

E-ZPass applications available beginning on Monday

By Adrienne Downing

The Rhode Island Turnpike and Bridge Authority announced Tuesday that applications for E-ZPass transponders will be available at the Jamestown office beginning Monday, Nov. 3.

"Tokens are part of the nostalgia of the Newport Bridge. So much a part of the nostalgia that the last time we had to order parts for the token machines, we had to get them from Australia," RITBA Chairman David Darlington said. "The time for EZ Pass has definitely come."

RITBA made the announcement in conjunction with U.S. Rep. Patrick Kennedy's presentation of \$500,000 in funding he secured for the implementation and installation of the E-ZPass system. Kennedy said the new system would provide a service to the users of the bridge, aid in attracting tourism and help reduce the amount of emissions from cars idling at the tollbooth.

Authority officials are aiming to have the system online in mid-December. E-ZPass officials called the time line "industrious," but vowed to work with RITBA to implement the system on time.

Transponders may be paid for by cash, check, credit card, or debit cards with a credit card logo. "We prefer credit or debit cards because that is how the system is set up, to be tied to a credit card account," RITBA Executive Director Buddy Croft said.

The rate for Rhode Island residents will be 83-cents per crossing with a Rhode Island transponder. The cash rate will remain at \$2 and the out-of state transponder rate will

be \$1.75.

Residents who owned transponders from other states prior to Sept. 24 will be eligible for up to \$25 credited to their Rhode Island E-ZPass account. A credit of \$10 will be given for the purchase of one transponder and an additional \$15 for the second transponder.

Families may have up to four transponders on one account and businesses are eligible for an unlimited number. The cost for the first transponder is \$10. The second transponder will cost \$15 and each additional transponder will be \$20.95.

A \$25 deposit is required for each account, and when the account falls below \$10, an additional \$15 will be added to keep the account at a \$25 level.

The Newport Pell Bridge will be the 50th site using the E-ZPass system in the Eastern United States.

Applications may be picked up at the office adjacent to the toll plaza from 7 a.m. to 7 p.m., Monday through Friday and 8 a.m. to noon on Saturday.

During the month of November, applications will also be available at Naval Undersea Warfare Center, building 80, from 8:30 a.m. to 11 a.m., on Nov. 4, 6, 13 and 18.

They will also be available at the Community College of Rhode Island in Newport on Thursday, Nov. 6, from 2 p.m. to 7 p.m., Wednesday, Nov. 12, from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. and Thursday, Nov. 20, from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m.

Online applications will be available Monday, Dec. 8. For more information on E-ZPass, visit www.ritba.org



RITBA Executive Director Buddy Croft, left, and Chairman David Darlington, right, receive a check for \$500,000 from Rep. Patrick Kennedy for the implementation of the E-Z Pass system.

Photo by Adrienne Downing

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There is a dearth of shellfish and aquatic life not just at Hull Cove but in the entirety of Narragansett Bay. Although this may be due, in part, to hoards of amateur quahoggers, knowledgeable experts attribute the principal cause of the problem to depletion of oxygen due to contaminated surface water runoff polluting the Bay.

That contamination comes from thousands of sources throughout the area draining into Narragansett Bay. The single worst culprit is frequently identified as fertilizers. In the Bay, these chemicals cause the explosive growth of aquatic life near the top of the water column. This artificially sustained "bloom" uses virtually all of the oxygen in the water, leaving nothing for the bottom dwelling species. Thus, the Bay's nursery is effectively shut down.

The Rhode Island Constitution provides, in pertinent part: "The people shall continue to enjoy and freely exercise all of the rights of fishery, and the privileges of the shore..." The Constitution also states that this provision shall be construed "liberally".

But then the Constitution goes on to declare that "it shall be the duty of the general assembly to provide for the conservation of ...the natural resources of the state...and to protect the natural environment..."

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