

ANNUAL REPORT 2014



Cambria County Planning Commission
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Letter from the Executive Director

Another successful year of community engagement and assistance is behind us! Throughout 2014, the planning commission continued to implement its mission to serve local communities through the provision of transportation and community planning services, technical resources and guidance. The past year was host to many successes and challenges.

The year began with planning for the Pennsylvania Safety Symposium. The State Transportation and Innovation Council invited the Planning Commission to serve on the project steering committee that developed the program agenda. Several planning meetings and conference calls followed, as did an event that included a full day of discussion and information about keeping the Commonwealth's highways safer. Senator Wozniak participated on a discussion panel about teen driving, and the event was highlighted by an address from Governor Corbett.

Staff also assisted the County Commissioners with the development of the first of its kind county water symposium. Water management continues to be an incredibly important issue in Cambria County. Many current initiatives are rooted in ongoing efforts to improve the water quality of the Chesapeake Bay and its tributary waters. A little known fact is the northeastern part of Cambria County forms part of the Chesapeake Bay watershed. With the passage of Act 68, and implementation of a stormwater management authority in Ebensburg Borough, stormwater management is also a topic of increasing interest to county officials. The symposium included valuable presentations from the Blair county MS4 Roundtable, DEP and the Ebensburg Borough Stormwater Authority.

The year came to a close with the publication of the US Route 219 Corridor Plan. While the planning document was published in December, our commitment to working with Carrolltown and Northern Cambria to implement the goals developed during the planning process remains steady. Recently, PennDot awarded a consulting contract for the development of design plans for what's being called the Carrolltown Improvements Project. The scope of the project is yet to be finalized, but in a few years we hope to see a US Route 219 corridor through Carrolltown that is safer for pedestrians and vehicular travel. Natural gas service, or the current lack thereof, is another plan goal where progress is underway in both communities.

I encourage you to read about these and other important projects. Let us know how the Planning Commission can help your community!

Ethan Imhoff, AICP
Executive Director

Community Planning

Route 219 Corridor Growth Plan

Corridor planning has long been a core mission of the Cambria County Planning Commission. Staff continue to work with area municipalities along the US Route 219 corridor on a growth plan. During the past year, staff focused these efforts on the communities of Carrolltown and Northern Cambria. As the northern alignment of the US Route 219 corridor and Sunset Road is currently the top priority of the county highway action plan, the Planning Commission determined this area would benefit from the opportunity to participate in a planning process.

There are two main purposes of the corridor planning process. The first is to initiate a conversation with key community members and stakeholders about what they would like to see happen in their community. Secondly, the plan focuses on the development of community goals, and the development of capacity towards the implementation of those goals. Following the completion of the planning document, which occurred in December, the Cambria County Planning Commission will be working closely with the plan communities, PennDOT and other organizations to implement the goals.



Proposed design for a roundabout at US Route 219 and Sunset Rd, Carrolltown

As a part of the planning process, staff forged an exciting new partnership with Chatham University's school of landscape architecture. Graduate students from Chatham's landscape architecture program worked with the CCPC and Carrolltown to develop visual renderings that depict ideas presented in the plan. The conceptual renderings created by the students are based upon feedback received during the public meetings and other focus group meetings. They include conceptual designs for a roundabout at the Sunset Road intersection and proposals for more conventional streetscapes components along US Route 219.

Improvements to Carrolltown's Main Street are already on the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) and included as part of the Decade of Investment transportation funding package. Discussions are underway to include improvements to the existing alignment of US Route 219 in Northern Cambria.

Commuter Survey / Park and Ride

In response to the closing of SCI Cresson, CCPC staff proposed the possibility of establishing a formal park and ride lot to be located at either the Cresson or Gallitzin interchange with US Route 22, both located in Cresson Township. The park and ride would benefit prison staff transferred to SCI Benner in the State College area who must now commute. Staff and others observed that many commuters are parking their vehicles in informal areas at both interchanges for carpooling purposes.

Planning Commission staff, in partnership with Centre Area Transportation Authority (CATA), surveyed potential users, using both an electronic survey sent to CATA's commuter database and paper windshield surveys that were placed on parked cars by CCPC staff. The survey yielded 71 responses total, most containing extremely positive feedback. Staff moved forward in the project by speaking with the Cresson Township, Gallitzin Borough and Tunnellhill Borough Supervisors about the project and potential sharing options of lighting costs and winter maintenance, which was met with mixed feedback but with enough positivity to be optimistic for the future of this proposed project.

