



# GETTING INFRASTRUCTURE DONE



Pennsylvania  
Department of Transportation

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For more information please visit our website: [www.pa.gov/penndot](http://www.pa.gov/penndot)

Pennsylvania Motorcycle Safety Program: [www.penndot.pa.gov/PAMSP](http://www.penndot.pa.gov/PAMSP)

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This newsletter highlights our latest efforts to improve mobility and quality of life in Pennsylvania. As always, feel free to send story ideas or requests for information you want to see. If you're involved in an interesting or innovative project or initiative, have ever wondered about other parts of PennDOT's operations or have other suggestions, email the Communications Office at [DOTcomm@pa.gov](mailto:DOTcomm@pa.gov).

We hope you enjoy this latest issue!



# SHAPIRO ADMINISTRATION DELIVERS RECORD NUMBER OF ROADWAY AND BRIDGE IMPROVEMENTS TO COMMUNITIES ACROSS THE COMMONWEALTH

**T**he Shapiro Administration's investments in roads and bridges in rural communities allowed for the repair of more poor-condition bridges than any other state and more miles of roadway improved than any time in the past decade. Nearly 6,000 miles of roadway and 488 bridges improved across the state in 2024.

At an event in Lancaster County, PennDOT Secretary Mike Carroll highlighted 269 South Bridge St in Christiana as an example of the Shapiro Administration's historic progress in maintaining and improving critical infrastructure across the Commonwealth, with Pennsylvania leading the nation in 2023 in the repair of poor-condition bridges.

Governor Shapiro and his Administration understand the vital role infrastructure plays in the daily lives of millions of Pennsylvanians, which is why PennDOT works quickly and safely to ensure roads and bridges are ready for the people who rely on them every day. The Shapiro administration has invested hundreds of millions of dollars in infrastructure in both rural and urban communities. These investments support a safe and reliable transportation network that connects Pennsylvanians to greater opportunity, no matter where they live.

Statewide in 2024, 5,910 roadway miles were improved, including 2,186 miles of paving. In the same timeframe, work advanced on 488 state and locally owned bridges. Additionally, 509 construction contracts for highway, bridge, and other improvement projects were completed statewide through PennDOT's private-sector partners in 2024.

In his first two years, Governor Shapiro has delivered hundreds of millions of dollars in infrastructure funding for our roads and bridges, which – combined with federal Bipartisan Infrastructure Law investments – has resulted in 12,921 miles of roadway improved, including 4,708 miles of paving: nearly 900 more miles of roadway improved and over 800 more miles paved than in the previous two years. During the same timeframe, work advanced on 1,172 state and local bridges, compared to 998 during the previous two years. The Shapiro Administration repaired more poor-condition bridges than any other state in the nation in 2023 and

improved more miles of roadway than any time in the past decade. Governor Shapiro has brought Democrats and Republicans together to invest \$330.5 million in additional state funding in our roads and bridges on a bipartisan basis.

The event was held at a newly replaced bridge on Bridge Street over Williams Run in Christiana, Lancaster County. The \$2.1 million project was completed under budget and a month ahead of schedule and was led by Lobar Site Development of Dillsburg and supported by 14 subcontractors and 30 Lobar employees. In addition to replacing the bridge itself, which was originally built in 1941, the project included new sidewalks and accessibility improvements. The new bridge spans 110 feet and features a wider deck and meets modern safety standards.

For more information on PennDOT's ongoing infrastructure projects, visit [penndot.pa.gov](https://www.penndot.pa.gov). Information about the state's infrastructure and results PennDOT is delivering for Pennsylvanians can be found at [penndot.pa.gov/results](https://www.penndot.pa.gov/results). Find PennDOT's planned and active construction projects at [projects.penndot.gov](https://www.projects.penndot.gov).





## Jonestown Love's Travel Stop

*Photo provided by Love's Travel Stops*

# SHAPIRO ADMINISTRATION OPENS FIVE NEW EV CHARGING STATIONS UNDER FEDERAL PROGRAM

**F**ive new federally funded Electric Vehicle (EV) charging stations have recently opened to the public, built using funds from the National Electric Vehicle Infrastructure (NEVI) program, part of the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL).

