

\$560,000 is anticipated cost of rebuilding minor route

TUPPER LAKE - The New York State Department of Transportation (DOT), is spending more than a half million dollars to rebuild state route 421 between the Bog River Bridge and the American Legion Veteran's Mountain Camp - a road which is almost untraveled in the winter and serves only campers, hunters, fishermen

and black bear viewers during the summer and fall.

Martin Hodge, of DOT's construction department, confirmed on Friday that the job is costing \$560,000. Work is being done by the Dudley Construction Company of Cicero, Hodge said.

Lesser improvements are underway on a shorter stretch of road between State

Route 30 and the picturesque bridge, which is visited each year by hundreds of tourists in July, August and early September.

Bruce Irwin, of DOT's planning department, explained why the state considered it necessary to spend this amount on the lightly traveled road.

"Extensive repairs had been postponed for many years," he said. "the road was in such poor condition that maintenance was becoming extremely expensive, and the condition of the road was such that we might have had to consider abandoning it."

Irwin said that it is not easy for the state to abandon an established state road, and there is little doubt that outcry would have been strong from both the American Legion and from local tourism businesses. The route is traveled by hundreds of people on summer evenings to get to the outlying section of 421 where black bears come to the road each evening to accept tidbits and be photographed by curious tourists and local folk alike. During the hunting season, many hunters travel the road, and fishermen use it to gain access to Horseshoe Lake, a favorite local fishing spot.

It has been noted that the old road has completely disappeared, and rock blasting, widening and leveling of a new roadbed is now underway as a prelude to a new surface. Irwin said, however, that the standards being applied are not as high as they would be for a more heavily traveled road.

In some cases, Irwin said, a minor state road can be turned over to the town or county in which it is located, but the town of Piercefield and St. Lawrence County, in which most of 421 is located, would find this completely unacceptable, it was noted. The road is located in a corner of each and is separated from the main body of the town and county by Big Tupper Lake. Several miles of travel through Franklin County would be necessary to give access to 421 from the county in which it is actually located.