



Quemahoning Water Pipeline Project

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County close to starting Que project

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Somerset County only has a few rights of way to obtain before the Quemahoning pipeline's bidding and construction can begin.

The county will have obtained about 157 of 163 rights of way after this week for the 22-mile, \$23.9 million project, said Jon Wahl of Somerset Planning & Engineering Services LLC in Friedens.

"The project is moving toward construction phase. There is no question it will go under construction sometime this summer," Wahl said.

Over the past two weeks, the county has acquired 11 more rights of way on the main line and seven on the Friedens extension, Wahl said. Twelve more right of way agreements should be signed within the week.

The county is purchasing permanent rights of way that are approximately 20-feet wide for \$3 per linear foot. Temporary right of way to stockpile dirt and pipeline during construction is being purchased at \$1 per linear foot.

Property will be restored back to the original condition, or if that is not possible, owners will be compensated for losses, Wahl said.

The remaining property owners include the state Department of Military Affairs and the state Department of Forest and Waters, he said.

The Quemahoning pipeline will run from the Quemahoning Reservoir to Somerset Borough, feeding water to municipalities along the way. The Friedens extension will be constructed along Route 281 from Geiger to Friedens, connecting a water storage tank to the Quemahoning pipeline's main line.

The engineers have made a minor redesign on the Friedens extension, moving it about 100 feet to avoid a building on one property.

"A man built a garage that did not show in the aerial photographs," he said. "We did not know it was there until we went and walked the property line."

Wahl said all of the municipalities that made commitments to purchase water from the finished pipeline have fulfilled their commitments.

"All the water agreements are in place, with the last one that was outstanding being approved by Conemaugh Township authority on Tuesday," he said.

Once all of the rights of way are obtained, the county will submit the project for final review to the financial agencies: the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Rural Utilities Service and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Wahl said.

Construction is scheduled to be finished within 18 months.

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