



Community CONNECTION

SUMMER 2007

A PUBLICATION OF THE DELAWARE RIVER & BAY AUTHORITY

New commercial 2008 toll rate approved for Delaware Memorial Bridge

The Delaware River and Bay Authority (DRBA) Commissioners approved a new toll schedule for the Delaware Memorial Bridge which will take effect in January 2008. The new rates, which affect commercial vehicles only, will increase \$1 per axle to \$4 per axle. The increase is expected to generate an additional \$10.8 million which will fund the Capital Improvement Program through 2009.

In addition to the change in commercial rate, the Commission approved changes in E-Z Pass accounts. Beginning in January 2008, all DRBA E-Z Pass accounts will be charged an account management fee of \$1.50 per month. In addition, the cost of each new transponder will be passed on



Outreach — John Jones, DRBA Director of Engineering and Maintenance, discusses the Authority's Capital Improvement Program with Salem County residents at Salem Community College. Mr. Jones' visit was part of the public hearing process associated with the proposed toll increase.

Photo courtesy of Lori M. Nichols of Today's Sunbeam

to the E-Z Pass customer. The Authority expects these two actions to save approximately \$700,000 in the E-Z Pass operating budget.

The Authority held a workshop and a public hearing in both New Jersey and Delaware to inform stakeholders about the capital needs at the Authority's crossing facilities, provide options to raising the toll rates at the Delaware Memorial Bridge, and solicit public comment. The public workshops focused on the capital projects in the Authority's CIP; current finances of the Authority; and the need for additional revenue. The public hearings provided the public with an opportunity to register comments on the proposed toll increase.

Delaware Airpark receives \$3.45 million in federal funding

The USDOT recently awarded \$3.45 million in federal funding to Delaware Airpark to help provide funds to acquire land for a new runway and taxiway system.

Delaware Airpark is one of five airports operated by the DRBA. It is a 45-acre general aviation facility located in Cheswold, just outside of Dover. It serves the general aviation needs of central Delaware and Dover as well as Delaware State University's flight training program.

It has one existing east-west runway with a parallel taxiway and a new terminal building with aircraft maintenance and classroom facilities for the University. The airport is also used by many to access Dover Downs International Speedway.

"The Authority thanks Delaware's Congressional delegation for its efforts to secure this vital federal funding," remarked James T. Johnson, Jr., executive director of the DRBA.

Johnson noted that general aviation facilities must rely on federal funding for infrastructure enhancements and security improvements which provide the foundation for aviation success and business development

The land acquisition program at the Delaware Airpark will facilitate a new east-west runway and parallel taxiway consistent with the airport's master plan, Johnson said.

DRBA: People serving people



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Agencies crackdown on toll violators
DRBA, DSP and DelDOT in joint effort

A new, tougher way to prosecute habitual toll violators has come about because of coordinated efforts by the DRBA, Delaware State Police and Delaware Department of Transportation.

DRBA police and toll officials are working with the DSP and DelDOT to identify and share information on habitual toll evaders by using photos of license plates and motor vehicle records. They have met and reviewed prosecution options for the most serious violators with the Delaware Department of Justice. Previously, toll evaders have been prosecuted as traffic offenders; now, however, toll evaders who exceed \$1,000 in toll violations can be prosecuted for theft of services which is a felony under the state criminal code.

The first criminal arrest under the new

guidelines has taken place. A New Jersey man was arrested and charged with 136 counts of toll evasion at the Delaware Memorial Bridge. After being arraigned, the man was committed to Young Correctional facility prior to posting bail. If found guilty, the alleged toll offender would owe the DRBA \$5,440 in toll fees as well as civil costs associated with these charged in addition to any penalties imposed by the court.

The same man was subsequently arrested and charged with another 200 counts of toll evasion at the I-95 toll facility in Newark, DE. He was charged with felony theft of services.

According to officials from all three agencies, the public should expect to see more arrests in the future.

DRBA has leadership role in cooperative action to combat E-ZPass violations

At the International Bridge, Tunnel and Turnpike Association's Violation Enforcement Summit in July, DRBA's Chief Information Officer Gerry DiNicola Owens participated in a panel in which she presented information on the DRBA's history with chronic toll evaders, the steps taken internally to address the issue and using intrastate cooperation to expand the program.

Because the problem of toll evasion has become a national issue, the E-ZPass Interagency Group established a Violation Subcommittee so states could share information on major toll violators, design reciprocal legislation, and develop methods to limit and enforce electronic toll violations. The DRBA is a member of the subcommittee.



