

SUMMER

2010



LACKAWANNA/LUZERNE METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION

# CONNECTIONS

## New Structure & New Name for Bridge over Mill Creek

On July 13th, the former Cleveland Street Bridge, located in the Irishtown section of Plains Township, came back to life as a new structure with a new name.

Destroyed by the flooding of 2006, the new bridge is named for four residents who fought and lost their lives in World War II. The new name is taken from the first letter of each of their first names - LANI, for Louis Moritz, Andrew Soroach, Nicholas Vaniga, and Ignatious Shuleski.

The bridge is the first structure to be constructed within the Lackawanna/Luzerne MPO area with American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) funds in the amount of \$1.4 million.

Several local officials as well as state and federal representatives attended the ribbon-cutting ceremony, including Plains Town-

ship Commissioners, Luzerne County Commissioners, State Representative Eddie Day Pashinski, and Congressman Paul Kanjorski, who had the honor of cutting the ribbon.

The bridge was originally constructed in 1931 as a concrete slab on an abutment structure with intermediate piers over Mill Creek. The bridge is located on Cleveland Street which serves as the

main artery for this section of Plains Township.

The new 32-foot bridge is a single-span adjacent box beam structure with pedestrian amenities. The project also included significant drainage, sidewalk and curbing improvements within the project limits.

Minichi Construction was the contractor for the bridge replacement project.



Ribbon-Cutting Ceremony on new LANI Bridge

## Pennsylvania Transportation Community Initiative Application Period Open

PENNDOT is offering funding again through the Pennsylvania Transportation Community Initiative program (PCTI). The application period for the PCTI program is currently open. The deadline for application submissions is September 15, 2010 by 5:00 PM.

PENNDOT has set aside \$24 million to support projects that exhibit Smart Transportation principles. Smart Transportation entails linking land use and transportation to create better communities.

Each eligible project may receive up to \$1.5 million for the pre-construction and construc-

tion phases of projects. Requests for planning proposals may not exceed \$300,000.

The following entities are eligible to apply for the PCTI funds: Counties; Municipalities; MPOs/RPOs; Transit Agencies; Educational Institutions; Transportation Management Associations; and other public bodies.

The PCTI program was developed to provide an incentive for projects that promote collaborative decision-making, advance integrated land-use and transportation decisions, and support regional and multi-municipal cooperation throughout the Common-

wealth. Projects will be selected based on the degree to which they incorporate Smart Transportation principles.

The PCTI funding is distributed as a reimbursement of funds spent on eligible project phases. It is not a grant program. Therefore, all state and federal guidelines, eligibility rules and regulations apply.

Additional information regarding the program, including the PCTI application and guidebook, and a list of previously-funded projects can be accessed at the following web site: [www.smart-transportation.com/pcti.html](http://www.smart-transportation.com/pcti.html).

## Downtown Scranton Riverwalk Opens

The newest section of the Lackawanna River Heritage Trail, the Downtown Scranton Riverwalk, opened to the public on Tuesday, July 13, 2010.

The Scranton Riverwalk serves as the gateway to the 40-mile Lackawanna River Heritage Trail, a multi-purpose recreational trail that runs along the Lackawanna River from Uniondale to the city of Pittston. Located immediately adjacent to downtown Scranton, the Riverwalk extends three-fourths of a mile from Olive Street to North Seventh Avenue, Scranton, where it links to the Central Jersey (CNJ) Rail-Trail section. The CNJ Rail-Trail continues through the South Side Sports Complex to Elm Street in South Scranton. The two trails create a continuous route that is just under two miles in length. The new Riverwalk section has a paved, asphalt surface and is



Walkers enjoy the new Riverwalk in Scranton

fully-accessible to wheelchair and stroller users. The CNJ Rail-Trail is surfaced with packed stone dust.

The Scranton Riverwalk features a spur trail that connects the main trail to Scranton High School, providing a safe walking or biking route for students to and from school.

The new Riverwalk will help restore and preserve the river corridor, as well as provide a catalyst for the revitalization of Scranton's downtown. Trail users will have convenient access to the commercial and cultural district of Scranton via the Mulberry Street Bridge, putting them within easy walking distance of Steamtown National Historic site, the Electric Trolley Museum, the Scranton Cultural Center, the University of Scranton and Lackawanna College, the State Office Building, the Mall at Steamtown, and the Medical College.

