

## Historic Knox Covered Bridge is damaged



ABOVE: Collision damage to the Knox Covered Bridge, 7 July 2015.

RIGHT: Repairs underway, 9 October 2015.

*Photos Courtesy of Roger D. Thorne © 2015*

On Monday afternoon, July 6, 2015, the historic Knox Covered Bridge on Yellow Springs Road in Valley Forge National Historical Park sustained severe structural damage from impact by a large vehicle after the driver failed to properly negotiate the turn before the bridge. The unknown perpetrator in this hit-and-run incident remains at large. The bridge has been closed to vehicular and pedestrian traffic since the accident.

The crash damaged almost an entire wall of stone masonry adjacent to the bridge and a 20-foot-long section of timber siding, according to the Pennsylvania Department of Transportation. The Knox Bridge was already due for scheduled rehabilitation work in 2016, so PennDOT bridge engineers assessed both the new damage and the rehabilitation needs to develop a master plan for restoring the heavily used covered bridge in 2015.

Following an eight-week preparation period through the summer for the production and delivery of necessary materials, the PennDOT reconstruction work began in September. However, the contractor soon found the damage to be far worse than initially thought. The covered bridge remained closed to the public through the fall of 2015 as additional resources were committed to this repair and rehabilitation project. The Knox Covered Bridge is expected to reopen in mid-December, 2015 (barring unforeseen delays).

The bridge, built in 1865, has been struck and repaired several times over the years, and completely rehabilitated in 1996 and 2006. The Knox Covered Bridge carries an average of 2,000 vehicles per day. — Roger Thorne (compiled from reports and articles on the subject from PennDOT, the *Philadelphia Inquirer*, and updates from State Representative Warren Kampf).

