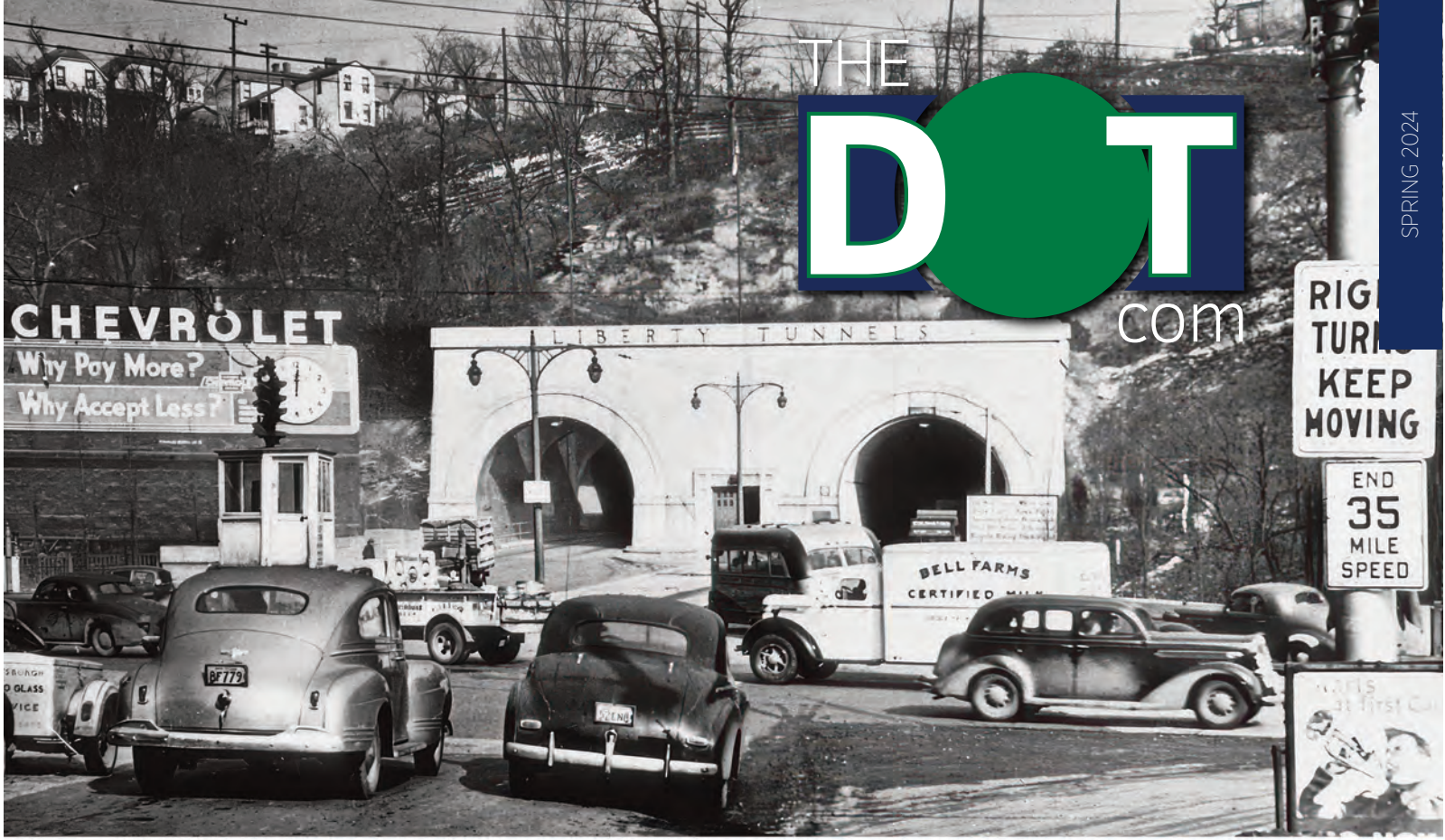


THE
DOT
com

SPRING 2024

CHEVROLET
Why Pay More?
Why Accept Less?



LIBERTY TUNNELS CELEBRATE **100** *years*

 **pennsylvania**
DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

TABLE OF CONTENTS

PennDOT Celebrates 100 Years of the Liberty Tunnels	2	Pennsylvania Archeologist Connects Past, Present and Future . . .	8
Investment in Transit	3	Shapiro Administration Announcements	9
Improving Traffic in Northcentral PA	5	Funding for Electric Vehicle Charging Infrastructure	9
Registering to Become an Organ Donor	6	Combating Human Trafficking	9
Law Enforcement Seminar	6	I-95 Cap Project	10
Meet John Grimm	7	Over \$49.5 Million in Improvement Projects	11



For more information please visit our website: www.PennDOT.pa.gov

Pennsylvania Motorcycle Safety Program: www.penndot.pa.gov/PAMSP

Or find us on social media at:



www.facebook.com/PennsylvaniaDepartmentofTransportation

www.facebook.com/penndotsec/

Regional Facebook Handles

www.facebook.com/groups/phillypenndot/

www.facebook.com/groups/422Improvements

www.facebook.com/groups/northwestregionpenndot/

www.facebook.com/groups/BayfrontParkwayProject/

www.facebook.com/groups/pittsburghpenndot/

www.facebook.com/groups/northeastregionpenndot/



www.instagram.com/pennsylvaniadot

www.instagram.com/ridealivepa



www.linkedin.com/company/penndot



www.twitter.com/PennDOTnews

twitter.com/penndotsec

twitter.com/ridealivepa

Regional X Handles

Allentown@511PAAllentown

Altoona@511PAAaltoona

Erie@511PAErie

Harrisburg@511PAHarrisburg

Philadelphia@511PA Philly

Pittsburgh@511PAPittsburgh

Scranton@511PANortheast

State College@511PAStateColl

Statewide@511PAStatewide

This newsletter highlights our latest efforts to improve mobility and quality of life in Pennsylvania.

