President's Message:

How the world can change within the span of just a few days! The COVID-19 virus is definitely something to take very seriously. Many questions are floating - How long will this last? How bad will it get? Will we need to be housebound for several weeks? There are many things that we do not know now, but one thing is certain - most of us have never seen anything like this in our lifetimes. I write this from my family property in rural northern Pennsylvania, where our only neighbors are turkey, deer, and if you are lucky an occasional bear. My wife and I are stocked up on groceries, supplies, and of course toilet paper. It is definitely better to be safe than sorry. Take the advice of our state and federal officials and stay home. I hope that we all, and all of our families and friends come out of this safely, healthy, and soon. In the meantime, enjoy quality time with your family. Do things around the house you have been putting off. Call and talk to friends and relatives. Find ways to stay fit. ITE has several webinars scheduled in coming weeks. Use these for PDH opportunities.

MASITE is in unchartered territory. All of our events for the foreseeable future are cancelled. The District has cancelled the April conference in Baltimore. The May golf outing is cancelled. As of now, our September Annual Meeting in Williamsport is still on. Let’s all hope we do not still need to be cancelling events then. We are trying to hold webinars instead of in-person meetings to keep our events going. Please sign up for as many as you can.

When I recently sent a special message to membership, I spent some time on the topic of the required bylaw revision. At our board meeting on March 19, the MASITE board approved the revised bylaw language. Among other things, our current 9-person board will become a 6-person board. The bylaws have language saying that a tie vote does not pass.

To operate, we will require a board majority of 4 people to conduct board business, down from our current requirement of 5 people. We will of course still have our area coordinators, but they simply will not be voting members of the board. We have sent the bylaws to the District for their approval. We will work with the District to incorporate any comments they have. They will take effect on January 1, 2021.

My best to you and your families, let’s hope we all get back to normal soon.

Steve Palmer
2020 MASITE President
### 2020 MASITE BOARD MEMBERS

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<tr>
<th>Position</th>
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### 2020 MASITE COMMITTEE MEMBERS

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MASITE NEWS

2019 Eastern Area Events

The Eastern Area finished out 2019 with a strong line up of events:

May - On May 14th, MASITE partnered with ITSPA for the annual Phillies game outing. Unfortunately, the Phillies lost to the Milwaukee Brewers, but it was still a fun evening at the ballpark.

June - Urban Engineers hosted a training on Signal Timings at Diverging Diamond Interchanges led by Bastian Schroeder of Kittleson and Associates on June 20th.


August - On August 15th, MASITE brought back the cornhole tournament for its second year. This year, the event was hosted at Sto’s Bar in Old City, Philadelphia. Congratulations to this year’s tournament winners – Tyler Farley (TPD) and John Doyle (TPD)!

October - MASITE partnered with ASHE Delaware Valley for a joint dinner meeting in Valley Forge, PA on October 16th. Speakers from Gannett Fleming and Jacobs Engineering presented Stage 2 of the I-95 / Turnpike Interchange Project.

On October 22nd, MASITE members travelled to Signal Service’s office in West Chester, PA for a presentation on Solar Flasher and Mid-Block Crossings and Wireless Communication Systems.

November - The final event of the year in the Eastern Area was a joint meeting with ASHE South Jersey on Adaptive Traffic Signal Systems presented by Kelly McVeigh of NJDOT on November 12th. The event was hosted at Maggiano’s in Cherry Hill, NJ.

Thank you to the speakers and eastern area committee members who helped make all these events possible. If you have an idea for an event in the eastern area or would be interested in joining the planning committee, please contact Rebecca Biro at rbiro@jmt.com.
A fun time was had at the September Annual Meeting get-together of Past Section Presidents in Lancaster, PA…
2020 MASITE ANNUAL MEETING
Genetti Hotel – Williamsport, PA
September 23-24, 2020

MASITE is seeking volunteers for the 2020 Annual Meeting that will be held September 23rd through 24th in Williamsport, PA. We are looking for volunteers to chair and assist with several committees that will help MASITE put together a successful Annual Meeting this year. The following committees still need filled:

- Graphics
- Marketing and Registration
- Workshop/Training
- Technical Program

Interested volunteers are asked to email annual meeting co-chairs Conor McAliney conor@driveengineering.com and Cory Bloom cbloom@gfnet.com

AS ALWAYS, PLEASE GO TO www.masite.org TO VIEW THE CALENDAR OF EVENTS
Pittsburghers for Public Transit launches website to spur transit development in east suburbs, Mon Valley

Pittsburgh Post-Gazette     June 25, 2019

Pittsburghers for Public Transit launched its interactive website, Beyond the East Busway, Tuesday to allow residents of the eastern suburbs and Monongahela Valley to design the type of public transit they need.

