

# There Is A Lot Of Roadwork Ahead

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future.

Beginning with the construction year 2023, there will be some major league inconveniences coming down the pike if you try to go just about anywhere. The major construction for local Barnesvillians will be the complete reconstruction of the north end of Front Street from the City Hall corner north to the intersection of Highways 34, 9, Old 52 and Clay County 2. That construction project will see the entire roadbed on north Front Street ripped out and replaced.

That Highway 9 and Front Street project has been in the works for a half dozen years. It is a MnDOT priority project that will be rebuilding a roadbed originally hard-surfaced back in the 1930s as a Great Depression era WPA improvement. The roadway itself, along with sidewalks, will be rebuilt and narrowed. A new bike trail will be installed on the east side of the highway. All of those improvements are being done on MnDOT's dime.

What will cost local residents along the Highway 9 corridor will be special assessments for local work. As long as the road is being torn apart and rebuilt anyway, the City of Barnesville is going to take out all of the old sewer and water piping under the roadway and replace it. Much of that plumbing is over 80 years old, likely in dire need of repair or replacement. It will be much less costly to fix it now than to cut the road and dig later in case of a sewer or water main break.

The city's share of the north Front Street project comes in at an estimated \$1,997,550. The city itself will pick up the lions's share of that cost. Under the present city



Barnesville's North Front Street from the City Hall Corner past the convenience stores will be rebuilt in 2023. While most of the cost will be absorbed by MnDOT, the City of Barnesville will be replacing sewer, water, and any electrical or fiber optic lines buried under the road. Part of the city's share of the costs will be special assessed against property owners in the city.

assessment policy, the city would assume 70% of that cost. The individual home owners would be special assessed for 30% of the cost or right around \$600,000.

That would be spread out over 274 homeowner parcels on the north end of town. Some of those addresses immediately on the Highway 9 corridor, would be assessed on a lineal front footage basis. The remainder would be assessed in an "areawide" special assessment. It's way too early to put a final price tag on that special assessment but it could be as much as a couple thousand dollars, payable over 15 or 20 years for the areawide

assessment.

A similar assessment system was used in 2011 when the south end of Front Street was reconstructed. That improvement involved about a third of the town. Those with frontage on the improved street paid about \$200 per lineal foot. The remainder of the special assessment was incorporated into an "areawide" special assessment district with each property owner being assessed a little over a thousand dollars each.

The north end of Front Street will also represent about a third of the city paying special assessments. The remaining third of the city will likely see a special assessment for paving

on 13th Street, the East City Limits Road if and when that ever happens.

Homeowners and businesses along the Highway 9 corridor will also have some personal decisions to make. The lateral lines that run from the mains in the center of the street to the home or business are also ancient. Those laterals are private lines. Anything coming off the mains in Barnesville is the homeowner's responsibility.

It may be to the owner's benefit and best interest to replace lateral lines at the same time the mains are being replaced. Those decisions can be made in the future but that future is looming ever closer.

You can run but you can't hide. If you were looking to escape to someone's lake cabin and hide out to avoid the mess that will be occurring in Barnesville, you're probably out of luck. You're for sure out of luck if you planned to drive through Pelican Rapids to escape road construction.

That community has major improvements stacking one on top of the other just as Barnesville does. MnDOT is sending up test balloons in the community ahead of plans that could see the stop lights in downtown Pelican disappear.

Those stoplights, located at two intersections of Highways 9 and 108 in downtown Pelican, would be replaced by "mini roundabouts". The Pelican City Council is almost universally opposed to the idea due to the narrow confines and lost parking spots in the downtown business blocks. But few arguments are ever won with MnDOT.

In addition to the two mini roundabouts downtown, there is another plan that would see a full blown roundabout on the north end of PR at the intersection of Highways 9 and 59. There is no actual time frame yet established for the road work that might take place in downtown Pelican Rapids but 2024 is a good bet for that roadwork.

But there are definite disruptions that will start in the next year or two that will change the scenic outlook of Pelican Rapids. Those changes will be coming due to pressure being applied to local government by the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources.

The scenic but aging dam and waterfall on the Pelican River in downtown PR is almost assuredly going to become a memory. It will be replaced by a "fish ladder" rapids that will replace the century old dam. That rapids will be very similar to the "fish ladder" that was installed in Whiskey Creek and Blue Eagle Lake a half dozen years ago. The rapids allows fish to move freely up or down stream while the dams do not.

Also about to be shown the exit door is the "windmill" that stands just south of the Pelican dam. A very long time ago there was a flour mill that occupied that spot on the south side of the Pelican River. That structure has been nothing more than decorative for decades as the foundation continues to be eroded by the river.

And PR's resident bird, Pelican Pete, is about to become a migratory bird. That huge, 65-year-old, concrete, white pelican is facing a move across the river from the north side of the Pelican River where he has stood since the middle 1950s. Pete will find a new, higher, dryer perch on the south side of the river where the windmill once occupied space.

Change . . . It is the one thing we can always depend upon. Change, death, taxes and road construction in Minnesota during the summer are always sure bets.