As always, feel free to send story ideas or requests for information you want to see. If you're involved in an interesting or innovative project or initiative, have ever wondered about other parts of PennDOT's operations or have other suggestions, email the Communications Office at DOTcomm@pa.gov.

We hope you enjoy this latest issue!

PENNDOT CELEBRATES 100 YEARS OF THE LIBERTY TUNNELS

By Cassidy Snyder, Press Assistant, Communications Office



The Liberty Tunnels in Allegheny County have celebrated a major milestone this year – they turned 100 years old! Located beneath Mt. Washington, the Liberty Tunnels lead motorists from the South Hills to the City of Pittsburgh. The tunnels were designed to shorten the commute for travelers in the Pittsburgh area; rather than go around or over Mt. Washington, travelers could go directly through the mountain.

Construction of the tunnels started in December 1919, though they did not open to traffic until January 30, 1924. The construction crew carved out more than 400,000 tons of dirt and rock to create two horseshoe-shaped tubes, nicknamed "The Liberty Tubes."

The tunnels have undergone many renovations in the last 100 years. In 1924, a ventilation system, consisting of four shafts with intake and outtake fans, was built to vent carbon dioxide from vehicles. Each ventilation shaft is approximately 200 feet high. The shafts are connected to the historic ventilation building called the Liberty Fan House, which is located on Mt. Washington. The fan house was also built in the 1920s to help maintain the ventilation system and air flow in the tunnels.

Another major renovation consisted of the removal of the pedestrian sidewalks inside the tunnels. The sidewalks were removed in the 1970s and the roads inside were widened. Additionally, a roundabout was originally built outside the entrance of the tunnels to manage traffic but has since been replaced by traffic lights.

The Liberty Tunnels are the longest PennDOT-owned tunnels in Allegheny County at approximately one mile in length. PennDOT also owns the Fort Pitt, Squirrel Hill, and Stowe tunnels.

While the Liberty Tunnels are the longest tunnels in the Pittsburgh area, they are not the most traveled. The Liberty Tunnels see nearly 50,000 vehicles per day, while the Fort Pitt Tunnel sees 80,000 vehicles and the Squirrel Hill Tunnel sees 100,000 vehicles per day.

Paul Manyisha, PennDOT's tunnel manager, oversees the daily functions and operations of the Liberty Tunnels, as well as the three additional PennDOT tunnels. Manyisha also oversees a large staff of tunnel maintainers, mechanics, electricians, supervisors, managers, and clerical staff, who each play a vital role in the success of the

continued on page 3



tunnels.

"It's a collective effort to make sure everything runs smoothly," said Manyisha. "It takes all of us and our partners working together to successfully perform our daily duties, while keeping motorists and our crews safe."

The tunnels regularly undergo routine maintenance such as structural repairs, lighting repairs, inlet and gutter cleaning, ventilation care, fire alarm testing, and more. In the warmer months of the year, the walls of the tunnels are washed by a specialty tunnel crew.

The Liberty Tunnels, in addition to the Fort Pitt and Squirrel Hill tunnels, are staffed, 24 hours a day, 365 days a year, with tunnel maintainers who monitor and respond to traffic

incidents in and around the tunnels to ensure the safety of all motorists. These tunnel maintainers are trained first responders, who can provide assistance to motorists involved in a crash or a vehicle breakdown.

At the time of construction, the Liberty Tunnels were the longest concrete tunnels in the world designed for automobiles. While that record has since changed, PennDOT is thankful for Manyisha and the staff who work hard to care for the Liberty Tunnels, a landmark of Pennsylvania's history.



IN A RECENT VISIT TO YORK, PENNDOT SECRETARY MIKE CARROLL AND OFFICIALS HIGHLIGHTED INVESTMENT IN TRANSIT

By Elizabeth Foose, PennDOT Digital Director



In a recent visit to York, PennDOT Secretary Mike Carroll and officials from rabbitttransit, the York County Economic Alliance, the United Way of York, and Harrisburg Area Community College (HACC) highlighted how Governor Shapiro's budget proposal to invest in transit agencies would help connect south central Pennsylvania residents to opportunity.

Governor Shapiro's 2024-25 budget proposed additional funding for the public transit systems that Pennsylvanians rely on, which would assist transit agencies like rabbitttransit. This investment – the first of its kind in over a decade – would be achieved with an additional 1.75 percent of the Pennsylvania Sales Tax being deposited into the Public Transportation Trust Fund.

"Nearly one million Pennsylvanians rely on public transit every single day. Public transit provides freedom and opportunity for millions of Pennsylvanians while making the Commonwealth more competitive," Secretary Carroll said.

continued on page 4

Continued from page 3



"That's why Governor Shapiro proposed the first major new investment in public transit in over 10 years. We have a historic opportunity to connect our communities, spur economic development, and create opportunity for generations to come. This investment will provide reliable public transit that can meet our residents' current and future needs."