The advocacy group wants residents to use the mapping tool to make suggestions for transit improvements in their neighborhood. The tool will be available through September.

In addition, the group will deploy two eight-member teams for three weeks each in July and August to visit churches, senior centers and other community gathering spots to help residents use the website.

Once it finishes collecting information, PPT will analyze it and make recommendations to the Port Authority on how best to improve service in those areas, where financial cuts 10 years ago eliminated thousands of hours of service in some of the poorest regions of Allegheny County. The group is looking for lower-cost alternatives to the proposed $549 million extension of the Martin Luther King Jr. East Busway to East Pittsburgh such as exclusive bus lanes and priority at traffic lights to reduce the time it takes riders to get to their destination.

Consultants are expected to have recommendations ready for submission to the Southwestern Pennsylvania Commission for design funding by the end of the year.

The group is working with two consultants, evolveEA and Civic Mapper. It is using a $47,000 Heinz Endowments grant and its own funds to pay for the project.

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Pennsylvania Turnpike Commission announces E-Z Pass mobile app

www.wearecentralpa.com     6/28/2019

(WTAJ) — The Pennsylvania Turnpike Commission (PTC) has announced a mobile app for managing an E-Z Pass account.

In an email sent out Friday morning, the PTC says the app is available in the Google Play store and the Apple App Store. The app will allow users to use their mobile device’s camera to make a payment, update payment information, and add new vehicles.

The app will also allow users to review account activity, request additional transponders or mounting strips, update account information, report a transponder lost/stolen, and ask questions about their accounts.

Users can access the app by using the same username and password they use to log in to the E-Z Pass website.

In the email, the PTC sent a video explaining the features of the new app.

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NJDOT launches enhanced 511NJ.org travel information website before busy July 4th holiday weekend

www.state.nj.us     7/2/2019

New web site optimized for mobile devices and Windows and Mac operating systems

(Trenton) - New Jersey Department of Transportation (NJDOT) officials today announced the launch of an updated and enhanced version of www.511NJ.org, the State’s traveler information website in time for the busy July 4th holiday weekend.

Today’s re-launch marks the first time the website has seen any significant enhancements since the original 511 website was launched in 2010. Since then, it has provided traffic and travel information for more than 10 million travelers.

“The 511NJ.org website provides valuable real-time travel information about crashes, congestion, construction, special events, and provides travel times,” Commissioner Diane Gutierrez-Scaccetti said. “The enhanced 511NJ.org website will allow visitors to see NJDOT traffic monitoring cameras on Windows and Mac operating systems, and is optimized to be viewed on both Apple and Android mobile devices.”

One of the most significant upgrades is to traffic cameras. Previously, website visitors who used Apple-based devices, including iPhones, iPads, couldn’t see the traffic cameras because of the limitations of technology. Using current industry standard development tools, the traffic cameras can now be seen on Apple-based platforms, as well as android phones and tablets.

Simply launch www.511NJ.org from a handheld device or tablet, using a mobile browser, and the system will recognize that you are using a mobile device; it will then automatically customize and maximize the information in to a mobile-friendly layout for you.

“The way the public accesses traffic and travel information has changed, and we are happy to be able to seamlessly deliver this valuable information to the public, regardless of the type of device being used,” Commissioner Gutierrez-Scaccetti said. “The Department always encourages motorists to check the 511NJ.org website for the most up-to-date travel information before leaving your home or office, particularly during busy holiday travel times.”

In addition to real-time traffic information, the website provides information about larger projects in the region, provides access to Twitter and Json feeds, as well as real-
time parking information for Newark Liberty, LaGuardia and John F. Kennedy International Airports.

511NJ also partners with State and local law enforcement and the Division of Highway Traffic Safety to cross-promote statewide safety initiatives that occur during the year, and with NJ TRANSIT, to promote public transit initiatives.

511NJ.org visitors who have subscribed to get My 511NJ Personalized Alerts will have their profiles, trips and information transitioned to the new website. Subscribers can simply go to the “LOGIN” link in the upper right-hand corner to access their accounts.

If you are interested in getting My 511NJ Personalized Alerts, using your computer or phone, go to the “LOGIN” button and register.

Motorists are encouraged to check NJDOT’s traffic information website www.511NJ.org for real-time travel information and for NJDOT news follow us on Twitter @NJDOT_info or on the NJDOT Facebook page.

