



## Awards

### 36<sup>TH</sup> ANNUAL ROAD AND BRIDGE SAFETY IMPROVEMENT AWARDS

# Townships Are Recognized for Projects That Increase Safety on Roads and Bridges

Three townships were recognized during PSATS' 96<sup>th</sup> Annual Educational Conference for transportation projects that improved safety in their communities. One road and one bridge project received top honors, and a third township received honorable mention, in the 36<sup>th</sup> Annual Road and Bridge Safety Improvement Contest.

#### RECIPIENTS

**Bridge Winner:** Polk Township, Monroe County

**Roadway Winner:** College Township, Centre County

**Honorable Mention:** Tredyffrin Township, Chester County

BY BRENDA WILT / ASSISTANT EDITOR

**T**wo townships received top honors and a third received honorable mention in the 36<sup>th</sup> Annual Road and Bridge Safety Improvement Awards presented during PSATS' 96<sup>th</sup> Annual Educational Conference in Hershey. Road and bridge projects were recognized in separate categories, and the winning activities included a culvert replacement and high-friction surface treatments on several dangerous curves. Honorable mention was given to road and signalization improvements.

The Pennsylvania Highway Information Association (PHIA) and the state Department of Transportation

(PennDOT) partner with PSATS each year to present the awards. Professional engineers and safety consultants from PennDOT, highway construction and design representatives, and PHIA staff judge the entries according to four criteria: safety, resource innovation, benefits to the community, and cooperation.

PHIA Managing Director Jason Wagner and PennDOT Deputy Secretary for Planning James Ritzman presented the awards.

#### 'It was almost a miracle'

Polk Township was honored with the bridge award for replacing a 30-year-old 8-foot metal culvert on the appropriately named Hell Hollow Road that

often caused flooding of the creek it spanned due to the culvert's inadequate size. On at least three occasions, flooding destroyed large portions of the road and guide rail, posing significant danger to motorists. In addition to road damage, repeated flooding also caused environmental impacts to the high-quality coldwater fishing stream and led to bank erosion, stream channel changes, and sediment deposits downstream.

The culvert was the final and most difficult of three bridge replacements that the township had been planning since 2007. Aside from seeking grants to help offset the estimated \$400,000 cost, the township also needed to get permits to work in the stream from the state

# Bridge Winner

Department of Environmental Protection, construction easements from neighboring property owners, and help from utilities to move electric, cable, and phone lines and a utility pole.

“It was almost a miracle that it all came together to get the project done before winter,” Polk Township Chairman Brian Ahner says.

After several delays and construction hiccups, the failing culvert was finally replaced with a 22-foot arched concrete culvert, and the road was reconstructed with new guide rail and 4-foot paved shoulders. Environmental impacts will be minimized by the placement of rock rip-rap on each side of the bridge for scour protection, improved drainage along the roadsides, and restoration and revegetation of adjacent slopes and banks.

“We are extremely grateful to so many people who came together and made this project their priority on behalf of our township and its residents,” Ahner says. “We always try to do what we can with our limited resources. It’s nice to be recognized for our efforts with this award.”

## ‘It was becoming a big problem’

College Township received the roadway award for improving safety on three curves with the application of high-friction surface treatment, or HFST. Despite advanced curve warning signs and speed limits of 35 mph on two of the roads, all three curves were sites of vehicle accidents that had resulted in significant property damage, especially during wet pavement conditions.

“We had pretty regular issues with downed signs and vehicles going off the road and into people’s yards,” township manager Adam Brumbaugh says. “It was becoming a big problem, particularly for adjacent property owners.”

To improve vehicle traction and motorist safety, the township solicited bids for a contract to apply HFST on the curves. High-friction surface treatment consists of a thin layer of polish- and abrasion-resistant aggregate placed in some kind of binder, such as a polymer. The technique has been shown to reduce hydroplaning on wet surfaces.

“Since the treatment last sum-



**Polk Township in Monroe County received the bridge award in the 36<sup>th</sup> Annual Road and Bridge Safety Improvement Awards at PSATS’ Annual Conference in April. Participating in the presentation are, from left, PennDOT Deputy Secretary for Planning James Ritzman; Polk Township Supervisor Carl Heckman, Chairman Brian Ahner, and Vice Chairman Michael Hurley; PHIA Managing Director Jason Wagner; and PSATS Assistant Secretary-Treasurer A.J. Boni.**



**Previous “fix” using gabions**



**Flood damage to existing road**



**New culvert**

**Polk Township was honored for a culvert replacement project. The township removed a 30-year-old, 8-foot metal culvert whose inadequate capacity caused periodic flooding and extensive damage to the road above. The new bridge is a 22-foot arched concrete culvert topped by a reconstructed road with new guide rail and paved shoulders.**



**New road surface**



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mer, we have had no crashes on those curves,” Brumbaugh says. “So far, it has worked very well.”

The township is honored to have this project chosen out of all the worthwhile safety improvement efforts from across the commonwealth, the manager says.

“I think it speaks highly of the township staff, especially the public works director, Garry Williams, who was instrumental in pushing the township to pursue a solution,” Brumbaugh says. “Garry will be retiring this year after 46 years of service. This award is a nice complement to an outstanding career here at the township.”

