

Bridge closed in Monocacy for repairs

By Denise Larive, News Writer

The Main Street Bridge in Monocacy is closed for repairs until Aug. 27.

Detours to Route 724 include River Bridge Road in Douglassville and the Route 82 Bridge in Birdsboro.

The Monarch Fire Department, located across the bridge from Douglassville, now has three fire trucks stationed at the barn at Route 422 and Limekiln Road until the bridge re-opens.

Fire department officials said there are three fire trucks stationed at the fire house and the Friendship Fire Company #1 of Birdsboro also has coverage of the fire house area.

Township Manager Charles E. Lyon said the bridge should reopen on Aug. 27 or the construction company will incur fines of \$13,000 a day.

Sandy Wertz, director of operations for Southern Berks Ambulance, said the Amity truck is now in service 24 hours a day, seven days a week, as of Sunday, June 13.

Their Amity station is located at Fisher's Landscaping, 1096 Benjamin Franklin Highway, Douglassville.

A 10-second left turn arrow, followed by a green light, will be installed at Maplewood Drive for left turns onto Route 422 westbound.

Amity Police Chief Kent A. Shuebrook said the arrow and the resulting green light should allow all stacked traffic from Maplewood Drive to move out onto Route 422.

In other business:

- Richard Almquist, vice president of development for Wolfington Companies, Conshohocken, said the former Schmale Farm property off of Pine Forge Road and behind the Cider Mills subdivision has been renamed the Leaf Creek Farm.

The company has submitted to the township a new housing development plan, called the Leaf Creek PRD (planned residential), with 291 units on the 118 acre site zoned medium density residential.

Almquist said the development would include 162, 20-foot wide townhouses, 32 single family homes and 97 twins.

All units but the single family homes would be designed and marketed for

people without children.

Wolflington Companies had previously proposed a by-right plan of 237 single family homes, a plan to build 10 apartment buildings with 351 units and a transitional age development.

Wolflington had worked with the township from 2004 to 2006 to write the Transitional Age Development Ordinance that all parties involved hoped would generate money instead of additional school-age children, more school buildings, higher property taxes, and more peak hour traffic.

The TAD ordinance and the land development plan to construct the 50 percent age restrictive housing (230 units) and 50 percent general market homes (256 units) was rejected by the board in August 2006.

The PRD would be permitted as a conditional use and will require a hearing with township officials.

"I don't like the plan. I don't think this is the best use for the property," said Supervisor Terry L. Jones.

"Age restrictive is not popular in Berks and Lehigh counties," said Almquist. "Phoebe Berks is very popular in western Berks communities. Most of the national companies are frightened by Berks County because they rely on people to sell their homes. The Villa at Morlatton is lucky with Montgomery County people. Need to appeal to Villa people who have and want equity."

Almquist said the plan does not take advantage of the opportunity for maximum density and the build-out would be five to eight years.

"This is a different game, a different market than when looking at 2003-2004 with Pulte and Pulte has pulled out of this area," said Almquist.

- The board unanimously approved three waivers for the cell tower land development plan at 152 Hill Road, Douglassville, submitted by Liberty Towers, LLC, a Washington, D.C. area based communications tower company.

The waivers include screening the fenced-in site on three sides with evergreens and a double row of evergreens for the resident on the south side, waiving the 380-foot sight distance requirement to 330 feet, and allowing for a future preliminary/final land development approval.

- Lyon said the township's plan to build and develop the Amity Township Western Industrial Park, north Limekiln Road, has recently received favorable comments and the recommendation to move forward from Berks County officials including the Berks County Planning Commission.

AWIP meetings will be held the fourth Wednesday of each month beginning with the kick-off meeting on June 23.