

NORTHWEST AREA WATER SUPPLY



Molstad Excavating of Grand Forks is working on laying pipeline south of Max for the Northwest Area Water Supply project. Work is expected to continue as long as weather cooperates.

Robert Petry/MDN

NAWS plans advance

Advisory committee moves ahead on expanding service

By **JILL SCHRAMM**
Staff Writer
jschramm@ndweb.com

While still focused on building pipeline south of Minot and locating an water-intake site, the advisory committee for the Northwest Area Water Supply moved ahead Wednesday with plans to expand service north of Minot.

The committee decided to offer a final

invite to area cities within the project's reaches before drafting a design for transmitting water beyond Minot. So far, 15 cities have shown interest, although two — Parshall and Willow City — appear to be resolving their water problems through other avenues at this time.

The other NAWS cities are Minot, Berthold, Sherwood, Mohall, Bowbells, Kenmare, Columbus, Noonan, Souris, Westhope, Bottineau, Grenora

and Wildrose.

At Wednesday's meeting, the advisory committee met with Houston Engineering to discuss water transmission to Berthold and how NAWS might collaborate with rural water systems to serve customers close to the main pipeline. Commission members indicated a desire to build the project to accommodate cities that want to tap in once water is flowing.

Minot public works director Alan Walter agreed that the pipeline should be large enough to handle all comers.

"It's everybody's money and everybody deserves a chance to have the water," he said.

Kevin Martin, an engineer on the project, told the commission that there are cost-effective ways to upgrade the system later rather than spending money up front on larger pipelines or other features that might never be needed.

Meanwhile, construction continues on the pipeline that would bring Missouri River water to Minot.

Project manager Jim Lennington of the State Water Commission said contract work will continue as late in the year as possible, averaging 300 to 400 feet of newly installed pipe a day.

The water commission is negotiating with the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation regarding use of Snake Creek Pumping Plant facilities for an intake structure. That option appears to be less expensive than building a separate intake, Lennington said.

The federal government has appealed a federal judge's ruling that the project needs a more thorough environmental study. Pipeline construction can continue while the appeal proceeds.

Manitoba sued because of concerns about biota transfer from the Missouri River Basin to the Souris River Basin in event of a pipeline leak. The Canadian province would prefer a treatment plant be built near the intake. NAWS plans call for treatment at the Minot Water Treatment Plant.

Because of the court ruling, Lennington said the Bureau of Reclamation will have to seek the judge's opinion on whether proposed work at the Minot treatment plant can go ahead as part of NAWS while the environmental study is appealed.