



C O M M I S S I O N N E W S R E L E A S E
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Turnpike Accelerates Completion Dates For Two Western Pa. Construction Projects

Commission is investing \$23 million for speedier finish of major road rebuilding work.

HARRISBURG (April 23, 2004) — Pennsylvania Turnpike officials announced today that the Commission has recently invested an additional \$23 million in order to finish two significant highway construction projects well ahead of schedule. Major construction activity for the two projects, located in Donegal and Somerset, will end this year, more than 18 months ahead of schedule.

“We want to wrap up these projects in a more timely manner so that Turnpike customers can immediately begin to enjoy the advantages of driving on an improved roadway,” said Turnpike CEO Joe Brimmeier. “Motorists driving on these two rebuilt stretches will experience more than 22 miles of smoother, wider and safer roadway; the bonus here is that it will now be open much sooner than planned.”

Work on the \$130 million Somerset total-reconstruction project was begun in late 2001 and was scheduled for completion in the spring of 2005. Under the accelerated timetable, the project will be finished (weather permitting) this fall — about six months ahead of the modified schedule. Work on the \$81 million Donegal total-reconstruction project was begun in mid 2002 and was originally to be done in the fall of 2005. Under the accelerated timetable, the major work will now be finished this fall, weather permitting, about 12 months ahead of schedule (though some minor work may last through spring 2005).

The Commission will pay acceleration fees of \$13 million and \$10 million for the Somerset and Donegal projects, respectively, to each prime contractor so that the contractors can allot additional resources — namely extra labor and equipment — needed to meet the new completion deadlines.

The hastened schedule will also enable the Commission to embark on several new improvement projects to be funded by the toll increase that goes into effect Aug. 1. “We have promised that every penny of that increase will be reinvested into the roadway,” Brimmeier explained. “But before we launch any new projects, we wanted to complete a few of the larger existing ones to minimize construction impacts to customers.” He noted that future projects will be shorter in distance end to end and more geographically dispersed across the state.

The total reconstruction marks the first time ever that the Turnpike has been excavated from the ground up and replaced with an all-new highway. It’s one of the Commission’s most significant improvement initiatives. In fact, the Commission will spend \$1.5 billion in the coming decade to fully restore America’s First Superhighway.

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