

February 22, 2008 - It's Worth 38 Minutes

Somerset Daily American

<http://www.dailyamerican.com/>

It's worth 38 minutes

February 22, 2008

As the war against Iraq approaches its fifth anniversary, U.S. Rep. John P. Murtha took time this week to let the public know about some of the hidden costs of that effort.

He reported the war has cost more than \$535 billion in appropriations since 2002, with daily spending now exceeding \$343 million per day.

He said that the spending has curbed programs in education, health and taken a particularly high toll on military readiness and members of the Armed Forces.

As Somerset County prepares its battle cry to preserve funding for Route 219 at a 2 p.m. rally today in the county office building, we believe Murtha's points are well taken.

We as a country need to revisit our priorities for government spending.

Highway infrastructure is only one area where the state and federal government have no idea on where to come up with the needed funding to repair or replace deteriorating bridges, let alone create new highways.

There are also great needs for improvements in education and health care.

The country initially worked as a united front on the war against terrorism in late 2001. Now it's time to reconsider what the return on investment has been with the war and to see how the tax dollars could be better spent helping Americans prosper.

For example today's rally at the Somerset County Courthouse concerns about \$9 million in matching funds that are no longer available. By Murtha's calculations, that's 38 minutes of the war effort.

Our local economic future deserves that money. We've waited more than 40 years for the highway and it needs to become the priority.