The new stations at the following locations bring the total number of stations developed in Pennsylvania as part of the NEVI program to eight, tied for first in the nation:

- Jonestown, PA at Love's Travel Stop on I-81
- Slippery Rock, PA at Love's Travel Stop on I-79
- New Milford, PA at Flying J Travel Center on I-81
- Chambersburg, PA at the Chambersburg Square Shopping Center near I-81
- Carlisle, PA at Sheetz on I-81 (Exit 44)

Since opening the first station in Pittston in December 2023, NEVI-funded chargers in Pennsylvania have completed more than 9,500 charging sessions and supplied power for more than a million estimated miles of travel. These openings help further the Shapiro Administration's work to address climate change, grow the Commonwealth's economy and ensure that Pennsylvania is ready for the next generation of

transportation, one that will be cleaner, safer, more affordable, and more reliable than ever before.

The five stations represent an investment of \$3,708,853 in federal NEVI funding, and each port will be capable of providing at least 300 kW of power. While charging, customers will have access to site amenities which may include Wi-Fi, food and beverage options, restrooms, local shops and dog parks.

NEVI funding supports the Commonwealth and federal goal of expanding EV charging along the previously designated Alternative Fuel Corridors (AFCs). Pennsylvania has over 1,800 miles of AFCs. Per guidance from U.S. DOT, NEVI formula funds must first be used to "build out" designated AFCs (meaning there must be no more than 50 miles between stations and less than 1 mile from an AFC exit) and meet U.S. DOT minimum standards and requirements.

The PA NEVI program includes multiple rounds of funding. During Round 1, of which these stations were awarded, the focus was on building out the AFC network along the interstates to meet the NEVI requirements.

A list of all NEVI awards is available on PennDOT's

*Continued on Page 6*





## RESULTS OF OPERATION SAFE STOP 2024 ANNOUNCED, DRIVERS REMINDED TO DRIVE SAFELY AROUND SCHOOL BUSES

**P**ennDOT and Education, the Pennsylvania State Police, West Shore Regional Police, and West Shore School District announced the results of Operation Safe Stop, an annual school bus enforcement and education initiative aimed at enhancing school bus safety for students across the Commonwealth.

Participating law enforcement agencies and school districts document occurrences of drivers violating Pennsylvania's School Bus Stopping Law and emphasize the importance of school transportation safety.

During 2024's Operation Safe Stop, participating school districts and law enforcement agencies witnessed 131 violations of the law, down from the 177 reported last year.

The School Bus Stopping Law requires motorists approaching a school bus with its red lights flashing and stop arm activated to stop at least 10 feet from the bus. Motorists approaching from all directions are required to stop. However, motorists who encounter a school bus stopping on the opposite side of a divided highway are not required to stop when lanes of the highway are clearly separated by a divider, such as a concrete barrier or grassy median.

Pennsylvania law, updated by Act 19 of 2023, allows school districts to install and operate automated camera systems for the purpose of enforcing Pennsylvania's School Bus Stopping Law and increasing safety for children riding school buses across the state. Violations identified by a camera system are reviewed by police under agreement with the school district. After that

review, the school district may issue a violation to the vehicle owner. The penalty for a violation is a \$300 fine. These violations are civil penalties only and no points will be assessed to driver records. Of the \$300 fine assessed to violators under the program, \$250 is paid to the school district where the violation occurred; \$25 is paid to the primary police department that reviewed the submitted evidence as required by law; and \$25 is paid to PennDOT to be used for the School Bus Safety Grant Program.

The School Bus Safety Grant Program can be used to promote and increase school bus safety, education, and training, as well as pay for education, training, and other associated costs related to an individual earning their commercial learner's permit, commercial driver's license, or school bus endorsement for the purpose of driving a school bus in Pennsylvania. Independent school bus contractors, school entities, and municipalities will be eligible to apply for grants from the program. PennDOT will announce the program once it is active.

Some safety tips for students to remember while waiting for the bus or while getting on and off the bus include:

- Get to the school bus stop at least five minutes early, so you won't have to run across the road to catch the bus.
- When waiting for the bus, stay away from traffic.
- Line up at least five giant steps away from the curb or the roadway to wait for the bus.
- Never run after the school bus if it has already left the bus stop.
- Never push when getting on or off the school bus.

