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**FEDERAL COURT**

# Ruling could stall NAWS up to 10 years

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A federal court in Washington, D.C., is scheduled to hear the lawsuit the Province of Manitoba has against the Northwest Area Water Supply project in July, according to Minot Public Works Director Alan Walter.

Walter said if the judge rules in favor of Manitoba, the NAWS project could be stalled for another 5 to 10 years.

In the meantime, construction of the project continues.

"We are continuing on until the courts tell us to stop," Walter said.

Walter presented information on the NAWS project to the Kiwanis Club on Tuesday in the International Inn.

Manitoba officials are opposing the project because they contend unwanted biota will be transferred from the Missouri River basin to the Hudson Bay Watershed.

NAWS involves piping water from Lake Sakakawea to Minot and other communities.

The Canadians want an environmental impact statement to be conducted on the project. An environmental assessment has already been done on the project.

## **NAWS**

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Walter said an environmental impact statement is close to what an environmental assessment is, except the EIS offers a more extensive comment period on the project.

Walter said the second phase of the NAWS project is expected to begin in June.

The first phase of the NAWS project included the construction of about 9.5 miles of pipeline from the water treatment plant south towards Lake

Sakakawea. The second phase of the project will also include another 9.5 miles of pipeline.

The second phase of the project is expected to cost \$4.7 million.

The new section will take the pipeline to North Dakota Highway 23, near the former radar station.

Walter also reported that progress is being made to get some of the federal funding for the project restored.

President George Bush is proposing \$17.3 million for next fiscal year set aside for Dakota Water Resources com-

pared to \$28.5 million designated for the current fiscal year funding, according to information from Sen. Byron Dorgan, D-N.D.

The federal portion of the NAWS funding comes from some of the money allocated in the Dakota Water Resources Act.

The next fiscal year begins in October.

Walter said state officials have told him that there is a good chance the funding will be restored.

The \$145 million project is funded by the federal government at 65 percent and the

remaining 35 percent will come from local funding.

Finance Director Bob Frantsvog said the city has about \$10 million in the bank for the NAWS project, which is enough for the second and third phases.

The local money comes from a one-cent city sales tax.

If the project is not stalled, Minot could be treating water from Lake Sakakawea by 2007.

By 2015 Walter predicts that NAWS will serve 61,000 people.

"Once the water starts flowing and people realize how good the water is everyone will want it," Walter said.