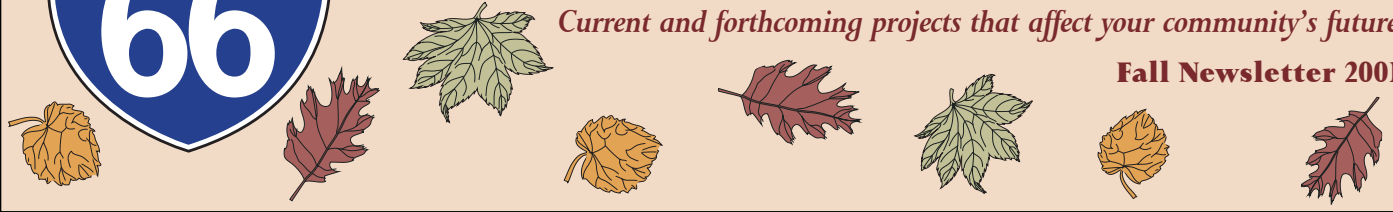




# Southern Kentucky Corridor (I-66) Appalachian Corridor Segment Newsletter

*Current and forthcoming projects that affect your community's future*

**Fall Newsletter 2001**



## ORIENTATION

The **Appalachian Corridor Segment** is a 30-mile portion of the Southern Kentucky Corridor (I-66), which extends the length of Kentucky through the southern tier of counties. The **Appalachian Corridor Segment** begins in Pike County on US 23 south of Pikeville and proceeds in a

northeasterly direction near Kimper, McVeigh, Phelps, and Ransom. The corridor crosses the state line at the Tug Fork and ends at the proposed King Coal Highway (Interstate 73 / 74 corridor) in Mingo County, West Virginia. (see enclosed map)

## LOOKING BACK

In the early 1990s, the Interstate 66 Feasibility Study was conducted to help examine the possibility of a coast-to-coast highway. The study indicated that linking the existing National Highway System to state transportation systems might make sections of the Interstate economically feasible. In 1995 Federal legislation was enacted which refined the proposed Interstate location to be near several cities in Kentucky - Pikeville, Jenkins, Hazard, London, Somerset, Columbia, Bowling Green, Hopkinsville, Benton, and Paducah.

By 1997 additional studies helped project planners conclude that a section of I-66 across the Bluegrass State, also referred to as the Southern Kentucky Corridor, had road-user benefits as much as \$1.45 for every dollar invested in the project, and economic-development benefits of \$4.14 for each dollar invested.

This section of the Southern Kentucky Corridor (I-66) in Pike County, Kentucky and Mingo County, West Virginia had a very high priority. Studies were conducted to further refine the project corridor and examine environmental issues. By April of 2000 a design team for this high priority project was assembled. The team included members from the Kentucky Transportation Cabinet and the West Virginia Department of Transportation, as well as consultants from American Consulting Engineers, Palmer Engineering, and Vaughn & Melton Engineering. Finally, in April of 2000, an I-66 Appalachian Corridor Team (I-66 ACT) of community representatives and state and local government officials was formed to assist with identifying and selecting the corridor for this 33 mile segment of Interstate highway.

## I-66 ACT MEMBERSHIP

Mr. David Akers	Mr. Randal Good	Ms. Marilyn Payson
Representative Ira Branham	Mr. Ben Hale	Representative Nick Rahall, II
Senator Robert Byrd	Representative Keith Hall	Senator John D. Rockefeller, IV
Mr. Brian Carr	Mr. Ben Hark	Congressman Harold Rogers
Senator Truman Chafin	Mr. James Harless	Mr. David Sanders
Mr. Larry Cline	Mr. Leon Huffman	Mr. Jose Sepulveda
Senator Joe Fanning	Senator Gary Johnson	Mr. James Sothen
Mr. Franklin Fitzpatrick	Mr. Earl Jones, Jr.	Mr. Terry Spears
Mr. Curtis Fletcher	Senator R. S. Jones, II	Mr. Gary White
Mr. Walter Fletcher	Ms. Linda Wagner-Justice	Representative Harry White
Mr. Michael Gheen	Representative Steven Kominar	Ms. Kitty White
Mr. Eugene Gibbs	Mr. T. C. Music	Mr. Mike Whitt
Mr. Freddie Goble	Ms. Carol Napier	Mr. William Wood
Mr. David Gooch	Governor Paul Patton	

## I-66 ACT CHARTER

### Mission Statement

The I-66 Appalachian Corridor Team is committed to provide responsive leadership in the development of a highway that is safe and sensitive to the human and natural environments with innovative and timely decision-making for a cost effective transportation system. The Team will work to promote economic development and enhance the quality of life in southern West Virginia and eastern Kentucky by encouraging the cooperation and involvement of the affected communities.

