

# CAPITOL HILL UPDATE

REP. JIM GERLACH (PA-06)

September 9, 2005

[www.gerlach.house.gov](http://www.gerlach.house.gov)

## Lafayette Street Project Gets \$9 Million Boost

Washington – Joined by state, county and local officials at the offices of the Redevelopment Authority of Montgomery County today, Congressman Jim Gerlach announced his procurement of \$9.62 million in federal highway funds for the extension of Lafayette Street and its connection with the Pennsylvania Turnpike.

“This is great news for southeastern Pennsylvania and Montgomery County,” Rep. Jim Gerlach said. “This project will mean great things for Norristown as



Congressman Jim Gerlach addresses the crowd at the press conference announcing the federal money for Lafayette Street

new shops, businesses, and homes will eventually flourish along a new Lafayette Street.”

According to the Montgomery County Planning Commission, the total cost of the Lafayette Street extension project is approximately \$120 million and will include a partnership of Montgomery County, Pennsylvania Turnpike and federal funds. The County is currently working with the PA Turnpike Commission to finalize its funding partnership

## House Supports Emergency Funding for Gulf Coast Recovery Efforts

Washington -- Congressman Jim Gerlach joined an overwhelming bipartisan majority in the House recently in voting for a \$51.8 billion emergency disaster supplemental bill to aid in the recovery and repair efforts under-

way in the Gulf Coast. The legislation provides \$50 billion for Federal Emergency Management Agency's (FEMA) Disaster Relief Fund, \$1.4 billion for the Department of Defense, and \$400 million for the Army Corps

of Engineers to repair damaged infrastructure.

“We will provide whatever resources are needed to help aid in the recovery and reconstruction of the areas devastated by Hurricane Katrina,” Rep. Gerlach said. “This will be an expensive and challenging task but we are committed to getting it done. More assistance will be provided in the weeks and months ahead as the full scope of the problem is realized and we go about the business of returning that region to greatness.”

The legislation also adds some reporting and accountability provisions to allow Congress to conduct oversight over the expenditure of taxpayer dollars. These provisions are similar to what was included in the September 11th recovery packages and require regular and timely reports on how disaster funds are being expended. In addition, \$15 million is provided within existing funds for the Inspector General of the Department of Homeland Security to monitor disaster expenditures by FEMA and other relevant agencies.

### *Supporting Hurricane Katrina Victims*

Our thoughts and prayers are with our fellow Americans all along the Gulf Coast who are suffering through the horrible aftermath of Hurricane Katrina. It is in times of great tragedy when the true spirit of our wonderful country unites as one. We will see to it that those individuals suffering the most right now are taken care of and provided the assistance needed to get back onto their feet. We will rebuild those great towns and cities. But this is no small job. We need the full resources of our government and the generous, compassionate spirit of the American people to get this done.

For those interested in donating more than their thoughts and prayers, visit The Salvation Army Web site at [www.salvationarmy.org](http://www.salvationarmy.org) and the American Red Cross Web site at [www.redcross.org](http://www.redcross.org), or call 1-800-HELP NOW (435-7669). Remember, every little bit helps.

Thank you and God Bless America,

Jim Gerlach

Visit [www.gerlach.house.gov](http://www.gerlach.house.gov) for more information about Hurricane Katrina relief efforts.

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## Federal Funding a Boost for Lafayette Street

*Continued From Front*

for the remaining phases of the project.

With the federal dollars announced today, the County now has almost \$22 million committed to finish the project's preliminary engineering and final design work. The County is also able to get moving on the right of way acquisition and utility relocation work and then start the first phase of construction which is reconstructing existing Lafayette Street.

The County is scheduled to complete preliminary engineering by the end of 2006, complete final design by 2008, start the right of way and utility work in 2008, and begin the project with the reconstruction of existing Lafayette in the early part of 2009. County officials are hoping to have the entire project with its connection to the Turnpike and Route 202 completed by the end of 2012.

"This project is the keystone for the revitalization of our county seat," said James R. Matthews, Chairman of the Montgomery County Commissioners. "The road access that this project provides will open up the riverfront for redevelopment and open space, and will open up the minds of developer's to Norristown's future."

Senator Rick Santorum, who worked hard to have money added in the transportation bill for this project in the U.S. Senate, added: "I am pleased to have worked with Congressman Gerlach and Senator Specter to bring this important funding to the region to help in the construction of the Lafayette Street Extension project. This project is vital to growth and mobility in Norristown."



Above, Congressman Gerlach talks about the funding for Lafayette Street; Pictured below is a segment of Lafayette Street in Norristown where officials hope an extensive revitalization effort will result from an investment of federal, state and local money.



Brian O'Neill, founder and Chairman of O'Neill Properties, which serves as the master developer of Norristown, said: "As one of Pennsylvania's great early industrial cities and the county seat of Montgomery County, Norristown serves as an important regional hub. We congratulate Congressman Gerlach as well as state, county and city officials for making this \$9.62 million appropriation possible in their ongoing commitment to improving Norristown's future. The Lafayette Street extension will create a retail and residential corridor unrivaled in the eastern suburbs of Pennsylvania."

The \$9.62 million

was included in the \$286.5 billion transportation reauthorization legislation that was signed into law in August. The Lafayette Street project funding was part of almost \$38 million Rep. Gerlach helped secure for the 6th Congressional District in H.R. 3, *The Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users*.

"Passage of this transportation legislation, although a long time coming, means that many great projects get the funding needed to move forward," Rep. Gerlach explained. "Not only will we improve the conditions of our roads and fund the busses and trains people we rely on everyday, but this legislation will help fuel the job market as its estimated

that 47,000 new jobs are created for every \$1 billion in transportation funding we set aside."

H.R. 3 also authorized the Schuylkill Valley Metro project for final design and construction funding for fiscal years through 2009. The proposed transit project would extend passenger rail service along the Route 422 corridor, stretching from Norristown to Wyomissing.

"This project is the keystone for the revitalization of our county seat."

-- James R. Matthews, Chairman, Montgomery County Board of Commissioners

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