DiNicola Owens

Community Giving



Pictured from right to left are DRBA Commissioners Edward Dorn and Ceil Smith; Glen Donelson, Vice President of Arc; John Gallagher, Arc's Executive Director; Jean Jack, President of Arc; Arc board member Bill Gallo, Jr.; and Ken Hynson, DRBA Community Outreach Administrator

THE ARC OF SALEM COUNTY — The DRBA Commission authorized a grant of \$8,000 to assist The Arc of Salem County, which will help the nonprofit organization install a new main entrance/evacuation route with automatic doors. The project will add a second egress which will relieve congestion during emergency evacuations and which also will benefit on a daily basis more than 150 people with severe disabilities.

THE PETER SPENCER FAMILY LIFE FOUNDATION —

The DRBA's Executive Director, James Johnson, joined with Commissioner Samuel E. Lathem to present L.M. Livingston of the Peter Spencer Family Life Foundation with a \$10,000 check to help defray the cost of the August Quarterly Celebration that helps educate the Wilmington community about the history of Peter Spencer and the legacy of the "Big Quarterly."



Pictured from right to left are DRBA Executive Director James Johnson, P.E., Commissioner Samuel Lathem and L.M. Livingston of the Peter Spencer Family Life Foundation.

Started in 1814, the August Quarterly became a kind of independence day for black residents of the Delmarva Peninsula. The annual celebration commemorates the founding of the Union Church of Africans, the first African American Church independently incorporated in the U.S.

In the early years of the festival, abolitionists and Underground Railroad conductors of the stature of Thomas Garrett and Harriet Tubman, who were in the Wilmington area to assist slaves who chose to escape, used the Quarterly to plan and share information about the road to freedom. Over the years, the "Big Quarterly" has remained a time of reunion, religious revival and celebration of freedom for the people in and around Wilmington.

Delaware Memorial Bridge condition rated good

The Delaware Memorial Bridge (DMB) is rated in good condition with no structural deficiencies. The DMB consists of three different types of bridge design: suspension bridge, deck-truss bridge and deck-girder bridge.

The DMB undergoes an in-depth annual inspection of roadway deck, steelwork, towers, cable system and numerous other components by the original bridge design engineers. The inspection, which conforms to federal bridge inspection standards, takes eight to ten weeks, resulting in a report on the condition and operation of the Delaware Memorial Bridge and its appurtenances.

Based on the report, the DRBA, operator of the DMB, develops a comprehensive five-year Capital Improvement Program to properly maintain and enhance the DMB to meet increasing demands primarily associated with the transportation industry. The program detail is available on the agency's website at www.drba.net.

In addition to these capital projects, the DRBA has an aggressive, on-going, pro-active, preventive maintenance program for all of its facilities. DMB preventive maintenance includes annual bridge painting of steel; annual deck resurfacing; spring wash-down of all steel (removal of treatments for snow and ice); and miscellaneous steel repairs.

James Johnson, DRBA executive director, says, "As an agency, we are committed to providing quality, safe transportation services for the traveling public."



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Millville Wheels and Wings Memorial Weekend Airshow features Blue Angels' aerial acrobatics

The organizers of the Millville Wheels and Wings Airshow are smiling as more than 75,000 spectators attended this year's show.

After the horrendous weather of the past two years, the sun came out for the 2007 Memorial Day weekend event. The combination of good weather and the appearance of the U. S. Navy Blue Angels attracted more than 40,000 visitors on Saturday and another 35,000 on Sunday.

While the figure fell short of the record-setting 90,000 who swarmed the field in 2003, which was the first year the Blue Angels appeared at the show, Lisa Jester, Millville Army Airfield Museum Executive Director exclaimed, "This is a huge success — we finally won one."

The Blue Angels Flight Demonstration Squadron consists of six air combat F/A-18 Hornet jet fighters flown by what are called America's finest pilots. Each year the group performs about 35 shows, which means they're in



The Blue Angels' Transport C-130 Hercules aircraft, known as Fat Albert, departs from Millville Airport. The only Marine Corps aircraft permanently assigned to a Navy squadron, Fat Albert carries cargo, fuel as well as support and maintenance crews to the Blue Angels' air shows, clocking more than 140,000 miles in a season. An eight-person Marine crew is assigned to the C-130.

the air almost every weekend from March to October.

In addition to the Blue Angels' breathtaking aerial acrobatics, there were many other aviation performances, military, civilian and historic, including Greg Poe, in the *Ethanol Kicks* Gas-powered Edge 540; the

Red Eagle Air Sports Team and a variety of jet demonstrations. Millville's warbird display included three WWII B-25 Mitchells, a P-51 Mustang, P-47 Thunderbolt, TaBM Avenger, F4U Corsair, P-40 Warhawk and C-54 Skymaster.