### Goals

1. Meet all project schedule dates.
2. Inform project area households of the availability of the I-66 ACT by August 1, 2000.
3. Obtain agreements of agency review turn-a-round times by September 1, 2000.
4. The project completed within budget.
5. Maximize economic development opportunity.
6. Establish the project website and newsletter by June 1, 2000 with scheduled updates.
7. Keep the spirit of partnering alive throughout the project design process.
8. Create an atmosphere of improved communications between government and communities.
9. Develop a process for timely access for geo-technical drilling.
10. Resolve all conflicts within the time frame set out in the conflict resolution ladder.
11. Produce a project that is recognized for technical excellence and environmental sensitivity.
12. Avoid, minimize or mitigate all environmental concerns.

We the undersigned hereby endorse the above goals in guiding the development of this project.

*Roy Adams*

*Fred Lorde*

*Scott L. Murray*

*Ann E. Rm +*

*Kitty White*

*Glenn Zander*

*John B. Sacksteder*

*David B. Akers*

*Fredie Goble*

*Bob Hill*

*William Hill*

*Brough W. Spent*

*John R. Bowlin*

*John D. Bean Jr*

*Thomas Fayman*

*Judea Kayne-Dotie*

*Bow Hale*

*Leon Huffman*

*Marilyn Payson*

*Earl J. Jones*

*Ralph J. Palmer*

*Phyllis Hunt*

*Norse Aragon*

*Samuel R. Dolly*

*James Melt*

*Cheri + James*

*(V.C. Mason)*

*Ch. Hill*

*John J. Hill*

*David Whitworth*

*Carol Taylor*

*[Signature]*

*[Signature]*

*Gandolph / Scott*

## What is the Purpose and Need for this Project?

1. To Open New Economic Development Opportunities in Pike County and Mingo County because of their low per capita income, high unemployment rates and poverty rates, and on-going emigration;
2. To improve accessibility to government services, higher education, employment, retail/shopping, and medical, dental, and legal services;
3. To improve east-west connectivity to the National Highway System as recognized by the United States Congress in 1995;
4. To improve safety for the traveling public through reduced travel and an improved roadway;
5. To increase tourism opportunities to Fishtrap Lake, Grant Branch Recreation Area, Breaks Interstate Park, R. D. Bailey Lake, significant historic landmarks related to coal mining towns and Hatfield/McCoy Feud (i.e., Stone and other towns along Pond Creek and the Blackberry Creek area in Kentucky, and Thacker, Newtown, and Meador in West Virginia), and cities and towns in the region that would generate additional revenue for the regional economy; and
6. To provide an important link in the Kentucky Portion of the Southern Kentucky Corridor (I-66) by closing a major gap in the east-west arterial system through southeastern Kentucky. This segment of I-66 from US 23 south of Pikeville to the proposed King Coal Highway has independent utility since currently there is no east-west roadway connection in southern Pike County that provides access to the National Highway System. This priority section of I-66 would provide this connectivity and much more direct travel opportunities than the present substandard facilities. It will provide an East-West direct link between two North-South major arterials, i.e., US 23 in Pike County, Kentucky and the proposed King Coal Highway in Mingo County, WV.

## PROGRESS TO DATE

Considerable progress has been made on the I-66 Appalachian Corridor Segment during the summer. Preliminary engineering studies are nearly complete. A Value Engineering Study has been conducted as mandated by the FHWA. The objective of value engineering is to maximize economy and the purpose of the study was to provide an impartial peer review of the proposed design and to suggest cost effective alternates. Presently the consultant design team is preparing responses to the Value Engineering Study.

Fuller, Mossbarger, Scott and May Engineers, Inc. (FMSM) has performed a Phase 1 Geotechnical Overview for the proposed Appalachian Corridor Segment. The overview consisted of a literature search related to geotechnical and geologic aspects of the project, numerous field reconnaissance of the area along the proposed corridor, research of coal mining, and oil and gas records at various governmental agencies, and a determination of possible geotechnical concerns in the project area. Many of the geotechnical concerns within the corridor are related to past and present coal mining operations. Mining operations identified during the overview were mapped and used by the Design Team to anticipate possible geotechnical problems such as subsidence, cut and embankment stability, and foundation conditions for

proposed roadway facilities. Geotechnical concerns related to known oil and gas facilities, landslides and hydrologic considerations have also been addressed during the overview.