On average, 64 percent of the people who use fixed-route services say that they have no alternate means of transportation. In the 10 counties served by rabbittransit – including York County – 69.4 percent of riders have no other option.

The Governor's proposal would not only stabilize the services York and other counties depend on, but also support improved service. With additional funds, rabbittransit could increase frequency on its 1W west York route giving current and potential riders more options and reliability to get to work and within the community. Increasing frequency on their 1E route in October 2023 led to 20 percent ridership growth on that route.

"Transit is the great equalizer" said rabbittransit Executive Director Richard Farr. "Providing mobility assists everyone to participate fully in society. It allows our friends and neighbors to access employment opportunities, medical needs, access to food and allows individuals to be connected to each other. It helps keep the economy moving."

Public transportation services are available in every county in Pennsylvania, including:



- Shared ride service in all 67 counties;
- Fixed route bus service in 49 counties; and
- Fixed route rail service in Philadelphia and Pittsburgh.

"The United Way of York County is setting out on a new, bold goal: assisting 8,000 working households to achieve financial stability by 2033," said Brian Grimm, president of the United Way of York County. "Transportation has been identified as one of the greatest barriers to achieving financial stability in the county. By convening, coordinating and funding efforts surrounding transportation, more working households can pursue opportunities for an equitably thriving community."

Further supporting York's economy, additional investment in rabbittransit would support creating a new vanpool focusing on second and third shift workers in York. These enhancements would help employers and workers, especially Asset Limited, Income Constrained, Employed (ALICE) residents for whom transportation may be a barrier to opportunities, childcare, and more.

"There is a direct correlation between access to transit and a stable, employable workforce. Employers and employees, educational institutions, social services providers, government, and our economy all depend upon it," said York Economic Alliance CEO Kevin Schreiber. "The Governor's proposal would ensure that access remains available and predictable which is essential to a thriving regional economy."

HACC's York campus is served by various rabbittransit routes, with roughly 14,000 annual trips to and from the campus. The Governor's proposal would help the agency ensure they don't have to cut routes or frequency to the campus.

"For the last 60 years, HACC has focused on helping change students' lives and the trajectories of their families. With over 110,000 alumni, HACC's story is one of countless successes," said Tim Barshinger, HACC assistant vice president for Student Enrollment Services. "As a result of this proposal, transportation will be one less barrier for HACC's current and future students, ensuring that HACC remains essential to the economic and workforce stability of York and Central Pennsylvania."

Learn more about public transit options and apply for transportation assistance programs through the Commonwealth's [Find My Ride](#) (FMR) tool.

UPDATED DATA INDICATES CSVT NORTHERN SECTION IS IMPROVING TRAFFIC IN NORTHCENTRAL PA

By Maggie Baker, Community Relations Coordinator, District 3



In October of 2023, updated traffic counts were taken in the Northern Section of the Central Susquehanna Valley Transportation (CSVt) Project which indicated that the project has had a substantial impact on traffic patterns in the region.

The new highway opened to traffic in July 2022, and updated traffic counts (counts), performed in October 2023 found that the CSVt River Bridge is carrying roughly 16,000 vehicles per day, including 3,800 trucks. These latest counts show that more motorists are using the new bridge in October 2023 than in October 2022, when initial counts found roughly 12,000 vehicles per day, including 3,100 trucks, were using the new river bridge.

Updated counts on other area highways appear to confirm that CSVt has removed substantial volumes of north-south through traffic from both Route 15 in Lewisburg Borough, Union County and Route 405 (formerly Route 147) in Northumberland Borough, Northumberland County when compared to counts taken before CSVt was constructed. Compared to initial counts performed in October 2022 (four months after the new CSVt highway opened), the latest counts found that traffic volumes on Route 15 were further reduced, while traffic volumes on Route 405 were unchanged from those taken in 2022.

Below are highlights from the updated counts on the following roadways:

Route 15 south of Lewisburg Borough:

- The daily total traffic volume counted in October 2023 (15,000) was roughly 35% less than prior to the CSVt Northern Section opening (23,000). The daily total traffic volume counted in October 2022 was 16,000.
- The daily truck volume counted in October 2023 (1,200) was roughly 45% less than prior to the CSVt Northern Section opening (2,100). The daily truck volume counted in October 2022 was 1,500.

Route 405 (old Route 147) north of Northumberland Borough:

- The daily total traffic volume counted in October 2022 and October 2023 (8,000) was roughly 40% less than prior to the CSVt Northern Section opening (13,000).

- The daily truck volume counted in October 2023 (700) was roughly 75% less than prior to the CSVt Northern Section opening (3,100). The daily truck volume counted in October 2022 was 800.

Route 45 near Montandon:

- The daily total traffic volume counted in October 2022 and October 2023 (8,000) was roughly 10% less than prior to the CSVt Northern Section opening (9,000).
- The daily truck volume counted in October 2022 and October 2023 (400) was roughly 20% less than prior to the CSVt Northern Section opening (500).