# PENNDOT ANNOUNCES NEW MILITARY LICENSE PLATES TO HONOR PENNSYLVANIA VETERANS

Recently passed legislation allows PennDOT to offer Pennsylvanians six new license plates honoring military veterans.

Three of the new plates recognize service members who received medals or honors for individual achievements or deployments. The plates are the standard license plate colors of white, blue, and gold and bear a graphic of the medal awarded. For a fee of \$26, the plates are available for use on passenger cars or trucks with a registered gross weight of not more than 14,000 pounds.

These plates include:

- Global War on Terrorism Expeditionary Medal Registration Plate – Applicants must submit a completed MV-150, “Application for U.S. Military Service Registration Plate,” and a legible photocopy of their Form DD-214 “Separation Papers or Discharge Papers” indicating they were awarded the Global War on Terrorism Expeditionary Medal.
- Operation Inherent Resolve Veterans Plate – Applicants must submit a completed MV-150P, “Application for U.S. Military Service Registration Plate,” and a legible photocopy of their Form DD 214 “Separation Papers or Discharge Papers” indicating they participated in Operation Inherent Resolve against the Islamic State and the Levant, which encompasses campaigns in Iraq, Syria, and Libya.
- Borinqueneers Congressional Gold Medal Registration Plate - Applicants must submit a completed MV-150P, “Application for U.S. Military Service Registration Plate,” and a legible photocopy of their Form DD-214 “Separation Papers or Discharge Papers” indicating they served in the 65th Infantry Regiment – The Borinqueneers – or other evidence or having received the Congressional Gold Medal.

The other three new plate designs recognize women veterans. Two are available for motorcycles and the third is for passenger cars or trucks with a registered gross weight of not more than 14,000 pounds.

- Honoring Our Women Veteran Motorcycle Registration Plate – A special fund registration plate allowing applicants to purchase the plate for



a fee of \$41, with \$15 going to the Veterans Trust Fund to support programs and resources assisting women veterans. Applicants must submit a completed MV-914, “Application for Honoring Our Veterans Special Fund Registration Plate.”

- Women Veteran Motorcycle Registration Plate This standard issue motorcycle plate is available for a fee of \$26 and consists of plate colors of white, blue, and gold and bears a graphic representing women veterans. Applicants must submit a completed MV 150V, “Application for U.S. Military Service Registration Plate,” and a legible photocopy of their Form DD-214 “Separation Papers or Discharge Papers,” or a legible photocopy of the front and back of their DD2(RET), “United States Uniformed Services Identification Card (Retired).”
- Women Veteran Registration Plate - This standard issue plate is available for a fee of \$26 and consists of plate colors of white, blue, and gold and bears a graphic representing women veterans. Applicants must submit a completed MV-150V, “Application for U.S. Military Service Registration Plate,” and a legible photocopy of their Form DD-214 “Separation Papers or Discharge Papers,” or a legible photocopy of the front and back of their DD2(RET), “United States Uniformed Services Identification Card (Retired).”

More information, including eligibility requirements and images of license plates, is available on the License plates page on PennDOT’s Driver and Vehicle Services at: [www.pa.gov/dmv](http://www.pa.gov/dmv).

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For more information about school bus safety, visit PennDOT’s page on the Driver Vehicles Services website, [www.pa.gov/dmv](http://www.pa.gov/dmv). The website also offers an interactive video illustrating Pennsylvania’s school bus stopping law.

# REGISTRATION FEES REDUCED OR ELIMINATED FOR SOME VETERANS, RETIRED CUSTOMERS

**D**ue to changes established in Act 60 of 2024, signed by Governor Shapiro in July, the annual income threshold for a retired Pennsylvanian to qualify for a reduced vehicle registration fee was increased, allowing more people to be eligible for this benefit. Additionally, some veterans may now be eligible for free vehicle registration and titling fees.

Previously, the annual income threshold for a retired customer to qualify for a reduced registration fee of \$11 annually was \$19,200. Beginning December 16, 2024, the annual income threshold increased to \$29,906 and will be subject to annual Consumer Price Index adjustments.

