



**NEWS RELEASE**

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**For Immediate Release**

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**STATE HIGHWAY ADMINISTRATION REPLACES US 219 BRIDGE  
SOUTH OF OAKLAND IN GARRETT COUNTY**

***Summer-Long Bridge Closure with Detour Begins June 18***

**(June 5, 2014)** – The Maryland State Highway Administration will begin construction June 18 to replace the US 219 (Garrett Highway) Bridge over Cherry Creek, about five miles south of Oakland in Garrett County. During construction, the bridge will be closed to traffic and a detour will direct motorists around the closure. Weather permitting, the new bridge will open to traffic late summer or early fall 2014.

The \$2 million bridge replacement project is part of SHA’s Bridge System Preservation Program. Originally constructed in 1922, the bridge has undergone temporary repairs and is now due for a full replacement to support safety and mobility. The new bridge will have wider shoulders and will be slightly longer and slightly south of the existing bridge. SHA’s contractor for the project is Charles J. Merlo, Inc. of Mineral Point, Pa.

“SHA considered several alternatives to maintain traffic on US 219 during construction, but we determined that a complete detour was the best option for safety and to reduce the duration of the project, minimizing the inconvenience to drivers and the local community,” said Anthony Crawford, SHA District Engineer for Allegany, Garrett and Washington counties.

The detour will direct traffic around the closure using US 50 (George Washington Highway), MD 560 (Gorman Road) and MD 135 (Maryland Highway). This route is approximately 18 miles so SHA encourages motorists traveling on US 219 to allow extra time and plan accordingly.

The bridge closure and detour were scheduled to begin after the last day of school to minimize impacts to the community, as the bridge is near Swan Meadow School in Gortner. Due to snow day make-ups that pushed back the end of the school year, SHA may need to continue the closure beyond the start of school in the fall. SHA will work closely with Garrett County Public Schools to coordinate transportation and keep the community informed.

While SHA and its partners work hard to maintain safe traffic mobility in work zones, each driver needs to actively modify his or her driving style to help prevent crashes. Stay alert – look for reduced speed limits, narrow driving lanes and highway workers. Slow down and don't follow too closely. *Safer Driving. Safer Work Zones. For everyone!*

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Editor’s note: Photo of old bridge and map of detour route are attached.



Above: The US 219 Bridge over Cherry Creek was built in 1922 and nearing the end of its useful service life.