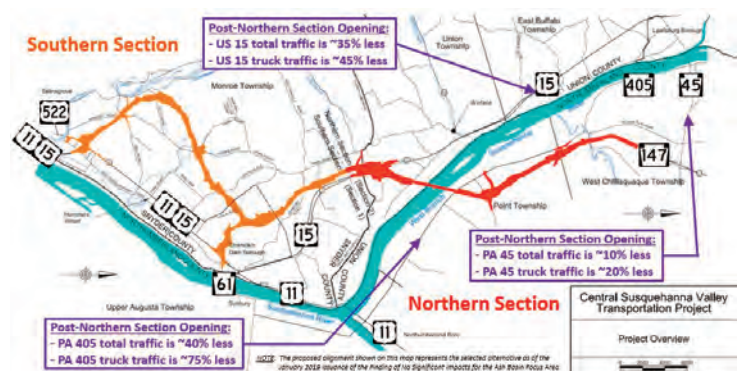
Data currently indicates that CSVt has not substantially affected east-west traffic on Route 45 between the existing major north-south roadways of Route 15 and Route 147.

Construction on the CSVt Southern Section began in 2022, and it is anticipated to open to traffic in 2027, connecting Routes 11/15 north of Selinsgrove to Route 15 and the CSVt Northern Section south of Winfield.

PennDOT notes that comparisons to traffic counts performed prior to the July 2022 opening of the CSVt Northern Section are complicated by the following:

- Impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, which originally began in 2020 and continue to some extent today (due to long-term shifts to teleworking).
- Impacts of the Duke Street reconstruction project in Northumberland, which was completed from 2017 to 2020.
- Natural fluctuations in traffic volumes that occur day-to-day and year-to-year.

Due to these various circumstances, the above comparisons of traffic volumes before and after the CSVt Northern Section opening should be considered approximate.



PENNDOT AND DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH ENCOURAGE PENNSYLVANIANS TO HELP SAVE LIVES BY REGISTERING TO BECOME AN ORGAN DONOR

PennDOT and Health (DOH), along with Pennsylvania organ donation organizations, Center for Organ Recovery and Education (CORE) and Gift of Life Donor Program, encourage all driver's license and identification card holders to help save lives by registering to become an organ donor.

Over 49 percent of current driver's license and identification card holders are registered as organ donors, nearly five million Pennsylvanians. Currently, nearly 7,000 Pennsylvanians await organ transplants.

There is no charge for adding the designation to your driver's license or identification card. To add the organ donor designation to an existing driver's license or identification card, visit the Organ and Tissue Donation page on the Driver and Vehicle Services website. Once the designation is added, individuals will receive a designation card that they must carry with them to affirm organ

donor status until they renew or replace their driver's license or identification card.



Driver's license and identification card holders, as well as registered vehicle owners, can also support organ donation programs by donating \$3 to the Governor Robert P. Casey Memorial Organ and Tissue Donation Awareness Trust Fund at the time of application and/or renewal. Proceeds from the fund are used to educate and promote awareness of the organ donor program through non-profit organizations like CORE and the Gift of Life Donor Program.

As part of ongoing efforts to increase awareness of organ and tissue donation, ads encouraging organ donation regularly appear on the Motor Vehicle Network at driver license centers.

For more information on organ and tissue donation in Pennsylvania or to sign up to become an organ donor, please visit www.donatelifepa.org, www.core.org or www.donors1.org. It only takes 30 seconds to save a life.

LEHIGH VALLEY DUI, HIGHWAY SAFETY TASK FORCE HOSTS LAW ENFORCEMENT SEMINAR

By Sean Brown, Safety Press Officer, District 5



local and state law enforcement located in and around the Lehigh Valley.

The event held at Lehigh Valley Health Network's main campus on Cedar Crest Boulevard in Salisbury Township, Lehigh County, covered a wide variety of law enforcement topics, such as medical marijuana, case law updates, electric vehicles, pedestrian enforcement efforts, collision reconstruction, and mobile video recorders.

Impaired driving is a factor in nearly 40 percent of all traffic fatalities, making law enforcement training on impaired driving enforcement extremely important. Impaired driving enforcement goes beyond checking for alcohol impairment.

In early March, Lehigh Valley DUI/Highway Safety Task Force and its community partners hosted a law enforcement seminar for

Law enforcement also works to identify motorists impaired by illegal drugs, prescription medication, or some combination of these. Drivers who are under the influence of alcohol or drugs can experience slower coordination, judgement, and reaction time, which increases the chance of being involved in a crash. In 2022, there were 1,179 fatal crashes in Pennsylvania. Of those, 452 crashes involved impaired drivers.

The Lehigh Valley DUI/Highway Safety Task Force has been in existence for 23 years and is comprised of PennDOT representatives, members of law enforcement, and business and health care communities. It raises public awareness about the dangers of impaired and aggressive driving, as well as the importance of seat belt usage.

Enforcement is part of Pennsylvania's Highway Safety Program and is funded by part of PennDOT's investment of federal funds from the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration.

More information on Impaired Driving is available on PennDOT's website. Current crash data can also be found on at: www.crashinfo.penndot.pa.gov.

MEET JOHN GRIMM, BEAVER COUNTY'S ASSISTANT HIGHWAY MAINTENANCE MANAGER

By Yasmeen Manyisha, Safety Press Officer, District 11



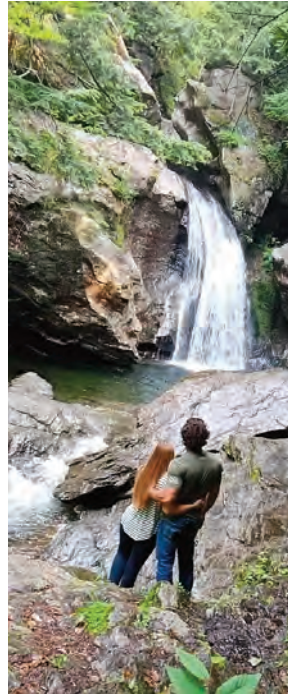
In 2004, John Grimm was hired as a temporary winter operator for Uniontown-based PennDOT District 12. For the last 20 years, Grimm has used his “can do” attitude and drive to grow and advance through PennDOT to his current position as Beaver County's Assistant Highway Maintenance Manager (AHMM).

