

# Bridge demolition forum Wednesday at Melrose school

The public forum on the blasting schedule for the old Jamestown Bridge demolition will be conducted Wednesday, March 22, at 7 p.m. at the Melrose School. The exact schedule for the blasting has not been set yet, but may be ready by next week's forum.

The event is co-ordinated by the state Department of Transportation in conjunction with the Cashman Equipment Company of Boston, contractors for the bridge demolition.

The forum is part of the contract requirements to provide residents with the opportunity to learn about the blasting procedures and to express any concerns they have about the demolition operations.

A film of a similar demolition is due to be part of the presentation. DOT and Cashman representatives will also explain the various methods of demolition and provide the dates or estimated dates of blasting to take place this spring.

A DOT spokesman said that three major blasts are expected during the first event, for which traffic on the new Jamestown Bridge will be stopped for a full four hours, between 10 a.m. and 2 p.m. on the first blasting date. On

that date, the main through truss, the approach spans on either side of the truss, and the two piers holding those sections will be removed by blasting.

The old and the new Jamestown Bridges parallel each other, with 220 feet between their nearly 7,000-foot lengths.

For other blasting, lesser sections will be removed in shorter time periods within the 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. hours on various weekdays. Under the contract, weekend bridge closures are not permitted.

The Boston-based marine specialty company, which won the bid to take down the bridge for \$19.5 million plus salvage rights, has been dismantling the bridge since mid-January, after spending four months on preparations, including building a project village of trailers, heavy construction equipment, and a barge crane.

Demolition will include a series of explosions to separate iron beams for removal. Bridge sections will be dropped into the bay and removed later.

The 1,650 feet of the western end of the old bridge is not part of the main demolition plan, pending decisions about putting a public fishing pier there. A report on the pier development was issued last week. (See story page 24.)



Construction of the old Jamestown Bridge.

Photo courtesy Jamestown Historical Society

The Cashman contract requires that it notify the DOT and that in turn the DOT is responsible to notify all local, state and federal public-safety personnel about the bridge-closing schedule at least two weeks before any closings. In addition, each closing must be posted on the DOT's traffic management center 48 hours before each blast.

A total of 18 portable "road work" trailers are in place near bridge approaches and along main highways in preparation for electronically updating traffic conditions on the new bridge during the blasting on the old bridge, which was closed to traffic in 1992.

Steel plates removed from the bridge roadway are being taken by barge or truck for stockpiling or for delivery directly to buyers, based on Cashman's arrangements for the approximately 6,000 tons of steel in the bridge. An estimated 24,000 cubic feet of concrete, some with embedded steel, will be towed out to create

three artificial marine reefs. All debris more than one-foot in size will be removed from the floor of the Narragansett Bay which the bridge spans.

Locations of the reefs are Gooseberry Island and Sheep Point, within two miles of the Newport coastline, and Rhode Island Sound, at a point 10 miles southeast of Point Judith, according to the DOT.

## For the Record

The state Department of Environmental Management is working to complete its response to Jamestown's "50-percent" plan to close the former north end landfill site and build a highway barn there. A report in the March 9 Jamestown Press incorrectly said the DEM response was expected by March 10.

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- James Fallows



The *National Geographic* of March, 2006, vividly portrays the ecological devastation inherent in current coal mining techniques.



America needs to re-think its policy on nuclear energy. And, it must give priority to development of alternative energy resources, such as wind power.

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