

## Roadwork ahead: MnDOT has big plans for 2014, 2015

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Everyone knows the saying Minnesota has two seasons: Winter and road construction. Right now winter is in full swing, but construction season is just around the corner.

The only area project planned in 2013 from MNDOT is some rehab work on a Hwy. 22 bridge west of St. Peter. That work is expected to cost \$736,000.

There are two projects to raise the grade of Hwy. 169 along the Minnesota River between Le Sueur and Mankato, according to Minnesota Department of Transportation spokesperson Rebecca Arndt. One is set for 2014, the other is expected to begin in 2016.

The only section of Hwy. 169 between Le Sueur and North Mankato that won't be addressed is the downtown St. Peter segment that was reconstructed in 2010.

"When these highways were originally constructed in the early 1960s, the Minnesota River high water elevation was assumed at 751 feet and the roads were constructed accordingly. The actual 100-year flood elevation in this area is about 756 feet," according to MnDOT documents.

The improvements on Hwy. 169 between Le Sueur and St. Peter set for 2014 are mostly on the southbound side of the highway, though some work on the northbound segments will take place at intersections in St. Peter near the St. Julien Street intersection. The modifications will allow MnDOT to open the southbound section of Hwy. 169 to travelers heading in both directions should flood waters cover the northbound segment which sits closer to the Minnesota River.

Two miles of Hwy. 169 between Le Sueur and St. Peter will be regraded, raised and reconstructed. Nine miles of that section will be resurfaced. In all, the project is expected to cost \$13.2 million

Improvements to Hwy. 22 on St. Peter's south side are proposed for 2015. A 2,500-foot segment of the highway will be regraded and reconstructed from Hwy. 169 to the bridge over the Minnesota River.

The project includes adding a 100-foot span bridge to handle additional water flow during high water events. Cost: About \$2.5 million.

In 2016, Hwy. 169 from St. Peter to the Minnesota River Bridge in Mankato will be addressed. The project includes six miles of resurfacing and the addition of a median along nine miles of roadway. MnDOT Project Manager Zachary Tess said work will take place mostly on the southbound lanes, though some sections of the northbound lanes will be raised as well. Costs are projected between \$22 and \$27 million.

One other area project scheduled to begin in 2014 includes replacing the Hwy. 19 bridge over the Pacific Union Railroad east of Henderson at an estimated cost of \$4 million.

Bridge work

One large project planned for the St. Peter area is the rehabilitation of the steel trussed Hwy. 99 Minnesota River Bridge or the “Broadway Bridge”.

Built in 1931, the bridge crosses the river on the eastern end of St. Peter and is on the National Register of Historic Places. Tess said though MnDOT originally planned on replacing the bridge entirely, federal guidelines prohibits MnDOT from doing so.

Instead the bridge will be rehabbed extensively. Tess said the project will take about three months and will likely occur during the spring of 2014. Traffic will be routed to Hwy. 22.

The project will cost close to \$3.2 million dollars and includes jacking the bridge up so new concrete can be poured underneath. In addition, the bridge will receive new sidewalks, a new deck, rehabbed lampposts and a new coat of paint.

### Nicollet County projects

In Nicollet County, there are two major road projects on tap for 2013, according to Nicollet County Public Works Director Seth Greenwood — a mile-and-a-half stretch of County Road 5 and an interchange at Hwy. 41 and County Road 14 in North Mankato.

“We’re going to work on County Road 5 this year from the intersection of County Road 5 and Gardner Road west to approximately 1,200 feet west of the intersection of County Road 5 and County Road 40. It hasn’t been reconstructed in about 40 years. We’re redoing it because it doesn’t meet state geometric guidelines. It will cost about \$1.6 million,” Greenwood said.

The project is still being finalized, but the project is set to commence this summer. Detours haven’t yet been set.

“We’re still working on those final plans. More than likely the detour will go down to County Road 13 to Hwy. 99 to get to St. Peter,” Greenwood said.

Nicollet County is also working with the MnDOT to add an interchange at County Hwy. 41 and trunk Hwy. 14 in North Mankato this summer.

“The North Mankato industrial park has been growing and it put a lot of pressure on County Hwy. 13. Another route to west for development is needed. Hwy. 14 will be expanded to four lanes.” Greenwood said.

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