

Town moves from winter to construction

Projects brings surprises, move quickly

By Kaitlyn McAvoy

Pinedale's sewer and water improvement project is well under way. Construction was noticeable last week as crews worked on the town's side streets including South Franklin and Fremont Avenues. Now work has pushed on to Pine Street, crowding the main street with orange cones and diverted traffic.

As of Wednesday, Town Engineer Eugene Ninnie expected crews to have crossed Pine Street by today or by early next week. He is impressed with how fast construction crews are progression on the project.

"They're moving very, very fast. They're better than any contractor I've seen here," he said.

Current construction is two phases of the extensive sewer, water and road improvement project. Phase four is slated west of Tyler Avenue and contracted out to HK Contractors from Idaho Falls, and phase five on the east side of town is contracted to Westwood Curtis Construction out of Jackson. The two phases cover the majority of town. Sewer improvements will replace 40-50-year-old clay pipe in the ground and rusted cast-iron water mains.

Businesses surrounded by construction remain open, though access to them is more difficult than usual. Some, like Heritage Quilts and Fabric Shoppe on Pine Street, placed signs outside their businesses informing customers that they are open, and while parking is restricted in front of their shop, customer parking is still available.

Besides the parking inconvenience, the construction created more serious problems

for businesses.

Neal Stelting's law office is located on South Franklin Avenue, where construction crews have been tearing into the street working on water improvements for weeks. While the crew was pulling out an old water line last week, workers hit Rocky Mountain Power electrical wires, which electrocuted a construction worker and sent an electrical surge through Stelting's office.

The surge ruined some office equipment and caused a lot of smoke, but no fire, said Stelting. Rocky Mountain Power took responsibility of the incident and responded quickly to repair the damage, he said.

"It's no big issue, just a loss of a day's work," said Stelting.

On Wednesday, a street lamp on Pine Street even took a hit. A construction truck jumped the curb near North Franklin Avenue and shook loose the "cobra" or light part of a street lamp, causing it to fall on the road in the midst of car traffic. No one was hurt and Sublette County Sheriff's Department officers and volunteer firefighters responded quickly to the scene to clean up the damage.

Pinedale received federal stimulus funds for phases four and five; however the town is funding the road improvement projects including installing curb gutter, sidewalks and repaving the streets. Since the improvements were necessary, the town decided to complete the work simultaneously with the sewer and water upgrades, explained Ninnie.

So far, road improvements are planned for Fremont Avenue, Maybell Avenue, Franklin



Kaitlyn McAvoy photo

Construction on South Franklin Avenue blocks easy access to businesses on the block and sits just east of Town Hall.

Avenue, Lake Avenue, North Madison Avenue, Jackson Avenue, Mapfel Street, Washington Street, Charles Street, Mill Street, Magnolia Street, Marilyn Street and sections of Bonneville Street, Hoback Street, Wilson Street, Adams Street and Washington Street.

All together, the sewer improvements cost

\$2,027,000, the water improvements \$1,864,000 and the road improvements cost covered by the town is \$5,600,000, said Ninnie.

Work is scheduled to continue throughout the town until the end of August. ■

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COMMISSION: County buildings begin shift to natural gas soon *Continued from 5A*

\$8,000 to produce and \$1,300 to mail, Sommers said.

Urbigkit suggested the commissioners think of an overall tone the County wants to convey to the residents, especially regarding the new budget.

The commissioners gave Sommers and Urbigkit the go-ahead to start putting together the State of the County report.

- Representatives from the Discovery Center asked the commissioners for funds to turn their upper playground into useable space. It would need dirt work to fill and level areas as well as a retaining wall. They said they'd like include a climbing rock and finish their teepee and a field.

The property belongs to the County, and Lankford said \$30,000 was set aside for the Discovery Center a couple of years ago for planning, not building. The Discovery Center would have to provide the final \$20,000 of the \$49,000 projected cost.

The Center had agreed to work with a

local contractor, but Cramer felt, considering the County owns the property, the project should go out to bid.

- Questar representative Brad Simmons and his associate Terry Christiansen updated the commission on the plans to convert propane to natural gas in County buildings. They hope to begin within a week.

Linn said he thinks all county buildings should make the conversion.

"It just makes sense to tie as much up in natural gas as possible," he said. "I don't think we should have propane anywhere."

Simmons said he thought there'd be a two-year payback period on the Sublette County fairgrounds, totaling almost \$19,000 in savings.

The utility company hopes to get the project started as quickly as possible to coordinate with construction at the Sublette County Fairgrounds.

- Construction of a fire training facility, planned for County property near Marbleton,

will start with a burn tower. The entire project is projected to cost around \$2 million; the tower alone will be close to \$954,000.

Bousman suggested waiting until funds were available for the entire project, but representatives from the Marbleton Volunteer Fire Department said the burn tower is separate from the rest of the project, and it wants to get started on the tower portion quickly.

Bousman asked if Groathouse construction could look over the plans and make suggestions as to how to best proceed by the next meeting. He noted it might be years before the funds for the full project are available.

- The commission unanimously approved rezoning land owned by Brad and Karen Stepp to commercial to allow them to build an equine facility, including a barn, arena and overnight camping area. They also unanimously passed a proposal to rezone ten acres belonging to Haslam Investments to light industrial. Contingent to the rezoning, the owner agreed to plan six to 10 plant units

to create a barrier between the industrial area and New Fork Creek.

- The last big issue on the agenda was the fairgrounds. Frank James, manager of the Fairgrounds, complained of drainage problems and the amount of water backing up between the stage area and the commercial building.

"It's been overlooked and overlooked," he said. "I'm tired of bringing it up."

The grade needs to be sloped so the water is brought away from the buildings, he said, and he suggested this be done when sewer and septic work is done on the grounds.

Cramer said Rio Verde Engineering, the company that did the original drainage plan, should update it for the new buildings. Linn noted to get the water to flow south from west of the agriculture building, it may have to be piped and could become an engineering mess.

- The next meeting is scheduled for May 4 in Pinedale at 9 a.m. ■

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