



Awards

35TH ANNUAL ROAD AND BRIDGE SAFETY IMPROVEMENT AWARDS

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

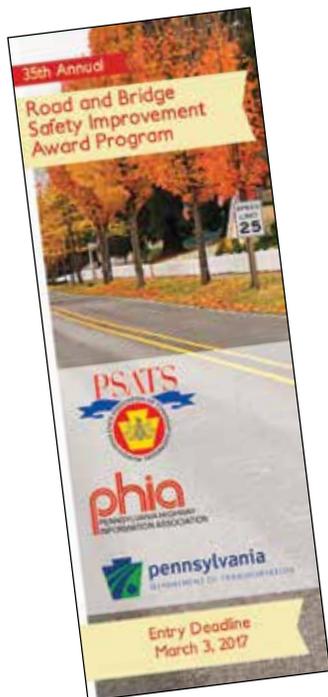
Two townships were recognized during PSATS' 95th Annual Educational Conference for transportation projects that improved safety in their communities. One road and one bridge project were honored in the 35th Annual Road and Bridge Safety Improvement Contest.

RECIPIENTS

Bridge Winner: Bradford Township, McKean County

Roadway Winner: Derry Township, Dauphin County

BY BRENDA WILT / ASSISTANT EDITOR



Two townships received top honors in the 35th Annual Road and Bridge Safety Improvement Awards presented during PSATS' 95th Annual Educational Conference in Hershey. Road and bridge projects were recognized in separate categories, and the winning activities included a bridge replacement and a road relocation and improvement project.

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 Director of Planning and Research Laine Heltebridle presented the awards.

'We can do this'

The Bradford Township, McKean County, supervisors had become concerned with the condition of a local bridge, which had been designated as structurally deficient and functionally obsolete. The 42-foot-long steel bridge's foundation was damaged due to scouring of the streambed, and the mortar joints in the stone masonry abutments were failing.

"The bridge was restricted to one lane, with a six-ton weight limit," says Jim Erwin, chairman of the board of supervisors.

Given the deteriorated condition of the bridge and the fact that the road leads to a local assisted living facility, the township determined that a bridge



PHIA Managing Director Jason Wagner, third from right, presents the 35th Annual Road and Bridge Safety Improvement Award to Jim Erwin, chairman of Bradford Township, McKean County. Also participating in the presentation are, from left: PennDOT Director of Planning and Research Laine Heltebridle; PSATS Executive Board Member Chuck Stowe; Bradford Township Engineer Owen Beachy, P.E.; Hopewell Township, York County, Engineer Jason Snyder, P.E.; and Brian Mergenthaler of U.S. Bridge, which manufactured the new steel structure.





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replacement, rather than rehabilitation, was necessary.

To save time and money, the township decided to use a geosynthetic reinforced soil-integrated bridge system (GRS-IBS) to construct new abutments. This technique alternates layers of block perimeter and fill with layers of geosynthetic fabric to build the abutments.

After touring several GRS-IBS bridges in North Hopewell Township, York County, and consulting with the engineer, Jason Snyder, and public works department there, Bradford Township decided to use the technique for the deteriorating bridge.

With help from Hopewell and a few neighboring townships, the Bradford Township public works employees con-

structed the abutments and prepared them to receive a prefabricated steel bridge deck.

“The deck was trucked in in pieces, and we assembled it on site,” Erwin says.

The new 60-foot-long bridge was completed in about two and a half months, he says, and cost the township about \$475,000 — a far cry from the more than \$1 million a traditional bridge would have cost. A fringe benefit is that the township public works crew learned new skills.

“When I first became a supervisor, the guys were leery of doing bridges themselves,” Erwin says. “I told them, ‘We can do this.’ We’ve built two bridges now and have saved the taxpayers a lot of money.”

“We are starting another GRS bridge this summer,” he adds. “We have 11 bad bridges and are doing them as we have the money.”

‘Making our community significantly safer’

Derry Township in Dauphin County, home of Hersheypark and other

Hershey attractions, relocated and improved a local corridor as part of a multi-phased effort to upgrade the tourist destination’s 100-year-old transportation infrastructure.

This successful project resolved significant safety and access issues on a heavily traveled corridor between the main entrance of the Hershey Entertainment Complex and a local avenue. Specific improvements included:

- relocation of a significant roadway, plus widening and overlay of the road at the Hershey Intermodal Transportation Center to add a safe bus unloading zone;
- construction of a new 126-foot bridge to replace a 60-year old structurally deficient span;
- installation of traffic signals to eliminate congestion and safety issues at the entrance to Hershey Chocolate World;
- creation of a connector road from the northbound boulevard into the Hershey Entertainment Complex main entrance to reduce emergency response time;





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PHIA Managing Director Jason Wagner, second from right, presents the 35th Annual Road and Bridge Safety Improvement Award to John Foley, center, chairman of Derry Township, Dauphin County. Also participating in the presentation are, from left, PennDOT Director of Planning and Research Laine Heltebride; Matthew Lena, P.E., transportation team leader for Herbert, Rowland & Grubic, Inc.; and PSATS Executive Board Chairman and First Vice President Bill Hawk.



- conversion of an insufficiently wide railroad underpass from two-way to one-way traffic with a barrier-protected sidewalk; and
- construction of a shared-use sidewalk to connect downtown Hershey to the intermodal facility and, in the future, the Hershey Entertainment Complex.

“The Park Boulevard project has been very effective in resolving many traffic safety issues that have plagued this section of road over the years,” Derry Township Police Chief Garth Warner says. “In the short time since the new roadway’s opening, we have seen a dramatic reduction in safety-related incidents.”

Derry Township Chairman John Foley, a former assistant fire chief, says that he is particularly pleased with the project’s accommodation of emergency services.

“As a 23-year firefighter with the Hershey Volunteer Fire Department, I am sincerely grateful that the vision for the relocation project focused on improving access for emergency vehicles,” he says. “For many years, first respond-

ers were unable to take the most direct route to the Hershey Entertainment Complex, which greatly compromised our response time. Our emergency vehicles now have a route that reduces our response time by at least two to three minutes, making our community significantly safer.” ♦

Don't forget about this year's contest

As your township undertakes road and bridge projects this summer and fall, consider entering them in the 36th Annual Road and Bridge Safety Improvement Contest. Document your work and take before and after photos. Brochures for the 2017 contest will be mailed to member townships and members of the Township Engineers Association in late December. 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. Townships may also go to www.psats.org, select the “Programs and Services” tab, and choose “PSATS Award Programs.”

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