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**President Bush vetoed the Iraq War spending bill because it contained a provision for a withdrawal timetable?**

- It was the right thing to do, the timetable is a surrender
- He was wrong, the people spoke in November
- It hurts our troops

America has no

## BREAKING NEWS: Outside firm now handling county's roads

Story posted Jun 09, 2007 - 11:40:46 EDT

By Stephen Guilfoyle [editor@onlinechester.com](mailto:editor@onlinechester.com)

It was after 8 p.m., but Tim Antley started packing up his computer bag to head out to McClure Street to get a look at the sidewalk in need of repair.

"There's still daylight left," he said. "Why wait?"

Antley is a project manager with the Dennis Corp. His company had just seen Chester County Council approve a contract between the two for Dennis Corp. to begin handling the county's road engineering work.

In March, the council met with Dennis Corp officials, who gave a presentation on what they could do for the county in maintaining and eventually paving many of the county's dirt roads.

The company had a similar contract with Fairfield County that was held up as an example for Chester County.

Fairfield County officials contacted by The N&R praised the company for doing good work and getting grant moneys that gave that county more bang for their road dollars.

Even so, Chester County Council had to go through a process of trying to hire a road-engineering firm, once the Dennis Corp. convinced the council to go that route.

The work is not bid out and based on the lowest price. The county sent out a "request for qualifications" and 17 firms submitted materials

County Procurement Director George Thomas and a committee pared the requesters down to four finalists and at the May 21 meeting, the council selected the Dennis Corp.

One reason is familiarity.

L.B. Cannon, who spent decades with the Chester County office of the state highway department before retiring last year signed on with Dennis Corp. Cannon made a pitch to the council in December about considering such an arrangement. That led to the March meeting, which led to the RFQ.

After the company was selected May 21, Cannon said the company needed to finalize a contract with the county before it could do any work, even though some council members started suggesting projects at that meeting.

Cannon said the company might also want to develop a new roads ordinance for the county, as it did in Fairfield County, to make clear what can and can't be done.

At its meeting last week, the contract was given final approval, and again, the council had

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moral authority in the world because of this war, and it needs to be ended ASAP  
 Complex issue can't be settled by a poll

Vote

Online Chester polls are strictly surveys of those who choose to participate and are, therefore, not valid statistical samples. No actions are taken by the News & Reporter as a result of the polls. We add a new online poll question when our page is updated on Wednesday mornings. We hope you'll enjoy the polls.

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some suggestions.

This time, Antley was there with Cannon and company founder Dan Dennis, and Antley was willing to go out and check the sidewalk both Council members Mary Guy and Alex Oliphant said needed to be repaired.

Oliphant said the road was "crumpled."

The sidewalk was just one of about four projects County Council approved getting bids on or working at a county Transportation Committee meeting held a few minutes before the council meeting.

Tributary Drive near Fishing Creek Lake in the eastern end of the county needs to be looked at.

Councilman Brad Jordan wanted bids taken out for the paving of the parking lots of the Fort Lawn Fire Department and the new main Lando Fire Department in Edgemoor.

All the work in preparing those projects will now be done by the Dennis Corp.

Roads to be worked

The county has about 250 miles of dirt roads that it can basically keep passable, but it rarely paves those roads. The county just bought a new motor grader for scraping dirt roads.

When the Dennis Corp., a Columbia engineering firm, made its pitch to the county, Dennis said it can possibly pave many of those roads instead of maintaining the dirt roads.

The company said it can not only maintain the county's roads, it would write a "modern" road ordinance for the county that would help it avoid pitfalls, One actual pitfalls of having either no road ordinance or not having a good one was highlighted in the presentation the company made March 9. The presentation had a slide of a story clipped right out of The News & Reporter of the flooding of Raxter Road at Thanksgiving, which caused about 11 families to be stranded for three days. The road has flooded two other times after heavy rainfall.

The developer who built the houses in that area was told not to build any houses past Tinker's Creek, but did so anyway, Supervisor Carlisle Roddey said.

County records are not clear, but the road was taken into the county system anyway, sometime after Roddey's first term of office ended, though some have tried to laid the blame for the road at his door.

That developer built other developments with poor dirt roads before the county adopted a road ordinance. The developer also recently asked the county Planning Commission and Chester County Council to approve a rezoning for a new development, but it was denied. Langley Road residents spent a couple of years trying to get their road taken into the county system. The dirt road there is wide, but washboards and floods after heavy rains. One section with an incline becomes highly impassable.

The Dennis Corp. can write a road ordinance that would prevent a road from being cut into undeveloped land the way that road was cut. The company can also design a bridge or big enough culvert to solve the problem of the flooding on Raxter Road, Antley told the council.

