPCA, 825-4111.

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