Marshall Miller & Associates (MM&A) has been retained as a geological consultant to determine the relative magnitude of impact to mining operations and coal reserves along the alternative corridors. The coal seam information is being assembled in a geologic model of the coal reserves within in the corridors. Once completed, MM&A will be able to determine the approximate amount of mineable coal that could be impacted by construction of the proposed highway within each of the alternative corridors.

Environmental field studies and investigations have been completed. A final draft environmental impact statement (DEIS) was submitted September 4, 2001 and is currently circulating among state and federal offices. The tragic events of September 11 have created repercussions across the country, and the I-66 project schedule has not been immune. Because key personnel have been called to duty by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), the DEIS awaits approval by the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA).

## PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT

The Kentucky Transportation Cabinet (KYTC) provided a number of public involvement venues for information exchange over the summer which include:

- ◆ **Public Information Booth - Matewan, West Virginia June 9th and 10th**
- ◆ **Public Information Meeting - Matewan High School, June 20th**
- ◆ **Public Information Meeting - Blackberry Community Center, June 20th**
- ◆ **Public Information Meeting - Kimper Elementary School, June 21st**
- ◆ **Public Information Meeting - Shelby Valley High School, June 21st**
- ◆ **www.interstate66.com - the I-66 website**



*KYTC information booth at the Hatfield-McCoy Reunion Festival*

In June, The KYTC hosted an information booth at the Hatfield-McCoy Reunion Festival with several team members on hand to answer questions and provide orientation. At this event the Appalachian Corridor Segment Questionnaire was introduced in an effort to solicit public opinion. Later the same month, four Public Information Meetings were held at

locations throughout the project corridor. The public was presented with comprehensive, large-scale displays detailing possible alignments within one of four corridors: North, North to South, South, and South to North. The participants were asked to examine specific sections within each corridor and to record remarks on the comment sheets provided. Again the Appalachian Corridor Segment Questionnaire was distributed and the attendees were encouraged to circulate the questionnaire with friends and family back home.

The I-66 website, [www.interstate66.com](http://www.interstate66.com), remains active and has been updated to show the displays exhibited at the public information meetings, and to include the Appalachian Corridor Segment Questionnaire.

*"My husband and I are for the road because it will be a great asset for the community. It will make transportation easier for people who work and will increase tourism for the Hatfield/McCoy Trail."*

Remark from an I-66 Comment sheet

## PUBLIC INPUT CHANGES ACCESS POINT

Several comments have been received from the Public Meetings regarding interchange locations. Interchange locations were proposed during Phase 1A activities and included an access to KY 319 at Poundmill Branch. However, this proved to be an expensive proposition which may not have best served the purpose and needs statement for this project. In addition, the I-66 ACT membership and large contingent

of the public began to express support for an access to the Phelps area. Additional possibilities were investigated and the proposed interchange at Blue Spring Branch appeared to satisfy all stakeholders as well as remain within the spirit of the purpose and needs statement. Other access points are shown on the map on page 7.

## FUTURE ACTIVITIES

Future activities include the identification of a preferred alignment, once the DEIS has been approved by the FHWA. The identification process will commence with an I-66 ACT Meeting where the public input will be reviewed and the design team recommendations presented. The next step will be to build consensus for a preferred alignment among other

stakeholders such as the KYTC Executive Committee and the West Virginia Department of Highways. Finally, the preferred alignment will then be presented to the public at one of two Public Hearings to be held in Kentucky and West Virginia respectively. The public hearings were scheduled to take place in October, but have been delayed until late November.

## FUNDING STATUS

Preliminary Engineering for the Appalachian Corridor Segment has been funded to date by \$4.5 million allocation from the Federal Highway Administration's Fiscal Year 1999 "Corridors and Borders" Discretionary Fund. Those monies were allocated to Kentucky for the purpose of assessing

potential project impacts and developing a more precise location for the new road. The location and environmental processes are nearing completion, and more funding is needed in order for the Pike County section of I-66 to move forward into the final stages of design.

