

Traffic

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miles driven is growing. The growth has continued; people are really taking that road that didn't take it before," said Chuck Mattei, Chief Engineer at PennDOT District 4.

Robert Jolley, Dallas Township Chief of Police, echoed the same sentiment, saying that the single biggest change he's seen in his township is increased volume.

Mattei said the decline in accidents at the same time as the increase of volume is due to planning that went into preparing for the completion of the Cross Valley Expressway.

In anticipation of an increase in traffic volume, Mattei said numerous road improvements were made to stretches of Routes 309 and 415.

Throughout the 1990s lights at various intersections were added, existing light systems were upgraded and a fifth lane was added in parts of Kingston and Dallas townships on 309.

"We noticed a solid decrease in the seriousness of the accidents," said James Balavage, Police Chief of Kingston Township. He said with the addition of the fifth lane, his department noticed a difference in safety almost immediately.

"What we've noticed is our severity has gone down."

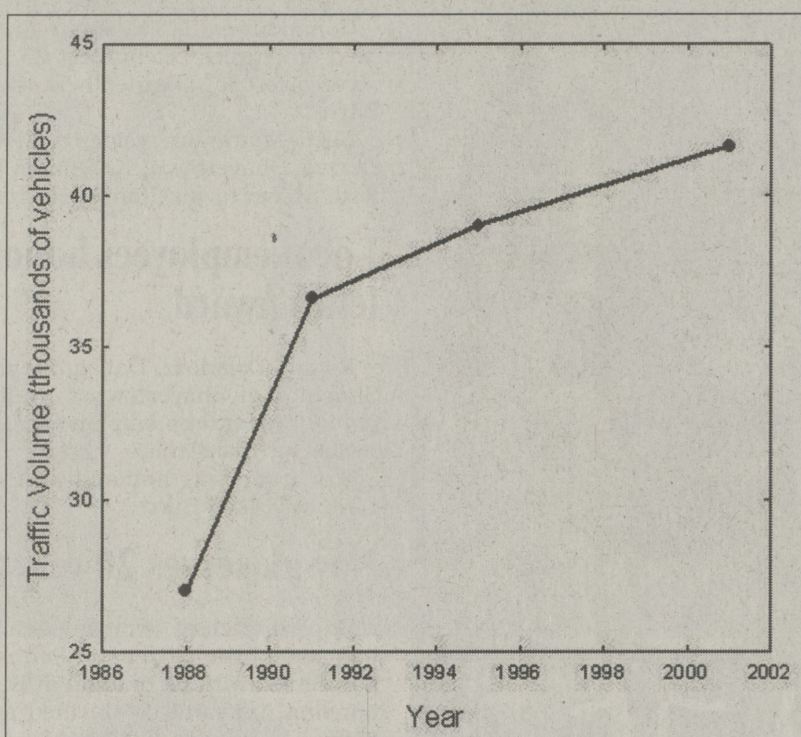
Robert Jolley
Police Chief, Dallas Township

Chief Jolley said he had not noticed the decline in the accident rate but reiterated Balavage's point. "What we've noticed is our severity has gone down," said Jolley. Jolley believes traffic signals added to the intersections of Routes 118 and 415 and Main Road and 309 in 1996 have slowed people down, reducing severity as well as inducing the accident rate to go down.

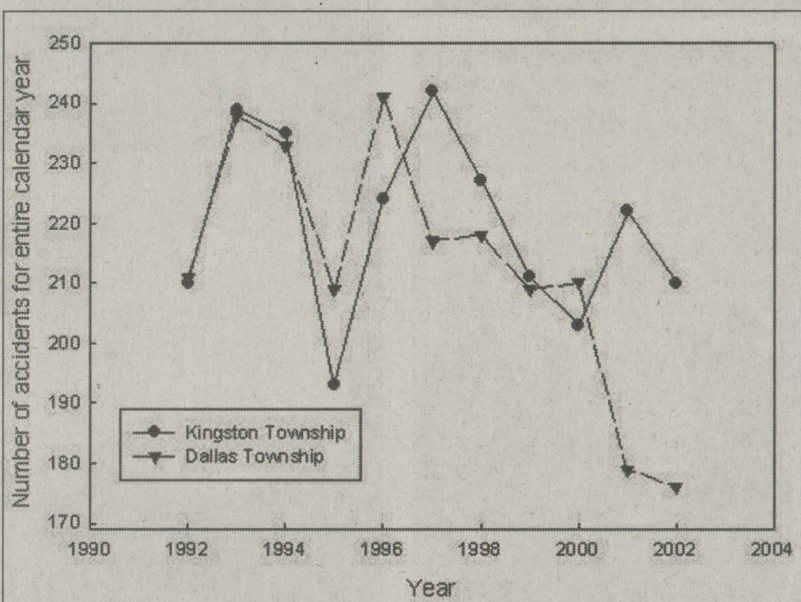
"I think it's the signalization project that has given the break in the traffic pattern," said Jolley. "It has created more control over the whole thing."

In 1995 and 1996, new signals were added and existing signals were updated with larger signal heads and were interconnected throughout the 309/415 corridor.

