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County bridge project underway in District 2

TALALA—Rogers County District 2 Road Foreman Benny King gave an update recently on the Crowson bridge construction project that took off at the beginning of this month.

Rogers County Board of County Commissioners (BOCC) approved the project earlier this year moving forward with the bid announcement. The contract was awarded to a local company, MSB Construction, on August 8 during a BOCC regular board meeting.

The road and former bridge -- located on NS4100 Road between county line at EW290 and EW315 -- were both closed in May to traffic.

Right now, the bridge construction, which had to be re-designed by Kellogg Engineering, Inc., is expected to be completed by the end of the year or early next year -- depending on weather or unexpected delays.

Commissioner Chairman Steve Hendrix of District 2 said engineers had to deviate from the original construction plan due to overhead power lines preventing the use of a crane to offload and position pre-cast box culverts. There was no other alternative, he said, other than “pour-in-place.”

The difference between precast and pour-in-place is that precast consists of prefabricated concrete structures that are cured off-site in a manufacturing plant then delivered to the job site.

Pre-casting is the normal way the bridge would have been done, he said. Pour-in-place means the concrete is poured into forms at the job site to cure.

“This bridge was a little out-of-the-box for us. There were some unique challenges that made us deviate from a traditional method,” Commissioner Hendrix added.

King said the original structurally deficient 18-foot bridge was approximately 80 years old with large cracks underneath, where the concrete wing walls and head walls were located, causing the main support to drop rendering it dangerous.

Upon routine inspection, the bridge progressively moved to priority status.

Commissioner Hendrix said structures over 20-feet long are on state inventory that get inspected by Oklahoma Department of Transportation (ODOT) engineers. Counties receive ODOT's inspection report twice a year on those bridges.

"For bridges less than 20 feet in length, those are not counted on the statewide bridge inventory. We [in District 2] have about 25 county bridges in addition to what is on ODOT's inventory."

This makes the county nevertheless responsible for maintaining them -- which includes inspections, repairs, replacements, and funding.

"This was a county-funded project [from the one-cent sales tax]," Commissioner Hendrix said, costing \$284,288 -- which he said was a little more than expected due to changing plans. That source helps provide for the construction, improvement, maintenance and repair of county roads and bridges.

Of the bridge construction, Commissioner Hendrix said, "When we get done, this is about an 80 to 100-year-old structure. It will be here for a long time. This is all Rogers County from start to finish."

County crew will lay asphalt and install guardrails once fully constructed. An update will be provided when the road and bridge re-opens to traffic.