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Lackawanna County transit center construction ahead of schedule

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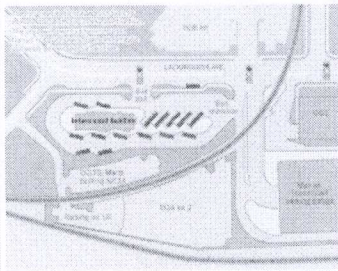
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JAKE DANNA STEVENS / STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER COLTS Executive Director Robert Fiume, left, and construction manager Nicholas Custer on the site that will become the Lackawanna County intermodal transportation center in Scranton on Tuesday.

Image Gallery for Lackawanna County transit center construction ahead of schedule



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The \$12.4 million Lackawanna County intermodal transportation center could be ready to become a functional public and commercial transit hub by Thanksgiving if the early pace of construction continues.

That would mean Martz Trailways could move into the building from its facility across the street, and the County of Lackawanna Transit System could also begin operations there — although COLTS will continue to be based out of its North South Road building.

Contractors reported that construction of the 22,500-square-foot downtown Scranton facility — designed to bring together public transit, private buses and taxis — is running about three weeks ahead of schedule, COLTS Executive Director Robert Fiume said.

During a recent visit to the work site, crews were squaring up and bolting together steel beams that make up the bones of the Lackawanna Avenue transit center. Michael Baker International is directing the work.

Room for buses

The building includes an indoor waiting area and outdoor bays that will house up to eight COLTS buses and five Martz buses.

Contractors expected that work to be done by the end of this week, at which point roofing and overhead mechanical work can start. Underground plumbing work was also scheduled to start this week.

By the end of the summer, the skeletal structure should start looking like a building, Mr. Fiume said.

"Every day there's more accomplished," he said of a project nearly two decades in the making.

The commercial bus parking lot runs right next to the railroad tracks, and county officials hope another phase of the project will install a rail pad to enable passenger rail service to the region.

Even without rail, passengers will be able to take public transit to the intermodal center and switch to commercial buses for longer-range travel.

"It's one central transfer point," Mr. Fiume said. The waiting area and canopy will "provide a climate-controlled environment for our passengers. They no longer will be out in the elements."

Parking to be moved

The process of moving parking for state employees from the transit hub's spot to space across the street will not be done this year. The goal was to set up about three-fifths of the space this year and demolish the former Tom Hesser Nissan dealership, then wrap up the work in the spring.

County Commissioner Ed Staback said the timing of the intermodal center's construction connects well with the study on regionalizing Lackawanna and Luzerne county transit systems. Officials in both counties asked the state Department of Transportation to examine the feasibility of restoring passenger rail service between Scranton and Wilkes-Barre to go with the consolidation study.

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