News from
SALEM COUNTY
Office of Public Information

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SALEM COUNTY RAILROAD RECONSTRUCTION MOVING *FULL-STEAM* AHEAD

Salem County celebrates the early completion of the current phase of railroad reconstruction at Ribbon Cutting Event

(SALEM, NJ) – Freeholder Director Lee Ware today welcomed a crowd of legislators, state officials, and local rail users to a ribbon cutting event celebrating the early completion of the current phase of railroad reconstruction. The recently completed phase of reconstruction involved approximately 4350 feet from Acton Station Road to the tie in of the newly replaced track at Tide Mill Curve, which was completed earlier in 2005.

"The success of the Salem County railroad reconstruction is a result of great team work," said Director Ware. "With the help of our State and Federal representatives we have been able to secure over 7 million dollars from funding sources outside the county wallet, which has allowed this project to move forward. The early success of this project is a result of the hard work of the rail workers and the effective leadership of the project engineers. I am looking forward to seeing this project continue to advance because it will greatly improve the business transportation infrastructure of our county."

The 18 mile short line railroad, which runs from Swedesboro to the Salem Port, over the Oldman's Creek Trestle, provides raw materials freight delivery to various businesses in Salem County, including Anchor Glass, Mannington Mills, South Jersey Farmer's Exchange, G. E. Fabricators and others. Currently, the condition of the rail prevents the trains from traveling more than 5 miles per hour, taking the operator nearly half a shift to simply move the cars from Swedesboro to Salem in addition to the time it takes to load and unload cars.

"The railroad reconstruction project is vitally important to the future of Salem County," said Freeholder Beth Timberman, Chair of the Planning & Transportation Committee. "Currently the rail's condition makes it extremely difficult and time intensive to transport using trains. The reconstruction of the railroad will assist our current businesses by providing a time and cost effective mode of transportation for their materials. As we look forward, this project will yield significant rewards as other businesses will come to the county because of our improved rail system."

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Freeholder Timberman attributes the success of the railroad reconstruction to the skill of the contractors and the project management team as well as the great weather. The early completion of phase I has resulted in an estimated $400,000 surplus in allocated funds, which will be rolled over into the next phase of reconstruction which is expected to commence later this spring.

"The repairs to the railroad will help expedite shipment to local Salem County businesses and allow for increased statewide trade," said Senator Stephen M. Sweeney. "This project is running ahead of schedule and under budget, which will allow these necessary repairs to be done, without burdening local taxpayers with the additional costs from taking more time than was initially expected," Senator Sweeney said.

"Rail lines are a vital part of South Jersey's economy," said Assemblyman John J. Burzichelli. "This reconstruction project will turn a slow-moving rail line into a modern, state-of-the-art channel of transportation that will help deliver goods throughout South Jersey in a timely fashion. The project is important to the Salem County economy and the entire South Jersey region."

"The Salem County railroad reconstruction project is smoothly progressing forward," said Assemblyman Douglas H. Fisher. "Local businesses along the rail line from Swedesboro to Salem Port are going to benefit tremendously from the new and improved 18-mile stretch of rail."

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