

New water line to go under river

PAWC will install 20-inch line from Nanticoke to Plymouth Township.

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NANTICOKE – Pennsylvania American Water Co. will soon begin its second \$1 million-plus project in Luzerne County this year by placing another plastic water line deep under the Susquehanna River.

In April, workers finished installing a 1,300-foot line 46 feet below the river between Pittston and West Pittston. That project cost \$1.2 million.

The next project will use less pipe, and not run as deep, but will total \$200,000 more because of project cost increases.

Crews will use horizontal directional drilling technology to drill a borehole about 25 feet under the river bed and then pull the new pipeline through the borehole between Nanticoke and Plymouth Township. This 20-inch, high-density polyethylene (HDPE) pipe is about 900 feet long. Work will begin by month's end and is scheduled to last through August.

The same type of drilling, which the water company had never used before this year, was also used for the project between Pittston and West Pittston. State Department of Environmental Protection spokesman Mark Carmon has called the technology and the decision to lay the pipe under the river bed "the preferred method."

"This is a good thing. When a company can do it, it's something we look at favorably," Carmon said when the Pittston project was completed.

The water company's project manager also praised the method. The old technique was to lay pipes along the river bottom where they could rust and corrode, or be damaged by dredging or debris.

"Horizontal directional drilling is a more economical and environmentally friendly option for this type of installation, as opposed to conventional open-trench methods," said Dan Rickard, PAW project manager.

"Working under the river bed allows us to avoid the significant costs and other issues associated with damming the river. We can complete the project in a more timely and cost-efficient manner."

An existing 20-inch main that crosses the river and supplies water from the company's Ceasetown Water Treatment Plant to customers in the Nanticoke area will work in conjunction with the new line.

"Because the new pipeline will run parallel to the existing main, we anticipate that water service to customers will be unaffected during construction," said Anthony Gangemi, the company's network superintendent.

Company spokesman Susan Turcmanovich said that, unlike the Pittston project that impacted traffic patterns, this project will not require closing any roads. The work will be done just south of the Broadway Street Bridge.

"There will not be any traffic issues. The work is not being done along any roadways," she said.

The same contractors that worked on the Pittston project – Linde Enterprises of Honesdale and Gabe's Construction Co. of Sheboygan, Wis. – are doing the work this time around, too.

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