

County panel updated on highway construction projects

By Alexa Zoellner Union staff writer | Posted: Wednesday, September 2, 2015 10:26 am

JEFFERSON — The Jefferson County Highway Committee was updated on road construction projects when it met Tuesday.

Currently, there are ongoing construction projects on County Highways W, A, N and J.

Work on Highway W is taking place near the new highway facility on the former site of Countryside Home.

“We did get the paving work and marking all done,” Jefferson County Highway Commissioner William Kern told the committee. “The only thing we have left is just a little bit of shouldering to do and a little bit of landscaping down where the bike trail and stuff is. It’ll take about a day to do that little bit of work.”

There are about 10 miles of construction on Highway A between Lake Mills and Watertown.

“On Highway A, we did complete all the asphalt on the first mat,” Kern said, adding that crews were to return Wednesday to put in the final mat, working there for the next few weeks.

“When A is all done, we’ll be jumping over to Highway N,” Kern reported. “Probably all the way into October, we’ll be working on paving A and N — get them shouldered and completed this year.”

Kern said that while the five miles of construction on Highway N, between Highways B and A, is complete, there remains some work to do.

“We actually finished in the last week all the dirt work and landscaping in that upper part that we had to finish this year,” he said. “We just moved our crews into the pit, and that’s the last thing to finish other than the paving.”

Crews will be working on closing and restoring the main burrow site and surface asphalt will be completed in September or October, Kern said.

meanwhile, work on Highway J should be starting within the next two or three weeks, with construction to take place between State Highway 89 and the City of Jefferson.

Work on County Highway P currently is in the design phase. Kern said that construction on the 2.91 miles of roadway between County Highways E and F is anticipated to begin in 2017.

In other business, the committee:

- Heard from Kern that officials had decided against purchasing a parcel of land located by County Highway CI and State Highway 106. The land had been eyed for a salt shed.

“It was two months ago that we had this on the agenda,” Kern said. “We talked over the options ... and decided it’s not a good time. We’re going to hold off buying. The owner and Realtor really didn’t want to look at that first right of refusal.”

- Heard updated information on the design of satellite highway shop facilities for sites in Lake Mills and Concord. Kern said they hit a snag in going through the final planning and code review process.

“The code review — because of the size of the buildings we would actually have to do fire protection in those buildings,” Kern said. “We’ve heard a lot of different things about that with different buildings being built in the last few years.”

Because neither site is on city water, it would be complicated and expensive, around \$150,000 in costs, to instal fire protection in the buildings, he said.

“What we’re looking at with the architect right now is a little redesign,” Kern said. “As long as the building stays under 5,000 square feet with a fire wall, then we don’t have to put sprinklers in.”

He said the second “snag” is that buildings standards in Lake Mills will not allow for an all-metal building. The Highway Department is in the process of making revisions and will be meeting with Lake Mills again in the near future.