

# Douglas County Road and Bridge discusses country road repair

By Jim Allen

The Road and Bridge subcommittee met on 10-13-2021. Jim Crane gave an update on the Harvest Ridge post construction road repairs. Beniach began work on September 7, 2021 and has completed 12 percent of the work to date. The contractor is focusing work on CR 2350 E and CR 2450 E. These are the roads that were used for EDPR contractor access to the turbine sites. Some culverts have been replaced and some that were installed by EDPR have been reinstalled because water does not like to flow uphill. Work on the roads will continue throughout the fall and into the winter as the weather allows.

After repairing existing damage to the roads and removing excess rock, Beniach is using a paver to apply rock back onto the roads. Following the CA-6 rock application, water is being applied and a compactor is following

the water trucks. This method has the advantage of sealing the fine particles into the base and creates a very hard surface that will last through the winter and be ready for sealcoating next year when temperature allows. To prevent any damage to the roads this winter, snowplows will not be scraping the surface of the rock. Crane reminded the committee that the roads in the footprint will be returned to their former width. EDPR contractors increased the width of some roads but maintenance costs are based on their original width.

To date the Douglas County Highway Department has incurred \$65,854.26 in expense for permit review and pre-construction inspections and \$33,259.42 in inspection time for the post construction repairs. These costs will be paid either from a contingency fund that was part of the Road Use Agreement or from permit fees paid

by EDPR. Further costs will accumulate as the road work continues.

In other business, Crane stated that bump grinding on County Highway 7, the Oakland-Newman Road, has been completed and some paving will be done from CH-7 to the entry of Walnut Point. The construction on the bridge over the Kaskaskia River on CH6 has been delayed until April 2022 due to supply chain issues.

A bridge over the Brushy Fork in Sargeant Township has been delayed due to the discovery of an endangered mussel, the Purple Lilliput (*Toxoplasma Lividus*). The county is required to obtain a conservation plan from the Illinois Department of Natural Resources and coordinate with the Endangered Species Protection Board. The mitigation is expected to cost \$16,742.40. The project is now expected to go to bid in spring of 2022.

# SBL

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ing program. This scholarship program represents a true partnership between EIU and Sarah Bush Lincoln Health Center (SBLHC) as it combines EIU merit aid and need-based aid with the

generous support of SBLHC to fully fund the educational costs for a select cohort of EIU Nursing students from admission to graduation. In addition, both organizations will invest in the personal and professional growth of the students in each cohort along the way.

More information about

the SBL Scholars program will be released once additional details are finalized. For more information about EIU, or to learn more about its growing assortment of programs and services, visit the university's website at [www.eiu.edu](http://www.eiu.edu), or call EIU's public information office at (217) 581-7400.

# County Budget and Finance discuss raises for Douglas county employees

By Jim Allen

The Budget and Finance Committee met on 0-15-21 with chair Don Munson and members Dick Hein and Phil Morris in attendance. Munson's update on possible projects to be funded by the American Rescue Plan Act was brief. To date there is no solid information on how the funds may be used. However, Munson stated that he thought the county's priorities for the funds should concentrate on water projects and ambulance service.

Part of the concern for water service is motivated by the closure of the Lyondell plant. Lyondell has its own water plant and provides water to Cabot Corp, its neighbor. As of August 2022, the agreement between Lyondell and Cabot will not be renewed and Cabot will have to find another source of water. It remains to be seen if ARPA funds could be used to assist in providing water to Cabot.

The county has received \$1,900,000 in ARPA funds thus far and will receive another \$1,900,000 in the first quarter of 2022. The county has three years to use the funds, so there is time to carefully consider the best

use of the money.

The budget for fiscal year 2022 will be more accurately assessed after the County Board meeting on 10-21-21. At his time, it appears that there will be an increase of approximately \$600,000 in revenues over last year. New business and an increase in business sales is responsible for the good news. Consideration of an increase in employee pay will be considered by the committee. The Sheriff's employees will be getting a 3 percent increase and the committee would like for other county employees to receive a similar increase.

Leaf it to Us submitted a proposal for landscaping in front of the County Annex. The proposal totals \$2,364.70. If the Building and Grounds Committee advises that the work should be done, the Budget and Finance

Committee will recommend to the full board that the work is completed.

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