For qualifying customers to receive the reduced vehicle registration fee of \$11, they must complete and submit Form MV-371, "Application for a Retired Person's Processing Fee of a Vehicle Registration." Customers should attach the completed form to their invitation to renew and return it to PennDOT to be processed. The \$11 annual fee will be applied after the application is processed. More information on eligibility requirements can be found on PennDOT's Driver and Vehicle Services website: [www.pa.gov/dmv](http://www.pa.gov/dmv).

Act 60 also provides for the elimination of registration and title fees for one passenger vehicle or truck weighing 9,000 pounds or less owned by military veterans who meet the following requirements (license plate fees still apply):

- Vehicles registered to a veteran who lost a limb or eye or who became partially paralyzed while serving in the Armed Forces of the United States.
- Vehicles registered to a person who, as a member or the Armed Forces of the United States, was captured by the enemy in any armed conflict for which the Department of Defense authorizes a campaign medal.
- Vehicles registered to a person who has been awarded the Congressional Medal of Honor.
- Vehicles registered to a person who has been awarded the Purple Heart.

For more information about driver licensing and vehicle services for veterans, visit [PennDOT's Driver and Vehicle Services website](http://PennDOT's Driver and Vehicle Services website).

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website. Once AFCs are fully built out, PennDOT will shift to expanding EV chargers for Pennsylvania's community charging infrastructure.

National data on the status of the NEVI program by state is available at <https://evstates.org/awards-dashboard/>.

Pennsylvania can compete for billions of dollars in federal funds across a wide range of federal grant programs through the BIL, also known as the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA). To help communities and organizations learn about these opportunities, PennDOT created a web page, [www.penndot.pa.gov/IIJA](http://www.penndot.pa.gov/IIJA), with details on federal grant opportunities to help municipalities, townships, and other community agencies with understanding the multiple transportation program grants that are available. The page includes Grant Alerts, guides, and links to important resources for local municipalities and organizations interested in pursuing federal funding opportunities.

Information about state infrastructure in Pennsylvania, including completed work and significant projects,

is available at [www.penndot.pa.gov/results](http://www.penndot.pa.gov/results). Find PennDOT's planned and active construction projects at [www.projects.penndot.gov](http://www.projects.penndot.gov).



# HIGHLIGHTING RESOURCES FOR OLDER DRIVERS ACROSS THE COMMONWEALTH TO REMAIN ACTIVE AND CONNECTED IN THEIR COMMUNITIES

The Commonwealth has a network of shared-ride service providers dedicated to keeping older adults mobile, safe, and engaged in their community. PennDOT developed an online tool called Find My Ride that allows older drivers to access free ride services online.

Drivers 65 years of age and older on the rise in Pennsylvania. Working with the PA Department of Human Services and transit agencies, PennDOT



developed an online tool called Find My Ride that allows older drivers to access free ride services online. The app allows transit agencies to process applications more efficiently,

so users can access benefits more quickly. The app can be found at: [findmyride.penndot.pa.gov](https://findmyride.penndot.pa.gov), or at [www.pa.gov/penndot](https://www.pa.gov/penndot) by clicking on Travel in PA, then Public Transit Options.

Pennsylvania has a network of shared-ride service providers dedicated to keeping older adults mobile, safe, and engaged in their community. The Senior Shared Ride Program allows seniors to ride at a reduced fare. More than 2.4 million senior shared ride trips were provided in FY 2023-24. Additionally, the Free Transit Program for Seniors allows citizens aged 65 or older to ride for free on a local, fixed-route service whenever local public transportation is operating. During FY 2023-24, there were more than 24 million senior Free Transit Trips.

More than 25 percent of Pennsylvania's 9.1 million licensed drivers are 65 and older. In 2023, there were 21,370 crashes involving at least one driver aged 65 or older that resulted in 330 total fatalities. This represents 19.3% of all crashes and 27.3% of all fatalities. Older drivers generally have fewer crashes per driver than the national average – but they have more crashes per mile of driving.

A list of approved mature driver courses available can be found online on PennDOT's Mature Driver Improvement Courses page at: [www.pa.gov/dmv](https://www.pa.gov/dmv).