**SEPTA Key Travel Wallet minimum load lowers to $1 at all stations**

www.inquirer.com 7/8/2019

Starting Monday, SEPTA riders will be able to load as little as $1 to their SEPTA Key Travel Wallets at kiosks found at all Market-Frankford and Broad Street Lines stops.

The transit agency launched a pilot program that reduced the minimum load amount from $5 to $1 in May, and the rollout has since expanded. The last remaining stations are set to transition Monday, SEPTA spokesperson Andrew Busch said.

The lowered minimum came as a response to customer feedback and complaints, he said, and will allow riders more flexibility moving forward. The amount can be paid with cash, debit, or credit cards.

“The $5 minimum load is burdensome for somebody who is maybe paying trip to trip as they go,” Busch said.

The option has now made its way to nearly all stations, with the remaining handful expected to see the $1 option available Monday, Busch said, including:

Eighth and Ridge.
16th Street entrance for 15th Street Station.
34th Street.
Berks.
Chinatown.
Fairmount.
Hunting Park.
Huntingdon.
Logan.
Lombard-South.

Somerset.
Tioga.
Wyoming.
York/Dauphin.

That’s not the only recent change to SEPTA’s Travel Wallet feature.

About 40,000 fare cards are set to expire by the end of the month, but don’t expect a new one in the mail. Riders with a July 31 expiration date will need to buy a new key card and transfer funds and unused one-day passes. That transfer can be completed at nine locations or via phone, at 855-567-3782. Old cards must be registered online first.

**PennDOT Deploys Video To Help Recruit STEM Students**

https://aashtojournal.org 7/19/2019

To attract science, technology, engineering, and math or STEM-focused high school students to careers in the transportation industry, the Pennsylvania Department of Transportation is deploying a new video developed in partnership with Commonwealth Media Services as a recruiting tool.

The goal of the video is to encourage high school students to consider a wide range of job opportunities at PennDOT, from highway pavers, bridge inspectors, driver license examiners, and snow plow drivers to app developers, internet technology managers, photogrammetry technicians, and civil engineers, among others.

The video is also being shown to students participating in the agency’s School to Employment at PennDOT or STEP program, which introduces eligible high school students who have completed their junior year to jobs within PennDOT’s operations division.

It also provides them with meaningful work assignments supporting a variety of PennDOT functions from skilled trades and professional/technical/business functions to administrative/clerical work, the agency added.

**Pittsburgh City Council hears concerns about driverless vehicles**

https://triblive.com July 23, 2019

A panel of experts expressed a range of concerns Tuesday about potential negative impacts of driverless vehicles during a meeting hosted by Pittsburgh City Council.

Council members noted that the autonomous vehicle industry in Pittsburgh has created numerous jobs in the city, but they said they wanted input from all sides to help with future public policy decisions.

The input included concerns about privacy, safety, job losses and diminishing public transit options.
“To me I think it’s just a philosophical conversation we need to have,” said Councilwoman Theresa Kail-Smith of Westwood. “The thing that concerns me is the jobs. I think that we need to make sure we’re preserving jobs. I don’t want to see people out of work.”

Jarvis Williams, president of a union representing public transportation workers in Columbus, Ohio, said that is exactly what would happen under an autonomous commercial shuttle bus program being tested in Columbus.

“They say explicitly that a major benefit of a fully autonomous vehicle is the reduction of costs achieved by eliminating the operator and all on-board equipment necessary for human operations,” Williams said. “We have too many concerns about the introduction of autonomous vehicles in Columbus. Our first is job loss, obviously. These are good jobs that have provided a solid middle-class income for generations of blue-collar workers.”

Companies including Aurora Innovation, Uber and Argo AI and Carnegie Mellon University have been testing self-driving cars in Allegheny County, according to Pennsylvania Department of Transportation data. Uber started the trend in 2016.

Bike Pittsburgh early this year released results of a survey showing that Pittsburgh residents feel safer sharing the road with autonomous vehicles over human drivers.

Michael Skirpan, a professor on the special faculty at Carnegie Mellon University, said driverless buses would likely carry special sensors and cameras capable of recording the actions of passengers. The ownership, use and amount of data permitted to be collected are critical elements in considering driverless vehicles, he said.

“Are we going to collect the maximum amount of data, which is often what people want because maximum amount of data leads to long-term potential monetization of that data and things that they can do with it,” Skirpan said. “However, (that’s) exploiting a lot of people who are riding the vehicle and who they are mining the data from.”

