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ERIC CONOVER/Standard-Speaker

Members of the Mountain Council of Governments (M-COG) saw first-hand Friday how a piece of equipment that mills a street and grinds and mixes the material into reusable material works. The Asphalt Zipper cut a section of James Street that will be repaved. About a half-dozen members of the M-COG were on hand for the demonstration.

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M-COG members eye Asphalt Zipper

By **JIM DINO**

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The City of Hazleton received some help in refurbishing one of its streets with a piece of equipment members of the Mountain Council of Governments (M-COG) are considering buying together.

The Asphalt Zipper mills the top asphalt surface of a street and grinds it and the material below.

The zipper was demonstrated for M-COG members Friday by milling a section of James Street, between Sixth and Seventh streets.

Aside from the city, officials of Freeland, Beaver Meadows and White Haven boroughs and Butler and Hollenback townships watched the demonstration Friday morning.

Robert Dougherty, the city's engineer, said the city began a long-term project to cut down the crown on James Street by milling and then repaving the center of the street used by traffic.

Up until now, Dougherty said the city was milling 1½ inches. But with the Asphalt Zipper, the street was milled 4 inches.

Tim Oustrich, the Asphalt Zipper representative, explained that when the machine mills the asphalt from the top of the street, it grinds the asphalt and whatever material – old layers of asphalt, dirt or clay – and mixes them together in a material



The Asphalt Zipper milled a 12-foot swath of James Street, between Sixth and Seventh streets, 4 inches deep and 20 feet long.

that can be used when paving or patching roads.

Oustrich explained that not all of the old material can be reused when the street is repaved because some room has to be left for the new asphalt being put down.

But the leftover can be used in other paving projects and makes for a good base for

repaving a street, Dougherty said.

"The machine breaks up the material, which varies in

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Zipper

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size from larger pieces of asphalt and rocks to fine dirt," Dougherty said. "You want a wide gradation of material when repaving a street because with the varying sizes, it packs well together and makes the street stronger."

Last year, M-COG members saw the same demonstration, but it was not as successful.

Bob Skulsky, then M-COG director, said the street chosen last year – a portion of the former Beryllium Road in the Ashmore section of Hazle Township – had only a small top layer of

asphalt and didn't allow the machine to operate the way it should.

Freeland Mayor Tim Martin said later in the year that the machine was demonstrated for Freeland and Foster Township officials by doing a section of Foster Township between Centre and Ridge streets.

"We did a block in Freeland last year and it (the Asphalt Zipper) was amazing," Martin said. "We scraped a little bit (of the newly created material) out and about a month later paved it."

Martin said he'd like to have the

Asphalt Zipper machine available to Freeland, but its cost to one municipality is too high.

"We looked into getting it for Freeland and Foster Township, but it was too costly to do ourselves," Martin said.

"It would be awesome if the council of governments could get it."

Dougherty said the section of James Street used for the demonstration will be repaved "sometime next week."

When the machine hit James Street, it cut a 4-foot wide path 4 inches deep.

In order to traverse the driving lane

of the street, three passes were made to create room a 12-foot improvement.

The machine took just nine minutes to make a pass 200 feet long.

Dan Guydish, M-COG director, said he will poll M-COG members if they are interested in participating in the purchase of the machine.

Guydish said he would seek a grant to aid M-COG in purchasing the machine.

M-COG succeeded in making such a purchase with a sewer camera, for which a grant was obtained.