

Dega Tunnel Update

Story: Gary Elles/Photos: MSA Staff

It is finally a reality. The tunnel to the infield which will allow two-way traffic of haulers and large motor homes 24 hours a day is finished with the final layer of asphalt and the sod being laid at this time.

The top layer of asphalt is mixed with a polymer in it to make it very hard and to resist cracking in the summer heat and the winters cold.

A ribbon cutting ceremony was performed after a press conference that was attended by NASCAR driver Jeffery Earnhardt. He is a part time driver for Joe Gibbs Racing in the No. 18 iK9. He's had a good season with leading 29 laps in the NXS season opener at Daytona followed by a sixth place finish at Atlanta. He will

compete at Texas, the Money Lion 300 at Talladega and make his MENCs 2019 debut in the No. 81 for X-treme Concepts Racing in the GEICO 500.

After the press conference the Media staff was shuttled to the infield side of the tunnel to see the famous Johnny Rays Big Rig come through the tunnel. It is the truck that carries the huge American flag around Talladega during the National Anthem, a huge crowd pleaser. AS the huge truck comes to a halt out comes Jeffery Earnhardt. He becomes the first NASCAR driver through the tunnel.

The Media was then shuttled to the new premium RV infield Finish Line sites which all have full hookups. This eliminates the generator noise and the problem of conserving water and full gray water



**JOHNNY RAYS ICONIC RIG WITH JEFFERY EARNHARDT:
FIRST RIG THROUGH THE NEW TUNNEL!**



LANDON ASH, JEFFERY EARNHARDT, JOHNNY RAY AND GRANT LYNCH

and sewage tanks.

Shortly after the April 26-28 race the infield will go through a massive change with construction of an interactive fan zone unlike any other track. The garages will have a center section for fans to see more of the crews working on the cars and more interaction with the drivers. This will also make it safer for all by not having fans walking behind the car to try to see what's going on with their favorite team.

The rest of the area will be more parks like with restaurants, game areas, picnic seating, FREE WIFI, new Pit Road Club and a beer garden and more fun for the infield. After that they should name the tunnel the TUNNEL TO FUN, This total Transformation is part of the 50 million dollar 50th anniversary of the speedway. This isn't just another track...

THIS IS TALLADEGA .



**GRANT LYNCH (DEGA HEAD HONCHO)
PRACTICING HIS FLAG WAVING**

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