Mattei said that initially many people in the Back Mountain region were concerned about increased strain the Cross Valley's additional volume would put on their services. As a result, Mattei said PennDOT and members of Back Mountain communities "worked as a team" to plan the changes



The number of cars and trucks traveling on Route 309 has increased dramatically since the opening of the Cross Valley Expressway.



The number of accidents has declined despite the increase in volume, although less so in Kingston Township.

that would be geared toward accommodating the new traffic volumes.

"This was a community effort. We had the community involved, police, ambulance, supervisors, we devised a plan together," Mattei said.

Accidents in Kingston Township are down an average of four per year, as opposed to 10 yearly in Dallas Township. Mattei said the much higher volume of traffic in areas of Kingston Township is the reason accidents aren't declining as rapidly.

There are still areas in the townships that need to be addressed. Joe Moskovitz, Dallas Borough Manager, said recently that all the intersections in Dallas Borough are a challenge. Jolley cited the intersection of Hildebrandt, Upper Demunds and Route 309 as a troubled spot in Dallas Township. In Kingston Township, Balavage is

gathering statistics for the possible re-engineering of the area of Rave's and the Texaco station on Route 309, where there has historically been a high incidence of accidents.

"That's how we determine where to put our safety money, where we can detect and eradicate problems," said Mattei.

Deadly

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needed. "We would look at it in historical trend to see if it's (the November accident) an anomaly, or trending up," said Mattei.

If determined that the previous accident was not an anomaly, he said there would be a couple options.

"We can limit (left turns) with signing. If something is more endemic with the roadway, the next step is a barrier," said Mattei.

Mattei said "no left turn" signs are adequate when one small area is affected. A barrier is appropriate when the high occurrence of accidents affects a larger span of road.

Mattei said that normally barriers are appropriate in areas that have a daily volume of 70,000-100,000 cars a day; whereas, the area in question has about half of that.

Because the barrier would prevent all left turns, Balavage said the business community has not reacted positively to the idea in the past.

Balavage, who years ago was involved in a similar accident, says there is one steadfast rule when traveling on Route 309:

"Don't cross four lanes of traffic to go south or north. Don't make any left turns on 309. Go to a traffic light and wait for the green."

Advice from James Balavage, Chief of Police in Kingston Township:

"Don't cross four lanes of traffic to go south or north. Don't make any left turns on 309. Go to a traffic light and wait for the green."

Kingston Twp. dips into reserve to balance budget

By **CARRIE MATHENY**
Post Correspondent

KINGSTON TWP. — Kingston Township Board of Supervisors passed the 2003 budget at Monday night's meeting. Despite the difficulties the township has been having, the board of supervisors managed to get the budget balanced by taking out \$160,000 from the township's capital reserve fund. The budget consists of \$2,071,126 in revenue and expenditures.

"There will be no increase in taxes, no layoffs, and township residents will see no change in their services," said Supervisor J. Carl Goodwin.

According to Paul Sabol, Chairman, because Kingston Township only had a town manager for part of 2002 and with police officer Skip Davis retiring and officer Ben Bigus being activated for military duty, the township managed to end the year better than it had planned. If it weren't for these unexpected cuts in payroll, the township would have ended the year \$95,000 worse off.

The township is also looking into a discrepancy in the amount it received for the earned income tax. Kingston Township currently has a wage tax of 1.5 percent. Berkheimer collects .5 percent that is designated for the schools and Wilkinson collects 1 percent for the township. Last year, Berkheimer sent the township \$855,000. The supervisors feel that since the township's tax is

twice as high as the school's it should have received \$1,711,000. However, it only received \$1,468,000 from Wilkinson. The township is looking into where the other \$243,000 went.

Supervisor John Versari added that the township had to take \$25,000 from its general fund because engineering, advertising, and matters involving the Sunrise Estates development were all over budget.

"If you look around the county, everyone is having a rough time," said Sabol. "These problems were here already, now it's up to us to take care of them."

Some supervisors are chipping in with their own money to get the township back on track. Goodwin announced at Monday night's meeting that he is going to donate his supervisor's salary to the township's general fund. Supervisor Chris Yankovich already donates his salary to Kingston Township's fire and ambulance companies.

To save money, the township eliminated the \$500 contribution to the Mountain Grange and the \$300 contribution to the Carverton Cemetery from the 2003 budget.

The township also approved a traffic study by Borton-Lawson Engineering for the intersection of Pioneer Avenue and Sutton Road to see if a stop sign is needed. Goodwin made a motion to request PennDOT do a study of Route 309 because of all the recent accidents.

Visioning meeting postponed by storm

The meeting of the "Our Dallas — Today and Tomorrow" community visioning initiative scheduled for December 15 was cancelled because of a snow storm.

The meeting has been rescheduled for Wednesday, January 22 at 7 p.m. at College Misericordia. More details will appear in issues of The Dallas Post leading up to that date.

Lake Township recycling schedule

The voluntary recycling drop-off center for Lake Township will be accepting items on the second Saturday of each month. The next opening will be Jan. 11 from 10 a.m. to 12 noon at the township building on Rt. 29. The following items may be dropped off: aluminum and bi-metal cans, clear, brown and green glass, plastic #1 and #2 only. No motor oil containers or scrap aluminum can be accepted. This month newspaper will be collected at the same time. Pack papers tight in paper bags with the glossy inserts removed. The center asks that persons do not drop off items before it opens.

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