

June 2019 - From the Chair - Submitted by Janell Bradley

Summer construction is underway in Fayette County!

Although detours and road closures can be a hassle, the end result is usually well-worth the inconvenience.

At the start of this summer's list is the asphalt overlay project on County Road W-51 between Wadena and Arlington which should be underway by the time you read this - if not delayed by rain. Mathy Construction of Onalaska, Wis. holds the \$1.7 million contract for Hot Mix Asphalt (HMA) pavement widening/resurfacing. Asphalt will be laid on W51 from Kornhill Road (near Deer Ridge Campground at Wadena's south edge) to Highway 187 in Arlington. The project has been assigned 35 working days.

Fayette County also let bids earlier this year for a bridge replacement on 280th Street over a dry run creek, near Waucoma. K Construction, Elkader, was awarded the \$262,299 bid for that work, which has 55 working days for completion.

Another Secondary Roads-led project is the large culvert extension project on County Road W-14. A Farley company, Top Grade Excavating was awarded \$586,910 for the project extending from the St. Lucas limits to Nature Road and from the Hawkeye city limits to 60th Street. There is a late start date of July 29, and 60 working days allowed for the placement of more than a dozen culvert extensions and replacements.

The replacement of the washed out bridge on Acorn Road over the Volga River east of Wadena, will see a 172-foot by 30-foot pre-stressed concrete beam structure placed, at a cost of \$936,529. FEMA and the state of Iowa will pay 85 percent of the total cost. Jim Schroeder Construction Inc. of Bellevue, holds that contract of 125 working days. Secondary Roads staff has been coordinating the moving of utilities so that work can begin soon.



We are also in the process of entering into a construction agreement with the City of Oelwein to resurface 6th Street and Outer/East Line Road. The city limits/county line runs down the centerline of the aforementioned roads, making a sharing agreement necessary. This road has been extensively patched this year and will have a good HMA overlay next year.

We have had people ask if a couple of specific areas are on the Board of Supervisors' radar: namely Apple Road going east from Clermont to Gunder, C50 near Oelwein and County Blacktop B-66 going west out of Hawkeye. The short answer is 'yes,' we are very aware of the deteriorating conditions of these county roads. The longer answer involves how to fund these projects with a limited amount of Property Tax, Road Use Tax, state and federal tax dollars.

Fortunately, our engineer, Joel Fantz, is quite resourceful in seeking funds outside of our usual allocations, but he isn't Houdini. The loss of road subgrade support on both HMA (asphalt) and rock roads will cause the biggest long term financial impact to taxpayers. As Joel told us at a Monday board meeting: "HMA roads are considered 'flexible pavements.' The asphalt surface is not what resists the load, rather the load is transmitted to and primarily born by the grade below the pavement. The loss of this subgrade support coupled with normal traffic loading resulted in significant and widespread damage to several HMA road surfaces that no longer seal and shed water. In many cases, due to wheel rutting, the HMA surface now funnels the water to the subgrade instead of shedding it."

As a Board, we know patching isn't the answer and won't last long. The only way to properly repair and mitigate significant future damage from weather events is to reconstruct these roads as soon as possible. We're considering our options and there will be more to say about the direction we choose, later this year.