

Construction season begins for NAWS

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Work has started on about \$22 million in construction scheduled for this year on the Northwest Area Water Supply project.

The work includes a high-service pump station that will be built next year, but could be bid later this year.

Also, the North Dakota Water Commission plans to ask U.S. District Judge Rosemary Collyer of Washington, D.C., to approve additional pipeline construction over the next two years.

Project manager Michelle Klose said earlier this week that the judge has asked for a NAWS project update by today. Besides preparing an update, the water commission has been developing requests that will be submitted over the next few months for additional pipelines to Kenmare, Mohall and Minot Air Force Base.

The court is involved because of a lawsuit brought by the province of Manitoba over concerns about possible biota transfer from the Missouri River Basin to the Hudson Bay Basin. NAWS would bring Missouri River water to Minot and other communities in northwest and north



Jill Schramm/MON

Contractors dig underground and prepare to bore under U.S. Highway 2 and 52 on Friday for a pipeline from Minot to Berthold.

central North Dakota.

As a result of Canadian concerns and the judge's order for more study, the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation is preparing an Environment Impact Statement. The agency expects to complete the EIS by October 2008. Until then, construction on treatment facilities is on hold.

However, construction of

nontreatment facilities has been moving forward with approval from Collyer.

NAWS is able to proceed this year with construction of four miles of transmission line from the Minot Water Treatment Plant to and along the U.S. Highway 83 Bypass. ERS Constructors of Centennial, Colo., is doing the work at a cost of \$5.8 million.

Signs along the U.S. Highway 2 and 52 Bypass alert motorists to contractors boring for a pipeline to run under the highway near the intersection with the Highway 83 Bypass. The work began after Memorial Day and is expected to take two weeks.

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Fargo will be constructing the pipeline from Minot to Berthold at a cost of about \$3.1 million. The pipeline will run to Berthold by way of Des Lacs.

On June 14, the State Water Commission will open bids for two storage tanks. One will be erected near Berthold and the other will be along the county road between Minot and Des Lacs.

Berthold is interested in a new water source because its existing water doesn't meet federal standards and is high in salt. The city is looking to get Minot's treated water as a stopgap measure until Missouri River water is available through NAWS. Water could be flowing through the new pipeline by next summer.

The water commission plans to ask Collyer for permission to extend the

Berthold line next year to help Kenmare solve its water problems. Kenmare had planned to build a water treatment plant to comply with new federal rules on arsenic before deciding to seek treated water from Minot instead.

The water commission also will be asking the judge for permission to build a transmission line from Kenmare to the Upper Souris Water Users Association to enable the rural water system to blend Minot water with its existing supply until NAWS water becomes available. Upper Souris lacks sufficient water quantity during peak demand and has had problems in meeting the federal standard for disinfection byproducts.

The water commission intends to ask the judge for the right to connect Mohall and the western portion of All Seasons Rural Water Users District into the line from Berthold to Kenmare in 2009. Mohall and All Seasons have concerns about lack of

water quantity from their wells in dry years.

The state also needs approval for a new transmission line to Minot AFB. The base already buys Minot water, but a larger line also would serve communities beyond the base.

Meanwhile, the last of the pipeline from Minot to the lake is in the ground, and contractors are installing the vaults that regulate flow and doing pressure tests on the line.

"That should be done in the next couple of months," Klose said.

Minot Public Works Director Alan Walter said a pipeline on North Hill to connect with a water storage tank will be the last of the transmission work remaining within Minot after this year.

A storage reservoir between Minot and Max and an intake structure at Lake Sakakawea also remain to be built.

Design and construction of a treatment system once the EIS is completed is expected to take two to three years.