

Bridge

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tion areas have been contacted directly and are aware of what is expected of them. During the evacuation period, displaced residents can go to the Jamestown library, where they can watch a live broadcast of the event.

On the morning of the event, motorists should avoid driving in the clear-zone areas because their presence could adversely affect the demolition schedule.

Emergency vehicles, such as ambulances, will be permitted access just prior to and after the demolition if needed.

All marine traffic within 3,000 feet of the old Jamestown Bridge center span will be prohibited starting at 10 a.m. on the morning of the detonation until the bridge is re-opened. The DOT recommends that any boats moored or docked within the 3,000-foot area be moved.

There are no nearby viewing areas of the event. The University of Rhode Island Narragansett Bay Campus on South Ferry Road offers a clear line of sight to the bridge. However, due to available

space, the number of spectators will be limited.

The event can be viewed live on Cox Digital Cable channel 124. The Highway Advisory Radio system at 1630 AM on the dial will also be broadcasting announcements concerning road closures and other up-to-the-minute information. For complete details, interested parties can also visit the DOT Web site at www.dot.state.ri.us. Safety zones will be strictly enforced in the air, on land, and on the water.

At 10 a.m. on April 11, dignitaries will gather at a restricted site on the North Kingstown side of the Jamestown Bridge. There, Governor Carcieri, and U.S. Senator Lincoln Chafee will make speeches to invited guests.

After the ceremonies, sometime between 11 a.m. and noon, a tugboat will sound three blasts on a horn to signal a five-minute warning, followed in four minutes by another three blasts, signaling a one-minute warning.

Then a 10-second countdown will signal the governor to press the button to detonate the charges. Only the media and other personnel in the immediate area will hear the live countdown.

However, the countdown will

be broadcast on Cox Digital Cable channel 124.

After the explosion, the new bridge will be cleared of any debris. A safety inspection will follow before Route 138 and all roads will be re-opened to traffic and evacuees will be allowed to return to their homes.

Following the event, the DOT expects the area to be cleared for limited marine traffic in about four weeks. The U.S. Coast Guard can provide more specific information, but the DOT recommends that boaters avoid the area if possible.

Dick Zellen, project manager, and John McNulty, project supervisor for Cashman Equipment Corporation, the contractors in charge of the dismantling of the bridge, estimate total cleanup time to be six to eight weeks after the explosion before the entire area will be open for navigation.

The superstructure of the center span is pre-rigged with cable to hold it together during the explosion, Zellen said. The entire structure is designed to collapse into the bay in such a way that it can be easily retrieved. Divers will be sent down to attach cranes to the rigged cables to pull the debris out of the water and lower it onto barges, he continued. The process cannot be rushed, and must be done properly to ensure safety and efficiency, he added.

The steel sections of the bridge will be recycled and the concrete sections will be used to create artificial reefs.

Aquifer

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pending application for federal funds. The designation would bring the EPA into planning if the town were to seek federal monies, he noted.

Heath said the designation would apply to any other town projects for which federal funds were sought. A secondary result of a sole aquifer designation is the increased public awareness of the nature and value of local ground water resources, he pointed out. Local residents and businesses may be more willing to protect an aquifer through local action if they learn their drinking water originates from a vulnerable underground supply, according to Heath.

The EPA has designated 72 communities in the U.S., including 15 in New England, as sole-source aquifers. Of the 15, three, including Block Island, are in Rhode Island. The Safe Drinking Water Act gives the EPA the authority to designate aquifers that are the sole or principal drinking water source for at least 50 percent of the population for an area, and that, if contaminated, would create a significant hazard to public health.

Ellen Winsor, a leader of the north end citizens' group, told the Town Council last month in regard to the group's efforts for the designation. She said the NECC wants federal officials to review planned development on the island and to raise public consciousness about protecting ground water and preventing contamination of the island's aquifer.

"Ultimately the amount of fresh water available and its quality are directly related to land-use activities. Land management is especially important. We seek sole-source aquifer status to protect the bedrock water now and in the future, to protect our private wells, to raise awareness of not only all who live on the island but also those who will visit seasonal-

ly and who will, in the future, choose to live, develop and do business on this fragile aquifer," Winsor stated.

In discussing the circumstances under which the designation would apply, Heath praised the town's current work on preserving open space through farmland preservation. He said that undertaking would not be covered by the sole-source designation because it does not involve any construction, and it is intended to deter development.

Heath is awaiting letters from Jamestown officials to confirm water supply data for the island, and from North Kingstown and Newport about the role they might or might not serve were Jamestown to need water due to problems with its water supply. Heath has also been advised that Dr. Michael Sullivan, director of the state Department of Environmental Management, has promised the NECC that he would write a letter about the island's water situation.

According to the NECC's petition, based on town documents, 57 percent of island residents are on private water wells and live outside the area supplied by the municipal water supply, and the well users rely solely on ground water through wells drilled into fractured bedrock. The reservoir water also is supplemented by bedrock aquifer community wells, the petition says.

The DEM currently is evaluating the latest plans for closing former Jamestown landfill and construction of a new town highway barn for the Department of Public Works. That report is not expected before the end of the month.

NECC members and other neighbors of the landfill were originally concerned about monitoring plans for post-closure and their concerns were increased a year ago, when the town began to study the possibility of building the garage at that location and further disturbing the long decaying garbage buried there. The two issues have split townspeople over how to proceed with each concern.

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