The Riverwalk has been funded by the PA Department of Conservation of Natural Resources, PENNDOT, and the National Park Service.

For more information on the trail, contact Colleen Carter, LHVA, at 963-6730, ext. 8211.

## Fall LTAP Courses Scheduled

The Northeastern Pennsylvania Alliance (NEPA) has scheduled the following three Local Technical Assistance Program courses for the fall:

### Equipment & Worker Safety

*Location:* Carbon County EMA Building  
1264 Emergency Lane  
Nesquehoning, PA 18240  
*Date:* October 12, 2010  
*Time:* 8:30 AM - 12:30 PM

*Telephone:* 570-325-3097

### Winter Maintenance

*Location:* Wayne County Visitors Center  
32 Commercial Street  
Honesdale, PA  
*Date:* November 10, 2010  
*Time:* 8:30 AM - 4:30 PM  
*Telephone:* 570-253-1960

### Engineering & Traffic Studies

*Location:* Monroe County Public Safety Center

100 Gypsum Road

Stroudsburg, PA 18360

*Date:* December 9, 2010

*Time:* 8:30 AM - 4:30 PM

*Telephone:* 570-992-4113

For more information on the LTAP program, contact Brian Langan, NEPA, at 655-5581, ext. 237

## 2011-2014 Transportation Improvement Program Approved

The 2011-2014 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) was approved by the Lackawanna/Luzerne MPO on July 28, 2010 by the MPO Coordinating Committee.

The majority of the 143 projects on the TIP are either bridge projects or asset management projects. (Asset management refers to projects on the existing roadway network). These projects total about \$263.4 million and have been estimated using a Year of Expenditure proce-

sure whereby inflation rates are accounted for when determining the total cost. No projects can be listed unless the appropriate amount of funding is available and authorized for them.

The TIP also underwent air quality conformity analysis to ensure that the overall impact of the projects would not adversely affect regional air quality.

The 2011-2014 TIP, and all associated documents, can be found on the MPO web

site at the following address: [http://www.luzernecounty.org/county/departments\\_agencies/planning\\_commission/lackawannaluzerne-metropolitan-planning-organization](http://www.luzernecounty.org/county/departments_agencies/planning_commission/lackawannaluzerne-metropolitan-planning-organization).

The TIP can also be accessed by going to the Luzerne County Courthouse web site, clicking on "Departments and Agencies" and clicking on "Planning Commission". The web page is titled "Lackawanna/Luzerne MPO" and is situated in the upper right corner of the page.

# Transit Operators & Riders Facing Possible Changes in Service

## Route Analysis

The Luzerne County Transportation Authority (LCTA) and the County of Lackawanna Transit System (COLTS) have recently undergone route analysis studies done by Clearview Strategies, a consulting firm based in Pittsburgh, that specializes in transit-oriented plans.

The studies were done in an effort to determine if there are existing routes that are no longer needed or need adjusting, and whether there are areas that are not being serviced, but need to be. In addition to route changes, the consultant also gathered input from a variety of sources, including transit users, as to any improvements that should be made regarding trip times, frequencies, and spans of service. According to Stan Strelish, Executive Director of the LCTA, the current LCTA bus routes are based on the areas served by the trolleys that operated in the early 20th century.

Robert Fiume, Executive Director of COLTS explained that the route analysis study was completed in early July, but he has not received the results yet. Stan Strelish, Executive Director of the LCTA, said that a new system-wide route analysis and evaluation is near completion with service adjustments expected to be made.

Hazleton Public Transit (HPT) had a route analysis done in 2007. According to Renee Craig, Director of HPT, as a result of that study the following changes were made:

Two lower-ridership routes were combined into one. By doing this, both routes were still served, but fewer trips were made per day. It also meant that one less vehicle in the fleet was needed;

Saturday coverage of three service areas with lower ridership was consolidated into one;

One of HPT's four busiest routes was streamlined (Rte. 80) and another route

(Rte. 10) was directed to cover the smaller areas previously serviced;

Transfer times for connections were improved;

Zoned fares were removed and one base fare established, including a 50-cent transfer.

HPT realized an annual savings of \$200,000 by implementing these changes.



Passengers await their buses at the new Wilkes-Barre Intermodal Center.