Laura Wiens, executive directors of the advocacy group Pittsburghers for Public Transit, said a proliferation of autonomous vehicles could diminish public transit and lead to decreased fare revenues and fewer bus routes. She also said drivers are necessary to help those with disabilities navigate public transit.

New technology will keep Pittsburgh airport travelers better-informed of wait times

https://triblive.com 7/31/2019

Waiting in line at Pittsburgh International Airport security may get a little easier thanks to new technology.

Travelers could soon be able to tell, within about two minutes, the amount of time they have to wait in any of the three lines at the airport’s primary security checkpoint.

The improved time estimates are courtesy of technology developed by Pittsburgh software firm Zensors and made available through a partnership between the company and the Allegheny County Airport Authority.

Zensors is a Carnegie Mellon University spin out company. Anuraag Jain, head of product at the company, studied at the university’s Human-Computer Interaction Institute.

“Airports are a perfect use case for this type of technology,” Jain said. “We’re applying deep learning in a way that can really become a game-changer for passengers and airport operations. We’re excited to help turn Pittsburgh into the world’s smartest airport.”

Authorities said the technology includes a specially trained neural network that continually observes and learns how long passengers are waiting in line while weighing factors such as time of day and number of TSA agents on duty.

Estimated wait times are updated every minute, and arrows indicate whether times are increasing or decreasing.

Pittsburgh International Airport is the first airport in the country to utilize Zensors’ unique technology in measuring line length.

Airport spokesman Bob Kerlik said start-up costs for the technology are about $3,200 and $540 a month after that.

Times will be displayed on screens throughout the landside terminal as well as on the airport’s website, flypittsburgh.com.

Wait times at the alternate checkpoint will be added later as cameras are installed.

“We’re constantly looking for ways to improve the passenger experience, especially with the innovative use of emerging technologies developed right here in Pittsburgh,” said Pittsburgh International Airport CEO Christina Cassotis. “We know security can be a frustration for travelers, and having accurate wait estimates can help set expectations and aid in planning trips.”

Pittsburgh International Airport serves more than 9 million passengers annually on 16 airlines.

More ‘Wrong Way’ Signs Going up Along Interstates

https://wnep.com 7/31/2019

PITTSTON TOWNSHIP, Pa. -- If you regularly drive on Interstate 81, you might have noticed a little more red than usual.

The red drivers may be seeing on interstates and other roads in Lackawanna and Luzerne counties are "Wrong Way" signs, placed by emergency crossovers as part of an ongoing initiative by PennDOT to keep drivers safe.

"Areas for emergency vehicles such as the police, ambulance, or a tow truck that needs to get to a crash that can't get there, so they have to turn around and go the other way," explained Trooper Deanna Piekanski about crossover roadways on interstate highways.
PennDOT is spending $600,000 to put new "Wrong Way" signs at 37 emergency crossovers and on 43 ramps on interstates and other major highways in Luzerne and Lackawanna counties.

"They made them bigger and more reflective, hopefully, to get the attention of the driver so they know not to use them and not to go that way," said Trooper Piekanski.

"Unfortunately, it had to be done and now it will be a better way for the drivers to be safer on the highway," said Rebecca Rybak, Northeast Highway Safety.

But other drivers question the need for "Wrong Way" signs at emergency crossovers.

"First of all, 'wrong way' makes no sense. You're not supposed to cross over in those anyway, so they're wasting their time putting the signs up and our money," Sally Feasle said. "Let's use that money to fill in all the potholes that will have out there, instead of just filling them let's fix the whole road."

PennDOT says more "Wrong Way" signs on highways will help keep drivers safe. PennDOT began putting up the signs in 2016 after a wrong-way crash on Interstate 81 in Lackawanna County that left five people dead.

PennDOT expects to finish putting up these newest "Wrong Way" signs on ramps and crossovers by the end of summer.

Here’s what Penn State is doing to help ease traffic and parking confusion this season

https://www.centredaily.com 8/3/2019

UNIVERSITY PARK

Penn State officials had a clear message for football fans at media day on Saturday when it comes to the upcoming traffic and parking changes going into effect this season: If you figure out your route before leaving, you shouldn’t have any trouble.

Because of the change in lot numbers, the new four-zone access system and one-way traffic pattern that starts four hours before kickoff, some football fans might be feeling a bit overwhelmed.

Acknowledging that change can cause confusion, Penn State is putting in the effort to make sure people know where they're supposed to go with the #RunYourRoute social media campaign, the gopsusports.com/gameday website with interactive maps from the state Department of Transportation, information on the back of each parking pass, new signage and a partnership with the Waze app that directs motorists to where they need to go on game day.

