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Summer Projects Keep City Staff Busy

It may be hot and humid, but city staff is utilizing these long summer days and making progress on a lengthy list of projects.

- Newly constructed portions of Tahlequah Street will soon be open to traffic. Crews are putting the finishing touches on the project, including a final layer of asphalt and seeding grass seed. The expanded street extends Tahlequah to Highway 59.
- On Tulsa Street, residents might have noticed that the asphalt surface of the street developed potholes soon after it was resurfaced last fall. Unfortunately, the asphalt performed poorly after installation. City staff worked with the contractor to remedy the problem, and this month crews will re-mill and overlay the street at no expense to the city.
- Construction crews continue to make good progress at the new wastewater treatment plant. Although the project is 20 weeks behind schedule due to weather and other delays, 75% of the new plant is operational. The plant is meeting the criteria established by the EPA for water that has to be discharged into Sager Creek and then the Illinois River. We anticipate completion of the plant in January 2011.
- City staff is preparing for the construction of a new electric transmission line and substation. Electric Department personnel are currently meeting with property owners to acquire easements. The transmission line will run across the north side of town near Country Club Road and will provide a "loop" around the city. This will be helpful in the event of power loss on one side of town or at another electrical substation, in which case power needs could be met by switching over to an unaffected area. This will build

in a necessary redundancy in the electrical system to provide even better reliability in electrical service.

- The runways and taxiways at Siloam Springs Municipal Airport will soon undergo rehabilitation to keep them in prime condition. The asphalt surfaces are beginning to show signs of wear and deterioration. It is important that runways and taxiways be well maintained for aviation operations. Ninety percent of the project is to be funded with a grant from the Arkansas Department of Aeronautics, with the city contributing only ten percent of the cost. The bidding process is underway and resurfacing is scheduled to begin in August.
- Phase two of the Sager Creek restoration project is underway. Boulders have been ordered and rock is being hauled in for the project. Actual construction is scheduled to begin in August, and should be complete by late fall. The main goal of the project is to improve the health of the creek by returning it to a natural stream habitat.
- City Departments continue to coordinate with Community Health Systems (CHS) in their plans to build a new hospital in Siloam Springs. Staff has had several meetings with CHS officials to discuss construction requirements, and preliminary engineering and design work is underway. Administrator David Cameron continues to serve on the Siloam Springs Memorial Hospital Board. A groundbreaking for the new hospital is expected in February 2011.
- Always looking for ways to extend our local trail system, city staff is currently planning a trail extension that would link existing trail from Hico Street to City Lake. Funding for the project would likely come from a grant, much like the recent Dogwood Springs Trail project completed in coordination with John Brown University and Arvest Bank.
- Discussion continues regarding the feasibility of a new Siloam Springs Library. Staff continues to gather feedback, review needs and compare possible building sites. A timeline has not been developed for this project.

Fall projects on the city to-do list include the removal and replacement of two bridges in Siloam Springs, the University Street Bridge and the Maple Street low-water bridge.