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DESPITE STORMS, MISSISSIPPI DRIVE WORK CONTINUES

Reconstruction project overcoming setbacks, continues progress on Phase 1

MUSCATINE, Iowa – Construction projects always have a time table that contractors and project managers hope stay firm, but those time tables must remain flexible to deal with Mother Nature. The Mississippi Drive Reconstruction Project is just such an effort with the initial deadline for Phase I just two months away (August 31).

“Obviously with the rain today (Wednesday) we have had to alter our schedule and work where we could,” Bill Haag, project manager for the City of Muscatine, said. “The rest of the week doesn’t look much better but we will continue to work where we can and make as much progress as we can.”

Haag is looking for those hot, dry days of July and August to return Phase I close to the original time table.

“If the weather cooperates we will take a big step Thursday,” Haag said. “That is when we hope to start pouring concrete on the south half of Mississippi Drive from Sycamore to the intersection with Iowa.”

Unfortunately it was not to be for Thursday but maybe Friday. If not then perhaps on Monday Haag added.

“There is a lot that goes on before you can pour concrete but just getting to that point where you can pour in one section is a milestone,” Haag said.



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Some curbing was poured last week in the section from Iowa to Sycamore and starting to pave is another big step.

With the river levels falling, the contractor was able to bring crews back to the Iowa intersection to install sanitary and storm lines from Iowa west toward Pine Street. Work on the Iowa Avenue railroad crossing also began this week.

While work continued on several fronts, Haag noted that the river is not the biggest problem at the present time. The storm on June 17 dumped 3.5 inches of rain on Muscatine in a matter of 20 minutes creating flash flooding and a rush of water toward the Papoose Creek Lift Station located in Riverside Park. The debris that came with that water overwhelmed the system and bent a bar on the scraper which normally cleans the screen that allows water to pass through and be pumped to the Water Pollution Control Plant (WPCP) for treatment.

“That created a backup in the system which caused some flooding in the basements of a couple of businesses along Mississippi Drive,” Haag said. “It also slowed us down in installing the sanitary and sewer lines.”

Jon Koch, WPCP director, said that he has an excellent staff that went right to work to try and correct the problem as quickly as possible.

“These guys were able to patch it together to get it running,” Koch said. “We are still looking at repairing the bar but for now we just have to keep the screen cleaned off with a pressure hose and try to keep the water low enough so that the construction crew can work on Mississippi Drive.”

Haag hopes that work at the Iowa Avenue intersection and the Iowa Avenue railroad crossing can continue.



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“If we can make good progress the next couple of days, we can start installing the water main down at the Chestnut intersection,” Haag said. “That will be huge in our ability to schedule sewer work and put together a timeline for paving Mississippi Drive.”

Two other construction projects are underway with the West Hill Sewer Replacement Project now concentrating on the 4th Street Park. Portions of Broadway and West 4th Street are closed for the installation of sanitary and storm sewer lines as well as the intersection of West 4th and Locust. Construction of the Musser to Deep Lakes Park trail is also underway with an expected completion date of September 30.

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