



Work on bridges must start

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On Aug. 27, a deal was reached between Canadian Pacific Railway and New York state regarding Pony Farm bridge in Oneonta and Brooker Hollow bridge in East Worcester.

The two Otsego County bridges were deemed deficient by the state Department of Transportation. The Pony Farm bridge showed obvious signs of structural stress, and Brooker Hollow was in a similar situation.

Funding of \$1.2 million was allocated to install pre-cast Con/Span bridges; Canadian Pacific agreed to supply half of the funds. The rest would be provided by the state through a \$600,000 grant obtained nearly three years ago.

State Sen. James Seward, R-Milford, was instrumental in engineering the settlement with Canadian Pacific, which owns both bridges. At the time, Seward said in a release that the deal was "good news for residents, families and businesses that rely on the bridges to get to work or school and for ensuring quick access by first responders and municipal vehicles."

In August, Seward spokesman Duncan Davie told The Daily Star that work was expected to begin in the fall, though there was a possibility it would wait until spring.

We find ourselves nearing summer, and still our area has not seen the repair of these bridges.

The residents of East Worcester have a temporary solution that allows vehicle traffic to use the Brooker Hollow bridge. Pony Farm residents aren't as lucky; the bridge is one of only two routes into the Pony Farm Industrial Park and neighborhood.

We applaud the efforts of Seward and Otsego County Chamber President and CEO Rob Robinson, who lobbied Canadian Pacific on behalf of the Industrial Park tenants. But we also feel frustration at the lack of progress.

Another spokesman for Seward, Jeff Bishop, told The Daily Star on Monday that there was no holdup. We feel there is a holdup when residents are given a timeline that is not adhered to, and they are left with limited means of transportation in a rural area.

Oneonta Town Supervisor Robert Wood said that the delay is because of a design change to the Pony Farm bridge and the state not releasing the funding for the projects. We feel funding from a grant that was obtained more than two years ago should be accessible by now.

These projects are important to our area. We urge the state and its local counterparts to work together toward the common goal of finally repairing these bridges.

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