Albany–Schenectady Double Track

Railroad Reconstruction Project

Location: Albany–Schenectady, New York
Client: Subcontractor to Middlesex Corp. working for Amtrak
Value: $5.7 million

Overview

Rifenburg undertook 17 miles of track bed construction between the Rensselaer Station and Schenectady Station, in order to prepare for the installation of a new track. The existing conditions were a single track, shared between commuter and freight trains. The task at hand required our team to excavate existing material adjacent to the live track while also preparing the subgrade for the installation of subbase and ballast stone. A key component of this project was Rifenburg's ability to utilize existing material by crushing old ballast stone to create new subbase.

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Challenge

Crews were forced to shut down when Amtrak trains traveled through at high speeds on the live track. Waste material from on-site was not allowed to be taken off property. This meant that the crew would have to use off-road haul trucks to move waste material within the right-of-way. The primary goal was to keep hauling distances to a minimum, however, access and right-of-way issues made this difficult to adhere to. Staging new ballast stone became a struggle because there were limited locations that were not only large enough, but also open, flat and adjacent to Amtrak property. This space was necessary to allow dump trailers to unload the new material while concurrently loading off-road haul trucks delivering material to the work zone.

Solution

In the summer months' crews started at 4:30 a.m. to get as much work completed before the trains began running. Property maps were examined to find locations along the right-of-way that were wider and would suffice for the type of operation Rifenburg was looking to implement. Rifenburg also proposed several smaller waste areas along the right-of-way in these wider locations, which were less spread apart than the larger waste areas identified in the plans.

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Result

Rifenburg excavated 99,000 cubic yards of material, processed and installed over 21,000 tons of subbase and imported 65,000 tons of ballast stone. The crew was able to complete this immense amount of work ahead of schedule and on budget. Amtrak began the installation of the new ties and rails on schedule due to Rifenburg's ability to plan ahead and work efficiently. Once completed the additional track will provide a more efficient commute between Albany and Schenectady for all Amtrak trains.

Rifenburg Companies, founded in 1958, is an expert in highway construction and restoration, landfill technologies, environmental clean-up, site development, utilities installation, mining, and airports.

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