Chester County's Emergency Management Department has gotten a grant, which comes in two parts, to study the problem at Raxter Road and come up with a plan. The second part of the grant, not yet awarded, would pay for the work.

But building a bridge across Tinker's Creek at Raxter Road would cost at least \$700,000, according to estimates.

In referring to the incident on Raxter Road, Dennis said, "These kinds of problems are not unique to Chester County. We could get Raxter Road fixed, and find the money to get it done."

Mostly, the company will arrange a maintenance schedule for dirt roads and start a program to pave many of the dirt roads, Dennis said.

Cannon will be the "project manager" for Chester County, according to an organizational chart prepared by the company.

He would make use of the rest of the company's staff. They do traffic engineering, storm water management, site and civil engineering, construction, surveying, transportation and design and construction management. The company has three field survey and inspection crews.

For basic road maintenance, the county gets money, called C-Funds, from the state gasoline tax, money doled out by the state Department of Transportation. It has to spend at least 25 percent of those C-Funds with DOT on projects.

It uses that money to basically keep drivable its 200 to 300 miles of dirt roads.

The county was projected to get \$958,000 for 2005-6, according to a chart of all the county's in the state, just under \$80,000 a month.

One of Dennis' engineers said the county can pick what projects it wants to spend its 25 percent on with the DOT, and does not have to use DOT services to do those projects.

DOT charges an administrative fee of 18 to 22 percent of project fee. Dennis Corp. would charge about 10 to 12 percent. Based on the '05-6 figures, that savings would give the county another \$100,000 to spend on DOT roads.

The Dennis Corp. would suggest that the county pave as many roads as possible instead of simply maintaining them. And it would use a different process to pave many roads, which Dennis and his engineer said is both more stable and cheaper.

Instead of laying a layer of rock and gravel on top of a dirt road, then laying down asphalt, Dennis Corp. uses cement, Antley said.

Asphalt pavement is basically layers of solid material on top of the dirt foundation, which is not stable.

Asphalt uses a large portion of petroleum as a base material, so its price fluctuates like the price of gasoline. Asphalt materials went up 34 percent from January to December in 2006. Cement went up 4.9 percent in the same time, Antley said.

The cement process "fixes" the base of the road, Antley said.

A specific mixture of cement for Chester County would have to be engineered to come up with exact prices, but Antley presented a chart that said it could save \$70,400 a mile on a road using cement instead of asphalt, which would stretch the county's road dollars that much more.

And Antley and Dennis said the county would not necessarily have to pave roads to DOT recommendations. DOT's recommendations are not set in law, but its engineers follow those guidelines on the roads they pave.

Antley said the county could build a road 8 foot wide if it chose.

If the county went to the cement paving system, it would not need to buy a lot of gravel, again saving money. Other materials the county has stockpiles for its roads will eventually not be needed.

If the county has an 8-foot dirt road it wants paved, DOT would require the county to pave it more than twice as wide as that, getting additional rights of way before it could begin.

Antley said Fairfield County decided to pave a minimum 16-foot-wide. People on a dirt road drive down the middle of the road until they spot an approaching vehicle, he said. Two school buses can pass side to side without scraping mirrors on a 16-foot wide road.

Dennis Corp. paves road for the Fairfield County Transportation Committee. The Transportation Committee there had basically stopped doing any road work and its C-funds had piled up into a \$4 million reserve. The state was going to take away the reserve if the county didn't start spending it, so the committee farmed the work out to Dennis Corp.

It had been in dispute with Fairfield County Council over paving issues. In Fairfield County, the Transportation is elected by voters and is not the same as County Council, as Chester County Council's Transportation Committee.

Fairfield County Council administers billing and payments to Dennis Corp., and has now hired it to do special projects, like building a pedestrian bridge at Dutchman's Creek on Lake Wateree.

Fairfield County Administrator Philip Hinely said the county and the Transportation Committee are pleased with the work Dennis has done.

"It's almost too good to be true," Hinely said.

"They are very responsive," he said. "I think Dan Dennis is a workaholic."

Fairfield County Procurement Director Mike Linville said in 2006, Dennis Corp. was paid \$300,000, but it delivered about \$2 million in roadwork.

It has a two-year agreement with the Fairfield County Transportation Committee.

Price hasn't been mentioned in Dennis' presentation to County Council.

The company's fees for Chester County are laid out in the contract approved.

The RFQ asked engineering firms what they would do, what their experience is and what their charges are.

At the meeting in March, Councilman Tommy Martin, who works on roads in Fairfield County for DOT, said he has been impressed with the work he has seen.