

# M-COG helping municipalities with code inspection changes

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By JIM DINO

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With a deadline of next year getting closer, the Mountain Council of Governments (M-COG) wants to make sure area municipalities are ready for the changes in municipal building code inspection.

While Pennsylvania municipalities have been adhering to the Uniform Code of Construction (UCC) for some time, municipal inspectors grandfathered under their old certification will have to be UCC-certified sometime in 2007.

M-COG Director Dan Guydish is asking for volunteers from among the organization's members to form a committee to study how M-COG could set up a cooperative program among area municipalities.

M-COG wants to set up a program in which UCC-certified inspectors would be available to all area municipalities, especially for those smaller municipalities who cannot afford to keep a certified inspector on staff because there would not be enough inspections to pay his or her salary.

Those municipalities would have to go to a third-party inspection service. But instead of doing that, Guydish wants to set up a program where M-COG would

provide the inspectors, with the expectation that M-COG inspectors would be available to municipalities at a lower cost.

Greg Gulick, Nanticoke City manager, has such a company, G&R Consulting, which does the inspections and returns money to the municipality from the inspection fees it collects.

Hazle Township Supervisor Anthony Matz said the township has four inspectors who are UCC-certified for residential inspections.

Meanwhile, M-COG members will have the opportunity to witness a demonstration of the Asphalt Zipper on May 16 in the morning. The demonstration will be the M-COG May meeting, Guydish said.

Guydish said the firm demonstrating the equipment – which strips the top layer of asphalt off a street to ready it for repaving – is looking for a small section of street in the area a municipality may be readying to pave.

Gulick, who is familiar with the equipment, said the process provides a better compaction for a street before it is repaved.

Guydish said he would be willing to apply for a grant for the equipment. He said the company that is demonstrating the equipment indicated its personnel

would help fill out paperwork for a prospective grant.

Like with the sewer camera the M-COG recently purchased, Guydish said the more municipalities who want to share the equipment will increase the chance for getting a grant – because government agencies like to make grants for projects in which multiple municipalities are involved.

Last month, M-COG members had a demonstration of a pothole filler – which can re-heat old asphalt and fill potholes more effectively. Guydish said because of inclement weather, he may ask for a second demonstration in better weather.

Guydish is also asking area municipalities who want to participate in joint bidding for anti-skid and road salt for next winter should call him as soon as possible with their tonnage needs. Guydish can be reached at the Greater Hazleton Chamber of Commerce at 455-1508.

And for the June 8 meeting, Guydish said he will attempt to bring in a speaker on regional police.

"I'd like to revisit that idea," he said. "It would especially help the smaller municipalities. What police have to do around here these days is a lot more than pulling cars over for running a red light. We're starting to get big-city crime here."