Phase 1 of the Roseau River Diversion Flood Control Project Nearly Complete

After a slow start due to heavy rains in June, Davidson Construction has made great strides towards the completion of Phase I of the East Diversion Flood Control Project.

Phase I construction involves the construction of the diversion channel’s outlet into the Roseau River just south of the confluence of Hay Creek and the Roseau River. Davidson is also working on construction of approximately .75 miles of channel and setback levees.

Davidson and the Corps of Engineers anticipate that construction of Phase I will be substantially complete by early fall. At the time of publication, the diversion channel excavation was essentially complete with most of the setback levees in place and the armoring of the outlet structure with rip rap just beginning. Final turf establishment and recreational features will be completed later in the fall or next spring.

The Corps of Engineers and their consultant SEH Engineering are working on the final plans for Phases 2 and 3. The Corps anticipate being ready to bid the second phase of construction in the fall of 2010, pending an additional federal appropriation in October. Phase 2 would begin where Phase 1 ends and carry the diversion channel back to the new MN Highway 11 Bridge. Phase 3 would be ready for construction in 2012, pending federal funding, making the diversion operational for the spring of 2013.

Riverview Park Gazebo Hosts 5 Summer Concerts

The finishing touches to the Riverview Park Gazebo hadn’t even been completed when it hosted the first of five outdoor concerts featuring local artists: Bob Lund, Denise Ostby, Hwy 11 Ramblers, The Overtones, Craig Whaley, and Jessica & Jake Johnson. The gazebo has also been host to wedding parties and others seeking photo opportunities. Originally conceived as a central gathering place for the community the gazebo was a central element in long-term vision for the community’s flood recovery efforts.

The Roseau City crews have provided the majority of the labor for the construction of the gazebo and park landscaping. Additionally, a volunteer committee has done all of the design work for the park and other volunteers have established a “buy a brick” fundraiser to help fund the gazebo’s construction.

To date, the total construction cost of the gazebo and all the associated landscaping has amounted to approximately $104,000. Funding for the park project has come from two appropriations of funds from the city. One in 2009 for $45,000 and another in 2010 of $28,000. The remainder of the funding has come from donations and the proceeds from brick sales.

Donations and personalized paver purchases are still being accepted to help fund the additional improvements to Riverview Park.

Future plans are to maintain a regular summer concert schedule for the gazebo on Thursday evenings.
Be Alert and Slow Down:
School is Back in Session

School is back in session and that means motorists need to pay particular attention to the many buses, pedestrians and bicyclists traveling to and from the school campus.

Motorists should be aware that speed limits in the area of the school, when children are present, are reduced to 15 miles per hour and that pedestrians have the right of way in all crosswalks. The City and School have installed electronic signs to remind motorists of their speed while traveling along Minnesota Highway 11 through the school zone.

Numerous school buses and parents also utilize the streets adjacent to the school for pick-up and drop-off of students. Motorists are required to obey all bus stop arms and lights. Anytime a school bus stop arm is extended children may be present and could cross in front of your vehicle, therefore, it is imperative that you remain stopped until the bus driver has waited for all children to clear before withdrawing the stop arm.

Please take extra care and drive safely through the school zone and pay particular attention to any pedestrians who may be present. Let’s make 2010-2011 a great and safe school year!

MinnKota Power Managers
Project Significant Revenue Losses in 2010

The City of Roseau has received notification from MinnKota Power Cooperative’s CEO Dave Loer that 2010 revenues are falling well short of those required to meet the power system’s margin covenants required by MinnKota’s bondholders.

MinnKota is the operator of a joint power system serving the Northern Municipal Power Agency (NMPA) and various rural electric cooperatives in NW Minnesota and Eastern North Dakota. NMPA is an association consisting of 12 municipal electric systems (including the City of Roseau) that jointly own a 30% share of a power plant in Beulah, ND. The power generated at this plant is combined with MinnKota’s power generation capabilities to form a joint-system. MinnKota manages the generation and distribution of power to its member cooperatives, NMPA and for sale on the open market when surplus power is available.

MinnKota cites a number of issues that have lowered the joint systems revenue in 2010 including:

- Decreased power sales to member customers (both cooperatives and municipals) as a result of the slow economy and conservation efforts
- Depressed wholesale market for MinnKota’s surplus electric power capacity, again as a result of the slow economy
- Losses on its wind energy contracts with Florida Power and Light (MinnKota is obligated to buy this power at contract rates substantially higher than current market rates)
- Significant costs to upgrade MinnKota’s Milton Young generation plant to comply with new EPA environmental requirements

MinnKota’s management team suggest that in order to restore the overall system to the black it will need to raise revenues of $260 million in 2011, which is a 21% increase from the projected sales revenue to existing members (Cooperatives and Municipals) in 2010. In order to meet this goal, MinnKota officials indicate that local utilities (such as the City of Roseau) could see an increase in the cost of wholesale power from MinnKota in the range of 22-36% starting on March 20, 2011.

The combination of the sagging economy depressing power sales and increasing mandates to increase renewable energy sources and conservation have come together to depress the amount of power sold while at the same time driving up the cost to deliver that same power.

Furthermore, MinnKota’s investment in wind energy contracts and wind energy transmission ($300 million) to meet Minnesota’s 25% renewable energy mandate has put the joint power system into a situation where it must sell high cost wind energy into a depressed energy market where it must be sold at a loss with the difference being made up on member rates.

Finally, MinnKota estimates it will spend $180 million to retrofit its Milton Young power plant with scrubbers and other equipment to meet new EPA emissions standards, thus increasing the costs of power generation without generating any new power.

