



COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA
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FOR IMMEDIATE ATTENTION

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Studies underway on Route 219, Meyersdale to I-68
Project Team begins work on Transportation Improvement

MEYERSDALE (May 15) - Engineering and environmental studies are underway on the portion of U.S. 219 from Meyersdale, Somerset County, Pa. to Interstate 68 in Garrett County, Md. by PENNDOT's District 9 and its partners the Maryland State Highway Administration and Federal Highway Administration.

U.S. 219 is a major north-south route through western Pennsylvania. It links I-68 in Maryland to the Pennsylvania Turnpike and I-80 providing important access to small cities, towns and rural communities throughout the corridor.

In recent years, portions of U.S. 219 in southwestern Pennsylvania have been upgraded to a four-lane, limited access facility. When this southernmost section is completed, it will provide a much needed transportation improvement for this region of the state.

McCormick, Taylor & Associates Inc. of Harrisburg along with a team of engineering and environmental consultants, has been retained to prepare an environmental document and preliminary engineering for the project. The preliminary design work is expected to be completed late 2004 or early 2005.

According to Earl Neiderhiser, district engineer for PENNDOT, the project team will study the area and develop several preliminary corridor alternatives.

"Through environmental and engineering studies and public involvement activities, the team will narrow the alternatives until a preferred alternative is identified," Neiderhiser said.

PENNDOT has recently mailed 'Intent to Enter' letters to all property owners within the project study area. The purpose of the letters is to inform residents that PENNDOT and

members of the consultant team may be entering area properties to perform environmental research and other studies vital to the project.

Neiderhiser said, "Receipt of a letter does not mean a property is or will be required for the project. The studies are being conducted to help determine the best location for improvements to Route 219.

All team members will be wearing an identification badge stating that they are with the project team. If residents or property owners have any questions, they should be directed to Dave Sherman, PENNDOT's district liaison engineer, at 814-696-7170.

To complete this project, the team will utilize PENNDOT's Ten-Step Project Development Process. This process ensures that transportation projects will be developed in an environmentally-sensitive manner that reflects community, state and federal resource agency input. Throughout the Ten-Step Process, the project team will collect public input regarding the interests that are important to the community - preserving a healthy environment while meeting community needs.

Neiderhiser said, "Information sharing and community input throughout project development is important to the success of any transportation project."

The project team will be providing information to the public through the project website (www.us219.com), newsletters, information outposts in local communities, educational outreach programs, and public meetings.