“What we encourage people to do is read the back of their parking permit, look at the signage, the signage will be completely different than in the past,” said Scott Sidwell, Penn State deputy director of athletics-external. “Know before you go. Don’t wait until 15 minutes before you have to be here to start looking up what you need to do for the day to make it a great experience for you as a fan.”

PennDOT Enhances 511PA for Labor Day, Penn State Football Travel Planning

https://www.penndot.gov 8/27/2018

Harrisburg, PA – The Pennsylvania Department of Transportation (PennDOT) is encouraging motorists to visit the "Historic Holiday Traffic" page at www.511PA.com to plan optimal travel times on major roadways across the state this Labor Day weekend.

New this year, 511PA will also include travel information for every Penn State home football game beginning with this Saturday’s game against the Idaho Vandals.

"Our goal is to help motorists plan ahead by providing them with as much information as possible," said PennDOT Secretary Leslie S. Richards. "By combining historical travel data with real-time, traffic speed information, drivers can be aware of traffic conditions and choose the route that best works for them."

The Labor Day travel tool allows the public to see how traffic speeds on the Friday before and Labor Day in 2017 and 2018 compare to traffic conditions during a typical, non-holiday week. Users can choose their region and view an hour-by-hour, color-coded representation of traffic speeds to help determine the best times to travel during the holiday. 511PA also offers real-time, traffic speed information for thousands of roadway miles throughout Pennsylvania.

PennDOT will also remove lane restrictions and suspend construction projects wherever possible through the holiday period.

The new Penn State football page, hosted through the department’s 511PA.com traveler information website, is dedicated to monitoring traffic conditions on the primary travel routes to the event. Travel times and alerts are provided for each parking zone: West Zone (access via Atherton Street to Park Avenue); East Zone (access via U.S. 322/I-99 to Park Avenue); North Zone (access via Fox Hollow Road); and South Zone (access via University Drive and Porter Road from College Avenue/U.S. 26).

Users can see incidents, construction, weather forecasts and alerts, traffic cameras, and traffic speeds on the map. The page also includes the 2019 Beaver Stadium Parking Map.

PennDOT's Central Region Traffic Management Center is also supporting Penn State Football game days by posting real-time travel information on dynamic message signs and transmitting audio messages on highway advisory radio systems to assist travelers.
For more detailed information on work zones and roadway restrictions motorists may encounter in or around State College, visit the PennDOT website.

The public can use 511PA to check conditions on more than 40,000 roadway miles in Pennsylvania. The service, which is free and available 24 hours a day, provides traffic delay warnings, weather forecasts, traffic speed information, and access to more than 860 traffic cameras. 511PA is also available through a smartphone application for iPhone and Android devices, by calling 5-1-1, or by following regional Twitter alerts accessible on the 511PA website.

New program teaches commuters with ASD public transportation

Reading street signs, crossing roadways and basic street safety are all potential challenges, Elizabeth Pfeiffer found among patients with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD).

“[Patients] were having trouble with basic adult roles and they didn’t have much support,” Pfeiffer said. “Transportation for these patients is one of the biggest barriers.”

Pfeiffer, an associate professor in the rehabilitation health and sciences department, had switched her research focus from pediatrics to developmental disability when she realized the age group 18 and older was having difficulty with basic tasks, like getting around on their own.

Pfeiffer’s answer to the transportation struggle was to develop a transportation peer-support program, in collaboration with SEPTA and the Philadelphia Independence Network. The program follows a peer-to-peer learning model that connects those who have ASD to mentor program participants to learn public transportation safety and commuting. Program mentors with ASD are trained by Temple staff on how to effectively teach the curriculum.

Peer support interventionists are hired as Temple University staff and go through training in order to learn transportation safety.

Pfeiffer saw commuting to be the main issue and looked into addressing this problem but couldn’t find any studies related to the subject.

“There were not a lot of transportation-providing curriculums that focus on the ASD population,” she said.

During the first two weeks of the program, participants learn about street safety, street signs and other basic fundamentals of travel. After that follows peer intervention, which is about 10 to 12 sessions of one-on-one traveling on public transportation based on participant’s goals.

Pfeiffer and the research team GPS track the participants by their SEPTA cards and cell phones.

The tracking allows the research team to see if they are moving around more, which helps to test the effectiveness of the program, according to Amber Davidson, a research specialist with Pfeiffer.

She added the curriculum that they have developed is specific to the Philadelphia area and to participants with ASD.

Patients for the program need to be at least 18 years old and do not need to be affiliated with Temple. As long as they are from Philadelphia or in regions that SEPTA runs, they can participate, Pfeiffer said.

