



Blue Valley Times

VOL. 31 NO. 4

SERVING THE SLATE BELT, SOUTHERN POCONOS & NORTHERN N.J.
DAILY ONLINE AT WWW.BLUEVALLEYTIMES.COM AND FACEBOOK

JANUARY 24, 2023



Real Talk in Portland Regarding the Impact of the Rt. 611 Closure

By State Rep. Ann Flood

PORTLAND - I along with the Mayor of Portland, Heather Fischer, visited businesses in the Portland Borough this week.

We visited Führer's Tavern & Grill, Alexandra & Nicolay Chocolate Inc., Janet's Jem Thrift Shoppe, and Alexandra & Nicolay Chocolate Inc. Each of these businesses were great with something unique to offer at each.

We sat down with the Mayor of Portland, Heather Fischer and other businesses in Portland to discuss the economic impact that the borough is facing with the closure of Route 611 for the second time in a year due to the falling rocks. All the businesses shared with us that the closure has really affected their revenue, some even stated that about 30% of their business has declined. Another negative impact on the Borough is the toll costing \$6 total per round trip for those that do not possess an EZ pass. Many residents in the borough do not and this toll could impact the residents multiple times a day as they travel for work and run essential errands such as food shopping, doctor appointments, etc.

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PennDOT Hosted A Roundtable With Monroe, Northampton, And Warren County

By I-80 Coalition

PORTLANT - PennDOT hosted a roundtable with Monroe, Northampton, and Warren County, municipal leaders, EMS reps (fire, ambulance, rescue) 911 call centers, county OEM directors and NPS.

While it is clear there is no emergency services plan – credit to PennDOT for starting the process, bringing everyone to the table.

Problem Summary - IMO: Basically, our I80 / 611 DWG Corridor is in a neglected dead zone because it is connected and divided by two states and three counties. If this corridor was not divided as such ALL the interconnected 611 / I-80 DWG safety, structural, design issues and solutions would be well coordinated and addressed. Unfortunately, this is NOT the case. This is not NJDOT, PennDOT, NPS, or anyone state or agency fault really. We are a victim of circumstance. We are on the fringe and are suffering because of it. However, we are working behind the scenes to correct this, and will update when we have public information on our efforts.

Updates to last week's project timeline, delay, and expectations: NPS cannot issues permits and complete environmental documents until it receives updated plans from PennDOT. It is not as simple as PennDOT is waiting on NPS. NPS has federal laws to follow, so their process is bound by such. Sounds like we are well over a month away from permits.

It will take PennDOT 4-6 weeks to mobilize (begin mitigation) once permits are granted.

It sounds like mitigation will take ALL OF 6 months once permits are granted. PennDOT's contractors are aware they have this project and are planning for mobilization. Feeling more like a September+ completion date.

Slate Belt Truck Traffic Issues: Trucks are damaging roads and street corners - what to do. PennDOT was thinking there was a way on the NJ side to divert traffic away from DWG, that diverts into the Slate Belt when 80 is backed up. We explained NOPE! The only way to do this is to send them to 78 via 33 and 287.

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