

# Sherlock Hollow Bridge torn down



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## Hinsdale structure, 110 years old, became unsafe due to deterioration

HINSDALE - In a matter of two days, a crew from Oakgrove Construction completely dismantled the 110-year-old Sherlock Hollow bridge.

"They worked pretty quickly and did a great job," said Ron Brown, Hinsdale highway supervisor. On Monday, "they took off the road grading on the bridge. (Tuesday) they took down all the structural steel and had no problems. "This is a pretty historical moment for the town." The bridge's demolition completed early this week ends all work at the site until next spring. In the meantime, drivers looking to access Sherlock Hollow will have to continue using an approximate six-mile detour up Flannigan Hill Road. Crews are tentatively scheduled to start work at the job site in March, Mr. Brown said. When they do return, crews will begin to construct an at-grade crossing over the railroad tracks about 30 feet north of where the bridge once stood. "Basically, people will be crossing right over the railroad tracks," Mr. Brown said. In addition to excavating more than 400,000 yards of dirt and materials to make way for the new stretch of road and laying 520 feet of pavement, crews will also landscape the former location of the bridge's crossing, Mr. Brown said. "That's going to give people living here privacy from the road," he said. The \$1.1 million project is being funded mostly by state and federal aid. "The town's portion for this project is roughly \$70,000," Mr. Brown said. "If we didn't get the help from the state aid and the federal aid, the town would have just had to close the bridge permanently. The town of Hinsdale could not have afforded to pay for this project by itself." During its 110 years of standing, the overpass has rusted out and deteriorated, making it unsafe for traffic. In September 2011, state inspectors visited the bridge to assess its condition. While there, they found many holes in the bridge's structural steel. Inspectors then had the bridge closed for repairs or replacement. Since beginning the process several years ago to have the bridge replaced, the town encountered many road-blocks, said town Supervisor Monroe Bishop. "We had a lot of trouble finding out who owned the bridge and the land next to it so we could file the proper paperwork to get started," he said. "But we were able to get all that straightened out." Though the town of Hinsdale is responsible for maintaining the bridge, the overpass is owned by the Southern Tier Extension Railroad Authority, which leases it to Norfolk Southern Real Estate, which in turn leases it to Western New York Pennsylvania Railroad. Though it will be some time before Sherlock Hollow is opened fully to traffic, the bridge's deconstruction is a welcomed sight for Mr. Brown. "I feel like a huge weight was lifted for us. That bridge has been a huge headache to maintain," he said. "We've had a lot of accidents here, with cars sliding down the hill leading up to bridge into Route 16. Getting rid of this bridge is a heaven-sent." Mr. Bishop shared in Mr. Brown's enthusiasm. "It shows the people that we've made progress," Mr. Bishop said. "We've spent about five or six years working to get this bridge out and I'm just glad to see it gone."