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Three county towns get state aid for roads, bridges

Recorder Staff

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Three Franklin County towns are among 10 rural communities in Massachusetts have been awarded state grants for roadway improvements.

Colrain, Monroe and Rowe are among the first recipients of this year’s MassWorks Infrastructure Grant awards — given to municipalities for public infrastructure projects that generate additional private sector investment. Gov. Charlie Baker, Lt. Gov. Karyn Polito and Housing and Economic Development Secretary Jay Ash joined community leaders and legislators to announce more than \$8.5 million in funding for 10 towns on Tuesday.

Colrain and Monroe have each received \$1 million, while Rowe has received \$420,000 for bridge and roadway improvements.

“The MassWorks Infrastructure Program is an important resource for cities and towns pursuing projects that drive local job growth and economic development in the commonwealth’s communities,” Baker said in a news release. “From safer streets and bridges to vital access to housing and our downtowns, these projects will further connect the residents of Massachusetts’ rural communities to schools, job opportunities and their neighbors.”

In Colrain, the money will be used to support the replacement of two town-owned bridges — the Adamsville Road Bridge, which is in imminent danger of failing, and the Call Road Bridge, which was previously closed in 2016 due to deterioration.

Both routes are critical for first responders, school buses and residents, providing vital services for the community.

Monroe will use its grant to pursue significant roadway and drainage improvements, as well as the restoration of a failing retaining wall to maintain critical access to the town’s water treatment system. The money will also be used to repair slope erosion affecting northern access to the treatment system.

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Rowe will replace the Cyrus Stage Bridge, which serves as a vital route for emergency vehicles and as a connection point to the Town of Heath. The bridge is currently rated poorly by the state Department of Transportation, and the town is contributing money for engineering and design costs.

Each year, the MassWorks program allocates 10 percent of awarded funds to assist municipalities with populations of 7,000 or less in completing roadway safety and transportation improvement projects.

“These projects will enhance public safety and community access for first responders, school buses, residents and tourists in our rural cities and towns,” Polito said. “Gov. Baker and I have been proud to increase funding for and support the reauthorization of MassWorks as a vital and flexible program for upgrading infrastructure across the commonwealth.”

Since 2015, and including this year’s awards, the Baker-Polito Administration has awarded over \$274 million to 134 projects in 106 communities throughout the Commonwealth, spurring the development of over 2 million square feet of commercial and retail space, over 7,000 immediate housing units, at least 7,000 square feet of new public space and 1,200 new hotel rooms and commercial/retail space.

Other grant recipients include Boxborough, Chester, Mount Washington, Oakham, Southamptton, Stockbridge and Warren.

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