After three winters in his temporary role, Grimm was hired as a full-time operator. Full of enthusiasm, he became eager to learn more and progress within the department, always asking “why” and “how” things were done. During the following 10 years, Grimm expanded his horizons by working on a variety of maintenance crews and became certified on multiple pieces of equipment.

In 2016, Grimm was promoted to foreman, successfully completing a project with his “whatever it takes” attitude. Always prioritizing the importance of showing his crew respect, Grimm would often include them in the day-to-day decisions regarding job related tasks. After six years of successful years as a foreman, Grimm became Washington County Acting AHMM, leading him to work on a project alongside Beaver County within District 11. Shortly after his acting role in District 12, Grimm became the Acting AHMM in Beaver County. His great ideas, positive attitude, and “go-getter” spirit contributed to him permanently being hired as the newest Beaver County AHMM.

One of his favorite aspects about his current role is having the ability to mentor new employees. Grimm is always willing to lend a hand and help others become better at their jobs and better people overall. Whether he is sharing career development advice or spending his personal time helping a peer practice for an upcoming interview, he wants to see people move forward in their careers, both to help themselves and improve the overall success of PennDOT. Grimm values the hard work conducted in Beaver County and takes pride in the work he and his colleagues make happen daily. Although short-staffed, he strongly believes the dedication and hard work of the crews, garage staff, and management lead to the success of the county operations.

As someone who appreciates the continued guidance from two former colleagues, Grimm finds mentoring less experienced employees rewarding. He reminds people to stay open to accepting constructive advice from others. One thing that



Grimm's mentors taught him was to never stop climbing and never be afraid to fail, because most successful people in the world have failed several times in their journey. Some advice that he has received and passed down to his employees include: to earn respect you must show it first, always be a reliable employee with a positive attitude, and set goals for yourself and when you achieve them, celebrate the victory, but then challenge yourself with a new one. The most valuable thing his mentors have contributed to Grimm's life, is simply telling him how proud they are of him. It keeps him grounded and encourages him to continue to make them proud.

When he's not working as an AHMM, Grimm loves being outdoors as much as possible. Having a three-acre lot and greenhouse, Grimm puts his horticulture degree to good use, growing his annual garden with hundreds of plants and trees included. Adding to his love for nature, he also enjoys golfing, hiking, kayaking, canoeing, and spending time with his two dogs and four ducks. Additionally, Grimm and his girlfriend love to travel and make sure to plan a road trip every summer.

Grimm is an active gym member, working out five days weeks, personally training friends and family, and even coaching people who compete in the fitness world. One day a man in the gym asked Grimm if he had ever considered competing in body



building and even offered to train him for his first show. Since then, he has been dedicated to the sport, resulting in his outstanding competitive body building career. Out of the six competitions he's participated in, Grimm has placed in the top three finalists in five shows and in the top five in the sixth. Grimm is proud of his success, however not due to the trophies, but

continued on page 8

PENNDOT ARCHEOLOGIST CONNECTS PAST, PRESENT, AND FUTURE

By Steve Harmic, Safety Press Officer, District 2



Just as many people may only think of plow trucks on winter roads when they think of PennDOT, many may only conjure images of mummies and lost temples when they picture an archeologist. Scott Shaffer, a Penn DOT archeologist for Clearfield-based District 2 and Montoursville-based

District 3, does work that brings highways and history together in a representation that is much closer to reality, and arguably even more interesting.

"Most people don't know we do this," Shaffer said. "But archeology is underground, and we are required by federal law and the state historical code to investigate any activity that may cause a disturbance to a significant historic or precontact site."

Shaffer explained that the construction of new highways and bridges can often be planned for areas inhabited in the past by historic or culturally significant people. To understand how, and to what extent, preservation measures on these sites should be implemented, Shaffer and outside consultants, coordinating with representatives from 16 Native American tribes, will often be among the first people on a site that is slated for future construction. They'll begin with small excavations, probing for artifacts or the existence of past activity, ramping up or halting excavation efforts depending on what is uncovered.

"Significant Native American sites are something that could reroute a project. We are at a point on the state and federal level where we will avoid certain sites, and that's how it should be," Shaffer explained.

continued from page 7

because of the discipline required to achieve these accomplishments. Preparing for a show is very demanding, beginning with a six-month tremendously strict diet with meal prepping in advance; meaning while friends and family are enjoying holiday and special events foods, he sticks to his pre-planned meals. Training also requires going to the gym seven days a week, twice a day, and pushing through both the mental and physical exhaustion. It takes plenty of discipline, which Grimm says has carried over into every aspect of his life including his job, relationships, and goals. He values the experience, and believes discipline is something you can't buy, but something that is learned.

Other sites may call for a mass collection of artifacts before transportation projects move through. This preserves the artifacts that may otherwise have never been discovered, as well as the stories they tell. One such project is currently happening in the city of St. Marys in Elk County, that Shaffer said is the largest archeological operation undertaken in District 2 in a decade.