Participant identities are kept confidential due to their involvement in the program.

The project initially started Oct. 2018, after receiving funding from the National Institute on Disability, Independent Living and Rehabilitation Research.

“We were very excited when we got the grants because it gave us the chance to get to work on the participation study and inclusion relating transportation,” Pfeiffer said.

Amy Raphael and Catherine Fleming both work as occupational therapists at SEPTA and have been involved with the project since its beginning.

Fleming said that SEPTA provides free monthly passes to those who participate in the program. The passes are available for all SEPTA transportation platforms and can be used during regular transit hours.

Fleming said she believes that the independence factor the program creates is one of the most beneficial opportunities for those with ASD.

She said that her favorite part is seeing participants gain independence, like being able to take train lines they couldn’t before.

“Now they can go to their job or hang out with their friends without depending on their parents,” she added.

Raphael said she also enjoyed seeing the participants’ excitement.

“Some of them haven’t been exposed to something like this before,” she added.

Davidson said the one-on-one sessions are the reason why the program is both special and successful.

“It is such a unique learning participating environment where you can help both sides gain important skills,” she added.

Pa. Turnpike installing fiber optic system, to lease extra capacity
https://www.post-gazette.com  9/8/2019

Earlier this year, the Pennsylvania Turnpike dropped plans to install a statewide broadband system along the toll road with a private partner and lease excess space to private firms with communications needs because it couldn’t reach a deal.

Now, the turnpike is moving on its own to install a fiber-optic communication system in the eastern part of the
state to meet its internal needs. But the turnpike hasn’t given up on the idea of generating revenue from the system and is designing it with extra space that it will solicit private operators to lease.

The state turnpike commission last week approved a $44.7 million contract with Black & Veatch Construction Inc. to install fiber-optic cable from the Harrisburg area to the Delaware Bridge. The commission also is awaiting bids for the same type of installation along the turnpike’s Northeast Extension, said Wally Wimer, project manager and senior engineer at the turnpike.

The turnpike uses its internal communication system for telephone service, radio communications among offices and maintenance workers, financial information such as toll collections, traffic cameras, electronic road signs and the turnpike computer network. But that system is near its capacity, especially in the eastern part of the state.

Although the rejected public-private partnership would have gone the length of the turnpike, the new system will begin in the eastern part of the state to accommodate the agency’s switch to a cashless toll system, Mr. Wimer said.

In the east, the turnpike uses overhead gantries to record transponders from E-ZPass users or take photos of other customers’ license plate to collect tolls where it has eliminated toll employees. The turnpike needs the additional fiber optic cable to receive and process the information from the gantries in its central offices.

West of Harrisburg, for the most part, the turnpike is using existing toll booths to collect E-ZPass or license plate information, so it doesn’t need the additional capacity as quickly. It will continue to use the existing microwave system in the western part of the state.

Mr. Wimer said in the east, the contractors are expected to be designing and getting permits for the system through next year. Installation of the cable on the shoulder of the highway should begin in 2021.

“We are installing additional fiber for additional use,” Mr. Wimer said. “Then we will seek other users that might want to be on the system.”

The turnpike plans to use three of eight spaces available in the new system, but the other five will be available for other companies to use for their communications needs. Mr. Wimer said the turnpike will hire two consultants for the system, one to manage internal use and another to solicit additional users.

“This is more of a ‘build it and they will come’ approach,” said turnpike spokesman Carl DeFebo.

The turnpike is trying to take advantage of leasing communications space as a new source of revenue. The goal would be to lease the extra space to major carriers such as Verizon or smaller groups such as local emergency services or service companies such as plumbers or electricians.

The Illinois Tollway leases space on a limited basis and collects several million dollars a year from other users.

“We’ll have an abundance of fiber, so we’ll see what we can do,” Mr. Wimer said.

You Can Now Track All Fatal Traffic Crashes in Philly
https://www.phillymag.com 10/3/2019

A new, publicly transparent PPD database allows you to monitor where crashes occur — and if those incidents result in charges.

Philadelphia is home to one of the highest fatal crash rates in the nation.

Over the last five years, our average traffic death — six deaths per 100,000 residents — was twice the rate of New York’s (3), and greater than both Boston’s (4) and Chicago’s (5). In 2017, Philly’s rate was only slightly lower than that of the famously dangerous Los Angeles, which recorded a rate of 6.5.

Two years ago, Philly instituted a Vision Zero policy aimed at eliminating traffic deaths in the city by 2030. But a report released this week revealed that traffic deaths increased by 17 percent in 2018 over 2017.

