

# Transit hub won't start until 2014

## COLTS says plan is still on track

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A proposed downtown transportation hub has a new date for groundbreaking after an issue with federal funding last year kept the project from pulling out of the station.

County of Lackawanna Transit System Executive Director Robert Fiume said COLTS hopes to break ground on the long-awaited intermodal center in spring 2014.

"We are continuing to move forward," he said.

The problem came in July when news broke that \$2.9 million in federal funding committed to the project from 1998 to 2000 had been redistributed because it was never spent. The cost of building the intermodal center is estimated at \$12.6 million.

In October, the U.S. Department of Transportation pledged that the funding would be restored.

"Hopefully, we will not have any snags," Mr. Fiume said.

U.S. Sen. Bob Casey said he is continuing to push the Department of Transportation to ensure that the money will be replaced.

"An intermodal transportation center in downtown Scranton will create jobs, bolster the region's infrastructure and ensure residents have access to a reliable, efficient bus system," Mr. Casey said in a statement, adding that he "will continue holding the fed-

eral government accountable until this gets done."

The unspent funding is not the only problem the project has encountered.

The COLTS board originally awarded the contract for the center's design in 2005 to Highland Associates, a Clarks Summit architectural and engineering company, without seeking proposals from other firms. In 2008, the Federal Transit Administration ruled the noncompetitive contract violated federal law and ordered COLTS to repay more than \$907,000.

The Highland contract later became part of the criminal case against former county Commissioners Robert C. Cordaro and A.J. Munchak, who were convicted on federal public corruption charges in June 2011.

Proposed in the 1990s, the intermodal center will be a hub for COLTS and commercial buses and taxis. It will also serve train riders should passenger rail service be restored to the region. The location for the center is slated to be the 100 block of Lackawanna Avenue, where the parking lot for the State Office Building is now.

COLTS spokeswoman Gretchen Wintermantel said the climate-controlled building will feature 10 bus berths for COLTS buses and five berths for intercity buses, with seating for about 70 people.

"The building will also feature a 'green' roof, which will save on heating and cooling costs and is better for the environment," she said in an email.

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