PA Safety Symposium

Planning Commission staff served on the steering committee to develop the 2014 PA Safety Symposium. The Pennsylvania Safety Symposium, a concept that PennDOT Transportation Secretary Barry Schoch has personally supported through its acceptance as an initiative of the State Transportation Innovation Council (STIC), was held on June 10th in Harrisburg at the State Museum. Seat belt laws, ignition interlocks for DUI offenders, automated speed enforcement in construction zones, and young driver safety were the topics highlighted. One hundred and seventy five transportation safety experts, legislators, researchers, and planners from Pennsylvania and neighboring states shared their accomplishments and discussed some of the most pressing transportation safety policy matters in Pennsylvania. As intended, this event supported Pennsylvania's key safety stakeholders as they worked together more effectively with state legislators to improve transportation safety.



Left, Sen. John Wozniak interacts with Safety Symposium exhibitors. Right, Gov. Tom Corbett addresses the Symposium.

Project Reviews

Act 537 Sewage Facilities Planning

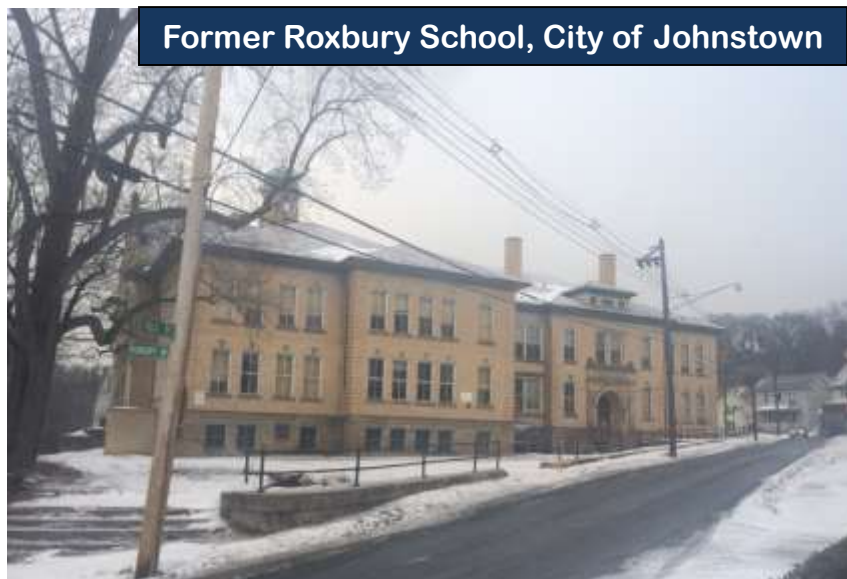
As required under the Pennsylvania Sewage Facilities Act (Act 537), staff reviewed four planning modules for residential and commercial development throughout Cambria County. Staff reviewed modules in Barr, Allegheny and Gallitzin Townships that were residential in nature, and will provide sewer service to approximately two dozen new residential units. Staff also reviewed a module in Portage Township. The purpose of that module is to provide sewer service to a new school bus storage facility owned by Tri County Transportation.

Act 247 Subdivision / Land Development

Section 502 of the Pennsylvania Municipalities Planning Code (MPC) requires municipalities with zoning, subdivision and land development ordinances to submit subdivision and land development plans to the county planning commission for review. The purpose of this section of the MPC is to ensure coordination between development plans and goals contained within the county comprehensive plan. The county review ensures that local municipalities and those involved with the review process consider the impacts of development from a countywide perspective. Projects may have regional environmental, transportation or infrastructure related impacts that are important to consider.

In 2014, CCPC staff reviewed 92 sets of plans, and collected \$8,895.00 in review fees. The number of plan reviews increased from 87 in 2013. However, the revenue collected declined slightly from the \$9,990.00 collected in 2013. The decline in review fee revenue resulted from the Planning Commission reducing some of the residential review fees at the start of 2014.

