

Long-term ramp closure starting Oct. 6

Long-term Interstate 81 ramp closure to start Oct. 6

Motorists are advised that the ramp on the east shore from northbound Interstate 81 to Front Street will be closed for approximately 40 days starting next Saturday, October 6. The ramp from northbound I-81 to Front Street includes both southbound and northbound Front Street.

Weather permitting, this ramp is scheduled to close early Saturday morning, October 6, and remain closed for a little more than a month. The detour will direct motorists to continue northbound on I-81 to the interchange with Route 22/322 (I-81 Exit 67B), west on Route 22/322 to the interchange with Linglestown Road, and then west on Linglestown Road to Front Street.

The current ramp closure affecting northbound Front Street to southbound I-81 over the George Wade Memorial Bridge will be reopened to traffic on the night before (Friday, October 5). This ramp has been closed for repairs since Sept. 5.

The ramp closures are necessary as part of the major rehabilitation project underway for the George N. Wade Memorial Bridge. Nearly all of the ramps associated with the bridge have been repaired over the past two years.

Three ramps associated with southbound I-81 were scheduled for repairs this year. The ramp from southbound I-81 to southbound Route 11/15 on the west shore was the first of these three ramps. The ramp from South Front Street to southbound I-81 on May 16 was the second of these three ramps.

The ramp from North Front Street to southbound I-81 was the last southbound ramp to be closed for repairs. This fall, the last ramp closure for repairs this year is the ramp from northbound I-81 to Front Street. In general, the rehabilitation work for this last ramp involves structural steel repairs and protective painting of portions of the steel.

People can view the traffic patterns and traffic conditions on the I-81 George N. Wade Memorial Bridge by way of a traffic camera on PennDOT's 511 traveler advisory website at www.511pa.com. Motorists can also use the website to check on travel conditions on other major expressways and interstate highways in south central Pennsylvania and statewide.

In addition to the website, motorists can also check on travel conditions by way of their telephones or cell phones by calling 511. This is a free travel information service available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

PennDOT has contracted with J.D. Eckman, Inc. of Atglen, Pennsylvania, to rehabilitate the Interstate 81 "George N. Wade Memorial Bridge" over the Susquehanna River at an original contract cost of \$36.5 million. This project on Interstate 81 extends from East Pennsboro Township on the west shore in Cumberland County to Susquehanna Township and the City of Harrisburg on the east shore in Dauphin County.

Work on the overall project began in October 2009 and is now scheduled to be completed in early 2013. The southbound "express lane"

should be removed in November and traffic should then be returned to its normal traffic patterns over the bridge. This is a major rehabilitation project to remove the bridge from being classified as structurally deficient (SD).

Most of the work is not visible to motorists driving over the bridge. Instead, the majority of the work deals with metal and concrete repairs to the substructure and superstructure of the bridge.

The George N. Wade Memorial Bridge, also known as the North Bridge, was built in the late 1960's and early 1970's. It was opened to traffic in August 1973. The bridge is 5,188 feet long and varies in width from 109 feet to 230 feet. It carries six lanes of traffic and has two collector road and

five ramp connections. Average daily traffic counts for this section of Interstate 81 are nearly 32,000 vehicles in each direction.

U.S. Army War College Archives - News Article - 02 October 2012