## Intermodal Facilities

The recently-opened Wilkes-Barre Intermodal Center is benefitting riders in several ways, the primary one being that riders are now out of the weather when waiting for buses. Buses have designated spaces to load and unload passengers eliminating the need to vie for parking areas on Public Square. According to Stan Strelish, "Projects like the Transit Center are key to ensuring the mobility of the region, offering commuters a place to park their vehicles and use public transportation to reach their destination. With the completion of the Transit Center in Hazleton and future [construction] of an intermodal facility in Scranton, we can tie the three centers together with both public and private transit services."

In the fall, the LCTA will install a Dynamic Bus Departure System in the Transit Center. This system will provide information at specified locations throughout the intermodal facility regarding the route and destination of the next buses departing. It will also

provide information about operational delays of buses at selected signs, display both LCTA and Martz Trailways system information, and post emergency messages at selected signs. To meet ADA compliance, a Campbell Beacon System will guide the user to press a button to convert the sign text into spoken word to announce route and departure times. The official opening of the Intermodal Center is scheduled for Friday, August 20, 2010 at 5:00 PM.

The Hazleton Intermodal Center has been operational since November 16th of 2009. According to Renee Craig, the facility has had many beneficial impacts on both riders and HPT staff. "We have received a lot of positive feedback from our riders. All our buses are now centralized, passengers have a climate-controlled indoor waiting area, as well as a canopied outdoor waiting area that are available 7 days a week. They also have access to vending machines, restrooms and office staff for ticket sales and schedule information."

## Regionalization

Another potential change coming for the three transit operators is the regionalization of the transit system. PENNDOT is currently studying the three transit operations to see if it would be beneficial to combine the three systems into one regional transit system.

Renee Craig, HPT Director commented on the potential benefits of a regionalized transit system. "It will improve service in that the three operators will be able to share staff, and it will provide access to more vehicles which can act as spares to cover when vehicles break down, and allow for preventative

maintenance to be done. It will also give riders an opportunity to access more service areas, including service between the major cities in the 2-county region via a Bus Rapid Transit system."

The only drawback to the regionalization efforts Craig sees is the start-up costs of the new marketing and branding which would need to be done.



Walkway to Public Square from the Intermodal Center.

**LACKAWANNA/LUZERNE METROPOLITAN  
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lackawannaluzerne-metropolitan-planning-  
organization](http://www.luzernecounty.org/county/departments_agencies/planning_commission/lackawannaluzerne-metropolitan-planning-organization)**



**PENNDOT District 4-0**  
**[www.neparoads.com](http://www.neparoads.com)**

## Governor Visits Area To Highlight Transportation Funding Crisis

On Wednesday, August 4, Governor Rendell visited Lackawanna and Luzerne Counties as part of his Fund PA Transportation Fund Now tour. The purpose of the tour is to highlight projects that should be done, but have to be deferred due to insufficient transportation funding.

In Lackawanna County, the Governor visited the Green Ridge Street Bridge in Scranton. The bridge was built in 1946 and carries 14,000 vehicles per day. \$6 million is needed to repair the structure and remove it from the Structurally-Deficient (SD) list.

In Luzerne County, the Governor visited the PA 309 (North Crossvalley Expressway) bridge that spans the Susquehanna River and River Road in Plains Township. This bridge was built in 1976 and carries 50,815 vehicles per day. \$12.5 million is needed to bring this bridge up to today's standards.

The Governor called a special session of the legislature in May to address the dire transportation funding situation. "I've repeatedly called on the General Assembly to set aside partisanship and act on transportation funding solutions that will not just shore up Penn-



*Representative Ken Smith and Governor Rendell on the Green Ridge Street Bridge.*

sylvania's crumbling infrastructure, but allow for real improvement in the years ahead," the Governor said.

In May, the state Transportation Advisory Commission issued a report which estimated that Pennsylvania is short \$3.5 billion a year just to maintain the existing transportation roadway and bridge network.

The Governor went on to say, "The bottom line is that time is running out to save Pennsylvania's roads, bridges, and transit systems. Pennsylvania's future, from job growth to getting our kids to school to car-



*Representative Mike Carroll and Governor Rendell at the PA 309 Bridge*

ing for our older residents, depends on taking courageous steps now to address this crisis."

In the Lackawanna/Luzerne MPO region, there are 172 SD bridges and 192 miles in poor condition. Statewide, there are 10,000 miles of roadway in need of repair, 7,000 of which are classified as being in poor condition, and 5,646 SD bridges - the highest in the nation.

For more information on the funding crisis, visit [www.FundPATransportation Now.com](http://www.FundPATransportationNow.com).