

Unique Project Preserves Rare Iron Bridge While Reopening Long-Closed Road

Wyoming County, Pennsylvania - A project to relocate and restore the historic Pierceville Bridge, currently located on SR-1029 over Tunkhannock Creek, to nearby Tunkhannock Township's Lazy Brook Park is underway. The preservation project is part of a \$3,014,013 contract that includes construction of a new replacement highway bridge on SR-1029. SR-1029 has been closed to traffic for years due to deterioration of the historic bridge. At Lazy Brook Park, the historic bridge will cross a flood relief channel and function as a footbridge for park visitors. This project will provide a new functional bridge for SR-1029 motorists, an iconic landmark for Lazy Brook Park, and will preserve one of the rarest historic bridges in Pennsylvania. The restoration will be the first in Pennsylvania to include historically accurate hot metal riveting for the restoration work. Kriger Construction of Dickson City, PA is the general contractor for the project with the specialized historic bridge restoration work being subcontracted to Bach Steel of Holt, MI.

The 113 foot Pierceville Bridge was built in 1881, and is a particularly unusual and rare type of iron truss bridge called a "lenticular" truss bridge, so-called because the trusses have a distinctive "lens" shape to them. Only five lenticular truss bridges remain in Pennsylvania, including the well-known Smithfield Street Bridge in Pittsburgh. The Pierceville Bridge is also noteworthy because it is the oldest lenticular truss bridge in Pennsylvania and one of the oldest lenticular truss bridges in the United States. It was built by the Corrugated Metal Company of East Berlin, Connecticut, which later changed its name to the Berlin Iron Bridge Company and was a promoter of its distinctive lenticular truss bridges, for which the company held a patent.

The historic bridge restoration will be the first of its kind in Pennsylvania because it is an "in-kind" restoration where a focus is placed on making the historic truss look exactly like it did 134 years ago when it was brand new. This means retaining as much original metal on the truss as possible, and making sure that any original metal that is replaced will be replaced with an exact replica, not a modern variation. One of the most noteworthy aspects of in-kind restoration is that any failed rivets on the bridge will be replaced with rivets and not modern bolts. Rivets were the fastener of choice for most metal structures built before 1970, but after 1970 the use of bolts and welding became the preferred method. This contract is believed to be the first Pennsylvania bridge contract in decades to specify riveting work. Finally, to complete the look of the bridge at its new location, the stones from the masonry abutments of the bridge will be moved and incorporated into the new abutments at Lazy Brook Park. Interpretive signage will also be installed at the park to inform park visitors of the bridge's history and significance.

The old roadway of the historic bridge has already been removed and Kriger Construction is currently working to lift the bridge off of its abutments and set it onto the ground in preparation for the bridge's disassembly and restoration.

About HistoricBridges.org

HistoricBridges.org is a website that is dedicated both to the photo-documentation of historic bridges as well as to advocating for the preservation of historic bridges throughout North America. Author Nathan Holth provided ideas and input to the Pennsylvania Department of Transportation for the Pierceville Bridge project as one of several Consulting Parties during the Section 106 Review, a procedure undertaken for projects with federal funding that have the potential to cause harm to historic structures. Section 106 requires consideration of feasible and prudent alternatives to avoid or minimize harm to historic structures. The Section 106 Review process was instrumental in developing this unique project that provides for the needs of motorists, while ensuring the cost-effective and high-quality preservation of this important historic bridge.

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For more details about the Pierceville Bridge or to schedule an interview with HistoricBridges.org

Please call Nathan Holth at 269-290-2593 or email webmaster@historicbridges.org. Permission is given for any media organization to publish any of HistoricBridges.org's photos of the Pierceville Bridge offered on the HistoricBridges.org for the purpose of covering this news story. Credit for photographs should be given to Nathan Holth, HistoricBridges.org. The photos were taken May 26, 2007. The HistoricBridges.org webpage for the Pierceville Bridge, which contains links to all the photos is:

<http://historicbridges.org/bridges/browser/?bridgebrowser=pennsylvania/pa1029/>

Contact information for the involved bridge project contractors is as follows.**General Contractor:**

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Historic Restoration Subcontractor:

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