*"The people of Phelps and Majestic have been neglected in the development of our infrastructure. We need this road to help keep this area alive. Without this proposed route being built, this area will surely become a ghost town."*

E. Ratliff - June 21, 2001



## PUBLIC INPUT

In addition to public participation, one of the objectives of the public involvement process, among others, has been to determine which corridor the public preferred. The Appalachian Corridor Segment Questionnaire presented the following item as question number 19:

19. On the attached map, which combination of preliminary alignment bands do you prefer? If you are opposed to the highway, just indicate you are opposed.

- TO ■ - BLUE TO PURPLE
- TO ■ - BLUE TO GREEN
- TO ■ - RED TO PURPLE
- TO ■ - RED TO GREEN
- Opposed

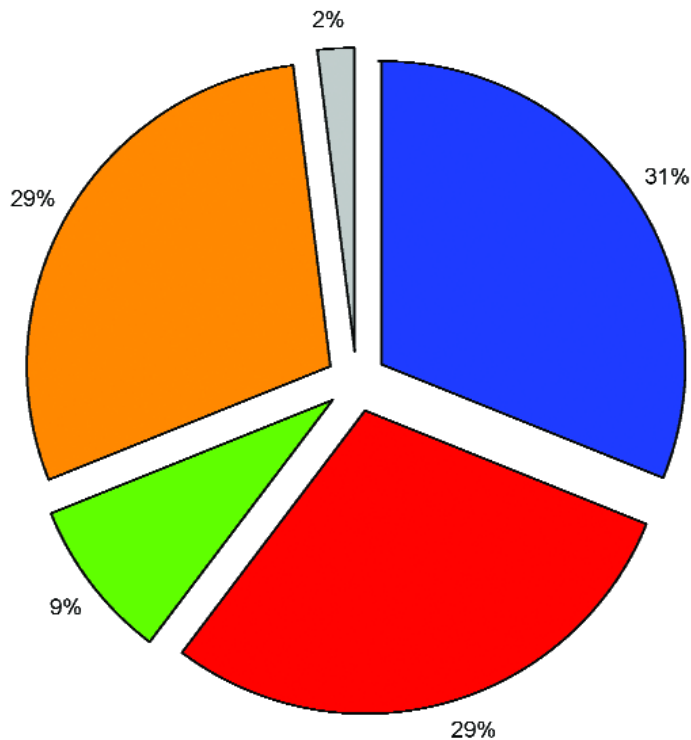
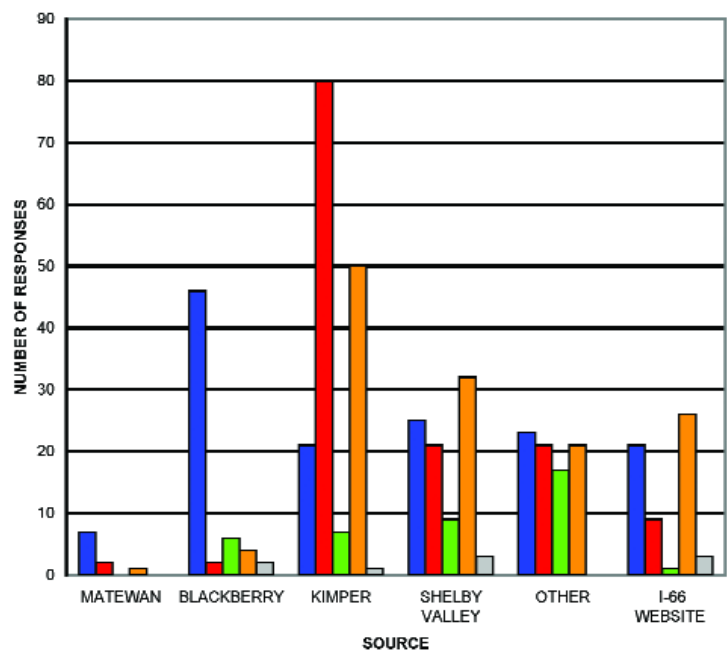
(The map has been reproduced on page 7)

