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Tivoli requests state action on dangerous intersection

by Kate Goldsmith

TIVOLI—Local officials and residents again are calling for the state to improve traffic safety at a crossroads where two fatal accidents recently occurred.

The intersection of Route 9G, a state highway, with Broadway and West Kerley Corners Road (County Route 78) is a highly trafficked area with narrow shoulders where walkers, cyclists and vehicles share the roadway.

On Jan. 31, two Bard students were killed and one injured in a hit-and-run accident as they walked with a group along Route 9G headed into the Village of Tivoli. Last week, one man was killed and two others injured in a two-vehicle crash at the intersection. Although occurring under different circumstances, both accidents highlight ongoing issues that have sparked a public outcry.

The latest accident occurred on the morning of Monday, March 3, when 21-year-old Brandon M. O'Connell of Hudson made a left turn from West Kerley Corners Road onto Route 9G southbound. His vehicle, a 2003 Nissan 350z, was struck on the driver's side by a 2006 GMC box truck operated by James Frizzell, 38, of Franklin, N. J.

The initial investigation led by the Dutchess County Sheriff's Office indicated the primary cause of the accident was O'Connell's failure to yield the right-of-way.

O'Connell was pronounced dead at Northern Dutchess Hospital. His passenger, Eric Hill, 25, of Germantown, was flown from the scene to Albany Medical Center, where he was reported in stable condition. Frizzell was treated and released from Northern Dutchess

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'Gut-wrenching': Power line issue tears apart family's plans

by Danielle Fried



The DeFelice family faces an uncertain future because of an indefinite timeline involving the proposed construction of power lines that would run across the family's property in the Town of Milan. From left are Tasha, Antonio, Giovanni and Domenic. *Courtesy photo*

Editor's note: This story is one in a series focusing on the current impacts of the high-voltage power lines proposed to relieve an identified transmission bottleneck between Leeds and Pleasant Valley.

Julia DeFelice's family has owned property in the Town of Milan since 1917. Beginning with her maternal grandparents, who moved up from Manhattan, four generations have built their lives and raised their families there.

And there was about to be a fifth.

The day Julia's son, daughter-in-law and two grandsons were driving from Indiana to Milan to build their dream home on the family property, Julia received a phone call from a friend, telling her power companies were proposing to build high-voltage transmission lines that would run across her 9.75-acre property. Now, the DeFelices face an uncertain future, and what Julia's daughter-in-law, Tasha, calls "a daily, emotional roller coaster."

"It was like an arrow shot from a bow headed straight for us - that's how it felt," said Julia. "To say it has made our lives miserable is the understatement of the year."

In October 2013, the Public Service Commission selected four of several proposals to relieve a bottleneck to present for public comment. Three of the four involved building high-voltage power lines that would take land and homes through eminent domain. Since that time, local grassroots groups have joined with farmers, residents, environmental organizations and business owners to form the Hudson Valley Smart Energy Coalition. The Coalition is advocating for a thorough analysis of the need for such a project, as well as alternatives to high-voltage power lines, should need be established. Detailed information about the project can be found at www.dps.ny.gov/ACTransmission/.

Tasha and her husband, Antonio, Julia's son, had their future planned. They would build their dream home on the family's property, which includes a fishing pond and woods for hunting and hiking.

Antonio would restore the existing 100-year-old home — Julia's childhood home — so Julia could live right next door and help with childcare. The boys would attend Red Hook schools. Tasha, an associate nurse manager for the Emergency Department at Vassar Brothers Medical Center, would be close to work.

Tasha and Antonio can't afford to live on 10 acres in Milan, but they could if they built on the family's land. Now, because of the uncertain fate of the home and property in Milan, they have been looking at homes in Saugerties, unable to wait for what they expect will be two to five years before a final decision on the proposed power line project will be reached.

"We have been planning for over a year

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*!#@& potholes

This season's road hazards can cause plenty of damage



A deep pothole on Pine Woods Road in Hyde Park is filled with water from melting snow. *Photo by Curtis Schmidt*

by Ray Fashona and Kate Goldsmith

Potholes. They're the bane of every driver's existence — not to mention highway crews and law enforcement officials who have to deal with the accidents they cause.

This year's brutal winter has made it a particularly ugly pothole season. They're everywhere, and some are deep enough to swallow an SUV.

Potholes are formed by the freeze and thaw cycle, which allows water to seep into the pavement and then solidifies into ice, weakening the roadway. General stress on

the pavement can also lead to road fatigue, which also contributes to formation of holes.

Between the amount of frost in the ground and the constant plowing required from the relentless snowfall this year, potholes are popping up everywhere.

But local highway crews say they are aware of the problem and have been staying on top of it.

Town of Wappinger Highway Superintendent Graham Foster said he sends his crews out every day on their normal plow runs — so they know the roads and the prob-

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