Del. 1 to be done in 2003

N.J. company with lowest bid expected to finish DelDOT job

By CHIP GUY
Staff reporter

The end of the billion-dollar road is near.

The state Department of Transportation has received the last round of bids for work on Del. 1, the limited-access highway that will usher motorists from one end of the state to the other.

The agency is expected to award a contract to a New Jersey company in the next 30 days for work on the last leg of the highway in southern New Castle County.

DelDOT opened sealed bids last week, and the lowest bidder of the five came from R.E. Pierson Construction.

Pierson bid $21.6 million as the cost of building a three-mile section from the U.S. 13-Del. 1 split south of Odessa to near Townsend.

Pierson has worked on other phases of the highway's construction, and already is working on a five-mile section that will join the final portion.

The bid still has to be approved, but that is expected.

"Ninety-nine percent of the time, the lowest bidder gets it," said D. Michael Williams, a spokesman for DelDOT.

Work on the last three miles will begin sometime early next year. A date has not been set.

"[DelDOT] would want them to start as early as they possibly could," Williams said.

The high-speed road will stretch from Interstate 95 to Dover Air Force Base. Completion is expected by late 2003, with a total price tag of about $1 billion.

It is one of the most expensive public-works projects in Delaware history.

Some residents and motorists in southern New Castle County have mixed feelings about the new road, which promises to relieve the busy U.S. 13 corridor.

Jodi Pyle, who lives and works on U.S. 13 near Townsend, wonders how the new bypass will affect her community.

"It's going to hurt the businesses," said Pyle, who works as a clerk at a seafood market. Pyle worries many people will use the new road and pass by the stores, filling stations and restaurants along U.S. 13.

As a resident, though, Pyle said Del. 1 promises to quiet some of the noise that is constantly rumbling just outside her front door.

"In a way, I would be happy," Pyle said. "As far as a being a resident, I'd be happy, yes. As for the businesses, not really."

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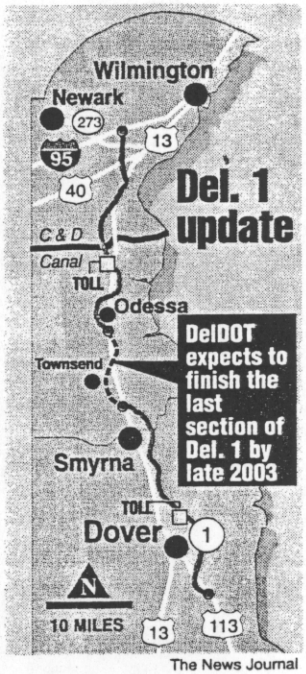

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