"At the location of the Route 120 connector project in St. Marys, we uncovered a site occupied by a family of one of the earlier European settlers to come to the area. It dates back to the mid-19th century, and was inhabited by a Bavarian Catholic family. We've found close to 20,000 artifacts, many of which haven't been touched since the 1850s."

The discoveries include everything from a rare solid silver double-eagle coin dated "1844", to children's toys, clay smoking pipes, tableware, jewelry, buckles, buttons, building foundations, and a stone oven once used by early settlers for baking. Most artifacts will end up on public display in museums or other locations yet to be determined, for members of the public to learn from and enjoy.

"This is important because it's intact, undisturbed. Nobody has done historic period archeology near St. Marys on groups like European-Americans. St. Marys is still largely a catholic strong hold. This is their history. What can we learn about the family that lived here; their way of life?"

Shaffer said the people of St. Marys are eager to learn what lies beneath the surface in their city. He shared, "It's their history. It's important for people to learn their own history, and people in St. Marys recognize that."

Shaffer said once collection and cataloguing of artifacts from the St. Marys dig is complete, a public website will be launched detailing the excavations and artifacts, and a public lecture will be planned on the subject.

Schaffer is working with archeologists from civil engineering firm McCormick Taylor's Harrisburg location on the St. Marys project.

Through different experiences throughout his life, the most important thing Grimm has learned and practiced every day, is to never judge anyone based on assumptions. In a society that focuses on judging others, this it is easy to jump to conclusions and make snap judgments. While Grimm appreciates the things that make people different, he does not believe those things define them. Defining qualities, he examines are on how you treat others, as well as your loyalty, kindness, intelligence, energy, and integrity. He believes everyone deserves respect and everyone has a story that has shaped who they are.

Grimm has been a great asset to the PennDOT team, and we look forward to seeing how he continues to grow.

SHAPIRO ADMINISTRATION ANNOUNCEMENTS

As motorists drive into Pennsylvania, they are greeted by large, blue signs that read "Welcome to Pennsylvania. Pursue your happiness." Beyond these welcome signs, PennDOT operates 14 Welcome Centers that are dispersed around Pennsylvania's borders. Each Welcome



Center is staffed with Tourist Information Counselors who assist motorists with travel information, hotel reservations, sightseeing recommendations, and more. Whether motorists are passing through or looking to make Pennsylvania their destination, these Welcome Centers play a key role in connecting travelers to information and resources.

Mary Jean Peple has worked as the Tourist Information Supervisor at the I-70 West Welcome Center in Fulton County for nearly 25 years and will soon be retiring at the age of 85, making her the oldest person to retire from PennDOT. In a recent interview, Peple explained how important tourism is for Pennsylvania.

"The first impression that someone has of you is what they remember you by," said Peple. "The best thing in life is helping someone and knowing they are completely taken care of. We want people to come back and see us."

\$20 MILLION IN FUNDING FOR ELECTRIC VEHICLE CHARGING INFRASTRUCTURE

Pennsylvania was among the first states to open a NEVI-funded charging station, new funding will speed up that work even more.

Pennsylvania Department of Transportation (PennDOT) announced \$20 million in investments for Round 1A of the federal National Electric Vehicle Infrastructure (NEVI) funding. Pennsylvania was one of the first states to open a NEVI-funded charging station in December 2023, and the Shapiro Administration is moving efficiently to drive out federal funding and build critical transportation infrastructure ahead of other states. This funding represents another step in the Shapiro Administration's commitment to combatting climate change and providing Pennsylvanians with transportation options that are cleaner, safer, more affordable, and more reliable.

WORKGROUP TAKE STEPS TO COMBAT HUMAN TRAFFICKING

The Pennsylvania Interagency Human Trafficking Workgroup held a human trafficking advocacy day and panel at the state capitol building in March. Workgroup members were joined by survivors, elected officials, advocates, and law enforcement to discuss issues currently faced in the battle against human trafficking.

Following the start of an informational session that included tables and displays hosted by partner organizations, the interagency group was joined by survivors and advocates to hear first-hand accounts of their stories and learn about the various ways we can improve our systems to better support healing. Speakers included Attorney General Michelle Henry, Project Protect Survivor Mentor Liz Stein, and Pennsylvania Human Relations Commission Director of Policy Ashley Walkowiak.

The panel, composed of Emmy Award-winning Documentarian and Advocate Ruchira Gupta, Chief Deputy Attorney General Heather Castellino, Founder of Character: Be about It (CBAI) Matt Harris, Captain James Savage and survivor members of Project Protect's Youth Advisory Committee discussed the current challenges in combatting human trafficking. The panel was hosted by Child Advocate and Executive Director of the PA Office of Advocacy & Reform Dr. Maryann McEvoy.

The Pennsylvania Office of Attorney General Human Trafficking Section, led by Chief Deputy Attorney General Heather Castellino, takes a multi-disciplinary approach to addressing these crimes. These cases often cross jurisdictional lines, so state and federal agencies must play enhanced roles in investigations and prosecutions. The section also seeks to continue education and outreach efforts on the topic, with an emphasis on helping individuals recognize signs of sex trafficking as they occur and implementing best practices to address the situation.