### Preparing for future needs

Tredyffrin Township received honorable mention for improvements it made as the first part of a multi-phase plan for Paoli Village. Based on the Paoli Road Improvement Study, the improvements address existing and future multimodal transportation needs in the area.

This initial phase involved work on

two corridors, one of which is a major route through Chester County that provides access to Paoli Village and the train station. During peak hours, traffic crawled along the corridor; during non-peak hours, traffic routinely moved at speeds up to 20 mph over the posted limit, making pedestrian crossings dangerous.

To address the congestion and speed issues, the township installed an adaptive traffic signal control system to improve traffic flow and eliminate the need for road widening to increase capacity. State-of-the-art thermal cameras and the adaptive system monitor traffic and optimize signal timing in real time.

Additional improvements included pedestrian signal heads and ADA-

## Roadway Winner



College Township in Centre County received the roadway award in the 36<sup>th</sup> Annual Road and Bridge Safety Improvement Awards at PSATS’ Annual Conference in April. Participating in the awards presentation are, left to right, PennDOT Deputy Secretary for Planning James Ritzman; College Township Council Member Anthony Fragola, Council President Carla Stilson, Manager Adam Brumbaugh, and Zoning Officer Mark Gobrovsek; PHIA Managing Director Jason Wagner; and PSATS Assistant Secretary- Treasurer A.J. Boni. The township received the honor for placing high-friction surface treatment on three dangerous curves (shown below with the treatment in place).



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compliant pedestrian push buttons to make conditions safer for walking and disabled travelers.

The second corridor is a neighborhood collector road that is often used as a shortcut between busier routes. Cut-through traffic had been measured at up to 44 mph above the posted 25 mph limit. Inadequate sight distance along the road added to the unsafe conditions for both motorists and pedestrians.

The township installed raised pedestrian crossings at intersections, bike lanes, and improved sidewalks with ADA-compliant ramps. The raised crosswalks act as speed bumps to slow traffic and provide highly visible crossings for pedestrians. The intersections and raised crosswalks are spaced at a distance consistent with recommendations to reduce prevailing speeds by about 15 mph.

The bike lanes not only give cyclists a dedicated lane but also narrow the driving lanes to help reduce traffic speeds. They also serve as part of a future connection to the Chester Valley Trail and, along with the sidewalk, connect Paoli Village to a local park.

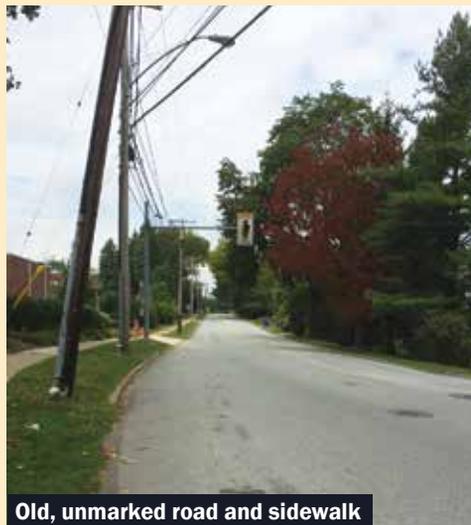
“Several agencies are planning multimodal improvements in the area,” Tredyffrin Township engineer Stephen Burgo says. “Amtrak is working on ADA upgrades at the Paoli station, SEPTA has changes in the works, and PennDOT has planned projects that will tie in to the township improvements. Our projects are early-action items that we knew we could tackle to get things started.”

To help offset the costs, the township acquired an Automated Red Light Enforcement grant of more than \$564,000, as well as a \$1 million Transportation Alternatives Program grant from PennDOT and the Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission.

# Honorable Mention



**Tredyffrin Township in Chester County received honorable mention in the 36th Annual Road and Bridge Safety Improvement Awards at PSATS' Annual Conference in April. Participating in the awards presentation are, from left, PSATS First Vice President Bill Hawk, PennDOT Deputy Secretary for Planning James Ritzman, Tredyffrin Township Engineer Stephen Burgo and Engineering Assistant Erin McPherson, and PHIA Managing Director Jason Wagner.**



**Old, unmarked road and sidewalk**



**New road markings, signage, bike lanes, and sidewalk**



**Old, unmarked road and sidewalk**



**New road markings, signage, bike lanes, and sidewalk**

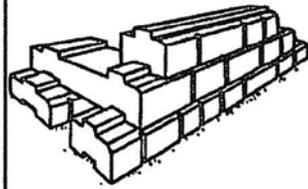
**Tredyffrin Township was recognized for a number of multimodal transportation improvements, from adaptive traffic signals to new signage, road markings, sidewalks, and bike lanes.**

“Tredyffrin is always interested in projects that will improve safety for our residents,” Burgo says. “We are honored to be recognized for these efforts.” ♦

## Think about your projects for this year’s contest

Brochures for the 2018 contest will be mailed to member townships and members of the Township Engineers Association in December or January. The deadline is typically in early March.

For more information, contact Brenda Wilt at PSATS at (717) 763-0930, ext. 123, or email [bwilt@psats.org](mailto:bwilt@psats.org). Townships may also go to [www.psats.org](http://www.psats.org), select the “Programs and Services” tab, and choose “PSATS Award Programs.”



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