While every person ages differently, aging typically brings certain -- sometimes subtle -- physical, visual, and cognitive changes that could impair an older person's ability to drive safely. Older drivers and their families should work together to identify potential issues that may affect driving, outline courses of action to assist the older driver, and plan for when it's time to hang up the keys.

Signs that can indicate it may be time to limit or stop driving altogether include:

- Feeling uncomfortable, fearful, or nervous when driving.
- Unexplained dents/scrapes on the car, fences, mailboxes, or garage doors.
- Frequently getting lost and frequent "close calls" (i.e. almost crashing).
- Slower response times, particularly to unexpected situations.
- Difficulty paying attention to signs or staying in the lane of traffic.
- Trouble judging gaps at intersections or highway entrance/exit ramps.

PennDOT encourages older drivers and their loved ones to review PennDOT's Seniors Driving Safely publication series, which can be downloaded for free from the PennDOT Driver and Vehicle Services website [www.pa.gov/dmv](https://www.pa.gov/dmv). These publications help older drivers assess their abilities and offer guidance on next steps if their medical condition is reported to PennDOT. The series also includes a publication designed to guide family and friends of older drivers in what can sometimes be difficult conversations about deciding to stop driving, as well as information for healthcare providers on PennDOT's medical reporting program.

The following safe-driving habits, which should be routine at any age, are especially useful to older drivers:

- Plan ahead: lengthy car trips should be made during daylight hours. Morning may be best because most people aren't as tired as they are in the afternoon.



# KEEP IT CIVIL — THE KEY TO A THRIVING WORKPLACE

BY BRANDI GAMBLE, EQUITY & INCLUSION PROGRAM MANAGER

In fall 2024, the Office of Equitable Transportation (OET) launched a new training for our maintenance field employees – Keep it Civil: The Key to a Thriving Workplace. This



module focuses on the importance of civility in the workplace, respecting attributes that make us unique, and recognizing the benefits of diversity and inclusion in the workplace. The 2024 schedule covered 12 district office Safety Stand Down Days, which included the following counties: Erie, Northampton, Perry, Union, Snyder, Columbia, Montour, Wayne, Cambria, Lancaster, Berks, and Huntingdon counties. Thank you to the districts that hosted a training session this year!

It was such an honor to meet PennDOT employees where they work and see their field operations first-hand. Talking face-to-face with the District Engineers, Assistant District Engineers for Maintenance, administrative, operational, county, and maintenance staff was by far one of the most memorable highlights.

Let's face it, we all spend a good portion of our day at work. Some of us work in an office while others work in the field. No matter what the position or what task is being done, every employee wants and deserves to feel safe at work, respected, heard, supported, and part of a team.

Employees are the heart and soul of PennDOT and bring lots of knowledge and experience to our workplace. Despite the location of worksites across the state, we are one PennDOT. Leading by example and adopting a culture of civility in day-to-day operations allows the entire department to succeed. In fact, future PennDOT employees and leaders expect a diverse and inclusive workforce. Let's continue to set the bar high and keep PennDOT an employer of choice!

If you're still not sure what you can do to make a difference, ask yourself these questions: How do I expect to be treated in the workplace? How does my work environment impact other areas of my life? What impact do I have on other employees? Civility in the workplace starts with all of us. Pay it forward by pledging today to do your part to embrace civility to create a thriving workplace.

In closing, OET leaves you with a few quotes that resonate

with civility:

- "Be the change that you wish to see in the world" by Mohandas Gandhi
- "Civility costs nothing and buys everything" by Mary Wortley Montagu
- "When everyone is included, everyone wins" by Jesse Jackson

The Keep it Civil training will continue in 2025. If you would like to host an on-site civility training, please contact Brandi Gamble, Equity & Inclusion Program Manager at [bgamble@pa.gov](mailto:bgamble@pa.gov).

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- Don't drive in rush-hour traffic if you can avoid it. Plan trips after 9:00 AM or before 5:00 PM. Know what roads near home are most congested and avoid them.
- When driving long distances, especially in winter, call ahead for weather and road condition updates.
- Look ahead. Good drivers get a jump on trouble by looking far down the road and making adjustments before encountering problems that may involve other vehicles, pedestrians, bicyclists or animals.
- Maintain a safe speed. This depends on what the road is like, how well the driver can see, how much traffic there is and how fast traffic is moving.
- Keep a safe distance from the vehicle ahead of you. The PA Driver's Manual advises that you should always keep a 4-second gap between you and the vehicle in front of you.