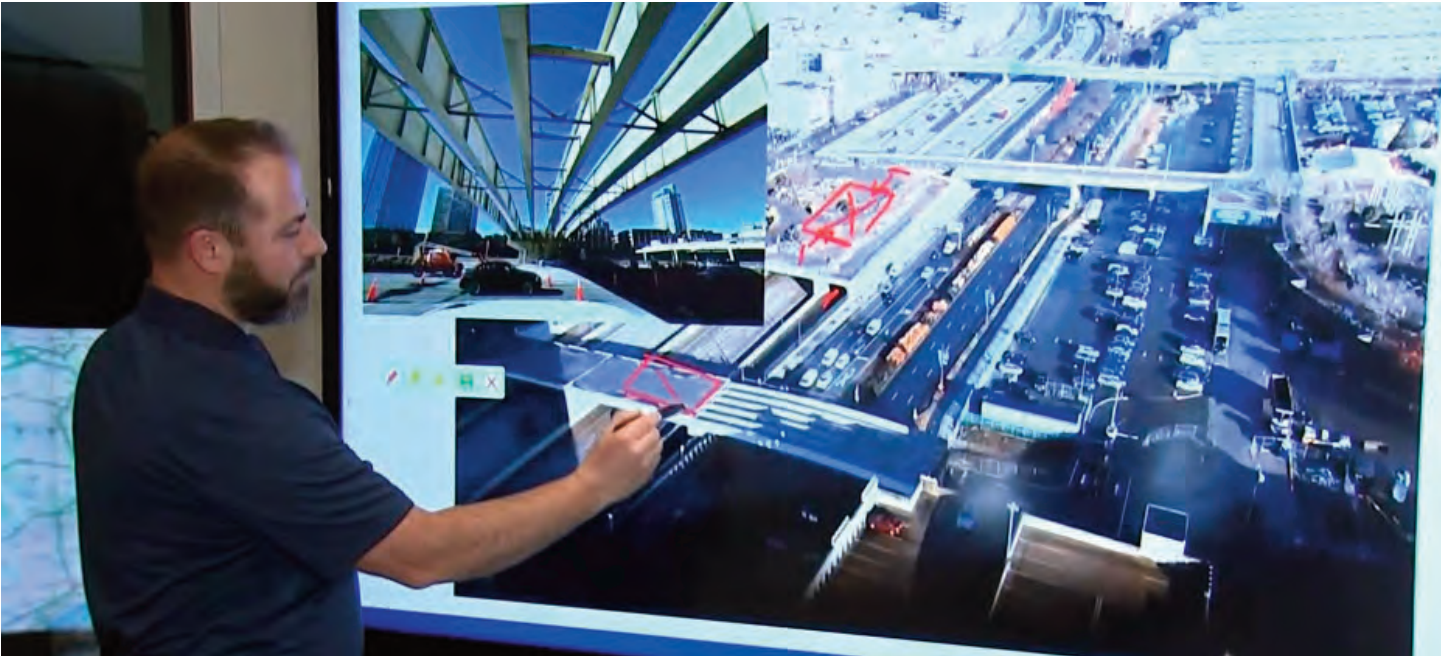
In 2023, PennDOT updated its [End Human Trafficking](#) course for all employees of the department. This course provides awareness on the subject of Human Trafficking and the various campaigns ran by organizations such as "Truckers Against Trafficking" and information on PA protection laws such as, Act 105, Act 130, Act 131 and Act 1.

The Human Trafficking Interagency Workgroup consists of roughly two dozen sibling agencies and advocacy groups working together to coordinate human trafficking prevention and awareness efforts across the state. The group meets bimonthly to share resources, discuss best practices, and organize human trafficking prevention efforts.

To learn more about what PennDOT is doing to combat human trafficking, visit <https://www.penndot.pa.gov/about-us/media/human-trafficking/Pages/default.aspx>.

DEMO COMPLETE: I-95 CAP PROJECT IN CENTER CITY PHILADELPHIA

By Brad Rudolph, Deputy Communications Director, District 6



It took closing I-95 for a couple of weekends, but the existing covered sections over the interstate are down and pier construction is underway in Penn's Landing. PennDOT closed northbound and then southbound I-95 over two weekends in February to remove what was left of the structures over the interstate at Walnut and Chestnut streets.

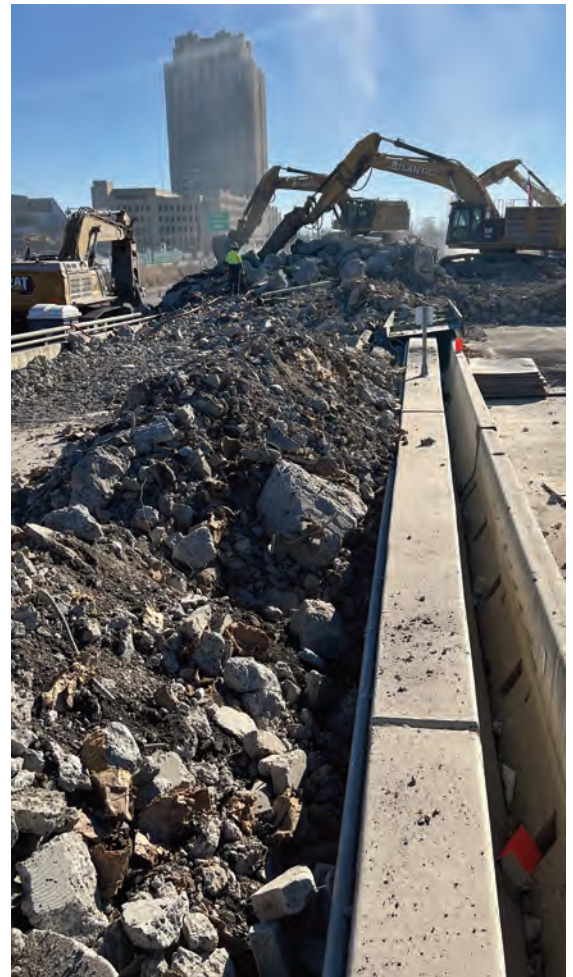
Additional overnight closures of I-95 South are planned for early March to install temporary barrier and restripe the southbound travel lanes to shift traffic away from the median, so that crews will have a safe area to begin construction on the new piers at Walnut and Chestnut streets. Work will also get underway to remove the remaining pier between the Market Street ramp and I-95 South and replace it with barrier.

