



NEWS ITEM - Completion of the Cross Valley Expressway is expected to significantly increase car and truck traffic on Route 309 in the Back Mountain.

Jackson

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"We are going to keep applying for grants and if we can pay off the loan faster we will," he said. "Things like state grants change all the time; one year you might apply and the next year you won't but we will keep trying."

Before any work is done the supervisors must award the bid and clear up a problem with the Department of Labor and Industry.

Before the bids were opened the township's architect announced that Labor and Industry did not give final approval for the plans.

"I don't know why the plans were not approved but we will do what is necessary to bring them in to conformity with Labor and Industry," said Adams.

Also, the township is going to look into references and other

dealings with Tri-State Construction to make sure there are no problems.

Once the architect and township engineer give the supervisors the recommendation, the bid will be awarded and work will begin.

Adams is hopeful that will be soon, and the project will be completed by the end of summer.

Zone

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land was determined to be zoned as conservation they wouldn't be able to do anything it," said Gorey.

The township planning commission has recommended that the change be made.

The other amendments to the zoning ordinance deal basically with changes in the wording of text.

One is that side-yard set backs

for homes in the R-2 (two family residential) zones will be changed from 25 feet to 15 feet.

Gorey believes that the 25-foot requirement was a typographical error in the zoning ordinance.

"Most of the properties in this zone are in the older sections of the township and they have smaller lots," said Gorey. He added that residents who wanted to build on

the lots have had trouble meeting the set backs and because of this the township has had several requests for variances in this area.

The other amendments deal basically with administrative changes. One will name the zoning hearing board as the authority to grant permits for a non-conforming use, replacing the zoning officer as the approving authority.

Lane

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will be studying the roadway and will do what is needed to keep it safe."

Keisling said that most of the funding for the project will come from the Federal Highway Administration, so the cutbacks on the state level should not affect the project.

"You have to watch what cutbacks are being made but since most of the funding is coming from the federal government it is likely we will see things start to happen," said Keisling.

"The only worry would be if the state could not come up with its share of funds, but since we are only funding 10 percent of the cost I don't think that would be too likely," he added.

Keisling said that PennDOT engineers are already looking at the traffic situation along Route 309 and they hope to start the study by the end of the year.

"They said they are 'very optimistic' about this project being approved," said Keisling. He added that if the design and study phase of the project is started by the end of the year then the physical construction of the new lane could come as early as 1992.

"We are basing this on other projects that have gone this route," he said. "But I don't see why things couldn't go as planned."

The initial study would focus on safety aspects along Route 309 from Kingston Township to the intersection of routes 309 and 415. Included would be studies of the driveways of homes and businesses along the roadway to see if there are any hazards created at these spots.

Truck

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309 will become truckers fastest route

There appears to be little doubt that car traffic on Route 309 has increased considerably during the past several years but the increase in truck traffic has been even more visible. That will continue to grow as highway work near Tunkhannock and the opening of the Cross Valley Expressway later this year make Route 309 the fastest connection with Interstates 80 and 81.

"This will make it a fast route from I-81 and the turnpike to the light in Shavertown traveling north," explained Schecter. "And traveling south the truckers will come down Route 309 from Route 6 and 11 to I-81 and go direct to Baltimore and Washington. The Cross Valley completion will make more traffic north and south through the Back Mountain and Kunkle and other points north. The truckers will prefer this route because they will have no delays.

"Route 6 now goes through Tunkhannock, the Abingtons and to the Scranton area where they pick up the interstate, but with the Cross Valley complete, it won't be long before the truckers will find it faster to come down Route 309," Schecter said.

Schecter said a proposed bypass around Tunkhannock will be a major contributor to truck traffic through the Back Mountain. "An important factor is that in a couple years the bypass around Tunkhannock will be under construction," he said. "It will go off Route 6 behind the large shopping center in Tunkhannock and go to the Route 29 bridge, then along the river and bypass the center of Tunkhannock and merge again with Route 6. The bypass will be built in two stages, first the upper end to the bridge, and then the second stage from the bridge to merge with Route 6 again."

"While the bypass is being built to avoid the center of town, the trucks will turn right to Route 309 or left to Route 6 going north because at that time they will have through traffic down Route 309.

"The Back Mountain Citizens Council asked PennDOT to incorporate a study of truck traffic with that of the bypass and consider reversing the construction from Route 6 north to the bridge by first going around Tunkhannock," Schecter said. "Then the truckers would have an option. PennDOT, probably due to lack of funds, did not make the study and are proceeding with the plans as they were."

Tom Ochal, assistant traffic engineer for PennDOT, said there is no truck problem on Route 309 to his knowledge and there would

be no ban on trucks using a route such as 309 unless trucks were causing deterioration of the highways or were the cause of several accidents. These statistics would go through the traffic department and Ochal said they have had none.

"Truckers can travel state highways by their own option and we don't redirect them unless heavy construction work requires a detour," said Ochal.

PennDOT says not to worry

When Ochal was questioned whether or not the traffic count had doubled he said he knew of no area where the traffic had doubled in the past year or two.

Ochal said rumors that traffic counts on Route 309 would increase by 38,000 cars daily upon the opening of the Cross Valley were greatly exaggerated.

"Realistically, when the Cross Valley is completed there will be more access to traffic but not by 38,000 more cars. I-81 is the heaviest traveled in the Wyoming Valley area and there are not 38,000 cars on that highway daily," Ochal said.

"Route 309 is a highly commercial highway and the businesses draw traffic and as the traffic increases, the businesses will increase. As the traffic increases, changes will be made in the highway," Ochal said.

Ed Davis, owner of Jedidia's Restaurant, has no problem with the increased number of trucks using 309.

"I am seriously considering putting out a sign in front reading 'Truckers Welcome.' I have lots in the back of the restaurant with plenty of space for truck parking. I believe they can bring other business to our area," Davis said.

John Ginochetti of Gino's Shoe Store is not concerned about increased truck traffic.

"I don't believe it will stop motorists from traveling Route 309," he said. "They don't in other places and I don't believe they will in the Back Mountain. When people find a place they like to shop they manage to get there. The route up to Eynon is heavily traveled by trucks and other vehicles but people from here go up there to shop. The traffic doesn't stop them."

The owner of E.M. Video said she doesn't believe the increased traffic will affect the video business one way or the other. "Our's is a neighborhood business. Increased traffic will have nothing to do with it," she said.

Harveys Lake man found asphyxiated in his garage

By RICH JOHNSON
Staff Writer

A Harveys Lake man was found dead Tuesday morning after he apparently was asphyxiated by exhaust fumes from his car.

Harveys Lake Police say that 35-year-old Gary Roberts, of Pole 283, was found in the garage of his home by a friend at around 11:00 a.m.

Assistant Police chief Ronald Spock said that the car was not

running when Roberts was discovered and that it was unknown how long he was in the garage.

Spock said the death is being listed as accidental but it is still under investigation.

Roberts was pronounced dead at 12:40 p.m. by assistant deputy coroner Harry Hyman.

Tests were being done Tuesday to determine the exact cause of death but authorities believe that Roberts died from carbon monoxide poisoning.

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