



## Nailing the Deadline

By Trudi Guilfillian, Staff Writer, 609-463-6716    Published Tuesday, March 10, 2009

**WILDWOOD** — With a month to go before its Easter deadline, the Boardwalk renovation at Schellenger Avenue is on schedule.

“They are amazingly far into the project and confirm they will be done in time,” said Lou Ferrara, the city's development director, who toured the site Friday.

So far, 80 percent of the 42,000 board feet of hardwood decking needed to complete the renovation has been installed. The tropical hardwood being used has been the source of much controversy for the city, which originally had planned to use black locust, a domestic wood, to rebuild the Boardwalk. Instead, it turned to ipe, a tropical hardwood, after the lumber it received was deemed inadequate.

In addition, the steel struts for the electrical vault for the utilities are now on site, the concrete flooring for the tunnel has been poured and the walls of the tunnel are being reinforced with steel before the concrete is poured this week, Ferrara said.

Ferrara said much of the project now relies on the utility work being completed. He said the project between Schellenger and Cedar avenues also has benefited from a mild winter, but he added that crews from the contractor, Walters Marine Construction, have worked in all types of conditions to meet the deadline. The renovation also is still on budget, he said.

The contract with Walters Marine Construction is for \$3.46 million. The U.S. Department of Agriculture is the lead agency on the project because it has contributed a \$1.25 million grant to fund the work.

The rest of the project costs are being paid with money collected through the city's participation in the Urban Enterprise Zone program.

“We're talking about a 100-year project. I'm hoping that this Boardwalk will last 100 years,” Ferrara said.

Ferrara also offered assurances to Boardwalk merchants about the project.

“We are doing anything we can to ensure they are open by Easter weekend,” he said.

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