

## Highway garage on track

By Amy Smith, Union staff writer | Posted: Thursday, October 9, 2014 9:16 am

JEFFERSON — The new Jefferson County Highway Department facility is on track and on budget heading into colder weather, the Infrastructure Committee learned Wednesday.

The \$15.37 million facility, which broke ground in early August, has begun to take shape as constant work continues on the site.

“We’re going to get to a point soon where it doesn’t look like there is much site work being done, but there is a lot going on inside,” said Chris Raykowski, project consultant from The Sigma Group of Milwaukee.

Located on the site of the former Countryside Home on the west side of Jefferson, the parcel previously sat upon a layer of moist clay and sandy topsoil, with silt and sand below, effectively stopping any drainage and causing major concerns for construction of the facility.

In order to make the site serviceable for the highway shop project, the county elected to stabilize the soil with lime. Lime stabilization works by adding lime to an unstable soil, with the lime reacting with the compounds in the current soil to draw moisture out and bond with the clay materials.

The lime stabilization was completed in early July with the grading of the site completed earlier this month. Topsoil for seeding currently is being spread and cement slabs for building foundations have been poured, showing no signs of soft soil areas.

“The site is holding up really well,” Raykowski said. “Normally if there were soft spots, you would start to see them by now.”

In addition to the completion of grading and many of the site’s footings and foundations, installation of all utilities in the site’s access road has been completed. Raykowski noted that almost all internal utility work is complete as well.

Contractors also have begun to roof the main facility with about 50 percent complete. Underground plumbing is about half completed and the pole bases for site lighting have been poured.

Pavement of the site is planned prior to Thanksgiving with a tentative start date of Oct. 29. A portion of the pavement in front of the salt shed will be pulled from Maas Brothers’ contract to be rebid or poured by the Jefferson County Highway Department next summer as construction of the shed would damage the pavement too extensively if it was poured now.

An additional fee of about \$15,000 would have been added to the project budget in order for Maas Brothers to return and pave the site at a later date. About \$190,000 will be subtracted from their contract for the pavement.

The building, approved for a budget not to exceed \$15 million, will utilize approximately 11 acres of the 40-acre plot, and necessitated demolition of all of the existing buildings of the county’s former nursing home. The new facility will be home to the Highway Department’s entire fleet of 60-plus vehicles.

Planners found about \$665 in budget savings this month and have used about 35 percent of the project's overall budget to date. Due to weather delays earlier in the year, the project is set to be completed by the end of March 2015.

Raykowski said contractors hope to have a substantial amount of the main facility completed by February.

Meanwhile, in other business, the committee approved a bid recommendation to the county board of \$303,745 from The Echo Group for electronic health record and billing software for Human Services.

The software would allow Human Services to keep an up to date digital version of a patient's records, which would be available instantly to all authorized users. The system would help keep all documentation in place that Medicaid auditors will look for and will help Human Services keep up to date with the constant changes in healthcare regulation.

Previously budgeted at about \$500,000, the software came in significantly under budget with a savings of about \$200,000. Echo's software, successfully in place in Walworth County, has an annual recurring cost of about \$73,000.

Human Services currently pays about \$125,000 a year for the current system, meaning the costly software will save the county money in the long run.