Drivers involved in fatal crashes are rarely charged with a crime in Philly. A new publicly transparent database from the Philadelphia Police Department, though, will allow citizens to more easily track how often fatal crashes occur, as well as whether or not drivers have been charged in those incidents.

The Fatal Crash Database, which launched last week on OpenDataPHL, shows all fatal crashes dating back to January 1st of this year, and includes their locations, investigative outcomes, the age and sex of the victim (or victims) and more. It gets refreshed nightly. There’s also a map.

According to the database, Philly has seen 67 fatalities this year. Of those crashes, 46 percent have resulted in no charges, while about 13 percent have resulted in charges, and 34 percent of cases are pending. One crash resulted in a citation; one investigative outcome field was left blank.

In a blog post written about the crash database this week, the Bicycle Coalition of Philadelphia said the organization believes “it is important for all Philadelphians to have access to the the results of the worst kinds of traffic violence happening on their streets, daily.”

As the Coalition noted, the database also includes information on how each crash occurred and which types of vehicles were involved. According to the data, two cyclists and three dirt bike operators have been killed in traffic crashes in Philly this year. Two pedestrians were killed by trains.

The database comes after the Bicycle Coalition’s Families for Safe Streets Greater Philadelphia met with both the PPD and the District Attorney’s Office to advocate for more transparent crash data in Philly. In addition to creating a fatal crash database, the organization had asked the police department to implement Crash Data
Retrieval System software, which would allow the department to read Event Data Records (also referred to as "black boxes") of motor vehicles involved in crashes. EDRs, which are triggered by a sudden change in wheel speed or problems in an engine, collect information that can help an analyst determine what the vehicle was doing before, during or after a crash. According to the Bicycle Coalition, the PPD's Police Foundation has approved a grant to purchase the necessary software.

“This tool will allow the PPD and DA’s office better evidence of how a crash occurred during their investigation, and could provide valuable data to engineers and planners when redesigning streets as part of Vision Zero projects,” the Bicycle Coalition wrote. “FSSGP considers this a big win.”

This plan to stop people from stealing 420 road signs is absolutely ingenious
The Growth Op 4/17/2020

“We just sent the guys back out there and hoped for the best and thought that perhaps the craze would die down and it never did.”

At Colorado’s 420 celebrations in 2017 — weed culture’s annual high holiday — an unusual scavenger hunt took place.

Hidden around the state were 100 miniature replicas of the 420-mile marker signs that are found on six of the state’s highways.

For nearly a decade, the signs had been popular targets for sticky-fingered weed enthusiasts, for whom ‘420’ has a special meaning. Every time a sign would go missing, it wasn’t long until the replacement disappeared again. The replicas and the scavenger hunt were an attempt to send people home with a collector’s item to deter future thefts.

Sam Cole, the communications manager for traffic safety at the Colorado Department of Transportation, says the signs started to go missing around 2009, when medical marijuana dispensaries began opening across the state. Some signs, like those on the more heavily trafficked routes, were more popular targets than others, he says.

But, to the frustration of the department, they all went missing at one point or another.

The mile markers play a critical role in traffic safety, Cole says. “They are incredibly important for our first responders and traffic operations to be able to identify specifics, where crashes might have happened or weather events,” he says.

Every time a sign went missing, they would dispatch an employee to go replace it. They thought, eventually, the thefts would stop. But as Colorado moved to legalize recreational cannabis in 2014, there was another surge.

“It was getting pretty hopeless,” Cole says. “We just sent the guys back out there and hoped for the best and thought that perhaps the craze would die down and it never did.”

So they came up with Plan B: No hidden cameras or covert spy operations. Instead, they moved the signs back a hundredth of a mile and changed the number to reflect their new location: 419.99.

It’s a move other states who have encountered the issue have followed, like Washington and Idaho. Cole’s explanation for that is simple: It works.

“No one has an interest in 419 signs,” he says. “They’re safe.”

Cameras are watching: Drivers who speed through Pa. road construction will be ticketed

Starting next week, motorists picked up by work zone cameras traveling in excess of 11 mph over the speed limit in a marked highway work zone will result in a written warning the first time and fines for subsequent violations.

PennDOT and the Pennsylvania Turnpike Commission announced on Wednesday that the statewide automated work zone camera program authorized by a 2018 state law is about to begin now that the 60-day pre-enforcement period is ending.

