

We would like to express our disgust with the progress at which the conclusion of the Route 313 project is being handled. The Pennsylvania Department of Transportation (PennDot) has through the current length of the project, held several meetings with Dublin area businesses in an effort to apprise merchants of the scheduled completion of the project. During the early summer month's of 1995, PennDOT issued statements that the anticipated completion of the traffic detour project would be the end of October 1995. This completion date was accepted with reluctance by area merchants, with thoughts that the opening of Route 313 through Dublin at the announced time would allow businesses the opportunity to attract back customers in advance of the upcoming Christmas shopping season. It was with distress, we recently heard of the extension to Nov. 24th given to the general contractor, Primo Construction, Exton, PA.

Prior to the start of this project, our business was thriving and experiencing a 25-30% annual growth over the past eight (8) years. It was with this strength, that for many years we were capable of expanding product lines and services to our customers and the community. Unfortunately, during the past year, we have seen a notable major decrease in floor traffic and sales. This regression is directly attributable to the construction work being performed on Route 313.

No matter what efforts are made to persuade the commuters who would normally travel Route 313 from Quakertown to Doylestown, and outlying community residents that the road is open to the business area of Dublin, we regularly hear comments from people that they did not know they could get to certain businesses because of the construction project. In order for our business to survive through the last Christmas season and to this date, we have eliminated all expenses deemed unnecessary, such as sponsorship of community events and activities, advertising and have sought to contain costs greatly. It was impossible for us to take our normal draw at times, due to the lack of business. During this time period, we have accumulated increased debt, which we have accepted reluctantly as the cost of staying in business during the reconstruction period. However, for us to remain in business for next year, we desperately need Route 313 to open to thru traffic in October as announced previously by PennDOT. We have stocked our inventory with product to sell in anticipation of the return of normal floor traffic.

We feel that no extension should have been given to the general contractor for the project, as the delays caused in the project have been through his total control. There have been periods of days (and in July and August Weeks), when the general contractor would not sufficiently staff the project with manpower to perform work required. The general contractor has

periodically pulled the few employees he had manning this project off the site to complete other PennDOT projects where completion schedules were failing, such as those in Warrington and Lancaster. There have been days when employees were dismissed early from the job site, due to a lack of materials to complete a task. Recently, it is our understanding that curb work was not completed on the date scheduled due to the fact that the concrete supplier refused to deliver material to the job site until past due balances were paid for previous portions of the project.

In closing, it is our hope that through this communication that no one else would be put into the position that we have had to endure.

Arthur M. Gross
Friends Cords & Gifts