



New Hope Headquarters and Administration Building
2492 River Road
New Hope, PA 18938-9519
TEL. (215) 862-5284 FAX (215) 862-7665

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
April 1, 2011

Contact: Joe Donnelly or Pete Peterson
Phone: (215) 862-7693 or (215) 893-4297

ARCHAEOLOGICAL DIG SET TO BEGIN AT PENNSYLVANIA SIDE OF SCUDDER FALLS REPLACEMENT BRIDGE

Work Aimed at Recovering Native American Artifacts Dating Back as Far as 12,000 Years

LOWER MAKEFIELD, PA – Archaeologists working for the Delaware River Joint Toll Bridge Commission are set to begin excavation work next week in the vicinity of the Pennsylvania landfall location for a new bridge structure that will replace the current Scudder Falls Bridge, which carries I-95 across the Delaware River between Bucks County, PA. and Mercer County, N.J.

The archaeological team will seek to recover and catalogue Native American artifacts, some of which could date back to between 8,000 and 10,000 B.C.

Up to 12 archaeologists and other scientists will be working at the site, which is located slightly north of the current Scudder Falls Bridge. The archaeologists are employees of AECOM, the project's design management consultant. The excavation at the Pennsylvania location will be more expansive than a similar AECOM archaeological dig that was completed earlier this year in the vicinity of the I-95/Route 29 interchange in New Jersey.

"We're really excited about this dig getting underway," said Frank G. McCartney, the Commission's executive director. "There is a remote possibility of recovering and permanently preserving Native American artifacts that could date back to the time when Native Americans first paddled the waters of the Delaware River. This is just the latest in a series of mitigation measures the Commission is undertaking in preparation for actual construction activities on the I-95/Scudder Falls Bridge Improvement Project."

Standard archaeological excavation methods will be employed, requiring all soil to be dug by hand with shovels and trowels and passed through screens to recover artifacts. The excavation work will extend to as much as 14 feet deep, the depth of the potential impacts of the replacement bridge piers at the site. The artifacts recovered from the archaeological dig will be taken to a laboratory where they will be cleaned and cataloged before being stored with the State Museum of Pennsylvania in Harrisburg.

AECOM's prior archaeological dig in Ewing, N.J. discovered a possible pre-historic hearth, evidence of tool-making, and evidence the site may have been occupied as long ago as 2,000 B.C. Artifacts from that dig will be provided to the New Jersey State Museum in Trenton.

The two excavations are part of \$1.1 million worth of archaeological activities the Commission is funding in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act and at the request of New Jersey State Historic Preservation Office and the Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission. Scudder Falls Bridge project consultants previously determined that further archaeological work at the two sites was warranted following archaeological testing that occurred in 2004, 2005, and 2009. Items recovered during the testing phase included pottery shards and projectile points.

Archaeologists determined that dig locations are at a geographically significant point in the river because it is an ecotone location, the broad area upstream from where the river ceases to be tidal. Such sites were attractive to Native Americans because ecotones contained a greater variety of diverse food resources in a concentrated area. In addition to the archaeological dig and recovery, scientists such as geomorphologists and palynologists will work to determine the time when the site was occupied and what the environmental conditions at the site were at the time.

The Scudder Falls Bridge project will be the Commission's largest single capital initiative in its 76 year history, with a current estimated project cost of \$322 million. The project is part of the Commission's comprehensive \$1.2 billion capital improvement program enabling the agency to refurbish, expand and modernize its 20 Delaware River bridges and other facilities.

"The Commission's motto is 'Preserving Our Past, Enhancing Our Future,' and the Scudder Falls Bridge project certainly is in keeping with those words," said McCartney. "This archaeological dig promises to recover and preserve Native American artifacts that could date back dozens of centuries as we continue to move forward in preparing for the construction of a new river crossing that will better serve the region's growing transportation needs."

Congestion on the bridge results in average delays for motorists of 27 minutes per day and traffic is projected to rise an additional 35 percent -- to 77,500 vehicles per day - by the year 2030. The project area extends 4.4 miles along I-95 from PA Route 332 in Bucks County, PA to Bear Tavern Road in Mercer County, N.J. The project includes replacement of the existing functionally obsolete four-lane Scudder Falls Bridge with new twin structures -- one on the upstream side of the existing bridge and the other overlapping the current bridge's footprint.

The new structures will have six lanes of through traffic (three in each direction) with two auxiliary northbound lanes for entry/exit travel and one auxiliary southbound lane entry/exit travel. The project calls for full inside and outside roadway shoulders on the bridge crossing to handle breakdowns and emergencies. The inside shoulder also would have the capacity to serve proposed bus/rapid transit routes. Last year, the Commission responded to public requests and approved the inclusion of a bicycle/pedestrian walkway on the new bridge.

The project will include the reconfiguration of the Taylorsville Road interchange on the bridge's Pennsylvania side and the reconstruction and reconfiguration of the Route 29 interchange through the use of roundabouts. The project also will include an inside widening of I-95 in Pennsylvania in the project area and the installation of noise-abatement walls at multiple locations in New Jersey and Pennsylvania.

A "cashless tolling" system in the southbound direction will be used to collect revenues to help pay for the project, averting the need for conventional cash toll booths.

For more information, please visit the project website at www.scudderfallsbridge.com

About the Commission

The Delaware River Joint Toll Bridge Commission was formed by the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania and the State of New Jersey in 1934. It operates seven toll bridges and 13 toll-supported bridges, two of which are pedestrian-only spans. The Commission is a self-supporting public-service agency that receives neither federal nor state tax dollars to finance its projects or operations. Funding for the operations, maintenance and upkeep of its bridges and related transportation facilities is solely derived from revenues collected at its toll bridges. The Commission's jurisdiction extends along the Delaware River from the Philadelphia-Bucks County line north to the New Jersey/New York border. The bridges carried more than 139 million cars and trucks in 2010. For more information about the Commission and its various initiatives to deliver safer and more convenient bridge travel for its customers, please see: www.drjtbc.org.