Motorists will be alerted through unique signs posted before entering the enforcement area about the presence of the speed cameras. The areas where the vehicle-mounted camera systems will be used to detect and record motorists exceeding the speed limit are selected by PennDOT and the turnpike commission based on where data suggests they will be effective in ensuring highway workers’ safety.

The cameras will only be operational in those zones when highway workers are present.

A first violation results in no financial penalty to the vehicle’s owner but a written warning will be issued to them through the mail. A second violation results in a $75 fine. A third and subsequent violation carries a $150 fine. No points will be assessed against a driver’s license for a violation.

Revenue raised from the fines will go toward covering the cost of operating the speed enforcement program. Excess revenue for the first three years will go toward state police recruitment and training as well as road and bridge improvements. After that, it will all be directed to PennDOT and the turnpike commission where the violation occurred to develop a Work Zone and Highway Safety program.

Critics of the program see it as simply a revenue-raising tool but its supporters made it clear that is not the motivation behind the program. During a Senate debate on the bill, Sen. Judy Schwank, D-Berks County, made that clear.

“It’s about making sure that not only do our highway workers, our construction workers get home that night but you as a motorist get home safely as well,” she said.

For more information on the work zone camera program, visit this page on PennDOT’s website.
The 2017 public campaign also helped, Cole says. Each of the miniature signs came with a warning about the dangers of driving high. Those lucky enough to spot a sign in the scavenger hunt won $40 in Lyft credits and a “nice, serious chat about the importance of never driving under the influence” with traffic authorities, Cole says.

“I think it was a great way to raise awareness about an issue that’s very important to traffic safety in Colorado.”

And while the fractional signs have deterred thefts in Colorado, other states that have continued to see the 419.99 signs pilfered. The new number becoming a collector’s item in its own right.

“Well,” Cole says when this point is raised, “Maybe we need to get back up there and check on our signs.”

Some good news from the transportation world
https://www.washingtonpolicy.org/  April 13, 2020

The silver lining in the COVID-19 pandemic, for me, is seeing how people have come together to encourage and care for one another during this challenging and disorienting time. John Krasinski, in his “Some Good News” episodes, shares positive news and uplifting clips of families, nurses, and coronavirus survivors to bring a little light into our homes. Grab a tissue before you watch.

Inspired by Krasinski, I wanted to share some good news from the transportation world – where people and companies are repurposing technology and using what they have in new ways to solve problems.

In Florida, the Jacksonville Transportation Authority has partnered with autonomous mobility platforms Beep and Navya to transport medical supplies and COVID-19 tests from drive-thru clinics to the Mayo Clinic in Jacksonville via fully autonomous shuttles with no attendant. The samples are placed in secure containers and loaded onto shuttles by healthcare professionals. This protects staff from exposure and frees up their time to focus on caring for patients.

In New York City, the epicenter of the coronavirus pandemic in the US, the car rental company Hertz has taken initiative to offer free car rentals to healthcare workers for the entire month of April. For those who must go to work, traveling in a private automobile is the safest travel option right now, rather than taking public transit. I hope more car rental companies can offer this service to people in other fields and in different cities, who must still go in to work and risk getting sick.

Since many people are following stay-at-home orders and not traveling unless they absolutely must – there have been massive reductions in traffic volumes on roads and decreases in ridership on public transit. Ridesharing companies are experiencing this reduction in customers as well. To help Uber drivers make ends meet, Uber has launched Work Hub, which allows drivers to find different gig work. Uber drivers can sign up with Uber Eats to deliver food, Uber Freight to deliver cargo, or use Uber to connect with other essential work in food production, warehouse logistics, and customer service.

In India, which is under a lockdown, Uber has partnered with Flipkart to deliver groceries directly to homes.

And last but not least, in China, a self-driving delivery startup called Neolix is using self-driving vans to transport medical supplies to cities like Wuhan. The vans can also disinfect city streets! This is a pretty incredible way to test and demonstrate the potential utility in automated technology.

I’ll continue to keep an eye out for innovations like these that are intended to help keep people and our economy moving forward. If you come across any exciting transportation innovation or technology that is being tested or deployed to help us during this pandemic, please feel free to share it with me at mfrost@washingtonpolicy.org.
INTERCONNECT ENDINGS

It’s just a crazy thing happening right now…

Respectfully submitted,

Dean J. Kaiser, P.E., PTOE
2020 MASITE Newsletter Editor

MASITE Interconnect Info – Please feel free to comment liberally on this and any issue of the Interconnect. All news and noteworthy items are still greatly appreciated in the next couple of months as well as information relating to sponsor companies, organizations, MASITE members and other Section planned activities. The deadline for the August 2020 issue will be July 31st.