

NAWS

Engineers consider schedule change

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By TOM RAFFERTY

Staff Writer

trafferty@ndweb.com

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Engineers are looking at proposals to build pipelines from Minot to Berthold and Minot Air Force Base even before the Northwest Area Water Supply pipeline reaches Minot.

The NAWS project involves piping water from Lake Sakakawea to Minot where it will be treated and piped to other communities in the northwest part of the state.

Officials hope to have the NAWS pipeline constructed from Minot to Lake Sakakawea in 2005, but Minot is not expected to begin treating the water until at least 2007.

Jim Lennington, the project engineer for NAWS, said the possibility of building a pipeline to Minot Air Force Base now is only in the discussion phase.

"The question has been asked, 'How much would a pipeline to the Minot Air Force Base cost,'" Lennington said.

He said some preliminary

NAWS

Continued from Page A1

engineering work has been done to gauge the interest in the project.

The base currently receives water from Minot through an existing pipeline, but Lennington said that pipeline is not large enough to handle the flow of NAWS water.

While plans for building a pipeline from Minot to Berthold are more definite, there is still work to be done.

City leaders in Berthold have proposed that the city connect Berthold to the Hampshire North Prairie Rural Water system and then use the connection later for NAWS.

Lennington said he has some ideas on the cost of a pipeline to Berthold, but he has asked engineers to determine the impact

the proposal would have on the whole project.

If a decision is made to connect Berthold or Minot Air Force Base earlier than planned, Lennington said the project would have to be funded without using federal money that is allocated to NAWS each year, because NAWS officials don't want to jeopardize the schedule of getting NAWS to Minot first.

Construction of the NAWS pipeline began in 2002 when about 7.5 miles were placed in the ground.

Last year, project officials had hoped to finish another 9.5 miles, but that phase of the project is still being worked on by Coughlin Construction.

This year's phase of construction will be to add another 11.5 miles of pipeline that will stretch from N.D. Highway 23 to Max along the east side of U.S. Highway 83.

Winter Brothers Underground, a company based in Sioux Falls, S.D., is the contractor for this year's phase that will cost around \$6.1 million to construct.

Lennington said he is unsure of when construction on the latest phase of the project will begin, but he said it could begin in mid-June.