

# POCONO RECORD

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## Construction of Smithfield Gateway begins with storm drainage pipe

Construction of the long-awaited Smithfield Gateway project has begun, as workers install a 6-foot pipe that will drain stormwater to Brodhead Creek.

It's the first physical step in a multi-year development process that will include the widening of U.S. Route 209 and the construction of a residential and retail complex on the former Mosier Dairy Farm.

Installing the pipe 30 feet underground, from the development site north of 209 to the creek, will take several months, said Doug Olmstead, development manager for DEPG/Legends Management Services.

Fortunately, traffic won't be disrupted while workers from Northeast Site Contractors place the pipe. Though the initial plan was to cut into 209, "it actually ended up being less expensive to bore underneath" the road, Olmstead explained.

The goal is have the pipe under 209 by July, when developers expect the first phase of improvements to the road itself to begin.

"If you've ever driven this road, and you try to make a left, it's just about impossible," said Jim DePetris, CEO of Legend Properties Inc.

The plan also calls for a loop road to run through the site, connecting 209 and Pennsylvania Route 447. Along that road will be a mixed-use development, including more than 200 "higher-end" apartments, as well as several hundred townhomes or condos for seniors, he said.

Below the residential units will be retail shops and restaurants, as well as a "small, rather upscale grocery store," DePetris said.

The development "shows the types of trends that are really happening now," said Smithfield Township Supervisor Jacob Pride. "What types of restaurants or residences do people really want these days?"

The site is the region's first entry into the "lifestyle center" category, a trend some of Legend's investors have noted. It's about being able to "live, work (and play)" all in the same place, DePetris said.

"It's sort of a concentration of activity so people don't have to drive everywhere," DePetris said. "It's convenient."

But it wasn't inevitable. Legend bought the Mosier Dairy property in 2015, and DePetris wasn't the first to try to develop the area.



A drainage pipe extending south of U.S. Route 209, as show in red, will carry stormwater from Smithfield Gateway to Brodhead Creek. [PHOTO PROVIDED]



Jim DePetris, CEO of Legend Properties, Inc., stands inside a storm drainage pipe that will be installed at the Smithfield Gateway development in Smithfield Township. [PHOTO PROVIDED]

"It's been tried many times over the past 25 years," DePetris said, but the "main obstacle" was always the traffic. Only a project that directly addressed 209 would work.

Pride attributed the success of DePetris and his team to the "level of complexity and sophistication" they approached the project with, as well as their dedication. He also praised their use of local contractors, and noted their success elsewhere in the region, such as Stroud and Pocono townships.

DePetris is confident that more development will follow, as it did when Legend worked along Pennsylvania Route 611 in the Bartonsville area.

"We believe that this corridor, which has been long passed by, will become a major activity for tax revenue and employment," DePetris said.

More development is "certainly possible," Pride said. The Smithfield Gateway will show developers and residents "what could really happen in our area, if given the right project and the right site."