Some locally significant projects reviewed are as follows: Sheetz Corporation submitted three sets of land development plans for new stores in Richland Township, Cresson and Ebensburg. The CVS Pharmacy chain submitted plans for a new store in Westmont Borough, at the corner of Menoher Boulevard and Goucher Street. The CVS plan became litigious and resulted in a good bit of discussion about community goals and the Borough's comprehensive plan. The EADS Group also submitted a unique plan to convert the abandoned Roxbury School in the City of Johnstown into senior housing.



Former Roxbury School, City of Johnstown

Act 247 Municipal Ordinance Reviews

As per the Municipalities Planning Code (Act 247), the Cambria County Planning Commission also conducts reviews of municipal zoning, subdivision and land development ordinance amendments. There are thirty municipalities in the County with an adopted subdivision, land development or zoning ordinance. In 2014, staff conducted five such reviews for the City of Johnstown, Borough of Ferndale, Borough of Ebensburg, Borough of Wilmore and Jackson Township.

DEP Reviews

The Planning Commission reviews a myriad of applications for the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection (DEP). These include surface and underground coal and non-coal mining permit reviews, abandoned mine reclamation efforts, storm water discharge and water encroachment applications, wetland permits and road crossing permits. CCPC reviewed twenty-eight such permits in 2014.

Notable mine-related applications include surface mining projects in Adams, East Carroll, Elder, Jackson, Richland, Susquehanna and West Carroll Townships.

The CCPC also reviewed several applications for National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) permits for new construction throughout the county. Reviews for new construction include a new Sheetz store in Ebensburg Borough, sports field expansions at Mount Aloysius College in Cresson Township, the expansion of military equipment parking at the Johnstown Airport in Richland Township, additions to the Spangler Subaru car dealership in Richland Township and the property redevelopment at the site of Roxbury Elementary School in the City of Johnstown. Planning Commission staff also reviewed NPDES applications for water system improvement projects in Hastings, Patton and Vintondale Boroughs and Blacklick, Clearfield, Elder and Jackson Townships.

PennVest Applications

The Pennsylvania Infrastructure Investment Authority (PennVest) provides municipal authorities low interest loans, and in some cases grants, to upgrade sewer, storm water and drinking systems throughout the Commonwealth. The Planning Commission reviewed provided support letters to ten applications for PennVest loans in 2014.

The CCPC reviewed three applications from the City of Johnstown for its ongoing sewage project which consists of separating storm sewers from the existing sanitary lines. These three applications involve the Woodvale and Prospect neighborhoods, Moxham neighborhood and Morrellville neighborhood in the city. The Johnstown Redevelopment Authority submitted an application for the Woodvale and Oakhurst interceptor project, which also involves separating storm sewers from the existing sanitary system. Lower Yoder Township submitted a project that will separate storm sewers from the existing sanitary system, specifically in the Westwood and Stackhouse areas. An application was submitted by Westmont Borough for a sanitary sewer rehabilitation project that will provide repairs to the current system. The Gallitzin Borough Sewer and Disposal Authority (GBSA) submitted an application for a large project that will serve the residents of Gallitzin Borough,

Tunnellhill Borough and parts of Gallitzin Township. The project involves major upgrades to their current and aging sewage system and wastewater treatment plant. The CCPC reviewed three separate projects involving drinking water systems upgrades submitted by the Glendale Municipal Authority, Hastings Municipal Authority and Patton Municipal Authority respectively.

USDA Rural Development Applications

The United States Department of Agriculture provides direct and guaranteed loans to municipalities to develop essential community facilities in rural areas and towns up to 20,000 in population. Loan funds may be used to construct, enlarge, or improve community facilities for health care, public safety and public services.

In 2014, the Planning Commission reviewed two applications for USDA Rural Development loans. The Summerhill Township Police Department submitted an application for the purchase of a new police cruiser to replace their aging and deteriorating vehicle, which has become very expensive to maintain and can no longer adequately serve the residents of Summerhill Township and the surrounding communities that they often assist. The Spangler Fire Department also applied for USDA funding for assistance to construct a new fire station to replace their rapidly deteriorating and partially unusable current facility which serves the residents of Northern Cambria Borough, Susquehanna Township and West Carroll Township.

PA Small Water and Sewer Applications

The Pennsylvania Department of Community and Economic Development provides grants for small projects to improve public water supply and sanitary sewer systems to municipalities and municipal authorities. Grants may be used for the construction, improvement, expansion, repair or rehabilitation of a water supply or sanitary sewer system.

