

The Times

Monaca awarded \$1 million for streetscape project

By Jared Stonesifer

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For Monaca, the money will help pay for a project that includes substantial upgrades along Pennsylvania Avenue between 13th and 16th streets. Plans include sidewalk and crosswalk renovations, traffic signal upgrades, new lighting, stormwater management installation and new bicycle racks.

The grant awarded Tuesday is the latest in a series of state and federal funds the project has received. Last summer, Gov. Tom Wolf came to Monaca to announce a \$3 million state grant for the project.

For Monaca Borough Manager Mario Leone, any money secured for the overall project is a good thing. The entire Monaca Gateway Project calls for various degrees of renovations on Pennsylvania Avenue between Fourth and 17th streets.

Borough officials have been breaking up the project into segments in an effort to make it easier to secure funding. For instance, Leone said, the borough has already secured \$4 million for improvements on Pennsylvania Avenue between 15th and 17th streets.

In addition, Monaca has received \$1.5 million in funding for the portion of the project between 10th and 13th streets.

Now, borough officials can add \$1 million for the portion of the project between 13th and 15th streets.

“It’s a good day in Monaca,” he said Tuesday. “We’re extremely excited for the additional funding that will help us continue improvements for the Monaca Gateway corridor project.”

This time around, the grant came through the Commonwealth Financing Authority through its Multimodal Transportation Fund. That program exists to encourage economic development and ensure safe transportation across Pennsylvania.

State Rep. Rob Matzie, D-16, Ambridge, said Tuesday that Pennsylvania Avenue in Monaca is a “vital commercial and residential corridor ... and I was happy to support the effort to fund these important upgrades in the community.”

“This project will increase safety and accessibility along the highway for motorists and pedestrians alike and, when completed, should spur further redevelopment and private investment in the community,” he said.

Monaca wasn’t the only local municipality to benefit from the multimodal grants. Midland was awarded a \$650,000 grant to restore sidewalks and resurface roads on Midland Heights Circle, Midland Heights Midcrest, Railroad Lane, and Ohio, Virginia and Woodlane avenues.

Also, Geneva College received a \$489,339 grant for the South Campus corridor project, which seeks to improve walking and biking opportunities for students.

The project will include new curbs on Route 18, construction of nearly 1,300 feet of new sidewalks, widening of existing sidewalks, and new lighting, fencing and landscaping.

In a news release, state Sen. Elder Vogel Jr., R-47, New Sewickley Township, called the multimodal grants “investments that improve the quality of life for everyone” in Beaver County.

“This is good news for Beaver County and all local residents,” he said. “Grants that Pennsylvania provides for the enhancement of its transportation infrastructure are long-term investments in communities and enhance the region’s attractiveness for economic development.”

State Rep. Aaron Bernstine, R-10, New Beaver, said the money for Geneva College will “go a long way in improving pedestrian safety” for students and Beaver Falls residents alike.

“I’m looking forward to seeing the completed results of this project, and I’m hopeful it will also encourage further economic development in our district for the future,” he said.