**Been There!...  
...Done That!  
Now I'm  
Looking  
Back...**



**Hunting Colorado**By: Gene Prim

## It Was A Messy Almost Surgery...

The doctor had been consulted. Two of them in fact. The first neurosurgeon to visit made it very clear she was not taking on a patient that was overweight, old and Norwegian. She was not going to risk her reputation on those kind of odds.

The second surgeon was willing to perform the risky surgery on my back. He also made it very clear what those risks were. He was quite sure he could alleviate the pain. Whether I would walk again was a question mark. Without the surgery there was a possibility, over time, that the severed vertebrae might heal itself. Or it could do even more damage than it had done already. For three months I had gotten by with the pain but in just a few days my health had gone into an out of control tailspin.

If that was the case, the vertebrae had had three months to heal itself and it had not been doing a very good job of it. In the interim, I was on a bunch of painkillers, including morphine that was making my mind mushy if I took too much. I had cut myself back to the point where my mind was sorta sharp but so was the pain. Enduring the pain was the trade off for being able to think.

I opted for the surgery and the family concurred. Something had to be done. There was a second meeting with the surgeon and he outlined his recommended course of attack. His list was extensive but he felt comfortable that he could make the repairs. What he did not know was my ability to withstand the rigors of surgery. Nor did he have much of a clue if the surgery would fix my new inability to walk. There was just no way of knowing what kind of nerve damage had been done and continued to be done to the spinal column. Would the surgery fix the nerves that were now keeping me on my back instead of vertical and walking?

In that regard I felt a little more comfortable than he did. After spending most of a lifetime without anyone attacking me with a knife, I had had four major surgeries in as many years without any adverse effects. I had a heart monitor surgically implanted. That had been replaced by a Pacemaker installed to regulate my heartbeat. I had both a left knee and a left hip completely replaced in successive years. I had cataract surgery to fix my vision, once on each eye. All had been done under anesthesia without any ill effects.

But this would be my longest and most complicated surgery attempted and there were no guarantees. I was on board with the risk. I think the family was there but a little less so. They were covering all the bases. They were hoping for the best but considering all of the other possibilities as well. While I was mentally prepping for surgery they were discussing music for the services if things did not go as planned. They had narrowed the selections down to "I Did It My Way" . . . "How Great Thou Art" . . . or "Lonesome, Ornerly and Mean."

As a sidebar here, as I was going through the preliminaries leading up to surgery, there were certain attitude adjustments that must be made. Any of you who have ever been incarcerated in a hospital know what I am talking about. Within hours of your being admitted to a hospital, you are relieved of any modesty that you once had. There will be people, perfect strangers, poking and probing unusual places. They will tap you early and often for enormous quantities of blood that you know not what they do with.

It might take more than a day but certainly not more than three days before you have given up on retaining any semblance of your dignity. The open backed "robe" that they put on you as well as unusual undergarments for their protection in case you have difficulty reaching the facilities in time, eliminate any of what may remain of your dignity. Nightly checks by staff at ungodly hours of the day do not present your best side.

Most of these indignities you learn to live with. Some you do not.

In any event, the big day finally arrives. All of the personnel that are needed to successfully pull off the surgery are assembled. All of the sharp instruments needed to "fix" you are in place. The sanitized room is scrubbed to every health care standard. Nothing can go wrong as they place you on the wheeled gurney that rolls you down to the surgical suite. You reply to the various questions such as what is your date of birth and what will they be fixing. It is a little concerning to you that they forget this easily since you have told them repeatedly your birth date. And if they can't remember what part they are fixing, perhaps they should keep better records. Besides, they have already marked the area with colored markers.

Nothing can go wrong with this type of a double check system in place can it?

Uhhh . . . There is one tiny detail that may have been overlooked in all of this prep work. For all of you squeamish readers out there, you are dismissed. While cutting back on the pain medications to a level I was comfortable with and could still think, I was still ingesting plenty. The problem with pain killers, narcotics such as morphine in particular, is that they have a tendency to slow down and even stop normal body functions and elimination procedures. In short, you are constipated.

To alleviate this situation, the hospitals prescribe Miralax or something similar by the barrel full. You will go or by golly, they are going to know the reason why. It's standard operating procedure. One might also think, that due to the fact that it is standard operating procedure, that certain precautions might be taken before operating. Be sure the tanks are empty before procedures are begun, so to speak.

That might be the way to think . . . it ain't the way to bet. They wheeled me into the operating room. The anesthesiologist and I had a short, meaningful conversation. I disappeared, off to la-la land for a nap. That is, according to after the incident reports, when the team rolled me over on to my stomach. And the ship hit the sand. Pressure was instantly released, doctors, nurses, tools, operating room, maybe the entire hospital and possibly all of Fargo were instantly contaminated. Surgery was called off and I had been unconscious through it all.



I had visitors the day before my scheduled surgery. Stopping by were kids, grandkids and great grandkids, Lucy, Chris and Jessie Disneau, Katie Szweduk, me, Gage Dishneau, Loretta Szweduk, Zach Prim and Dakota.

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