The Planning Commission reviewed five applications seeking PA Small Water and Sewer funding in 2014. An application from the Cresson Borough Municipal Authority included two projects designed to lower the current operation and maintenance costs and reduce nuisance odors that occasionally surface during warmer weather. The Glendale Municipal Authority submitted an application that consists of two separate projects that will serve Chest, Reade and White Townships. One project involves a comprehensive evaluation of the water distribution and sewage collection lines in the Glendale Yearound service area, while the second project involves a water and sewer line extension to the New Road baseball/softball fields for a new concession stand and restroom. The Jackson Township/East Taylor Sewer Authority (JETSA) submitted an application for a project which involves the replacement of approximately 1,000 feet of the existing Leisure Village collection system. The CCPC reviewed two applications for projects that will impact the water and sewer systems in Nanty Glo Borough. The first of these projects was submitted by the Nanty Glo Water Authority and involves rehabilitating the Nanty Glo Dam to protect the structural integrity of the reservoir. The second was submitted by the Nanty Glo Sanitary Sewer Authority for sanitary sewer improvements which include the installation/replacement of approximately 500 lineal feet of PVC gravity sanitary sewer main, three manholes and all necessary surface restoration as well as the replacement of the Authority's back-up generator which is currently not functioning.

Transportation Planning

The primary goal of the Transportation Planning Department is to encourage the development of an integrated and environmentally compatible system of highways, rail lines, airport, mass transit facilities, non-motorized vehicles, and pedestrian facilities which will provide effective and safe traffic circulation and accessibility to all parts of Cambria County with a minimum of conflict and congestion. In order to accomplish this goal, the CCPC provides technical and coordination assistance to the County Commissioners, area municipalities, and state and local transportation agencies in matters pertaining to highways, bridges, and public transportation systems. This planning process is achieved primarily through the Johnstown Metropolitan Area Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP) which addresses transportation issues confronting the Johnstown area and the County on an annual basis. The UPWP, funded through an annual transportation planning contract with the Pennsylvania Department of Transportation (PennDOT), utilizes a combination of federal, state, and local funds for transportation studies and programs.

Twelve Year Program (TYP) Update

The Twelve Year Program functions as the formal guide for budgeting, design, and construction of transportation improvements; and as federal and state funds become available, projects are implemented. The TYP is updated biannually.

Technical work on the Federal Fiscal Year (FFY) 2015 Twelve Year Transportation Program update for Cambria County began in 2013 and was completed in 2014. In its role as Secretary of the Johnstown Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO), known as the Johnstown Area Transportation Study (JATS), the CCPC facilitated the prioritization of highway, bridge, and public transit projects. This list was forwarded to the State Transportation Commission (STC), which is responsible for formal adoption of the transportation plan. The 2013 Twelve Year Program Update for Cambria County was adopted by June 18, 2014.

Transportation Improvement Program (TIP)

The Planning Commission participates in the development and approval of the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP). The Johnstown MPO area, by federal mandate, must prepare and adopt a TIP which defines transportation projects to be implemented in the short term, usually over a four year period. Highway, public transit, intermodal, bicycle, and other transportation-related projects which are to be financed with federal funds must appear on an approved TIP. Projects contained in the first four-year period of the adopted Twelve Year Transportation Program are reflected on the TIP. The TIP defines projects scheduled for the phases of engineering, right-of-way acquisition, and construction activities and are limited by the level of funds expected to be available over the four-year programming period.

The Planning Commission, as Johnstown MPO study secretary, participated in the review and

approval of numerous TIP projects in 2014. Staff coordinated meetings of the Johnstown MPO, facilitated public involvement, and conducted votes for amendments to the (FFY) 2013-2016 TIP. Additionally development of the (FFY) 2015-2018 TIP was completed on June 18, 2014.

Long Range Transportation Plan Update

In 2014, the CCPC began the process of completely updating the Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP) for Cambria County. The CCPC issued a request for proposals from qualified consultants to assist with the project. Gannett Fleming of Harrisburg, PA was selected, with project kick-off and stakeholder meetings set for February, 2015. When completed, the plan will support the economic vitality of Cambria County, increase safety and mobility, enhance connectivity of the transportation system across and between modes, and promote consistency between transportation improvements and land use. It will be built on strong stakeholder and public input and meet federally-legislated requirements for performance-based planning, air quality and project prioritization. The plan will be developed throughout 2015 and completed in June of 2016.