Pennsylvanians with insurance questions can contact the Insurance Department Consumer Services Bureau online or at 1-877-881-6388.

Additional information on older driver safety and mobility resources is available at both PennDOT Driver and Vehicle Services and the Department of Aging websites.

## FIRST STATEWIDE, REAL-TIME PUBLIC TRANSIT SERVICE TRACKER SYSTEM IN THE NATION, IMPROVING RIDER EXPERIENCE AND SERVICE RELIABILITY

**P**ennDOT recently celebrated a completed technology project for transit providers and users. The Fixed Route



Intelligent Transportation System (FRITS) has been fully implemented at 33 transit agencies across the state. FRITS provides real-time service information for passengers, and enhanced transit planning for agencies. Passengers are now able to see their bus and how far away it is from their location at nearly three dozen transit agencies spanning 41 counties across the Commonwealth.

Riders can access real time service information including the location of the bus and predicted stop arrival times via the “myStop” smartphone app. Customers can also easily navigate between transit agencies using myStop, which is especially useful for riders in rural areas. For example, a passenger in Lemont Furnace who needs to travel to Greensburg can use myStop and view information for both Fayette Area Coordinated Transit and Westmoreland County Transit to identify which

routes to use, where the bus is currently located, and easily plan their route. Additionally, because all agencies have had their routes certified by Google Maps as part of the project, customers can use Google Maps to plan transit routes as well and rest assured that route information is accurate.

In addition to the service improvements for riders, the enhancements help transit agencies monitor their vehicles’ location, automatically count passengers boarding or leaving vehicles, and provides a statewide reporting database.

The \$32.6 million project began in March 2018 and was completed by State College-based Avail Technologies. FRITS has been implemented at all fixed-route transit agencies in Pennsylvania, except for the Southeastern Pennsylvania Transit Authority (SEPTA) and Pittsburgh Regional Transit (PRT), which already have their own comparable systems. Pennsylvania’s FRITS implementation was the first statewide deployment of this technology.

Transit agencies around the state, along with their customers, have seen the benefits of FRITS.

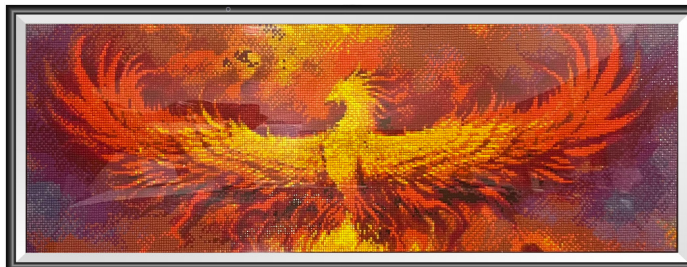
Public transportation is available in some form in every Pennsylvania county. To see available services, visit [www.pa.gov/pennidot](http://www.pa.gov/pennidot) in the “Public Transit Options” section of “Traveling in PA.”

## EXPERT LEVEL TALENT EARNS DVS EMPLOYEE ACCOLADES

**A** Driver and Vehicle Services Bureau of Support Services employee used the York County Fair to showcase a special talent and claim bragging rights as the best in her craft.

Congratulations are in order for, who won first place in the expert-level diamond painting competition at the York State Fair.

Similar to both cross-stitch and paint-by-numbers, diamond painting is a popular craft in which



you create images by affixing tiny crystals to their corresponding colors on a canvas that is covered in adhesive. Canvases come in a range of sizes and designs and with either square or circular crystals; the square crystals are harder to place than the more common circular ones, but the effect is even more stunning.