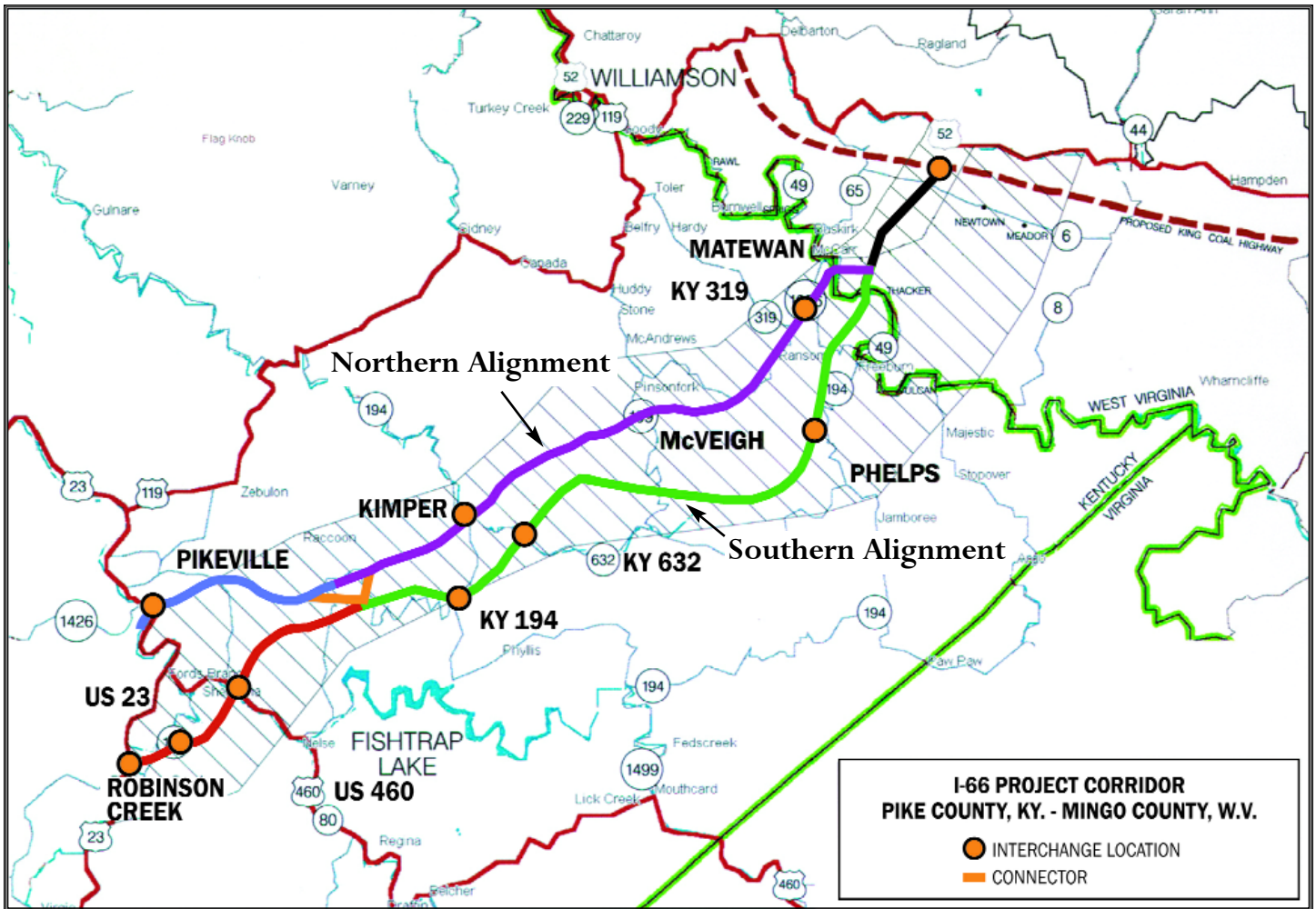
## PUBLIC RESPONSE

The public responded to this question in the following manner. The bar graph below shows how each corridor scored on a source by source basis. For example, at the Shelby Valley Public Meeting, about nine people preferred the South to North route. The pie chart shows responses on an overall basis. The South to North route appeared to be the least popular.

### LEGEND

- NORTH (BLUE TO PURPLE)
- NORTH TO SOUTH (BLUE TO GREEN)
- SOUTH TO NORTH (RED TO PURPLE)
- SOUTH (RED TO GREEN)
- OPPOSED





Map taken from Appalachian Corridor Segment Questionnaire, Item #19

### ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

More information can be obtained by contacting:

**John Bowlin, PE**  
 I-66 Project Manager  
 Kentucky Transportation Cabinet  
 Hindman, Kentucky 41822  
 PHONE: (606) 785-9644



The I-66 website will be updated to announce future meeting dates. Visit the website at:

[www.interstate66.com](http://www.interstate66.com)

**Southern Kentucky Corridor (I-66)  
Appalachian Corridor Segment Newsletter**



**[www.interstate66.com](http://www.interstate66.com)**

Kentucky Transportation Cabinet  
PO Box 1347  
Hindman, Kentucky 41822