

Turnpike expansion in gear

Businesses dependent on toll road await autumn start of \$2.5B widening



By Andrew Kitchenman

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Trucking companies and other businesses praise the long-awaited expansion to the New Jersey Turnpike. The \$2.5 billion project will expand the roadway from six to 12 lanes from Interchange 8A to Interchange 6, paving the way for faster truck traffic. [NJBIZ File Photo]

The first visible signs of the long-awaited widening of the New Jersey Turnpike are expected in the next two months, and business owners who depend on the road are happy to see work moving forward.

The Turnpike Authority recently awarded several contracts for the \$2.5 billion project, which will expand the roadway from six to 12 lanes from north of Interchange 8A, in Monroe, to Interchange 6, in Mansfield. The construction is scheduled to be completed in 2014.

Recent contracts include those with the **Shaw Group Inc.**, of Baton Rouge, La., to perform construction management and inspection services, and **IEW Construction Group**, of Hamilton, which surveyed construction staging areas on the south-side lanes in August in East Windsor. IEW also is beginning to place construction barriers.

Along with the construction firms that will work on the project, the businesses that will most directly benefit are the shipping and distribution companies that line the road in central New Jersey.

Matt Wright, president of **Apgar Bros. Trucking**, in the Somerset section of Franklin, called the widening "really overdue."

Wright said trucking companies like his are excited about the work getting under way, and look forward to the benefits of faster transit times.

"It's going to do a lot for the state," he said, predicting that once the widening occurs, fewer trucks will be on Routes 1 and 130.

"The faster they can move this along, the better," Wright said. "Every consumer and every business in this state is going to benefit," because the whole region is served by trucks that are the last link in a worldwide delivery system of goods.

Gary Borne, co-owner and president of South Brunswick distribution and trucking business PSS, said his company was looking forward to the progress on the widening.

While Borne said the company's location near the Turnpike is "already perfect," the widening will make it more profitable.

"The accessibility is going to be that much simpler and for us, time is money," said Borne, who has been keeping a close eye as the project has moved forward.

Borne said he is anticipating more traffic delays during construction, but that doesn't trouble him too much, as "ultimately, the benefit we're going to see from it is going to be worth it," he said of his 26-year-old company.

Thomas Adamski, owner and president of **Cross Port Transport**, of Kearny, said he "couldn't be happier" that work is starting on the project, adding that he expects the project to be completed on schedule.

"Obviously, it's a good thing for the trucking community," said Adamski, whose trucking business transports from the Port of New York and New Jersey.

Turnpike Authority spokesman **Joe Orlando** said drivers on the Turnpike will start seeing activity along the road by October, with more construction activity deeper in the fall.

Orlando noted much of the current activity is in construction prep work.

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