

Precast concrete parapet panels to enhance rail crossing

Smith-Midland Corp. is participating in a railroad crossing improvement project in Prince Georges County near the Washington D.C.-Maryland line designed to promote safety.

Smith-Midland (smithmidland.com) will provide 465 custom precast concrete parapet panels, which will be installed on top of new, elevated railroad tracks in a contract worth approximately \$2.1 million.

The elevated tracks will allow for the free passage of cars on Maryland Route 450 in Cheverly, so they will no longer have to stop at the grade railroad crossing in its current configuration. Up to 30 trains and other small loads cross Route 450 daily, stopping traffic at the intersection each time.

The parapet panels are designed to carry the weight of the trains, as well as hide the train and noise from nearby residents. Parapet panel production began last month at Smith-Midland's plant in Midland, Va., and will be completed in March 2008. Delivery of the panels is scheduled to begin this fall and will be completed in the spring.

Once in place, the base slab of the parapet panel, which carries the railroad loading, will be covered by railroad ballast stones and then the tracks. The upturned portion of the parapet incorporates a colonial brick formliner finish, which once stained brick red, will help the parapet panels and the cast-in-place concrete abutments bring an historic feel to the new structure. **CM**