Major Highways Action Plan for Cambria County

The Major Highways Action Plan was originally developed in 2005 as a statement of the Johnstown MPO's highest priority highway and bridge projects throughout Cambria County. The plan has evolved over the years, CCPC coordinating with the MPO to continually update it. CCPC staff met with members of the Planning Commission Board, as well as Greater Johnstown/Cambria County Chamber of Commerce's (COC) transportation committee to discuss their comments and input for updating the plan, as well as their overall ideas for transportation priorities in the County. Staff compiled comments and suggestions from the COC, Planning Commission, and others, and prepared an updated draft of the Action Plan for discussion at the February 21, 2014 JATS meeting. Staff continues to keep the Plan updated.

Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP)

The Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP) program provides Federal funding for local projects that enhance pedestrian safety and accessibility. TAP project selection and funding distribution was made at the State level, with input from planning organizations. The deadline for applications was April 4, 2014. In support of the program, staff issued a notice to all municipalities in the region, and provided technical assistance to applicants. On February 28, 2014, staff, along with staff from the Southern Alleghenies Planning and Development Commission, Blair County Planning Commission, and PennDOT District 9-0, conducted an informational workshop for prospective TAP applicants. Staff evaluated all applications for Cambria County, performed field views, interviewed the applicants, ranked the applications, and provided comments to the statewide selection committee. Five applications were submitted within Cambria County. Three were awarded funding, as follows:



Creslo Neighborhood, Adams Township. The Township received \$147,459 in Transportation Alternatives funding to install sidewalks here.

Creslo Neighborhood Safe Routes to School; Adams Township: \$147,459

Ebensburg Borough Sidewalks; Ebensburg Borough: \$500,000

Ghost Town Trail Extension; Cambria County Conservation and Recreation Authority: \$908,500

Highway Functional Classifications Updates

In December 2014, the CCPC staff performed a review of roadway functional classifications throughout Cambria County. Staff attended a meeting with PennDOT District 9-0 staff on December 10, 2014 to discuss possible changes, initially including adding roads to the National Highway System (NHS) network, and later possibly adjusting non NHS roadway classifications. These classifications can affect what funding is applied to bridge and roadway improvements, and how those improvement projects are prioritized. Functional class update requests were presented and formally approved by the JATS MPO committees at their January 21, 2015 meeting. The requests will now be forwarded to the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) for approval.

Public Involvement

To facilitate public involvement in the transportation planning process, the CCPC annually reviews and evaluates the effectiveness of the procedures and strategies in the current Johnstown Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) Public Participation Plan (PPP). In 2014 the PPP was updated by compiling and adding data for the disabled population in the county. The PPP was formally adopted by the Johnstown MPO at their June 18, 2014 meeting.

As part of the (FFY) 2015-2018 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) update, CCPC staff distributed letters to Native American Tribes with native homelands in the region, notifying them of the TIP update and inviting them to comment on any projects included therein. In the future, the tribal contacts will be included as interested parties in the Public Participation Plan.

Data Collection

Through its Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP) agreement with PennDOT, the CCPC is assigned to collect various data items. In 2014, the CCPC was assigned traffic data counts at fifty-five locations throughout the County. The CCPC contracted with Peggy Malone & Associates to have the data collected. Fifty-three of the fifty-five counts were completed, with two count locations being under construction and unable to be counted in 2014. The data was submitted to PennDOT in November, 2014.

Also in 2014, the CCPC staff participated in data collection for the Highway Performance Monitoring System (HPMS). The HPMS program collects detailed data, including lane and shoulder widths, signalized, signed, and other intersection information and speed limits, at a subset of roadway sections throughout the County. In 2014, staff field-viewed thirty-five HPMS sample sections. Of the thirty-five sections reviewed, nine were found to be in need of correction. Staff notes for the corrections were forwarded to PennDOT Central Office staff.

Interchange Lighting

The Planning Commission continues to play a lead role in the coordination of inspections, maintenance, and repairs to county interchange lighting. The County owns the U.S. Route 219, U.S. Route 22, and PA Route 56 Johnstown Expressway interchange lighting systems. In 2014, the Planning Commission conducted the process of re-bidding the interchange lighting inspection and maintenance agreement. Bids were received from three contractors, and opened on September 23, 2014. Barclay Electric was the lowest bidder, and was awarded the contract. Staff coordinated with Barclay Electric to complete inspections and repairs to the lighting systems throughout the County.