Deborah began diamond painting seven years ago as a creative outlet and way to destress after work. She grew up living all around the world, and her favorite paintings are those that honor that part of her life: images of Mt. Fuji in

## DISTRICT 4 EMPLOYEE SPOTLIGHT: TODD FERRETTI, COMMUNITY LEADER

**T**odd Ferretti, who works out of the Wayne County Maintenance office, stands out not only as a dedicated employee but also a community-driven leader who consistently goes above and beyond to support the local area. Known for his work ethic and deep connection to the people he serves, Todd's influence extends beyond his day-to-day responsibilities. For the past several years, he has also been a driving force behind the Flags in the Valley Football League, where he recently took on the role of president. His leadership has helped the league thrive, introducing children to football in a safe and enjoyable way while promoting teamwork and discipline.

Todd's role in the league is a testament to his passion for both community involvement and youth development. Under his leadership, the league has seen continued growth and success, with hundreds of local children participating each season. Todd is always looking for new ways to engage parents, coaches, and players, exemplified by his initiative to host the first-ever Superbowl tailgate party. This creative idea brought families together in celebration of the season, creating lasting memories for players and their loved ones alike. Todd's ability to combine strategic thinking with genuine care for others has made him an invaluable asset to the league.

"It's great to see Todd performing so well professionally and in his spare time as President of the Flag Football



League. I've seen how much time Todd dedicates to making the league successful and ensuring kids have fun," said Jonathan Eboli, PennDOT Active Chief Executive.

When he's not working in Wayne County or leading the charge for Flags in the Valley, Todd remains an active participant in his community. Whether it's coaching or volunteering, he continues to invest in the next generation, ensuring they have the tools and opportunities to succeed. Todd's dedication to both his work and his community highlights the kind of leadership that makes a real difference. His commitment to improving the lives of those around him is inspiring to all. Way to go Todd!

## WESTMORELAND COUNTY OPERATOR LUKE FINLAY NAMED BIG BROTHER OF THE YEAR FOR LAUREL REGION

**L**uke Finlay, a PennDOT District 12 Operator, has been recognized as the Big Brother of the Year for the Laurel Region, honoring his exceptional commitment to mentorship and community service.

Luke's involvement with the Big Brothers Big Sisters program began at the Twin Lakes Summerfest, where he was introduced to the organization and encouraged to volunteer. Luke decided to become a Big Brother. He was matched with Jaxon, a 7-year-old boy. Their connection was instant, and over the past year, they have formed a bond filled with adventures and life lessons. Meeting three to four times a month, they've explored the outdoors, tackled new challenges, and celebrated milestones—like Jaxon learning to swim without water wings, a moment Luke considers one of his proudest.

The Big Brother of the Year award not only recognized Luke's dedication but also celebrated Jaxon, who received the Little Brother of the Year award. Their story underscores the profound impact mentorship has on children, whether through community-based or school-based programs.

"The two-year commitment is just the start. It's really a lifelong bond," Luke said. "This experience has taught me so much about myself and made me a better person."





## \$55 MILLION INVESTMENT IN 30 RAIL INFRASTRUCTURE PROJECTS, SUPPORTING BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT AND OVER 340 JOBS STATEWIDE

**P**ennDOT recently approved 30 rail freight improvement projects that will enhance freight mobility while creating or sustaining 344 jobs across Pennsylvania. These investments are aligned with the Governor's commitment to improving Pennsylvania's infrastructure and supporting economic growth.

Pennsylvania has 65 operating railroads, which is more than any other state. PennDOT is committed to working with private rail operators and rail-served businesses to construct new rail lines and assist in maintaining and improving Pennsylvania's roughly 5,600 miles of freight lines.

The State Transportation Commission voted to approve \$55 million for the following projects through the Rail Transportation Assistance Program (RTAP) and the Rail Freight Assistance Program (RFAP).

A complete list of the 30 approved rail freight projects with the state share, can be found at: [www.pa.gov/agencies/pennidot/news-and-media/newsroom/statewide/12-18-24\\_dot-rail-freight-grants.html](http://www.pa.gov/agencies/pennidot/news-and-media/newsroom/statewide/12-18-24_dot-rail-freight-grants.html).



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Japan, an English cottage scene, and a bear for Germany.

Her winning piece—a phoenix rising—has a similar emotional connection. The story of the phoenix and its cyclical regeneration has always resonated with Deborah, and it was after a family member's dementia diagnosis that she had a phoenix tattooed on her arm. She then started working on the phoenix diamond painting: it took her over a month to carefully place the 29,600 square crystals.