By replacing and extending the cap over I-95 and Columbus Boulevard between Chestnut and Walnut streets, the \$329 million I-95 Central Access Philadelphia (CAP) Project will improve pedestrian and multimodal connections between Center City and the waterfront. The project has two main components: a new Park at Penn's Landing, and a new signature bridge at South Street, both of which will also extend over Columbus Boulevard to connect cyclists and pedestrians to the newly completed Delaware River Trail.

The new Park will be an 11.5-acre civic space spanning I-95 and Columbus Boulevard between Chestnut and Walnut streets, extending from Front Street to the Delaware River. It will include amenities including gardens, play areas, flexible open space, a contemplative setting for the Irish and Scottish Memorials, and a mass-timber Pavilion.

Additional project details, construction updates, project detours and other information are available at www.95revive.com and parkatpennslanding.com.

To view a time lapse of the project can be found here: <https://youtu.be/YoLNzm9NRdI?si=Iij6uSPF-PkwFdRc> or scan QR code to left.



OVER \$49.5 MILLION IN PROJECTS ACROSS THE COMMONWEALTH TO IMPROVE PEDESTRIAN ACCESS TO CROSSWALKS, TRAILS AND PUBLIC TRANSIT AND ENHANCE STUDENT SAFETY



Community resources like biking paths and sidewalks will receive new funding and invest in student safety with improved access to schools through new crosswalks, sidewalks and walking paths

PennDOT Secretary Mike Carroll announced investments totaling more than \$49.5 million in 55 projects that will improve community resources and enhance public accessibility across the Commonwealth.

Through the Surface Transportation Block Grant program Set-Aside, also known as the Transportation Alternatives Set-Aside (TA Set-Aside), the Administration awarded projects that improve the accessibility of biking and walking paths and amenities, pedestrian access to public transportation, community improvement activities, environmental mitigation projects, and trails. Additionally, awards include safe routes to school (SRTS) projects designed to create and improve alternative access to schools via new crosswalks, sidewalks and walking paths.

Notable awarded projects include:

- \$734,871 to the Borough of Chambersburg in Franklin County to permanently close two street blocks to vehicular traffic adjacent to the former Southgate Shopping Center to create a pedestrian and bicycle-only route. The project will create direct pedestrian access from the neighboring senior housing and residential blocks to a new medical facility, create greater bicycle and pedestrian connectivity to the Southgate neighborhood and existing Rail Trail.
- \$1,184,767 to Lower Paxton Township in Dauphin County to extend the Township's sidewalk network to make important connections between neighborhoods and key destinations such as the Lower Paxton Township Municipal Center, Central Dauphin Middle School, and many neighborhood-

serving businesses. The new sidewalk connections will include all necessary signage, ADA accessible ramps, and crosswalks, and will narrow the width of the roadway, which will act as a traffic calming feature on Prince Street and improve pedestrian safety.

- \$1,500,000 to the City of York in York County for a variety of safe routes to school improvements at 12 schools including: (1) Upgrade existing 15 mph school zone signage to flashing signals. (2) Install new 15 mph school zone flashing signals, signs, and pavement markings. (3) Replace old overhead 15 mph school zone flashing signals, signs, and pavement markings. (4) Re-mark and re-sign adjacent intersection school crosswalks. (5) Construct missing sidewalk gaps/connections along school walking routes. (6) Construct/install a new traffic signal with pedestrian/school crossing amenities at the North Beaver Street/West North Street all-way stop controlled intersection.
- \$1,400,000 to the City of Erie in Erie County to install ADA compliant sidewalks and ramps in locations where there are currently missing segments of sidewalk within the 1.5-mile walking radius of City of Erie schools. It will also include installation of high visibility crosswalk and signage.
- \$834,176 to the Anthracite Scenic Trails Association in Luzerne County for a trail connection from the Creekside Trail portion of the Back Mountain Trail in Luzerne Borough to the end of the Susquehanna River levee trail in Edwardsville. The project will be a multi-use trail intended for bicycle and pedestrian use, with the potential for equestrian use.

A list of awards for the Transportation Alternatives Set-Aside Projects is available at

www.penndot.pa.gov/ProjectAndPrograms/Planning.

PennDOT received 137 applications this round, requesting over \$165 million. Selections were made based on established criteria such as safety benefits, cost effectiveness, readiness for implementation, impact on low-income or minority communities, statewide or regional significance, integration of land use and transportation decision making, collaboration with stakeholders, and leveraging of other projects or funding. Applications were reviewed by representatives from PennDOT, the state Department of Conservation and Natural Resources, and the Metropolitan and Rural Planning Organizations.