Coordination

Metropolitan Planning Organization/Rural Planning Organization Caucus: CCPC staff coordinated with staff from the Mercer County MPO to plan and conduct the MPO/RPO meeting session during the PennDOT planning partners conference on October 27, 2014. Staff is continuing to follow-up with PennDOT and the other Planning Partners regarding suggestions to form statewide work groups to tackle various issues discussed in the meeting, including planning performance measures, the Transportation Alternatives Program, and the Multimodal Program.

PennDOT Corridor Modernization Plan: CCPC staff participated in several conference calls of PennDOT's Corridor Modernization steering committee. The committee revisited the Regional Operations Plans for Intelligent Transportation Systems planning and implementation.

County Bridge Program

In 2014, the CCPC conducted a process to select a County Bridge Engineer of Record, with the intention of replacing the Carney's Crossing Bridge in Washington Township. CCPC staff coordinated with PennDOT to follow the proper procedures to advertise for, and select a qualified consultant for bridge engineering services.

Advertisements for statements of interest (SOI) were posted in PennDOT's Electronic Contract Management System, as well as the Mainliner newspaper, with a submittal deadline of April 11, 2014. Eleven Statements of Interest received from qualified

consultants were evaluated and ranked. Staff, along with the County Commissioners collectively decided to select Keller Engineers as the County Engineer of Record.



Wildwood Bridge Replacement Project: CCPC staff coordinated with PennDOT District 9-0 project managers to continue developing this project. In February, 2014, staff reviewed a technical and cost proposal from the EADS Group, covering preliminary engineering, Final Design, Construction Consultation, Construction Inspection, and Final NBIS Inspection. Total cost for these parts is estimated at \$426,412.92.

The Local Technical Assistance Program (LTAP)

In 2014, staff of the Planning Commission, in partnership with PennDOT and the Southern Alleghenies Planning and Development Commission (SAPDC), conducted the Local Technical Assistance Program (LTAP) in Cambria County. LTAP provides municipal road safety and maintenance training to local elected officials and employees.

In 2014, the CCPC offered four training courses in Cambria County. The first course was held May 7th and focused on posting and bonding of local roads, providing an overview of the laws governing posting and ponding and requirements for developing and implementing a posting and bonding program. This course was held at the Pennsylvania Highlands Community College campus in Ebensburg. The October 3rd course taught participants about the responsibilities of municipalities that own bridges and preventative maintenance tasks for preservation of the spans. This class was held at the Pennsylvania Highlands Community College campus in Richland. On October 14th, a class was

held on worker and equipment safety where participants learned about why accidents happen and how to prevent them. The final course was held on October 17th focusing on how water affects roadways and problems caused by poor drainage, with discussion on various solutions on how to handle these problems. Both of these courses were held at the Pennsylvania Highlands Community College campus in Ebensburg.

Local Transportation Asset Inventory

In 2014, CCPC staff continued work on the local roads portion of the PennDot local roads and bridges data collection inventory. The purpose of this project is for PennDot to have an up-to-date database of the small local roads and bridges (8-20 feet in length) that may have fallen off of their records over the years. The roads that are collected are municipal owned roadways that currently do not receive liquid fuels funding. The local roads portion of this project involves visiting various PennDot identified locally owned roads and collecting specific data. Many of these roads are small alleys or streets located in newer developments. Staff collected data on surface type, number of miles per segment, number of bridges and railway crossings and cartway width of the roadway as required. The information is entered in a mobile device and sent to PennDot through a mobile application to be added to their database.

Planning Commission staff collected and sent data for approximately 744 segments of non-liquid fuel funded roadways throughout the county, which completed the local roads portion of the project.

In Memoriam

Long time Planning Commissioner Robert Fisher passed away January 8th, 2015. Bob faithfully served as a member of the Planning Commission since his appointment in 1999. Bob was also a dedicated community servant in his home of East Conemaugh Borough. There, he served as a Councilman for 40 years and as Council President for 24 years. Bob also dedicated a tremendous amount of time to the Conemaugh Volunteer Fire Department, where he served as chief. He will be missed and remembered fondly.

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