



PENNDOT MAKES BIG PROGRESS, MORE WORK AHEAD

By Christina Lengyel, The Center Square

PennDOT celebrated a busy year in 2024.

The agency has seen 5,485 roadway miles of improvement, much in paving, a major sore spot for Pennsylvanians.

The year also brought progress on 422 state and locally-owned bridges and 447 private-sector construction contracts.

The state claims over 120,000 miles of roadways, with over 41,000 owned by the state and over 79,000 owned by local municipalities. Nearly 29,000 benefit

from the Federal Aid system, including over 7,000 miles within the National Highway System and nearly 2,000 miles of the Interstate System.

"Investing in and improving our infrastructure is a commonsense way to spur economic development, create jobs, and help Pennsylvanians reach their destinations safely and efficiently. These improvements will help our communities grow as we continue working together to move Pennsylvania forward," said Gov. Josh Shapiro in October.

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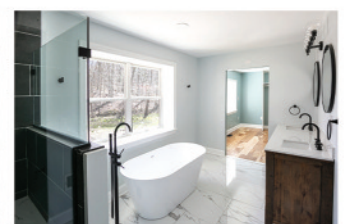
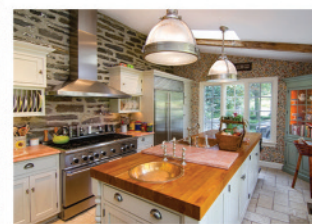
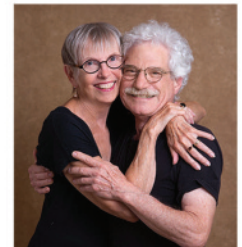
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PENNDOT MAKES BIG PROGRESS

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In 2023, PennDOT boasted the largest drop in poor-condition bridges of any state in the country, and the current administration has sought to keep up the momentum with the hundreds of projects in the works. Of the state's over 25,000 bridges, just about 2,200 were in need of repair.

The state received \$1.6 billion in federal aid to improve bridge infrastructure immediately before the collapse of Forbes Avenue Bridge in Pittsburgh in 2022, which saw a bus plummet into the ravine below.

Despite putting up impressive numbers, legislators and residents maintain vocal opposition to the state's transportation priorities. A chief complaint is a lack of attention to local issues and road safety that affect people in their day-to-day lives in favor of highway infrastructure that supports the state's massive trucking industry.

Local issues like potholes, traffic calming, pedestrian and safety measures are taken into account with broad surveys and town halls, but many feel their concerns fall on deaf ears. Last year, the state's pedestrian deaths

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increased, a statistic that other states have seen go down since the height of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Much of the contention around funding derives from the split between the state's vast rural areas and its major cities, leading many to complain about the state's investment in public transit like SEPTA, which supports about 700,000 daily riders in the Philadelphia region.

Divisions between Republicans and the Shapiro administration came to a head when SEPTA announced it would need to increase fares and reduce its

routes to stay afloat in 2025. The legislature failed to agree on long-term funding.

Republican leaders insisted that more investment should be made in infrastructure across the state with SEPTA support from other revenue sources. Shapiro said that proposals, including one that would tie income from skills-games regulation to the authority, never made it to his desk.

Ultimately, Shapiro flexed funding from federal highway capital funds to delay a transit crisis in the city.



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