

Butler Eagle 12-3-2024 Traffic Light Replacement at Rute 8 and Airport Road Construction Start

Construction begins on long-awaited traffic signal in Penn Township

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After more than a year of waiting, the long-awaited traffic signal and intersection changes at Airport Road and Route 8 in Penn Township are finally nearing completion. Butler Eagle File Photo

After more than a year of waiting, the long-awaited traffic signal and intersection changes at Airport Road and Route 8 in Penn Township are finally nearing completion.

The installation of the new signal, to begin Wednesday, Dec. 4, weather permitting, aims to solve the Township's longest-lasting traffic problem, an intersection that is a hot spot for traffic accidents — some of which have been fatal.

Aside from the new traffic signal, the revamped intersection will feature new left-turn lanes, pedestrian crossings, and improved lighting.

The poles for the traffic signal initially were estimated to arrive in late September, a half-year after they were ordered in March. But due to an increased backlog for the manufacturer, delivery of the poles was delayed.

"I trust that the general traffic will respect the construction zone restrictions and drive with awareness of the construction workers' safety as they pass through this intersection," Township Supervisor Samuel Ward said.

The Township previously estimated it would take three weeks for the new signals to become operational.

Construction on the project began in May, when the contractor, M & B Services, began installing underground conduits for the new traffic lights. M & B was awarded the construction contract for the project in January. The contract was just shy of \$500,000.

As the new traffic signal is installed, lane restrictions will be in place, and the contractor will provide warning signs. "We all look forward to the safe completion of this work and the permanent traffic improvements in the next few weeks," Ward said.

The intersection is known for crashes.

In a 2022 interview, Ward said the main problem is people speeding through the red light and driving too fast. He said at that time, Township officials were making moves to make the intersection a priority.

His comments came months after Ed Shields, the owner of Ed Shields Realtor in Penn Township, died in a crash at the intersection. Other serious injury crashes over the years also contributed to the decision to make changes at the intersection happen, Ward said at that time, noting that he, too, had been in a crash at the intersection.