Local residents are encouraged to contact their elected officials to inform them of the negative impacts of onerous environmental mandates on the ultimate cost of energy for individuals and industry.

Is there a leak in your energy bill?
PowerSavers can help!

The City of Roseau is a participating utility in the PowerSavers conservation program that is offering installation of energy saving equipment in your home or business free of charge. With the recent rate of increases and the possibility of future increases, your local utility is finding ways to help you save energy.

It’s quick and easy!

If you are interested in lowering your utility bill, contact Gwen at the Roseau Utility Department for more information 463-2351.
Save Money on Your Home Energy Bills with an Energy Audit

What is an energy audit? An energy audit is an evaluation of a home’s energy efficiency. Energy audits identify sources of energy loss (e.g. poor insulation, inefficient heating systems, and improperly sealed windows and doors). During a typical energy audit an auditor will:

- Evaluate the home’s lighting system
- Check water heater settings
- Check refrigerator settings
- Check insulation levels
- Check the efficiency of the heating system
- Measure air infiltration
- Check for gas leaks

Energy audits are conducted by certified residential energy auditors. These auditors have been trained to assess residential heat loss and mechanical efficiencies.

You may qualify for a free energy audit through the Northwest Community Action Agency if you meet income qualifications and participate in the Northwest Community Action’s Weatherization program. Participating households must have incomes which are less than 200% of poverty. For a family of four the maximum income level to participate is $44,100. Contact Northwest Community Action to determine if you qualify for an energy audit today (218) 528-3258.

Northwest Community Action will be offering energy conservation workshops on October 19 and 21, 2010 from 5 to 9 pm. Call (218) 528-3258 to register for a class or to see if you qualify for an energy audit and energy assistance today.

Websites for more information on energy conservation tips:

www.state.mn.us/portal/mn/jsp/home.do?agency=Energy
www.energysavers.gov
www.energy.gov/energysavingtips.htm

New Addition to the City Park Shelter

The Park Board and City Crews recently completed a project to improve the City Park’s main shelter building. The project consists of creating a new exit from the main park shelter out to a new paver patio on the north side of the building. This patio provides an outdoor picnic and gathering place for shelter events away from the gravel parking lot to the south of the building. Installation of the new doorway and patio was completed using city staff and the door was donated by Polaris Industries. The Park Board plans to make additional improvements to the patio area including providing a seating wall and barbecue grill area, lighting and new picnic tables.

Electric Lineman Tom Hovorka Retires

In July, after nearly 39 years of service to the City of Roseau, Electric Lineman Tom Hovorka retired from the Roseau City Crew. Tom has been a fixture on the City’s utility poles, keeping the lights on and power flowing to the homes and businesses in Roseau. Tom’s extensive knowledge and experience will be missed and we wish him well in retirement.

Thank you Tom for all of your hard work with the City!

Annual Notice to All Residential Customers

Bills can pile up just like snow. But the Minnesota Cold Weather Rule is designed to protect people who may have trouble paying their utility bills in the winter. The Minnesota Cold Weather Rule applies from October 15 to April 15. The rule, established by the Minnesota Public Utilities Commission, means that your utility cannot disconnect your residential electric service during the winter if the customer meets the following requirement:

- Utility disconnection would affect the customer’s primary heat source;
- The customer has declared inability to pay on forms provided by the utility (Note: customers receiving “any form of public assistance”, including energy assistance, are deemed to have qualified for inability to pay status);
- The household income of the customer is less than 50 percent of the state median income level, as documented by the customer to the utility; and
- The customer enters into and makes reasonably timely payments under a payment agreement that considers the financial resources of the household.

If you have trouble paying your utility bill, local agencies may be able to provide payment assistance. The state Department of Human Services recommends you call the county in which you live.

If you know you are going to have trouble paying your utility bills, please contact the Roseau Utility Department at 463-2351 to try and work out a payment schedule. We will try to help.

**THE COLD WEATHER RULE DOES NOT FORBID ALL WINTER DISCONNECTION**

**POWER OUTAGES**

The City has recently contracted for line maintenance services with the Roseau Electric Cooperative and residents should report all power outages by calling REC’s service number 463-1544 and leaving location information (complete address).
Roseau Area Community Fund Awards 3 Grants

Roseau Area Community Fund (RACF), a component fund of the Northwest Minnesota Foundation, recently awarded three grants to area organizations. A grant of $1,350 was given to Roseau Parks & Rec Riverview Park Project. Other grant recipients are Roseau Friends of the Library ($500) for an outdoor steel mural and Boy Scout Troop #56 ($150) for lettering on their trailer. Your donation to the RACF endowment fund will allow the Community Fund to expand its grant-making capabilities further. Contact Sarah Klint or Mary Dieter for further information about the Roseau Area Community Fund.

Attention Pet Owners

Please be courteous when walking pets by picking up all animal waste deposited on public and private property and placing it in appropriate trash receptacles.

Also a reminder that Roseau has a leash law requiring all pets to be on a leash.

November 2nd is Election Day

Election day is Tuesday, November 2nd and City residents are reminded that their local polling place is located at the Roseau City Center. Residents of Jadis and Ross Township also vote at the Roseau City Center.

The Roseau City Council has three seats up for election in November including Mayor Jeff Pelowski who is running unopposed and incumbent council members Curt Ireland and Linda Vatnsdal who face a challenge from George Bjerk.

Hometown Hero Dustin Byfuglien Shares Stanley Cup with Roseau on August 15th

Support your Family, Friends, & Neighbors
Preserve Community

Shop Roseau First:

Shown are Pam Hetteen, Joyce Larson, RuthAnn Helgeson of the Riverview Park Fundraising Committee and Sarah Klint, RACF Advisory Committee